

Tracing/Tracking/Transforming Histories of Ethnology/Folklore: Toward Critical Methodologies [SIEF Working Group on Historical Approaches in Cultural Analysis] [P+R]

Convenors

- Hande A. Birkalan-Gedik (Goethe Universität, Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie) email
- Ingrid Slavec Gradišnik (ZRC SAZU) email

Short abstract

The panel proposes to challenge uncritical, evolutionary disciplinary histories vis à vis the histories with novel approaches. We invite scholars who have an interest in tracking the history of folklore and are ready to present and discuss methodologies that go beyond the conventional ones.

Long abstract

While historiographies of ethnology/folklore are abundant, mostly they are written in a mood of "progress." We believe that the folklore historian should not simply summarize the previously established insights, but rather question them. This panel aims to challenge such uncritical histories vis à vis the those with novel approaches (e.g., Herzfeld, Zumwalt, Bendix) which trace and track disciplinary histories through key concepts (e.g. nationalism, literary vs. anthropological perspectives, authenticity). We invite scholars to discuss approaches that transcend entrenched conventional models. Possible topics:

- Tracing an integrative history: Are interactions, truces, connections, discontinues traceable and critically rethinkable? How can we handle local/national issues but also connect them to a global/international scholarship?
- Authority in tracing: What are the challenges in writing "sound" and competent histories of folklore, borrowing the model from R. Darnell? Who has the right to trace such histories-historians or practicing scholars?
- Models of tracing: What are the problematics of "historicist," or "presentist" approaches (Stocking)? Is tracking histories a matter of epistemology, positionality, and interpretation—going "beyond the words" of traditional historical documents (Brown/Vibert 1996)?
- Sources of tracking: Where do we turn to for a history of discipline? How do we access our sources? Can we produce a history not based on the succession of names but see to the social conditions through which scholarship is formed (*histoire croisée*)?
- Tracking the audience: Who needs disciplinary histories? Can histories, and which ones, be used as transformative tools for the discipline?