



FOLKLORE

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF BELIEFS, CUSTOMS,
TALES, MUSIC, AND ART

Thomas A. Green, Editor

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OF BELIEFS, CUSTOMS,
TALES, MUSIC, AND ART

Not many people realize that many modern films, comic books, and advertisements are based on folklore. The tale of Superman traveling through space in a womblike vessel only to be raised by a poor North American couple parallels the stories of Moses, Cyros, and other ancient heroes. Identity changes like Superman's are characteristic of most traditional heroes and heroines. Such folklore themes have a psychological force that prompts people to re-create them in different modes and media.

For over two hundred years, folklorists have endeavored to collect and preserve folklore traditions, which are an essential component of all cultures. The formal study of folklore and the informal interest in it are linked to nostalgia for the past and an apprehension about modern society. Now, a comprehensive, two-volume encyclopedia examines the study of folklore forms and methods.

Written by an international team of acclaimed folklorists, ABC-CLIO's *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art* is an extensive general reference work that surveys the types of folklore and the methods of inquiry and analysis relevant to their study. Focusing on folklore forms such as ballad and folktale and methods such as fieldwork and linguistic approach, this work emphasizes cross-cultural, theoretical perspectives ranging from the anthropological through the linguistic, literary, and psychological. Emphasis is placed on those bodies of North American and European scholarship that

(Continued on back flap)

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Edited by
Thomas A. Green

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Santa Barbara, California
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Oxford, England

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AN ENCYCLOPEDIA
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PREFACE

This volume is a comprehensive general reference work for students, scholars, and general readers on forms (e.g., Ballad, Folktale, Legend) and methods of inquiry and analysis (e.g., Fieldwork, Historic-Geographic Method, Linguistic Approach) relevant to the study of folklore. Entries survey and evaluate the historical and current approaches incorporated in the study of these forms and the foundations and current applications of these methods. In addition, the historical dimension is addressed further by entries devoted to theories that have been abandoned within contemporary folkloristics (e.g., Evolutionary Theory, Myth-Ritual Theory). The encyclopedia as a whole and the individual entries focus on folklore forms and methods from a cross-cultural, theoretical perspective in an effort to present an internationally applicable overview of the topics. This general theoretical volume does not contain biographical entries. Rather, individuals are treated within the context of entries devoted to their theoretical concerns.

The methods and theories that underlie specific ethnic and national traditions, such as African-American folklore or Jewish folklore, are considered in the entry Ethnic Folklore. To pursue specific ethnic or national traditions (e.g., Asian folklore, Native American folklore, the folklore of British children), readers are referred to the bibliographies following relevant general entries (Ethnic Folklore, Children's Folklore, and so forth).

Despite efforts made to confine this volume to general topics and to recruit an international list of contributors, it was impossible to comprehensively cover such a far-ranging field as folklore in a single work of this type. Although every attempt has been made to include major topics from a broad spectrum of the genres that constitute the world's folk traditions and methodologies from folklore and related disciplines used to analyze these traditions—insofar as material exists to document such traditions and scholars could be found to examine them—any overview within this format cannot be exhaustive. Emphasis in this volume is on those bodies of North American and European scholarship that have influenced each other most profoundly since the discipline's inception: those of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, and the United States. The entries in this volume, however, provide an introduction to the scholarship in general and facilitate the pursuit of more specialized topics.

For some topics, the labels North American scholars employ differ

from those utilized by their European counterparts (e.g., folklorists in the United States favor the label “historic-geographic method,” but Finnish scholars tend to employ “historical-geographic”) or the respective groups adopt different spellings (“oikotype” versus “oicotype”). The North American term or spelling has been used in this volume, followed in certain cases by other common labels or spellings.

The topics treated in this work range from traditional subjects such as Ballad, Festival, and Joke, to cutting-edge entries such as Computer-Mediated Folklore, Cultural Studies, and Postmodernism. In most cases, a longer, more comprehensive essay format for entries (e.g., Folktale, Legend) has been favored over shorter entries. Exceptions have been made, of course, for those genres that have attracted more scholarly interest than others and, consequently, have generated scholarly literatures of their own (e.g., Magic Tale, Urban Legend). Similarly, categories of traditional phenomena that have international distribution and are of interest to both scholarly and general audiences (e.g., Evil Eye, Vampire) have their own entries as well. Also, there are topics that have been treated in the literature as “umbrella categories” (e.g., Material Culture). These entries are coordinated with their customary subsets (in the case of Material Culture: Architecture, Folk; Art, Folk; and Costume, Folk). Finally, less conventional categories—such as Assault, Supernatural and Enigma, Traditional—are employed as a means of developing consensus on overlapping phenomena that customarily have been distributed among a dozen or more entries.

The richness and diversity of the world’s folk traditions and the literature devoted to them make it inevitable that much must be summarized or omitted entirely in an encyclopedia of this type. Readers, therefore, are urged to explore their relevant interests not only by means of the references included at the end of each entry but also through the general works in the list that follows this preface.

Thomas A. Green

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T.A.G.

STANDARD FOLKLORE INDICES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The following works are cited within entries in the short forms shown in brackets.

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A

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS IN FOLKLORE, INTERNATIONAL

Research, teaching, and study of folklore as a formal academic discipline outside North America. Any investigation into the current status of folklore and of its discernible progress in the academic world internationally is, from the very outset, apt to run into terminological problems as well as organizational variations. The term *folklore* for the discipline and/or for the materials the discipline studies, though originating in English in William Thoms' famous letter to *Antheneam* of 1846, has not found general acceptance in university circles in the British Isles. Currently, it is used only in the official title of the Department of Irish Folklore in University College Dublin, the department being a direct descendant of the former Irish Folklore Commission. The preferred term elsewhere, in the few academic institutions in which folklore is a recent newcomer to the curriculum (Edinburgh, Cardiff), is *ethnology*. Sometimes, this term also is used in Scandinavia, as in the title of the journal *Ethnologia Europaea*, but *folkliiv*, *folkminne/folkeminde*, *folkekultur*, *folkedigtning*, and the like also occur in institutional titles. In some instances, these terms imply a strict separation of the study of material and nonmaterial culture, and the relationship of this group of terms to the use of *ethnology* is not always clear. Sometimes, the latter is understood to be the umbrella term; at other times, it is thought of as coequal with folklore. Relevant chairs or institutes in universities in German- or Dutch/Flemish-speaking countries usually are designated by the term *Volkskunde*, generally in deliberate juxtaposition to *Ethnologie*; in the former socialist countries, *ethnography* predominates. In Greece, we find *lagrophia*, and in Italy, *storia delle tradizioni popolari* as well as *etnografia*. The term *ethnology* is frequently qualified by the epithet *regional*, and other designations restrict the scope of inquiries to areas and groups within national borders. The Finno-Ugric countries have their own terminologies.

These and other variations on the surface appear to point to a fragmented discipline, but in reality, they hide a remarkable singleness of purpose. The activities generated and the subject matter studied all have some bearing on and are frequently roughly identical with what in North America is termed *folklore*. They can, therefore, legitimately be included in any attempt to measure the status of and programmatic development in this field of study. Apparently, there has never been a global survey of the teaching of folklore in academic institutions, and no systematic inquiry has been conducted in Europe since the late 1960s. Two surveys were undertaken, however, in

1953–1954 and in 1965, the former on behalf of the Commission Internationale des Arts et Traditions Populaires (CIAP) and the latter in conjunction with its successor, the Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore (SIEF). These surveys yield a certain amount of information with regard to the presence of folklore studies in European institutions of higher learning. The 1965 survey, for example, ascertained that, at that time, there were about 150 chairs-cum-institutes in “folklore” in European academic establishments. In some countries, practically every university offered courses and conducted research in the subject; in others, formal offerings were more sporadic or nonexistent. It also was quite common for the pursuit of folklore studies to be linked to or incorporated within departments devoted to adjacent areas of academic endeavor (e.g., geography, cultural history, German), rather than conducted within independent departments. It would be misleading, however, to gauge the presence and development of folklore studies in Europe solely in terms of the universities, for much research in the field in the last two centuries has been carried out by individuals or clusters of individuals attached to academies, archives, and museums; many of the incumbents of related research posts also have had part-time or honorary lecturing positions in universities. A rich crop of publications testifies to the range and intensity of the research carried out by individual scholars or as cooperative ventures.

One reason why development and evolution are so difficult to measure for the field of folklore studies involves the change in direction that the discipline has undergone in certain parts of Europe, especially in reaction to the politicization of the topic in the 1930s and early 1940s. A sociological orientation is now not unusual, often coupled with expressions of a social conscience. The investigation of modern phenomena often takes precedence over more traditionally oriented approaches. In a sense, such directional shifts may be interpreted as progressive, as may the increase in the number of students entering this field. Occupational opportunities in the public sector are practically nonexistent in Europe, unlike the United States.

The most obvious advance in academic folklore on the international scene has been through joint projects such as the *European Folklore Atlas*, the *International Folklore Bibliography*, and the *International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklore*; through conferences and symposia organized, in most instances, by national and international scholarly societies such as CIAP and SIEF, the International Society for Folk-Narrative Research, or the fledgling International Society for Contemporary Legend Research; or through the summer schools organized by the revitalized Folklore Fellows of Helsinki. Within SIEF, the Ballad Commission has been particularly successful in arranging annual symposia that have resulted in fruitful personal contact among scholars not only within Europe but also across the Atlantic. Therefore, in terms of a wide definition of what folklore is and of what folklorists do, it can be said that the research, teaching, and study of the subject

undoubtedly are prospering in much of Europe, and the current situation can with justification be described as encouraging.

W.F.H. Nicolaisen

See also Academic Programs in Folklore, North American.

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A CADEMIC PROGRAMS IN FOLKLORE, NORTH AMERICAN

History and development of folklore programs in North American colleges and universities. The academic study of folklore and folklife has made considerable progress since 1940 when Ralph Steele Boggs reported only twenty-three U.S. colleges and universities with folklore courses; however, departments or even minidepartments of folklore projected in the late 1960s and early 1970s and degree-granting programs in folklore have not developed. Most academic folklorists teach folklore courses in departments other than folklore, typically in English and anthropology departments or in American studies programs.

In North American colleges and universities, folklore was first taught by literary scholars as part of literature and philology courses. This literary study of folklore began at Harvard University around 1856 when Francis James Child began collecting English and Scottish folk ballads from books, broadsides, and manuscripts. Although Child did not develop separate folklore courses or a folklore program, he incorporated folklore in his English courses, created the Folklore Collection in the Harvard College Library, and trained several notable U.S. folklorists, including George Lyman Kittredge, successor to Child's English professorship in 1894. Through the efforts of Child and Kittredge, Harvard became the center for the literary study of folklore in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and it remains a center for the comparative study of oral literature today. Bartlett Jere Whiting and others carried on Child's and Kittredge's tradition of library research in folk literature, and in the 1930s, Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord initiated field research in European oral epics, leading to the development of

the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature now in the Harvard College Library. The university's Center for the Study of Oral Literature supports graduate study in allied areas and complements Harvard's undergraduate degree program in folklore and mythology, awarded through its Committee on Degrees in Folklore and Mythology.

In 1883, Franz Boas was beginning fieldwork among the Eskimos of Baffinland, and by 1888, he was serving on the faculty of Clark University and collecting folklore from Native Americans in British Columbia. In 1899, Boas began a long career as an anthropology professor at Columbia University, which, through his reputation, became the center for the anthropological study of folklore in North America. Inspired by Boas, several of his students—including Robert H. Lowie, Ruth Benedict, Melville Herskovits, and Melville Jacobs—and other anthropologists began to incorporate folklore, especially Native American folklore, into their courses. Boas also encouraged scholars such as Marius Barbeau, who collected French-Canadian folklore, to study North American ethnic traditions. After Boas retired, Ruth Benedict and George Herzog combined efforts to keep Columbia a center of folklore activity well into the middle of the twentieth century.

The academic study of folklore also is indebted to a group of Americanists—Perry Miller, F. O. Matthiessen, Bernard DeVoto, Ralph Barton Perry, and Howard Mumford Jones—who established the first degree-granting program in American studies at Harvard in 1937. These Harvard Americanists expanded the study of American literature and culture from an emphasis on formal culture to include folk and popular cultures. They also established a place for folklore within interdisciplinary American studies programs, which today rank third after English and anthropology among departments and programs offering folklore courses at U.S. institutions. Although the early literary folklorists stressed the library study of older European folklore and the anthropological folklorists emphasized the field study of tribal traditions, the Americanists promoted the interdisciplinary study of American folk cultures against a background of American cultural history.

The first department of folklore in the United States was established at Franklin and Marshall College in 1948 when Alfred L. Shoemaker was appointed assistant professor of American folklore. Although the department was called the Department of American Folklore, the program was based on European folklife and *Volkskunde* models, and four of the six courses offered dealt with Pennsylvania folklore and folklife. Franklin and Marshall's short-lived folklore department first appeared in the catalog for 1949–1950 but remained in the catalog only through 1951–1952.

Although separate courses in folklore were introduced at several universities in the 1920s and 1930s, a degree-granting program in folklore did not exist until 1940 when Ralph Steele Boggs founded an interdisciplinary

curriculum in folklore, offering an M.A. degree and a doctoral minor, at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Professor Boggs, a specialist in Latin American folklore, also spread the study of folklore to Mexico, where he introduced folklore studies and taught a folklore techniques course at the National University in 1945. Through its curriculum in folklore, the University of North Carolina remains one of the leading centers for the study of folklore in North America. Supported by major research collections—including the papers of D. K. Wilgus, the labor song collection of Archie Green, the Southern Folklife Collection, the John Edwards Memorial Collection, and the American Religious Tunebook Collection—and a large library collection in southern literature and culture, the North Carolina program is especially strong in the study of folksong and southern folklife. The program also emphasizes African-American folklore, ethnographic filmmaking, occupational folklore, public sector folklore, and immigrant folklore. The curriculum in folklore at North Carolina is designed mainly for graduate students, though undergraduates may put together an interdisciplinary degree with an area in folklore.

Trained by Kittredge and inspired by the historic-geographic studies of the Finnish folklorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Stith Thompson, who joined the English faculty at Indiana University in 1921, introduced the first folklore course there in 1923 and directed a number of folklore theses and dissertations of graduate students in the English department. Thompson founded the first U.S. doctoral program in folklore, emphasizing the comparative study of folk narratives, at Indiana University in 1949. After Thompson's retirement in 1955, his successor, Richard M. Dorson, expanded the concept of folklore studies at Indiana and elevated an expanded folklore program to departmental status in 1963. A graduate of the Harvard program in the history of American civilization, Dorson provided an Americanist orientation for a generation of folklorists trained at Indiana University between 1957 and 1981. Warren E. Roberts, Thompson's protégé in comparative folktale studies and recipient of the first U.S. doctorate in folklore in 1953, introduced the first course in material culture at Indiana in 1961; he also contributed significantly to broadening the scope of the Indiana program, which now combines humanistic and social scientific approaches. The program emphasizes theoretical approaches to folklore and, true to its comparative heritage, continues to cover many of the world's folk traditions. A program in ethnomusicology within the department and the renowned Archives of Traditional Music strengthen the teaching and research programs. Nearly 60 percent of all university teachers of folklore who hold doctorates in the subject have been trained at Indiana University.

Under the direction of MacEdward Leach, the University of Pennsylvania introduced the second U.S. doctoral program in folklore in

1959. After receiving a Ph.D. in Middle English literature at the University of Pennsylvania in 1930, Leach remained on the university's English faculty and changed an epic and short story course into an introductory folklore course and a literary ballad course into a folk ballad course. Eventually, Leach developed an interdisciplinary graduate program in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania and trained a number of folklorists, including Kenneth S. Goldstein, who eventually became chair of the program. At first, studies in ballads and folksongs and in folklore and literary relations were emphasized in the university's program; however, by the time Leach retired in 1966, the Department of Folklore and Folklife had developed into a broad program covering the entire range of folklore studies. Influenced by sociolinguistic approaches and the ethnography of communication, the program stresses social scientific approaches to folklore. Presently, around a third of all university teachers of folklore who hold doctorates in the subject received their training at the University of Pennsylvania.

Today, only two universities in the United States—Indiana and Pennsylvania—have folklore departments, but the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is another major center for the study of folklore in North America. UCLA first offered a folklore course in 1933 when Sigurd B. Hustvedt, another student of Kittredge, introduced a graduate course in the traditional ballad. In 1937, Wayland D. Hand, a specialist in folk belief and custom, joined the German faculty, and two years later, he introduced a general folklore course. Under Hand's direction, an interdepartmental folklore program was established in 1954, offering around two dozen courses in folklore and related areas. Currently, the Folklore and Mythology Program at UCLA awards interdisciplinary master's and doctoral degrees in folklore and mythology. The interdisciplinary nature of the UCLA program gives it identity and strength, for students may choose from over seventy-five folklore and allied courses in departments throughout the university. A research institute, the Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology, and other university research centers strengthen UCLA's teaching program.

In Canada, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Université Laval have folklore programs, one anglophone and the other francophone, and both programs award doctoral degrees in folklore. In 1962, Herbert Halpert, a student of Benedict and Herzog at Columbia and of Thompson at Indiana, joined the Memorial faculty, and through the encouragement and support of place-names scholar E. R. Seary, head of the Department of English, he developed a folklore program within the Department of English. In 1968, Halpert founded the Department of Folklore, which now offers a full range of folklore courses and emphasizes a balanced approach to folklore studies. Three archives support the teaching mission: the Centre d'Études Franco-Terreneuviennes, the Centre for Material Culture Studies, and the Folklore

and Language Archive. Université Laval, with folklore studies dating from 1944 when Luc Lacourcière was appointed to a chair in folklore, offers courses and undergraduate and graduate degrees in folklore through its *programmes d'arts et traditions populaires* in the Département d'Histoire. Laval's program emphasizes French folklore in North America.

Although only Indiana, Memorial, Laval, Pennsylvania, and UCLA award the Ph.D. degree in folklore and only Harvard, Indiana, Laval, Memorial, Pennsylvania, and Pitzer College offer the B.A. degree in folklore, the M.A. degree in folklore is more common in North America. In addition to master's programs in folklore at UCLA, Indiana, Laval, Memorial, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania, an M.A. in folklore also is offered in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. in folk arts is offered through the Tamburitzans Institute of Folk Arts in the School of Music at Duquesne University. Western Kentucky's program in folk studies is housed in the Department of Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies and offers an undergraduate minor as well as an M.A. degree in folk studies.

At least 80 North American institutions offer majors in other disciplines (notably, English, anthropology, and American studies) that permit either a folklore minor or a folklore concentration. These programs range from formal curricula to informal concentrations at all degree levels. For example, an M.A. and a Ph.D. in anthropology or English with a folklore concentration is offered at the University of Texas, Austin, and undergraduates there may design a special concentration in folklore. Undergraduate majors as well as graduate majors in anthropology at Texas A & M University also may elect a concentration in folklore. Degrees in folklore at the University of Oregon are coordinated through its Folklore and Ethnic Studies Program, which is supported by the Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore. At Oregon, master's students create their own plans of study through individualized programs, and doctoral students may elect folklore as an area in English or anthropology. Through its Program in Folklore, Mythology, and Film Studies, the State University of New York, Buffalo awards an M.A. in English or humanities and a Ph.D. in English with a folklore and mythology concentration.

George Washington University's Folklife Program grants an M.A. in American studies or anthropology and a Ph.D. in American studies with a concentration in traditional material culture. Well situated in Washington, D.C., the Folklife Program utilizes the resources of the Smithsonian Institution, the American Folklife Center, and other museums, libraries, archives, and historical societies in the area. The Folklore Program at Utah State University is administered through the American Studies Program, and undergraduate and master's degrees in American studies with a folklore emphasis are offered. Folklore concentrations also are available in history or English at Utah State.

Master's candidates may elect areas in general folklore, public folklore, or applied history/museology. Ohio State University has offered folklore courses since the 1930s and now has a Center for Folklore and Cultural Studies, allowing undergraduate and graduate students a folklore concentration in an interdisciplinary program. A folklore archives and the Francis Lee Utley Collection in the university library support the academic program, which emphasizes folklore and literary relations and narrative theory.

Although more folklore courses are offered in English and, to a lesser degree, anthropology departments than in any other departments or programs, folklore courses are found in a wide variety of academic departments and programs, from architecture to women's studies. At a number of institutions, folklore courses, often cross-listed, are housed in more than one department. Though degrees in folklore and departments of folklore have not developed to the extent anticipated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, folklore courses and concentrations in allied departments and programs, after a slow beginning, have increased significantly in North America since that time. Public institutions, doctoral-granting institutions, and large institutions are more likely to offer folklore courses than private institutions, two-year institutions, and small institutions.

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See also Academic Programs in Folklore, International.

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ACCULTURATION

Cultural modification of groups' and individuals' material culture, behaviors, beliefs, and values caused by borrowing from or adapting to other cultures. Whenever cultures regularly contact one another, change takes place in a limited number of ways: One group may destroy the other, one may completely adopt the other's culture and become a part of it, the two may merge to create a fusion culture, or both may adapt and borrow from one another. The group that is politically or economically subordinate to the other usually does the most immediate and extensive borrowing. Major references to the subject of acculturation include the "Exploratory Formulation" published by H. G. Barnett and colleagues in 1954 as the result of a Social Science Research Council Summer Seminar and the report of a 1979 symposium sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The process of acculturation, without a doubt, has been going on as long as cultures have been coming in contact with one another, and the concept of acculturation was first employed in a manner close to its present sense as early as the 1880s. But acculturation has been the subject of a good deal of intensive analysis in the fields of cultural study only since the 1930s. The emphasis that led to closer scholarly examination of acculturation, particularly in the United States, grew out of the earlier concern for salvaging so-called memory-cultures and the assumption that "pure" cultures that had not been "contaminated" by acculturation were somehow superior and more important. In 1936, a committee appointed by the Social Science Research Council and consisting of Robert Redfield, chair, Ralph Linton, and Melville J. Herskovits published a three-page "Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation" that urged special attention to the matter and the exchange of information gathered on the subject by researchers working with different cultures. There is little evidence that the sort of exchange among researchers that Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits anticipated took place, but the call greatly affected the course of cultural study. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits themselves heeded the call, and each of them wrote classic books on acculturation.

