FAEF
FEMINIST APPROACHES TO ETHNOLOGY AND FOLKLORE

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FAEF NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2026

Happy summer to Everyone!

By JoAnn Conrad

Before you all take off on your well-earned vacations, we wanted to give you a brief update on the Working Group's ongoing work and also to look to our future plans.

Some of us have just returned from the ISFNR (Folk Narrative Research) conference in Reykjavik where our WG sponsored a great panel (see Niina's summary below). We decided, back in Aberdeen at last year's SIEF meeting, to sponsor a panel to expand our visibility. This plan worked, as we were not only surprised by how many ISFNR participants did not know about SIEF (and hence did not know about our FAEF WG), but also how many people were interested in our work. We want to keep that momentum going!

Looking ahead, our WG interim-year workshop is coming up in August (see the announcement), and we are already working towards ensuring the workshop's success by meeting with the participants and organizers via Zoom to discuss their progress on their respective presentations. We will continue this discussion until the workshop, where, after having heard four fabulous lectures on the theme of "Embodiment Revisited," we'll all be able to discuss the participants' projects anew. We've structured it in this way to maximize not only discussion, but also as a great way to get feedback on our work.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Helena Tužinská

Anna Zalewska

Lily Rozier Smith

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Report on FAEF Panel at ISFNR Conference

Upcoming Events: AGM 14 August

News from our members (3 publications: Elena, Merrill and JoAnn)

Call for secretary and newsletter

Happy summer to Everyone (continued)

By JoAnn Conrad

As Rozemarijn has reminded you, at the end of the workshop, we'll have a hybrid WG meeting for ALL members. This is an important meeting. After the workshop, Niina will be stepping down as co-chair, and Rozemarijn will fill that position thereafter, but we will need a vote on that. We are also now in need of a new Secretary to step in when Rozemarijn becomes co-chair. And finally, we need someone to take over the newsletter. So, please attend the meeting, there are a lot of things to decide.

It is critically important at this stage for all of you to participate – attend the meeting and sign up for board positions. All of the work outlined above has been really fruitful, but it is the labor of only three members, and, after August, that goes down to two! That is, the FAEF is in need of new people to help continue the work we've started. If there are no nominations for positions of secretary and/or newsletter, then the zoom meetings and the newsletter will be discontinued. Please take the time to join our meeting and Vote!

Thinking ahead (and with hopefully an expanded board) we want to think seriously about proposals for panels for SIEF 2027 in Bolzano, Italy. Please give a thought to topics you'd like to see proposed that relate to Feminist Approaches. We will have one panel session that builds on the theme of this 2026 workshop – Embodiment Revisited. But we are looking for a lot more suggestions.

We have more news to share during the Zoom meeting, so please come, ready with thoughts and suggestions.

Happy Summer

JoAnn

CALL FOR SECRETARY

The board is looking for a new secretary. As secretary, you are one of three people on the board of the FAEF WG.

In close collaboration with the chair, you take care of everyday business as well as the website, membership admin, minutes of meetings and other related tasks.

The amount of time this takes varies throughout the year but averages to around 1 hour a week. We ask that the candidate starts working with or current secretary Rozemarijn from September 2026 onwards. This allows them to ease into the position before taking over completely after the AGM in 2027.

If you have any questions about either of our vacancies OR if you want to express your interest, please reach out to rozemarijnvdwal@hotmail.nl

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Report from ISFNR

By Niin Hämäläinen

This June, the 2026 ISFNR conference took place in Reykjavik, Iceland on the theme of "Nature(s) in Narrative". The FAEF WG was present at the event sponsoring one panel session focusing on ecofeminist perspective: "Regenerative narratives: (eco)feminist entanglements with nature". The panel had two interesting sessions with eight papers of which five were held by the members of the FAEF. We are excited to announce that some of the papers from the panel will be worked on for a special issue in 2027.

The panel "Regenerative narratives" was formed by the members of the FAEF WG: Niina Hämäläinen, Jennifer Schacker and Natasa Polgar (in photo).

Join our Annual general meeting

Friday 14 August 17.00 Finnish time

Please join us for our Annual General Meeting, scheduled to take place on Friday 14 August at the end of our workshop 'Embodiment Revisited' in Helinski.

Below you find a preliminary agenda. As you can see, we want to use the AGM as an opportunity to discuss future activities of the FAEF Working Group and also do a collective brainstorm for the SIEF conference coming up in 2027. We really need your input and hope to see many of our members!

