

INSTITUTE OF LITHUANIAN LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE
DEPARTMENT OF ESTONIAN AND COMPARATIVE FOLKLORE, UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
INSTITUTE OF LITERATURE, FOLKLORE AND ART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

9th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG FOLKLORISTS

(IR)RELEVANCE OF CLASSICAL FOLKLORISTICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

September 18-20, 2019

Institute of Lithuanian
Literature and Folklore
Antakalnio g. 6, Vilnius



ABSTRACT BOOK

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Organizers

INSTITUTE OF LITHUANIAN LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE

In Partnership with

DEPARTMENT OF ESTONIAN AND COMPARATIVE FOLKLORE, UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
INSTITUTE OF LITERATURE, FOLKLORE AND ART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PHD STUDENTS IN THE FIELD OF ETHNOLOGY "VERITAS
ETHNOLOGICA"

Organizing Committee

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ASTA SKUJYTĖ-RAZMIENĖ, DIGNE ŪDRE, ŪLO VALK

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ROKAS GELAŽIUS

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

September 18, 2019

- 10.00-11.00** Registration
- 11.00-11.30** Opening of the Conference
- 11.30-12.30** Keynote lecture. Prof. Timothy R. Tangherlini (University of California, Los Angeles) Searching for ISEBEL: Aggregation, Search and Visual Analytics for Distributed, Multi-Lingual Folklore Collections
- 12.30-14.00** Lunch
- 14.00-16:00** 1st session
-

Folkloristics in the 21st Century: New Methodologies vs. Classical Approaches (Part I)

Chair: TUUKKA KARLSSON

Folkloristics and Digital Challenges

Chair: ASTA SKUJYTĖ-RAZMIENĖ

Digne Ūdre

Is Folklorism Still Relevant as an Analytic Category Today? The Case of Latvian Mythological Ornament

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Digital Folklore and Digital Fieldwork: Researching Online Humour with its Offline Context in Mind

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Analysis and Rethinking of the Collected Folklore Texts from the Early Communist Years (1949–1953) in Hungary

Deepika Kashyap

Production and Circulation of Nyishi Folklore in the Digital Realm

Mathilde Frances Lind

Her Unwritten Legacy: Needlework Philanthropy and the Folklore Canon, 1883-1909

Siyun Wu

Being Online and Being There: Some Reflections on Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in an E-Estonia

Aurimas Bačiulis

Cognitive Historiography — An Alternative Approach to Witchcraft

Uģis Nastevičs

The Image of Latvia and Latvians on Japanese Twitter: Reflections on People

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16.30-18:00 2nd session

Exploring Traditional Fields

Chair: LINA LEPARSKIENĖ

Alina Oprelianska

Seven-year-old Children as Androgynes in Ukrainian Wonder Tale

Rokas Sinkevičius

Thunderer – A Judge and a Punisher in a Love Relationship

Rita Balsevičiūtė

Folk Medicine in the Ancient Lithuanian Written Sources

Folklore and Intertextuality

Chair: KIKEE D. BHUTIA

Daisy Barman

Telescoping History through Mythology: A Study of “Midnight’s Children”

Dovilė Valaitė

Tradition of Dream Interpretation in Islam: Origin, Conception and Typology

Kristina Dolinina

“Who is your *Guru?*”: Traditional Knowledge Transmission and Changing Institutional Setting in *Kathak* Dance Education

18.30 Cultural evening (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore)

September 19, 2019

09.00-10.00 Keynote lecture. Prof. Lotte Tarkka (University of Helsinki)
Imagine Folklore... On the Vernacular, Creativity, and
Tradition

10.00-10.30 Coffee Break

10.30-12.30 3rd session

Folkloristics in the 21st Century: New Methodologies vs. Classical Approaches (Part II)

Chair: KATALIN PAJOR

Interdisciplinarity as a New Methodology

Chair: ANASTASIYA FIADOTAVA

Tuukka Karlsson

Indexical Cues in a Kalevala-metric
Incantation Register

Daiji B.

The Construction of Chinese
Ges(a)e(rology under the
Interdisciplinary Perspective

Andrius Kaniava

All stories are true:

A Phenomenological Approach to
Folklore Studies

Ilze Ļaksa-Timinska

Reading Autobiography:
Literary Experience

Rūta Latinytė

Rethinking Relationships: The
Situations of Avoided Gifts in
Contemporary Lithuanian Society

Ala Grinkevič

Activities of Franciscan
Communities in Lithuania and
Japan: Kretinga and Joetsu
Case Studies

Nijolė Vailionytė

Methodological Challenge
of the Studies of the
Childlessness' Phenomenon

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00 4th session

Life Stories and Folklore

Chair: RAMINTA LISKAUSKAITĖ

Katalin Pajor

Researching Life Stories in an Interdisciplinary Way

Elvira Žvarte

„I think about my diary as a small but fundamental part of myself that will survive long after me”: Influence of Authors and Depositors on Archiving Autobiographical Materials

Kikee D. Bhutia

Old Wine in New Bottles: The Life Stories and Narratives of Ambiguity about Dhuk Iha (Poison Deity) in Sikkim

Ernesta Dambrauskaitė

Narrative as an Approach for a Daily Routine Cognition

Intangible Heritage in Modern Contexts (Part I)

Chair: DOVILĖ VALAITĖ

Vincenzo Di Giorgi

BALFOLK. Rediscovering Tradition and Human Connection. 3 Case Studies

Lucilla Scolaro

Celtic Festivals in Northern Italy. Exploring the Possible Applications of Folk Studies in Cultural Event Management

Elīna Gailīte

“Folk dancing creates a close relationship with my country and the nation”

Justīne Jaudzema

How Folk Groups Choose Their Repertoire? The Role of Folklore Archives Nowadays

16.00-16.30 Coffee Break

17.00 Guided Tour in Vilnius Old Town/Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania

September 20, 2019

09.00-10.00 Roundtable discussion: Authority, Normativity, and Freedom in Folklore Studies (chaired by Prof. Ülo Valk, University of Tartu and Prof. Dong Xiaoping, Beijing Normal University)

10.00-10.30 Coffee Break

10.30-12.30 5th session

Challenges of Ethno-centered Research Approach

Chair: ANDRIUS KANIAVA

Yaryna Zakalska

Image of the Enemy in the Creolized Text in the Folklore of Ukrainian Resistance in the 21st Century

Paulina Vituščanka

Negotiating National Belonging in Belarusian Interwar Vernacular Writings

Ágnes Eitler

Good Friday Ablution: Interpretation of a Newly-invented Custom

Vytautas Budvytis

Jonas Basanavičius: Origins and Relationship with the Native Culture

Social Issues and Cultural Practices

Chair: DIGNE ÜDRE

Tiger Juntao Du

"Your Taiwan, My ROC", the Censorship of 'China' under the Political Transformative Discourse of Democratic Taiwan Society

Dalia Sabaliauskiene

Ritual Politeness in Contemporary Iranian Culture: Tehran Case

Šarūnas Rinkevičius

The Role of Language in Constructing Modern Identity in Lebanon

Raminta Lisauskaitė

Refugee Muslim Women: Adapting Woman Lifestyles and Relevance of Asylum Ethnography

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 6th session

Narrating Contemporary City

Chair: VINCENZO DI GIORGI

Aušra Teleišė

Reminders: the Landscape
Story of Marijampolė in the 21st
Century

Karina Taruškaitė

A New Approach to the Memory
Narratives of Habitants of Kaunas
Districts – Theory of Micro Narrative

Kristina Jaskūnienė

Narratives as a Way of
Understanding Contemporary
Urban Society

**Intangible Heritage in
Modern Contexts (Part II)**

Chair: GABRIELLA VÁMOS

Katarina Stradner

Multi-sited Ethnography
Approach: UNESCO
Nomination of Singing to the
Accompaniment of Gusle

Vaida Rakaitytė

The Way to Reconstruct the
Christmas Father. Case Study of
Lithuanian Museums

15.30 Closing of the Conference

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

In 2019 the 9th International Conference of Young Folklorists (Ir)relevance of Classical Folkloristics in 21st Century invites folklore students and young scholars to Vilnius (Lithuania). This conference is an international academic event, which annually brings together advanced students and researchers from different countries to come to Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania, and gives them an opportunity to present their research to an international audience. The conference aims at fostering academic communication, collaboration, and research in the field of folklore. Especially this year, when the conference joins forces with Veritas Ethnologica, national conference of PhD students in the field of ethnology.