From the research of the committee members and that inspired by their report emerged many important studies and widely accepted conclusions concerning acculturation. It is, first of all, important to note that the term *acculturation* as used within the fields of cultural analysis refers only to change that comes about by borrowing, although popular usage also applies the term to the process of socialization by which individuals (usually children) learn to function within their own culture. As it is used within anthropology and folklore, the term *acculturation* usually is limited to changes caused by intercultural influencing that affects and modifies a broad range of the deep structures of culture; the term *diffusion* is used to describe changes that take place in individual

elements or parts of cultures adopted without change. The Navajo and Zuni tribes of the U.S. Southwest, for example, have been in close contact for several hundred years and have experienced a good deal of diffusion, but their total sociocultural systems seem to have been little acculturated by one another because the two cultures share a long-standing tradition of mutual hospitality and reciprocity—"guest-friend" relationship roles that encourage mutual acceptance.

Classic research studies, furthermore, demonstrate that the degree and extent of acculturation within a culture depends on and ultimately occurs at the behest of the culture that is doing the borrowing (the receptor culture), rather than the culture from which the other is borrowing (the donor culture). An individual culture's emphasis upon and mechanisms for maintaining its cultural boundaries, the relative degree of flexibility of its varied internal structures, and the degree and functioning of its mechanisms for self-correction are all major cultural traits that directly and indirectly affect acculturation. The existing values and patterns of the receiving culture serve as a filter that controls the process of acculturation and allows the enthusiastic and whole-hearted acceptance of some traits while providing for the firm rejection of others. Thus, acculturation does not proceed at an even rate in terms of all elements of culture within the same group. Research also has indicated that technology tends to be altered more readily than nontangible elements such as beliefs or values.

Perhaps the single most important fact to emerge from the classic studies of acculturation is that acculturation is not only inevitable and extremely dynamic but also highly creative. Researchers made much of the melancholy process of change as cultures adapted to new situations, and they based their observations upon the unspoken romantic assumption that the precontact cultures represented a "golden age" and that acculturation in response to contact was somehow unavoidably corrupting and evil. In marked contrast with this tacit assumption, the description of the borrowing of the Navajo tribe—and other cultures—as incorporative acculturation presented a very different model, explaining that cultures borrowing traits often reinterpret them in form and/or meaning so that a culture may be always changing and yet always retain its integrity. The Navajo, for example, borrowed sheep, horses, silversmithing, weaving, and ceremony and mythology from other cultures, but they reinterpreted all that they borrowed so that the new traits became and remain their own.

Research on acculturation published in the 1980s and 1990s supports earlier research and agrees with previous discoveries—though in different language—that acculturation must be recorded and studied as a multivariate and multidimensional process. This research develops and employs highly sophisticated statistical models and tools that enable quantitative analysis as a supplement to the earlier classic qualitative studies. The researchers who are

developing this approach to understanding acculturation emphasize the psychological consequences of acculturation upon individuals.

Keith Cunningham

See also Anthropological Approach.

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AESTHETICS

The study of the creation and appreciation of beauty. Philosophical approaches to the subject of aesthetics center on the *perception* of beauty in the experience of art. Folkloristic approaches to the subject define those formal features within folklore that constitute its artfulness in communal and/or personal terms. Folklorists speak of aesthetic issues most often in terms of style, artistry, and the relation of tradition and innovation. An aesthetic analysis may pertain to a single genre or to the folklore of an entire community. In either case, aesthetic standards may be examined from a contrastive perspective (i.e., in relation to some other genre or community) or from an in-group perspective. Folkloristic research in aesthetics contributes vitally to theoretical understandings of cultural relativism and the importance of communal tastes in the creation of art. The topic of aesthetics also holds importance for public sector researchers, as it raises issues related to the evaluation and presentation of folklore.

TRADITION AND INNOVATION

The study of material culture in particular has furnished significant insights into aesthetics. One of the early classics in the area is Franz Boas' *Primitive Art*

(1927). Through examination of traditional arts from around the world, Boas identifies several fundamental criteria of artistry: symmetry (a balance of component elements), rhythm (the regular, pattern-forming repetition of features), and the emphasis or delimitation of form (the tendency toward representative or abstract depiction). The complex interplay of these features makes artwork from one culture distinguishable from that of another.

Since these features underlie all art, however, Boas stresses further the importance of communal tastes in the execution of “primitive” art. Boas writes of a communal “emotional attachment to customary forms,” limiting acceptance of innovation. The fact that the form and details of a given implement may vary little from one artist to the next does not derive from a lack of creativity on the part of the folk artist; rather, the artist responds to the community’s greater interest in preserving the traditional. Under these circumstances, the aesthetic merit of a given product resides not in its uniqueness but in the artist’s ability to realize and execute communal norms, confining individual variation to small details of ornamentation or style.

As Boas and later scholars demonstrate, this stress on the customary is further bolstered by the communal creation of objects. In a traditional barn raising or quilting bee, for instance, individual tastes or experimentation are limited by the communal execution of the work. Communal production, characteristic of many varieties of traditional material culture, thus exerts a leveling influence on artistic variation and helps ensure the maintenance of a communal aesthetic over time. When traditional performers become separated from this ambient collective tradition of evaluation and production, their work may change greatly, incorporating new ideas and departing to some degree from old standards. Richard Bauman addresses changes of this sort in his study of a folk raconteur turned professional. Similarly, Michael Owen Jones examines the conscious interplay of tradition and innovation in the products of a professional Kentucky mountain chairmaker. Jones stresses that aesthetic choices do not occur mechanistically but as the result of personal decisions and values over time.

Given this analytical framework, a prime issue for the folk art collector lies in the question of whether to value typicality in a piece of folklore (an act presumably valued in the traditional community) or to privilege instead those works that transgress typical norms or tastes (an act valued in elite art circles). Judgments of this sort have direct bearing on folk artists, as the monetary value attached to a given work may influence artistic trends within the community itself. Collector interest in a particular physical form or color scheme, for instance, may alter a community’s evaluation of that form and lead to its triumph over other types. An obscure performer or style may thus become central, while a community’s own evaluative standards lose cogency. By contrast, changes that appear significant to an outside audience may be

regarded as minor creative alterations within the ambient community itself, of little consequence to the tradition or its maintenance. Alterations in technique, materials, or use only become significant if they transgress important rules within the community's aesthetic system. Questions of aesthetics thus present intriguing issues for both public sector and academic folklorists alike.

AESTHETICS IN COMMUNICATION

Aesthetics becomes an explicit concern of linguistic folklorists through the writings of Roman Jakobson. Jakobson's attention to poetics provides a new basis for the analysis of the aesthetic form and uses of language. In Jakobson's analysis, poetic language draws ordinary words into new frameworks of meaning through attention to criteria (e.g., rhyme) normally ignored in speech. This new axis of *equivalence* distinguishes the poetic utterance from the ordinary. Studies such as William Pepicello and Thomas Green's examination of riddling demonstrate the ways in which folklore can capitalize artfully on such normally unnoticed similarities between words or utterances. The study of ethnopoetics further examines the ways in which equivalence operates in the narrative traditions of many cultures, converting seemingly utilitarian components of speech (e.g., grammatical case, conjunctions, tense) into markers of artistic structure. In this way, minute aesthetic features become markers of larger aesthetic patternings, themselves constitutive of the narrative's symbolic import.

From the outset, the performance perspective of folklore studies stressed the importance of aesthetic inquiry. Dan Ben-Amos' classic definition of folklore as "*artistic communication in small groups*" (emphasis added) has led others to pay particular attention to the ways in which aesthetic merit is achieved in a given performance. For Richard Bauman, the performance itself becomes framed through communally recognized aesthetic features that distinguish it from ordinary discourse: for example, special language, altered use of voice or body, or special opening and closing formulas. Aesthetic features become instrumental, helping the performer designate the performance as a special moment during which the rules of ordinary communication are temporarily suspended.

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Folklorists have often addressed aesthetic features within a given genre or community from a contrastive perspective. The aesthetic values of a certain kind of folklore, for instance, may be contrasted with the values of elite art or with those of some other community. Typical of a genre-based approach is Max Lüthi's study of European *Märchen* (see Folktale entry). Concentrating

on the formal aspects of the genre (e.g., characters, setting, plot), Lüthi demonstrates the *Märchen*'s distinctiveness from elite narrative literature. Similarly, Breandán Breathnach's study of Irish folk music contrasts the means of ornamentation and style in folk music with that of European art music. The features favored by the elite tradition (e.g., variation in intensity of sound—"dynamics") remain unexploited by the folk performer, and other features (e.g., grace notes, rhythm) become prime means of varying and evaluating performances.

John Michael Vlach offers a community-based approach to contrastive aesthetics in his examination of African-American arts. In his discussion of quilting, for instance, Vlach not only stresses the survival of West African techniques and styles but also examines how the particular aesthetic embodied in such works contrasts with the Euroamerican aesthetic of quilt form. Whereas Anglo quiltmakers of the nineteenth century valued geometric regularity and naturalistic representational depiction, African-American quilters valued works that employed both "improvisational" patternings and stylized figures.

Such contrastive analysis is particularly enlightening when the groups or genres compared have existed side by side for an extended period, leading to the more or less conscious creation and maintenance of contrastive evaluative standards. Differential aesthetics can become a means of creating and defending cultural boundaries, of resisting a threatened loss of communal identity.

IN-GROUP VALUES: ETHNOAESTHETICS

Often, however, the folklorist seeks to explicate a communal aesthetic on its own terms, without reference to some contrasting system. An examination of this type turns to native concepts and categories. Gary Gossen's study of Chamula verbal categories, for instance, discusses the importance of "heat" in Chamula evaluations of oral performance. Genres differ from each other in Chamula culture through differences in attendant heat, and one performance differs from another in its ability to create the proper degree of heatedness. Heat becomes the conceptual basis of Chamula verbal aesthetics, relating it in turn to aspects of Chamula mythology.

Gary Witherspoon and Barre Toelken point to the similar centrality of the concepts of process and cosmic interrelation in the aesthetics of Navajo people. Navajo aesthetics locates beauty in the act of creation rather than in the product and stresses the relation of that act to many others occurring in tandem throughout the universe. Beauty is a central and profoundly meaningful concept rather than a marginal or superfluous one. Aesthetics can thus provide insight into deep philosophical questions of native metaphysics and worldview.

Although folkloristic approaches to aesthetics may appear diffuse and

unsystematized, they indicate the fundamental importance of aesthetics for the study of folklore. Aesthetics helps link the performer and the community, the personal and the communal. It provides a crucial focus for researchers interested in the artistry of human communication.

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See also Art, Folk; Artifact; Ethnoaesthetics; Ethnopoetics; Linguistic Approach; Performance; Repertoire; Texture; Tradition.

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ANECDOTE

Narratives that concentrate on representative incidents regarding named individuals or groups. As the etymology of this term indicates (Latin *anecdota*, “unpublished items,” from the Greek *anekdotos*, “unpublished”), anecdotes have always been closely associated with oral tradition. They share their particular folk-narrative niche with closely related genres such as *joke*, *legend*, *exemplum*, *rumor*, *tall tale*, (see related entries) and the kind of humorous story that in German is called *schwank*. Several traits, therefore, tend to overlap among these genres, and it is not always easy to separate one from the other.

What is peculiar to the anecdote, though not exclusively so, is its concentration on named individuals or groups, especially the former. Consequently, anonymity is not one of its chief properties. Anecdotes focus particularly on well-known historical or contemporary personalities, both those in the public eye in general (royalty, famous military figures, politicians, scientists, film stars, athletes, writers) and those locally regarded as “worthies.” Whether anecdotes told about these individuals are intended to enhance or to denigrate them, the anecdotes relate incidents seen as typical of the individuals’ actions or other qualities. In performance, an anecdote is often used to underpin or confirm in its pointedness a characteristic previously ascribed to an individual (“To show you what I mean, let me tell you a story I heard about so-and-so”). Whether they are believed to be true or known to be apocryphal, anecdotes can be powerful rhetorical tools thinly disguised as narrative entertainment. Mutatis mutandis, these hallmarks also apply to anecdotes told about distinguishable, named groups, whether in praise (soldiers of a particular regiment, a famous clan, Londoners during World War II) or in mocking contempt (the East Frisians, the Irish, the people of Aarhus, the men of Gotham, city officials).

Although allegedly relating the actions or sayings of named individuals, anecdotes essentially express general human traits or universal human concerns, such as stupidity, cleverness, boastfulness, curiosity, cowardice, miserliness, laziness, drunkenness, gaucheness, ignorance, credulity, absent-mindedness, shrewdness, courage, quick-wittedness, slow-wittedness, and so on. The diplomatic gaffe of an ambassador representing a powerful country or the simple mistake made in a foreign language by a prominent politician not only creates a certain amount of *schadenfreude* and exposes the imperfections of those in high places but also, in some representative fashion, compensates for our own occasional lack of tact or behavioral competence and our own linguistic struggles when abroad. Thus, anecdotes are convenient vehicles for overt or covert social criticism. Drunkenness may itself be deplored or lead to hilarious narrative accounts: The story of a drunken priest highlights the incongruity of the condition and the status of the person afflicted. Courage may be admired in the strong, but it gains much poignancy when displayed by the timid in adversity. Group rivalry between sports teams, neighboring cities, universities, fraternities, the different armed services, ethnic communities, religious persuasions, and so on may find otherwise elusive expression in the short, sharply focused narrative of the anecdote.

Structurally, anecdotes, like jokes and contemporary legends, rely heavily on and therefore work toward a final revelation or punch line. But unlike the other two genres, they do not lose their effectiveness in repetition; quite the contrary, those who tell anecdotes are often asked to repeat them to reinforce a particular view or opinion of an individual or group in an entertaining manner. Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson’s *Types of the Folktale* lists many of

the traditional anecdotes in section 1200–1999 (“Jokes and Anecdotes”), together with other monoepisodic stories. The majority of motifs are likely to be found under J (“The Wise and the Foolish”), K (“Deceptions”), W (“Traits of Character”), and X (“Humor”) in Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. Despite the popularity of the anecdote in oral tradition, folklorists have paid comparatively little attention to the anecdote as a genre per se. Not surprisingly, the anecdote, with its strong affinity to the short story, also has become a well-honed literary genre.

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See also Blason Populaire; Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Ethnic Folklore; Folktale.

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ANIMISM

Term derived from the Greek *anima*, meaning spirit or soul, and used to signify either: (1) the belief in indwelling spirits (souls, ghosts, and other invisible beings) inherent in people, animals, plants, or even lifeless things and often presented in personalized or anthropomorphized images, or (2) the theory that accounts for the origin of religion on the basis of this kind of anima. The anima is believed to be like a soul, a self, or an ego, able to leave the body either temporarily (e.g., in sleep, ecstasy, or fright) or permanently (e.g., on the occasion of death).

The theory of animism as the basis of the earliest form of religion was set forth by the pioneer English anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) in his book *Primitive Culture*. Tylor bridged the evolutionary and diffusionist theories of culture of his times in his own psychologically inspired reasoning. The general evolutionary perception of that age proposed a gradual development

of the natural, social, and spiritual worlds toward more complex and higher modes of existence. In the evolution of man's religious ideas, monotheistic Christianity was placed at the pinnacle of the developmental scale as the highest form of spirituality.

Tylor stated that primitive religion was rational in its own way, supporting his premises with an image of the "ancient savage philosophers." The theory of animism was thought to reveal the psychological mechanisms of primitive man and the original form of religion in human history. However, Tylor's hypotheses were not based on reliable scientific data, and the premise of unilinear cultural evolution ultimately could not prevail in the face of accumulating evidence regarding early man. Scientific accumulation of knowledge on the so-called primitive religions and on continuous contacts between these tribes and peoples of different modes of production and belief systems forced scholars to abandon the theory that claimed that the nineteenth-century aboriginal tribes represented the pristine state of human cultural evolution.

Despite the fact that the theoretical value of animism has been disproved, it played an influential role in the study of man for decades before the rise of functionalism in the field of anthropology. It also made an important contribution to the search for the origins of human civilization.

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See also Evolutionary Theory; Religion, Comparative.

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH

Subject selection, definitions of folklore, data selection, research methods, and theories of folklore research closely related to and associated with those employed in cultural anthropology. Folklore and anthropology arose together as disciplines in response to the interests and concerns of an England that had

accepted Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and social Darwinism. An important and long-standing difference between the disciplines from the time of their common English origins—a difference that grew out of and in turn shaped the disciplines' definitions of themselves—was their subject selection. From the beginning in England, there was a division of labor and laborers so that anthropology traveled through space and folklore traveled through time to explore the evolutionary stages of man. From the beginnings of their histories, anthropologists researched contemporary people and cultures other than their own around the world, and folklorists researched the lore of their own people as it existed in the past through an examination of peasant culture as a stage of their own cultures' histories.

The disciplines of folklore and cultural anthropology have varied greatly through the times and spaces they have shared but perhaps no more so than in their definitions of folklore. The Russian structural folklorist Vladimir Propp strongly denied that material culture and custom—he called the complex of custom and belief “spiritual culture”—were folklore and argued that these genres of tradition should be left to ethnologists. The American folklife movement insisted just as strongly that material culture and custom—from the 1950s on, Don Yoder also insisted that folklore included something very akin to Propp's “spiritual folklore”—were an essential part of folklore and demanded that greater attention be paid to them. At various times in various places, members of both professions have claimed as their province various combinations of verbal lore, customary and material culture, and the folk.

Another issue of concern between members of each discipline is whether the data of the field are to be garnered through written records or firsthand experience (library or field research). Some early folklorists—Andrew Lang, for example—and anthropologists were content to draw their data from the recorded observations of others. Later folklorists and anthropologists often insisted upon conducting field research themselves and gathering their own materials for analysis supplemented by their observations. Both field- and nonfield-based research has been conducted by scholars in folklore and in anthropology at various times throughout the disciplines' histories.

There have been many anthropological approaches to folklore based upon cross-cultural theories. Some of these theories quickly fell out of fashion. Max Müller's *solar mythology* claimed that folklore was devolutionary. He defended the idea that it was possible to work backward, transcend the “disease of language,” experience anew the wonder of an age in which primitive man worshipped the sun, and discover that the folklore of the present was but a dim reflection or a broken-down myth of the time when the sun was king. Müller's theory—and his reputation—were destroyed by the power of the pen when Andrew Lang published a brilliant parody using Müller's methods to prove that both “Max” and “Müller” were reflections of solar myth.

Max Müller and Andrew Lang were united, however, in their reliance upon published materials for research. Lang's own *survivals theory* was in keeping with the widespread acceptance of evolutionary patterns of thought in the England of his time, and his wit and tenacity won the day. His vigorous defense of the idea that all peoples and cultures evolved in a fixed, orderly progression of stages so that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny was a folkloristic attempt to understand the present by studying the past, just as anthropologists have sought to understand their cultures by studying others—different responses to the same theory. Lang's theory, however, had its day and slowly lost its influence in both folklore and anthropology over a period of decades.

Other anthropological approaches to folklore also foundered when field-tested and gradually were disproved and discarded by folklorists. The *myth-ritual theory*, an essentially literary approach espoused by Sir James Frazer and others who sought to discover the patterns and forms of the ritual of early man underlying literature, was, like Max Müller's solar mythology, essentially devolutionary and therefore in conflict with the evolutionary theory that dominated Western thought. Consequently, myth-ritualism was destined to be discarded. Although the process was more gradual, the myth-ritual theory, like solar mythology, also lost its influence and adherents over the years.

The *pattern theory of culture*, *ethnography*, *functionalism*, *structuralism*, and *symbolic anthropology* are all anthropological theories that underlie or are elements of widely accepted and employed anthropological approaches to folklore in the 1990s. Because of its generative relationship to other anthropological approaches to folklore, Ruth Benedict's pattern theory of culture, it can be argued, is the anthropological theory most basic to folklore scholarship in the last days of the twentieth century. Benedict asserted the idea that all parts of culture are related and reflect—albeit sometimes in different ways—the same values and beliefs, so that unconscious canons of choice produce a unified whole of behaviors, values, and beliefs. Benedict's theory implies that culture is one, each part evincing the whole, so that oral and material and customary folklore are all windows into culture. The widespread acceptance of Benedict's theory revolutionized the definition of culture and the study of folklore. A good deal of controversy was generated within the discipline of folklore by this anthropological approach (in two books published in 1972, Richard M. Dorson both condemned and commended the idea that lore including ordinary conversation could be used to understand values). Thus, it is somewhat surprising to see that Benedict's ideas have been so widely accepted that they have become a truism and the basis of a great deal of research and general knowledge in the 1990s, even among people who may not know that she was the scholar who first popularized the pattern theory of culture. Folklore was the principal cultural item she studied. Her concept of the great significance

of folklore follows from the definition of culture she popularized and has led to a number of anthropological approaches to folklore.

The importance of Ruth Benedict's pattern theory of culture is matched by the influence of the method she used to report her research—the *ethnography*. Ethnography is a method of studying cultures in which researchers immerse themselves in ways of life to perceive them as they are lived and then write articles and books recounting and interpreting their fieldwork. Such studies are designed to enable others to experience what it is like to be members of the cultures studied. The method existed long before Benedict, but it was popularized because it was the method she and her colleagues employed. Clifford Geertz, along with many other contemporary anthropologists in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, further emphasized ethnography as an important and successful way of exploring culture, and ethnography has become a major literary genre and anthropological approach to folklore in the late 1990s.

Structuralism is another anthropological approach to folklore. Syntagmatic structuralism is concerned with discovering the basic, surface structures of folklore—the method is most often applied to oral lore—and has become one of the most frequently employed methods of folklore research today. Vladimir Propp's morphological analysis, the oral-formulaic method, and William Labov's system of narrative analysis are widely employed structural analysis methods applied to the study of narrative and other oral forms, and there have been a number of widely accepted structural analyses of conversational genres such as riddles and proverbs. Claude Lévi-Strauss' paradigmatic structuralism—the quest for underlying deep structures (usually sets of binary oppositions)—was extremely popular for a period of time in the middle of the twentieth century. Lévi-Strauss claimed that his sets of binary opposites were universal and reflected the basic nature of human thought. The theory had become less influential and widely accepted in folklore by the 1990s.

