



## Contents

<b>Friends in Folklore Research</b> <i>by Ülo Valk</i> .....	3
<b>Message from the Membership Committee</b> <i>by Cristina Bacchilega</i> .....	
<b>ISFNR Interim Conference “Folk Narrative and Society”, September 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, Argentina</b>	
<b>Sharing Difference: A View on the Interim Conference in Santa Rosa, La Pampa, Argentina</b> <i>by Ricardo Kaliman</i> .....	5
<b>Folk Narrative and Society Meeting in Latin America</b> <i>by Eerika Koskinen</i> .....	7
<b>About Favorable Surprises, Interactions and Particular Behaviour that We Call Folklore. E-mail Interview with Martha Blache</b> <i>by Elo-Hanna Seljamaa</i> .....	10
<b>Call for Papers: 15th Congress of the ISFNR <i>Narratives Across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptation</i>, Athens, Greece, June 21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2009</b> .....	13
<b>Call for Papers: ISFNR Symposium “Folk Narrative: Genres, Social Function and Cultural Arena” at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, September 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2008</b> .....	15
<b>Message from the Committee on “Folktales and the Internet”</b> <i>by Theo Meder</i> .....	16
<b><i>The Charms of Pécs</i>. News from the Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming</b> <i>by Jonathan Roper</i> .....	16
<b>Call for Papers: One-Day Seminar on Encounter Charms/ <i>Begegnungssegen</i>, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Tartu, Estonia</b> .....	17
<b>Belief Tales: Call for Cooperation</b> .....	17
<b>In Memory of Kirill Vasilyevich Chistov (1919-2007)</b> <i>by Pekka Hakamies</i> .....	18
<b>In Memory of George Mifsud-Chircop (1951-2007)</b> <i>by Mare Kõiva</i> .....	19
<b>Archives of Argentinean Folk Narrative: Trends, Topics and History of Argentinean Folkloristics</b> <i>by María Inés Palleiro</i> .....	20
<b>International Conference <i>Charms, Charming and Charmers</i> in Pécs</b> <i>by Ülo Valk</i> .....	29
<b>The 7<sup>th</sup> Folklore Fellows Summer School in Karelia</b> <i>by Mészáros Csaba</i> .....	33
<b>Symposium <i>The Concept of Time and Space in European Folklore</i> in Ljubljana</b> <i>by Katja Hrobat</i> .....	37
<b>Joint Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society and Folklore Studies Association of Canada in Québec</b> <i>by Liisi Laineste</i> .....	40
<b>Folklorists’ Festivity in Latvia</b> <i>by Toms Ķencis</i> .....	43
<b>Conference and Festival of South Asian Folklore in New Delhi</b> <i>by Ülo Valk</i> .....	45
<b>Once More about the Origin of Fairy Tales. A Parable and its Exegesis</b> <i>by Heda Jason</i> .....	48



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## Dear Friends in Folklore Research,

The year 2007 marked a new step in the history of the ISFNR as many of us travelled to Argentina to our first official meeting in the Western Hemisphere. Members of our folk narrative society gathered to hold the ISFNR Interim Conference "Folk Narrative and Society" in Santa Rosa, La Pampa. We met in a small university town with a lively academic atmosphere and a strong school of folkloristics, well known among Latin American scholars who had visited the town before for its Conferences for the Study of Folk Narrative. The ISFNR Interim conference was organized jointly with the 7<sup>th</sup> *Jornadas de Estudio de la Narrativa Folklórica*. For most guests from the rest of the world this was their first, exciting trip to this lovely town in the hospitable country of Argentina. The conference was a remarkable success thanks to the efforts of Ana María Dupey, María Inés Poduje, María Graciela Eliggi and the other organisers as well as to the supporting institutions: *Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento Latinoamericano*, *Secretaría de Cultura de la Nación* and *Departamento de Investigaciones Culturales Sub-Secretaría de Cultura de La Pampa*. Martha Blache and Manuel Dannemann – the vice-president of the ISFNR representing Latin America – also deserve our gratitude for planning and preparing this forum.

The third issue of the ISFNR Newsletter offers to our readers some impressions, ideas and reflections about our recent meeting in Argentina, including an interview with Martha Blache. It also shares with you memories of folklore events in Canada, Hungary, India, Karelia (both in Finland and in the Russian Federation), Latvia and Slovenia, where members of the ISFNR and friends of our society participated in over the past year. One of the priorities of the ISFNR is to develop and support contacts among scholars sharing similar goals in the field of folk narrative research. The ISFNR Committees for Charms, Charmers and Charming and "Folktales and the Internet" set

positive examples of co-operation in well-defined fields of research. This Newsletter marks the establishment of yet another research group, a committee dedicated to belief narratives and open to all interested scholars.

Another initiative taken by our members and supported by the Executive Committee is to broaden the scope of events organized under the auspices of the ISFNR. Ezekiel Alembi – our vice-president representing Africa – has, together with his colleagues, invited us to take part in the ISFNR research symposium "Folk Narrative: Genres, Social Function and Cultural Arena" at the Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya in September 2008. For participants of the ISFNR Interim Conference of 2000, this offers an opportunity to go back and refresh old acquaintances while for others this will be a new experience. In May, the Committee for "Charms, Charmers and Charming" will convene in Tartu, Estonia, for a one-day seminar on Encounter Charms/ *Begegnungssegen*. Information about subtopics and dates of both meetings can be found on the pages of this Newsletter as well as on the ISFNR web site.

The call from Africa, like the projects of the committees, serve as reminders of the simple truth that the life and activities of the ISFNR depend on the efforts of all of its members. The Executive Committee of the ISFNR welcomes initiatives taken by members in order to make the ISFNR into a more active society that effectively carries out the mission established in our Statutes: "to develop scholarly work in the field of folk narrative research and to stimulate contacts and the exchange of views among its members". I am pleased that this issue of the Newsletter makes several contributions towards these goals by bringing to you not only news about recent and forthcoming academic events but also a research essay by Argentinean folklorist María Inés Palleiro on practices of collecting and publishing folk narratives in Argentina during the past cen-

tury. While Palleiro focuses on changes in research paradigms, Heda Jason's follow-up comment on the orality and literacy debate mediated in last year's Newsletter draws attention to the stubborn persistence of certain topics and the tendency of history to repeat itself.

As many of you already know, and hopefully have noted in your diaries, in June 2009 the ISFNR will meet in Athens, Greece to hold its 15<sup>th</sup> Congress "Narratives Across Time and Space: Transmissions and Adaptations". The Athens Congress will also mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ISFNR and an exhibition dedicated to the society's history will feature at the meeting. As mentioned in the call for papers, all of you are invited and encouraged to participate in assembling this display and in helping document what is part of the history of our discipline and a framework for networks of friendship and collegiality that span the decades.

These approaching milestones and cyclically recurring gatherings, as well as the new initiatives, gain significance also from the steadily growing membership of the ISFNR. Cristina Bacchilega, our vice-president representing North America and Chair of the Membership Committee accounts for the steps taken by the Membership Committee to facilitate the procedure for joining the society. We are glad to welcome seventeen new members who joined us in 2007: Camilla Asplund Ingemark (Finland/ Sweden), Simon J. Bronner (USA), Anne Duggan (USA), Ana María Dupey (Argentina), Marja-Liisa Keinänen (Sweden), Desmond Khar-mawphlang (India), Chan-Hoe Kim (Japan), Pauliina Latvala (Finland), Lea Olsan (USA/ UK), Hanne Pico Larsen (Denmark/ USA), Radvilė Racėnaitė (Lithuania), Soumen Sen (India), Hanna Szychalska (Poland), Jūratė Šlekonytė (Lithuania), Daiva Vaitkevičienė (Lithuania), Sinikka Vakimo (Finland) and Katrien van Effeltherre (Belgium). By now, more applications will have reached Cristina Bacchilega, who deserves our

gratitude for her effective work. I also thank Elo-Hanna Seljamaa for her kind readiness to combine doctoral studies at the Ohio State University with the secretarial work of the ISFNR and I thank the Executive Committee for their valuable and friendly company. Mare Kõiva and her team at the Estonian Literary Museum deserve our gratitude for dedica-

ting several recent volumes of *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore* to papers delivered at the 14th ISFNR Congress "Folk Narrative Theories and Contemporary Practices" held in Tartu in July 2005. To enjoy free online versions of these publications, please visit the web site <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/> (Vol. 33, 35-37). I also thank the authors of

this Newsletter, our artist Marat Viires, language editor Frank Carney, and finally all the ISFNR members for their active support and for paying the membership dues that have helped us bring this Newsletter to you.

Ülo Valk  
President of the ISFNR

## Dear Colleagues,

During my term as chair of the Membership Committee, it has been a pleasure to welcome thirty-one new members to the ISFNR. Our new colleagues include folk-narrative specialists from Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany/New Zealand, India, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Their involvement in our organization strengthens not only the ISFNR but also the disciplines of folkloristics and narrative studies. As per our statutes, the official announcement of new members will be made at the next ISFNR General Assembly.

I'd like to thank the Executive Committee of the ISFNR for showing vision and flexibility in making it possible for interested scholars to join our organization in the time between conferences. Based on the materials that the Membership Committee (myself and Gabriela Kiliánová) presents to the Executive Board, we proceed to an e-mail vote, and the process has been running quite smoothly.

I take this opportunity also to thank Elo-Hanna Seljamaa, the ISFNR Secretary. Our membership records, including the especially helpful e-mail and mailing addresses of ISFNR members, continue to be updated and have become more accurate thanks to her initiative and ongoing attention! This means that members are receiving the Newsletter and that we have access to information on the ISFNR

web site if we want to reach our colleagues across the world.

There is one more change. Those who are interested in joining the ISFNR can submit materials at any point during the year, but they should be aware that the Board will consider nominations/applications twice a year (May and November). Nominees can thus expect to hear back either in June or in December. In addition to making the procedures clearer to nominees, this timetable also regularizes the tasks of the Membership Committee and Secretary; it also makes it possible for the new members' names to be announced in the ISFNR Newsletters. (We shall add the information about this timetable to the Nomination Form.)

Let me end by encouraging all of us to let other scholars who work with narrative and folklore know about the International Society for Folk Narrative Research. Or, if you are one of our colleagues who has attended ISFNR meetings but never joined our Society, please consider doing so in 2008. Not only do we have a fabulous conference coming up in Athens in 2009. It is now easy to join the ISFNR, and there are some clear benefits to doing so—including the Newsletter.

As for the membership process, the nomination form is online and, together with the nominee's CV listing publications in folk-narrative research, it goes to me as the Membership Committee chair. Nominating

members can send an e-mail to me in lieu of signatures. It is also helpful to send two recent abstracts that are representative of the applicant's scholarship. (Any offprints, however, should be sent to our President who is building an ISFNR library/archive.) Once the vote takes place (June and December), new members will receive a message welcoming them to the Society and information about membership fees and benefits.

Please contact me directly if you have any ISFNR Membership questions. I wish you a productive and healthy new year, filled with good research and good stories!

Cristina Bacchilega,  
Chair of the Membership Committee  
E-mail: [cbacchi@hawaii.edu](mailto:cbacchi@hawaii.edu)



Cristina Bacchilega's book *Legendary Hawai'i and the Politics of Place: Tradition, Translation, and Tourism* (2007) received the Chicago Folklore Prize – the oldest international award recognizing excellence in folklore scholarship  
Photo by John Rieder.

## Sharing Difference: A View on the ISFNR Interim Conference in Santa Rosa, La Pampa, Argentina

by Ricardo Kaliman, CONICET, *Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, Argentina*



Ricardo Kaliman at the opening dinner of the ISFNR Interim Conference in Santa Rosa. His research interests include music industry and commercial folk music in contemporary Argentina.

Photo by Elo-Hanna Seljamaa.

“Pampa” is a word in the Quechua language – spoken in the South American Andes – meaning an extent of flat land. During colonial times, the word managed to travel southward and to become the proper name for a vast prairie in the territory of Argentina, of limitless horizon, a piece of the infinite which most accurately reflects its name. Today, La Pampa (“The Pampa”) is also the name of a young province of Argentina, located at the very heart of this extensive landscape. And the capital city of La Pampa, in turn, is the little big city of Santa Rosa, where from September 20 through 22, 2007, the Interim Conference of the ISFNR took place.

It was an intense, warm and friendly meeting. Connoisseurs of and specialists in short narratives arrived from the most diverse corners of the planet to speak about the feelings, memories and hopes of the peoples among whom these narratives make their sense. A milieu emerged for celebrating difference, as if it were possible to imagine that the fearsome ghost of globalization will never be able to expunge the fascinating diversity of human culture. And, at the same

time, it was a milieu for discovering, through argument as well as comparison, links – resting on the deepest foundations of the human condition – that can still be perceived between the world’s peoples. It was a political milieu, that is to say, in the most productive and enriching sense of the phrase.

The 2007 Interim Conference of the ISFNR took place simultaneously with the VII *Jornadas de Estudio de la Narrativa Folklórica* (VII Conference for the Study of Folk Narrative) and without it being possible to tell the one from the other. This confluence has its own story, one which tells how institutional continuity may echo collective projects. The *Jornadas* have been held periodically and uninterrupted since 1987, with the support of the *Subsecretaría de Cultura de La Pampa* (Under-Secretary of Culture of La Pampa) and of the creative and hardworking Martha Blache, one of the seminal figures of folkloristics in Argentina. While in charge of the ISFNR Vice-Presidency representing Latin America, Martha Blache shared her initiative of La Pampa Interim Conference with Galit Hasan-Rokem, then the President of the ISFNR, and thereby this joint effort was conceived. It has now finally been realized, when both of them have relinquished their respective posts to other trustworthy hands.

The Argentine hands were those of Ana María Dupey, Professor of Folklore at the University of Buenos Aires and Researcher at the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento Latinoamericano* (INAPL, National Institute of Anthropology and Latin American Thought, one of the institutions organizing the meeting in Santa Rosa), who took charge of planning the sessions as well as the

coordination of the complex network of international contacts; and those of María Inés Poduje, a scholar from the Under-Secretary of Culture of La Pampa, who, backed by a team of attentive, cordial and efficient young people, was responsible for the coordination of local infrastructure, from rooms and equipment to hospitality and social events. The ISFNR, in turn, was represented by its major authorities – President Ülo Valk, together with Vice-Presidents Ezekiel Alembi (Africa), Mehri Bagheri (Asia) and Manuel Danneman (Latin America), as well as the Treasurer, Ulf Palmenfelt.



On the right, Ropo Sekoni (Lincoln University, USA) giving a speech during the *asado*, local barbecued meal organized on the first evening. On the left Brazilian scholar Roberto Benjamín (Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco), one of the plenary speakers.

Photo by Ülo Valk.

Simultaneous sessions were organised according to the language in which contributions were presented. There was the locally predominant Spanish, and, to a lesser extent, Portuguese; and also English, the academic lingua franca, its empire spontaneously subverted and diversified by dialectal variety. The constant transit of bilingual and multilingual participants from one zone of the conference to the other was a symbol



Christine Shojaei-Kawan (*Enzyklopädie des Märchens*) discussing with the audience after her presentation on xenophobia and female mourning in the tale of three oranges. On the right, chair of the session, Argentinean ethnomusicologist Ercilia Moreno Chá.

Photo by Alejandra Regunaga.

of this climate of shared difference. Some visitors, like Wolfgang Karrer (University of Osnabrück, Germany) and Taro Nagano (Seisen University, Japan), veterans from previous *Jornadas de Narrativa*'s, chose to deliver their papers in Spanish. In plenary sessions, this zeal for rapprochement was embodied in the practice of Mariela Eliggi, interpreter from the *Universidad Nacional de La Pampa*, who, with a pleasant professionalism, managed to insert translations into the lectures.

Some generalizations about the state of the discipline could be ventured, based on the sessions I could attend myself, and the comments I gleaned from participants of other sessions. Case studies seem to have been the preferred academic option, suggesting a favoring of the multiplication of particular cultural views. Very few papers, in proportional terms, involved strictly theoretical discussions, although there were a number, some intellectually very provocative indeed. Taxonomic efforts, on the other hand, seem to be in the process of being replaced by the search for identitarian specificity, aspiring, perhaps, towards conceptual frameworks yet to come. The very notion of narrative has correspondingly widened, covering both fiction and testimony, and compre-

hending, in generic terms, strictly verbal recitation as well as popular songs, theatre and performance in general. Various papers on *murga* or street bands in different cities in the area of Río de la Plata provide a nice illustration of the latter. It seems as if "narrative" is understood by us as the way in which different cultural groups, of varying sizes, recount their own past, present and future, even by means of fantasy, children's songs, dance, etc.

A certain political dimension, a militant concern about the threatened silencing – by different forms of power – of smaller cultural perspectives characterised the papers and debates, perhaps more explicitly in Latin American and African approaches, but also implicitly in the rest of the contributions. It is as if we were somehow impelled by the desire to define the nature of the profession of folklore studies vis-à-vis our societies, the cultural groups whose expressive cultures we study, even international organizations (as in the substantial paper by Ana María Dupey about recent policies of UNESCO), and, of course, vis-à-vis ourselves. This may be one of the most stimulating points to emerge from the experiences shared in the Argentine pampas.

## Folk Narrative and Society Meeting in Latin America: ISFNR Interim Conference "Folk Narrative and Society" in Santa Rosa, Argentina, September 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007

by Eerika Koskinen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland



Eerika Koskinen is a doctoral student of Ethnology at the University of Jyväskylä. Her doctoral thesis "Intersections of Gender, Class and Work: Strategies of a Female Worker in 20th Century Finland" is part of Professor Laura Stark's research project "Strategic Practices: Hidden Histories of Gender in Finland 1880-2005."

Photo by Ülo Valk.

In autumn 2007, the International Society for Folk Narrative Research invited folklorists to the Argentinian Pampa, to the University of Santa Rosa (*Universidad Nacional de la Pampa*) in the capital of the Province of Pampa. Located 600 kilometers from Buenos Aires, Santa Rosa offered a journey to the heart of Latin America, the world of gauchos, Mapuches (the indigenous Indian inhabitants of southern Argentina), and their traditions. Discussed in relation to mass media, social identities and various other perspectives, folk narratives brought together researchers from many different parts of the world.

The conference was organized in cooperation with Argentinian colleagues and the following institutions: Institute of Anthropology and Latin American Thinking, Buenos Aires (*Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento*

*Latinoamericano*), Government of Santa Rosa (*Gobierno de Santa Rosa*) and the University of Santa Rosa. Beginning with the *asado*, a rich local barbecued meal on the first evening, the three-day conference offered plenty of new experiences, as well an opportunity to exchange opinions and knowledge.

Conference sessions were organized around five different themes: Folk Narrative: Structure, Process and Context, Folk Narrative and Mass Media, Folk Narrative and the Construction of Social Identities, Folk Narratives and Social Memories, and Storytellers and their Audiences. Official languages of the conference were Spanish, Portuguese and English; with the exception of the last day, sessions in English and Spanish were held separately. However, the organizers had translated all of the abstracts into both languages<sup>1</sup> and the keynote speeches were provided with a simultaneous interpretation. In the following, I intend to refer to some examples from each session

and allude to a couple of the keynote speeches.

### Folk Narratives and Changing Societies

Keynote speaker Diarmuid Ó Giolláin (University College Cork, Ireland) discussed the challenges of addressing large-scale issues such as modernization and postmodernism – grand narratives and their death – in folk narrative research. Referring to Ulrich Beck's theories, he outlined some guidelines for current research and argued that if the first phase of modernization has been characterized by concepts like individualization, globalization and mass production, the extreme fragmentariness of the second phase is even beyond conceptualization. Ó Giolláin emphasized that the multiplicity and complexity of popular culture and other current cultural phenomena can only be approached at the intersections of different, old and new, cultural processes and products.



Isralean folklorists Ravit Raufman (on the left) and Rachel Ben-Cnaan revealing suppressive messages expressed in an ultra orthodox Jewish version of the Little Red Riding Hood.

Photo by Risto Järv.



Ana María Dupey, one of the main organizers of the ISFNR Interim Conference in Santa Rosa giving a speech in the closing ceremony.