The 9th International Conference of Young Folklorists invites scholars to investigate the current stage of folkloristics. Although researchers have raised this issue for several decades already, it is still relevant. Different local tendencies or research traditions enrich and widen the scope of the discipline. We do not question the necessity of folkloristics and its research methods in the 21st century, however constant emphasizing of interdisciplinarity and marginalities leaves one pondering about the situation in the centre of the discipline. What is the focus of folkloristics today? Are classifications and genres still relevant, or are we already dealing with completely new cultural phenomena that do not necessarily comply with the classical approach? How can balance between classical and innovative research methods help us understand the human ways? What problems or destinations can we gain from interdisciplinary research practices? Is it possible already to define old and new schools in folklore research?

Focusing on the situation in folkloristics, the topics for the conference include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Current situation and possibilities for classical folklore studies in the 21st century;
- New methodologies vs. classical approaches;
- Decline or development of classifications in contemporary scholarly context;

- Life story as the 21st century's genre;
- Interdisciplinarity as a "new discipline" ;
- Digital challenges: methodological approaches related to choosing the internet as a place for field work;
- Revitalizing concept of tradition;
- Challenges of ethno-centred research approach;
- Folkloristic approach as a way of understanding the contemporary society.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF LITHUANIAN LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE

The Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore (formerly known as the Institute of Lithuanian Studies) was established in 1939 and consisted of three departments: Lithuanian language, Lithuanian history and Lithuanian folklore. With the establishment of the Academy of Sciences in 1941, the Institutes of Lithuanian Language and Lithuanian Literature were also set up. As decided by the Presidium of the Academy in 1952, both Institutes were merged into one – the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature, but in 1953, the folklore section having been transferred from the Institute of History, the Department of Folklore was established. The present name and structure of the Institute was legitimized on April 16, 1990 as an independent scientific institution.

The Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore comprises two buildings, designed by August Klein and erected in 1904–1906 by the engineer Petras Vileišis. Until 1931, it was the residence of Vileišis family, but since 1932 the buildings became the centre of Lithuanian culture: the Lithuanian Science Society (1907–1940) and Rytas Society were located here; the house by the street provided space for a printing house, where “Vilnius’ News”, edited by P. Vileišis, was published. This building also housed a book shop of Lithuanian books and here the First Exhibition of Lithuanian Art took place in 1907. From 1941 on, the buildings have been the property of the Academy of Sciences of Lithuania and are valuable as an architectural monument of local significance.

Current mission of the Institute is implementing the state priority for Lithuanian studies by carrying out long-term fundamental research of Lithuanian literature, folklore, and old Lithuanian literary heritage; gathering, organizing, preserving, promoting the intangible and the documental heritage of literature and folklore as well as ensuring the development of Lithuanian studies in the European and global scientific scene. Using research results the Institute strives to enhance the cultural identity of the Lithuanian society and republic.

KEY-NOTE LECTURE Wednesday, September 18

Prof. TIMOTHY TANGHERLINI

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Searching for ISEBEL: Aggregation, Search and Visual Analytics for Distributed, Multi-Lingual Folklore Collections

Two years ago, a group of researchers from the Netherlands, Germany and the United States received funding to develop an “intelligent” search engine for belief legends — the project became known as ISEBEL. One of the main goals of the project has been to develop a method for researchers to work consistently and from a single interface across international folklore archives, returning useful results from searches across collections in many different languages, and offering a suite of visual tools for their analysis. In this talk, I explain the motivations for the original research, describe the work of the group over the past two years, and discuss some of the ongoing challenges. Since there are many different ways to structure a folklore collection, I discuss some of our solutions to making disparate collections compatible for search, while preserving local control over resources. Similarly, there are significant challenges in multi-lingual search. If you search for “witches” in one collection, how can you find those witches in another collection, particularly if one collection is entirely in Danish and the other in low German? After presenting some interim solutions for multi-lingual search, I explore some of the tools we are developing for understanding folklore collections at scale and across regions. Finally, I explain how groups can join the larger ISEBEL consortium, as we move toward making folklore archives and collections readily available to researchers, students and the public across borders and across cultures.

KEY-NOTE LECTURE

Thursday, September 19

Prof. LOTTE TARKKA

University of Helsinki
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Imagine Folklore... On the Vernacular, Creativity and Tradition

The paper addresses the methodological potential of imagination in the study of folklore and vernacular culture. Vernacular imagination encompasses the cultural, collective and traditional aspect of imagination, including imaginaries and the strategies of creating and transforming these imaginaries in poetic language and conceptual categorization. The paper argues for the specificity of vernacular imagination. Rootedness in language, oral expressive traditions and processes of memory gives vernacular imagination qualities that differ from literary imaginaries and their production.

In conceptualizing folklore, imagination has been an undertheorized residual category. With a brief survey of history of research, the paper will argue for the centrality of the imaginary in a plausible theory of folklore performances, texts, and their cultural interpretations. The concept of imagination has the potential to connect creativity, variation, tradition, and conventions of expression into a multidimensional notion of folklore as cultural praxis an individual action.

With empirical reference to Finnic oral poetry, the paper discusses the interface of tradition and imagination. How were the cosmogonical narratives, notions of the otherworld and utopian discourse elaborated upon in poetic language and ritual practice? How is the imagination operating in these poetic and cognitive processes? The performance of the mythic poems transforms the unspeakable and unseen into social facts and verbalized or visualized representations. In mythic language, the creation of unseen worlds dialogically structures the everyday and historical realities and has a transformative potential.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Friday, September 20

Prof. ÜLO VALK

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Prof. DONG XIAOPING

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Authority, Normativity and Freedom in Folklore Studies

Folkloristics is an international discipline with a wide range of approaches, schools and research foci. The classics have left us a rich heritage of theories and methodologies in their influential works. Is there something in the legacy of the discipline that has become a burden for developing innovative research? How can a young folklorist find his or her own voice and offer new insights if the authority of tradition seems to be overwhelming, sometimes prescribing topics, methods, theoretical frameworks and even conclusions? What about ideological constraints and prescriptions in the past and today? What is the role of inspiration and freedom in scholarship? The roundtable discussion invites all participants to think along these lines.

AURIMAS BAČIULIS

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Cognitive Historiography: An Alternative Approach to Witchcraft

The evolution of academic methodologies is a natural and ongoing process. Different approaches change and complement each other, scientists offer new theoretical approaches to a wide range of cultural phenomena. The term 'interdisciplinary' is continuously streamlined in the academic world, which makes us to reflect on the content and applicability of it. In the opinion of the author, it is a set of different tools that can take different forms depending on the subject of the research and the purpose of the researcher.

At present, it is not enough to select one angle of view, one category and explain the complex phenomena such as witchcraft. This type of phenomenon forces complex researchers to use different disciplines and develop certain integrated academic instruments.

A new discipline has been emerging in recent years, which suggests looking at mythological representations on the basis of human cognitive characteristics: the ability to receive information, to process, transform and express it. The attempt to understand human thinking on the basis of psychological theories seems to be fully justified. Witchcraft as a phenomenon is an integral part of human understanding and thinking, from brain activity to social contexts. In order to gain more objective and comprehensive view of this phenomenon, we need to understand cognitive abilities of human beings. These methodologies are used by the researchers who focus on a human particularly as a biological being, who is evolving and have certain cognitive characteristics, which are of great importance to their perception.

The purpose of the report is to present a rather new methodology and to consider prospects of applying it in the research of a phenomenon that is remote in time.