Benedict's insistence that all spheres of culture are meaningfully related provided a rationale for approaches attempting to discover how folklore functions. The idea that all forms of folklore satisfy some important psychological, social, or cultural function is a basic axiom of most folklore research in the 1990s.

Symbolic anthropology, interpreting symbols in the context of the processes of social and cultural life, is another anthropological approach to folklore. Victor Turner disagreed with the rigidity and conformity that he felt had become a part of structural and functional anthropology and argued instead for an analysis of symbols. Turner and other symbolic anthropologists saw symbols as conscious and unconscious representations and objects of power. His method and his insistence upon interpreting symbols from the broadest possible perspective as complex data reflecting multivalence and condensa-

tion have been widely accepted as an anthropological approach to folklore; moreover, his approach is yet another way of saying, as did Benedict, that all cultural traits have meaning. Anthropology in general, throughout its long history, has studied man; folklore has studied the products of the human imagination; and symbolic anthropology studies the products of the human imagination in order to understand man.

Anthropology and folklore both developed and changed over their histories from Tylor to Turner. Folklore continued to broaden its field of study, method, and theoretical orientations as it developed as a discipline. In the 1990s, functional, structural, and symbolic anthropology are all part of anthropological approaches to folklore. The major feature of the discipline of folklore in the last decades of the twentieth century is the fact that it is eclectic. In the 1990s, most folklorists pursue research in terms of a limited number of topics, but most recognize as an ideal a truly complete anthropological approach. This approach would examine people of all cultures as revealed by research methods emphasizing the firsthand experiencing of material culture, custom, and oral lore.

Many American folklorists and American graduate programs have defined their field of study not in terms of lore—item or genres—but in terms of anthropological approaches to folklore. In the 1990s, folk cultural field research concentrating upon people and their lore is one of the most commonly used methods for dissertation research in major American folklore graduate schools, and for that reason, such research is apt to be one of the most important approaches to folklore for at least the next generation of graduate students.

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See also Acculturation; Anthropology, Symbolic; Cultural Relativism; Ethnography; Evolutionary Theory; Fieldwork; Functionalism; Myth-Ritual Theory; Structuralism.

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ANTHROPOLOGY, SYMBOLIC

The study of the nature of the symbols used in different cultures, in ritual, in performances, and in daily life where full meaning requires more than literal expression. A symbol has two components—a solid, visible, or otherwise sensory sign and the idea to which it points. Symbolic anthropology interprets symbols in the context of the processes of social and cultural life.

In the history of the symbolizing process, investigators are able to trace symbolization to *Homo erectus*, who lived a million to a hundred thousand years ago, before *Homo sapiens*. Symbolization was evidenced in the signs of ochre pigment on the bones of these earliest hominids. Later (circa 35,000 to 19,000 years ago), the caves of Lascaux and Altamira were filled with pictures of shamanic scenes, pictures that themselves are thought to have been objects of power. Human beings appear to possess a predisposition for symbolization (indeed, this trait is shared by some animals). The practice of producing an alternative object to the ordinary one—a picture of a bull, for example—is deep in the techniques of ritual and usually goes beyond representation. There exists the ordinary object, the bull, and the picture of it—two things thrown together. Within the depiction lies not only meaning and ideological message, a teaching device, but also actual sacredness and efficacy. The nature of the sacredness is very hard to determine.

The use of the word *symbol* was first known to have appeared in ancient Greece, though undoubtedly a reflexive process about what we call *symbols* was afoot much earlier. Certainly, the history of the concept is considerably older than the discipline of anthropology. The word *symbol* itself derives from the Greek *sym*, meaning together, and *ballein*, meaning to throw—that is, two things thrown together. A pair of friends would mark their alliance by breaking a precious token in half, whereupon each treasured one of the halves as a mark of identification. The church took up the Greek idea of a mark or symbol and termed the creed itself a symbol. Later, the church developed a field of symbolic theology in which *symbol* began to take on its present meaning based on the mysteries inherent in a religious object—its double nature, outward and inward.

Symbolism came under the close attention of thinkers during the romantic movement in the nineteenth century, mainly in the theorizing of Johann Bachofen (1815–1887)—specifically, his notion of an original “mother right”

among early humanity and his theory that the symbolism of funerary rituals was related to fertility. However, as we have seen, symbolism in the activities of the world's peoples was flourishing for ages without scholarly analysis. It is how we look back on symbolism now that appears to determine our definitions. We already see two ways of looking at symbols—as a mark or really a sign and as having power—which Jung as a scholar began to recognize in the early twentieth century in his work on the living symbol and dream archetypes. In modern religious studies, Mircea Eliade held that symbols are true parts of religion itself; he pointed out that an ordinary object could become genuinely sacred while remaining just the same as it is.

Clearly, to obtain an unbiased view of symbolism, only genuine participant study can pinpoint what is actually going on, even at such simple occasions as a folk wedding or when a hunter takes an animal.

Within the discipline of anthropology, the basic thinking on symbolism was founded on the concepts of Émile Durkheim and his school centered in France in the first decade of the twentieth century. Durkheim taught the primacy of the *social* in symbolic analysis and held that symbols were always social representations. Durkheim even attempted to bring theology down to earth by claiming that symbols were the building blocks society constructed for itself for the task of deifying itself. After Durkheim, the study of symbolism became ramified and divided, notably in the work of the folklorist Arnold van Gennep, who broke free of Durkheim's strictures by drawing attention to the liminal, in-between phase in rites of passage, that no-man's-land beyond the provenance of normal social structures and their self-deifying tendencies.

Others, notably the linguist Edward Sapir, began to reveal the complexity of a symbol as multivalent, that is, possessing many meanings and condensing them. David Schneider, a down-to-earth functionalist and authority on kinship and marriage, showed how the major (though hidden) symbol driving our conceptions of kinship and marriage was semen itself, at the core. In the 1930s and 1940s, the study of kinship became central in anthropology. (Interestingly, kinship studies have been vindicated by contemporary theorists working on the symbolism of the body.)

Then Victor Turner appeared on the scene, breaking from the sole focus on kinship and social structure and resuscitating van Gennep's work from the oblivion it had suffered while most anthropologists were following the course of structural functionalism, which taught, as Durkheim had, that symbols serve the main structures of society and follow them in style. Turner claimed a distinctly creative and different character for the symbols of rites of passage—*liminal symbols*, as he termed them; these symbols might even carry a revolutionary message, subverting social structures while sheltered in that temporarily antistructural phase of the rite of passage. Turner became the principal analyst of symbolism in anthropology, emphasizing—and here he

followed Durkheim—that symbols were factors in social processes. However, he argued that these processes were not necessarily structure-bound.

In his analysis of the symbol itself, Turner explicated the important likeness between the symbolic object (the signifier) and its meaning (what is signified). Symbols were semantically “open”: The meaning was not absolutely fixed. Turner saw how a symbol might become an independent force that was a product of many forces, even opposing ones. He was much influenced by the symbolic anthropologists, psychologists, and other theorists who went before him—Freud, with his polarization of the symbol into the ideological pole and the sensory pole of meaning (Turner cited the example of the Ndembu initiation symbol, the “milk tree,” whose sensory pole was the bodily and emotional experience of milk and whose ideological pole, dynamized by the sensory pole, connoted the tribal virtues and the principle of matriliney), and also Jung, with his insight that a live symbol works and possesses power when pregnant with meaning but dies when it is dissected and analyzed. On the basis of this insight, Turner realized that there is no need for participants to render into words what symbols say, for symbols transmit their messages in a number of sensory codes simultaneously. Yet Turner himself analyzed. He followed Sapir in his discovery of the multivalence and condensation of meaning in dominant symbols. He noted conscious and unconscious levels in the symbols’ meanings. He perforce had to alternate between regarding symbols as representations and as objects of power. He described the shrine pole of the Ndembu hunters of Zambia as not so much an object of cognition, a mere set of referents to known phenomena, but rather as “a unitary power,” the slaughterous power of the hunter spirit itself. His analysis of symbolism stood, whether he took the representationist view or the power view.

Other symbolologists abounded. Raymond Firth pointed out that the relation between the two elements of a symbol, the signifier and the signified, was that of concrete to abstract, particular to general. Claude Lévi-Strauss saw symbols as key items in the universal cognitive structures of the mind. Clifford Geertz’s definition of a symbol, similar to Firth’s, was “any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception.” He explained how symbols are layered in multiple networks of meanings and warned that the symbols of each culture should be studied in situ, without attempting a universalist theory. Mary Douglas was a universalist, regarding symbols as corresponding to the attitudes held by a culture toward the human body—which is very much a basic universal.

Further hints of the independent character of symbols have appeared. Roy Wagner showed how symbols become independent entities, ever obviating themselves in new forms. He became interested in the way a percept in the brain may be formed at some central location in the visual system by using

stimuli that could not possibly produce that percept at an earlier, more primary location. The percept requires its own special, internal “retina” for the formation of the image. In other words, a percept with its rich meaning—a symbol, for instance—arrives in human minds as a manufactured item produced in its own peculiar way. Wagner said that this “abstracting” process is not the kind of abstraction that produces items useful in logic and the like but is part of the generative and ongoing process of complex symbol production itself. This appears to be parallel to the processes that produce poetry.

Barbara Babcock pointed out an important characteristic of symbols in festivals and celebrations that is of particular interest to folklorists: a well-marked surplus of signifiers—multitudes of symbols produced to bespeak the meaning of the celebration in an exuberantly fantastic multiplication of color, cloth, masks, costumes, and fireworks, even to the point of indeterminate nonsense. This surplus creates a self-transparent discourse that mocks and subverts the monological arrogance of “official” systems of signification. Here are hints of Victor Turner’s “antistructure,” which, he said, is the mark of the rite of passage; there are also reminders of Mikhail Bakhtin’s praise of the vitality of the people’s second life, as expressed in *Rabelais and His World*.

Another extension of symbol theory comes from Don Handelman’s work on the symbolic type, again of significance in the study of folk festivals. The symbolic type may be a Hopi clown, the *wau* (a disreputably disguised uncle in Iatmul initiation in New Guinea), a lascivious old man figure in Pakistani weddings, or the hobbyhorse intruder muddling the neat figures of Morris dancing. There are many examples in folklife literature of this clumsy, contradictory figure, often suggestive of overfertility; it is a figure that will not stabilize like the respectable gods of the Hopi, for instance, or the royals in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The fool figure classically appears within the boundaries of rites of passage or yearly rites, demonstrating uncertainty and also process itself, and thereby it is able to shift ritual occasions through their sequential phases.

Another school, that of critical anthropology and postmodernism, looks at modern symbolism under the rubric of commodity fetishism, including the symbolism of store goods, advertising, and land development, as displayed in the contemporary popular scene.

Meanwhile, in the most contemporary discussion, the Africanist Michael Jackson has held that the controversial question of whether the effect of a symbol is objective or subjective should be subsumed under the performance and experiencing of the ritual process—thus downplaying the word *symbol* as a nonissue: If one actually experiences ritual, mere representation is left behind. Is symbology really the way to study human ritual or action sequences of deepest fundamental importance? Robert Desjarlais has looked back on a generation of anthropologists who worked under the guiding assumption that

culture consists of networks of symbols and webs of significance, so much so that later ethnographers even considered human bodies as texts, emotions as discourses, and healings as symbolic. He has argued that here we have drifted away from experience of the body. We must go back and consider ritual direct, from the plane of the body and not as interpreted through the mind.

In short, an anthropology of the senses is emerging that is returning to the study of bodily experience. And paradoxically, we are gaining an even richer understanding of what we have called symbolic objects. Our understanding is richer because the object (such as a sacred tree, a ritual food, or perhaps a song) may be given a deeper respect—a respect that ethnographers (and certainly the people themselves) often have actually felt, with something like Rudolf Otto's awe. We may now be able to accept that, for example, the whale meat from the self-sacrificing spirit being, the whale, is both bodily delicious and charged with the whale's spirituality—a direct process in which representation has no part. This brings symbolism out in its full dimensions; we see no cutoff point where logic steps in and says, this is only blubber.

From this summary, incomplete as it is, the depth and diversity of thought on symbols in anthropology can be inferred. Symbols are all around us. To paraphrase Vasilii Kandinsky, there is no form, there is nothing in the world, that says nothing.

Edith Turner

See also Anthropological Approach; Freudian Psychology; Jungian Psychology; Phenomenology; Semiotics.

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APPLIED FOLKLORE/FOLKLORISTICS

Using folklore or folklorists' methods, investigative techniques, and skills as a personal resource or to affect policy, develop technology, or alter social, cultural, and economic conditions. Applied folklore is often contrasted with academic research and teaching folklore courses per se (although these might include a degree of advocacy and intervention). Typical venues are museums, the entertainment industry, arts agencies and parks and recreation departments that document and present folk traditions, the health and social welfare professions, cultural resources management programs, community redevelopment agencies, human resources development departments and management consulting firms, and education programs.

Early folklorists did not hold full-time appointments teaching and researching folklore owing, in part, to the absence of chairs of folklore studies and degree-granting programs. They documented, interpreted, and presented folklore avocationally or as a resource in their professions. Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, the compilers of celebrated collections of household tales, practiced law; the latter also published a study of ancient Teutonic legal customs. Employed by his government as a circuit physician, Elias Lönnrot (whose dissertation concerned magical medicine of the Finns) traveled to remote areas where he met "seers" ("wise men" and "wise women") as well as masters of narrative poetry from whom he collected beliefs and songs that he recast into the *Kalevala*, which became the Finnish national epic. Poets Sir Walter Scott and John Greenleaf Whittier and writers Joel Chandler Harris and Zora Neale Hurston, among others, collected and interpreted folklore and drew upon it for their literary creations. Hungarian composer Béla Bartók based many scores on folk music. The American regionalist Thomas Hart Benton included folksong themes, fiddling, and other Ozark folklife in his murals and lithographs.

Folklore has long been manipulated for political purposes. In 1630, the king of Sweden decreed that ancient traditions be documented; as records of the way of life in ancient times, they would demonstrate to older European countries that Sweden, too, had a long history. The Antiquities Council, founded in Stockholm in 1666, implored the local clergy to gather old narrative songs because they contained "much truth about the heroic deeds of the forefathers." Nineteenth-century nationalism motivated some of the folklore collecting in Germany, Finland, Ireland, and other countries suffering from outside cultural or political domination. In the twentieth century, Nazi Germany exploited the Aryan myth, Soviet Russia promoted folklore for its propaganda value, and Communist China attempted to indoctrinate children through folksongs, dance, and puppetry. On the other side of the coin, labor and civil rights activists and social reformers have used folklore to educate, agitate, and rally people to a cause.

Folklore was also used to help immigrants adjust to their new social environments. Jane Addams established Hull House in Chicago in 1889 as a place where people could gather to celebrate familiar holidays, dress in traditional costume, sing the old songs, and reminisce. In 1900, she created a labor museum with tools and products, photographs, and demonstrations. By showing similarities in crafts and work, the museum linked various nationalities, revealed a continuity in experiences from the native country to the new, and bridged the gap between immigrants and their children. Phyllis H. Williams, who interviewed and observed more than 500 Italian immigrants over 11 years' time, published a volume in 1938 on southern Italian folkways in Europe and the United States. A handbook for social workers, medical personnel, and teachers, the work surveyed both Old World and New World traditions and advised the reader on how to ease the adjustment of families and individuals. In the 1940s, Rachel Davis DuBois, a social worker, utilized folklore in schools to increase understanding among people of different ethnic backgrounds. Dorothy Mills Howard created child development programs through which children became aware of the folklore process and how it operated in their lives and communities.

Public agencies in the United States have played a role in applied folklore, from the Bureau of American Ethnology (founded in 1879) to the Archive of Folksong (established in 1928 and renamed the Archive of Folk Culture in 1981) and the Works Progress Administration's Federal Project Number One, which operated between August 2, 1935, and August 31, 1939. The latter included folklore documentation, festivals, or publications by the art, music, theater, and writers' projects in addition to the Historical Records Survey. During World War II, the National Research Council created the Committee on Food Habits, dedicated to the belief that studies of ethnic and regional customs revolving around food were crucial to solving nutritional problems.

More recently, three federal organizations have been active in folklore applications in the United States. The Office of Folklife Programs at the Smithsonian Institution sponsors research, exhibits, films, and publications as well as a Festival of American Folklife (established in 1967), defending this annual event for its advocacy on behalf of cultural equity. The National Endowment for the Arts' Folk Arts Program (founded in 1974) funds local traditional festivals, workshops, demonstration programs in schools, and other activities that present folk art and artists, in part to help perpetuate traditional art forms, skills, and knowledge. This organization also provides the first years of funding for folk arts coordinator positions in arts councils; by the late 1980s, 50 of the 56 states and territories and several cities had hired people to document and present traditional arts, performers, and craftspeople. In 1976, the American Folklife Preservation Act established the American Folklife Center as the country's first national agency devoted to the study, preservation, and presentation of folk culture. Located in the Library of Congress, the center

provides technical assistance, carries out model documentary projects, and organizes public forums in the name of cultural conservation.

The folksong and folk dance revivals of the 1950s and 1960s brought many to the halls of academe seeking information, resources, and training. Some became scholars; others continued to pursue careers in the arts as singers, musicians, puppeteers, dancers, choreographers, directors of folk dance troupes, radio programmers, creative writers, journalists, editors, filmmakers, and consultants to the entertainment industry (advising on costume, dialect, sets, and scripts). Folklore studies complement and supplement arts training by providing (1) knowledge about varied forms and examples of folklore through time and space, (2) familiarity with bibliographical tools and archive resources, and (3) an understanding of the historical, social, cultural, and biographical contexts in which folklore is generated and perpetuated. Arts practitioners enrich their repertoires, tend to be more concerned with authenticity, and usually add an interpretive, educational dimension to entertainment.

Many folklorists find employment in public agencies such as state arts councils, city cultural affairs divisions, and parks and recreation departments (sometimes referring to their specific field as “public folklore” or “public sector folklife programming”). They locate and document the behaviors of individuals who are the active tradition-bearers. Through films, tape recordings, festivals, exhibits, publications, and interpretive programs, they honor local artists and performers, educate the public about the community’s history and culture(s), and foster intergroup communication and cooperation. Apprenticeship programs and venues for showcasing artists help perpetuate the traditions. Attention to folklore in these agencies democratizes support of the arts and enlarges the public served.

The same is true for museums of art, history, and science and industry in which folklorists have found employment as curators and directors. Those trained in folklore studies know their way around archives and historical collections, can establish the traditionality and cultural representativeness of objects, and are able to discern and communicate the meanings, symbolic significance, and functions of the things that people make. With their interviewing and observation skills, folklorists can elicit information from resource persons while locating and presenting craft demonstrators for educational programs. Oriented to the documentation and study of traditional, expressive behavior in everyday life, folklorists are well suited to working in living-history museums and community cultural centers, and they can help prevent or overcome elitist tendencies in other museums. Their efforts and emphases assist established residents in valuing their heritage, newcomers in understanding what daily life was like for early settlers, and tourists in comprehending the social and cultural forces shaping the region.

Increasingly, teachers, curriculum planners, and educational consultants

are seeking training in folkloristics and utilizing folklore materials and folkloristic methods. Effectiveness in the multicultural classroom requires that a teacher communicate with those whose heritages differ from one another's and from the teacher's own; the teacher must also discover what the various traditions are and uncover fundamental similarities. Learning to do folklore fieldwork develops these skills. Student fieldwork projects promote experiential learning, nurture the enjoyment of discovery, and can help reduce intergroup stereotyping and dissonance as individuals learn about each other. The sharing of folklore in the classroom establishes common ground between the student and teacher, among the students, and between generations when class assignments involve the student in conversations with younger siblings or with parents and grandparents.

Incorporating comparative folklore into the curriculum internationalizes students' studies. Folklore provides a sense of immediacy, capturing students' attention and interest as it confers a sense of identification with the subject. In language arts, exposure to folk poetry and narratives (or analysis of the students' own verbal art) can help students learn about meter, rhyme, structure, motivation and character, and symbolism; the classics then become less formidable. Having students in composition classes write about their own folklore, community traditions, or the lore of colleagues provides interesting subject matter and turns the writing exercise into a meaningful and rewarding experience. In history and social studies, students who document family traditions or record narratives, songs, and descriptions of customs from community members gain insights into historical events and processes that impersonal textbooks cannot convey. Investigating modern legends, beliefs, and rituals can help the student understand more fully the impact of social and technological change.

Folklorists in the helping professions, such as medicine and social work, supplement and complement the knowledge and skills of coworkers because their training prepares them to document and interpret relevant traditions historically, culturally, and behaviorally. Folklorists seek to understand the overlooked knowledge, especially by learning the traditional idioms and modes of thought from which it arises, posing questions aimed at understanding the patient's point of view and describing it sympathetically. They advise medical personnel about health beliefs and healing practices that are traditional either cross-culturally or within a given group, suggesting ways to integrate folk medicine with scientific medicine and to translate concepts from one system of care to another. Practitioners in health and social work who study folklore increase their ability to understand patient or client behavior and enhance their delivery of services.

Folklorists in human resources management and organization development provide understanding and assistance in meeting the needs of the multi-

cultural workplace. They also document and analyze the meanings and significance of stories, rituals, metaphoric language, and customs in an organization, including such functions as enculturating members, expressing values and assumptions, serving as coping mechanisms, or fostering community and cooperation. Through the use of fieldwork techniques, knowledge of folklore forms, and an understanding of what traditional symbolic behavior expresses and does, those trained in folkloristics are better able to uncover the sources of interpersonal tensions, to help improve communication and leadership, and to contribute to strategic planning by ascertaining and assessing the organization's culture.