Photo by Risto Järv.

Accordingly, several of the presentations dealt with the continuities and transformations of traditions in contemporary societies. Torunn Selberg (University of Bergen) and Stein R. Mathisen (Finnmark University College) both examined the new modes that older Norwegian traditions have adopted in the media. Selberg described a pilgrimage to the Isle of Selja that takes place once a year and which is based on a Celtic legend; after disappearing for many hundred years, the legend has recently re-emerged in new narratives and iconographic representations. According to Selberg, the Celtic past lends relevance to this peripheral place. Mathisen has found cartoons and stories about persons with shamanistic characteristics appearing in contemporary newspapers and has analyzed the representations of these magically-gifted Sámi characters – called *nojda*.

#### **New Materials ...**

For me, it was interesting to discover that the Internet offers new ways of collecting material for folk narrative research. Rachel Ben-Cnaan and Ravit Raufman (University of Haifa) from Israel have found interesting versions of Little Red Riding Hood in a radical

Israeli nationalist and religious Internet forum which is addressed to the young, and to young girls in particular. In their joint presentation, they analyzed the social, political and psychological messages expressed in this ultra-orthodox interpretation of the fairy tale. Reeli Reinaus (University of Tartu, Estonia), similarly, studies another phenomenon appearing in Internet forums, a debate between advocates of active birth and defenders of hospital childbirth, criticized by the former as a technocratic model of birth. The aim of both parties seems to be to prove the correctness of their values and practices. Reinaus focusses in her studies on the rhetoric used in the debate by each group.

Interesting new materials were also found in another realm of life, in the rhetoric relating to a very common disease, breast cancer. Mojca Ramšak (Graduate School of Humanities, Slovenia) talked about the symbolic metaphors used in pathographies of breast cancer patients as well as in the medical language of physicians. Her analysis has shown these metaphors to be embodied by, and often based on, binaries such as dark/light, sweet/bitter, etc. Both parties, professionals and patients alike, represented the body as a battlefield and treatments as a war against the intruder, cancer, though patients at the same time experienced the medical language of physicians as unfamiliar, even hostile to their body. I found Ramšak's study very significant, since, by analyzing the power and impact of language, she listened to the patients' voices. Ramšak also faced ethical dilemmas when entering the field of medicine; in addition to concealing the patient's identity, the computer files containing research data had to be destroyed once the analysis was completed. I would like to know more about the ethical and methodological challenges posed to folklore studies by this kind of new material coming from other fields or easily available on the Internet. Maybe these issues could be brought up at the next ISFNR Congress in Athens?

#### **... and Fresh Approaches**

The Slovenian scholar Nina Vodopivec (Institute for Contemporary History) acquired her research data by working in a textile factory and sharing the experiences of working life of her informants, female factory workers. Examining their experiences of the changes in Slovenian society in the transition from a socialist system to post-socialist conditions, Vodopivec has been interested in the possible changes in the working mentality and identity of women workers, in the values attached to work during the period of socialism and at the present time; and in the re-organization of work according to capitalist rules. She has found that even though the socialist past can be remembered as "the good old days", female textile workers evaluate both periods critically and are well aware of the meanings attached to both. I think that this kind of reflexive attitude in informants should be taken seriously.

#### **Challenges of Ethnopolitics and Ethnogenesis**

Ezekiel Alembi (Kenyatta University, Kenya) drew attention in his keynote speech to an important ethical issue and a constant dilemma in folk narrative research by asking to whom the stories of villages and different groups belonged. Alembi has studied children's folklore in African village communities and criticized researchers who, after conducting fieldwork and collecting materials for a long period, have published anthologies of children's folklore with their own name on the cover. Relying on his own continuous and extensive fieldwork, Alembi stated that children's folklore belongs to the whole community, and, since everybody knows the corpus, it is impossible to tell who has rendered particular songs or plays. Alembi suggested that anthologies and studies based on such material should be published under the names of the very same communities the folklore originates in. He also hoped that the members of these communities could participate in the study process and even visit conferences.





From right to left: Manuel Dannemann with plenary speakers Marita Fornaro and Antonio Diaz (Universidad de la República, Uruguay). In their richly illustrated presentation, Fornaro and Diaz analyzed the annual cycle of a Murga group called "Nunca Más" from Colonia Sacramento, Uruguay.

Photo by Alejandra Regunaga.

Ana María Dupey (Institute of Anthropology and Latin American Thinking, Buenos Aires, Argentina) analyzed the role of researchers in UNESCO's world heritage politics. She warned of issues that lie at the basis of concepts such as 'cultural identity' (*identidad cultural*) and 'cultural heritage' (*patrimonio cultural*). While studying local traditions of indigenous tribes, researchers recognize, name, define and categorize the cultural heritage and cultural identity of these groups from the outside. Thereby, the academic discipline takes away people's right to their culture, to self-definition and cultural identity. Aimed at saving and protecting the disappearing traditions of indigenous peoples, the work of UNESCO is dependent on the kind of information about, and knowledge of, past and current oral traditions of illiterate cultures that our field, the study of folk narratives, provides.

In Latin America, the ethnogenesis (*mestizaje*) that characterizes folk narratives and was also addressed in keynote speeches given by Latin American scholars, raises the question of people's right to their cultural heritage. It became clear from many conference presentations that researchers are often asked to give their expert opinion on issues such as granting a certain group the status of indigenous people. However, as I found out when visiting the Ethnological Museum and Institute of Anthropology and Latin American Thinking in

Buenos Aires, it can be rather difficult in today's Argentina to say to which group an indigenous people belong: their lands have been taken away from them, and they have moved to different regions. Tribes and their cultures have intermixed and have also integrated with the white Creole people.

It would be interesting to get more information relating to the history of the indigenous people of Latin America, as well as to hear more about the research conducted in these countries, and I hope to meet Latin American scholars again at future conferences. However, highlighting the political dimension of folk narrative research is also an important issue in Europe and other parts of the world. Information about the situation of different peoples, the history of the discipline and current research in various countries are vital to ethical and critical study in the context of this international field. Finally, I want to express my deep gratitude to the Organizing Committee of the conference, the whole Society, and especially to Ana María Dupey and María Cecilia Pisarello for the great opportunity to share my thoughts with them and to get new ideas.

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1 Abstracts can be found on the ISFNR web site: [http://www.ut.ee/isfnr/files/santa\\_rosa\\_abstracts.pdf](http://www.ut.ee/isfnr/files/santa_rosa_abstracts.pdf)

## About Favorable Surprises, Interactions and Particular Behaviour that We Call Folklore.

### E-mail Interview with Martha Blache (*Sección Folklore Instituto de Ciencias Antropológicas, CONICET, Argentina*)

by Elo-Hanna Seljamaa, Ohio State University, Columbus, USA



Martha Blache, initiator of the ISFNR Interim Conference in Argentina and former Vice-President representing Latin America reflecting on her impressions of the meeting.

*Photo by Risto Järv.*

#### **What were your impressions of the 2007 ISFNR Interim Conference in Santa Rosa? Was there anything that surprised you?**

The conference in Santa Rosa was an exceptional opportunity for Latin American scholars since it was the first time that the ISFNR had organized an interim conference in our region. Folklorists from this area were eager to participate and to meet colleagues from abroad, to register the current situation of our field of study, and in addition to learn from different approaches.

We are deeply grateful to all those who facilitated this interim conference: to Galit Hasan-Rokem, former President of the ISFNR, whose idea it was to initiate this meeting; to Ülo Valk, current President of the ISFNR, who strongly supported the proposal and made it possible; to the local organizers, Ana María Dupey and María

Inés Poduje for their dedication and hard work.

I was favorably surprised to see the friendly interactions among folklorists from different continents during the intervals between sessions, as well as during social encounters. Likewise, I was surprised by the plenary sessions, simultaneously translated, where the audience attentively followed the presentations of foreign scholars and participated with questions and comments.

#### **The theme of the conference was "Folk Narrative and Society". How would you interpret that?**

I suppose that the local organizers had chosen this theme because they wanted to emphasize the close interrelation between folk narrative and society, as well as to stress the important role that folklore plays in the process of socialization.

**Your own paper was about social interactions and stereotypes in a border area, in an Argentinean town bordering Paraguay. Could you please tell us more about this project and how you came to this topic?**

The reason I chose this topic is because international frontiers are sensitized regions where two political systems and two cultures come face to face. Borders usually provide a valuable resource for a better understanding of the effects from which socio-cultural identities arise within folk groups, those groups that produce, perceive, perform, recognize or value a particular behaviour that we call folklore. Intercultural communication is much more frequent on borders than in other areas, and the in-group as well as the out-group often strengthen identity-features, local pride, conflicts and nationalistic reactions. Besides, people living at the border use stereotypes to describe their neighbours on



Closing ceremony of the conference in the University of La Pampa.

*Photo by Risto Järv.*

the other side; as Alan Dundes used to say, folklore supplies one of the principal sources for the articulation and communication of stereotypes. And, according to the classification of Roger D. Abrahams, stereotypes belong to the conversational genres of folklore.

Social interactions among folk groups has been thoroughly examined from different perspectives by folklorists belonging to various academic centers, but what have been particularly inspiring for me are the influential studies done by two distinguished folklorists, Américo Paredes and José E. Limón, who analyzed the border culture of México and the United States. Therefore, my paper dealt with stereotypes that people living in a border town located in Northeastern Argentina entertain about their Paraguayan neighbours. The two groups are connected either by family and friendship ties or by commercial activities, and they usually have peaceful interactions. The distinct features Argentines have attributed to Paraguayans are related to language, hospitality and work-skills or to the aesthetic criteria they use to choose their clothing. But conflicts arose when Paraguayans applied for Argentine citizenship or used illegal procedures to obtain it; also when they used magic objects to either attract someone or to cause him or her physical or psychological harm.

**The ISFNR conference was organized jointly with the VII Jornadas de Estudio de la Narrativa Folklórica. Could you please tell us about the history of this event and its role in Argentinean folklore studies?**

In 1986 the National Institute of Anthropology, where I was working at the time, received a request from the Executive Cultural Board of La Pampa for a course on oral narrative, and I was assigned to that task. Starting from there, and owing to firm support from the heads of both institutions – Rita Ceballos and Norma Medus respectively – these organizations made an agreement

that both of them would periodically invite folk narrative scholars to participate in the *Jornadas de Estudio de la Narrativa Folklórica*, which would be held in the city of Santa Rosa, La Pampa, Argentina, in the month of September.

According to this schedule, the first *Jornadas* was held in 1987, and since then they have taken place every three years. For the first time, and from the very beginning, these meetings gave researchers and professors from different universities of our country the opportunity to get together, to raise different problems of folk narrative and to share information as well as



Antonia Díaz-Fernández from Argentina discussed in his paper the dynamics and terminology of Mapuche kinship system.

*Photo by Alejandra Regunaga.*

engage in discussions and stimulating debates. The subsequent conferences slowly started to integrate scholars from other Latin American countries such as Chile, Uruguay, Brazil and Venezuela, and occasionally from the United States and Denmark. The person who has attended every conference from the very beginning is our well-known and much-appreciated colleague, the Chilean scholar Manuel

Dannemann, at the present time the vice-president of the ISFNR representing Latin America.

**In your view, what is the position of folk narrative research in Argentinean folkloristics? In 1983 you published an article titled “El Concepto de Folklore en Hispanoamérica”. In your opinion, has the concept of folklore in Hispano América changed in recent decades and if yes, in what ways?**

As regards the position of folk narrative research in Argentinean folkloristics, we are far behind other areas such as, for example, Europe and the United States – although there are some outstanding scholars in Latin America devoted to this area of study, for instance the late Yolando Pino Saavedra from Chile, the late Susana Chertudi from Argentina and Braulio do Nascimento from Brazil, all three of them members of the ISFNR.

As far as the concept of folklore in Latin America is concerned, it has certainly gone through significant changes. Up to the middle of the 1970s, folklorists tended to identify folk with peasants, rural communities or with those urban poor who preserved survivals of cultural traits that are no longer viable. For these scholars, folklore denoted the entire lifestyle of the rural people. From the 1980s onward, although slowly, folklorists incorporated some of the new concepts that enjoy full acceptance among international researchers. They define folklore as social behaviour, detaching it from particular social sectors or geographical areas. The focus shifts to the importance of the communicative process and the social rules governing it. During the first period, there was a strong folklore tradition in Latin America, and folklorists of this region maintained scholarly connections in order to exchange information. In the course of the more recent period folkloristics has declined drastically and intercommunication among colleagues became infrequent. Besides, as far

as I know, throughout Latin America there are few folklore programs where students can receive training in folkloristics. In Argentina, for example, there is only one course at the Anthropology Department of the University of Buenos Aires. In spite of this decline, nowadays it seems that students as well as scholars from different social sciences are showing more interest in folkloristics. It is an incipient movement, but it could be a sign that in Latin America this field of study might be recovering some of its strength.

**Could you please tell about *Revista de Investigaciones Folklóricas*, the journal you founded in 1986?**

When I was in charge of the Folklore Section of the University of Buenos Aires, we decided, with some colleagues, to establish a folklore journal to be published once a year, in December. That is how the *Revista de Investigaciones Folklóricas* or RIF – Journal of Folklore Research – emerged. We were interested in the Argentine and Latin American folklore production scattered in various periodicals and thus difficult to locate. The first volume of RIF appeared in 1986, and twenty-one volumes have been published so far.

From the beginning, RIF has published articles concerning folklore research and about new theoretical

and methodological approaches, as well as critical, thought-provoking discussions within our field of study. Although special interest is devoted to Argentine and Latin-American production, translated papers presented by well-known European and American folklorists are welcome, not only because these articles are hard to find in our part of the world, but also because of our interest in keeping our academic community informed about the current state of the discipline globally. From the beginning, and due to our periodical's continuity, we have been able to fulfill our goal, which has mainly been to establish a communication channel that allows the interchange of research experiences in folklore studies and other social sciences, which exchange promotes a valuable dialogue among colleagues from different latitudes. Up to RIF 17, 2002, the journal was published in paper-form, but due to the severe Argentinian politico-economic crisis of 2001-2002, we published the subsequent volumes only on the Internet:

<http://www.investigacionesfolcloricas.com>

**What would you say to younger scholars joining the ISFNR today?**

I would say that they have made a very wise decision in joining this society that connects the world's most reputed scholars of folk narratives.

New members have the chance to become acquainted with the latest advances in this field as well as with new theoretical and methodological approaches. At least, this has been my own experience. In addition, they have the opportunity to attend the congresses that the ISFNR organizes in a different country every four years.



From left to right: Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, Repo Sekoni, Isidoro Okpewho, and Joseph McLaren capturing the opening ceremony.

Photo by Elo-Hanna Seljamaa.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### 15th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) “Narratives Across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations”

Organizer: Hellenic Folklore Research Centre - Academy of Athens

Athens, Greece, on June 21-27, 2009

The 15th Congress of the ISFNR will convene in Athens, Greece, on June 21-27, 2009. The International Society for Folk Narrative Research is an international academic society whose objective is to develop scholarly work in the field of folk narrative research. The research interests of ISFNR members around the world cover a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including, in addition to folklore, anthropology, cultural studies, comparative literature, language, history, museology, education and ethnography from the point of view of narratives.

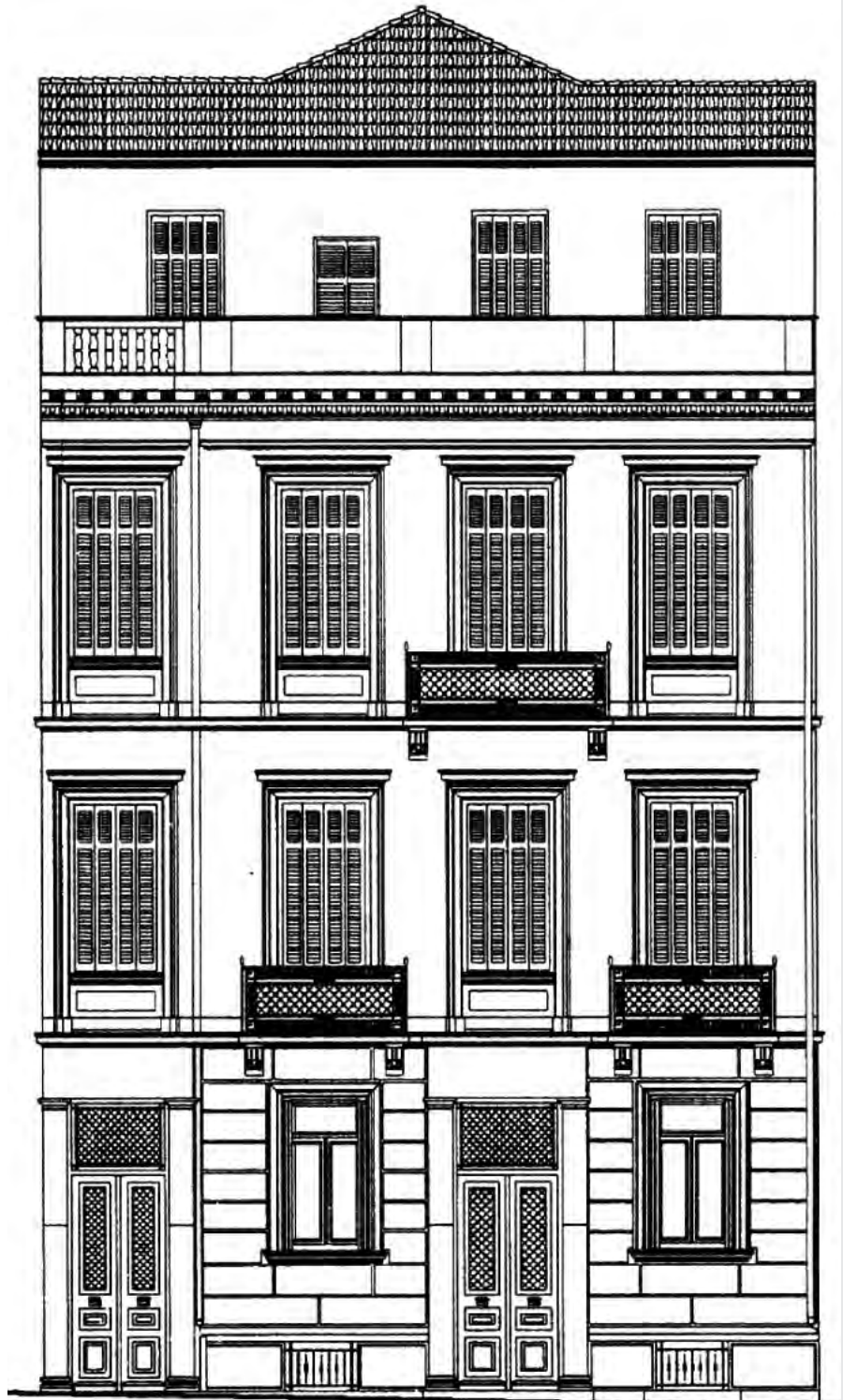
The 15th Congress in Athens coincides with the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the ISFNR in 1959, in Kiel and Copenhagen. It is the second time in the history of the ISFNR that Athens will host the Conference. The 4th International Congress for Folk-Narrative Research, held in Athens in September 1964, consolidated the foundation of the ISFNR in that it approved its Statutes by means of the General Meeting of the Members of the Congress.

#### Topic:

“Narratives Across Space and Time:  
Transmissions and Adaptations”

#### Subtopics:

- I. History and Future of Folk Narrative Research
- II. Mythologies, Ecology and Environmental Representations
- III. Migrant and Diaspora communities: Adaptation and Memory
- IV. Social Strategies and Collective Identities
- V. Storytelling and Storytellers
- VI. Folk Narrative in the Modern Media



Hellenic Folklore Research Centre in Athens.

*Drawing by Aggeliki Svoronou.*

**Panels:** Participants wishing to suggest a panel are most welcome. Those wishing to organize a panel need to submit their suggestions following a specific form (chair/convenor of the panel, topic, titles of papers and participants). In doing so they must comply with the thematic guidelines of the sub-topics and general topic of the congress [**Deadline: September 30, 2008**].