RITA BALSEVIČIŪTĖ

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Folk Medicine in the Ancient Lithuanian Written Sources

The origins of Lithuanian folk medicine lie in ancient Lithuanian and Prussian religious beliefs, bans, rites, rituals, theophanies, and so on. In order to understand the origins and meaning of therapeutic methods of folk medicine, especially medical magic (incantations, beliefs, spells, prayers), it is necessary to investigate the early written sources, i.e. the 13th to the end of the 17th century, that provide data about the ancient Baltic religion. Fragments of folk medicine knowledge are captured in „Sūduviai book“, writings of Lukas Davidas, Jono Lasickis, Motiejus Sikorskis, Matas Pretorijus. Although these sources are later records (made during the recession of the old religion), they contain knowledge about the ancient gods, oracles, sacrifices, religious bans, prayers to the pre-Christian Lithuanian and Prussian gods, zoomorphic and dendromorphic theophanies. The fragments of knowledge are reflected in folk medicine tradition of the 19th–21st centuries.

So far, Lithuanian folk medicine in early written sources has not been systematically studied or is investigated only in relation to another subject, such as sacrifices, religious bans, prayers, characteristics of the ancient gods, theophanies (see Balsys 2008, 2010, 2015, 2017, Usačiovaitė) 2005; Vičinskas 2018). According to R. Petkevičius (2012), some elements of the therapeutic sacrifice rituals described in the sources of the 16th–17th centuries are widely found in fragments in Lithuanian medical tradition's practices and concepts of the 19th–21st centuries.

The aim of the presentation is to review data on folk medicine in Lithuanian written sources of the 16th–17th centuries; to determine the possible reflection of the data concerning methods of folk medicine in the 19th–21st centuries. Comparative, analytical, and interpretative methods are applied in the study. The study helps to trace the meaning and origins of some therapeutic methods of folk medicine, the possible evolution of folk medicine traditions.

DAISY BARMAN

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Telescoping History through Mythology: A Study of “Midnight’s Children”

Salman Rushdie is a powerful postmodern writer whose novel “Midnight’s Children” has established him as a literary figure of international repute. This novel explores contemporary reality through the abundant use of myths. It is the only Indian English novel which deals with the entire Indian subcontinent and traces multidimensional historical development from 1920s to 1970s. The term ‘myth’ suggests a traditional tale common to the members of a community, race or nation. It imaginatively explains the supernatural elements in terms of some natural phenomenon. Mythology is an intuitive form of apprehending and expressing universal truths. It has always been a part and an operating factor in literature. The postmodern literature has seen a significant increase and strong interest in myths. Salman Rushdie creates a modern-day version of the epic Mahabharata with all significant aspects of modern Indian experiences. He uses the epic conventions of numerous digressions and narration of multiple stories woven into each other. As the story unfolds, several myths and legends are referred to. There is a mythic resonance in the names of the characters. To compose the protagonist Saleem’s story, the author makes use of several mythologies. For example, Shiva is the Hindu god of destruction, thus in the novel, Shiva is a threat to order and stability, an embodiment of chaos. It is in this sense that the paper explores the history represented and highlights the diverse elements that come together to create the Indian experience through the use of myths.

KIKEE D. BHUTIA

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Old Wine in New Bottles: The Life Stories and Narratives of Ambiguity about Dhuk Iha (Poison Deity) in Sikkim

Prior to its merger with India in 1975, Sikkim was a Himalayan Buddhist kingdom ruled by the Chogyal Dynasty that was formed in 1642 under the influence of Tibetan theocracy. Its demography today is primarily made up of the Lhopo (Bhutia), Rong (Lepcha), and Nepalese ethnic groups. Additionally, there are people from Bihar, Bengal, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and other parts of India, who are generally referred to as 'madhise' (plainsmen), as well as Tibetan refugees who arrived there after Tibet's occupation by China in the 1950s. While communal harmony has long been the norm, this ethnic diversity also always carries the possibility of creating disorder. Keeping this complex social landscape in mind, across Sikkim, belief narratives of Dhuk Iha (a poison deity) also often interpreted as *jig rten las 'das pa'I srung ma* (worldly deities) – *bpal ldan Iha mo* (Wojkowitz 1993[1996]:22), assume various and contested forms among different communities, in practice often demonising and 'othering' each other. Therefore, in this paper I offer a detailed investigation into the ambiguity of identifying the Dhuk Iha. I argue that the stories of the deity remain the same yet in different setting, thus "old wine in new bottles". Often, the deity and her ambiguous position can be interpreted within the context of a growing Buddhist influence on local/non-Buddhist traditions and belief systems. Integration of the deity into Buddhist world view also bring about its demonization. Hence, Dhuk Iha can be seen not only as a perpetuator but also as a victim.

VYTAUTAS BUDVYTIS

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Jonas Basanavičius: Origins and Relationship with the Native Culture

Dr Jonas Basanavičius (1851–1927), a physician, political figure, broad-minded researcher-specialist of Lithuanian philology, one of the key figures in the movement of the Lithuanian National Revival, created a mental image of the Lithuanian past that laid the foundation for the formation of the modern Lithuanian people.

Based on his origins, Basanavičius was a representative of traditional culture; however, observing the manifestation of traditional culture was not an ordinary standpoint in the second half of the 19th–the beginning of the 20th century. The purpose of collecting folklore and studying Lithuanian culture was to get familiar with and understand the society, and, most importantly, observe and evaluate it, as opposed to educating people. For Basanavičius, concern for tradition and culture was a way to reflect and change his own way of existence.

In this context, there are several essential questions that can be raised: how is his concern for the history of culture related to the change in the Basanavičius' national identity? what connects Basanavičius with the native culture and what is the degree with which he distances himself from that culture during the years? In view of these questions, the main aim of this presentation has been formulated: by analyzing the origins of Basanavičius, to draw attention to his relationship with the native culture which, in this particular case, would be treated as an attempt to grasp the relatively early Basanavičius' disposition towards folklore and, especially, the basis and motives behind collecting (and recording) it.

"Having been born and raised in a purely Lithuanian corner, from my early days, under the instream of my parents, within myself I started to revive the Lithuanian spirit," wrote Basanavičius in his autobiography. The historical landscape of his native Bartininkai, marked by hill forts still in memory of the traditions of the Crusades and relatively late introduction of the serfdom (at the end of the 18th century), the loving surroundings of family home, the tradition of cultural memory of "the happier old days" that had been passed on to Basanavičius by his parents from the forefathers since an early childhood, and, at the same time, struggle to adopt the traditional peasantry way of life, his disconnect from the peasantry daily routine, allow to assume a very specific Basanavičius' relationship with the native culture.

DAIJI B.

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The Construction of Chinese Gesa(e)rology under the Interdisciplinary Perspective

“Gesa(e)r” is an epic of Tibetans, Mongolians, and many ethnic groups in the Himalayas, Siberia, and Central Asia. Gesa(e)r epic preserves the humanistic thoughts and artistic essences of different eras and different nationalities.

In the 1930s, Ren Naiqiang, a Chinese ethnologist, explored, commented and translated the epic of Gesar, and created the contemporary Chinese Gesa(e)rology after the founding of New China. The approach embraces the perspectives of Tibetan studies, Mongolian studies, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, linguistics, literature, and folklore. In China, the Gesa(e)rology, which is based on the Tibetan epic “Gesar” as the main research object and covers more than ten ethnic groups including Mongolian and Tu nationality, has gradually formed.

This paper focuses on the formation of Chinese Gesa(e)rology through interdisciplinary dialogue.

ERNESTA DAMBRAUSKAITĖ

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Narrative as an Approach for a Daily Routine Cognition

Daily routine has many definitions in ethnology that often can include quite different dimensions of life. This presentation introduces a daily routine as quite contradictory and to the people's understanding as a constant, however a changing dimension of reality. In a private area, a daily routine is expressed as an entirety of habits, actions and activities that are connected with the material expressions of consumption. One of the main possible methods to get acquainted with a daily routine in ethnology is an individual verbal narrative, which helps to understand how a respondent perceives a daily routine, how it is apprehended and experienced. Narrative is an irreplaceable approach for a daily routine cognition that brings a researcher closer to the vision of a respondent and helps to find balance between the emic and etic points of view. The aim of the presentation is to reveal how, according to theoretical approaches and empirical research, an individual verbal narrative can help to get acquainted with a daily routine.