Environmental planning, rural and economic development, and tourism benefit from folklorists' involvement by utilizing their knowledge of ethnic and regional subcultures, their abilities to document and interpret traditions, and their inclination to work with local communities to help them define and achieve their own goals. The cultural resources management aspect of environmental planning involves inventorying cultural resources, determining their significance, mitigating the effects of intervention, and presenting and interpreting community traditions to others. Social impact assessments entail investigating how a proposed development (such as an industrial park, a shopping center, or a recreational facility) will affect communities, including the impact on the communities' traditions, quality of life, and collective ethos. Folklorists understand the basis of community identity in common traditions; they also are among the most adept at discovering attitudes, values, and tastes, using folklore as a diagnostic tool and information source. Their knowledge of craft traditions, vernacular architecture, and local customs is crucial to rural development and tourism; they can clarify what aspects of culture need to be preserved or developed, and they are able to assess how alternative economic interventions will strengthen or weaken and enhance or disrupt the local culture and community.

Folklorists also use their knowledge and skills to develop programs for and with senior citizens, in art therapy and urban planning, and as archivists, librarians, photographers, marketers, public relations specialists, and program officers on humanities councils, to name a few fields. Some are involved in technological developments. By the late 1960s, specialists in artificial intelligence were experimenting with computer programs that mimic human storytellers, using folklorists' research on narrating, dialect use, and the structure of folktales and myths. Concerned about the demise of the apprenticeship system in modern industry and seeking to develop computerized expert systems for use in training, some firms have employed folklorists to interview older designers and craftspeople to document their procedures and understand their processes of conceptualization.

Various conceptual, logistic, ethical, and political issues surround applied

folkloristics. Issues of authenticity and context confront museum curators, festival organizers, and teachers who present folk artists or experts. Interpreters or re-creators of folklore are practiced performers but not necessarily representative of the cultural heritage. Demonstrating to the public may discomfort local artists and craftspersons, and it removes the art or craft from its natural context in family and community. Spotlighting esoteric traditions and highlighting differences may reinforce stereotypes. For some, “cultural conservation” suggests artificially sealing off some elements of culture from further development—in effect, embalming them. There is also concern about the deliberate staging of cultural pluralism by organizers of festivals serving as cultural brokers who select, manipulate, or sometimes alter the cultural symbols and strategies of a group through their decisions about which segments or members of the community to invite as participants and what traditions to include or exclude. Because public sector folklife programs have such broad or vague goals as furthering public awareness, appreciation, and support of traditional culture, it has proved difficult to develop adequate measures of their success. The fact that so much programming in the folk arts depends on a few governmental agencies (and the decisions of their directors) raises concerns over the exercise of power and control. Folklorists in the private sector must guard against misapplication or abuse of their findings. Efforts at cultural resources management or economic development may disrupt some segments of a community while benefiting others. Folklorists have resolved some of these issues through the use of a partnership approach or participatory action research in which the impetus for programs or inquiry originates with the community or organization, representatives of all interests are included, and collaboration occurs to understand the problems and to plan and take action.

To conclude, applied folklore has evolved from a simple and sometimes simplistic use of folklore forms and examples per se to the discipline of applied folkloristics with a body of theory, methods, and techniques that establishes research problems and hypotheses along with a code of ethics. From the inception of their field two centuries ago, folklorists have focused on populations often ignored by others (children, the elderly, various ethnic groups), providing a forum through publications, exhibits, festivals, and films for underrepresented groups or individuals and their traditions. Some folklorists have become activists on behalf of particular groups (such as Alice Fletcher, the first woman president of the American Folklore Society [1905], who studied the lore of the Winnebago and Omaha and lobbied for the passage of federal legislation giving Native Americans greater control over their lands). Whether they work in academe or applied fields, folklorists are trained to identify, document, analyze, and present forms and examples of traditional symbolic expression in which ordinary people engage in their everyday inter-

actions. They appreciate these traditions and respect the bearers of them. They understand and can interpret the historical, social, cultural, and biographical circumstances of traditional behavior. With such skills, knowledge, and abilities informed by values and philosophy, folklorists are particularly suited to both pursuing theoretical research that increases understanding of the species and participating in applications that improve the quality of life and benefit the welfare of individual members.

Michael Owen Jones

See also Occupational Folklife/Folklore; Organizational Folklore; Public Sector Folklore.

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ARCHETYPE

Word derived from the Greek *archētypon*, signifying the first stamp, pattern, or model. As a term, *archetype* is instrumental in two major theoretical approaches to the study of culture: (1) the Finnish School employing the historic-geographic method toward reconstructing the original form of an international tale type (or other relatively intricate items of lore that exist in a variety of forms), and (2) Jungian analytical psychology. In the works of the Finnish



A woodcut by Albrecht Dürer depicting the battle between St. George and the Dragon. This battle is a Christian account of the archetypal struggle of the hero slaying the monster, which signifies the conflict between life and death, right and wrong.

School, *archetype* denotes the reconstructed first form argued hypothetically to be the original form of the item under scrutiny. The term *archetype* is also closely linked to the psychological postulates advanced by C. G. Jung. Jung proposed that a number of primordial images common to all individuals of a given nation or historical epoch and—to some extent—to any human being

exist in the collective unconscious of the social group (race). These images are externalized (expressed) in the form of streams of intuitive notions, bits of common knowledge, or apprehensions recurrent to mankind. In this respect, the archetype is analogous to Adolf Bastian's concept of the elementary idea (*Elementargedanke*), which holds that certain thoughts may be generated independently by different peoples at various time periods due to the psychic unity of mankind. Jung labeled this phenomenon *transcendental imagination*.

By their nature, according to this reasoning, archetypes are preexisting determinants of mental/psychological experiences that render an individual disposed to behave in a manner similar to that manifested by his or her racial ancestors. Typically, archetypes are primordial potentials for generating thoughts, images, and emotions (to be differentiated from learned feeling, or sentiments). Archetypes exist only in the collective unconscious of the individual; they impose themselves on a person when the conscious mind is inactive and is generating no images, as during sleep, or when the consciousness is caught off guard, as in telling impersonal tales. They tend to personify natural processes and to present them in concrete terms—god and devil, life and death, male and female, for example—a characteristic of mythological imagery. Less pivotal belief-characters (such as spirits, fairies, ogres, and dragons), as well as abstractions (such as good and evil) and individuals in the social group (or mother and father), also serve as prominent archetypes. In daily living, archetypes are experienced as emotions and mental images associated with such significant events in the life of a human as birth or death or with a stage in life (adolescence or becoming a man or woman, for example).

Of the many archetypes Jung designated, four seemed to him to be more recurrent, laden with emotional significance, and traceable directly to ancient myths of origins. Consequently, Jung considered them separate personality systems. These four are: the *persona*, the *anima*, the *animus*, and the *shadow*. The *persona* (or outermost aspect of personality) conceals the true self; it is the mask that an individual wears publicly and is comparable to the concept of role-playing. The *anima* is the feminine characteristics in the male. The *animus* is the masculine characteristics in the female. The *shadow* (or darker self) is the inferior, animal-like part of the personality; it is something primitive in our human nature. Yet, the most important archetype in Jung's system is the *self*; it comprises all aspects of the unconscious and is an integrative force that provides stability and unity to the structure of personality.

Thus, a cultural account of a hero slaying a monster (dragon) that had impounded water (Motif A1111, "Impounded water"; AT 300, "The Dragon Slayer") would signify conflict between life and death, right and wrong, and so forth; meanwhile, a wager between truth and falsehood (Motif N61, "Wager that falsehood is better than truth"; AT 613, "The Two Travelers [Truth and Falsehood]") would be symbolic of conflict between god and devil,

good and evil. Similarly, an elaborate folktale in which a youth sets out to learn fear (Motif H1376.2, “Quest: learning what fear is”; AT 326, “The Youth Who Wanted To Learn What Fear Is”) and encounters many socially significant individuals and groups, of whom only one succeeds finally in teaching him fear, would be indicative of the struggle between individual and society; it is the struggle of a youngster with no independent social identity seeking to wrest his place in society (represented by parental authority) by going through the process (archetype) of individuation.

Hasan El-Shamy

See also Historic-Geographic Method; Jungian Psychology; Monogenesis/Polygenesis; Psychological Approach.

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ARCHITECTURE, FOLK

Regional traditions in building. In the study of cultural traditions past and present, folk architecture has found its niche among academic fields that document, conserve, and interpret cultural heritage. Folk architecture, also known as traditional or vernacular architecture, values concepts based on enduring patterns that often express regional or ethnic personality. Tradition is the chosen utilization of older, agreed-upon, and sometimes transplanted ideas in a new thing. Though tradition is manifest in every sort of experience, it is the conservative, community-based tradition accrued over time and trial that provides the rootstock for the ordinary structures and landscapes that constitute folk architecture. Researchers interested in traditional building study all kinds of domestic, agricultural, industrial, and sacred structures. Like other expressions of cultural heritage, folk architecture has patterns and decorations that have evolved over generations of execution and variation.

When people build, they intend to build structures that look good,

whether they are constructing a new house, a church, or a garden shed. “Style” makes the surfaces of buildings look good in the context of the expectations of the community.

Vernacular architecture operates in a system related to high-style design but separate from many of its pressures and goals. Traditional architecture continually changes, even if subtly and slowly, and one can chart the nuances of social and cultural history in the varieties of buildings and their revealing individualized details.

However, though change for the high-style designer means trying to forge beyond boundaries of popular taste, change in folk design occurs within the flexible boundaries of custom. An 1880s traditional farmhouse in Maine, Iowa, or California may sport a stylish Gothic dormer window above the front door to express the owner’s participation in the popular culture of the day.

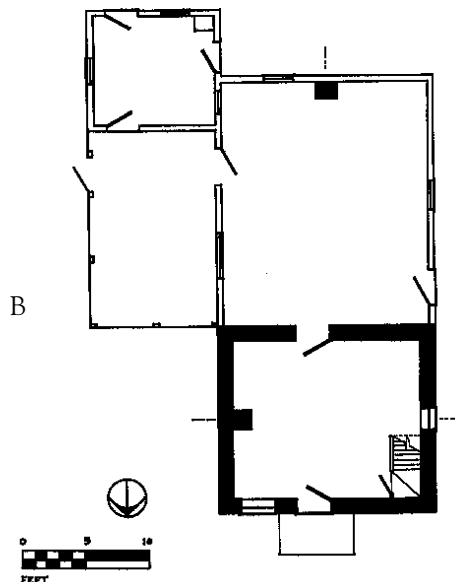
Folk buildings are not anonymous; their builders simply have not been identified. All buildings reflect the individual designer, builder, or owner’s personality. To be conservative is not necessarily to be old-fashioned or resistant to fashions moving through the community. There are countless examples of conservative traditional builders who adapt to new technology and ideas if they fit with the customary view of what architecture should be like.

For example, the owners of a late-nineteenth-century farm on the moors of central Scotland built a stone house, byre (stable), and barn in a



A

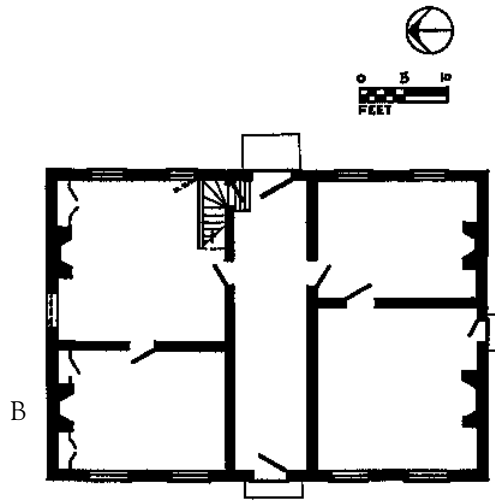
Figure 1. The basic building block in British-American house types was a one-room, “single-cell” or “single-pen” house. Most single-cell log cabins were well made and represented temporary economics, not temporary architecture; almost all log cabins were covered with horizontal weatherboarding (as in this example) to protect the log walls, provide added insulation, and present the look of a fashionable white frame building. (A) The John Wells house, a single-pen horizontal log house in Callaway County, Missouri, circa 1840. (B) The Wells house plan; additions to the rear of a log house were typically frame construction, as indicated here.





A

Figure 2. The Georgian cottage house type, with its broad central hall, meant high status in early-nineteenth-century Missouri, but it proved less popular than the I house type and faded by the time of the Civil War. (A) Kentucky emigrant and tobacco planter Thomas Hickman's 1818 brick house, Howard County, Missouri. (B) Hickman house plan.



B

traditional manner but asked the masons to install a carved finial or knob upon the front peak of the barn's gable roof. Such finials, like the finials on chairs and presses, reflect to the eighteenth century's deep shift to bring Georgian style and order to the small steading. The owners thereby acknowledged fashion while doing business as usual as thrifty farmers.

In the context of traditional architecture, style pertains to visual elements of decoration and ornament. Styles change in the context of popular design and taste, influenced by a small number of designers whose ideas are disseminated in the mass media. Houses may be based on folk ideas of suitability and at the same time be designs selected from catalogs, magazines, displays of prefabricated houses, or model houses in new suburbs. The range of domestic shelters the student of vernacular architecture studies runs from the archaeological remains of one-room, half-timbered houses in colonial America to the connected adobe rooms of a Native American pueblo in Arizona to a grand Gothic mansion of white wood along a big city boulevard to the small shotgun house of the sharecropper to the mobile home and tract house.

Makers of traditional buildings are craftsman-builders or artisans who—like the carpenter who made roof trusses in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, resembling those of medieval France—are bearers of the knowledge of how to build a new thing on the footings of folk tradition. Folk builders reuse parts of old structures or entire structures as they expand and tinker with their landscapes and take advantage of local climate and terrain. Construction may depend upon locally available materials, but even builders in remote areas import construction materials when desired or needed.

Traditional builders acquire most of their skills through apprenticeship,

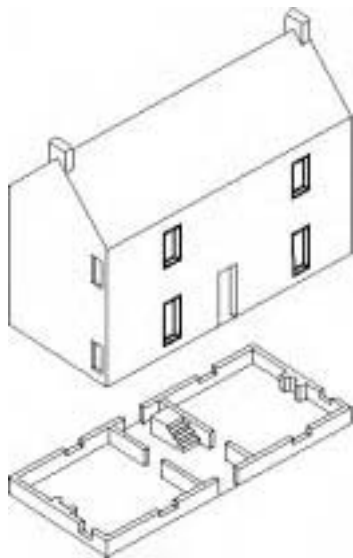


Figure 3. One of the quintessential folk house types in the United States has parallels and antecedents in the British Isles: the so-called I house (generalized sketch and plan, Missouri).

practice, and emulation of respected models and artisans, rather than through classes at schools of design. Instead of being called an architect, the maker of a commonplace traditional building was and continues to be called a builder or contractor, craftsperson, bricklayer, carpenter, and so on. Special cases result in special names; the group of skilled stonemasons from northern Italy who settled and built in Paradise Valley, Nevada, were called “cement men” and “pic-à-pierre.”

One feature of folk design that differentiates it from high-style design is the degree to which the client and members of the community participate in the design process. Forms are often familiar. Neighbors understand what is being built and why. The contractor knows similar buildings; work is attuned to the needs of the client. People apply decorative details

and variations to give the building special character.

For studies of diffusion and cultural connections, typologies continue to be useful. Typology—classification—is important because, on many levels, form and surface structure are important. Form is reasonably stable through time and different regions and gives the researcher discernible patterns with which to trace routes of diffusion and variation. Floor plan (horizontal layout) is important because form is relatively stable over time and scholars can use form to study cultural diffusion.

Looking for background patterns and comparative examples is only one of numerous approaches to the study of buildings as culture. We can learn about comparable buildings in other regions, communities, or countries; folk buildings vary regionally and culturally more than they vary chronologically through time.

In looking at building types, several elements can be documented and analyzed. In 1968, Henry Glassie implemented a three-part approach to typology, in which the elements form, construction, and use were employed to classify and identify different types of houses and agricultural structures with European parentage. In 1981, Howard Marshall, a student of Glassie’s, added a fourth element, decoration (stylistic detailing), when analyzing folk buildings in the Little Dixie region of British Missouri. Other scholars concentrate on different elements, such as function or the decoration that overlays a structure. Although Glassie, a theoretical and methodological innovator, has also

written about new and different areas of material culture research, his early books continue to be the basis for many studies.

The hunt for origins and paths of diffusion, the classic approach in examining folk architecture, usually leads to more questions. Some building types can be seen as successfully established; other types of structures simply do not take root in a new environment. We have yet to understand completely why certain features of folk culture do not get carried to new places. For example, one of the oldest settings for people and their possessions, produce, and animals is a building type that comes in two basic forms in the British Isles and Europe—the longhouse and the housebarn. The longhouse has been built for hundreds of years in the British Isles, alongside separate house and byre farm steadings that developed in late medieval times. In this long, one-story building that is one room deep, the spaces for the family, the dairy, the storehouse, and the beasts are lined up to form a row of rooms with special purposes. The longhouse or housebarn tradition is deeply ingrained in the shared cultural heritage of western Europe, Scandinavia, and the British Isles. However, though a number of distinctive European and British folk-building elements were carried to the Americas—seen most clearly and immediately in the prevalence of the “I house” type across British America—the longhouse or its continental cousin, the housebarn, was rarely situated in North America. Finding vast tracts of new land and forest, immigrants were quick to assert control, order, and ownership. One way of asserting control was to break apart and scatter the old European longhouse and housebarn over space into a series of buildings. Perhaps the saga of the longhouse—its interruption or rejection—helps illustrate the point that ethnic groups, even in substantial numbers, do not necessarily reestablish old and familiar patterns. People may adopt and adapt other forms of architecture when the new forms have a good fit with the character of the group’s sense of place and architectural preferences. One of the challenges of the folk architecture researcher is to try to disentangle the various vines of architecture and view architecture’s parts both as reflections of old folk ideas and as continually evolving new ideas as well.

One may investigate roles played by the Industrial Revolution and the factory system as factors in the processes of folk architecture. Shifts in

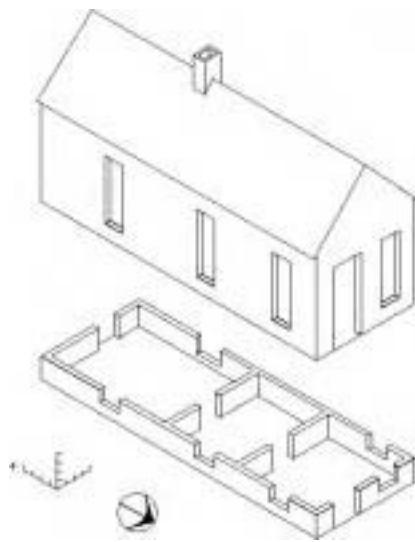


Figure 4. Shotgun house (generalized sketch and plan, Missouri).



Figure 5. The T-shaped house became popular in the late nineteenth century; it retained the interior spaces of traditional houses but presented to the public a facade decorated with the “carpenter Gothic” ornament of the day (birthplace of World War I Allied forces Gen. John J. Pershing, Laclede, Linn County, Missouri).

technology brought changes in traditional building. The influence of pattern books and carpenter’s manuals in the nineteenth century is interesting in terms of the accommodations builders made and make still to new tools and techniques that become widespread nationally. Mail-order house plans for a “vernacular cottage” from a Sunday newspaper today provide a self-selected style that means much in terms of private values. Mobile homes (manufactured housing) sell fast in growing communities not only because they are relatively inexpensive and efficient but also because their interior spaces and their layer of “style” makes them livable to people. Prefabricated housing is a very old tradition in the United States; the dynamics of a production model speak to folk ideas, or the company loses business.

American folklorists who study folk buildings tend to study those of the colonial period through the mid-twentieth century. Most leave precontact Native American architecture to experts in archaeology and today’s built environment to scholars in American studies or anthropology. Yet the entire range of traditional buildings needs attention, and the increasingly complicated matter of ethnicity in folk architecture is gaining importance in this as in every area of cultural study. Part of the success of folk architecture studies

is due to the tendency of researchers to study built environments of ethnic groups, socially marginal communities, and remote places where little or no field documentation has been accomplished.

Sorting out the ethnic elements in a building or neighborhood can be a complex undertaking. All may not be what it seems. Some patterns in folk houses are embedded in time and are difficult to interpret. John Vlach has shown that the shotgun house, the narrow dwelling of African-Americans in certain regions, likely resulted from the wedding of West African social space to Caribbean dwelling forms, transmitted to the American South in the processes of evolution in the colonial and early national periods. The shotgun house type was carried in people's minds and employed in many places when African-Americans built their own houses, spreading outward and upward from the New Orleans, Louisiana, area, along riverways in the nineteenth century. In regard to rural Chinese communities in northern California, architectural historian Christopher Yip has shown us the complexity and rich symbolism in the construction and ornamentation of the interiors of frame buildings that were relatively simple in outward appearance. Sacred places (joss houses) in these communities carried minimal exterior ornamentation. A people suppressed by society and economy, whatever form the subjugation or manipulation may take, tend to express identity or ethnicity in private spaces—the inside of the dwelling, the garden plot behind, the altar, or the fireplace mantle.

Studying architecture gives entry into broader areas of behavior, so the land itself becomes our artifact. People live in environments and not merely in buildings. Landscape study is part of the folklorist's work as constellations of buildings in a community, valley, or region are seen in the frame of habitat and climate. Environment influences how folk buildings are thought of and built. In 1900, a Lowland Scottish coal-mining family arriving by train at a prairie village in north Missouri would have found no suitable stone for the "cottage" they know and want, so the Midwest's great hardwood forests would serve for the Scots, as for all, in the construction of a dwelling that in form and use might well have been identical to those in the home village.

One of the tools brought to the study of old buildings by scholars such as Warren Roberts, Henry Glassie, and John Vlach is intensive field research. Discovering and measuring ordinary, scruffy, and often derelict buildings up close is at the heart of our work. Photographing a barn from the road provides visual and structural information; spending the afternoon crawling through the dusty, smelly barn balancing tape measure, cameras, flashlight, and clipboard adds a level of intimacy that is helpful in a holistic reading of the structure in its distinctive place and time. So field research and its products—the measured architectural drawing, fieldnotes, and detailed photographic coverage—are integral components in the study of vernacular architecture.

