



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Folklore: A Global Perspective

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Abstract:

Folklore generally refresh to the body of material, in a variety of forms, that expresses the traditions of a particular culture .There is no clear cut definition of the term 'Folklore' mainly because academics of different disciplines study the same material from completely separate perspective .Scholars of literature focus primarily on structures, narrative style, of a culture . Thus the founder of French folkloristic study, Arnold van Gennaep, believed folklore was the key to understanding the creative force within small groups of societies. Both paradigms raise the questions of whether folklore can be viewed as a common phenomenon and therefore broken into broad categories, or as specific cultural artifacts of a given society.

The first Folklore Fellows' Summer School was held according to plan at the Turku Christian Institute under the auspices of Turku University during July 29, and August 14, 1991. This was the globalism of folklore research, Never before had so many nations from all over the world met each other on such a relatively small course. This document stresses the inherent value and importance of folklore in the cultures of the world. Advanced scholars and institutions take part in what becomes a forum for gathering available experience for the formulation of basic principles for modern folklore work in the global sense, i.e. without regional, national or other limitations.

Keywords: folklore, legend, myth, festival, folk song, fairy tale, tall tale, epic poetry, global etc.

Introduction:

Folklore is the body of expressive culture, including tales, music dance, legends, oral history, proverbs, superstitions, and so forth, common to a particular population that comprise the traditions of that culture, subculture, or group .Scholars who study folklore are often called folklorists study has been academic, classifying material and identifying original forms. Applied folklorists on the other hand, use folklore and other traditional cultural to address social problems. As the world is increasingly globalized, preservation of traditional folklore and the ongoing development of new materials are important ways in which unique cultural expressions can be maintain and their wisdom transited to future generations. Folklorists tend to bridge both worlds, as for example, Dan Ben Amos attempted to create a comprehensive understating of folklore for all disciplines by arguing that: "Folklore is either "a body of knowledge, a mode of thought or a kind of art." Modern scholars usually view folklore as both literature and unique cultural phenomena. Folklore..... remains wholly within the control of its practitioners. It is theirs to remember, change, forget is that which is that which is at once traditional and variable.

Study of Folklore:

The term 'Folklore' was coined in 1846 by the Englishman William who wanted to use an Anglo- Saxon term for what was then called 'popular antiquities' The concept developed as part of the nineteenth century ideology of romantic nationalism, leading to the reshaping of oral traditions to serve modern ideological goals. Johann Gottfried von Herder first advocated the deliberate recording and preservations of folklore to document the authentic spirit, tradition, and identity of the German people; the belief that there can be such authenticity is one of the tenets of the romantic nationalism that Herder developed. Only in the twentieth century did ethnographers

begin to attempt to record folklore without overt political goals. Standards of identifications were devised, and every example was classified by place and date, with a view to determining the original forms as well as patterns of distribution. Later developments, based on “performance” analysis, regarded each from as an event that emerges from the interaction between performer and audience and which fulfills a particular role or function in the social group. As the modern world becomes more industrial and moves farther away from traditional life-style communities, the folklorist is in a unique position to help integrate older traditions into modern life as well as continue to collect previously lost genres of folklore.

Categories of Folklore:

There are numerous different types of folklore, ranging from such diverse example as jokes and riddles, to animal tales and even some rites of passage. Many genres overlap, and sometimes the distinction between one type and another can be quite arbitrary. Nearly every culture that has existed has its own set of lore, and one of the broadcast categories is those of ethnic or national folklore. For example , the Arthurian legends can be viewed as both an example of English and Welsh ethnic folklore ; urban legends and tall tales are almost exclusively American ; fairy tales are the result of German ethnic tradition; while the Arabian Nights can be viewed as a regional Middle Eastern tale . The following is a list of the most common types of folklore, listed from the most general to those that are more specific.

Legend:

A legend is typically a romantic adventure story told in an historical context, usually believed to be true. It is typically concerned with heroes and villains, epic battles, and great feats of courage. In general, the hero is an iconic symbol of a particular ethnicity or nationality.

Myth:

Myths share many common characteristics with legends in that they usually depict events of long ago and persons of epic proportion. However, myths have two distinguishing features. Generally speaking, myths incorporate forces beyond the physical world, such as a deities and supernatural powers. Second they can be etiological, explaining the origins of such things as the world and humankind .Myth more often than legend involves archetypal characters, as the literary scholar Joseph Campbell claimed. So basic is the idea of the journey of a hero to an underworld , in an attempt to attain powers that he can bring back to save his world from an evil, that the paradigm has appeared again and again in all forms of literature for thousands of years.

Folk Song:

A folk song may be defined as a song belonging to the folk music of a people or area often existing in several versions, or with regional variations. Folk songs are perhaps most culturally diffused of all types of folklore. Musical traditions and styles were culturally traded long before the rise of written works and the advent of recording technologies.

Festival:

The earliest festival revolved around harvests, honoring of the dead, or celebration the communal activity was often accompanied by music, dance, and storytelling, the most common place and time of folklore transmission ⁵ Often the festival itself was based on a particular folkloric belief or tradition such as the Dionysus festivals of ancient Greece. One of the most famous and widely celebrated festivals is that of Halloween. Although its origins lie in Pagan rituals to ward off evil spirits that arose once a year along with the tradition of all Hallow 's Eve, it has come to be a largely secular, children's holiday of dress up and New festivals have changed meaning and celebratory style over the years.