KRISTINA DOLININA

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“Who is your *Guru*?”: Traditional Knowledge Transmission and Changing Institutional Setting in *Kathak* Dance Education

Like in many other fields of theoretical and applied knowledge in the context of South Asia, the knowledge of performing arts most commonly was transmitted through the *guru-śiṣya* parampara – traditional teaching model from teacher to student. *Kathak*, one of the dance styles that developed from performing traditions of northern central India and is currently recognized as “classical” and practiced in India and beyond, is no exception. “Since the ancient times” this traditional educational system has been a warrant of passing on the “authentic” musical and dance knowledge in the families of hereditary brahmins-bards - “storytellers” usually from father to son. In this way, *guru-śiṣya* parampara served as one of the holding pillars of “socio-artistic organization” (Neuman, 1990) of *kathak* community.

In the last few centuries there have been many changes in economic, political, cultural and social environment of India, which brought major influences in the modern scenario of *Kathak*. Recently, while India is further keeping the path of fast development, globalisation, mass media dissemination, spread of consumerism culture (Appadurai, 1996), with the dance field becoming very competitive and business-oriented, the situation of dance transmission proves to be even more complicated.

The paper aims to look deeper into the recent situation of *Kathak* knowledge transmission and is partly based on the field work conducted in various *kathak* communities in 2017 and 2018 and my own experience as a dancer and student of *Kathak*. The participant observation, interviews, stories of teachers and students in various places would, hopefully, help me to overview the “ethnographic presence” in the field of dance knowledge transmission.

ÁGNES EITLER

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Good Friday Ablution: Interpretation of a Newly-invented Custom

This study examines the interpretations of the Good Friday Ablution, a newly-invented folk custom in a Hungarian village. Based on my fieldwork, I would question that using the folkloristic approach to analyse revitalized or even invented folk traditions would be a successful method to understand contemporary society. The field of the observation is Ecser, a village located in the commuter belt of the Hungarian capital. The inhabitants' Slovak origins can be explained by their ancestors' movement from northern counties of the Hungarian Kingdom in the 18th century. Nowadays Ecser is a popular destination to move from the capital. The ceremony of Good Friday Ablution has been organized on Friday before Easter Sunday since 2012. Establishment of this custom came from the Association for Safeguarding of Traditional Culture which is strongly connected to the Local Minority Self-Government. Care for local peasantry traditions as well as Slovak origin is highly emphasized. Behind the scenes, a significant factor could be ethnic revival, a general process in case of villages with Slovak origins in the immediate vicinity of the capital. Moreover, the revival and invention of traditions may strengthen interpersonal relations and cohesion between the members of the local community as they can symbolize the continuity from the common past to present days.

ANASTASIYA FIADOTAVA

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Digital Folklore and Digital Fieldwork: Researching Online Humour with its Offline Context in Mind

As much of the contemporary folklore goes digital, so must the folklorists. While traditional ways of conducting fieldwork can provide us with abundant data, some new genres of folklore remain in the 'grey zone' if we try to research them using oral interviews or participant observation. These are the genres that are specific to the online reality and cannot be easily performed in offline communication.

Humorous folklore is a good case in point. Memes, viral videos, gif-animations and other forms of digital humour are becoming more and more popular, gradually replacing oral jokes, especially among younger generations. These forms of humour have a lot of features of conventional folklore genres (i.e., anonymity, variability etc.) but they are different from oral folklore in many respects. They rely primarily on visual information, can spread extremely fast and are increasingly globalized. As they are readily available in large quantities and in open access online, they might seem an easy prey for a researcher. However, images, videos or texts per se do not always reveal the ideas behind sharing them. The context surrounding them remains illusive unless we turn to the people who spread them.

Researching this context requires a combination of conventional fieldwork approaches and digital ethnographic methods. It is essential to capture the personal background that resonates with specific humorous examples and understand the motivations behind sharing them with particular audience. The delicate balance between digital and conventional fieldwork calls for new skills and approaches on behalf of a researcher.

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“Folk Dancing Creates a Close Relationship With My Country and the Nation”

Since in Latvia there are folk dance researchers, stage folk dance has been one of their research subjects. The “traditional” folk dance, which is a social dance, part of the everyday life and festivities of the society is one genre, however, stage folk dance, that is stylized, standardised folk dance, and mostly danced in concerts on the stage and is very popular now, is a different genre. Although they are not the same, today the border in the eyes of the dancers is not strictly drawn.

The survey, that was conducted this year among stage folk dancers, revealed interesting tendency – significant part of the dancers think that they dance folk dance. They speak about stage folk dance and say, for example: “Folk dances are important to Latvian nation and traditions. Folk dancing creates a close relationship with my country and the nation”. Despite the fact that stage folk dance is an art form, that is a debatable, and mostly not connected with “real” folk dance, there are few discussions between dancers as such.

The aim of this paper is to show stage folk dance as an important part of folk culture, to highlight and summarize inner perspective which belongs to the dancers, not dance researchers, and also share my reflections that have arisen while looking at this phenomenon from a folklorist perspective.

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BALFOLK. Rediscovering Tradition and Human Connection. 3 Case Studies

The term 'balfolk' (or 'bal folk') refers to a repertoire of traditional, regional and popular dances, which have been rediscovered and reworked in France since the 1970s. In a balfolk event it is possible to find forms of dances in pairs, in chains, in circles, in cortège, etc... Some of these dances, like the "gavotte" and the "rondeau", have strong local connotation while others, like the "mazurka" or the "polka", are not linked to a specific area. The success of these kind of folk dances has certainly led to a choreographic codification and to the extrapolation from their original context. After having spread to other European countries, balfolk events have assumed peculiar characteristics depending on the regions where they have taken root. In Italy, for example, they gave rise to the so-called "Mazurke Klandestine" and were enriched by local influences and dances. The value of balfolk meetings lies deeply in the relational dynamics that dancers intertwine with one another. Through the contact, the gazes and the sharing, balfolk dancers rediscover fleeting moments of poetic sociality. Not less important is the aspect concerning the re-appropriation of public places and squares where citizens gather for these occasions. Through the analysis and comparison of the meetings that take place in Paris, Venice and Palermo, this study intends to show the current socio-cultural potential of the dance practices of the balfolk phenomenon.

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Activities of Franciscan Communities in Lithuania and Japan: Kretinga and Joetsu Case Studies

Franciscan's parish communities in Lithuania and Japan were chosen for the comparative study. An overview of community activities in Kretinga and Joetsu respectively will be provided.

Anthropological questions in the sociological-cultural context of the groups and the psychological traits, the expression of identity have not been analysed so far.

The object of the study is the following: the Franciscan communities (Secular Franciscan Order, activity group leaders) and their activities in contemporary Lithuanian and Japanese societies.

Tasks: to review the religious studies of Franciscan communities in Lithuania and abroad by making use of the academic literature, fieldwork materials and observation; to study the social, cultural, educational activities of Franciscans as well as the contribution of these activities to the socio-regional aspect and the impact of these activities on the overall context of Lithuania; to study the devotion of the greatest Franciscan communities in Lithuania and Japan, its forms of social expression, aspects as well as the influence of faith on personality.

The material provided by individual community members represents both the personal relationship within the community and the group.

The work continues with the exploration of the distribution of communities and the characteristics and aspirations of social activities and interactions between different groups in communities; the study has been carried out in a comparative intercultural context on the international level.