Field study is fundamental because folk buildings have not been accorded

the historical documentation that high-style buildings have received. Combined with the recording of the physical scene, including elements of the material culture of a farmstead or household and the landscape itself, we include oral interviews and discussions with knowledgeable citizens. To these field techniques can be added research in public records to establish property histories as well as research in historical photograph collections, ordnance survey maps, manuscript archives, museums, and a variety of libraries and repositories.

There always will be debates over terms when describing culture. Many folklorists divide culture into categories reflecting the degree of tradition found among cultural items in the categories. For example, some use a three-fold division of folk, popular, and elite, as positioned in the literature by Henry Glassie in his pathbreaking *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (1968). R. W. Brunskill posed two categories, vernacular and “polite.” We try to avoid culturally biased terms such as *primitive*, *naïve*, *untrained*, and *country*. Actually, buildings, each exhibiting different shares of traditionality or progressivist design (style), can be located somewhere along a horizontal scale from conservative through commonplace to futuristic. Viewed this way, folk buildings are at the more conservative, community-oriented, and indeed restrictive end of the scale.

Folk architecture specialists frequently are involved with historical preservation groups and agencies in their local districts. More and more, preservation agencies will deal with traditional buildings and cultural landscapes, and the folklorist’s theories and practical approaches to the study of artifacts in context will be helpful in the coming years.

Traditional buildings comprise the bulk of the built environment globally and thus are significant within a broad context. Traditional buildings provide clues to understanding historical patterns and intersections between methods of design, form, construction, and function as people alter buildings to meet trends and changing economies while still finding ways to accommodate them to personal and aesthetic ideals. Folk architecture’s ideas and preferences are versatile. They endure and change, and they can be studied through field research and observation. From Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello to Abraham Lincoln’s log cabin to Elvis Presley’s Graceland, architecture is a crucial element in our lives. All of us shape our personal spaces to one degree or another according to deeply held traditions in our family or community or both. When we have choices, we select forms and styles in a dwelling that reflect a number of forces in us as people, whether these forces are obvious and objective—to impress our neighbors, mark success, or meet a limited budget—or obscure and subjective—for psychological comfort and safety, order, balance, predictability, or tradition.

Howard Wight Marshall

See also Material Culture.



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ARCHIVES AND ARCHIVING

Repositories of material in formats ranging from transcribed fieldnotes through photographs and films documenting folklore, folklife, and related areas and the techniques used for the collection, preservation, and cataloging of such materials.

Unpublished material relating to folklore and folklife studies may be found in ethnomusicology, anthropology, oral history, local history, sociolinguistic, and cultural archives as well as in archives dedicated to the preservation of folklore and folklife documentation. There are over 200 such ethnographic archives in the United States and Canada alone. Some archives are specific to particular topics or genres, such as folksong or cowboy lore. Others may specialize in the conservation of particular formats, such as sound recordings or photographs. Still others provide for the care of all formats of cultural documentation in all genres. Researchers working in this field must learn to make use of all such archives, as they contain the primary resources for the study of folk culture.

The creation of the first folklore/folklife repositories coincided with the emergence of folklore as a formal discipline and was a manifestation of both the genesis of the field and the field's early concepts. By establishing archives, scholars declared the importance and vitality of their new field of study, ensured that the results of their research would be passed on to the next generation of scholars, and hoped to preserve examples of traditions they feared would disappear through industrialization and urbanization. As research in the field developed, the pragmatic necessity of creating safe storage for the growing collection of a particular researcher or institution often gave rise to the foundation of public archives.

All these motives probably contributed to the establishment of the world's first archive for collections of folklore. The Folklore Archive of the Finnish Literature Society was created at the same time as the society (in 1831) and opened its public quarters in 1888. Its first collections were those of Elias Lönnrot, the compiler of the *Kalevala*. This body of Finnish lore provided an inspiration to other collectors, who then added their materials to the collections.

The folklore movement in Europe was paralleled by similar efforts to preserve traditions in many parts of the world, resulting in the creation of archives devoted to the preservation of folklore. The establishment of archives became imperative with the development of new documentary technologies. As folklorists began to use fragile formats such as recordings, film, and still photography regularly in their fieldwork, they found that those formats required expert preservation, and they therefore established a number of special format archives for that purpose.

The first public archive dedicated to collecting and preserving folklore and folklife in the United States was established in 1928 at the Library of Congress. The Archive of Folksong was originally concerned with the preservation of sound recordings. Today, it is part of the American Folklife Center and has been renamed the Archive of Folk Culture. It is a repository for all formats of ethnographic documentation.

Folklife archives often are research institutions as well as repositories, and their staffs initiate ethnographic research and compile the collected materials. Archivists also have found ways to sponsor or support fieldwork in order to add to their collections. Archivists at universities with folklore programs often encourage and preserve student collections. Some are able to provide training in fieldwork and collections management through internships. Others provide for the loan of documentary equipment, such as tape recorders, to collectors who then may place their documentation in the archive.

Folklorists often joke that in order to become an effective field-worker, one must learn everything there is to know. Folklife archivists must master the skills of a field-worker and those of archival science as well. Managing materials in fieldwork situations is practical experience for managing collections in an archive. But an archivist must be able to preserve and duplicate various media, which may entail such things as knowing the technical specifications for the preservation of audiotapes, the chemistry of different types of film, and the methods for conserving aging manuscripts. Folklife archivists usually are trained folklorists who have studied archival science or learned it through on-the-job experience. Some also have training in library science, history, or another related discipline; all should be familiar with computer networking and database construction.

Archivists first arrange a collection. When possible, mixed-media documentary collection materials are processed together in keeping with the collector's intent in compiling them. The documentary goals of the collector are a guiding principle in organizing and providing access to ethnographic documentation. This means that the better collections are documented and organized by a collector before they arrive at the archive, the more thoroughly the collector's purpose and method can be conveyed to researchers. Ideally, a collection arrives at an archive already arranged by the collector. If a collector fails to give the collection a clear order and it is no longer possible to contact the collector for further information (as is often the case with historical collections), the archivist must decide on an order. This frequently involves attempting to reconstruct the collector's purpose as much as possible in order to arrange the materials in a coherent way.

The next step is to preserve collection materials by housing them in protective enclosures or by duplicating them onto more durable media. Many ethnographic materials have finite life spans. The primary task of the archivist

is to preserve the information the materials contain through duplication. Duplicates also can be used as reference copies so that the life of the originals may be lengthened. Funding is not always available for duplication, and the originals of sound and video recordings must be preserved because duplicates may lose signal with each generation. For these reasons, preservation care and storage for the original media are generally needed as well. With manuscript materials, it is often desirable to preserve the original. For example, a paper disc sleeve from an instantaneous disc recording of Zora Neale Hurston made by Herbert Halpert, containing fieldnotes by the collector, has intrinsic value as an artifact to folklorists interested in the history of the various formats of documentary media. Many ethnographic media have finite life spans.

For documentary materials to be useful, the archivist must have the original technology used to play or read the item. Early recording equipment must be collected and preserved so as to duplicate cylinder, wire, and disc recordings. Early film, video, and computer technologies need to be collected and preserved as well.

Finally, the archivist creates tools to provide access to the collection for researchers. The most basic of these are catalog records on a computer database, collection inventories, and collection descriptions that provide a guide for readers. For modern collections, searchable databases often can be constructed using the field-worker's computer files. These access tools are another important means of providing links among the various media in mixed-media ethnographic collections. Even if photographs must be housed separately from recordings and manuscripts, all the different parts of the collection may be located and their relationships to one another explained clearly for researchers by means of well-written access tools.

Archives sometimes publish books or recordings of materials from collections, thereby providing access to a selected portion of their collections. Books or recordings created by other organizations from an archive also may be available. Today, archivists and publishers are exploring the possibilities of interactive computer duplicates of collection materials made available on a network or CD-ROM (compact disc read-only memory).

Whatever public products stem from collections in archives, the rights of the individuals documented in ethnographic work must be considered. The laws regarding rights to unpublished materials change frequently, and the interpretation of these laws is sometimes difficult. Archivists must stay abreast of these changes and also determine their own archival policies concerning the use of their materials. Generally, the archivist is responsible for obtaining permissions when the institution publishes or disseminates collection materials. When researchers publish archival materials, the responsibility to obtain permission falls on them. Field-workers often ask participants in their research to sign release forms giving them permission to use performances and

photographs in their publications. Such permissions do not transfer to an archive. But should the collection become part of an archive, these permission forms provide a valuable source of addresses and phone numbers so that performers may be contacted in case materials are published.

Archives provide a fine training ground for folklorists and for future archivists. Field-workers may benefit from experience in collection management training so they may better care for the materials they collect, and aspiring archivists may find their best preliminary training in an ethnographic archive. Many archives sponsor interns or provide classes for this purpose. Folklife, ethnomusicology, and cultural archives make it possible for scholars to explore the range and variation of traditions over time and to compare traditions across cultures and regions. The archive may be the first stop in a folklorist's preparation for field research or an additional, later step as questions arise during an ethnographic study. Any number of issues may be addressed in archival research: Other folklorists may have compiled collections on the same or a related subject, local historians may have collected materials that provide useful cultural background, or linguists may have documented language variations or examples of natural speech that may provide clues to the culture in question. The unique unpublished recordings, photographs, and moving-image materials found in archives can provide field-workers with indispensable cultural data to take with them into the field.

It is difficult to predict from the outset what useful information archives may yield, and archival research consequently proves most fruitful when approached with an open mind. It is advisable to prepare for a visit to an archive by doing preliminary reading and by contacting the archive ahead of time to obtain brochures and background information about collections.

Every archive will have its own system for retrieving information. Some archives have cataloged materials at the item level, so that song or narrative titles may be searched and retrieved. In larger archives, this level of detail often is not possible and collections can only be searched in more general ways. Researchers must allow more time for working with unpublished materials than with published works, as the organization, indexing, and descriptions of the collections are irregular. In addition, most of the research must be conducted in the archive, for unique materials usually cannot be removed for study. Duplication of materials is sometimes possible, depending on the restrictions of the collection or archive. Transcriptions of recordings are sometimes available for duplication, but not all archives are able to provide them. Transcriptions, furthermore, are often inaccurate or lacking in important information available in the original sound recording.

A general understanding of the history of cultural documentation and the constraints of ethnographic archiving can facilitate an archival search. Pioneers of ethnographic research were often pioneers of recorded sound as

well. For example, folklorist Robert Winslow Gordon experimented with transferring cylinder recordings to disc recordings for archival preservation. Such experimentation with documentary and preservation technology continues to the present day.

The developing technologies worked changes on ethnographic techniques. Lengthy recorded interviews became a research method with the invention of the tape recorder. Earlier collections of folklore on cylinders and discs usually focused on collecting individual songs, stories, and other items of a length that fit on one side of the recording medium. Folklorists used their fieldnotes to add information about the selections recorded. A modern researcher seeking information about the cultural background of songs sung in the 1930s, for example, may be frustrated to find that the collector of a historical ethnography turned the disc recording machine off just as the singer began to explain the provenance of the song or that only a few verses of a long ballad were recorded. But the rest of the information the researcher seeks may be jotted on the protective disc sleeve or painstakingly written into notebooks. Similarly, photographic documentation of culture changed as photography became less cumbersome and society became more accustomed to the camera. Researchers using historical collections need to become aware of what they can expect to find there and how to gain the most from the materials available.

Changing technology also affected archival practice. In the 1950s, ethnographers eagerly took up the new medium of reel-to-reel tape recording, allowing them to record long interviews, cultural events, and ambient sound without concern for duration. But these long recordings posed new problems for the archivist. Formerly, songs, stories, and other short items recorded on identifiable tracks on discs or cylinders could be readily cataloged. Interviews and other long recordings collected with tape recorders could not so easily be broken down and cataloged by item. In addition, as tape recording became inexpensive and tape recorders became increasingly portable and as the number of scholars in the field increased, the quantity of recorded folklore documentation contributed to archives became overwhelming. Increased use of photography and videotape added to the large bodies of ethnographic documentation that folklife archivists now needed to preserve and make accessible.

Today, folklore archives often can only catalog collections at a general level. Archivists typically rely on the fieldnotes, photograph logs, and audio- or videotape logs of the folklorists who created the collections they house. Researchers may be startled to find that materials available through the 1950s have been carefully cataloged (complete with song titles, references to individual performers, and cross-references to other collections) but that the more modern archival holdings are far less accessible. Researchers doing work with modern collections will need to examine manuscripts of tape logs and fieldnotes of collectors to determine which recordings will be most useful to their

study. Fortunately, in the 1980s, many field-workers began using computers in the field. Computer-readable fieldnotes and logs can be entered into archival databases to create searchable collection information. As technology provides field-workers with better methods of managing their collections, they will be able to donate more accessible documentation to archives, making work with the collections far easier for both archivists and researchers.

The possibilities for data retrieval created by computers are causing many ethnographic archivists to change their methods of cataloging materials. In the past, concern for the care of various documentary formats caused archivists to break up collections by format: recordings might go to one repository or storage facility, and photographs would go to another. Modern use of computers is helping archivists to create cross-references to materials stored in different environments so that the different media from the work of one ethnographer can be brought back together for researchers to use. Modern archivists are going back to old collections and reexamining how they were cataloged to provide more comprehensive access in the future.

Archivists today must keep abreast of the ever changing technologies of modern ethnography, while learning about new ways to preserve materials from older collections. For example, early recordings and photographs are deteriorating to the point that they must be duplicated, quite possibly for the last time. Modern technologies of digital recording and scanning may provide a method of preserving the most information possible in those preservation duplicates. This new technology is still developing, however, and the stability of the various formats of digital preservation are a modern area of archival discussion. Digital technology is being used in the field as well, so archivists must learn about the preservation needs of the various digital formats and to make sure that they have access to equipment to read those formats.

The future of folklife archives may extend far beyond archival walls. Collections may become available to researchers through the Internet and other on-line information services. These far-reaching developments in ethnographic archiving were described in the 1994 report on the state of the discipline by the Archiving Section of the American Folklore Society:

Historic collections once broken up by format can now be reunited for the researcher by means of digitized versions of the sound recordings, photographs, and texts linked together on a multi-media server or CD-ROM. Online communications are making it possible for archives to share their collection finding aids and catalog records with the world. A new standard cataloging format for multi-format collections, Mixed Materials MARC, makes possible standardized cataloging of ethnographic collections as whole intellectual works, rather than as separate media. . . .

The computer and information revolutions provide marvelous new possibilities for compiling, preserving, and providing access to ethnographic collections. However, these new options come at a time when ethnographic archives are losing funding and staff and are often unable to support the technology that makes these techniques possible. Archives need computers to build the databases, staff trained in using them, and staff to develop catalogs and other access tools.

Ethnographic archivists today may look forward to providing more complete access to their collections and to reaching scholars globally in a way never before possible, if they receive the intellectual and material support needed to realize these goals.

Stephanie A. Hall

See also Academic Programs in Folklore, International; Academic Programs in Folklore, North American; Applied Folklore/Folkloristics.

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ARGOT

A special linguistic code whose purpose is to conceal and to exclude. Also called *cant*, this genre of folk speech differs from standard language principally in vocabulary. However, argots based upon a language (the use of *Romanes* by Gypsies in English-speaking societies, for instance) or dialect differing from that in mainstream social use may diverge from standard speech in more complex ways. Argot's nonstandard diction allows its users to communicate

with one another secretly. Hence, it most usually occurs among speakers with reasons to hide what they are saying from uninitiated listeners. Argots may merge with other folk speech genres such as jargons and slang.

Groups that have developed argots include persons whose activities are regarded as either illegal or immoral in some social contexts—for example, professional criminals, drug users, and homosexuals. Other groups may develop argots because their activities, though not illegal, require secrecy. Occupations that depend, in part, on tricking clients—gambling and carnival operations, for instance—may generate argots, as may competitive activities in which one team of players wishes to conceal its intentions from another team. Some ethnic groups use their native language as an argot in occupational contexts. Others may employ their language in the same way in social situations to guarantee the privacy of their communication. Argots also may have generational significance; adolescents, for example, often adopt vocabulary usages that exclude their parents from their communications. Argots may also develop in ritual situations, thus allowing religious specialists to deal with topics of esoteric spirituality without revealing sacred secrets to the profane masses. Another possible context for argot development involves communication among members of one sex that is designed to exclude persons of the other sex.

Argots received scholarly attention as early as the fifteenth century, though the first formal dictionary of a cant was probably issued in the 1700s. Francis Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, first published in 1785, remains an important source of vocabulary usage by British criminals. Folklorists had included argot in their new discipline by the late 1800s. In 1890, the *Journal of American Folklore* published materials on *Shelta*, an argot used by British tinkers. Most studies of argot by folklorists and others (many of which have appeared in the periodical *American Speech*) have focused only on the compilation of word lists and their definitions. These glossaries may provide general comments about the group that uses the argot but often do not deal with specific usages in particular contexts.

More contextually oriented research could identify (1) particular situations in which groups employ specific words and phrases from the argot vocabulary, (2) whom such groups intend to exclude through their use of argot, and (3) the sociopsychological functions, such as group integration, that argots may perform in addition to their practical role in promoting secrecy and privacy of communication. Moreover, the playful dimension of argot, though noted by several commentators, has not received the attention that it deserves. Often, what appear to be attempts at communicative concealment may be artful linguistic flourishes that demonstrate the verbal agility of the speakers more than their desire for secrecy.

William M. Clements

See also Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Language, Secret.

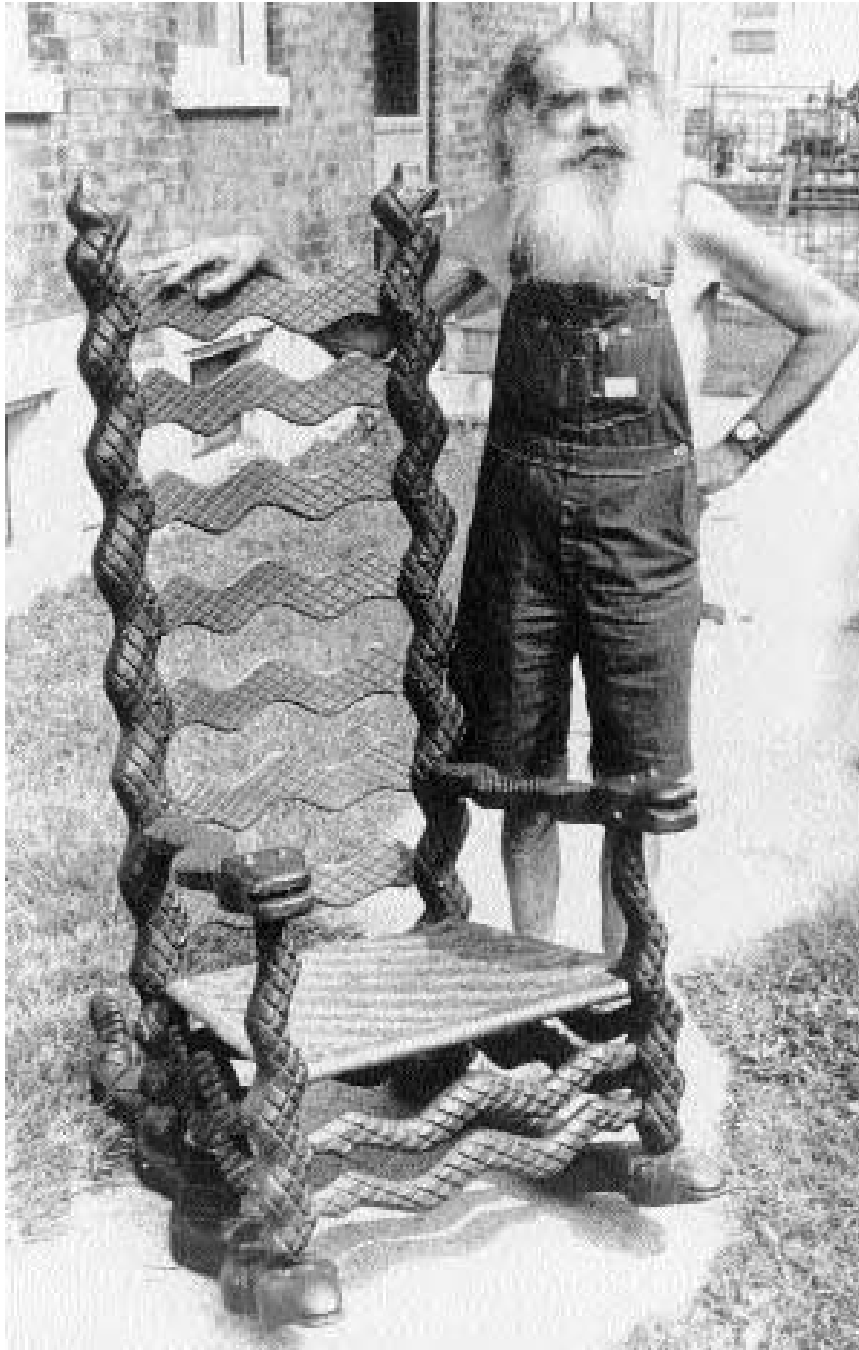
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ART FOLK

The creation of aesthetic forms that emulate or reproduce techniques and designs taught, learned, and displayed primarily in situations of informal interaction. Much of what people make in everyday life and the procedures they employ in making these things are derived from the behavior of predecessors and peers. With time and repetition, these objects and behaviors become pervasive and commonplace. When they do, they are thought of as traditional. Rooted in the past and associated with particular groups or communities, they are called “folk” because of the continuities and consistencies they exhibit in form and design, materials, or techniques of manufacture.

Art entails the creation of aesthetic forms, that is, products or performances capable of being perceived by the senses, acting upon people's feelings, and being judged according to standards of excellence as well as personal preference (taste). In principle, folk art comprises both nonutilitarian objects (such as paintings and sculpture) and useful products (crafts and architecture) as well as dancing, singing, and music making. Many researchers, however, limit folk art to material culture. Some restrict it further to ornamentation, decorative designs, and sculptural forms lacking utility. Others include useful objects that may elicit aesthetic responses in the course of making and using them, such as unadorned but well-designed chairs or clay vessels, iron or wooden implements, baskets, duck decoys, musical instruments, fishing flies and lures, and customized cars.