**Two exhibitions** are scheduled in the context of the 15th Congress of the ISFNR in Athens:

a) an exhibition of books and the latest periodical publications released since the last Congress of the ISFNR in 2005;

b) an exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the ISFNR. Members of the ISFNR and other participants are kindly invited to contribute documentation material (such as photographs, programs, posters, proceedings, speeches, correspondence, registration forms and audiovisual material) before **September 30, 2008**.

**Symposium: The ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming** will hold its second symposium in Athens, at the 15th Congress of the ISFNR.

For more information please contact:  
Jonathan Roper  
[[J.Roper@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:J.Roper@sheffield.ac.uk)]

**Registration for the Congress:**  
[**Deadline: June 30, 2008**]

**Please submit your registration (registration form attached):**

**by e-mail:** [isfnr@academyofathens.gr](mailto:isfnr@academyofathens.gr)  
**by fax:** + 30 210 3313418  
**by mail:** ISFNR 15th Congress  
Hellenic Folklore Research Centre -  
Academy of Athens 3, Ipitou street -  
Athens 105 57 - GREECE

**Registration Fee [Regular Registration until April 20, 2009]:**

Full Registration: 250 Euros  
Accompanying persons: 150 Euros

Late Registration from April 21, 2009 and on-site:  
Full Registration: 300 Euros  
Accompanying persons: 180 Euros

**Submission of Abstracts [Deadline: September 30, 2008]**

Sessions and panels will be structured according to topics (with a maximum of four participants). Papers are expected to investigate historical and geographical aspects of folk narrative research in relation to questions of transmission and adaptation. Suggestions for panels are going to be treated as separate units, organized and submitted by the panel organizer/chair.

Participants are kindly asked to indicate the sub-topic for their papers when submitting the abstracts.  
N.B. Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of discussion.

Format: RTF, Rich Text Format  
Typed: Times New Roman, 12 point.  
Length: up to 300 words.  
Space: single [double space between title/subtopic/author/address and the body of the abstract]

**You will be notified about approval any abstract submitted by January 31, 2009.**

**Please submit your abstract:**

**by e-mail:** [isfnr@academyofathens.gr](mailto:isfnr@academyofathens.gr)  
**by fax:** + 30 210 3313418  
**by mail:** ISFNR 15th Congress  
Hellenic Folklore Research Centre -  
Academy of Athens  
3, Ipitou street - Athens 105 57  
GREECE  
**Online:** available soon.

**Honorary Committee (Members of the Academy of Athens):**

Nicolaos Matsaniotis  
Panos Ligomenidis  
Constantinos Drakatos  
Chrysanthos Christou  
Iakovos Kambanellis

Panayotis L. Vocotopoulos  
Constantinos Krimbas  
Spyros A. Evangelatos

**International Scientific Committee:**

Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki (chair, Athens)  
Eleutherios Alexakis (Athens)  
Ulrich Marzolph (Göttingen)  
Marilena Papachristophorou (Athens)  
Ülo Valk (Tartu)

**Further Information**

A second circular containing further information will be issued in January 2009. A third circular including the congress programme will be issued shortly before the Congress.

Please find regularly updated information regarding the conference, forthcoming circulars, registration procedures, etc., on the web sites:

[www.academyofathens.gr/](http://www.academyofathens.gr/)  
[www.ut.ee/isfnr/page](http://www.ut.ee/isfnr/page)

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

### International Society for Folk Narrative Research Symposium at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya

Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya – is hosting the 2008 International Society for Folk Narrative Symposium between 2 and 4 September 2008. Kenyatta University is located in a quiet, serene environment about 20 kilometres north of the capital city, Nairobi. It has a student population of about 23,000 and is the second-oldest and largest university in Kenya after the University of Nairobi. Kenyatta University is arguably the most cultural University in the region. This is not only because it runs vibrant culture-based disciplines such as Anthropology, Literature, Sociology and Religious Studies but also because it presides over the annual Cultural Week, one of the most elaborate cultural festivals in the country.

The organizing committee is putting in place a programme that is a combination of academic work and social events that will include theatre and cultural performances, and an excursion that will expose participants to the local culture. The excursion will include a visit to the Bomas of Kenya where participants will have a guided tour of the Bomas – traditional huts of the different ethnic groups of Kenya – as well as a performance by the Bomas of the Kenya Dance Troupe. There will also be a short paper presentation on Kenyan culture. Participants will also have a guided tour of the Kenya National Archives, the National Museums of Kenya and the Karen Blixen Museum and Butterfly Park.

The local organizing committee is working with Jet Travel to organize pre-conference as well as post-conference tours. These are aimed at introducing participants to the rich scenery and beauty of Kenya through

its people, wildlife and landscape. A description of the different packages available scholars and details of the cost are contained in the attachment we are sending with this call for abstracts. We encourage you to communicate directly with Jet Travel regarding the tours.

#### The theme of the Symposium is:

Folk Narrative: Genres, Social Function and Cultural Arenas.

#### The Sub-Themes are:

Narrating Belief  
Cognitive Worlds  
Cultural Arenas of Folk Narration  
Inter-Generic Relations  
Genres as Orientation Frames  
Construction of Social Realities

All abstracts should be sent so as to reach the secretary by **April 30, 2008**.

#### Participation Fee for Scholar and Accompanying Person is:

Kshs. 5000 for African scholars  
US\$ 200 for all other scholars

- a) Cheques for payment of the registration fee should be paid to Kenyatta University
  - b) Early Registration up to 30th April, US dollars 185
  - c) Registration during the Symposium, US dollars 200
  - d) Accompanying persons, US dollars 150
- Registration during the Symposium will be in cash.

The fee will enable us offer the following services to the participants: excursion, ticket for theatre and cultural performances, Lunches, refreshments at 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. and a concluding banquet.

#### Accommodation

Details of accommodation will be communicated in the next circular.

#### The Symposium address is:

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY,  
LITERATURE DEPARTMENT,  
P.O. BOX 43844,  
NAIROBI.  
KENYA  
Tel: +25420819901 Ext. 454  
+254720614407  
Email: ebalembi@yahoo.com

#### Organizing Committee:

Dr. Ezekiel Alembi  
Chairman  
Dr. Mbugua Mungai  
Secretary  
Dr. Waveney Olembi  
Treasurer  
Prof. Francis Imbuga  
Prof. Muigai Wa Gachanaja  
Prof. Kitula King'ei  
Mr. Peter Mugambi  
Dr. Beatrice Digolo

## From the Committee on "Folktales and the Internet"

by Theo Meder, Meertens Instituut, the Netherlands

Preparations have started for the 15th ISFNR Congress in Athens in the summer of 2009 (June 21-27). The main theme of the congress will be "Narratives across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations". One of the sub-themes will be dealing with "Folk Narrative in the Modern Media".

As coordinator of the committee for *Folktales and the Internet* I would like to organize one (or more) session(s) on the subject of digital storytelling and online folktale databases. On the one hand I would be interested in modern digital ways of interacting,

storytelling, roleplaying and creating identities, by means of for instance the mobile phone, game consoles and the PC, including e-mailing (sending jokes, Powerpoints, Photoshop-lore, movies, chain-mails, virus-warnings), blogging, chatting (MSN, MySpace, IMVU) and game playing (Second Life, World of Warcraft). On the other hand I am interested in online folktale databases and especially in the question of how folklorists should collect, preserve, present and research the new digital means of storytelling. I myself hope to present a demo version of an International Folktale Database.

I am making this announcement at this early stage so that colleagues will have ample time to consider if, and on what subject, they could contribute to the sub-theme of digital mediation. In due time, please contact me if you might be interested or if you know of any other colleagues who are.

Dr. Theo Meder  
Meertens Instituut  
PO Box 94264  
1090 GG Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
[Theo.Meder@Meertens.knaw.nl](mailto:Theo.Meder@Meertens.knaw.nl)

## *The Charms of Pécs*

### News from the Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming

by Jonathan Roper, School of English, University of Leeds, UK

In May 2007 we had a very pleasant and scholarly conference in Pécs, Hungary. For more information, see the report elsewhere in this issue. I can simply observe that one sign of the growth in interest in charms studies (albeit quantitative) is that whereas London 2003 was a 1-day conference, and London 2005 a two day conference, Pécs 2007 lasted three. Our next conference won't be a four-dayer however – instead we plan to hold a one-day charms studies symposium in Tartu on May 9<sup>th</sup> this year. Papers are particularly sought on 'encounter charms', i.e. those charms which contain a narrative in which a healing power or an evil spirit is met with. See the call in this issue for more details. We also intend to have a number of sessions on charms, charmers and charming during the main ISFNR meeting in Athens in 2009.

The committee itself discussed various issues, among which were the

desirability of expanding our range of contacts, especially to include specialists from south-western Europe, classicists, and scholars from beyond Europe, and also the desirability of publishing anthologies with partners of the most representative (and most interesting) charms texts in bilingual editions. A fuller report of the committee's meeting is on our website, within the larger ISFNR website.

Also on our website, you can see the first fruits of one project conceived at Pécs: an online annotated bibliography of charms collections and studies. Eleven areas/languages are covered to date – England, France, Hungary, Lithuanian, Mari El, Norway, Romania, Russia, Scottish Gaelic, Serbia and Swedish. But this is very much a work in progress, and anyone interested in adding information on an area/language they know about is welcome to contact us. We hope that this will

become a useful source of information on reliable collections and studies, and that its coverage becomes as geographically wide as possible.

Finally, we can mention that a fresh book of charms studies will shortly appear. Edited by Jonathan Roper, *Charms, Charmers and Charming* (Palgrave Macmillan) ISBN 978-0230551848, features both specially commissioned papers and work first presented at London 2005. Authors include Lee Haring, Laura Stark, Éva Pócs, and Andrei Toporkov, and the cultures covered in its nineteen chapters include those of Malaysia, Georgia, Slovenia, and England. Topics include charms to deter rats, gender and snakebite charms, the charmer's body and behaviour as a window into early modern selfhood, and charms as a means of coping. The publication date is June 2008.



## Call for Papers

### One-Day Seminar on Encounter Charms / Begegnungssegen

May 9th 2008, Tartu, Estonia

Organised by the Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research in collaboration with the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, and Department of Folklore, Estonian Literary Museum.

Many narrative charms feature an encounter between the chief protagonist of the *historiola* and another key figure. These may be encounters with a supernatural helper or encounters with an evil power. The great charms scholar Ferdinand Ohrt termed such charms 'Begegnungssegen' in a series of influential articles and in his entry on 'Segen' in the *Handwörter-*

*buch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. But little concentrated work has been done on encounter charms since then – a situation this seminar intends to remedy.

This seminar will be dedicated to addressing encounter charms across cultures and over time, and papers are requested dealing with topics such as:

history of particular types of encounter charms, the genre characteristics of *historiolas*, the role of protagonists, antagonists and helpers in *historiolas*, the nature of encounters and dialogues in charms, the links (or lack of links) between the *historiola* and the remainder of the charm, the connec-

tions of encounter charms with other charm types, the relationship between charms and other genres, and other related themes.

Please send your proposals of 75-150 words, by the deadline of **March 31st**, **either by email to:**

ulo.valk@ut.ee (with copies to j.roper@leeds.ac.uk and pocse@chello.hu)

or by post to:

Ülo Valk

Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore

University of Tartu Ülikooli 16-208

51003 Tartu

ESTONIA

Fax: +372 737 5310

## Belief Tales:

### A Call for Cooperation

Belief tales ("belief tales" like "folk tales," "fairy tales," "trickster tales," "tall tales") form a significant part of narrative folklore. We call those of us who are interested in delving into the secrets of these tales to join the group: we intend to come together for our mutual benefit. Interested folklorists please write to: [isfnr.beliefstory@gmail.com](mailto:isfnr.beliefstory@gmail.com).

#### Description of intentions

Genres: Legend (= legend of the sacred), daimonon (= demonic legend), magikon (daimonon on magic actions), urban belief tales (= urban / modern legends) and other genres of belief tales.

Aspects: As the work is a unity, with several aspects, all aspects of the tales should be included: (1) historical, comparative; (2) classification and cataloguing; (3) literary-semiotic;

(4) sociological, (uses, performance, functions); (5) psychological and socio-psychological (uses, functions); etc.

Activities: An electronic "Newsletter" will be issued, available to everybody, on the ISFNR web site (<http://www.ut.ee/isfnr>). It could publicise a current bibliography (annotated); descriptions of work-in-progress and projects; information on meetings and teaching; calls for cooperation and help; etc.

Finances: At the moment, all the work is being done on a voluntary basis. For the future, members are called on to be inventive.

Early responses would be very welcome, in order to plan a first meeting at the next ISFNR congress (Athens, June 21–27, 2009).

Gillian Bennett (England)  
Kishore Bhattacharjee (India)  
Lina Būgienė (Lithuania)  
Isabel Cardigos (Portugal)  
Irma-Riitta Järvinen (Finland)  
Heda Jason (Israel)  
Eda Kalmre (Estonia)  
Zoja Karanovic (Serbia)  
Vera Kuznetsova (Russia)  
Ulf Palmfelt (Sweden)  
Paul Smith (Canada)  
Timothy Tangherlini (USA)  
Ülo Valk (Estonia)

## In Memory of Kirill Vasilyevich Chistov (1919-2007)

Kirill Vasilyevich Chistov was born in 1919 in the town of Detskoje Selo, formerly Tsarskoje Selo, close to Petrograd (from 1924 Leningrad, and from 1991 again St. Petersburg). He studied in the Philological Faculty of the Leningrad State University from 1937-1941. He had just finished his studies when the war broke out and he joined the army as a volunteer. Kirill Chistov served in the Soviet army in the Great Patriotic War, became a prisoner of war, and subsequently fled from the German camp in which he was held and fought again in a partisan unit.

After WWII Kirill Chistov worked in the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Academy of Science in Petrozavodsk, in Soviet Karelia, a region well known for its archaic folk culture and rich folklore, both Russian and Karelian. In Karelia it was still possible to hear the singing of old Russian bylinas, and Kirill Chistov met famous bylina singers and other talented performers of old folklore. He participated in a field work group which recorded 74 bylina texts from 38 performers. He published a monograph based on his candidate thesis about the lamenter I. A. Fedosova, who lived in the XIX century and was one of the most famous Russian lamenters – and as Kirill Chistov later wrote, perhaps one of the greatest practitioners in the world of the lament tradition.

Kirill Chistov did not study only old, classic folklore. From the beginning of the 1950s he was already widening the scope and field of folkloristics, investigating a realm which today would be called Oral History. He became interested in the stories about a pair of partisan girls who during the war were sent behind enemy lines and who were subsequently killed. A post-war radio programme about the heroic deed of the girls generated a lot of new tales to add to the established stories, and all this began to acquire a folkloric character.

Kirill Chistov was an active developer of folkloristics. He always participated in the theoretical discussions launched from time to time among Soviet scholars, and he was interested in the definition of the aim and field of folkloristics. This theoretical orientation was well balanced by his expertise as a field worker, and he had a good feel for living oral traditions, both archaic and of later origin. In the 1960s he also wrote about the necessity of



*Photo: Web site of the "Folklore and Post-Folklore: Structure, Typology and Semiotics" project: <http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/chistov.htm>*

studying modern popular culture, but this was impossible of realization in the atmosphere of the Brezhnevian Soviet Union.

Leningrad was the old home city of Kirill Chistov, and the traditional peculiarities of St. Petersburg Russian were often heard in the speech of Kirill Vasilyevich. At the beginning of the 1960s he returned to Leningrad, and subsequently worked there as the head of the Department of the Ethnography of East Slavonic Peoples in the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Science of the USSR.

Besides research and administrative work in the institute, Chistov taught regularly at Leningrad University as well as at Moscow University and at the Pedagogical University of Petrozavodsk.

In 1967 Kirill Chistov defended his doctoral dissertation on Russian social-utopian legends. His work was an innovation in Soviet and world folkloristics at that time. His materials consisted for the most part of juridical documents of the XVII-XIXth centuries, texts concerning rumors about the fugitive, benevolent, "real", czar – not the cruel "fake" emperor ruling in the capital (in connection with the peasant revolts in the Russian provinces); and also other documents concerning notions of the "paradise" located in some distant part of Russia. Kirill Chistov carefully studied his material in the context of the Russian feudal society of the time, and interpreted the legends as social protest against the miserable conditions of peasants under serfdom. His study was naturally written in accordance with the ruling Marxist ideology, but it was by no means dogmatic. Later, in a more influential position, he used his authority in defending a thesis that included serious criticism of vulgarly determinist methods of applying Marxist philosophy to the study of folklore.

In 1981 Kirill Chistov became a corresponding member of the Academy of Science of the Soviet Union. During the years 1980-1991 Kirill Chistov worked as the editor-in-chief of the journal "Sovetskaya etnografiia" and as the editor and co-author of dozens of books, among them important compiled works concerning the ethnography of the Russians and other peoples of the former Soviet Union. One of them, dealing with Northern Russian folk culture, was translated into Finnish and published in Finland in 1976. 1998 saw the publication of "Overcoming Slavery. Folklore and

Language of the 'Ostarbeiters'" (in Russian, translated into German) which was compiled and annotated by Kirill Chistov and his wife Bella Chistova. In 2000 he was awarded a German medal for his contribution to the Russo-German cultural life. The total number of his publications is approximately 570.

Contacts across the iron curtain were complicated during the Soviet era, but Kirill Chistov clearly wanted to build a bridge to the western scientific world, a fact which is evident in the sources of his writings; and several of his articles were published in German, which he spoke fluently. One result of his international activity was his position as the vice-president of ISFNR during 1974-1989. During the later years of his career Kirill Chistov was an invited member of several foreign scientific societies, among them membership of the Finnish Literature Society. In the 1990s age and health problems gradually affected the intensity of his work, but as recently as 2005 an important collection of his articles was published with the title "Folklore, Text, Traditions" (in Russian), in which he examined many important theoretical issues in folkloristics. It is retrospective in character, but the themes and the author's insights have not lost their urgency.

Kirill Chistov was a prominent person in Soviet and later Russian science, and was often very busy with all his duties. Nevertheless, many guests found him to be a kind, hospitable host when they visited Leningrad/St. Petersburg and met him, either in the institute or at home – where he and Bella Yefimovna showed genuine Russian hospitality and, as I experienced as a young student, did not accord undue importance to the position of their guest in the hierarchy of science.

Kirill Chistov passed away on 29.10.2007.

Pekka Hakamies, Turku, Finland

## In Memory of George Mifsud-Chircop (1951-2007)

On December 19, 2007 we received the sad news that Maltese folklorist George Mifsud-Chircop, long-term member of the ISFNR and contributor to the ISFNR Newsletter has died. He was one of the founding members of "The Ritual Year" working group of SIEF and the organizer of its first conference. Members of the working group will remember him as a tireless introducer of and expert on Maltese folklore



George Mifsud-Chircop at the ISFNR Congress in Tartu in 2005. In addition to folk narratives, he took a special interest in *ghana*, traditional Maltese folk song.

Photo by Alar Madisson.

and are thankful for their unique opportunity to learn about the island's customs under George's warm and humorous guidance. In December 2006, in collaboration with various European institutions, he organized the First International Folk Narrative Conference on "The Wise Fool in Narrative Cultures" – supplemented by the first Malta Storytelling Festival.

As one of the few professional folklorists in Malta, he played a crucial role not only as a scholar, teacher and collector of folklore, but also as an expert on the Maltese language and culture. Always involved in several projects, broadening the scope of local folklore studies and introducing folklore to the school curriculum, he achieved a lot before illness led to his untimely death.

Mare Kõiva, Tartu, Estonia

## Archives of Argentinean Folk Narrative: Trends, Topics and History of Argentinean Folkloristics

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María Inés Palleiro and Manuel Dannemann in Santa Rosa.

Photo by Alejandra Regunaga.

Considered from a diachronic perspective, the methods of collecting and archiving folk narratives exemplify the different currents, trends and epistemological convergences related to the transdisciplinary field of folklore in the Argentinean context.