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Narratives as a Way of Understanding Contemporary Urban Society

People develop place attachment and create relations to different city objects even nowadays while facing urban challenges, alienation and anonymity. Scientists exploring the relationship between narrative and urban space have no doubts about the importance of storytelling. This paper analyses the role of the local people in the processes of urban change. The author uses interdisciplinary approach, content analysis and interpretative methods to identify interrelationship between concepts of place, space and narratives in the context of public space transformations. Much attention is given to comparison of conventional urban planning and place making through storytelling. The analysis shows that narratives about the place, its past (as well as its future) reveal not only certain facts, but also the inner concern and judgment of the narrator. The stories that narrators share with their neighbours, friends, relatives or strangers create a kind of local individuality and let us show how people give meaning to a particular place. Transformation of public spaces often reveals a contradiction between urban development professionals and local residents. In conventional urban planning, the stories of local people are not relevant, and a strong orientation towards the future determines absence of strong people's relationship to the place. A different approach is evident in the place making through storytelling. Only a human makes a certain city area a place of attraction and narratives of local people could be a very useful way of understanding the contemporary urban society.

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How Folk Groups Choose Their Repertoire? The Role of Folklore Archives Nowadays

One of the main tasks since the establishment of Archives of Latvian folklore in 1924 has been to collect and archive folklore materials gathered in Latvia. Among other materials, there are large amounts of folk song lyrics and melodies written down, as well as many audio recordings. At the beginning of the 20th century the aim was to document the existing traditions that are handed down from generation to generation. Now, as the times have changed, the materials of the archive has gained a new meaning among folk groups and folklore performers. Nowadays often the singing tradition and the repertoire of the songs have not been inherited from previous generations but learned from archival materials. In a way, the archive has become an informant for new folk groups, thus in some ways it has changed its role.

In this paper, I will focus on the role of folklore archive and folk groups that use archives as a source for their repertoire, the ways and reasons how the repertoire is made. The presentation will offer an insight to the perspective of performers.

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“Your Taiwan, My ROC”: The Censorship of ‘China’ under the Political Transformative Discourse of Democratic Taiwan Society

Republic of China (ROC), commonly known as Taiwan, is a de facto a democratic state in East Asia. Following the Chinese Civil War, loss of Chinese mainland since 1949 and establishment of People's Republic of China (PRC), the dispute of legitimacy of ROC and PRC on the level of the international diplomacy has continued until today. However, since the democratic wave of Taiwan in 1980s and 1990s, the Taiwan self-consciousness and even Taiwan independent movement has become a kind of voice in politics. The transition of identity makes dilemma in the status of the unit ‘China’ in the nation’s name, institute names, media attitudes and social behaviour. Even though Taiwan is a highly free society in the world, the political correctness sometimes still causes self-censorship in the use of the unit ‘China’. Even the officially announcements from government, the transition of the name of the state from “Republic of China” to “Republic of China (Taiwan)”, “Taiwan” or “This Country (中華民國)” by President Tsai Ing-wen, silently happened.

In this paper, I focus on the period since 1987, when President Chiang Ching-kuo lifted the 38 year-long martial law to present era of Taiwan, to analyse the practical use and transformation of the unit ‘China(中國 中華)’. Besides, I explore the transformation under the politically correct additional symbols of China, such as the national flag and national anthem from Kuomintang authoritarian era, the pictures and statues of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, the plum blossom and others. The topics of my discussion also include indication of PRC in Taiwan, namely transition from “Chinese mainland” to “China” and how internal self-censorship influences the expressions.

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***All Stories Are True:* A Phenomenological Approach to Folklore Studies**

In Lithuania, there are no cult buildings and very few artefacts of pre-Christian religion. Our sacred places are natural objects – hills, rocks, streams, forests, etc., rich with folklore tradition from 19th–20th century. It is part of a sacred landscape, full of meanings and ideas instead of material culture. However, investigation of ancient sacred places as a rule belong to the field of archaeology and history. As far as conventional archaeology operates, lack of artefacts makes it difficult to apprehend sacred places. This situation forms a methodological issue which could be solved by interdisciplinary discussion.

In this paper, I am going to share my thoughts about phenomenological approach to the investigation of sacred sites and, on the bigger scale, folklore studies altogether. Human experience lies at the very centre of this approach. In order to understand human experience we have to see into people's stories. Because a folklore text (whether it is a tale, myth, song or a dance) is, before anything else, a story. And in the field of phenomenology *all stories are true*.

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Indexical Cues in a Kalevala-Metric Incantation Register

Kalevala-metric poetry is a multi-generic oral tradition that was practiced in linguistically and ethnically diverse Finnic area mainly up to the 20th century. In the paper, the focus is on one of this poetic language's genres, namely, incantations.

The paper discusses possibilities of a new methodology for studying this classical subject. The methodological framework treats Kalevala-metric incantations not only as a genre, but also as a semiotic register formation, or a cultural model of action. By this definition, Kalevala-metric incantations are a register performed via speech and other semiotic signs, linking incantation repertoires to stereotypical indexical values, which are recognized by a socio-historical population.

The methodology I use in the study enables inspection of ritual specialists' strategies and allows looking into the stances taken by them to fulfil their goals in the ritual performance. By analysing use of moderative suffixes, dispensation strategies, and imperatives, I propose that the performers strategically chose appropriate stances and lexical forms included in them in order to reach desired goals in ritual situation.

The theoretical framework I apply in the paper includes both folkloristic and linguistic anthropologic theories and illuminates individual strategies of performers and their ways of evaluation, positioning, and alignment in incantation texts. Thus, the paper contributes to relevant discussions regarding the prospects of interdisciplinary research in the field of folkloristics. It shows that multidisciplinary approach to classical research subjects offers new prospects, and as such provides subject for discussion between the disciplines.

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Production and Circulation of Nyishi Folklore in the Digital Realm

Nyishi community are the major ethnic group in Arunachal Pradesh, India. Despite having a spectacular culture and tradition, they were less known to the world because of their geographical location. But, the penetration of the internet has transformed the community and culture globally; even places that missed the age of land-line phones are getting cellular-based mobile systems. Now, the concept of identity and culture is closely associated with the interface between technology and society. This advancement in technologies has largely influenced the Nyishi community. Now, they can circulate, recreate, and save their cultures and traditions with the help of the Internet. Being an ethnic group, the Nyishi community have many legends and stories about their evolution and existence, which are now available on the online platform. The penetration of the Internet has provided a space for the Nyishi community to represent and disseminate their folk identity. The Nyishi folklore is now moving through the Internet and, at the same time, the Internet has created new forms of Nyishi folklore because the technology has enabled new kinds of communication to occur. The world is slowly learning about the existence of the Nyishi community and their vibrant folk culture. This paper is going to examine the influence of the Internet on the production of culture.

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Rethinking Relationships: The Situations of Avoided Gifts in Contemporary Lithuanian Society

The aim of this paper is to reveal a special case of gift giving – the situation when the gift giving is avoided either from the perspective of the giving part or from the receiver. The situations analysed in the paper are found in common individual practices in contemporary Lithuanian society and were collected during individual non structured interviews.

The studies of everyday practices based on phenomenological anthropology gives the opportunity to look at the experiences of gift giving practices in modern society within a particular cultural field. Every analysed situation of a foreknown yet avoided gift or a will to avoid it occurs as a unique moment of how a person is experiencing him/herself in the world, establishing an intersubjective distance and re-evaluating the relation towards the Other. Such situations include gifts, feasts, parties, treats and celebrations. Some of the examples indicate cases when a person leaves the country to travel just to avoid an important celebration. Some take the vacation at work to not be worried about treats and gifts. Some intentionally announce to all the guests and family members about the “no gift giving policy” or finds many different reasons to be absent from the party.

The occasions of gifts that were intentionally avoided or not can be recognized as moments of perception and change of interpersonal relationships.

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Her Unwritten Legacy: Needlework Philanthropy and the Folklore Canon, 1883-1909

In graduate seminars on the history of folkloristics, the earlier portion of the timeline, sometimes even up to the 1960s, is heavily weighted toward the written contributions of men. Many of these contributions are from a time period before the discipline was formalized through university programmes and professionalization, so these men often were something like “proto-folklorists” who researched and wrote in ways that are recognizable to folklorists today and that serve as precursors to later folkloristic studies, thus securing their places in the canon even when their findings are no longer relevant. Historical and institutional conditions shut many female researchers out of the canon, and many never had the opportunity to publish in the first place. Nevertheless, many women took a serious interest in folk culture and in ethnographic research that they directed to efforts outside of or alongside of publishing written texts. Women’s work related to traditional culture often followed a different trajectory from the work of their male counterparts, and much of this was determined by gendered expectations and limits to their professional output. In this paper, I will discuss two women from the late 19th century whose projects align them with contemporary ethnographers, but who have received little recognition in academic circles. I will show how examples such as these can widen our disciplinary histories to include more women as precursors to contemporary public folklorists, whose durable legacies include a wider range of products as well as academic publications.