Folk art comes in diverse forms. Here is a “snake” rocking chair of black walnut by Chester Cornett of Wheeling, WV, who had a vision of a chair in 1967.

Most folk art belongs to ordinary, day-to-day experiences: the way people decorate their homes and work spaces, dress or adorn themselves, create altars and ornaments or other objects for holidays, prepare and serve food, and craft such things as quilts, furniture, pottery, rugs, clothing, toys, gifts for friends, and paintings of special or memorable events. Some people fashion particular things as an occupation or preoccupation, becoming noted in their communities as, for example, carvers, weavers, needlelace makers, boatbuilders, chair-makers, stonemasons, or makers of headstones and grave markers.

Many nonutilitarian creations display the virtuoso's skill. One person makes highly detailed miniature chairs, sofas, and rocking horses from discarded soft drink cans. Others fashion amazingly lifelike dolls from cornhusks or dried apples and small figurines from concrete. Some build elaborate birdhouses with fancy trim, carve chains from matchsticks, and construct larger-than-life animals or small-scale windmills as yard decoration. Certain Native Americans in California and Mexico weave decorated baskets no larger than a fingernail.

Objects intended for practical use also exhibit skill and mastery of technique and even great ingenuity and virtuosity. Technical excellence in carving a paddle or wooden buoy, weaving a blanket, preparing a meal, building a haystack or boat, or setting stones in a fence without mortar suffices to evoke admiration. One or more formal principles (unity, harmony, rhythm, balance) will likely be evident, and the product will serve its purpose with distinction. For example, a rocking chair with deeply curved back, sculpted armrests to enhance comfort, and legs at just the right angle to the rockers so that a slight breeze will set the chair in motion is a joy to use.

Folk art has been studied from four perspectives. One perspective views forms and examples of folklore as artifacts because they have histories. Hypothesizing that many examples of traditional objects hark back to earlier eras, some folklorists have conceptualized folk art as survival, continuity, or revival. Survivals are objects and behaviors known to have been more common historically or more compatible with former norms rather than with present norms. Living-history farms, open-air museums, and pioneer villages typically associate folkways, crafts, and arts with the past. Colonial Williamsburg (Virginia), Upper Canada Village (Ontario), Skansen Open Air Museum (Stockholm), the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan's (Cardiff, Wales), and other sites consist of restored or reconstructed buildings and period furnishings, tools, and utensils, as well as role-playing interpreters in costume who discuss life in the past, demonstrate skills, and answer questions.

Numerous exhibits and publications also point out the durability of tradition and the continuity of attitudes, behaviors, and objects. Tourist markets perpetuate the making of things for which there once was widespread local use. Ethnic display events perpetuate traditional foods, dances, and crafts from the Old Country. Activities such as decorating homes, donning costumes,

coloring eggs, creating shrines or altars, and building floats during holidays all help to define events and make them special. Taking part in traditions creates a sense of continuity and connectedness with others. Sometimes, people revive or revitalize forms and designs, such as the making of storytelling dolls among Pueblos, pottery production in rural North Carolina, or lei making in Hawaii. Motivations range from self-esteem to financial benefit and community redevelopment.

A second perspective views folk art creations as describable and diffusible entities. Folklorists establish genres, such as textiles, metalwork, and ceramics, in addition to subgenres (pottery, for example, can be further categorized on the basis of purpose or use—cream pitchers, butter jars, and milk crocks—or according to glazes, such as salt, lead, and alkaline). Researchers also configure types and subtypes from the many examples of houses, barns, outdoor bake ovens, chairs, garments, rugs, wooden clogs, sickles, harrows, and foods, among other forms. Questions asked about the distribution of types and subtypes leads to mapping, illustrated by Swedish, Austrian, and other European folklife atlases. Recognition of widespread examples of what seem to be the same design, technique, or form raises questions about origins. Although folklorists attribute some designs to polygenesis or multiple origins (for example, variations of a multihooked, swastika-like motif), they hypothesize that most similarities result from monogenesis (single origin) with subsequent diffusion through space and time as people travel or migrate. Procedures for tracing origins, changes, and stability are called the historic-geographic method.

A third orientation considers folk art creations to be aspects or manifestations of culture. Researchers seek to establish what other elements of culture art correlates with and how and why. Religious carvings or paintings and the colors and designs of baskets or pots sometimes parallel patterns and values in the oral literature, music, and philosophy of a society. Art may express social status. Residents of some Newfoundland outports put handhooked rugs with asymmetrical designs in their parlors where hierarchical relationships between themselves and privileged guests dominate. They place rugs with symmetrical, repetitive designs in the kitchen, where they entertain friends on an egalitarian basis. To compete for passengers and gain a modicum of wealth and status, Filipino jeepney drivers paint their vehicles with colorful scenes, elegant names, and provocative sayings (sometimes sexual), hang crocheted curtains reminiscent of those in village homes, and decorate their vehicles with rosary beads, holy pictures, and miniature altars. Folklorists postulate that some art conveys norms of behavior, validates or reinforces culture, and also provides escape from social pressures through fantasy or wish fulfillment.

A fourth perspective treats folk art as behavior. Some researchers hypothesize panhuman symbols such as the egg as life force or seek evidence of psychic processes (projections of unconscious archetypes such as the anima, animus, and shadow figure). Others have inferred unwritten laws or rules that

people intuitively learn and unconsciously follow while creating aesthetic forms. For instance, food encodes social relationships and events (apparent in the structure of a meal); designers of folk houses or other objects employ an artifactual grammar in composition and construction. Some folklorists study art in a biographical context, examining repertoire, content, and style in relation to events and experiences in the maker's life. Others explore the unique situation in which a traditional object is formed, observing the impact of personality, customer influence, feedback, and reinforcement as well as uncovering the multiple meanings attributed to the object and its creation.

Aesthetic forms have instrumental effects. Some people artfully arrange linens in a cabinet, flowers on a table, nuts and bolts in containers, kitchen utensils in a drawer, or jars of homecanned goods on a shelf (by type and color of food). Ordering delimits a form, making it separable, recognizable, and accessible. Technical excellence in tools, furniture, pottery, and baskets enhances their utility and maximizes efficiency in use.

Art also has hygienic value. Many people create aesthetic forms during critical junctures in their lives or in times of anguish or turmoil (illness, retirement, marital problems, loss of a loved one). Physical expression helps objectify complex, unconscious, or vague feelings and issues. Doing something rhythmic and repetitious when troubled tends to calm, free the mind, or unlock emotions. Once produced, forms can symbolize achievement, garner praise, and increase self-esteem. Creating memory paintings, applying craft skills learned in youth at a later point in life, or making things in traditional ways with or for others can comfort through symbolic connectedness.

Art triggers aesthetic experiences. A positive response involves physiological reactions such as muscular tension and release along with a heightened awareness of form, the subordination in importance of other stimuli, and the suspension of time. The percipient likely feels a sense of unity with the object and with others. Immersion in pleasurable activities can help resolve tensions and reenergize a person.

Since no society has been discovered without traditions or aesthetic forms and experiences in everyday life, these behavioral tendencies appear to be inherited predispositions in human beings. If so, then folk art may be crucial to the adaptation of the species and survival of individual members.

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See also Craft, Folk; Material Culture.

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ARTIFACT

Any object made or modified by humans. The term derives from the Latin *arte factum*, meaning something made with skill. The object expresses the mental template of its maker and the culture at large, through the shaping of raw materials that result in the artifact's tangible form. The attributes seen in an artifact are based on traditional, functional, and/or technological requirements of the user and culture. For these reasons, few artifacts have only one attribute or meaning.

The varied approaches used during the last century to study artifacts began with the description and classification of objects, usually by museum curators. The artifacts were grouped according to type, based on their morphological features. Nineteenth-century evolutionary theory, combined with the diffusionist theories of early twentieth-century anthropologists, contributed to the development of stylistic analyses of artifacts, as well as interest in the techniques and technology used in making them. The early fieldwork of cultural anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski, Franz Boas, and Ruth Benedict and archaeologists such as A. V. Kidder focused on the interrelationship of objects to sociocultural patterns and structures.

Since the 1960s, the study of artifacts has drawn on a number of disciplines in the physical and social sciences to extract information not readily apparent to the observer. The most recent efforts now inform an integrated approach that includes aspects of the previous approaches. Artifacts now "speak" to the observer as repositories of human communication and inter-

action. Reading the text of an artifact, rather than just focusing on its physical attributes, is another way of accessing the culture being studied.

Although artifacts occupy a central place in anthropology and folklore studies, each discipline differs in its approach and analyses. It is understood that through artifacts, researchers in both disciplines can attempt to comprehend the beliefs, values, attitudes, ideas, and assumptions of a society or group of people at a given point in time. So the main distinction that separates the two disciplines is the factor of time.

For the archaeologist, the *processes* (both mental and physical) by which an artifact is produced are less tangible than for the folklorist since archaeologists often study cultures that are extinct. At best, the archaeologist can only hope to accurately guess at these processes through the reconstruction of events and scientific study.

For the folklorist, however, the artifact or folk object is part of an informal learning process whereby, through tradition, the mental and physical aspects of the object's manufacture are seen in the creative process of the producer and are recorded by the folklorist. In turn, when the artifact's form is read like a text, then certain motifs can be recognized and compared to known traditions. In this context, the artifact is complete and historical, so there is no mystery as to its relative context or creator.

Regardless of disciplinary orientation, the artifact continues to play a central role in bringing the culture to the researcher. In this sense, the artifact, as reference point, mirrors for posterity the ideas and systems of the culture that produces it purposefully or accidentally.

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See also Text.

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A ASSAULT, SUPERNATURAL

Attack by a spirit or by spiritual means. The term *supernatural* has had many meanings, some of them very complex and culturally specific. However, a cross-culturally applicable concept can be derived from the simplest common denominator of the word's various usages. Most basically, *supernatural* refers to *spirits*, sentient beings that can exist and act without a physical body. *Supernatural assault*, then, is assault by spiritual means. This definition is well suited to a great many folk beliefs, but it does leave an ambiguous category of "extraordinary" creatures who sometimes assault humans, according to certain traditions. These range from werewolves and other shape-shifters to occupants of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) who abduct people from their beds. Some believe that such creatures have spiritual significance, others think that they in fact *are* spirits of some kind, and still others believe them to be entirely physical. This uncertain category will be considered last.

The idea that human beings could be supernaturally injured appears to be both ancient and ubiquitous. The events taken to constitute such assault are quite varied, including ordinary illness or injury in which a supernatural cause is inferred, special classes of illness considered always to result from supernatural attack in which the evidence of a particular supernatural cause is still indirect, and experiences in which the perception of the supernatural attacker is a central feature. Each of these kinds of assault has been associated with practically every sort of supernatural agent, from witches to ghosts to vampires to demons. The result is a very complex set of categories, and many of the characteristics attributed to each kind of attacker differ from one locale to another. A cross-cultural description follows that sets out rough conceptual categories of supernatural assault found in many traditions around the world. Each is briefly illustrated with reference to one or two specific traditions. This process inevitably downplays local, culture-specific differences. This is a necessary result of summary description and not an indication that these local variations are of lesser importance. This discussion is presented in sufficiently general terms to apply to the traditions of most cultures, but it should be understood that although the general statements that follow refer to widely found phenomena, they are not necessarily universal in application.

The human soul is supernatural, that is, although it spends part of its career in a body, it does not require that body for its existence. In some traditions, the soul exists before the body and chooses the body in which it will be born. In practically all traditions, the soul animates the body and survives the body at death, and under some circumstances, it can leave the body and return during life. In some traditions, people are believed to have more than a single soul. Supernatural assault sometimes may produce a direct physical



Vampire attacks are among the most famous types of supernatural assault and are common to many different cultures.

effect, such as bruises or scratches, but effects on the body are more often seen as operating through effects on the soul.

During life, one's soul can be dislodged. The resulting condition of "soul loss" is often called "magical fright" or "fright illness" in the literature because the condition is often believed to be produced by sudden fear or emotional shock. The most frequently described tradition of soul loss is the Latin American *susto*, but similar traditions are found in many parts of the world. This is usually an explanation attached retrospectively to explain a condition of sickness. The characteristics of such sicknesses are often distinctive, as in the case of *susto*, and are probably not merely derived from local names for

medically recognized diseases. Some of them may truly be culture-bound syndromes; others may represent the recognition of sicknesses not yet known to modern medicine. Many circumstances can cause soul loss, including such natural events as seeing a terrible accident or hearing of the unexpected death of a loved one. But this loss also can be caused by sorcery or by a ghost or other spirit, and then it is a consequence of supernatural assault. In these cases, the person who has suffered the magical fright may have no memory of the event, in which case the event took place entirely at the spiritual level.

Another widely believed supernatural cause of illness is the “evil eye.” The best-known example of this concept is the Italian *mal ojo*, but the idea is found in many places. In many versions, an attack by means of the evil eye barely qualifies as assault because the damage is done unintentionally. Most commonly, sickness or misfortune is brought on one person by the envy of another. As with supernatural magical fright, the victim—and in this case, the perpetrator—is unaware that anything is happening at the time.

Some living persons, because of training or a special aptitude, can leave their physical bodies and travel as disembodied spirits. In this state, they are believed to be able to see and interact with other spirits. This technique is used by some healers to find and bring back a lost soul and cure a case of magical fright. Some wicked people can travel in soul form to do harm. They may attempt to kill persons or terrify them and disturb their sleep. In English tradition, this is called “hagging” or “witch riding.” The victim is held helpless and oppressed to the point that breathing becomes difficult.

Normally, a person’s soul “goes on” to the afterlife or to be reincarnated at death, but some souls remain close to where they have lived or return under special conditions. Since this is not the normal course, these ghosts are especially likely to be dangerous. Some people with special knowledge and aptitude are able to cause these ghosts to do their bidding.

Ghosts can assault people in a great variety of ways. Haunted locations are places to which ghosts are bound either because of intense attachment during life or because of the circumstances of their deaths. Whatever the reason, most haunted places are dangerous. Earth-bound spirits are themselves in a “sick” state (otherwise, they would have progressed), and their anger, envy, and other negative emotions cause them to accost people who trespass in their places. (It should be noted, though, that some haunting ghosts are said to be innocuous or even friendly, and sometimes, a haunting ghost handsomely repays good treatment.) The assaults committed by such ghosts range from intentionally causing fear by producing weird sounds and apparitions to effecting a variety of transitory physical effects and inducing terrible dreams to causing potentially fatal diseases. In animist traditions, ghosts are not the only spirits associated with particular places, and in Southeast Asia, for example, there are many risks encountered from “wild spirits.”

Ghosts sometimes return to particular people rather than places. Their

motives may be very positive but still result in assault. This is the case when a ghost returns to admonish a parent or spouse who is abusing someone the ghost cared for in life. Sometimes, a ghostly assault is an act of revenge, visited on a person who inflicted injury in life. The avenging ghost may strike a person and cause a cancer to grow at the site of the blow, harass the guilty party into confession, or otherwise make life miserable. Less severe is the case of a ghost whose purpose is to force a living relative into a more prudent and honorable life path, as in the case of the Hawaiian tradition of *aumakua*, which has been translated as “behavioral direction visions.”

A common reason for ghostly return is the absence of proper burial and mourning. This situation has been especially difficult for some of the refugee groups who fled Southeast Asia in the 1970s. In the process of fleeing, many relatives were killed under conditions that prevented proper funerary rites, and many problems, including illness and sometimes death, have been attributed to the resulting ghostly returns.

An assaulting spirit actually may seek to displace one’s soul in order to possess the body. Motives for such possession vary, and many traditions allow for benign possession, as for mediumistic communication between the living and the dead. But most traditions also acknowledge harmful possession. In Christian tradition, it has generally been believed that demons—fallen angels who were never in human form—carry out possession of this type. Such nonghost possession is found in many traditions, but ghosts also are widely believed to possess the living. The act of possession itself may be perceived as an assault in which the victim struggles and feels an alien spirit entering the body by force, attempting to push out the soul of the rightful owner. In other cases, the victim is unaware of anything but gaps of “missing time” and must have the events of the possession recounted. During possession, the victim’s body may do antisocial acts or physically harm itself. Somewhat less intrusive is the attachment of spirits to the living in a way that influences their behavior, sometimes called “obsession.” In spiritist traditions, such influences may be either good or bad; for other believers, the influences are more consistently detrimental. Most traditions have techniques for identifying harmful spirit possession or influence and treating it by expelling the offending spirits.

In many cultures, there exists the concept of supernatural sexual assault. In European tradition, such attacks were carried out by both male (incubi) and female (succubi) demons. Some held that the demon actually had no gender but merely took the form opposite to its victim. Reports of sexual assault by spirits continue to the present.

Magical assault is sometimes carried out at a distance through the principles of magic described by Sir James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough*: that like produces like (the principle of similarity) and that once in contact, things continue to act on each other even after contact has been severed (the prin-

ciple of contagion). Both principles are illustrated by the use of an effigy that includes, for example, some of the victim's hair or nail parings (contagion) to cause that person pain and sickness by injuring the effigy (similarity). This and a variety of other techniques of magical assault, such as "bone pointing," are found all over the world. A more directly supernatural kind of sorcery is spirit magic, in which a spirit is bound by the sorcerer to do his or her bidding. Spirit magic is often used for healing and other benign purposes (many healers have one or more spirit helpers or "guides," what the Laotian Hmong call "tame spirits" in translation), but the same spirits can do all kinds of mischief.

Magical assault, like the attack of a ghost, sometimes may be directed against an evil one. In Japan, for example, the experience known as haggling or witch riding in English is called *kanashibari*, which is sometimes translated as "metal bound." The term derives from the magic of Fudomyoo, a Buddha who fights against evil. His statue is placed at the entrance to temples, where it is said to bind evil ones so that they cannot move, preventing them from entering. In medieval Japan, Ninjas and Buddhist monks were said to be trained to bind their opponents as if by metal strings. Similar "spellbinding" traditions, used against enemies and evildoers, are very widely found.

It was noted earlier that some categories of assault (and attackers) are ambiguous with regard to the previously outlined definition of supernatural. These types of assaults and attackers do not constitute an entirely new category so much as a boundary where opinion, often within a single tradition, differs on the physical/spiritual nature of events. Fairies sometimes appear to be a physical race with magical powers, but others consider them to be spirits. Some Newfoundlanders, for example, said that the fairies were fallen angels who were not bad enough to be consigned to hell. Fairies often mislead wanderers and sometimes strike them or wound them with fairy weapons. Bell's palsy, a neurological condition causing temporary paralysis on one side of the face, was attributed to fairies by some Newfoundlanders. Fairies also can cause blindness and all sorts of other injury. Similar races of "little people" are found all over the world.

The activities of witches are sometimes similarly ambiguous. During the witchcraft persecutions in Europe, there was a great debate over whether witches flew in their physical bodies or after leaving their physical bodies behind. The European witchcraft tradition clearly included the possibility that witches might not only leave their human bodies but also either change them or enter alternative bodies such as those of animals. In such a case, injury to the animal would then be found on the body of the witch at a later time, confirming the identity. The belief in shape shifting is found universally, and shape-shifters usually are very dangerous. Shape shifting is often associated with witchcraft, as in the Navajo "skinwalker" who transforms itself by putting on the skin of a coyote or wolf. This image is similar to the European

werewolf; here too the transformation process appears supernatural, but the result seems to be a physical agent who can do direct bodily harm. Another related belief is that witches can “slip out of their skins” and travel about invisibly, a belief reported from the U.S. South. Although this sounds like a metaphorical description of witches traveling in spirit form, some informants say that, though invisible, the witches can be touched when they are out of their skins and that they feel rubbery, like raw meat.

Vampires also share some of this physical/supernatural ambiguity. Traditional vampires, unlike the movie variety, do not live above ground in closed caskets that they can conveniently open and exit at night. Rather, their bodies remain in the buried casket, and their travel and attacks seem to involve either spectral appearance or shape shifting. Some accounts suggest that a burrow connects the casket with the surface and that the vampire can leave in the form of a small animal. But the blood of the victim, in European belief, somehow gets to the corpse of the vampire, which is found filled with it when the vampire is finally identified and destroyed. In other traditions, creatures like the vampire (such as the “viscera sucker” of the Philippines) seem to take vital essence rather than physical nourishment from their victims. The result, of course, can be the same: sickness and death.

One final ambiguous category indicates the continued vigor of traditions of supernatural assault. This is “UFO abduction.” Until the mid-1980s, even people fascinated by UFOs considered those who claimed to have been taken aboard the flying objects to be part of a lunatic fringe. But by the late 1980s, the topic of UFO abduction was being taken much more seriously. Stories in the media documented the increasing number of people claiming to have been taken against their will to strange craft, where they were subjected to painful physical and sexual examinations and had semen or ova taken from them. At present, there are at least dozens of investigators and abductee support groups in the United States, and a substantial number of mental health professionals are taking the abductees’ claims seriously. Although many investigators are convinced that recent abduction events have been carried out by a technologically advanced alien civilization, others, including many abductees, believe that what is happening is metaphysical rather than physical. Abductees are often accosted in their bedrooms and paralyzed in events much like those involved in haggling. Subsequently, they may be taken right through the ceilings of their rooms. The differing opinions on how this occurs recall the earlier debate about whether the flight of witches was physical or spiritual. The alien hybridization program has many elements reminiscent of fairy abduction, which sometimes included sexual union between fairies and humans.

There have been many theories about why the belief in supernatural assault recurs in so many cultural settings, and most of them probably supply pieces of the explanation. Such a belief can serve social control functions,

suggesting, for example, consequences for antisocial behavior—consequences against which wealth and power cannot necessarily protect. Also, as an explanation of disease, the belief offers a course of action. Psychoanalytic authors have suggested explanations in terms of repressed sexuality.

