

14th International Conference of Young Folklorists

Humble Theory and the Power of the Vernacular

Conference Programme

Day 1

September 25, 2025 (Thursday)			
09:00 – 09:30 Registration (University of Tartu Library, W. Struve 1, Tartu)			
09:30 – 09:45 Opening of the Conference (Conference Hall)			
09:45 – 11:00 Keynote Lecture by Dorothy Noyes on topic – <i>The Vernacular Ground and the Field of Folklore</i> (Conference Hall) Moderated by Ülo Valk			
11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break			
Session 1: Folkloristic Theories I (Conference Hall) Chair: Lodewyk Barkhuizen		Session 2: Human-Animal Interactions (Seminar room Tõstamaa) Chair: Margaret Lyngdoh	Session 3: Performance and (un)tellability (Seminar room Kodavere) Chair: Marje Ermel
11:30 – 12:00	Evgeniya Litvin , University of Salento, <i>Humble Theory in Minority Language Literature Research</i>	Haozhen Li , University of Tartu, <i>Between Religious Revival and Reinvention: Three Strategies of Revitalisation for Shamanism in Northeast China</i>	Jaana Ahtiainen , University of Helsinki, <i>Beyond Institutional Lenses: Rethinking Sex Work Research Through Folklore Studies</i>
12:00 – 12:30	Digne Ūdre-Lielbārde , University of Latvia, <i>Academic Endeavours and Popular Imaginations: The Question of Lay and Academic Voices in Folklore Studies</i>	Jasmina Rejec , Institute IRRIS for Research, <i>Animal Folk Tales as Vehicles of Moral Values and Social Critique</i>	Pema Choedon , Independent scholar, <i>Gorshey: An Expression of Resilience and a Unified Identity through Tibetan Folk Dance</i>
12:30 – 13:00	Ivan Praštalo , University of Belgrade, <i>Between Grand and Humble Theory: What Can We Learn from the History of the Discipline through Sima Trojanović</i>	Chloe Lundrigan , Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, <i>“It’s Tradition, but also Breaking Tradition”: Performing Multi-species Environments in Newfoundland</i>	Yun Dai , University of Tartu, <i>Bear Grandmother: Hearthside Storytelling</i>
13:00 – 14:30 Lunch Break			
Session 4: Folkloristic Theories II (Conference Hall) Chair: Alina Oprelianska		Session 5: Narrative Reflections (Seminar room Tõstamaa) Chair: Pihla Maria Siim	Session 6: Vernacular Expressions (Seminar room Kodavere) Chair: Haozhen Li
14:30 – 15:00	Abhirup Sarkar , University of Tartu, <i>Some Notes on the Viability of the ‘Humble Approach’ in Folkloristics</i>	Iida Rätty , University of Turku, <i>Illness Narrative as an ‘in Between’ Category</i>	Dan Zhou , Kwansei Gakuin University, <i>Reframing ‘Vernacular’: The Localisation of a Global Concept in Japanese Folkloristics</i>
15:00 – 15:30	Li Feng , Fudan University, <i>Why Is Chinese Folkloristics Theory Still Not So Humble?</i>	Mirjami Sipilä , University of Turku, <i>Exploring Livonian Counting Rhymes and Their Presentation in the Volkslieder der Liven (1936) Collection</i>	Anja Mlakar , Institute IRRIS Slovenia, <i>Folklore as Contested Knowledge and the Struggle for the Vernacular</i>

15:30 – 16:00	Mar'yana Svarnyk, University of Tartu, <i>Sustainability: A Concept without a Theory?</i>		Susanna Jurvanen, University of Helsinki, <i>Bridging Theory and Ethnography: Multimodality in the Study of the Finnish Helka Festival</i>
<div>18:00-21:00 Reception at University Cafe (Ülikooli 20) for Registered Participants</div> <div>Musical Performance by Estonian flute duo Kuula Hetke (Kärt Pihlap & Katariina Tirmaste)</div>			

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Day 2

September 26, 2025 (Friday)			
09:45 – 11:00 Keynote Lecture by Mariya Lesiv on topic – <i>Folklore of Anger in the Precarity of War: Humble Theory and the Unhumble Vernacular</i> (Conference Hall)			
Moderated by Anastasiya Astapova			
11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break			
Session 7: Placelore (Conference Hall) Chair: Kikee Doma Bhutia		Session 8: Social Media and AI (Seminar room Tõstamaa) Chair: Andrus Tins	Session 9: Belief Narratives (Seminar room Kodavere) Chair: Kristel Kivari
11:30 – 12:00	Lachlan Bell , University of Tartu, <i>The Sõrve Bunyip: Reimagining a Colonial Cryptid in an Australian-Estonian Context</i>	Hanna-Kaisa Lassila , University of Turku, <i>The Everyday Entertainment of Vernacular Disciplining on Social Media</i>	Roope Kotiniemi , University of Helsinki, <i>Navigating Contradictions: Analysing Magical Pouches in Finnish and Karelian Belief Narratives</i>
12:00 – 12:30	Linda Saraswati Klausner , University of Tartu, <i>When Trees Wear Saris: Ritual Dressing and Sacred Power</i>	Joan Jürgens , University of Tartu, <i>‘Timeless Reading’: Fortune Telling with Tarot Cards in Estonian-speaking Social Media Channels</i>	Anete Saulīte-Stačkune , University of Latvia, <i>Personal Insight as an Aid, Not the Enemy: An Example on Latvian Folk Belief Research</i>
12:30 – 13:00		Ismet Suleimanov , University of Tartu, <i>Adjustment and Humour: Humorous Vernacular Commentary on Being a Ukrainian Refugee</i>	Hanna Dudkowiak , University of Warsaw, <i>Our Lady and the Golden Foam: Tracing the Medieval Polish Magical Charm</i>
13:00 – 14:30 Lunch Break			
Session 10: Ritual Practice (Conference Hall) Chair: Alevtina Solovyeva		Session 11: Material Folklore (Seminar room Tõstamaa) Chair: Digne Üdre-Lielbārde	
14:30 – 15:00	Nataliia Rygovska , University of Tartu, <i>The Invisible Front: Vernacular Spiritual Practices in Contemporary Ukraine</i>	Mila Santala , University of Turku, <i>From Tradition to Modernity: The Enduring Legacy of Kalevala Jewellery and the Kalevala Women's Association</i>	
15:00 – 15:30	Lodewyk Barkhuizen , University of Tartu, <i>Existential Weakness as Method in the Spiritual Teachings of South African Traditional Healers</i>	Edgar Mirjamsdotter , Åbo Akademi University, <i>Following the Threads – Exploring the Aibo Tapestry though Ethnography</i>	
15:30 – 16:00	Baobao , University of Tartu, <i>Sutṣywu and Sutṣywumini of Misfortune Transferability in the Eastern Minyag Community</i>	Kikee Doma Bhutia , University of Tartu, <i>Thensay Yaksay and the Burden of Ritual Gift-Giving in Sikkimese Villages</i>	
16:00 – 16:30 Closing of the Conference			