In this article, I intend to examine different folklore archives selected according to their organizing collections of Argentinean prose narratives. In order to demarcate the object of study, I will concentrate on archives of prose narratives, while at the same time bearing in mind that the flexibility of this genre favours the narrators' free expression, and in comparison to verse genres bound up with stereotypical metre and rhyme<sup>1</sup> demonstrate more clearly the dynamic transformation of folklore. I thereby consider archives in the etymological meaning of the word *arkhé* as a principle of memory-organization

(Derrida 1997) and narration as a cognitive method for the sequential articulation of experience (Bruner 2002). I emphasize the status of these archives or collections as material and symbolic supports for the cultural memory of a group and suggest that at the same time they are useful as configurational frames of collective memory (Goffman 1990). Firstly, I will discuss the three central collections of traditional Argentinean narratives from a diachronic perspective. Secondly, I will proceed to regional archives selected on the basis of their varying ways of arranging materials; as such they reflect with greater sharpness the different trends and disciplinary convergences of folklore studies in Argentina. The article draws on the results of my research project "Archives of Argentinean Traditional Narrative" sponsored by the National Council for Scientific Research (CONICET).

### The general archives of Argentinean traditional narrative: the influence of the historic-geographic method

The initial link in the chain of archives: the 1921 Folkloric Survey *Encuesta Folklórica de 1921* or the Folkloric Survey carried out in 1921 constitutes the first attempt at a systematic collection of folklore materials in Argentina. The Survey was directed at school teachers, convoked to work as intermediaries between their pupils and scholars and to write down folklore materials containing prose narratives.<sup>2</sup> The idea of this Folkloric Survey, initially conceived by the French-born Argentinean writer Paul Groussac (1848-1929) in 1893, coincided with the initiative taken by Ricardo Rojas (1882-1957) in planning an integral collection of folkloric expressions as part of the curriculum in Argentina (Fernández Latour de Botas 1981). As the title of the project indicates, teachers had to carry out a survey among their pupils according to a series of institutional instructions sent by the National Council of Education. The survey format presupposes the polyphonic presence of a plural enunciator, in which converge the institutional voice realized in the instructions, the voice of the teachers in charge of the collection and the voice of "informers" whose oral testimonies are turned by teachers into an exercise in textual re-writing. This modality corresponds to the paradigm of Folklore centred on compilation rather than on the interpretation of materials.

Among the instructions given by the Council of Education is one that tells the teachers to compile "all the cultural products without exception: crafts, games, beliefs, customs, rites, techniques, instruments, manufactures, decorative elements, etc." Such products include the "literary forms" in

“verse” and in “prose”, the latter “stories or fiction” being characterised as “the most important genre in folklore narrative” and classified according to the classificatory parameters of the Aarne-Thompson index of folktale types.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the teachers were instructed to distinguish between II. Legends, III. Cases and events, IV. Traditions, and V. Explanatory Narratives or Myths. This mode of classification is based on *a priori* parameters independent of concrete textual realizations and is transmitted to teachers as the required model or paradigm for organizing the material when interrogating their informants and asking them for referential information. The adoption of the survey modality aims, in fact, to prioritise the semantic content over the narrators’ performance itself. The paradigm of folklore applied in the instructions stands very close to the W. J. Thoms’ foundational letter to the *Athenaeum* in 1846, which characterises “Folk-Lore” as the study of the customs of former times, thus situating it in the antiquarian tradition. With regard to narratives, the Folkloric Survey aimed at the identification of “versions” and “variants” of an *Urform*, which was also the goal of the historic-geographic method of the Finnish School. The result of the 1921 Folkloric Survey was a vast manuscript archive, now located in the National Institute of Anthropology and Latin American Thought in Buenos Aires.

**Textual re-writings of the 1921 Survey: *Los Cuentos Folkloricos de la Argentina (Argentinean Folktales) (1960-1964)* by Susana Chertudi**

Textual re-writing of the narrative materials of the 1921 Folkloric Survey constitutes the axis of the *Los Cuentos Folkloricos de la Argentina* collection put together by Susana Chertudi (1925-1977), a researcher of folk narratives who had a competence both in literature and folklore. “Argentinean Folktales” aims at more precise classificatory criteria and contains additional versions by other collectors like Jesús María Carrizo, Guillermo

Perkins Hidalgo and Julián Cáceres Freyre, as well as fieldwork materials by Chertudi and her husband Ricardo Nardi.

The collection consists of two volumes or “series” of a hundred narratives each, beginning with an introduction and concluding with a register of types, general bibliography, “Lexis” and an index. The introduction to the first series gives an overview of the state of affairs in folk-narrative scholarship both at the international and national level, alluding also to the concept of folklore studies initially outlined by W. J. Thoms and mentioning Aarne’s and Thompson’s classificatory system in order to contextualise systematic folklore and folk-narrative studies in Argentina within an international ambit. The introduction also mentions the documentation of the 1921 Folkloric Survey and pays tribute to scholars such as Augusto Raúl Cortázar. The introduction to the second volume refers to studies by Vladimir Propp and to other international scholars of crucial importance to the opening up of folklore studies to new formal and structural text-centred paradigms. However, the collection itself maintains the above-mentioned modality of the Survey adapted to the parameters of collectionism. In fact, the series could be described as a collection of “stories” or versions compiled on the basis of an anthological criterion rather than one of analytical interpretation: variants are ordered neatly according to the typological parameters of the thematic indexes of Aarne-Thompson, Thompson and Ralph S. Boggs – with each narrative being identified in a table by a number indicating its place in the universal typological classification. At the foot of each narration the collector also gives the name, age and geographic origin of the narrator or “informant”. Furthermore, each particular narrative is subclassified according to the parameters listed in the indexes: I. “animal tales”, II: “marvellous tales”, III. “religious tales”, IV: “human tales” and V. “formula tales”. The orthography and syntax characteristic of orality

are normalized to meet the standard rules of writing, and narratives are repositioned in order to give them a certain cohesive structure and a greater textual coherence. However, the narrative texts maintain the indicial markers of orality and this is how Chertudi was able to include lexical regionalisms and other phonic, syntactic and morphological forms of the local dialect.

With regard to the methods of documenting these narratives, it needs to be underlined that recorders and other technologies of sound reproduction were not available at that time, so the work was based on the re-writing of previous archives. Including materials from different regions of Argentina, the *Los Cuentos Folkloricos de la Argentina* documents with great precision the geographical diffusion of narrative types according to the principles of the historic-geographic method. However, some notes and observations in the introduction refer to questions of structure and style, revealing the beginning of new paradigms of folklore, research orientated towards the communicative dimension and the poetic structure of the message.

**The register of orality in a monumental collection: *Cuentos y leyendas populares de la Argentina (Folktales and Popular Legends of Argentina) (1982-1995)* by Berta Elena Vidal de Battini**

*Cuentos y leyendas populares de la Argentina* is a nine-volume work edited by Berta Elena Vidal de Battini (1900-1984) and published in Buenos Aires by *Ediciones Culturales Argentinas*, with a tenth volume issued posthumously. The series focusses on two narrative genres – tales and legends – which are linked by means of an anthological criterion that privileges collecting and organizing rather than interpretation and analysis. The archive was initiated by Berta Elena Vidal de Battini, teacher and scholar of regional speech, who collaborated with educational institutions in order

to carry out folk narrative collections. The modality of arranging materials likewise accords with the paradigm of folklore sustained by collectionism and adheres to the rules of the historic-geographic method. For the organization of the archive, Vidal de Battini adopts Aarne-Thompson's principles of thematic classification and divides narratives into two great categories. The first is "folktale", which is further divided into 1) "Animal Tales", 2) "Magical or Marvellous Tales", 3) "Human, Moral Tales and Others", 4) "Tales of Popular Characters...like Pedro de Urdemales", 5) "Accumulative Tales", and 6) "Jokes", 7) "Riddles", 8) "Novel-lae", and 9) "Indigenous Narrative". The second main category is "legends" and for this the compiler adopts her own rules of thematic ordering, distinguishing between legends referring to 1) places, 2) stones and hills, 3) lakes and rivers; as well as 4) legends of a lost city, 5) legends of burials or hidden treasures, 6) legends of plants, 7) legends of animals, and 8) legends of heaven. The editor also refers to the classification of Budapest – proposed after the corpus selection had already been started. "The Folktales and Popular Legends of Argentina" includes a classification according to geographical regions, along with maps of the regional distribution of different narratives. This, in addition to the general classification, corresponds to the rules of the historic-geographic method. Narratives are grouped into "versions" and "variants" of narrative "types" or "models". Vidal de Battini also refers to the use of questionnaires as instruments of collecting folklore data, and regards narrators as "informers", so granting privilege to the semantic content rather than the style or performance of these narratives; although in footnotes she sometimes does comment on the particular artistic talent of one narrator or another. Many times the same group of stories appears in different sections, which shows the dynamic character of all classification; e.g. "The crop division" can be found in the "stories of animals", the "wonderful stories" as

well as among the "legends".

The distinctive feature of "The Folktales and Popular Legends of Argentina" is the extensive scope of the compiled material, which is directly proportional to its classificatory imprecision. Glosses concerning the linguistic features of some narrations are outstanding, as is the inclusion of cartography in order to illustrate the distribution of the narrative material in different geographical areas. The collection combines trans-national classificatory criteria like typology with other systems adjusted to the specificity of the Argentinean corpus, e.g. the method adopted for legends. This, together with the documentation of some features of speech, shifts the classificatory spectrum towards a contextual paradigm appropriate to the "new perspectives in folklore" (Parades and Bauman 1972).

#### **Narrative collections and other folk archives: universal models in Argentinean folklore**

These three collections of prose narratives are framed within the classificatory mode of the historic-geographic method: based on recognition of thematic regularities, they are orientated towards the reconstruction of universal models of which the different regional manifestations constitute "versions" and "variants". As such they are also orientated towards the documentation of the regional distribution of these universal models. Further examples of such collections are those of the provinces of Catamarca (1957), as well as La Rioja (1942) and Tucumán (1937) compiled by Juan Alfonso Carrizo (1885-1957), the first director of the *Instituto Nacional de la Tradición*; the dance collection initiated by Ventura Lynch (1850-1888), Jorge Furt with his *Coreografía Gauchesca* (*Gauchesque* Choreography) from 1927; *Danzas y canciones argentinas* (Argentinean Dance and Songs) (1936) by Carlos Vega (1898-1966), and Antonio Barceló, the first director of the National School of Dance.

Among theorizers of folklore, Augusto Raúl Cortázar (1910-1974), the author of *Ciencia Folklórica Aplicada* (1960) (Applied Folklore Science) stands out. Aiming at raising folklore studies to the category of "science", he defines folklore pieces as "popular, anonymous and orally transmitted since immemorial times", with the capacity to "enrich the tradition that maintains its collective force in the bosom of the regional environment where the texts were documented from the people". This adjustment to the paradigm of the Finnish School is also evident in collections of regional folk narratives such as the *Cuentos de la Tradición Oral Argentina* (Folktales of the Argentinean Oral Tradition) (1948) by Jesús María Carrizo and Guillermo Perkins Hidalgo in a critical edition with references regarding types and classification of folktales by the folklorist Bruno Jacovella (1910-1996), and the significant anthological collection *Cuentos populares de La Rioja* (Popular Stories of La Rioja) (1965) by Juan Zacarías Agüero Vera. This collection includes both a preliminary study by Augusto Cortázar titled "El método histórico-geográfico y el estudio de los cuentos populares" ("The historic-geographic method and the study of popular stories") and Susana Chertudi's precise typological classification of the stories according to the parameters of Aarne-Thompson. At the time of publication of the above-mentioned works, Cortázar and Chertudi were two of the leading representatives of the theorization and systematic compilation of folk narratives in the Argentinean context.

#### **The most recent archives: differential modalities of filing narratives in regional contexts**

Instead of creating monumental corporuses of the folkloric prose narratives of the whole of Argentina, the general trend of later archives has been to focus collections on specific regional contexts, following, among others, the examples of the above-mentioned archives of Carrizo and Perkins Hidalgo,

and Agüero Vera. Furthermore, as I will try to show in the following, these new archives indicate a shift towards a paradigm of folklore based on studies of regional contextual variation, as well as towards research reflecting on the process of constructing narrative messages (Jakobson 1964) as well as on channels and codes of circulation of the narrative material.



Provinces of Argentina.

In a previous discussion of the problem of the state of art of folklore studies in Argentina (Palleiro 2004b) I proposed a distinction between currents of folklore studies based on (1) the study of thematic regularities (historic-geographic method, evolutionism and diffusionism, functionalism and psychological as well as mythic-archetypal methods); (2) the regularities of composition (the methods and formalist and structural currents of Propp, Roland Barthes and Algirdas Greimas); (3) on stylistic regularities (approaches similar to Olrik's epic laws); and (4) on studies of variation initiated by Dell Hymes with his ethnography of speaking and continued by Richard Bauman's notion of

verbal art as performance, with antecedents in the historical particularism of Franz Boas. I also mentioned Hermann Bausinger's contributions and his theory of contexts as well as other studies of contextualization centred on the problem of variation, which I discuss in depth in my doctoral thesis (Palleiro 1993). I related this dynamic between regularity and variation to the historical development of the field of folklore: in order to acquire the status of science, folkloristics had to first center on the identification of regularities, on systematic invariants indispensable to the configuration of a disciplinary system. This scientific advance was correspondingly marked by a turn towards the study of contextual variations with regard to the regularities identified in the previous stage, and towards a reflection on the communicative role of folklore. The most recent archives of narratives exemplify this turn.

**Tension of paradigms: *Cuentos y leyendas de La Pampa (Tales and Legends from La Pampa) (1988) compiled by Nélide Giovannoni and María Inés Poduje***

The "Folktales and Legends of La Pampa" (1988) compiled by Nélide Giovannoni and María Inés Poduje and edited in Santa Rosa by the Direction of Culture of La Pampa, adopted classification principles similar to those used by B. E. Vidal de Battini and based on the Aarne-Thompson index of tale types and Thompson's motif-index. In the case of legends, however, the compilers combined the parameters proposed by Vidal de Battini with those of the international classification of Budapest, adding the category of "legends of belief" studied by Susana Chertudi. While part of the materials derives from the Survey of 1921, the other part is based on fieldwork conducted by compilers.

As with Vidal de Battini's "Folktales and Popular Legends of Argentina", the collection of La Pampa narratives grants privilege to *anthological* criteria and similarly focusses on the folktales

and legends. Instead of analysis of particular versions or groups of them, the book offers general commentary on all of them. "Tales" are classified into tales about animals, humans, into jokes and brief narratives of Pedro de Urdeales, fool's tales, tales of exaggeration, fictional tales or *novellae*, marvelous stories, and religious and moral tales. Legends, on the other hand, are divided into religious, etiological (related to the origin of places of the *pampa*) legends, to legends of plants and animals, and legends of belief. In the "Prologue" an interesting reflection on the concept of folklore is presented which can be perceived as a harbinger of the contextual studies of folklore. A tension between different paradigms is certainly noticeable in this work, a shift from an adjustment to general principles of the Finnish School's thematic classification to incorporation of contextual variation both in the register of regional speech as well as in the organization of the archive – which includes the category of "lo pampeano" as a classificatory parameter. The authors also reflect on the codes and channels for transmitting folktales, and on the difficulties of adjusting *a priori* classification categories to the specificity of the *corpus*, on the gap between universal categories and the specific characteristics of Argentinean narratives. Giovannoni and Poduje thus recognize the tension between paradigms of folklore based on the identification of regularities and those focussed on studying variation.

**The analytic dimension and the archive configuration: *La Estructura del Miedo (The Structure of Fear) (1991) by Martha Blache***

The work of Martha Blache marked a decisive turn from the anthological criterion of organizing archives, characteristic of the collector-paradigm of folklore, to an analytical dimension of interpretation; from a paradigm of folklore based on the study of regularity, especially thematic regularities, to one centred on the study of contextual variations and narrators' artistic performance.

Blache's collection entitled *Estructura del Miedo* or "The Structure of Fear" was compiled between 1972 and 1974. It uses a corpus of the legends of Paraguayan migrants in Buenos Aires as an "instrument to reach the universe of values, beliefs and traditions ... [that configure] the *ethos* of the Paraguayan migrant people."<sup>4</sup> The distinctive feature of this work centred on methodological reflection is the archive configuration as a pretext for the study of the cultural representations of a determinate group context, starting from a paradigm of folklore open to both structural and contextual currents. The study is based on the material of the author's doctoral thesis presented at Indiana University, but revisited from the standpoint of Greimas' "actantial categories" and Peirce's semiotic categories of iconic, indicial and symbolic signs. Thus Blache incorporates approaches from narratology and semiotics for a communicative study of folklore understood as aesthetically marked messages, and leaves the evaluation of the efficiency of each narrator's performance for the audience to decide.

**Oral and written folk narrative: *De Duendes, Ánimas y Otras Historias: Relatos Orales de Adolescentes Cordobeses (Of Elves, Souls and Other Histories: Oral Narratives of Teenagers from Córdoba)* (1995) by Stella Watson and Nelson Herrera**

This archive, gathered by secondary school teachers, focusses on the genre of "strange histories" of arguably real events circulating among teenagers in the urban area of the city of Córdoba. It also incorporates written versions by students that manifest the emergence of new topics like the UFO narratives.<sup>5</sup> While the collection is based on the anthological criterion, it also includes an interesting preliminary reflexive study on the classificatory modalities of narratives. The stories are arranged according to thematic parameters adjusted to the collection's particular characteristics,

and include the following classes: a) mysterious appearances, b) unmaterializations, c) precognitions, d) messages from beyond the grave, e) mythical animals, f) metamorphosis, g) the devil and deals with the devil, h) the *Salamanca*<sup>6</sup>, i) the "luz mala" (bad light), j) elves and mythical beings, and k) UFOs, aliens and strange beings.



Berta Elena Vidal de Battini (1900-1984), editor of one of the major collections of Argentinean folktales and legends.

Photo: private collection.

Among other things, the collection incorporates numerous versions of "The Lady Ghost" and thus gives evidence of its wide distribution among teenagers in Córdoba. The above-mentioned topics reveal a certain predilection that narrators of this age have for the frightful – situated in an ambiguous zone between reality and fiction, which represents one of the distinctive features of materials of this archive.

What makes this archive interesting and significant is that it opens up the paradigm of folklore both to written materials and to "strange histories" or stories dealing with new topics like UFO narratives or urban legends – classified according to the thematic criterion, but also acknowledging the specificity of teenagers' narrations.

**The dimension of the quotidian and scriptural fiction: *Cuentos de las tres abuelas (The Stories of Three Grandmothers)* (1995) by Silvia García and Diana Rolandi**

Compiled by two anthropologists, this collection presents a particular modality of arranging narrative materials that provides an account of the different phases in the production of a folklore text. The book is based on a group of tales of "three grandmothers" collected by the authors from the region of Antofagasta de la Sierra in the Catamarca Province, and presents three different phases of scriptural production. Thus the first part includes the "poetic history" of the three grandmothers narrated by means of different anecdotes arranged according to the cyclical change of seasons in such a way that the quotidian becomes the principle of the sequentiality of the narrative materials ("Spring, day of the dead... Summer, *Señalada*..., etc.).<sup>7</sup> This "first part" becomes an object of scriptural re-elaboration in the second part, where the same narratives are re-written into "stories for children" and accompanied by illustrations done children. The organization of this "second part" is based on thematic categories similar to the ones used by Aarne and Thompson, so that narratives are classified into "marvellous tales", "animal tales" and "human tales", but also context-specific categories like "la Pacha" – the goddess mother earth in Quechua, a Native American language of South America. In addition, the stories are arranged according to the anthological principle.

The contribution of this collection consists in giving an account of the different stages of scriptural re-elaboration of oral materials to adjust them to different audiences and, furthermore, in the framework of a project promoting the "intangible patrimony" of oral culture in a specific regional context of Argentina. The successive transformations of the material demonstrate the fictionalisation processes of the



discourse according to the scriptural conventions that anthropologists rely on. In this way, there is an intertextual gap between different stages of this enunciative process. By means of such mediation, primary orality is transformed into ethnographic documents as well as into children's tales, into a text implicated in the "fiction of anthropological writing" to express it in Clifford's terms.