In addition to such theories, there is now evidence that a substantial number of supernatural belief traditions (both negative and positive) are partially supported by experiences that occur cross-culturally. Such experiences seem to play a central role in the formation and persistence of these traditions. The category that has been most completely described is what Newfoundlanders call “the Old Hag” or haggling, although the perpetrator may be either male or female. In this experience, people awaken to find themselves paralyzed, although fully awake. They may hear shuffling footsteps approach; they may see a grotesque creature clamber up on the bed and squat on their chests, making it difficult to breathe; or they may be overwhelmed by a “sense of presence.” The great majority of victims are convinced that something evil is in their immediate vicinity. Most surprising is the fact that this type of experience, complete with its complex set of grotesque features, is found in different cultural settings all over the world, including modern North America where most victims have no cultural frame in which to place the event. This experience is what sleep researchers and physicians call “sleep paralysis.” There are known physiological mechanisms that explain the paralysis, but the peculiar, cross-culturally stable patterning of the subjective experience is still puzzling.

The sleep paralysis experience is a universally available empirical basis for supernatural assault traditions, and it has been attributed to each of the spiritual attackers described earlier. Although this event is the most thoroughly described, it appears that there may be other ubiquitous experiential foundations for these assault traditions, just as there are for more positive belief traditions (such as the near-death experience). For example, in multiple personality disorder, the alter personality sometimes claims to be a demon or other spirit alien to the host. This does not happen only to those with a strong prior belief in possession. There may well be many other underlying experiential categories. In order to find such patterns and make theoretical sense of them, it is first necessary to take traditions of the supernatural seriously—that is to inquire into them as though they may refer to actual experiences. To do this, one must not only seek the cultural repertoire of beliefs but also interview those who claim to be direct observers. Many will reveal a retrospective interpretation of mundane events. But others may give us new knowledge about phenomena that are genuinely puzzling, as is sleep paralysis. In turn, such empirical elements put the traditions in a new light, making their logical structures more understandable. Sleep paralysis by itself, occurring among about 20 percent of the population, provides an empirical basis for the belief

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that evil spirits exist. If that belief is established, the reference to such powerful agents in theories of disease etiology is not so difficult to understand.

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See also Evil Eye; Exorcism; Night Hag; Magic; Possession; Vampire; Werewolf; Witchcraft.

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AUDIENCE

A word derived from the Latin *audientia*, meaning a hearing or listening. In folklore scholarship, the term *audience* may refer to a variety of social groups (or individuals) who constitute the actual (or intended) receiving party in a transmission process. Depending on the dynamics of the activity involved, the term may signify a listener to verbal or musical communication or a spectator of visual presentation or activity. In a broader sense, closely related labels (e.g., *the public*, *fans*, *clients*) also are used to refer to a customary audience or to consumers of a material culture product (artifact). Typically, an audience is physically present with the source of the communication; the audience may

also be intended (as in the case of producing a commodity for a certain category of a population) or imaginary (symbolic interactional—e.g., in AT 894, “The Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Stone of Pity,” a persecuted heroine tells her sorrows to a stone, which bursts out of compassion for her).

During the early stages of folklore scholarship, only casual references were made to the audience, especially with reference to narrative materials (e.g., *Märchen*, ballads). The most pronounced emphasis placed by a folklorist on the audience came in the 1920s as part of Walter Anderson’s “Law of Self-Correction.” Anderson credited the audience of orally communicated tales with censoring narrators into conforming to established characteristics of a tale text, thus exerting a stabilizing influence on traditions. Other folklorists defined some genres in terms of the presence or absence of an audience and its expectations. For example, Iouri Sokolov argued that one can chant a song for one’s self but that there is no solitary tale telling since narrating a tale presupposes the presence of an audience; similarly, C. W. von Sydow distinguished between the long *chimerates* and *novellates*, on the one hand, and the short animal fables and jocular fables, on the other, according to a raconteur’s purpose vis-à-vis a listening audience.

Subsequent theoretical developments led to the inclusion of the audience as a basic factor in studying lore. One such development was the anthropological functional approach, which was heavily influenced by behavioristic theories of learning wherein labels such as *cues* and *intervening variables* designated the context for a learning process. Under the terms of functional studies, the audience becomes a component of the context within which cultural institutions operate, and recurrent practices are learned or unlearned.

As did Anderson earlier, many folklorists came to view social reward by an audience as a major factor in motivating narrators, singers, minstrels, dancers, and other performers to publicly perform their art or exercise their craft. Stith Thompson pointed out the impact of such rewards on raconteurs; Albert Lord reported the influence of a “critical audience” on minstrels’ performances; Bengt Holbeck concluded that if meaning in tales were to be understood, the traditional audience had to be seen in conjunction with the narrators. Likewise, in the field of material culture, the role of the consumer is emphasized. Warren E. Roberts noted a craftsman’s eagerness to produce “satisfactory items” due to a close personal contact with the customer and expectations to serve the customer again, and Henry Glassie pointed out the folk artist’s sensitiveness to the “audience’s needs and pleasures.”

This form of interaction (as compared with feedback) between a source and a recipient in terms of effect (reward and punishment or absence thereof) received further indirect elaboration in the “ethnography of speaking” espoused by Dell Hymes and in “performance-centered” approaches advocated by Roger Abrahams, Richard Bauman, and others. The new nomenclature for this formula is the *responsibility/accountability* assumed by a

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speaker/performer to an audience (and vice versa). Imbedded in this view of “cultural behavior”—to use Hymes’ words—is the audience’s response, which will reward or punish the performer. According to behavioristic learning theories, effect is the basic force responsible for the continuity and discontinuity of behavior, especially that category of traditional cultural behavior that may be designated as “folkloric behavior.”

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See also Performance; Psychological Approach; Superorganic Theories; Tradition.

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AUTHENTICITY

Clearly identifiable authorship or the uniqueness of a folklore item, such as an authentic piece of folk art as opposed to mass-produced copies of it; also, the ability of cultural objects or performances to evoke a sense of genuineness among those who partake of them, such as the strong emotional or even physical response of audiences witnessing a ritual. The term derives from the Greek *authentēs*, meaning made by one’s own hand, original, or genuine. In classic and medieval usage, *authenticity* was primarily applied to objects and scriptures, particularly in the religious and legal realms.

The intellectual, social, and political transformations that began with the Enlightenment brought forth individual experience as a second realm of authenticity, which remains central to modern philosophy. In the breakup of feudal life worlds that would eventually lead to the formation of bourgeoisies and democracies, upper-class literati in Western societies began to question the sincerity of social interaction, as civilized manners and behaviors increasingly removed people from expressing themselves in plain, truthful, and unpremeditated ways. Intellectuals thus sought to discover places and states of being where authenticity flourished undisturbed by what Jean-Jacques Rousseau termed the “wound of reflection.” Excessive civilization had, from this perspective, covered over authentic ways of being and expression, and thus the search began for peoples or social classes that remained in primeval states in order to then recover authenticity from such examples and employ it for the recovery and renewal of the self.

Aside from the exotic savages encountered in the colonial expansion, one such locus of authenticity was thought to be the European peasantry. Labeled *the folk*, this group and its material and spiritual artifacts became the focus of folklore studies, which emerged around 1800. The search for authenticity was thus a core concern in the formation of the discipline, and the material and the experiential component of authenticity became intertwined. The concept served as a powerful means to legitimate the subject matter but itself remained curiously unexamined. Only in the 1980s did authenticity undergo increasing analytic scrutiny, particularly with regard to questions of cultural commodification (as in the mass marketing of indigenous artifacts) and the politics of culture (as in the use of folklore materials for diverse sociopolitical goals). Eventually, the absolute nature of the concept was questioned, and the notion of authenticity as a socially negotiated quality emerged instead.

Despite its ancient Greek roots, the meaning of the term *authenticity* is thoroughly modern. It emerged in the mid-eighteenth century, concurrently with both the political transformations brought about by the French Revolution and the socioeconomic changes initiated by the Industrial Revolution. Both the political and the economic changes furthered the growth of increasingly individualistic worldviews in place of the communal ethos dominant in feudal societies. The excitement of dramatic change and technological progress therefore also entailed a sense of loss of community, and the romantically inspired search for authenticity around the turn of the nineteenth century attempted to counteract this loss. Emphasizing the need for getting in touch with their own innermost feelings and emotions, romantic writers and thinkers sought to uncover the lost origins of poetry. This was closely entwined with the perception of natural purity, on the one hand, and civilization as a spoiling agent, on the other. Works such as Ossian (later discovered to be a fraud) inspired the collection of folksong and folk narrative on a grand scale, as upper-class individuals hoped to regain their own lost

authenticity by reading and imitating folk poetry. A vocabulary relying on tropes such as cleanliness and genuineness of natural manifestations, threatened loss of paradise, and alienation from society was employed by the romantics, who were initially driven by a largely emotional desire to recoup the authentic. Although this vocabulary lingers to the present, the desire to restore authentic origins moved from the emotional realm and became an increasingly scholarly, scientific preoccupation. Scholars began to devise techniques of collecting and representing the essence of folkness in the form of texts and artifacts. In the work of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, for instance, one recognizes the effort to turn the sociopolitical quest for authenticity into a scientifically valid enterprise. Folklore materials, the standards used in collecting them, and the groups and individuals from whom scholars collected were subjected to explicit or implicit authenticity criteria. This perception of more and less genuine groups and cultural productions grew into a rarely questioned scientific canon. The ideology that relative isolation from modern forces such as mass communication and technological advances preserves cultures in a purer (hence, superior) state continued to inform choices in fieldwork sites until the romantic mystique of fieldwork itself began to be examined.

In contrast to authenticity standards in the domain of high culture, where individual, known authorship of artistic production served as a means to determine originality, the authenticity of an item of folklore was established by proving anonymous authorship and continuity through traditional channels of communication. Individual performers living within presumably untainted communities were considered only as vessels through whom folklore materials were passed on. In a variety of theoretical folkloristic projects, such as those of the historic-geographic school, the scholar's task consisted of cleansing from folklore materials the impurities that had crept into them through human error and establishing the original or *Ur-form*. In the public sphere, the appeal of authenticity was considerable as well. Folkloristic notions of originality and cultural purity fueled applications in anything from (romantic) nationalist rhetoric to small-scale preservational or restorational associations.

In the second half of the twentieth century, folklorists began to move from an item- or text-oriented focus that had disregarded intentionality and creativity on the part of the folk to a processual approach in which actors and audiences were recognized as active shapers of folklore. Simultaneously, scholars faced a variety of cultural manifestations that forced them to examine the latent dichotomies informing much of their thinking. By adhering to the folk-versus-nonfolk dichotomy and the corresponding differentiation between the genuine or authentic versus the spurious, folklorists artificially isolated the materials they studied from the cultural processes in which they were embedded. Issues such as the mechanical reproduction of folk art or the touristic exploitation of costume, festival, and foodways brought forth the *folklorismus*

discourse in Europe and the concept of fakelore in the United States. Both notions were initially conceived to separate out authentic folk culture from the machinations of mass markets. Closer examination of issues such as the commodification of cultural goods in the larger framework of the politics of culture forced scholars to recognize the artificial boundaries that they themselves had constructed around folklore and folk communities. Cases where the purported authenticity of folkloric materials was foregrounded began to be studied, for instance, in the intersection of folk art and the art market, the display of ethnicity, or the encounter of tourists and natives. Agents in these settings clearly constructed authenticities according to arbitrary criteria suiting their particular needs. Such insights helped the discipline to recognize its own complicity in endowing some cultural goods with greater significance than others. The hegemonic implications of disciplinary theory and practice in the discourse on authenticity thus finally became an object of analysis itself.

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See also Fakelore; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Tradition; Invented Tradition.

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AUTOGRAPH BOOK

A volume for collecting handwritten verse and prose. This written material can be traditional or original, comically irreverent or high-mindedly serious. It can represent very personal feelings or repeat customary formulas. Messages are usually quite brief, perhaps consisting only of a traditional greeting phrase with the writer's signature ("Best wishes, Spike").

Also called *friendship books* and *memory books*, autograph books existed as early as the fifteenth century. A vogue for keeping them emerged early in the 1800s and continued as a mark of gentility until the beginning of the twentieth century. Writers of autographs at least until the mid-nineteenth century treated the custom as an opportunity for offering homiletics on such subjects as friendship ("Remember well and bear in mind, / A constant friend is hard to find"). Although some might compose their own messages, most writers probably drew upon traditional materials that originated or were preserved in almanacs, school readers, and collections of sentimental verse. Later in the century, messages became more comic, a trend that has continued until the present.

During the 1900s, the custom of keeping autograph books has flourished most among children, who employ a variety of folk rhyme formulas ("Roses are red, / Violets are blue, / There has never been a friend / That's better than you") as well as visual manipulations ("U R 2 Good 2 B 4 Gotten") to memorialize relationships. Sometimes, symbols take the place of a word or concept (a heart substituted for the verb "love" or a "smiley face" representing happiness). Autograph book inscriptions also may comment humorously and sometimes sardonically about such concerns as schoolwork and boy-girl relationships. Though writers still stress the importance of friendships, twentieth-century autograph verse is often comically insulting. Inscriptions may be preserved in albums designed especially for the purpose. Today, school yearbooks, produced even for elementary schools, are designed to accommodate autographed sentiments from one's classmates. In fact, administrators may set aside part of a day at the end of the school year for an "annual" party, during which students write in each other's yearbooks.

Most studies of autograph books published by folklorists have focused entirely on the verses and prose written therein. Changes through time in the nature of the sentiments expressed have received considerable attention. Some attempts also have been made to typologize autograph verse on the basis of form and to view the content of the verse as reflecting the worldview of the writers and collectors. Little attention, though, has been paid to the dynamics of autograph exchange. A study by folklorist Stephen Stern provides some rare insights into why particular children write particular sentiments.

A related autograph book custom involves the collection of signatures from celebrities. Some participants in this custom specialize in particular kinds of celebrities (for instance, country-and-western musicians); others are more general in their approach. Some sites where a number of celebrities may be available for autographs market special books to collect their signatures. The Disney theme parks, for instance, sell books in which children can collect signatures from people dressed in the costumes of Disney characters.

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See also Children's Folklore; Inscription.

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B

BALLAD

Narrative song that is characterized chiefly by concentration on a single episode, dramatic development through dialogue and action, and objective tone and that is structurally rooted in repetitive verbal patterns and tight, balancing scenes. This definition—which applies mainly to the classical ballad, as distinct from the broadside, native American, and blues ballads—augments only slightly a definition formulated over half a century ago by Gordon Gerould. There is, however, a shift in emphasis in current approaches to the definition. Whereas Gerould attempted to define a substantive body of poetry, as epitomized by the anthologies of Francis James Child and Svend Grundtvig, a contemporary reader focuses on Gerould's attention to stylistic features and argues that balladry should be understood not as a canon of folk-songs but as a way of telling a story in song using a particular narrative technique. As a result, contemporary ballad studies show a marked concern for the poetic processes of composition and interpretation, with particular emphasis on the role of formulas and other verbal and structural patterns.

Ballads are found throughout Europe and, as a result of outward European migration, in northern Africa, the Americas, and Australia, with analogues reported in India, the Orient, and Oceania. But the desire to deal with an apparently global tradition is frustrated by the need to grapple with regional forms whose differences are as apparent as their common characteristics. The most obvious distinctions are metrical. In northern Europe, ballads are stanzaic, commonly written in rhymed quatrains of alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines or, less frequently, four tetrameter lines. Couplet stanzas, often thought to be an older form, normally have interspersed refrains, whereby they are equivalent to quatrains. By contrast, many southern and eastern European ballads are stichic and exhibit varying metrical and acoustic structures: The Spanish *romanceros* are based on octosyllabic verses linked by assonance rather than rhyme; verses in Romanian ballads, normally trochaic trimeter or tetrameter, are subject to considerable variation in metrical length. It should be noted, however, that ballad scansion is variable within the confines of the melody, and rhythm is dictated primarily by four-beat melodic phrases grouped in four-line strophes. Hypermetrical or abbreviated constructions are common enough that it seems quite inappropriate to describe them as “irregular,” and when ballads are sung, inconsistencies that might otherwise be apparent on the printed page are smoothed out.

One might argue here, in light of defining the ballad from the perspective of narration, that prosody is a secondary consideration having little to do with

the actual way a story is told. It has been shown, however, that form has a direct bearing on style. Stichic ballads permit expansion and development more easily than strophic ones, and thus they tend to be more descriptive. Since this has implications for how formulas and other repetitive patterns function in the various traditions, researchers attempting to understand the precise details of balladic style have tended to deal with regional forms as distinct entities.

Although it is difficult to generalize about ballads on a broad scale, one can perhaps identify two overarching elements that encompass the most significant stylistic features: (1) a paratactic linking of concise narrative images (noted by David Buchan), the so-called gapped quality of the ballad, and (2) a reliance on repetition. Forgoing descriptive detail and elaborated character or scene development, the ballad tells its story through flashes of imagery, a process M.J.C. Hodgart likened to the cinematic technique of “montage.” Each action and scene is clearly articulated, with actors characteristically frozen in tableau, glancing back over a shoulder, taking the hand of another, shouldering a cape, or peering over a castle wall; Lajos Vargyas described balladry as a poetry of gestures. Many other metaphors applied to the genre also point to its highly concentrated narrative style. Thomas Gray recognized the ballad tendency to “begin in the fifth act,” often at a moment of immanent conflict; from there, it is said to “leap and linger” from one scene to the next. To the overall narrative structure, Wilhelm Grimm applied the analogy of rows of mountain peaks with the valleys between hidden from view. These characterizations, along with such typical features as a propensity for overstatement and understatement, highlight the degree to which the ballad subscribes to Axel Olrik’s “epic law” of tableaux scenes. Its ideas are clear, focused, and, at the same time, intrinsically dramatic.

Repetition, within individual songs and within the broader tradition, is central to ballad technique. Indeed, Francis Gummere’s notion of incremental repetition (that is, narrative development through sequences of verbally patterned lines, stanzas, or stanza groupings) is a crucial one in that it shows a compositional unity between repetition and the paratactic linkages inherent in ballad structure. Recent Danish scholarship, particularly the work of Flemming Andersen, expands on the idea by showing that repetition has both *static* and *dynamic* functions. Static repetition includes reiterations of a single idea for the sake of intensity—“You lie, you lie, you bonny may / So loud I hear you lie.” With dynamic repetition, the idea behind the pattern is modified in some way, however slightly, so that each iteration moves the narrative forward. This includes both the “progressive” forms, such as incremental repetition, and noncontiguous “recurrent” repetitions, which often act as frames for scenes and larger narrative units. In addition to internal repetition, commonplaces (formulas) and stylized poetic diction intrinsic to

each regional tradition are standard generic conventions that further demonstrate the importance of verbal patterning in balladry.

For the most part, ballad theory has struggled to understand the cultural basis of ballad style. Early in the twentieth century, communal creationists and cultural devolutionists attempted, from contrasting perspectives, to explain ballad style in terms of long-term transmission processes. The debate was finally resolved by the notion of “communal re-creation,” advanced by Cecil Sharp in England and Phillips Barry in the United States. This concept assumed individual authorship but declared it irrelevant to ballad process and focused instead on the continual reshaping of texts through a total interaction between the ballad story, the singer, and his or her community. Philological studies of the same period focused on the genre’s relationship to epic, metrical romance, and other ostensibly medieval forms.

Present research tends to be more synchronically oriented and attempts to locate the role of formulas and other repetitive patterns within the larger framework of ballad poetics. Two main schools of thought have emerged, one focusing on composition, the other on interpretation. Influenced by Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord’s oral-formulaic theory, several scholars have proposed that ballad style emanates from an oral re-creative process. David Buchan’s work, in particular, suggests that preliterate ballad-makers relied not only on formulaic repetitions but also on complex structuring mechanisms that enabled them to maintain tight control over the organization of stanzas, scenes, and the narrative as a whole. Changes in ballad style at later stages in the tradition are thus seen to result from a literate poetic sensibility, one no longer bound by the patterned conventions of oral art.

Other analyses, such as those by Barre Toelken, Otto Holzapfel, Edith Rogers, and Flemming Andersen, have discovered a tendency for formulas to appear in stable narrative environments. The ideas embodied within the formulas thus become habitually associated with certain narrative events, such that image and action cohere as a compound structural unit. At a basic level, then, the formula foreshadows a certain course of events. From a more dynamic perspective, the two parts of the compound often establish a qualitative tension: The delicateness suggested by “he’s taen her by the lily-white hand” contrasts starkly with the brutality of the acts of rape or murder that normally follow this formula. The interplay of image and action drives the narrative forward, often at an accelerated pace, but at each step of the way, ancillary tensions are generated by contrastive associations built into the stereotyped motifs. It is this apparently simple yet superbly artful way of telling a story in song that is the essence of balladry.

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See also Folk Song, Narrative.

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BARD

Originally, an ancient Celtic poet-minstrel, who composed and performed songs eulogizing heroic deeds of chiefs and warriors. In Ireland and in Gaelic-speaking Scotland, the bardic tradition was still alive until the eighteenth century. In Wales, the original tradition disappeared after the Middle Ages but continued in the form of yearly festivals called *Eisteddfod*. An important part of the program consisted of competition in composing poems in the classical poetic devices. Romanticism gave birth to literary products eulogizing the bardic art, such as *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson, *The Bard* by Thomas Gray (1757), and *An Essay on the Ancient Minstrels of England* by Bishop Thomas Percy (1765), and also to organizations and festivals promoting the revitalization of the bardic traditions—for example, the society of Welsh bards *Gorsedd* (founded in 1792), the Irish festival *Oireachtas* organized by the Gaelic League (and held since 1818), and the *Mod*, the equivalent event in Gaelic-speaking Scotland that was organized by the Gaelic Language Society.

In addition, *bard* is often used as a general term for singers and/or composers of (especially) epic folk poetry. The synonyms are *minstrel* or *troubadour*.

In Western Europe, the bardic traditions have left such epic monuments as the *Beowulf* (eighth century A.D.), the *Nibelungenlied* (thirteenth century A.D.), and the *Song of Roland* (eleventh century A.D.). The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* will be treated later in this entry.

In most parts of Europe, the bardic traditions in their oral form disappeared before the nineteenth century. In certain areas along the eastern border of Europe, some of the epic poetry cultures have survived to the present—the south Slavic epics performed by bards called *guslar*, Russian *bylina* poetry, or Finnic *Kalevala* poetry, for example.