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Refugee Muslim Women: Adapting Woman Lifestyles and Relevance of Asylum Ethnography

Muslim refugee women living in a completely different cultural setting adapt to it their everyday practices. First and foremost, it is the interpretation and adaption of religion (which is Islam) related practices, their dress code, women role(s). Women construct their belonging in regard to their country of origin, ethnic inheritance, upbringing and religion. The factors are both uniting these Asian women on different levels and also disconnecting them. Their belonging is in constant negotiation and creation trying to adapt their woman lifestyles, being Asian refugees women, to unfavourable social climate by choosing such strategies as: "do not stick out", not to draw attention to themselves (that covers dressing, public behaviour); dividing their everyday lives between public and private to exercise their women roles (as wives, as mothers) reclaiming their status at the same time or they limit their social interaction to people from the same country of origin/region/religion/destiny (i.e. being a refugee)/sex/social status. Those unable to cope with the changed social status, way of life (e.g. switch from communal to individual) chose to leave the country.

The relevance of asylum ethnography constitutes of representation of environment, life and stories of vulnerable people – women that went through asylum process – it gives them a voice.

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The Image of Latvia and Latvians on Japanese Twitter: Reflections on People

During the last seven years the number of Japanese tourists to Latvia has quintupled. The circulation of the information regarding Latvia and Latvians in Japanese has risen, yet polarization of the experiences has been shown likewise. Therefore, the image of the relatively poorly known Latvia is shaped by responses on the open space (i.e., the Internet). It directly affects the further inbound tourist dynamics. An interdisciplinary folkloristics research reflecting the Latvianness via Japanese point of view may provide solutions in several sectors, thus eventually propelling economic performances. The goal of this research is to analyse tweets published in Japanese reflecting the characteristics of Latvians as people – a segment of more than 377 thousand tweets acquired from the year 2006 to 2018.

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Seven-year-old Children as Androgynes in Ukrainian Wonder Tale

In accordance with the Ukrainian custom, up to 7 years old children wore the same type of the clothes and were considered as no-gender. We may suggest that children up to 7 years old age are androgynous. This belief is reflected in a few Ukrainian wonder tales, such as "The Rolling-Pea Boy" and "The Seven-years-old Girl".

The category of androgyny here appears as sex, not as gender, because in this case the hero/heroine still stay in the sacred sphere. Furthermore, it means that binary gender system is not relevant for Ukrainian wonder tales, and as far as it is connected to the sacred sphere, all the traits of the profane sphere are blurred out. Yet another sphere appears - the androgynous one. Moreover, there is a specific way of the hero`s/heroine`s moving between the sacred and profane spheres in Ukrainian wonder tales. The aim of the research is to reveal specific traits of androgyny in Ukrainian wonder tales about 7 years old children.

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Researching Life Stories in an Interdisciplinary Way

The genre of modern autobiography is derived from the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* in 1769. This autobiographical concept was not just a new literary genre, but it also shows gradual changes in the way people view their lives, how they understand and interpret events from their lives and how they build their life stories. Although not all social groups adopted this mindset right in the 18th century, the autobiographies published by writers with peasant origin in Hungary in the 20th century already show a change in attitude in this cultural group as well. This change also influenced the structure of verbal life stories, and in general the way in which we talk about our lives. Regarding the last theories (for instance narratology, Foucault's discourse analysis, Lejeune's autobiographical pact-theory) one property of modern life stories is that they reflect the identities of the given personality. What can they tell us about the identities of an individual or a given group? And what can this information about identities tell us about the culture of the 21st-century people? I will try to answer these questions in my presentation based on the results of my research about ethnic/national identity within the Hungarian minority in Slovakia performed in the last two years. I will introduce my results using the theoretical background of ethnography and the methods of phenomenological hermeneutic and discourse analysis.

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The Way to Reconstruct the Christmas Father. Case Study of Lithuanian Museums

Research paper reveals how many museums in Lithuania nowadays revitalize the tradition of Christmas Father in a pure ethnographic manner going back to times of the late 19th and the early-mid 20th centuries. Results show that only few museums offer educational programmes, where invited participants can explore the real grey-scale colour Christmas Father who at the same time is both a very poor man wearing reverse fur coat and a man of wisdom blessing people around and demonstrating the expertise of folk entertainment. The main research aim is to figure out how museums' archives are connected to the content of the programme scenario, how ethnographic educational environment and ethnographic vocabulary are in use, what distinguishing features of the mentioned museums make them to be original, actual and relevant in the competitive world. Methods used: questionnaire, participatory observations, researcher's diary writing, interviewing in-situ both in museums and afterwards in the class.

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The Role of Language in Constructing Modern Identity in Lebanon

The Lebanese alphabet was introduced by the Lebanese poet and thinker Said Akl in 1961. This act marked an effort to de-arabize both Lebanese language and identity, naming the language as a separate entity from Arabic. The creation of the Lebanese alphabet was based on the theory that Arabic script is alien to Lebanese culture while the use of Latin script, which has its roots in the Phoenician script, was more accurate since Lebanese people were called to be descendants of Phoenicians. The ideology of the followers of this view is called Phoenicianism. However, Phoenicianism has not managed to represent the whole Lebanese society with Arabic being an official state language while French remaining widely used, mainly in education and literature. The use of French is supported by those considering Lebanese to be a separate identity from Arabs thus engaging to the local nationalism, mainly Maronites, although they speak vernacular Arabic as well. The use of Arabic is supported by those who feel themselves to be a part of the Arab world. The paper questions how language is being used for identity construction in Lebanon and how this construction reflects the quest for identity considering the fact that, according to Franck Salameh, both French and Modern Standard Arabic are alien to Lebanese people since the vernacular is a local Lebanese dialect which is called Lebanese language by the Phoenicianists while the rest of the population call it simply Arabic considering themselves to be Arabs.

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Ritual Politeness in Contemporary Iranian Culture: Tehran Case

In all cultures, there are certain patterns of decent behaviour, which consists of specific norms that actually restrict and control so that it is almost unnoticeable, especially for the representatives of that culture (Myers, G. David 2008) and courtesy is among these patterns. The present paper focuses on the contemporary concept of Iranian politeness, called 'ta'ârof' in Farsi language. Attention is paid to the multifaceted notion of 'ta'ârof' which is one of the most important aspects of Iranian-ness (fars. *iranīyat*) and can be perceived as a set of cultural communication strategies, a behavioural pattern or at least a language register. In present paper I will analyse the problem of how this traditional behavioural pattern is perceived in modern Tehran culture and what its main forms of expression are. Moreover, the present paper gives an overview of face concept in Iranian interaction and shows emic perceptions of ta'ârof as well as reveals its practices in Tehran. Finally, a look at the change of ritual courtesy in contemporary Iranian culture is given. It is assumed that the use of ta'ârof model in the society will continue to decrease, especially in informal contexts and at micro-levels where a modern ta'ârof perception is being formed by interpersonal agreements. The main source of this paper is comprised by empirical material collected during an anthropological field research in the Northern Tehran area – Tajrish – in 2016-2017.

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Celtic Festivals in Northern Italy. Exploring the Possible Applications of Folk Studies in Cultural Event Management

Since early 2000, Celtic festivals have been spreading in Northern Italy as a popular form of entertainment, in particular during the summer season. These events include a wide variety of historical re-enactment performances, concerts, lectures and stands of themed products that attract both local people and tourists. They are characterized by a combination of elements that can be considered “authentically” Celtic with features belonging to New Age beliefs, Norse mythology, fantasy literature and regional traditions.