### Textualisation processes in folk narrative: María Inés Palleiro's archives

My own archives consist of three anthologies and a critical edition of folk narratives that sums up the results of more than twenty years of field work in both rural and urban settings. While the anthologies give an account of the research undertaken for my dissertation, the critical edition comprises post-doctoral work. My doctoral thesis focussed on fictionalization processes of context of materials dealing with the topic of "The deal with the devil" (*El trato con el Diablo*; Aarne-Thompson 330A "The Smith and the Devil") and including tales, case studies, events and stories. While editing the anthologies, I experienced the influence of certain paradigms of folklore in the editorial market. I classified the narrations according to the parameters of type and motive indexes compiled by Aarne and Thompson. The first and the second of anthology, titled *El escondite mágico y otros cuentos folklóricos riojanos* (The Magic Hiding-Place and other Argentinean Folktales) (1990) and *Los tres pelos del Diablo* (The Three Hairs from the Devil's Beard) (1992) respectively, included marvellous tales while the third one, *La fiesta en el cielo* (The heavenly banquet) (1998), was dedicated to animal tales. Each text was accompanied with footnotes explaining the context and commenting on the style and performance of each particular narrator. In the introduction, I reviewed the present state of studies on each narrative genre and added a very brief analysis of the thematic, compositive

and stylistic characteristics of each narrative included in the anthology. The first collection comprised ten and both of the succeeding volumes twenty narratives.

The critical edition *Fue una historia real. Itinerarios de un archivo* (It has been a Real Case. An Archive with Different Itineraries) (2004a) consisted of materials of my post-doctoral research and contained twenty oral versions of the same "Meeting Death" (*Encuentro con la Muerte*) pattern that presents common elements with Thompson E 332.3.3.1., "The vanishing hitchhiker". This collection, organized like a genetic dossier (Grésillon 1994), presents a particular modality of register in three levels of complexity: Spanish that goes from the phonic register colloquial oral speech to a register corresponding to standard conventions of writing, with an intermediate stage called "dialectical writing". The aim of this register modality is to reflect the scriptural textualisation processes of oral narratives as well as the gap between oral and written text. The work is arranged around the axis of the register and analysis of dispersion itineraries of the same narrative pattern or "matrix" in different contexts and channels of discourse. The narratives include both oral and written versions as well as mediated recreations in the periodical press, filmic and video transpositions and literary elaborations. While this work deals with textualisation processes of narratives, it also emphasizes the analytical dimension. It considers the messages of folk narratives as an expression of differential group identity, highlighting the compositional and stylistic procedures by means of which a narrator imprints the narratives with the seal of his/her authorship. As such, this study can be situated in the tradition of contextual studies of folklore, and relies on Richard Bauman's performance theory as well as on approaches developed by French genetic criticism (Grésillon 1994, Hay 1993) for the register and analysis of textualization processes.

### The archives in their linguistic dimension: the collections of indigenous narrative

Another important set of collections of Argentinean folk narrative is those of indigenous narratives, which also represent a contribution of linguistics. An important antecedent of these archives is Berta Koessler-Ilg's *Tradiciones Araucanas* (Araucanian Traditions) (1962) the second edition of which was published in 2007 in Chile under the title of *Cuenta El Pueblo Mapuche* (The Mapuche People Tell). Koessler-Ilg was a German folklorist who came to Argentina to live close to the Mapuche people as the wife of a medical doctor. She included in her work not only transcriptions of narratives, but also traditions like songs and prayers, even riddles and magical practices, children's games, proverbs and traditions (that is to say, memorates and chronicates). The new edition, translated from German into Spanish, comprises three volumes, the first of "traditions", the second of "myths and legends" and the third of "tales and fables". The texts are neatly annotated and accompanied by sharp linguistic observations about the characteristics of Mapuche speech as well as by ethnographic comments on the special features of the culture of this ethnic group. In fact, one of the distinctive features of Koessler-Ilg's work is that it illuminates not only the register of the narratives but also, in an ethnographic mode, the universe of cultural representations of this aborigine community from the south of Argentina and Chile. Although it manifests a sharp ethnographic perceptiveness, the collection is dominated by the anthological criterion.

By way of contrast, the analytical dimension is privileged in the pioneering work by anthropologist Else María Waag titled *Tres Entidades Wekufü en la Cultura Mapuche* (Three Wekufü Entities in the Mapuche Culture) (1965). Waag looks at cultural representations of evil entities in the Mapuche community, starting with the study of narrative testimonies. It

is situated, in this way, in the school that Martha Blache will later develop in a systematic way. Another collection of narratives of the same social group was compiled by César A. Fernández and titled *Cuentan Los Mapuches* (The Mapuches Tell) (1999). Like the volume by Berta Koessler-Ilg, it is based on the anthological criterion and includes an interesting introduction about the aesthetics and poetics of the Mapuches, also differentiating between their discursive genres. This preoccupation with discursive genres as well as with poetics reveals the stamp of the ethnography of speech developed by Dell Hymes and in *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore*, which put emphasis on the communicative dimension of folklore and on its character as an aesthetically marked message orientated towards the audience.

One would also have to mention the work by the eminent Argentinean linguist Ana Fernández Garay and her team on the narratives of the ranqueles, an ethnic group of the Mapuches, and their bilingual collections in the aborigine language and Spanish. *Testimonios de los últimos ranqueles* (Testimonies of the Last Ranqueles) (2002), for instance, presents the results of the systematic investigation of the Mapuche ranquelino that Fernández Garay began in 1983 on the indigenous reservation of Colonia Emilio Mitre in the province of La Pampa. The work includes transcriptions – accomplished with a remarkable precision – as well as a CD. Linguistics provides this kind of research with valuable instruments for a careful registering of the phonic, morphosyntactical and semantic levels, which in turn makes possible an accurate transcription that segments phrases into shorter linguistic units. Register modality of this kind can give a precise idea of the linguistic organization of aborigine languages facing extinction. From the same team of scholars, Marisa Malvestitti recently published a study titled *La variedad mapuche de la Línea Sur* (The Mapuche Variety of the Southern Line) (2003), which is ac-

companied by a CD. These and other similar works privileging the linguistic aspect are clearly influenced by Dell Hymes's ethnography of speaking. Yet their scope of analysis is bound to remain restricted since major emphasis is put on the register of indigenous languages and dialects on the verge of extinction, though the register of different speech genres is remarkable and reflects also on the poetic dimension.

### **Conclusion: topics and trends in archives of Argentinean folk narrative**

In this brief diachronic journey, I have noticed, in the case of the first general archives an adjustment to what I have called a folkloric paradigm of collectionism. The first collections were organized according to the anthological criterion and on the basis of type and motive indexes that tend to adjust local archives to parameters of transnational classification and prioritize the re-collecting of the same story. The modality of the register is based on re-writing orality according to conventions of literacy, whereas the latter are slowly becoming flexible enough to admit forms of oral speech. During this first period of Argentinean folkloristics, philological and historic-geographic approaches dominate the main goal of which is to collect texts in archives.<sup>8</sup>

A second moment is marked by a shift towards the contextualist paradigms of *The New Perspectives in Folklore* and towards performance studies developed by Richard Bauman, with special emphasis laid on the aesthetic dimension and the poetics of the message. In addition, there is developing an interest in new topics such as UFO narratives, new narrative genres like "strange histories" and memorates, and new channels of discourse such as the written and mediated registers.

Another group of collections are centred on indigenous narratives and with the help of ethnolinguists attempt to document registers of languages and dialects facing extinction, with their poetical forms reflected in narrative

forms. Such collections, bearing the stamp of the ethnography of speaking, privilege the textual register of linguistic forms and often include information about the language system and occasionally also an account of the performances of individual narrators.

As a general trend in all archives, one registers a greater inclination towards anthological principles than to analytical interpretation, with exceptions like Martha Blache's collections and my own, preceded by the pioneering work of Else María Waag. This tendency corresponds to the different profiles of individual compilers, who ascribe to the folkloristic paradigm of collectionism, to linguistic or literary studies, or to the analytical school – which tends to be adhered to by those scholars closer to anthropological studies.

This brief resume adumbrates the richness and variety of the collections of Argentinean folk narratives the dynamism of which is able to survive the most diverse political, economical and cultural crises. In sharp contrast to the amplitude of the first general collections, the current trends in organizing archives are orientated towards embracing a more limited spectrum and a modern approach that provides the tools to connect the past to the present. These collections view traditional narratives as a privileged instrument of communication, the semantic content of which is linked to the expression of identities and social memories.

One must also mention the shift of paradigm from the "oral and anonymous" production in the rural ambit characteristic of the first archives towards an urban setting and the study of problems of authorship and of style in narrators. These new approaches enable us to highlight the narrators' capacity to recreate in an aesthetic message the multiethnic and multicultural character of Argentina. The differential features of this culture are also reflected in the narrative archives, in the radical heterogeneity provided by contributions of different kinds –

European, *créoles* and indigenous people, western and eastern – and accentuated by the multiple diasporic movements that revitalise the Argentinean cultural patrimony with their richness and diversity.

<sup>1</sup> Adjustment to stereotypes coincides with meeting the standards of Spanish traditions. A clear example of this trend is the Traditional Argentinean Romancer (*Romancero Tradicional Argentino*) which keeps a close relationship with the Traditional Spanish Romancer (Chicote 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Engaging schoolchildren in collecting folklore was a common practice in Estonia in the 1920-30s: in 1922, Walter Anderson intitated a nationwide collection of children's songs and poems; in 1938-1939, a competition for collecting local legends and placelore was carried out. [Editor's comment.]

<sup>3</sup> According to the given classification, the "stories" are sub-categorized to 1) wonderful, 2) religious and moral, 3) animist or scary, 4) human, 5) animalistic and jokes.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, in Spanish, Blache speaks about the "*ethos de un pueblo*." This expression refers to the cultural background of a certain group from the perspective of an ethnographic approach differentiating between the ethnic and emic. It also refers to the Greek word *ethos* as to the set of values of a certain community.

<sup>5</sup> An investigation of UFO narratives has been undertaken by Patricio Parente, who has collected a great number of them for his doctoral dissertation.

<sup>6</sup> The *Salamanca* is a local ritual, in which a man or a woman makes a deal with the devil in order to gain youngness, beauty, a lot of money, or special abilities.

<sup>7</sup> The *señalada* is the action of marking cattle in the form of a ritual ceremony that in certain places takes place in the beginning of summer.

<sup>8</sup> This trend seems to be similar to the one in Estonian folklore described by Valk (1999: 207): "Philological approaches have dominated in Estonian folkloristics; it has become a scholarly tradition to work with the texts in archives. Estonian folkloristics has been influenced by the historic-geographic method, known also as the Finnish school."



In *Fue una historia real. Itinerarios de un archivo* (It has been a Real Case. An Archive with Different Itineraries, 2004), María Inés Palleiro examines textualization processes of folktales on the basis of twenty versions of the same "Lady Ghost" story.

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## Charms, Charming and Charmers.

### ISFNR Conference at the Pécs Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Pécs, Hungary, May 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2007

by Ülo Valk, University of Tartu, Estonia



Éva Pócs opening the conference Charms, Charming and Charmers.

Photo by Ülo Valk.

The lovely South Hungarian town of Pécs turned for three days into the European capital city of magic, when the ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming held its first conference in May 2007. This international forum offered a wide range of approaches and topics and covered an extensive time period, starting with the Hellenistic age, continuing with the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times, and concluding with contemporary Europe. Some papers utilised philological methods of studying old manuscripts, others dealt with typological issues, the international spread and historical development of charm types, or offered ethnographic and folkloristic insights into modern magical practices, their social uses and interpretations. One of the key issues, addressed by all participants, was the question of the contextualization of charms – of finding the relevant empirical, theoretical and historical framework for the formulation of research problems, and making charms meaningful as textual phenomena, religious practices or elements of culture. Some papers discussed charms in the context of the history of folkloristics, others in relation to ritual practices or to the genre sys-

tem of folklore – to prose narratives, hymns, folk songs and prayers. Ecclesiastical traditions, religious and theological writings and the Bible offered many insights into popular charms. Several scholars showed how the verbal magic and religious practices of clergymen, once officially approved by the church, have been taken over by the peasantry and modified as expressions of vernacular religion. Many papers demonstrated that one of the important contexts of charms, past and present, is folk medicine. However, charms are polyfunctional, as they also appear in neo-pagan rituals, weather magic, divination and many other spheres of religious and lay culture. Their link with folk narratives is crucial, starting with myths, *historiolae* and saints' legends and leading on to folktales, belief legends and personal anecdotes. It seems that oral narratives about the effectiveness of charms also contribute towards their effect in various magical practices. Obviously, we need to study charms not in isolation as single textual items, but in their folkloric, religious, cultural and social contexts, either from the diachronic or synchronic perspective or in a combination of the two.

Arne Bugge Amundsen (Oslo, Norway) analyzed the work of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century folklorists whose theological background shaped their attitudes towards folklore. A. Chr. Bang's monumental work on Norwegian magic books represents a comparative, historical and philological approach to charm texts. His clerical position engendered an ambivalent attitude toward his object of study, subsequently marginalized as a genre with little aesthetic and cultural value. Andrey Toporkov (Moscow, Russia)

delivered a paper that had been written with Tatyana Agapkina. He presented an outline of their project of compiling an index of East-Slavic charms as a major contribution to the adumbration of a European typology of charms, comparable with the Aarne-Thompson-Uther index of international folktales.

Edina Bózoky (Poitiers, France) discussed the thematic classification, sources, language and function of medieval narrative charms. She showed how miraculous events of the past, narrated in *historiolae*, were meant to integrate the patient into a mythic order – a state of protection, security and health. She interpreted the uses of charms a mediating process, such as projecting the present into a mythical time and assimilating the present situation to the prototypical situation described in the *historiola*. Vilmos Voigt (Budapest, Hungary) discussed the historical development of charm terminology in Hungary. Although the word *báj* ('magic') is a borrowing from Old Turkic, its semantics does not reveal an Old Turkic heritage but a close connection with West European magic lore, with benedictions and maledictions. Lea T. Olsan (Cambridge, England/ University of Louisiana at Monroe, USA) talked about the marginalization of charms in Europe from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Charms are relatively rare in manuscripts and cannot be easily distinguished from other formulaic expressions, such as prayers and medical prescriptions. As charms had an insignificant role in academic medicine, only some of them were written down. At the end of the Middle Ages charms were further marginalized by suppression. Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart (Edinburgh,

Scotland) discussed the Gaelic background and textualization of Alexander Carmichael's monumental work *Carmina Gadelica* (1900). He showed that his literary rendering of the texts was not literal and involved multi-faceted translation – between the Gaelic and English languages, between concepts, beliefs, knowledge, genres of literature and narratives.

Aigars Lielbardis (Riga, Latvia) compared charming in traditional, rural Latvian culture with its uses in contemporary urban settings. In contrast with earlier healers, who worked on their own, modern healers form communities, and their activities are strongly influenced by the market economy. Christa Agnes Tuczay (Vienna, Austria) gave a paper on the magical flight of witches, which has been described in demonological treatises, literature and legends since the novel "The Golden Ass" by Apuleius and *Canon Episcopi*, the first clerical discussion of the topic – which interpreted the ecstatic experience as an illusion induced by the Devil. Ljiljana

Marks (Zagreb, Croatia) analyzed the occurrence of magical formulae in Croatian legends about flights of witches and their appearance in court cases. Legends stress the importance of the faultless recitation of these charms, accompanied by correctly performed actions to guarantee their magical effect. Daiva Vaitkevičienė (Vilnius, Lithuania) compared Baltic and Eastern Slavic charms, focusing on parallels in mythological tropes, both Christian and Indo-European, and in magical formulae that accompany ritual and magical actions. Vladimir Klyaus (Moscow, Russia) discussed the historical development of Eurasian charms, based on a broad range of comparative material, collected among Slavonic peoples and the native peoples of Siberia. The paper demonstrated the range of variation of topics and motifs used in charms, and certain invariants among charm texts – collected among peoples who have not had any historical contact. Tatiana Minniyakhmetova (Innsbruck, Austria/Bashkortostan, Russia) gave a paper, based on her fieldwork among various

Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples who live in the Volga-Ural region. Although their religious traditions range from Orthodox Christianity to Islam and to heathen belief systems, there are many similarities in their respective folk medicine, charming and charm texts. Udmurts and the Besermyan ethnical group attribute the greatest power to "ancient charms", a vernacular expression that signifies incantations about the sun, moon, stars, hills, stones, water and other astronomical and natural objects. The charmers, whose power comes from nature, are regarded most effective in their ability to cure illnesses and handle the consequences of witchcraft and demonic possession.

Jonathan Roper (Sheffield, England) discussed the Estonian narrative charms, recorded in approximately 800 variants, that form less than 10% of the huge collection of charms in the Estonian Folklore Archives in Tartu. Topics of vernacular Christianity dominate among these texts, which have parallels among many other European



Andrey Toporkov from Moscow listening to Zuzana Profantová's paper about word magic in contemporary Slovakia.  
Photo by Ůlo Valk.



Discussions continued at coffee breaks. Jonathan Roper from Sheffield, one of the main organisers of the conference, has something to say to Emanuela C. Timotin (Bucharest, Romania) and to Maria Vivod (Strasbourg, France).

Photo by Ülo Valk.

peoples. Some of them are *historiolae*, others derive from hymns that have gone through a genre shift and been adopted in folk magic. The charm types, “Bone to bone...” and “Three roses” are represented in the greatest number of variants. Judit Domány’s (Budapest, Hungary) philological paper analysed the Second Idyll of the Hellenistic Greek poet Theocritus. This text recounts courtesan Simaitha’s unsuccessful attempt to win back her lost lover by using magic. Zuzana Profantová (Bratislava, Slovakia) presented the results of her work on the magical function of language. She analyzed curses and swearwords as acts of communication in the context of contemporary Slovakian culture. Marion Bowman (Milton Keynes, England) highlighted the uses of magic in contemporary paganism, with a focus on the forms of Celtic spirituality, such as modern Druidry. The influential belief in reincarnation and karma is having an effect on the whole belief-system and on magical practices. Whereas blessing is accorded positive values, cursing is supposed to have negative effects on its practitioner in this or the next life.

Emanuela Cristina Timotin (Bucharest, Romania) explored magical texts against *năjit* (‘neuralgia’) written down in Romania in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and used by the clergy. These spells, identified both as “charms” and “prayers” in the records, manifest connections with the Slavonic manuscript tradition, with oral charms and with Christianity – as Christ is the healer who banishes *năjit* into deserted places. Taisto-Kalevi Raudalainen (Tallinn, Estonia) interpreted some Kalevala-metric charms of Izhorian and Ingrian Finns as a syncretic fusion of pre-Christian and Christian elements. The religious legend concerning the chaining of the Devil by Jesus (ATU 803) stems from clerical tradition, but it has been folklorized in narratives and charms. Dániel Bárh (Budapest, Hungary) examined the impact of Franciscans, Jesuits and Benedictines on popular religiosity in early modern Hungary as a part of the Central European region. The paper focussed on benedictions and exorcisms, used both in official and unofficial religious practices. Éva Pócs (Pécs/ Budapest, Hungary) studied the connection be-

tween church benedictions, exorcisms and popular charms in Hungary. She demonstrated the constant interaction between official and vernacular uses of magic that was once practiced by members of all layers of society. Most charms familiar to rural people in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries derive from the ecclesiastical benedictions that earlier belonged to the priestly tradition.

Maarit Viljakainen (Joensuu, Finland) discussed charms that were used in rural Finland among the Lutheran Finns and Orthodox Karelians. She focussed on the image of the Virgin Mary in birth incantations, where she appears as a divine helper and “merciful mother” who actively assists in delivery, while the woman who gives birth remains passive. Tatiana Bužekova (Bratislava, Slovakia) explored charms against the evil eye that are still practiced in Slovakian villages. Some are widely known and used; others – those that are close to Christian prayers – are kept secret. Only one woman in a family can use these charms, which are transmitted from mother to daughter or daughter-in-law. T. Bužekova interpreted such deathbed transmission of secret knowledge in the light of Pascal Boyer’s works in cognitive anthropology. The lack of crucially important information about the social environment leads to the mystification of this secret knowledge as an aspect of the sacred and supernatural. Ritwa Herjulfsson Andersson (Göteborg, Sweden) analyzed charms against snakebites in Swedish folklore, and the folk-medical practices that were linked with these texts. The Virgin Mary is the most common figure in these charms, but Jesus, Peter and Joseph also appear. The paper discussed the connection between the healing practices described in charms and those that were used by folk healers.

