

18th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR), University of Zagreb, Croatia: 21-26 June 2020 rescheduled for September 2021.

accepted paper

Fisherman in no. 19 of the Grimms' tales: eco-anxiety or reverence?

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Humanity is facing environmental changes exaggerated since the beginning of the industrial era two hundred years ago. Questions and fear emerge and call for responding. Science and politics discuss the issues. But they mostly limit their efforts to analytics and declarations, neglecting the need for a thorough exploration of causes or directing effective solutions.

Two centuries ago, a painter Phillip Otto Runge adapted a motif of human greediness and sent a tale of Fisherman and his wife to the editors of German oral folklore. As an artist, whose pictures based on a mystical interpretation of nature, he focused on the response of nature. Besides changes of colour and water density, he noticed as well other terrifying behaviours of the ecosystems. With the accelerated darkness of the ocean and weather, he effectively dramatizes the rise of human greediness for wealth and power.

In the environmental analysis of the tale, I'll expose the active role of ecosystems over their interpretation as a milieu for the social events, common in folklore research. Out of many examples of human-nature interrelations displayed in European fairy tales, I'll expose Fisherman, his anxiety and his reverence for nature as a possible model for modern and future Westerns.