Superstition:

Superstition is the belief in the causality of seemingly unrelated events and actions, known to anthropologists as 'sympathetic magic' in that it is the belief that the actions of a person can influence events beyond the boundaries of time and space. It is a tradition rooted in the belief of larger, metaphysically controlling forces in the universe, whether a particular version of God or just the idea of luck.

Fairy Tale:

Fairy tales are universally seen as fictitious, often beginning with the phrases 'Once upon a time' or 'In a land far away' and recounting stories of heroines in danger, princes in disguise, magic, adventure and anthropomorphic animals and creatures. Conceived in Germany around the seventeenth century, the fairy tale is a type of folklore that has changed dramatically over time. Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, known as Brothers Grimm, started to collect orally transmitted German tales in the early seventeenth century, publishing the first series as Kinder and Hausmarchen Children's and Household Tales in 1812. These early fairy tales were vastly different from the children's tales of today. Most were dark stories revolving around such moral lessons as obeying your parents and rejecting evil.

Tall Tale:

A tall tale is a form of traditionally American folklore. Often light, comical story of some larger than life persons who achieves superhuman deeds, they are often stories of national pride and cultural iconography. Johnny Appleseed is credited with travelling the vast wilderness of early America, spreading apple seeds wherever he went, thus, being the source of the numerous apple trees in the northeastern U.S. Paul Bunyan and his ox Babe Blue are giant characters credited with the creation of such famous landmarks as Grand Canyon, and Pecos Bill was the image of frontier, cowboy life. Most of these stories are complete fiction, but at least one, Johnny Appleseed is based on an actual person, John Chapman whose life work as nurseryman was a great deal more practical than depicted in the tale.

Epic Poetry

Like myth and legend epic poetry with heroes of long ago, supernatural powers, deities and grandiose battles. The main difference between them is that epic poetry tends to be the end result of a series of oral traditions. Epic poetry as a form of literature consists of a novel length poem, originally sang in ceremony. It involves the author's invocation of a muse, or God to speak through the author. The most famous of epic poets, ancient Greece's Homer was believed to have produced such classics as *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by condensing long standing Greek myth, legend and tradition into a structured narrative. Vergil's the *Iliad* brings together the traditions of Greek and Trojan legend as well as Roman belief to detail the founding of Rome and John Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* bridges Arthurian legend Protestant ideology, and British lore into a classical work of fiction. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* not only use the dogma of the Bible, but also incorporates Puritan traditions and beliefs and most modern day conceptions of Satan and the Garden of Eden story come more from Milton's Interpretation than the Bible.

Urban Legend

An urban legend is perhaps the newest form of folklore to emerge, and one of the most unique; while it can be found in most industrialized countries. One of its distinguishing factors, it is most widespread in America. Urban legends are typically a collection of oral stories passed around from person to person, never as firsthand account of events; association to the stories are related as happening to someone three or four times removed in association to the storyteller. Most urban legends are merely variations of similar stories, characteristically with a twist at the end, some unforeseen event that is either ironic or supernatural. The driver who picks up a hitchhiker who vanishes before the trip is complete and is revealed to be a ghost is a classic example, as is the story of a recently escaped serial killer or mental patient, sometimes with a hood for a hand terrorizes a young couple parked in a car in a wooded, deserted area.

Folklor: A Global Perspective

One of the product of this first international forum was the Folklore Fellows, first an alliance of a score of local folkloristic societies mainly in European countries, second an editorial board of monograph series by the same name aiming at goals stated by the first Fellows in the Nordic countries and Central Europe and, now in its third phase as international network of folklorists with the aim to promote, among other things, globally oriented training in folklorists with the aim to promote, among other things globally oriented training in folkloristic documentation, archiving and research. The network is thus picking up the international tradition of folkloristic in a practical way similar to the first cooperation. The main difference is that not variants of folktales are brought together for comparison, but rather variants of folklorists' people who in their own environment work with traditional culture and are responsible for the future of this rare species of scholarly endeavor. It is believed that by bringing together the future of this rare species of scholarly endeavor. It is believed that by bringing together the actual problem and experiences of active folklorists from different parts of the world, valuable information and lasting which for so long thrived on various combinations of Romanticism and Nationalism. The professional folklorist should be aware of the premises and consequence of his work. Another area where a satisfactory level of proficiency should be reached is the technical, modern folklore documentation, cannot be based on pencil and paper only but requires skills in modern video, audio and computer techniques.

Conclusion:

Global folklorists is not possible without a quest for quality, these names in essence that all parties, be they Americans, Scandinavians, Germans, Russians, Asian or African scholars, must be considered as equal in the sense that each of them possesses some strong points as well as some weakness in their folklore work. Some nations may excel in theoretical work, others in vast archive collections, whereas yet others stress the collecting theoretical work, others in vast archive collections, whereas yet others stress the collecting of living folklore. In each category valuable results may have been achieved, yet theoreticians may have lost their touch with cultures where folklore abounds as a central element of people's identity, archive scholars may not have much not have much understanding of the rapidly changing modern forms of folklore, or collectors of living folklore may not possess a comparative picture of the material they gather. The aim must be to bring different focuses theory is

one but many, depending on research traditions and the nature of folklore under study. There are deficient or outmoded theories still in circulations as there may be a lack of fruitful analytic aspects, but there are also many both theoretical and practical lessons to be learned from different cultures where genres are not from our textbook or where research has been based on entirely different historical experience.

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