Judit Kis-Halas (Budapest, Hungary) gave a paper, based on her fieldwork in Töröcske village near Kaposvár in



Discussions lasted long, thanks to the amazingly warm nights and good company. From the left: Taisto-Kalevi Raudalainen (Tallinn), Jonathan Roper and Vladimir Klyaus (Moscow).  
Photo by Ülo Valk.

Dallos (Szeged, Hungary) presented a paper on the tale type "The Magician and his Pupil" (ATU 325), comparing Hungarian and European Tartar variants and analyzing them from an ethnosemiotic perspective.

The conference, arranged by the ISFNR Committee, the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Pécs, The Hungarian Ethnographical Society, and by The Folklore Society (London), and held in the historical building of the Pécs Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, was a great success – due to its clear focus and to the rich variety of perspectives that were offered. Charms, which were once regarded as a marginal genre in folklore, have become a lively field of interdisciplinary knowledge production. Here we should acknowledge the role of some international leaders – such as professor Éva Pócs, one of the main organizers of the conference – who has initiated a strong school of research on charms, charming and witchcraft. This school was represented at the conference by several Hungarian scholars of the younger generation, whose papers wisely synthesized textual analysis with research on the ethnographic, religious, social and historical context of the relevant magical practices. Arranging the conference with no parallel sessions, with no plenary papers and offering an equal amount of time to all speakers generated discussion in a democratic, friendly and hospitable atmosphere. The participants are thankful to the effective team of local organisers and to Jonathan Roper, who is the leader of the ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming, and who played a crucial role in arranging this international forum, bringing together scholars from many countries. The Folklore Society of London generously sponsored the wine reception of excellent Hungarian wines, inspiring dialogues and supporting participants in building networks and friendships.

south Hungary. She had studied the prayers and magical practices of a dynasty of female folk healers, such as the ritual of pouring bee wax, used for divination and healing. J. Kis-Halas discussed the tradition of transmitting knowledge in the family and the narratives about becoming a healer. She interpreted the secret magical texts as a symbolic fund of knowledge, connected with the power of the healer. Laura Iancu (Pécs, Hungary) addressed the folk-medical practices of Moldavian Hungarian communities in Romania. Magical bathing to cure "severe illness" is performed by a ritual specialist, who possesses the relevant secret knowledge. The ritual has psychic and social functions such as giving new life to the cured child, who is reintegrated into the family and community. Maria Vivod (Strasbourg, France) discussed the magical practice of ear whispering (*suskálás*), used in some villages in north Hungary, where Slovaks form an ethnic minority. The secret prayer is said in Slovakian in order to cure any psychological disorders by "chasing away evil spirits" from the patient's body. Vesna Petreska (Skopje, Macedonia) talked about the status of experts in magic in Macedonian folk culture. They are

popularly divided into two categories: the condemned female practitioners of magic who cast spells in order to damage somebody's health or economic well-being; and healers of both sexes, who break these spells and have a high reputation. Jenny Butler (Cork, Ireland) explored the worldview of Druidry, Wicca and other forms of neopagan witchcraft in Ireland, focussing on the uses of talismans, amulets and verbal charms. She showed that Irish traditional folk religion has had a considerable impact on the modern pagan culture.

In addition to these oral presentations, some posters were presented to the conference participants. Evgenia Troeva-Grigороva's (Sofia, Bulgaria) paper discussed interaction with demons in Bulgarian folklore. In critical situations, such as illness or poor crops, special rites were performed to neutralize the demonic beings. Urszula Lehr (Krakow, Poland) offered a paper on air demons and weather wizards in folk religion in Poland. These experts in ritual and magic had to defend villages from storms. Lehel Peti's (Szeged, Hungary) poster studied the contemporary magical practices in Csángó villages of Romanian Moldavia. Edina



## The 7th Folklore Fellows Summer School in Karelia

by Mészáros Csaba, Comparative and Hungarian Folkloristics Doctoral Program,  
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I  
After a break of five years the Folklore Fellows Summer School (FFSS) was reborn in the cradle of the *Kalevala* in Viena Karelia: the 7<sup>th</sup> FFSS was held on June 11-20 in Kuhmo, Finland, and in Vuokkiniemi, Haikola and Paanajärvi in the Russian Federation. This division between two countries gave the Summer School a double character that among other things raised the question whether Viena Karelia or the writing-desk of Elias Lönnrot is to be perceived as the birthplace of *Kalevala*. Both lecturers and participants at the Summer School were involved in theoretical discussions about the methods of and contemporary concepts in folklore research, as well as in visits to elderly villagers performing authentic Kalevala-metric songs. Viena Karelia and the FFSS thus offered us a highly inspiring environment in which to understand the role and place of folklorists in a symbolically important area in an age of transition. Moreover, it was illuminating to see the efforts on the part of the Finnish Juminkeko

Information Center for Kaleva and Karelian Culture, the organizer of our stay in Viena Karelia, to safeguard the cultural heritage of this unique area by recording the performances of the older generation and to revitalise the villages and settlements by means of tourism and small-scale handicraft businesses. Here again we had a double position with regard to the representation and consumption of authentic folklore: on the one hand, we listened to lectures and papers about the policy of creating authenticity and about problematising village tourism, but on the other hand were present in this environment as simple tourists (at least in the eyes of the villagers). These peculiar surroundings gave – as was pointed out by some veteran attendants and lecturers – a special character to the whole of the 2007 Summer School.

One of the general features of Finnish folklore scholarship has been its constant eagerness to build networks between researchers of various countries. By creating a forum for holding

discussions about folklore and for transmitting knowledge on novel methods of understanding folklore, the organisers of the 2007 Summer School undoubtedly once again achieved this important target.

II  
Inspired by the Karelian landscape, the 2007 Summer School aimed to focus on questions concerning oral poetry and fieldwork. However, the spectrum of lectures and presentations was much broader, with some papers reflecting on other loosely related subjects. As such, this FFSS was a meeting-place for young folklorists, anthropologists and philologists dealing with various folklore materials and representing distinct scientific schools and heritages. The 2007 FFSS brought together thirteen lecturers from Iceland, Norway, Scotland, the United States, Russia and of course from Finland, and sixteen participants from ten countries. Yet despite this seeming heterogeneity, during discussions participants easily found points of common interest and understanding, which was also due to the aptly chosen lectures and panels concentrating on three major subjects:

1. The scientific and political context of folklore research and fieldwork,
2. The interpretation of orality, and genres of oral poetry,
3. Karelia and Karelian oral poetry in the larger context of Scandinavia.

Since the abstracts of the participants' papers are bound to be published on the website of the Folklore Fellows (<http://www.folklorefellows.fi>), I will concentrate in this brief report on the lectures and discussions on these three major subjects.

On the first day of the FFSS a panel adumbrated the role of the *Kalevala* and the creation of the canon of folk



Happy ending of the ISFNR Interim Conference in Santa Rosa, Argentina. L-R: Martha Blache, Mehri Bagheri, Ulf Palmenfelt, Elo-Hanna Seljamaa, Ana María Dupey, Ülo Valk, Ezekiel Alembi, María Inés Poduje, Manuel Dannemann.

Photo by Risto Järvi.



From left to right: Markku Nieminen, Eila Stepanova, Galina Misharina, Pekka Hakamies, and Anna-Leena Siikala listen to the singer and storyteller Santra Remsujeva from Vuokkiniemi.

Photo by Elo-Hanna Seljamaa.

poetry during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, introducing one of the major themes of the subsequent lectures. Contemporary folkloristics has frequently acknowledged that at the dawn of observations on folklore, researchers did not simply *find* a previously neglected poetry, but, rather, that they *created* it. In addition, they emphasised certain characteristics of oral poetry that accorded with the particular objectives of collectors and publishers alike. Terry Gunnell (Iceland) pointed out in his lecture that one cannot gain insight into early folk-tale collections in Norway, England and Iceland without taking into account the scientific context of the collectors, since the latter were in close contact with one another, they influenced each others' approaches, and the scientific works written by them thus followed common patterns. This was very much the case in evaluating and criticising the *Kalevala* from the point of view of Finnish folklore research, as was shown by Satu Apo (Finland) in her lecture. Judgements as to the authenticity and the value of the *Kalevala* have been changing constantly in accordance with changes in ruling scientific methods and milieux. This process could be examined not only from the point of view of folklore research, but also from that of society and politics, which have been forming their assessments

of the *Kalevala* in conjunction with the changes in research methodology, as Pertti Anttonen (Finland) showed in his lecture. Lauri Harvilahti's (Finland) summarising, concluding lecture on the last day of the Summer School provided a concise history of Finnish folklore research by drawing attention to its decisive turning-points.

Further lectures investigated the problem of the influence of research methodology on the corpus of collected materials. As a useful comparative history, and an interesting case study, John Shaw (Scotland) presented a brief survey of the history of collecting Gaelic oral poetry in Scotland from the 17<sup>th</sup> century up to the present. By citing 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century collectors' diaries and notes, he revealed the collectors' changing attitude towards their material. One of the most exciting lectures of the Summer School was given by Seppo Knuuttilla (Finland), whose colourful personality and witty delivery further elevated his already interesting lecture, which dealt with the relation of fieldworker to the field and with the fieldworker's attachment to the locus of fieldwork. The need to understand the whys and hows of the changes in the episteme of folklore studies was one of the recurring discussion topics during the whole Summer School, helping us to evaluate the

dissimilar positions of fieldwork and the divergent use of fieldwork materials in folkloristic research in the context of various research methods and political environments. The last of John Miles Foley's (USA) three lectures could be regarded as a summary of these discussions: surveying various contemporary methods of researching oral poetry, he concluded that there is no sole method for the analysis of oral poetry by which a researcher could reach the "ultimate truth". Looked at from this point of view, research methods are fundamentally only interpretations of folklore material, and the pluralism of interpretations serves the purpose of a better and more complex understanding of texts and performances.

Several lectures and presentations focussed on various problems arising during the interpretation and analysis of oral poetry and oral texts, which formed the second major topic of the Summer School. Two stimulating lectures by John Miles Foley reported on his research on Muslim Serbian, Basque, Mongol and contemporary U.S. oral poetry. His first lecture concentrated on genres and genre-competence in orality, pointing out the differences between the attitudes toward and evaluations of epic and non-epic texts. In his second lecture, Foley reviewed the orality-literacy debate in modern folklore studies, arguing that it is impossible to have real insight into oral texts if one is bound to the opposition between the two media; instead the researcher should focus on the register or the way of speaking in which the given texts are formulated. The example of long-term fieldwork conducted by John Shaw in Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, Canada elucidated the social life of oral poetry and its related music, as well as the interdependence of knowledge and competence in performing texts belonging to dissimilar genres. Lotte Tarkka (Finland) addressed in her lecture the relation between texts belonging to different genres but formulated in the same *Kalevala*-metric register, showing that they are interdependent



The village of Paanajärvi by the river Kemijoki is one of the oldest settlements in Viena Karelian area. In 2005, the local people of Paanajärvi and the Juminkeko Foundation were awarded the Europa Nostra medal "for the preservation of the fine wooden architecture of a remote village, the revitalisation of the traditional building techniques and safeguarding of its unique cultural heritage through sustainable income-generating initiatives" ([http://www.europanostra.org/lang\\_en/index.html](http://www.europanostra.org/lang_en/index.html)).

*Photo by Elo-Hanna Seljamaa.*

and should not be analysed separately. Using this method, she examined the whole corpus of Kalevala-metric oral texts collected in Vuokkiniemi between 1821 and 1921.

The third focal point of the lectures was an introduction to Karelian folk culture and to the whole cultural area of Scandinavia and western Russia more generally. Pekka Hakamies (Finland) focused his lecture on the modernisation of Soviet Karelia during the Soviet era, thus offering an introduction to the development of the contemporary Karelian lifestyle. This view from a Finnish folklorist on the everyday life of the Soviet state in Karelia provided us with the means to interpret the present state of the Karelian villages we visited during the Summer School. However, it would also have been interesting to compare his notions of the changes during the Soviet era with those of a Karelian researcher raised and educated in this system. Representing Karelian folkloristics in the 2007 FFSS were Aleksandra and Eila Stepanova, Jelena Dubrovskaya, and Maria Vlasova. Aleksandra Stepanova introduced us to

the world of Karelian laments, with the help of Anna-Leena Siikala, who kindly provided simultaneous translation from Finnish into English. It is good to know that Aleksandra Stepanova is handing down the study of Karelian laments to her daughter Eila, whose paper similarly dealt with the Karelian lamenting tradition. In addition to focussing on the Karelians, the situation of a small people in the context of Scandinavia was also illuminated by the case of the Sámi living north-west of Karelia. Two lectures by Stein R. Mathisen (Norway) (who has mastered the Finnish tango as well as he has the Sámi culture) reflected on questions concerning the double character of the image of the Sámi. On the one hand, this image was created by the Norwegians, Finns and Russians according to their special objectives in the area. As is often the case, these majority cultures were more interested in exploiting the natural resources of the area than in understanding the local culture, creating both good and evil images of the Sámi as savages. On the other hand, nowadays the Sámi themselves are very much aware of their peculiar position as the

only "aboriginals" of Scandinavia, and maintain an explicitly traditional and authentic lifestyle and economy, from which they benefit by emphasising certain of its characteristics in presentations aimed at tourists.

### III

Certainly, the 2007 Folklore Fellows Summer School was more than just a simple series of presentations, lectures and discussions to be reported in a dry and boring manner. A productive ambience was ensured by the location of the Summer School – both in Finland and the Russian Federation. It was an environment that exuded an informal atmosphere, differing radically from the familiar venues of university lecture hall and academic institute, and it drew lecturers and participants together.

The first three panels were held in Kuhmo, at the Juminkeko Center, which offered a perfect milieu for initiation into the experience of the *Kalevala* phenomenon, created, maintained, used, protected and analysed in Finland and worldwide. Here we met the heads of the Juminkeko Foundation, Markku

and Sirpa Nieminen, who proved to be perfect hosts in Finland. Later, in Karelia, it turned out that Markku Nieminen is not only a good host, but also a zealous guide to Karelian villages. After spending a couple of days in Kuhmo, the Folklore Fellows Summer School moved to Viena Karelia, where we resided principally in Vuokkiniemi. The overwhelming majority of discussions and presentations were held in the sometimes chilly gym of the local secondary school. This environment conveyed a different message to the participants than the Kuhmo institution had done.

First, one could witness the changes introduced into the local traditional culture in the past century (public education, mechanisation and the centralisation of settlements in villages). These changes, along with the process of globalisation, restructured the context of oral poetry, offering novel challenges to folklorists – and this situation was addressed in the discussions of the Summer School. Nevertheless, our impressions concerning the changes in the villages took on a gloomy tinge, since our short visits in Vuokkiniemi and the village of Shomba to the last old singers competent in the use of authentic registers for composing songs emphasised the fact that the process of transition witnessed by us in Karelia involves the loss of cultural heritage.

Secondly, the Karelian villages offered the participants of the FFSS a good opportunity to understand the situation and position of Karelia as a borderland and a multicultural environment, where the local Karelians and Russians experience the presence of non-villagers not only through welcoming city-born relatives and friends or through the immigration of Russian and Belorussian newcomers, but also by hosting Finnish or Swedish tourist groups for one or two nights. And who represented this multiculturalism better in these small villages than the participants of the Summer School? It was indeed noticeable that our kind hosts in the villages were sometimes really excited to have



Seminars in different settings:

on the right, Hanne Pico Larsen and Terry Gunnell listening to presentations in Paanajärvi.

On the left: Yin Hubin in the house and museum of Karelian national writer Ortjo Stepanov (1920-1998) in Haikola.

*Photos by Elo-Hanna Seljamaa.*



us as their guests, and that our visit was an important, meaningful event. The small, cosy rooms of the village school and the cottages, the saunas and the all-night parties of Finnish tango, *humpa* dancing and bottles of local liquor helped mightily to cement the company, and to ease communication in this multi-lingual group, where English, Finnish and Russian were equally frequent in informal discussions. Tasting Karelian homemade dishes, floating in small boats on the river Kemi at Paanajärvi and travelling for long hours on Russian village roads on buses filled with alcohol fumes are undoubtedly unforgettable memories for all the participants, proving that we had much more in common than just an interest in studying oral poetry. This auspicious choice of site for the 2007 Folklore Fellows Summer School thus created a truly inspiring environment, not only for the official panels, but also for the informal discussions before and after.

To end this report, in the name of all the participants, I would like to express our gratitude towards our attentive hosts in both Paanajärvi and Vuokkiniemi, and to our local drivers, who tirelessly

transported us from Finland to the tiniest villages of Karelia and back. We are also indebted to the organisers, Maria Vasenkari, Pauliina Latvala and Emilia Karjula for their stimulating company and for co-ordinating practical organizational issues. Finally, many thanks go to the lecturers, and especially to Anna-Leena Siikala, whose tenacity in once again organising the Folklore Fellows Summer School gave the participants a good opportunity to meet and to learn.

Participants of the 2007 FFSS:

Joonas Ahola  
Elena Dubrovskaya  
Frog  
Eldar Heide  
Kati Heinonen  
Hanne Pico Larsen  
Leah Lowthorp  
Mészáros Csaba  
Galina Misharina  
Elo-Hanna Seljamaa  
Pihla Siim  
Jūrate Šlekonytė  
Eila Stepanova  
Venla Sykäri  
Maria Vlasova  
Yin Hubin

## Symposium "The Concept of Time and Space in European Folklore" in Ljubljana, Slovenia, September 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2007

by Katja Hrobat, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

At the beginning of September 2007, the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology organized an international symposium on the theme of time and space in European folklore. The initiator and prime organizer of the event was Mirjam Mencej (University of Ljubljana), assisted by an organizational board consisting of Francisco Vaz da Silva (ISCTE, University of Lisbon), Zmago Šmitek and Katja Hrobat (both University of Ljubljana). The three-day conference was of an interdisciplinary character. The participants came from across Europe and covered different fields of activity, from ethnology/folklore, archaeology, history and art history to linguistics and philology. The symposium was financially supported by the Slovenian Representation of the European Commission and its successful realization was also due to the support of the head of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Rajko Muršič.

The introductory lecture, delivered by Emily Lyle (University of Edinburgh), introduced the problem of cyclical movements in the Indo-European concept of time. Instead of the familiar representation of continuous movement in one direction, Lyle highlighted the existence of an analogical movement of time in the opposite direction, of temporal reversals in the year. At the annual level, the idea of the reversal of time is closely connected with the idea of death, which finds expression not only in the twelve days in the middle of winter, but also in the time of Carnival and of Easter. The reversal "dangerous time" corresponds to the dangerous "wolf festivities" at the beginning of winter, which have been thoroughly investigated by Mirjam Mencej in her book "The Master of Wolves in Slavic Mythology" (*Gospodar volkov v slovanski mitologiji* (2001), Ljubljana : Oddelek za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo,



Mirjam Mencej (University of Ljubljana), initiator and prime organizer of the symposium "The Concept of Time and Space in European Folklore" in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

*Photo: private collection.*

Filozofska fakulteta (Zbirka Županičeva knjižnica 6)). The concept of danger and the suspense of the moment determining the reversal of time can also throw light on the phenomenon of the "wheel of St. Catherine" in Bohinj, which was the topic of Andrej Pleterški (Institute for Archaeology, SASA, Ljubljana). In this legend, on the day of St. Catherine, one of the community's two streams supposedly turned the mill wheel in a direction which decided the village's fate in the following year.