Despite this hybridization or, perhaps, thanks to it, Italian Celtic festivals not only have been developing their peculiar style, but they also constitute the ideal context for the re-shaping of local traditions and the creation of meaningful community boundaries.

The purpose of this case study is to identify and analyse the most relevant imaginaries and mechanisms operating behind the phenomena mentioned above, focusing mainly on the significative relations between people, landscape and memories. On the other hand, the study aims to illustrate how the understanding of these topics can help local governments and local associations active in the field of cultural event management to improve their actions by enhancing more sustainable forms of tourism and landscape planning or more efficient community revitalization projects.

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Thunderer – A Judge and a Punisher in a Love Relationship

In the song “Mēnesio svodba” (“The wedding of the moon”) published by L. Rēza, Perkūnas (Thunderer) punishes the Moon for ties with Ausrine (Morning Star), striking him (i.e. the Moon) with a sword. In Latvian mythological songs, Perkons, unhappy with the chosen bride’s wedding partner, invades the Sun daughter’s wedding and his rage is usually poured out by splitting the oak.

Since other folklore and literary (or even fictitious?) texts exist in which Thunderer (1) intervenes in the conflict between the Sun and the Moon, or (2) punishes for inappropriate love relationships, the report will be maintained within these two lines, and will discuss the question of the reliability of each recorded work, the validity of the role of Thunderer, the possible influences on the narratives and their transformations.

Additionally, the image of the thunderstorm in the texts about wedding rituals and non-marital relationship will be revealed and illustrated by the examples the majority of which are taken from the eastern Slavic folklore. The insights obtained are used to compare the thunderstorm manifestation in the bylinas, ballads, wedding songs, fairy tales and the explored Latvian and Lithuanian mythical narratives.

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Multi-sited Ethnography Approach: UNESCO Nomination of Singing to the Accompaniment of Gusle

Singing to the accompaniment of gusle is a topic of “classical” folkloristics that has been researched as folkloristic, linguistic, socio-cultural, art historical and political anthropology phenomenon. After its inscription on behalf of the Serbian State Party to the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity in November 2018, new possibilities of research have emerged. Vernacular practices enter a public realm upon inscription to the UNESCO’s Representative list and operate by the rules of the heritage discourse. Hereby, traditional knowledge acquires new functions and manifests new relationships among its bearers, institutional as well as societal. Therefore, inquiry of social and political processes that shape the performance of epics due to the nomination needs a method that responds well to the complexity of the task. The multi-sited ethnography approach seems to be the most suitable. The intention of this method is to carry out interviews and participant observation with organization representatives, tradition bearers and academics involved in the nomination process. Additionally, research expands to the internet as a virtual fieldwork place focusing on daily newspaper articles in order to reveal how news penetrate the consciousness of the wider population. The aim of this approach is to understand how the nomination affects the practice: Is the use of epics a propaganda tool? Does it have a role in the process of nation-building? Does institutional power affect tradition and how? What role does tradition have in relation to the cultural and national identity?

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A New Approach to the Memory Narratives of Habitants of Kaunas Districts: Theory of Micro Narrative

After the Second World War, Kaunas experienced major demographic changes. These changes were caused by internal migration, modernization and the processes of industrialization. In order to accommodate the employees of new industrial enterprises in Kaunas, Dainava, Kalniečiai, Eiguliai and Šilainiai districts were built. Currently, there are 145 000 habitants living in these districts. The habitants of these districts face social problems, crime and identity crisis. Identities can reveal themselves through memory narratives. This is why the researcher sought to record their memories and stories about their life in the neighbourhood during an ethnographical expedition.

Based on traditional approaches to narrative analysis, narrative is a story with a certain structure. This structure can be characterized by a certain sequence of events (that usually happened in the past), and the plot has the beginning, middle and the end. Narratives usually reveal certain views and perspectives, they are dedicated to a certain group of listeners, who can comprehend and shape it's meanings (Ochs, Capps, 2001: 57, from Bamberg, Georgakopoulou 2008: 381). Such a traditional approach can be restrictive, and the researcher who bases the research on it might reject a lot of useful information, which has a potential to become empiric material, just because the information does not match certain criteria. M. Bamberg uses a concept of "small stories" (micro narratives), which defines a series of stories that may describe current, future or hypothetical events, also allusions or references to speeches, or references to speeches, or even silences or refusals to tell a story (Bamberg, Georgakopoulou 2008: 381). According to M. Baberg, the analysis of micro narrative is like a window that opens up a possibility to monitor at a micro level how a person constructs and expresses his or her identity (Bamberg 2004a, 2004b).

Empirical research was conducted by using participatory observation, semi-structured interview and in-depth interview methods. Methods of micro narrative analysis were applied for the analysis of the material. The research reveals how the habitants, while telling stories about themselves, their lives and their surroundings, express and construct their identities.

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Reminders: the Landscape Story of Marijampolė in the 21st Century

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Lithuania has been experiencing rapid economic, political, social and cultural changes. Those changes had an impact on various aspects of Lithuanian cities. A landscape is considered as a phenomenon full of meanings and memories (Tilley 1994) as well as a process, which depends on historical and cultural moments (Hirsch 2003). It is possible to assume that city landscape has a capacity to reflect changes which have happened after Lithuania regained independence.

Marijampolė is one of those cities, which, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has experienced various changes such as decline of industry, turn towards market economy, etc. This paper aims to reveal the places of Marijampolė city landscape that are the reminders narrating about changes that have happened following Lithuania regaining independence. Questions raised in this paper include: what has happened in the landscape of Marijampolė after the collapse of the Soviet Union; what kind of story about changes in the city could be read out in the 21st century landscape of Marijampolė? In order to achieve the aim, this paper is based on the interviews with citizens of Marijampolė as well as observation of Marijampolė city.

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Reading Autobiography: Literary Experience

In mid-2018, an Autobiography Collection was launched at the Archive of Latvian Folklore. The collection compiles materials that people have written during various periods to document their own lives and the times in which they live. For the most part, they are written diaries, life stories and memories, as well as various materials that provide complementary information - photos, interviews with authors and their relatives and stories about them.

Considering that the collection is being created under the auspices of the Archive of Latvian Folklore, it might seem that the materials are topical for traditional culture researchers or as secondary sources for various types of historical research, but the materials presented show that they could also be analysed as literary objects, especially memories and autobiographies.

This paper analyses the materials in the collection that balance between documentary and literary. By showing how artistic expressions, intertextuality (allusions, quotes, parodies) appear in individual manuscripts, how composition and narrative are made, etc., it is possible to identify texts for which the term "literary memories" can be applied (yet with some conditions because the definition of the genre is problematic, which will be also minimally discussed in the report) and reconstruct the poetics of autobiographical writing.

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Is Folklorism Still Relevant as an Analytical Category Today? The Case of Latvian Mythological Ornament

The most famous quote on folklorism till today is the one by Hans Moser, who defined it in 1962 as the second-hand mediation and presentation of folk culture. Fitting into a larger discourse on authenticity, folklorism comprises the idea that folk culture appears in contexts to which it originally did not belong. On the one hand, labelling something as ‘folklorism’ creates false dichotomies between “genuine folklore” and falsified materials. Thus, in the course of folkloristics as a discipline, folklorism belongs to one of the most criticized concepts. On the other hand, despite all the critics, the concept is still used till today, now and then getting revisited.

Found in a very wide range of spheres in human life, mythological ornament testifies to contemporary creativity of Latvian society. It has travelled from folk crafts to modern media moderated environment and commerce-related activities, comprising the idea of benevolent qualities of visual symbols as the markers of one’s identity. However, the opinion of the practitioners of the tradition is not always consistent with the scholarly opinion. Foreign context and creative application allow this cultural phenomenon to be interpreted as folklorism. But is it still relevant as an analytical category today? Using the case study of Latvian mythological ornament, the presentation will discuss the ethical and methodological challenges that arise when folklorism is used as an analytical category.