On the agenda:

- Elections to the board
- Brainstorm for SIEF conference Bolzano 2027
- Proposals for SIEF 2028
- *Cultural Analysis* special issue on 'Unwriting through Feminist Approaches' (to be published in 2027)
- Future of zoom reading sessions

Zoom link Annual General Meeting

Topic: FAEF WG annual meeting

Time: Aug 14, 2026 05:00 PM Helsinki

Join Zoom Meeting

https://4cd.zoom.us/j/9150754556?

pwd=2z90XSURjR0JPouPOHmUU6ejdC4SM8.1&omn=85908111943

Meeting ID: 915 075 4556

Passcode: 050353

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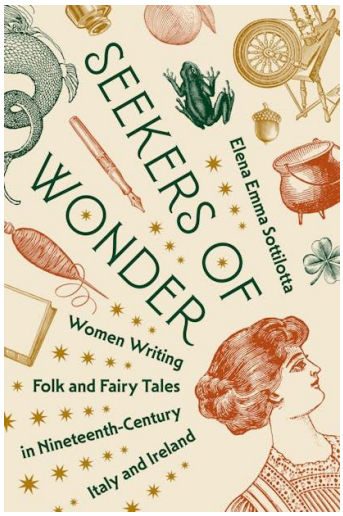
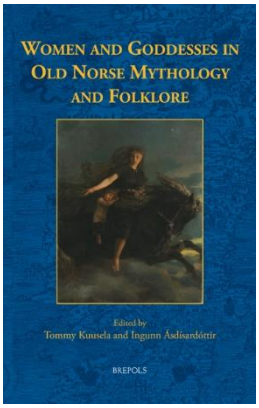
News from our members

New publications on feminist approaches



Seekers of Wonder. Women Writing Folk and Fairy Tales in Nineteenth-Century Italy and Ireland by Elena Emma Sottilotta.

With Seekers of Wonder, Elena Sottilotta offers the first comparative study of women's manifold roles in the collection of Italian and Irish folklore and fairy tales between 1870 and 1920. Sottilotta views the often-overlooked work of these women from an interdisciplinary perspective, considering both the politics and poetics of seeking wonder. In so doing, she centers women's influence on the preservation and dissemination of oral traditions, bringing work that was once relegated to the margins into dialogue with work long regarded as canonical.



"The Fateful Feminine. Reading Mythology Against Snorri" by Merrill Kaplan in *Women and Goddesses in Old Norde Mythology and Folklore*.

This essay peers past Snorri's androcentrism to see certain figures of Norse myth in a new light. Part one demonstrates that reading the Codex Regius version of *Voluspa* without the *Prose Edda* at our elbow reveals a cosmos densely populated by powerful female figures, many with a fate-death association. Contra Snorri, Odin seems less a king than a shaman-like mediator between the *aesir* and these feminine powers. Part Two raises questions about the *disir* and the identity of the *bond* and *hopt*. *Haustlong* suggests that the *disir* are in charge of the fate to which the *aesir* are subject. *Bond* and *hopt* may be not the gods as a group, as Snorri maintains, but instead a collective of female fate beings more like the *disir* and *nornir* than the *aesir* and *vanir*. The Norse myths gender fate as feminine, reflecting a misogynist ideology that assigned blame for misfortune to female beings.

CALL FOR NEWSLETTER CREATOR

We are also looking for a member who is willing to take care of our newsletter. We aim for this newsletter to be published twice a year. Your tasks include soliciting for input among our members, and together with the board, drafting texts and putting the actual newsletter together. You do not need to be a board member to fulfil this position.

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Embodiment Revisited

Helsinki 13-14 August 2026

The second interim meeting of the FAEF will be held in Helsinki, Finland on August 13–14 in 2026. It will gather members of the working group, the board and keynote lecturers to discuss one of the central issues of feminist theory, embodiment. We will revisit the concept and its uses for feminist theory. We seek to investigate the relationship between corporeal sensations and perception, emotion, and affect, and how, in a rebarbative fashion, these phenomena continuously reshape subjecthood, identity, and cultural formations.

The two-day workshop consists of small group presentations as well as keynote lectures followed by discussions. The workshop meeting will be the culmination of a year's worth of discussion and readings on these topics, which we will incorporate into our own work. There will also be the annual meeting of the FAEF at the end of the meeting on August 14.

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News from our members continued

"The Thread/Threat of Patriarchy: Tales of Abduction in Two Sámi Children's Books" in *Nordic Journal of Childlit Aesthetics* by JoAnn Conrad.

Inspired by Sámi feminist Jorunn Eikjok's admonition that "we must carefully evaluate which of our traditions are worth basing our community upon" (2000, p. 41), this article focuses on two adaptations of traditional Sámi narratives, which, at their core, are stories of violence against women – Mary Ailonieida Sombán Mari/Marry Ailonieida Somby's Uhcastáloš (1993), and Sissel Horndal's Sølvmånen/Silbamánnu (2015).

These books reveal an underlying corrosive gender ideology that performs the ideological work of patriarchy under the cover of tradition and contributes to the legacy of silence surrounding violence against women. At the same time, they resonate with the real social issues of violence against women circulating in the news.

The organizing thread that runs through the books examined here is the well-worn plot between the male aggressor/abductor – in these stories, Stallo, the villainous fiend of Sámi folklore – and young Sámi girl(s), which, I will argue, reinscribes a normative masculinity enacted through violence and reiterates the patriarchal logic of colonialism, Christianity, and capitalism.

On a final note

We hope you enjoyed reading our FAEF newsletter! Do you have anything that you'd like to share via the newsletter? Make sure you submit your publications/events/calls/other tips via e-mail to rozemarijnvdwal@hotmail.nl so we can include your content in the next newsletter (which will be a winter edition). Photos are also most welcome.