By way of Plato's myths and comparisons with other cultures, Francisco Vaz da Silva commented on the modern European folkloric data on the theme of alternating space-time in three dimensions – cosmographical, geographical, and biographical. Mentioning the folk perception that newborns resemble old people, da Silva discussed analogies with Plato's model of time-inversions between this world and the other world, which accounts for the similarity between newborns and corpses. The alternation between two opposite time-flows, hinging on dangerous turning points, applies to the so-called life cycle, which posits that the visible time-flow of life, from birth to death, is completed by

an otherworldly time-flow from death to rebirth – which is a position held by Plato.

Based on folklore research, Mirjam Mencej demonstrated that the interaction between the world of the living and the world of the dead occurs on the basis of circular movement. This movement has been proved to be a distinguishing feature of many folklore creatures (for example, Balkan fairies), of people endowed with supernatural powers (the seventh/ninth/tenth child, magicians) and of people mediating between the two worlds. The movement of souls to and from the other world is characterised by circling; in a similar manner, encounters with mythical creatures generate circular movements. At the symbolic level, the same idea is also present in the circular movement of the spinning wheel, the mill, the circular (spiral) dance, etc. According to Éva Pócs (University of Pécs), werewolves alternate between the two worlds in a similar manner, and experience the time-cycles of life and death as well as of death and re-birth. The spatial alternation of the types of existence corresponds to the cyclic conception of time: "wolf time"

and “human time”, life and death. The werewolf occupies a liminal position between nature and culture, and at the same time represents a duality, embodying both nature and culture. At the beginning of each new time-cycle a metamorphosis between the human and the animal-like occurs, a struggle of the two, the ritual of deciding the fate of the werewolf, and the initiation into the alternate existence. “Green George”, a mythological figure from Slovenia and Croatia, also moves between the underworld and this world. Zmago Šmitek demonstrated that parallels with this mythical creature are found across Europe and the Middle East as far as India (chthonian Zeus/Zeus Georgeus, Dionysos, Khidr, Indra). His cyclical movement presents an orientation in time and space from the human and phenomenological point of view. In contrast to Merlin, he does not re-occupy his home, but “dwells in his transmigration”. The “tenth brother/sister”, who may be perceived in the Slovene space both as a mythological and/or human person, is also in a state of continuous movement.

Radvilė Racėnaitė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Vilnius) investigated the funeral customs of the Balts in Lithuanian folklore, and came to the conclusion that in the afterlife both space and time exhibit an inverse symmetry with their equivalents in the human world. Thus, the objects gifted to a man by mythical creatures undergo a transformation when brought to the human realm. Time in the afterlife is concentrated – three days spent in the afterworld represent three hundred or even three thousand human years.

By means of an examination of medieval inauguration rites (curial, the ground floor of St. Mary's church in Aachen, the Carinthian inauguration stone, the imperial crown (Reckoned) etc.), Annette Kehnel (University of Mannheim) demonstrated that the ritualistic power-transfer is preceded by a liminal phase when the person undergoing a “change of status” has to submit to suffering, hu-

miliation and disempowerment. These could be explained as ritually-produced states of weakness, corresponding to van Gennep's *rites de passage*.

According to Mare Kõiva (Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu), different categories of charms can display a cognitive map of mythical spaces and creatures (three maidens/sisters/maids in the sky, the abode of the sky), of biblical locations (the Red Sea, Jerusalem), or even impossible spaces which ordinarily cannot exist. Charms were recited at specific times and specific places, but with certain fixed elements. In a similar manner, different categories of symbolic time and space become “sacred” only at specific moments of contact, a topic discussed by Lina Būgienė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Vilnius). Būgienė analysed Lithuanian folklore in terms of symbolic time: the time of breaking taboos (Sundays, Thursdays, Mass time); moments of supernatural experiences (midnight, dusk); special, “marked” spaces, which include sacred spaces (church, chapel, funeral grounds); as well as everyday localities or household buildings. According to Kaarina Koski (University of Helsinki), one example of such contact between a tabooed time and an interdict space is a church at night, when we find displayed entirely different ontological traits from the everyday, profane sphere. Karen Bek-Pedersen (University of Edinburgh) showed that the ordinary space for spinning, called “djinga”, could also be a space of strong symbolism, connected with ideas about fate. In Scandinavian medieval folklore, and in the archaeological find featuring a weaving tool depicting figures wielding swords, Bek-Pedersen discerned a strong symbolic meaning of spinning in “djinga”, which performed the role of deciding the outcome of distant battles, births and deaths.

Ivan Lozica (Institute for Ethnology and Folklore, Zagreb) discerned in the carnival festivities the annual victory of the cyclic concept of time over the linear, historical concept promulgated by the ruling order. In the case of the bonfire

of the carnival puppet, it is not good or bad that is being burnt; rather, it is the conflict of antitheses: consequently, the ritual enables a new cycle of everyday life to begin. Ljupčo S. Risteski (University Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje) demonstrated that as well as the notion of cyclical time, the perception of time as a permanent but unrepeatable passing category – with the basic measure of the length of a human life – is also significantly present in Macedonian folk culture. People maintained their identities through oral transmission of information and family history. The other type of linear time in folk culture is “historic time”, which is interwoven with mythical characteristics of the world and its creations. This was discussed by Ivan Marija Hrvatin (Institute for Archaeology, SASA, Ljubljana) who has studied oral traditions concerning the origins of settlements in Slovenia after the dragon's death and the liberation of the waters, which marked the passage from chaos to cosmos. Monika Kropelj (Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, SASA, Ljubljana) addressed the issue of personifications of abstract time in mythology and folklore, which are given a more concrete form in anthropomorphic figures marking the days, months, seasons, or simply time itself. In Slovenian folklore, the individual days of the week are represented by female figures, such as Torka (Tuesday), Četrka (Thursday), Petka (Friday), Sobotka (Saturday) and Nedelja (Saint Sunday). Lubomir J. Konečný (City Museum, Brno) identified concepts of time depicted in the Romanesque painting of the Rotunda in Znojmo (Moravia) – from the mythical cycle of the Přemyslids dynasty to the circular space of the temple-cosmic house – as the representation of the cycle of the year. Jūrate Šlekonytė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Vilnius) presented the theme of human time as understood in Lithuanian folklore as a gradation, stretching from the narrative of a giant woman (*ajdinja*), who brings little people in her apron to a period when human beings will be so tiny that they will have to look up to the cock (with a witty conclusion that it might be the cock that becomes

a giant).

Andrej Pleterški emphasised that while time and space have not been perceived as separate entities since Einstein, this same insight was very much alive in the folk cultures of the past. Space-time as a single dimension was a crucial element in the understanding of the natural order, and ultimately enabled the invention of the solar clock. Pleterški spoke about measuring time with space, looking at the examples of an early medieval mythological landscape at Mislinja Valley (calculation of the duration of winter: 2 x 45 days) and a country house in Bohinj, Slovenia.

city/a specific space, indicates a certain *genius loci*. Analogies with the mythic figure bringing the rain and the wind can be found in the folklore of the Slavic and Western worlds, as well as in Greek myths. Josef Blaha (Palacky University, Olomouc) presented the history of the cult of Olomouc, the centre of medieval Moravia, from pre-history to the Middle Ages: until the Middle Ages, the central cult role was played by Michael Hill, an area with a chthonic character centred on St. Michael's Church. After the destruction of Olomouc and the constitution of a diocese, this significant cult role was taken over by "Předhradí" and "Hrad".

Petrović (Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade/SRC SASA, Ljubljana) presented a spectrum of commonly accepted theories of time and space, which argue for independence of cognition from particular languages, and concluded with contemporary theories more conscious of the differences between the two concepts. Petrović put particular emphasis on research that explores the differences in ways that time and space are coded in various languages and cultures.

Miha Pintarič (University of Ljubljana) demonstrated the shift in the conception of time in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when time became a "thing" and was no longer conceived as an integral, constitutive part of the self; in other words, when it became "measurable" and like "money", devoid of any moral or other inherent content. Cyclic, mythic-temporal patterns, succeeded by the sacred aspects of linear time, were banished to the margins of collective consciousness.

The international interdisciplinary symposium discussed the categories of time and space from different perspectives and using diverse approaches, and thereby brought up and opened up some fundamental questions – while also indicating directions future research may take. Moreover, the gathering enabled experts from across Europe to engage in a fruitful and enjoyable exchange of ideas and opinions. The organizers are looking forward to a result of this highly informative event – a compendium, which should be published in 2008.

To adumbrate a summary of the theme of space and time, let us quote an excerpt from a poem which in an imaginative way discloses the evasive nature of these two concepts:

A house, a garden, are not spaces:  
circling, coming to and fro.  
Their apparitions  
open another space in the space,  
another time in time. (...)  
(Excerpt from the poem *A Tale of Two Gardens*, Octavio Paz; V: Paz 1993, 35.)



Katja Hrobat (right) and Nina Vodopivec – both from Ljubljana, Slovenia – enjoying Argentinean spring in September 2007 during the post-conference fieldtrip to the pampas near St. Rosa. Photo by Ülo Valk.

Vitimir Belaj (Faculty of Arts, Zagreb) corroborated the observations of Pleterški with examples from Croatia, namely the cases of spatial points dedicated to Slavic deities, which form a triangle with fixed geometric features. Belaj thus convincingly read and interpreted the Slavic mythic tradition from the topographic records of Croatian space. The author of this report discerned similar spatial patterns, marking the space of water, fire, and thunder, in stone monoliths, which personify the mythic figure of Old Baba in Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia. The threat made to children that they will have to kiss the stone monoliths before they enter the

Pieter Plas (University of Ghent) has pursued research into the mechanisms through which the "language of locality" connects "real" topographies with symbolic spatial concepts, the time of social relations, and other categories. Drawing on Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian ethnographic accounts, his analysis focussed on discursive developments of topics of "locality": the sense of local belonging, local identity, local history, and local "roots". It is possible to discern in the latter how the spatio-temporal anchoring of village communities is verbally (re-)produced and performed. Adopting a linguistic point of view, Tanja

## Joint Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society and Folklore Studies Association of Canada in Québec, October 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 2007

by Liisi Laineste, Estonian Literary Museum/ University of Tartu, Estonia



Liisi Laineste is a doctoral student of Folkloristics at the University of Tartu and has dealt extensively with ethnic jokes in Estonia.

*Photo by Aado Lintrop.*

The joint annual meeting of the American Folklore Society (AFS) and the Folklore Studies Association of Canada entitled “The Politics and Practices of Intangible Cultural Heritage” allowed a number of different issues and viewpoints to be discussed during the four intellectually enriching days of the conference. Despite the great variety of presentations, many common themes characterised the event – one of them being the interaction of lived/embodied heritage and academic descriptions of these practices. Some more general plenary sessions (“The 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage): The Political and Cultural Stakes”, “The Inventorization of ICH: New Technologies, New Approaches” I-II, etc.) directly addressed the academic and political discourse influencing the categorization of intangible cultural heritage. The speakers gave an overview of the developments that have taken place since the enactment of the UNESCO convention on safeguarding intangible heritage, and expatiated on the possibility and necessity of definitive lists of cultural masterpieces. They also discussed the inevitable question of why the USA has not yet signed the convention, with Rieks Smeets (Intangible Cultural Heritage Section, UNESCO) giving an insider’s view of the issue,

acknowledging the many problems that might arise in a multicultural society such as the United States when trying to extract more “valuable” practices from the intricate pattern of lived experience. The board stressed the value of NGOs and other means of citizen-participation in deciding upon such issues.

Besides these intensely political and practical issues concerning the role of the folklorist in a globalizing world, about 17 simultaneous, more specific panel sessions completely filled all four days of the conference schedule. The very intense conference programme probably left the majority of attendants with the feeling that a lot of valuable insights were being missed in choosing some panels over others. Among this abundance of topics, some of the more prevalent issues will be presented in this overview.

A persistent theme was that of space: the symbolic meaning of the concept, different (emic-etic) interpretations of space, the politics of these interpretations (as described vividly in a paper by Anna Lydia Svalastog (Dalarna College), “Colonizers, Maps, and Creation Myths: The Swedish Case” in the panel on Scandinavian identities), and the (most often etic) detachment of time and space with the related politics of representing the other. Another topic that featured in a number of panels was the medium itself: how the medium, above all the Internet, changes the tradition it conveys. The Internet includes all kinds of distinct and mixed genres, and transmits remakes and “mash-ups” of known stories, beliefs, etc (e.g. as exemplified in the paper by Elizabeth Tucker of Binghamton University, “Guardians of the Living: Characterization of Missing Women of the Internet”). New media, with their opportunity for multivocal, simultaneous, global in-



The Lower Town of Québec City, not far from the site of the 2008 AFS/FSAC joint annual meeting.

*Photo by courtesy of the AFS.*

teraction are not only changing the subject matter of folklore, but also the methodology necessary for describing such changes. Researchers need to be mindful of the content and specificities of the new media in order to generate more insightful analysis. Folklorists and ethnographers bear a great responsibility in designing the study of new media. The academic public is still waiting for a comprehensive theory and adequate description of the field of online studies.

Questions concerning identities were also discussed, for example, in relation to the creative creolization of traditions and indigenous folklife as well as to multiple and negotiated identities in multicultural societies (e.g. the paper by James Leary (University of Wisconsin), “The Importance of being Ole”). This topic is especially relevant as the site of this year’s conference was Canada, a country that has successfully combined two official languages and multiple nations in a stable state of integration. It is also an issue worth



studying in the Estonian (or more generally Eastern European) context, and it has been studied intensively over the years; nevertheless, a more practically-oriented approach could also be developed here, one that would not only describe and analyse issues of identity, but also engage in dialogue with everyday political decisions, thus intervening in the otherwise disembodied and estranged politics of the state. This (qualitative) orientation is absolutely vital in creating a knowledge-based, stable society and even in predicting or avoiding conflicts based on identities inside and between nations. Another relevant theme was also the ever-present problematics of postcolonialism, represented by case studies from many parts of the world (India, Siberia, also a more general approach presented by Diarmuid Ó Giolláin (University College, Cork), “Folklore, Folkloristics, and Colonial and Postcolonial Power; or the Logic of the Modern State”).

My choices included all the panels on doing folklore online, but also those on immigration, identities and creolization, and on methodological tools (e.g. phenomenological analysis) in the discipline. Out of sheer curiosity, and in order to experience a more panoptic view of the event, I also attended sessions on the interconnections of literature and folkloristics, on health, Scandinavian studies, dietary customs, queer studies, and Mormon identities.

I will now briefly discuss the papers that most tickled my academic interests. The subject of aggression and violence is closely tied to academic discussions about the nature of humour, the main field of my study. Though William Westerman’s (Princeton University) presentation (“Folklife, Translations, Migrations: Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Violence Question”) on intangible cultural heritage and its violence did not deal with violent tradition in itself, it alluded to it on several occasions and forced the participants to think about the violence inherent



AFS Executive Board members Dan Sheehy (Smithsonian Folklife Recordings) and Guha Shankar (American Folklife Center) sharing ideas for US-China folklore collaborations with Fang Xiao of Beijing Normal University, a member of the official China Folklore Society delegation to the AFS, and Juwen Zhang of Willamette University, the convener of the AFS Eastern Asia Folklife Section.

*Photo by courtesy of the AFS.*

in tradition on several levels. First of all, there is the tradition itself, which is said to be violent “in essence”. This can be the traditional fox hunt in England, or female circumcision in Africa, or even offensive jokes in the USA. But on a second level, it can only be violent “in essence” in the eyes of the onlooker. There is an agent involved, who makes the decision. If a once-important tradition is losing ground, it can be included in the list of items that need safeguarding. It will be evaluated, and an important part of this process is ethical evaluation. Here the values of the dominating (Western) culture are of great importance and will influence the decision. According to these cultural norms, it is not ethical to sustain a violent tradition, as supporting violence is opposed to the exercise of human (or for that matter animal) rights. Thus, some “live” traditions that might be of importance to the people practicing them can consequently be negatively stigmatized and forced to alter on (alien) moral grounds. That is also why it is necessary to involve people in compiling the lists of UNESCO heritage objects, but even more importantly, to reflect on the politics of decision-making and categorization. From similar considerations arose the recent polemics on ethnic jokes about Blacks and Rus-

sians in Estonian jokelore. Academics should ask through whose eyes is it ethical to collect racist jokes, and who will decide what is racist and what is not definitively racist.

Another interesting branch of thought unfolded itself through the presentations of Tok Thompson (University of Southern California) (“Man or Digi-Man?: Folk Music for the 21st Century: Beat-Boxing, Mashups and More”), of Lynne McNeill (Utah State University/Memorial University of Newfoundland) (“The End of Internet: A Folk Response to the Provision of Infinite Choice”), and others who touched upon the Internet as a resource for folklore studies. The vastness and ungraspable nature of the medium is readily apparent in meta-folklore about the Internet itself. In many ways, the medium not only transmits content, but is also used to discuss the medium itself. This tendency can be obvious or completely incorporated into the form and content of the tradition – as in stories describing the medium (end-of-the-Internet tales) or in parodies, mash-ups and collages. Both of these express the idea of postmodern individuals facing the advantages and drawbacks of infinite choice available online. Overabundance of information about catastrophes, for instance, can

similarly result in news parodies, jokes and pictures that, in a way, serve as a cognitive tool for the audience. Many studies have shown that less choice in shops leads to more purchases, and more choice just leaves people with an uncomfortable feeling of not grasping the whole picture. These mash-ups that help people cope with information overload are also present in all kinds of Internet portals (e.g. YouTube), which serve as a perfect location for describing new trans-cultural and geographic music traditions, e.g. beat-boxing. This is an especially interesting case as the collage here consists not only in mixing different songs, videos and music, but it also in presenting a hybrid form of man-imitating-machine. And mastering this new electronic vernacular is simultaneously empowering to some, while leaving others powerless in terms of Internet literacy. And resonating with this, though focussing more on Internet identities, was Sarah Moore's (Memorial University of Newfoundland) paper ("Coming Out Online: Recognition of Gay Self Through a Virtual Community"), which analysed how people find yet another function for the Internet, making use of its anonymity: the Internet is very helpful in taking a step in a "rite of passage" (in this case revealing one's homosexuality online).

Last but not least, though more entertaining than strictly academic,

was the enlightening session on psychoanalytical approaches in folklore research. At the risk of dealing the listeners a true Freudian overdose, Greg Kelley (University of Guelph) presented an analysis of alterations to the folk tale "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" and of jokes featuring Snow White ("When Snow White Drifts: From Grimm to Disney and Beyond"), criticizing the "disneyfication" of traditional fairy tales. By making his film more child-friendly, Disney actually highlighted the very elements he had sought to expunge. The absolute absence of sexual cues was also highlighted in Kelley's presentation, after which I will never be able to watch the Disney version of the fairy tale without laughing hysterically.

For many participants, the cream in the AFS and FSAC joint meeting was the Daniel Crowley Memorial Storytelling Concert and book signing, which represented a unique experience of doing and viewing folklore at the same time. During this event, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (New York University) interviewed her father Mayer Kirshenblatt on stage, presenting to the auditorium a book of his drawings from memory of Poland before the Holocaust. The slideshow of paintings was complemented by her questions and his stories of childhood – ways of life, people, activities, relationships, emotions. At the factual level, it was a

brilliant and cordial storytelling event. On the metalevel it was a reflection on the main (and much-discussed) device in the folklorists' armoury. It was the materialization of the notion that folkloristics is the art of "listening with love". Simultaneously a symbol of the folkloristic experience from both an academic and a layperson's point of view, and also the very act itself, the storytelling event was an unforgettable experience.

Social events also included numerous organized and unofficial meetings of work groups (e.g. Newfolk@AFS, Folk Narrative, etc), banquets, and a luncheon meeting with newcomers, where the main rules for a successful conference attendance were pinpointed. Every evening ended with instrumental and vocal music jam-sessions, which were great fun for active participants and onlookers alike. For an intellectually enriching conference experience I would like to thank the AFS board for granting me an International Student Award.