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Methodological Challenge of the Studies of the Childlessness Phenomenon

In recent decades, levels of childlessness have been increasing rapidly in most European countries. The aim of this research is to identify the causes and consequences of this phenomenon, not only for the individual, but also for the society. Some researchers call it the reflection of a personalized and self-centred society that, for economic reasons, postpones childbirth. Probably there is no unambiguous answer to the question as to why the phenomenon of childlessness is rapidly growing. Complexity of this issue testifies to the extremely high and interdisciplinary interest in this subject, which is being studied by demographers, sociologists, and ethnologists. Although the research of childlessness has not received much attention from Lithuanian ethnologists, this issue is being tackled in terms of interdisciplinary approach: there is a number of sociologists working on this topic. So, we can rightly raise the question whether childlessness is a phenomenon of (post) modern society. Historical demographics dismisses this idea. And yet we are facing another challenge of research in order to find out the change of public attitudes towards families (women) without children.

In the works of Lithuanian ethnologists dedicated to traditional family customs, various stages of family life are discussed, but we can learn about the community's attitude towards married women who have no children only from brief references or indirect data. On the other hand, the new methodology explores these issues through in-depth interviews or the life stories. As a consequence, this leaves researchers to face difficulties in comparing the incomparable data of old ethnology research methods and the new ones.

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Tradition of Dream Interpretation in Islam: Origin, Conception and Typology

Dreams are an integral part of sleep. In all cultures people have long been interested in their dreams and what these dreams mean. Dreams relate profoundly to various cultural phenomena, so that the aspects of this relationship are broad and diverse. Also it is an important aspect in the study of cultural history. Dream analysis is one of the parts of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Dream interpretation in the West was developed in the 19th century in conjunction with Freud's theories (McLeod 2013). Meanwhile, in the 7th century, great Islamic scholars became interested in dream interpretation. In Islam, dreams are understood as, on occasion, offering a portal to the divine will, and are seen as the only appropriate form of future divination. Dreams have a special authority as they are believed to communicate truth from the supernatural world.

This study aims at historical understanding of the Islamic discourse on dream interpretation. In the present paper, I will analyse the early Muslim tradition of dream interpretation and divination, the fracturing of the tradition, homogeneity and imitation. The presentation reveals typology of dreams, the written tradition of dream interpretation and dream manuals. The attention is drawn to orthodoxy, the role of religion, the Holy Quran and the Prophetic tradition in the tradition of dream interpretation. An attempt is made to answer the questions: how the social and cultural contexts of dream interpretation are understood? What is the role of religion in dream interpretation?

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Analysis and Rethinking of the Collected Folklore Texts from the Early Communist Years (1949–1953) in Hungary

There are many researches about how the political system changed in Hungary after the World War II. The new government was established by the Communists who wanted to reform the cultural life of the country, and founded new institutions, periodicals in order to archive processors. The idol was the Soviet Union. The aims of scientific researches also changed, they had political meanings and significance, were carried out within the set limits as to what could be researched, collected and presented. Firstly, in my presentation, I focus on how the new, Communist form appeared in the folklorists' methods and in the texts collected by them. This presentation will examine how the collectors and the speakers were talking about the political and social changes. In this paper, I wish to examine how peasant and the new workers' culture appeared in the texts. How did they express themselves when they were talking about their life, the collectivisation, or their new life in the towns? How did they integrate the expressions of the new system in their personal stories? I also would like to describe what kind of researching methods should be used if we would like to use these texts nowadays. As the title of my presentation indicates, my focus is on the early Communist years (1949– 1953) in Hungary, called Rákosist era.

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Negotiating National Belonging in Belarusian Interwar Vernacular Writings

The research is based on surviving archival documents of submissions which were sent to left-oriented Belarusian newspapers based in Vilnius in the interwar period. These documents, coming mostly from the villages in contemporary Western Belarus and North East Poland, are a multifaceted collection of grassroots journalism, thoughts on local politics and vernacular poetry. They reflect current reality of local inhabitants, the quality of their lives, their hopes for the future and their self-perception. At this time, with increasing spread of literacy, local rural population was given their first chances to auto-record, and was also introduced to the idea of national belonging which, according to the ideological program of Belarusian left activists, was the key for ending hardships and oppression that most of the village dwellers had to endure. Through the analysis of Belarusian national image, as it was constructed in press at the time, schooling materials and literature, and the responses to it expressed in the vernacular submissions to the local newspapers, the research aims at reconstructing the process of early negotiating national belonging before it became a commonly imposed and inherent trait.

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Being Online and Being There: Some Reflections on Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in an E-Estonia

What opportunities and challenges can digitalization bring to ethnographic research? How can working digitally, with the Internet as one field site and a part of our ethnographic encounter, help us to understand and connect with the field? And why does the 'classical' approach of 'being there' still matter? In this paper, drawing from some of my fieldwork experiences from my current research on folk music heritage practices, citizenship and cultural intimacy in Estonia, I want to bring some reflections on 'being online' and 'being there' as methods for ethnographical fieldwork. The advanced digital environment and people's extensive uses of online platforms and social media in Estonia create many opportunities for me to search out and track music, activities, networks, and people's narratives (textual and multisensorial) as part of their everyday life and social interactions.

However, the Internet can also be "a great wall" for ethnographic engagement and exploring diversity. The more I get engaged within the field, the more I realise the necessity of bridging being on the Internet and being in the field. Approaching representations and contacting people digitally can widen our scopes of research and ways of practising ethnography. But, to reveal life stories, personal experiences, and people's creative and critical takes on matters, even seemingly unpolitical and insensitive ones like music and heritage, it is still crucial, maybe more in a digital era, to carry out a long-term participatory fieldwork, to carry on the classical practices of 'being there' and 'talking to people'.

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Image of the Enemy in the Creolized Text in the Folklore of Ukrainian Resistance in the 21st Century

The Revolution of dignity and the Russian-Ukrainian war in the east of Ukraine have consolidated the Ukrainian nation, revived the pulse of the people's life. Folklore of the Revolution of Dignity and the Antiterrorist Operation (ATO) denied all pessimistic forecasts for the extinction of traditional collective creativity. On the contrary, we have a vivid confirmation that folklore is not only a dynamic communicative phenomenon, but also a distinct identifier and consolidating factor of the community in which it functions. It is well known that folklore reacts on all things momentarily. Tumultuous events which have had place in Ukraine since 2013 have confirmed that fact and also actualized the image of the enemy. The image of the permanent national enemy is collective and complex and contains in itself different negative characteristics. Negative stereotypes of the enemy have been changing in the Ukrainian culture depending on the historical age. However, the typological parameters are always the same: strength, cruelty, anti-humanity, danger etc. A lot of folklorists have dedicated their articles to the image of the enemy in different folklore genres. The aim of the report is to show how the enemy is represented in the creolized text (the term "creolized text" was firstly used by Sorokin and Tarasow) from the beginning of the Revolution of dignity. We are going to investigate and present six main types of the image of the enemy in memes, photoshopped images, posters and comic strips.

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„I think about my diary as a small but fundamental part of myself that will survive long after me“: Influence of Authors and Depositors on Archiving Autobiographical Materials

Historically autobiographical materials, in their various forms, have always been present but little known at the Archives of Latvian Folklore and have served as a complementary information of classical folklore genres. A new initiative was launched in 2018 to create a collection of autobiographical materials at the archives. Since then, not only individuals but also institutions of intangible cultural heritage have been asked to participate in sharing their autobiographical materials — written life stories, memoirs and diaries. Since the beginning of the initiative, more than a year has passed resulting in over 130 collections and now some regularity can be noticed. During the creation of the collection, my attention was drawn to the attitude and relationships between depositors/authors and their materials which are sharply different from the informants from whom researchers had strived to collect folklore. Unlike folklore, which is often perceived as a common knowledge, diaries, memory stories, and written life stories in many cases are personified as a “part of me” and that is why creators of this autobiographical collection have to take into account the vision of authors and owners of life writings. They are not only interested in how the material will be stored, but frequently they suggest how it should be named and categorized at the archives. This personal and often personified relationship between owners and their materials has led to a number of unexpected challenges systematizing materials and has broadened collection creators' horizon of documenting subjective realities in which this paper will give an insight.