The 2008 members of the AFS Executive Board. L-R: Sandy Rikoon, University of Missouri; Dan Sheehy, Smithsonian Folklife Recordings; AFS President-Elect [2008-2009 President] Elaine Lawless, University of Missouri; Lucy Long, Bowling Green State University; Diane Goldstein, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Kay Turner, Brooklyn Arts Council; Guha Shankar, American Folklife Center; Patricia Turner, University of California-Davis; AFS Executive Director Tim Lloyd; Bill Ellis, Pennsylvania State University; AFS President [2008 Past President] Bill Ivey, Vanderbilt University. Not present: Olga Nájera-Ramírez, University of California, Santa Cruz; Elaine Thatcher, Utah State University.

*Photo by courtesy of the AFS.*

## Folklorists' Festivity in Latvia: Annual *Krisjanis Barons* Conference in Riga, Latvia, October 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, 2007

by Toms Kencis, University of Tartu, Estonia



Toms Kencis is a doctoral student of Folkloristics at the University of Tartu. He is studying works on Latvian mythology from the 1920s to 1940s in the ideological context of these decades.

Photo: private collection.

Within the framework of the second *Letonika* congress<sup>1</sup>, the annual *Krisjanis Barons* conference was held in Riga during October 30-31, 2007 (*Krisjanis Barons, 1835-1923* – father of Latvian folkloristics<sup>2</sup>). The theme chosen for this year's meeting was "Festivities and celebration: the processes of tradition in Latvia". Representatives of various disciplines offered 24 presentations in all, and some of them featured traditional performances. As was metaphorically said at the opening by the Chair of the Latvian Folklore Archive, Dace Bula, the conference itself resembled traditional celebrations in the sense of bringing to a conclusion several projects carried out in the course of recent years. Although united under one common title, the presentations were surprisingly diverse with respect both to the fields and objects of research and to the methods applied.

The first day of the conference was dedicated primarily to the analysis

of different historical celebrations. Speakers examined such long-defunct festivities and rituals as the first night-watch of horses at pasture (*pirmā pieguļas nakts*), the fishermen's spring celebration (*zvejnieku Vastlāvis*) and the syncretistic rites of St. Agate's day (February 5<sup>th</sup>). In particular I would like to single out the presentation by Sandis Laime on the watching of horses at pasture – a tradition that has not been studied since the 1970s. This very ancient tradition is linked with the patronage of horses and can be viewed as one of the most ambiguous issues in ancient Latvian mythology. Ieva Pigozne-Brinkmane analyzed, in a very interesting manner, on the basis of historical and archaeological materials, one particular motif in folklore materials – "danced-out shoes." Thus, she disproved claims by previous researchers about the metaphorical nature of this motif in celebration-related folksongs and fairy tales. Syncretism in Latvian festivity traditions was excellently exemplified by Rita Treija, whose account of St. Agate's day revealed both the theological and folkloristic content of this originally Catholic celebration. Other participants, similarly, analysed different elements of traditional festivities in their social and historical contexts, with two presentations being dedicated respectively to the etymology of celebration titles and to the euphemistic use of the term 'festivity' (*svētki*) in the context of reproductive taboos. While the majority of presentations were based on archive materials and field research, that given by Elga Melne was exceptional in that it used autobiography as the primary source. Her report on the dialectics of everyday life and celebrations in the course of her lifespan provided unique material about several minor rites from the beginning of the 20th century.



Dace Bula, chair of the Latvian Folklore Archive. Photo by Una Ciemleja.

In summary, it could be said that the traditional was discussed in a traditional manner. The day was closed with the presentation of "Magnificent songs" (*Greznās dziesmas*, edited by Rita Treija) – a book by the Latvian theologian and folklorist Ludis Berzins that analyses the history of collecting, publishing and interpretation of Latvian folk songs from the first written songs in the 16<sup>th</sup> century until 1844 when the first substantial collection was published by G. Bitner. The book had been awaiting publication since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and as the first in a series of publications about Latvian folklore, it can be considered an important milestone in the history of Latvian folkloristics.

The second day of the conference was different both in terms of the topics discussed and the disciplines represented, for celebrations were analysed from the viewpoint of social anthropology, philosophy and communication science. Papers focussed mostly on festivity traditions of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and especially on transformations of celebrations relating to paradigmatic socio-political changes. Thus winter solstice and midsummer night rites, International Women's day and other specific festive traditions were analysed in the context of media, gender, politics, etc.

Dace Bula was the only contributor to cover not just Latvian but Baltic festive traditions more broadly. Her presentation "Celebration of gender: the 8th of March in the Baltics" looked at the transforming meanings of International Women's Day since the collapse of the Soviet Union: on account of its association with the totalitarian regime, the celebration of Women's Day was rejected at first, but has now experienced a comeback and acquired new meanings both within the popular culture and officially. Guntis Pakalns examined the winter solstice celebrations on the Internet, offering rich illustrations of these new forms of expressive culture and festive traditions that are more or less exclusively virtual. Baiba Krogzeme-Mosgorda looked at the same tradition, but in a different medium – the postcard, which has attracted no previous scholarly attention and is thus a new genre in Latvian folkloristics. Sergejs Kruks, one of the most famous public figures among Latvia's intellectuals, analysed analogue, non-digital reality from a very different point of view. His presentation was devoted to monuments as centres of ritual and anti-ritual activities in Latvia, and focussed on the role of monuments in public mass-celebrations in particular. The most recent tradition discussed at the conference was Riga Pride, a festival of sexual minorities, analysed by anthropologist

Aivita Putniņa. She looked at both the emblematic aspects of this event as well as the discursive practices surrounding it, emphasizing the role this celebration plays in the forming of a community. Anda Beitāne reported on several representative cases where celebrations have built the context for traditional music. In view of the time period covered, the methods applied were not limited to the analysis of archive or field-research materials, but drew also on contemporary mass media.

One could say that Latvian folkloristics fully engages with the reality of new technologies, and besides addressing the classical objects of the discipline – ancient folk traditions and vernacular culture – its representatives categorize, analyze and interpret contemporary expressive culture in its various forms. Because of the time constraints, the majority of participants chose to introduce listeners to the wider context of their research as opposed to the details of a particular issue or expanded analysis. However, there were also presentations that focussed in an original fashion on the scholarly praxis itself or on the existence and dynamics of a tradition.

To conclude, the state of Latvian folkloristics is hardly comparable with the deconstruction of scholarly

practices and their objects topical in Western disciplinary meetings. Traditions and processes of expressive culture provide so many opportunities for research that the work of several generations is needed before we can engage in the appraisal of those researches and conduct discussions about specific theoretical questions of this kind.

<sup>1</sup> *Letonica* is an umbrella concept that includes all scholarly activities related to the idea of Latvia and Latvian – various disciplines of language, customs, history, biography, music, etc. Thus this congress contains fourteen virtually separate sections, and the folklorists' conference is just one of these.

<sup>2</sup> K. Barons gathered the greatest collection of Latvian folk songs and played an important role in Latvian national awakening of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Audience of the 2008 Krisjanis Barons conference or the harvest festival of Latvian folklorists. Second row first from the left: Rita Treija, editor of Ludis Berzins's monograph *Greznās dziesmas on the history of collecting and studying Latvian folk songs*.

Photo by *Una Ciemleja*.

## Conference and Festival of South Asian Folklore

### New Delhi, December 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2007

by Ülo Valk, University of Tartu, Estonia

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) comprises eight countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, The Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature (FOSWAL), led by its founder-president Ms Ajeet Cour, has a long history of building bridges between these countries by arranging writers' conferences and other major cultural events. Now, for the first time FOSWAL invited folk artists and folklorists to the capital of India for four intense days



Vasmally Pothily, a tribal artist belonging to the Toda Tribe from the Nilgiri Hills, breaking coconut for inauguration.

*Photo by Satyajit Das.*

of performances and discussions. It is hard to imagine a more central place for a folklore festival – every day performances were held in Central Park, the heart of the circular Connaught Place, from where streets proceed in eight directions like the spokes of a huge Dharma Wheel. Both festival and conference were broadcast by different TV channels and widely covered by the mass media. All of a sudden, folklore was the centre of attention of millions of people from the high-

est ranks of politicians to the children and youth of Delhi, for whom performances were arranged in schools and colleges. Thus indeed, folklore became a key-word during these days in Delhi – comparable to Dharma as a noble doctrine, symbolised by a chariot wheel, setting things into motion and causing positive changes in people's lives and their thinking.

South Asian folklore is rich in strongly expressive genres that enchant the audience in spite of language barriers, mysterious symbolic, mythical and religious tropes – either Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic or of indigenous traditions – to a great extent unknown to outsiders. More than four hundred performers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka mesmerised the audience, but also engendered spontaneous dancing, laughter and even awe. Witnessing ritual possession, heroic adventures from oral epics, the appearance of deities in mask dances, martial arts' mock-fights, dramatic or comic folk theatre and dozens of other vivid performances open one's eyes to the non-verbal aspects of folklore. I was truly enchanted by the scenes from the ancient epical traditions of the Mahabharata and Ramayana, brought to life by folk performers from the Kushan Gaan troupe from Bangladesh and Teejan Bai and her troupe from Chattisgarh. Foujdar Singh offered another magical performance – of battle scenes from the heroic epic Aalha from Bundelkhand. Remarkably, several folk groups were invited to Delhi from tribal areas and remote corners of the Indian subcontinent, such as the Bhils from Gujarat, Todas from the Nilgiri Mountains of Tamil Nadu, Jenukurubas from Karnataka and performers from the North Eastern States of Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

The three-day meeting of about fifty South Asian folklorists was modestly called a seminar by the organisers, but its scope and academic quality was equal to a successful professional conference. Shri Nihal Rodrigo's (Sri Lanka) inaugural address gave a broad picture of the contemporary manifestations of folklore in the SAARC region. While some traditions are thriving, others are neglected and disappearing; therefore a more enlightened approach to folklore is needed to support its true practitioners. In his keynote address Jawaharlal Handoo (India) showed the incapacity of the elite to understand the folk discourse in India and other countries of the SAARC region, where 80% of the people live in a predominantly oral culture. Handoo showed the potential of folklore for creating public space in civil societies. He also emphasized the need to establish a single institution solely devoted to the study of folklore of the SAARC countries. In her comment on the keynote lecture Sadhana Naithani (India) stressed the need for empowerment of the marginalised folk artists, who often live in the poorest conditions and whose work tends to be misused by the media industry. Lauri Harvilahti (Finland) discussed the dynamics of oral and literary processes in contemporary Asia, where ethnocultural and linguistic diversity is endangered. Safeguarding folklore requires the documentation and archiving of oral traditions, supplemented by the training of young scholars to carry on the discipline. According to Lauri Harvilahti's vision, archives should be seen as resources for creation, used both by folk artists and researchers, whose work need a solid empirical basis both now and in the future.

Mahbulul Haque (Bangladesh) has studied the transformations of the folklore, popular culture and national



Ülo Valk and Lauri Harvilahti (Helsinki, Finland) in the Folk Arts Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts and Literature.

Photo by Satyajit Das.

identity of Bangladesh. A growing tendency seems to be the integration of elements of local and regional folklore traditions into the national culture. Fouzia Saeed (Pakistan) gave a thought-provoking paper about the place of women in the folklore of the SAARC region. She challenged the romantic concept of folklore as a valuable ancestral heritage, to be passed on to the next generation with minimal distortions. Instead, she laid emphasis on changing traditions and the potential of folklore to support emancipation of those who have been suppressed. Fouzia Saeed adduced several examples to illustrate the negative aspects of ancient traditions – such as polyandry, which is not a free choice for women (as opposed to polygamy); the exclusion of women from the public sphere and the imposition of rigid restrictions during their periods – all connected to the old concept of impurity and its related taboos. However, the paper also offered positive examples, such as the matriarchal traditions of Bhutan and the Maldives, where widowhood or divorce are not seen as stigmas, in contrast with many other regions.

Chandrabhanu Pattanayak (India) offered a theoretical insight into ways of communication and related folklore

processes. Proceeding from Walter Ong's concepts of oral and literary cultures and secondary orality dominated by mass media and electronic modes of communication, he argued that the age of primary orality is returning. Web-blogs, online chatting, sending SMS messages and the advent of visual news are all challenging the former modes of communication based on the static word of print. As South Asian folklores manifest a dynamic flow of different cultures into the synthetic culture of the mainstream, this basic contradiction and opposition between 'synthesis' and the 'other' has to be deconstructed. Tulasi Diwasa stressed the need for developing new folkloristic theories and methodologies instead of borrowing them from other disciplines. Kishore Bhattacharjee (India) presented a synopsis of the development of folkloristics in India, Nepal and Bangladesh, starting from the 1970s. During recent decades leading folklorists have maintained a creative dialogue with trends in international scholarship, such as the schools of performance studies, psychoanalytic approaches, structuralism, oral literary criticism, and reflexive and post-colonial research.

Several papers offered in-depth case studies from different regions. Soumen

Sen (India) examined the formation of Hindu ideologies, domestic life and city-lore among the middle-class of the emerging metropolis of Calcutta (Kolkata) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His main focus was on the discourse of the religious leader Shri Ramkrishna, whose teaching combined elements of goddess-worship (*shakti*) and practices of devotion (*bhakti*) and relied to a great extent on urban folklore. Desmond Kharmawphlang (India) examined the social context of folklore in contemporary North-East India, which has long been seen as a secluded area of wildlife sanctuaries and ethnic communities with "unspoiled" identities. As an example of such ancestral traditions, Desmond Kharmawphlang has studied the ethnic genres and oral histories of the Khasi people, who have a strong, even tangible connection with an ancient megalithic culture. In Khasi traditions, stones are charged with mythical and legendary narratives from the past. Mahendra Kumar Mishra (India) discussed the contents and ritual context of the oral epics in Orissa and the status of singers who nowadays lack patronage. However, the epic culture is strong, as performances last up to six hours and songs handle diverse topics, such as the origin of castes, the creation of gods, goddesses and human beings, and other myths. Syed Jamil Ahmed (Bangladesh) gave a dense paper on the cult of Manik Pir – an anthropomorphized entity, worshipped by both Muslims and Hindus in Western Bangladesh and South Eastern regions of West Bengal in order to overcome pestilence among domestic animals and sometimes to cure people of serious diseases. The role of priests is performed by Muslim faqirs, but Hindus sponsor most of the performances. Syed Jamil Ahmed interpreted this cult as a resistance strategy of a subordinate group, manifesting cultural difference to subvert the officially approved practices and doctrines that dismiss various forms of popular religion as superstition. Shandrasiri Palliyaguruge (Sri Lanka) gave a paper on historical legends from Matara township, the



Folk artists from Rajarhat, Kurdigram, Bangladesh who continue the indigenous art form Kushan Gaan, presenting scenes from Ramayana.  
Photo by Abhijit Das.

southernmost part of Sri Lanka. There is a place there, called “the garden of the seven Bo trees” (Hath Bodiwatta), where the ashes of the royal family and the poet Kalidasa are supposed to have been buried. According to folk legends, Kalidasa was visiting his friend, the poet king Kumaradasa, but was murdered by a courtesan, who wanted to claim the prize money for his couplet. Because of this tragic incident, the king and the five queens burned themselves to death on the pyre together with the poet. Though featuring in folklore, this episode is not described in the official history of Sri Lanka or in Sinhalese classical literature. Shandrasiri Palliyaguruge discussed the discrepancies between folkloric and literary discourse and the links between these legends and the epic Ramayana.

Of course, it is impossible to review here all the papers that were delivered and ideas that were adumbrated at the conference. One fundamental point was made by Jawaharlal Handoo, who said that the weakness of folkloristics is due to the fact that much attention has been paid to the “lore” and the “folk” has often been forgotten. Indeed, the conference laid strong emphasis on the social dimensions of folklore and the daily life of the traditional communities of contemporary South Asia.

A resolution was accepted and sent as a memorandum to the SAARC secretariat to safeguard folklore and cultural and linguistic diversity in the region. The document says that folklore “needs to be protected against abuse by the burgeoning culture-industry and the consequent distortion and loss.” The resolution also urges the governments of SAARC countries to support folkloristics and the documentation of folklore. A proposal was made that “An institute to this purpose may be established in one chosen country in the region, and the concerned Ministries may establish link-institutions in their respective countries, as well as founding chairs and initiating programmes in the major universities for folklore studies and research”.

Thus, this meeting in Delhi has a great chance of becoming historic – with positive effects for South Asian and world folkloristics. Some concrete steps have already been taken since the conference to strengthen the institutional grounds of folkloristics and develop the discipline in the SAARC region and India in particular. The ISFR and the international community of folklorists are involved in making these future plans. The folklore festival and the conference are to become annual events in different SAARC countries. The gratitude of the participants goes

to Ms. Ajeet Cour, Prof. Chandrabhanu Pattanayak and Prof. K. Satchidanandan and their team, who did marvellous work to guarantee the success of this major event. The conference venue was provided by the Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature; generous financial support to cover the travel costs, board and lodging of the participants was provided by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.



From left to right: Jawaharlal Handoo, Kikkeri Narayan (both from Mysore, India) and Nihal Rodrigo (Sri Lanka) at Connaught Place, New Delhi.

Photo by Ülo Valk

## Once More Concerning the Origin of Fairy Tales. A Parable and its Exegesis

by Heda Jason, Israel



Heda Jason has published works on ethno-poetics, Jewish and Indian folktales, genre theory and many other topics. She is the author of "Motif, Type and Genre. A Manual for Compilation of Indices & A Bibliography of Indices and Indexing" (FF Communications 273. Helsinki, 2000).

Photo by courtesy of FF Communications.

### Walking and Swimming

One of two brothers left home and went to the woods to practice *tapas* (= austerities). The other brother remained in the village as a householder. After 25 years, the ascetic brother returned to the village, naked, emaciated and dirty.

– Welcome home, brother! Oh, my! What do you look like! What happened to thee, poor brother? – said the householder-brother by way of greeting.

– I made *tapas*. 25 years of *tapas* have given me the power to walk on water! – proudly answered the other brother.

– To walk on water? In 25 years? What for? Didn't both of us learn in two months how to swim?  
(Adapted from *Tibetan Folk Tales and Fairy Stories*, ed. by S. N. Ghose. Bombay: Rupa, 1986)

I was highly surprised to read in the ISFNR Newsletter no. 2 (2007), pp. 17-19, the report on the discussion of the problem of the age and origin of fairy tales, adorned with the photos of the proud leaders of the two camps, namely the "from written to oral" camp, i.e. from written collections/early modern written works to the oral tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century" vs. the camp "from oral to written", i.e. from oral traditions of the preliterate 4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> millennia B.C.E. to the oral tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century, with occasional documentation in collections of antiquity (e.g., Aesop, Panchatantra, Jatakas), the Middle Ages (e.g., Gesta Romanorum, the Arabian nights, Kathasaritsagara) and early modern collections (e.g., Boccaccio, Straparola). I rubbed my eyes: did the Newsletter misprint the date of the discussion and should it have been 1807? Or 1859 (Benfey?), or 1931–1935 (Wesselski/Anderson)? Have the toilers in our discipline forgotten everything, but absolutely everything, that was written before the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or before the advent of the PC? Very sad. How about taking a break with a good cup of coffee, for consolation? And after the rest, we can ask for instruction from histories of our discipline, e.g., A. Bach's *Volkskunde* (1960), H. Bausinger's *Formen der "Volkspoesie"* (1968, chapter I, pp. 9–64), and M. Lüthi's *Märchen* (1961)? These books are old, from the ante-PC times, but, as the problem has been solved long ago, they give a good overview and a bibliography bound to enhance our folkloric education. Sorry, they are not in English, but should we follow the meek and the poor in spirit to order to become virtuous? And practice *tapas* to attain the ability to walk on the water of scholarship instead

of swimming in the lake which the work of our scholarly predecessors prepared for us?

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The International Society for Folk Narrative Research is a scientific society whose objectives are to develop scholarly work in the field of folk narrative research and to stimulate contacts and the exchange of views among its members.

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Happy ending of the ISFNR Interim Conference in Santa Rosa, Argentina. L-R: Martha Blache, Mehri Bagheri, Ulf Palmenfelt, Elo-Hanna Seljamaa, Ana María Dupey, Ülo Valk, Ezekiel Alembi, María Inés Poduje, Manuel Dannemann.

Photo by Risto Järvi.