South Slavic epic poetry saw centuries of dynamic, productive output that continued well into the twentieth century. The performers of both Finnish and Russian folklore, in the golden age of collection in the nineteenth century, were largely peasants living in remote regions, people engaged in hunting or itinerant occupations. The art of singing was still common in the nineteenth century (and to some extent in the twentieth century), but active professional singing of heroic and mythical songs was on the way out. Female singers performing largely lyric-epic and lyric songs often remained productive longer than their male counterparts.

In spite of the fact that most of the bardic traditions are dying out, there are several epic poetry cultures still alive, especially in various parts of Asia and Africa. The tradition is kept up, in many cases, by the elderly, those of seventy or eighty, and it will die with them. For instance, the epic of *Džangar* is still known among the Oirats in northwest China (Xinjiang), but most of the singers are very old. Formerly, this epic was known among the Kalmyks in the Volga region, in Mongolia, and also among the Buriats, who inhabit the region around Lake Baikal. The epic of *Geser* was spread mainly within the sphere of Tibetan cultural influence in Tibet, Mongolia, and among the Buriats and also in Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Ladakh. This heroic epic can still be encountered in some rather inaccessible areas. Convincing evidence of existing epics is to be found among various Turkic peoples (e.g., the Kirghiz *Manas*) and also among other peoples living in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Siberia. There are also rich epic poetry cultures in some parts of Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

Formerly, unfamiliarity with the material and inadequate knowledge of local oral traditions, cultural history, and other relevant contextual information led some scholars to assert that there were no bardic traditions in Africa. At present, there is enough evidence to demonstrate that there are several rich and influential epics in different parts of the continent—for example, the *jeli* (often called *griots*) among the Mande-speaking populations in West

Africa, the epics called *mvet* of Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea, or the *Nyanga* epic from Zaire. The performing of the epics (such as *Sunjiata*) is often only one of the manifold social roles of the bards.

On the basis of new fieldwork methods and materials, it is possible to draw a more complete picture of the art of the bards from all over the world, considering topics such as the variety of epic genres, modes of performance, differences between mythic, historical, and lyric-epic songs, and roles in society. One of the most interesting areas of contemporary research focuses on the coexistence and mutual influence between oral and literary epics and the use of epics in modern culture. In many cases, dominant concepts or ideologies have helped to strengthen the vitality of the impulsive use of epic poetry. This kind of situation also inspired a large number of new epic songs. Bardic poetry has been in constant use as a productive tradition adapting to new situations.

THE PROBLEM OF BARDIC ART AND ORAL COMPOSITION

In 1795, Friedrich Wolf argued in his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* that Homer could not have composed such long poems as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. According to him, the Homeric poems were composed orally in the form of short songs and edited later to obtain the unity they ultimately had. Wolf maintained that the Homeric poems were composed before the Greeks were acquainted with writing. For that reason, he contended, it was not possible to create such long epic texts as the Homeric epos.

Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord suggested that the performers of south Slavic epic songs created their texts in the performance situation by means of formulas, themes, and an overall structure, the “stable skeleton of narrative.” The production of folk poetry varied thus from one performing situation to another—the singers were using a method that Parry and Lord referred to as *composition in performance*. Parry’s basic aim was to prove that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* too were composed orally in a traditional style. South Slavic epic poetry was proved to be oral and traditional. Since the Greek heroic epics also revealed the same type of features of traditionality and orality, Parry and Lord asserted that they were composed using the same mode of composition. In his study *The Singer of Tales*, published in 1960, Lord presented a summary of Parry’s theses as well as his own research. It is necessary to note, however, that only the starting point of the Parry-Lord theory was literary in the sense that the authors aimed at solving the classical Homeric question. During the years since Lord’s work appeared, this approach, originally devoted to classical literature, has expanded into a universal school. In the bibliography *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research* by John M. Foley, over 1,800 monographs on materials from more than 90 language areas are mentioned. In addition to

the Homeric and south Slavic epic, the advocates of the oral-formulaic school have focused on the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, as well as a number of other classic epics and living traditions.

Milman Parry and Albert Lord's argument can be supported by many bardic traditions. In fact, an oral singer can produce an epic song longer than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the Finnish *Kalevala* put together. The Tajik singer of the *Gurguli* epics Hikmet Rizo has sung a version with a total length of 101,596 verses. Sayaqbay Qaralaev, one of the best-known Kirghiz epic singers (*manasci*), has produced a version of the *Manas*-cycle (Manas, Semetey, Seytek) totaling more than half a million verses. Another famous Kirghiz singer, S. Orozbaqov, has produced a version that comprises over 180,000 verses.

By using a set of narrative techniques, a singer is capable of composing long epics without having memorized them or created them beforehand. Singers are able to use this technique to vary and compose long narrative structures during performance. As singers produce their versions of epics, they make use of the line sequences commonly encountered in tradition, some of which are suitable for setting the scene for several plot structures or describing different events, others for rather few entities. In studies of epic singing among various peoples, one often finds mention of singers who are able to repeat a long narrative poem after only a single hearing or rapidly producing a new poem on a given theme.

The singer has at his or her disposal the traditional means of epic poetry: metrical patterns, parallelism, alliteration, rhyme, anaphora, or other devices of diction. During the composition process, the bard elaborates on the song according to his or her own preferences and the circumstance. In order to perform an entire epic song, the singer has to master simultaneously a number of systems. The memory of the singer works on multilevel representations containing features of surface and meaning structure. Formulas, ideas, and images join in a coherent whole; certain scenes and themes include particular details and clusters of forms. As a result of this composition process, bardic art is simultaneously innovative and traditional.

The training of the bard takes place over a long period, involving numerous stages of development. A. B. Lord's account of the south Slavic oral-formulaic learning process is famous. According to Lord, this process consists of three stages. The first is a period of passive listening, during which the singer learns the general themes and plot structures of his region. This stage is followed by a period of practice, during which the singer-to-be, who already knows how to sing, gradually learns to fit the material learned into traditional metrical and musical frameworks. The third stage is the making of the singer: the first performance of an entire song before a critical audience. Albert Lord mentioned the learning capabilities of the Bosnian master singer Avdo

Medjeović, describing a situation in which another singer—Mumin Vlahovljak—performed a song that Avdo had never heard. After Mumin had finished, Avdo praised the song but stated that he could perform it better. Although Mumin’s version was already thousands of lines in length, Avdo’s interpretation was even longer. Avdo’s poem was more complete than that which Mumin had presented, and it made use of standard elements characteristic of Avdo’s repertoire in its construction.

Although the skill of the gifted singer made it possible to improvise on the basis of traditional forms and to repeat a song after hearing it only once, as a general collective expression it was considered that the epic poems had to be repeated in a traditional, standard form. The study of epic poetry nonetheless reveals signs of considerable variation. Among the features of epic poems (and indeed of folklore in general) is a tendency to preserve the linguistic and poetic conventions that have become familiar and primary in the community and also to produce folklore tied to the history, social development, and cultural conditions of the community. One may find abundant examples of these concepts in studies of epic songs among various peoples. In some poetic cultures, the performers generally produce relatively fixed entities (small-scale epics); in others, the singers compile poems by drawing on traditional devices in relatively free combinations (large-scale epics). According to this distinction, Finnish-Karelian and Russian bards normally belong to the former category; the epic poetry of the southern Slavs, especially the Bosnian and the Herzegovinian Moslem singers as well as those in numerous Mongolian and Turkic traditions, belong largely to the latter category.

In addition, it has to be noted that there are abundant examples of epic traditions in which diverse genres play an important role. Epics in such traditions might contain chapters in verse hagiography or panegyric, prose sections (or prosimetric) forms, fragments of lyric elegy or laments, or even proverbs and riddles.

The mode of performance may be flexible and varied. The singers can perform on various occasions, for different audiences, and they are able to choose the chapter to be performed according to the context. Such “eposes in the making” clearly show how important it has been to challenge the literary-based concept of the epics and bardic traditions.

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See also Ethnopoetics; Folk Song, Narrative.

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BELIEF FOLK

A broad genre of folklore that includes expressions and behaviors variously called superstition, popular belief, magic, the supernatural, old wives' tales, folk medicine, folk religion, weather signs, planting signs, conjuration, hoodoo, root work, portents, omens, charms, and taboos. Alan Dundes has formulated a structural definition of folk belief (underlying patterns remain the same even if the content changes) in order to avoid the pejorative connotations of many of the terms just listed. Superstitions are traditional expressions that have conditions and results (if a black cat crosses a person's path, he or she will have bad luck; a halo around the moon means rain the next day). In some superstitions, the conditions are causal (the black cat is the cause of bad luck), and in some, they are not (the halo is a sign of rain, not the cause of it). The belief that spilling salt means bad luck has a cause condition (spilling the salt) and a result (bad luck). Since spilling the salt causes the bad luck, a conversion ritual is possible—in this case, throwing the salt over one's shoulder in order to negate the bad luck.

The underlying structure is not always apparent in the spoken belief, as in the widespread expression “knock on wood.” The cause condition here is not spoken but is part of the context of behavior. Someone says, “I've been driving for thirty years and never had an accident” and follows with “knock on wood.” The unspoken cause condition and result—that is, that saying an event has not happened will actually cause it to happen—shows the magic power of uttering words. The only expressed structural element is the conversion ritual—knocking on wood—which then negates the result element—an accident taking place. This example also illustrates the need to examine the behavioral context in order to understand the folk belief; the verbal expression only contains a part of the meaning of the event. Using the structural definition helps us to better see the contextual elements and to avoid making judgments about the people who practice the belief.

Folklorists and anthropologists who studied superstition in the nineteenth

and early part of the twentieth century definitely were making judgments about the tradition-bearers of folk belief. One school of thought saw superstitions as survivals of primitive rituals, so that knocking on wood, for instance, would be based on an appeal to vegetation gods. The problem with this theory is that it is not based on evidence of actual belief or behavior in the past; rather, it is a hypothesis that works backward from present-day evidence. Also, the survivalist theory does not tell us much about belief in practice in present-day situations; people who knock on wood are not aware of appealing to vegetation gods. Earlier scholars associated superstitions with the peasantry in rural environments, which caused them to neglect the study of superstitious behavior in urban, industrial, or middle- and upper-class environments. There was an implicit condescension toward the bearers of folk belief as the “other,” groups of people whose culture suffered arrested development.

Folklorists have long recognized the need for a neutral term to designate traditional beliefs in order to avoid ethnocentric bias in studying human behavior: In 1930, Alexander Krappe wrote, “Superstition, in common parlance, designates the sum of beliefs and practices shared by other people in so far as they differ from our own. What we believe and practise [sic] ourselves is, of course, Religion.” More recently, in 1977, Lawrence W. Levine noted that “in the cultures from which the [African-American] slaves came, phenomena and activities that we might be tempted to dismiss as ‘superstitious’ were legitimate and important modes of comprehending and operating within a universe perceived of in sacred terms. To distinguish these activities and beliefs from religion is a meaningless exercise.” Religious beliefs and folk beliefs may be similar in terms of structure and function; their differences lie in the way they are perceived by different groups. As many folklorists have pointed out, folk beliefs are found not just among isolated, uneducated, or exotic groups but among all peoples.

Given the diversity and cross-cultural spread of folk belief, one of the central problems in the scholarship in this field is classification. What scheme will be able to handle the seemingly unending variety of topics and examples from different cultures all around the world? Wayland D. Hand formulated a classification based on “the cycle of life,” which has proven useful in organizing folk belief collections. The categories are: (1) birth, infancy, childhood; (2) human body, folk medicine; (3) home, domestic pursuits; (4) economic, social relationships; (5) travel, communication; (6) love, courtship, marriage; (7) death and funereal customs; (8) witchcraft, ghosts, magical practices; (9) cosmic phenomena: times, numbers, seasons; (10) weather; (11) animals, animal husbandry; (12) fishing and hunting; (13) plants, plant husbandry; and (14) miscellaneous. These categories are subdivided into more specific topics—for instance, the fourth category (economic, social relationships) is divided into (a) prosperity, wealth; (b) works, trades, professions; (c) religion;

(d) friends, enemies; (e) recreation, sports, games; and (f) lying, thievery, legal guilt, murder, etcetera. The stuff of human drama, this list gives some idea of the range of topics and concerns that make up folk belief.

The cycle of life classification system is based on the concept of the rite of passage as formulated by Arnold van Gennep. Rites of passage take place at points in the life cycle where important transitions from one stage of life to another occur. Ritual and magic tend to be concentrated at these points to aid in the transition; Hand's classification system illustrates this with major categories of folk belief located at birth, marriage, and death. In many circumstances, folk belief as part of human cultural activity can only be understood as it relates to ritual. For example, beliefs about marriage are often expressed as part of the ritual of weddings, so that the traditions of throwing rice at the newly married couple or wearing "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue" have to be studied in terms of the overall customs and behavior associated with the wedding itself.

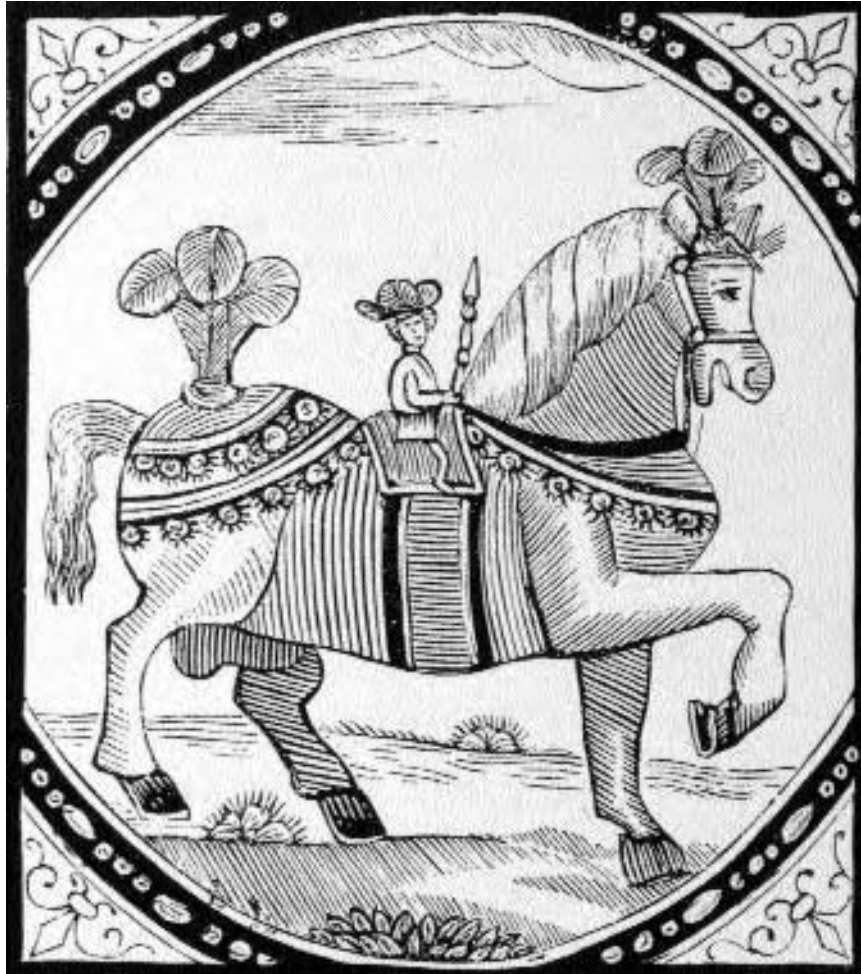
In the past, folklorists tended to collect superstitions as statements of belief without exploring related behavior or varying degrees of belief, concentrating on texts and ignoring contexts. Developments in the anthropological study of magic and ritual, specifically the work of Bronislaw Malinowski and other functionalists, have caused folklore research in folk belief to become more contextual. Malinowski conducted fieldwork on magic and ritual among Trobriand Islanders, and out of this research, he formulated the anxiety-ritual theory: Wherever there is uncertainty in life, anxiety will arise, and magic and ritual will be used to gain a sense of control. Numerous researchers have pointed out how the anxiety-ritual theory applies to various occupational groups involved with high-risk work. For instance, the research of Patrick B. Mullen indicates that commercial fishermen have a system of occupational folk belief that helps them to cope with the physical and financial risks of their work. When they start out on a long fishing trip in potentially dangerous waters, they perform rituals such as throwing coins overboard, they avoid saying words such as "alligator" or "rabbit," and they avoid particular actions such as turning the hatch cover upside down in order to ensure a safe and profitable trip. The pattern of anxiety and ritual can be observed among athletes involved in big games, actors on opening night, students taking exams, and lovers who are suspicious of their mates—in other words, among any group or in any individual who faces any form of uncertainty and anxiety.

Scholars have criticized this functional explanation of superstitious behavior because it concentrates on abstract cultural forces as determinants of behavior to the exclusion of varying individual causes. The idea that folklore, in this case folk belief, is only a reflection of preexisting cultural patterns such as anxiety-ritual oversimplifies the complex ways in which folklore can be an imaginative means of dealing with life. Folk belief in a specific context can serve

many other individual needs as well as relieve anxiety. For instance, some commercial fishermen who work as deckhands have been known to follow the traditional occupational belief in throwing coins overboard to buy wind in order to get off work early, and coal miners who do not want women working in the mines can cite the traditional belief that women are bad luck in mines. In both cases, folk belief is used in individual creative ways as part of strategies to control specific situations, not to relieve anxiety. A person who expresses a folk belief may not actually believe it and may be using it to parody another's behavior, to challenge accepted rules rather than reinforce them. In order to comprehend the multiple meanings and functions of folk belief, we have to examine the specific circumstances in which it occurs, noting such features as verbal expression, behavior, responses of others present, and so forth.

Recently, folklorists have begun to apply performance theory to the study of folk belief in order to get at the ways in which expressions of belief do more than simply reflect worldview but actually help to reconstruct the culture itself. Folk belief as part of a dynamic, ongoing tradition is not static but continually undergoing change as individuals adapt received knowledge to specific circumstances. Performance theory provides an approach for examining the nuances of verbal expression and behavior when superstitions are discussed or acted upon. Definitions of folklore from a performance perspective seem to exclude folk belief since they emphasize *artistic* communication and the utterance of a belief or the practicing of a superstition is not ordinarily thought of as an artistic expression. An argument could be made that these behaviors contain an artistic component in that they often depend on metaphor and analogy, but even if they are not artistic communication, they are subject to certain formulas and framing devices, in performance terms, the keys that set them off from other kinds of expressions and establish clues to their rhetorical purpose. Gary R. Butler has done extensive research on folk belief in a French Newfoundland community, applying concepts of performance to identify and analyze narrative and conversation frames in the "discourse of belief."

As Butler and others have discovered, folk beliefs are often expressed in other genres of folklore, such as narratives (memorates and legends), customs, rituals, foodways, proverbs, and rhymes. Examples of the cross-genre nature of folk belief also indicate the cross-cultural pervasiveness of superstitious behavior. Memorates are stories told from a first- or secondhand point of view with a belief at their core—for instance, a story about a personal encounter with a ghost would be a memorate because the belief in ghosts is essential to the narrative. A story one tells about a friend walking under a ladder and then being hit by a car also would be classified as a memorate because it is based on a superstition. The storyteller does not necessarily have to believe in the core folk belief; for example, a person could tell about starting a trip on Friday and



Tom Thumb is an example of the folk belief in the diminutive fairy child, a popular character in French and English folklore.

having good luck on the trip, a story that would counter the traditional belief in Friday as an unlucky day. Often, folk beliefs are expressed in narrative form to prove or disprove them.

Legends are usually removed from the first- or secondhand point of view of the memorate; they are told about events in the past that were not observed by the teller or someone the teller knows. In addition, certain kinds of legends also have folk belief at their core. The legend of the Flying Dutchman is about a ship doomed to sail the seas for eternity because of the actions of a blasphemous captain. The central belief here is that blasphemy (the cause condition in structural terms) can bring about a supernatural punishment (the result), indicating an area where religious and folk beliefs overlap.

Customs and rituals also contain folk beliefs that are essential to their meanings. The aforementioned wedding customs have many beliefs associ-

ated with them, mostly ones meant to guarantee good luck for the bride and groom as they begin a new stage of life. Folk beliefs are also an integral part of holiday customs, where they often intersect with foodways. In the southern United States among certain groups, there is a custom of eating black-eyed peas (always made with salt pork) on New Year's Day to ensure good luck for the rest of the year, an example that illustrates how belief, custom, and foodways interact. Beliefs exist as folk knowledge and are then put into practice as customary behavior. It is through the behavior that the belief itself is usually learned; a child may never hear that it is good luck to have black-eyed peas on New Year's but will learn the belief when the dish is served. A novice coal miner may not hear that it is bad luck to whistle in the mine until he whistles and is fired for breaking the taboo. Folk beliefs do not exist solely in the abstract but also in actual practice and behavior. Again, folklore is not merely a reflection of an abstract cultural worldview; it exists in everyday life as a means of creating culture.

Often, folk beliefs are expressed as proverbs or rhymes in situations in which such communication is appropriate. Weather signs can be more easily remembered and passed on if they are given in the form of a rhyme: "Red sun at night, sailor's delight; red sun at morning, sailor's take warning." Children's rhymes sometimes have expression of folk belief in them, such as "Step on a crack, and you'll break your mother's back." Some children may believe this to the extent that it affects their behavior: While walking down a sidewalk, they will avoid stepping on any cracks out of fear that they may hurt their mothers. An expression such as "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is also a folk medical belief that has come to be expressed in the fixed form of a traditional proverb. "Rats leave a sinking ship" can be used as a metaphorical proverb to express contempt for someone who abandons a failing project, but it is also a folk belief, an omen of impending disaster.

Omens, portents, and signs indicate human concern with the uncertainty of the future; science cannot predict what the future holds, but folk belief provides ways for people to believe they can foretell future events. We have everything from astrology, numerology, tarot cards, and palm reading to Ouija boards, children's games, and jump rope rhymes for predicting the future. Many of these devices could be thought of as divination rituals, ways of divining the future. For example, children make folk toys out of folded paper, which they then inscribe with predictions and color codes. By moving the folded paper with their fingers a certain number of times and identifying colors within, they can predict whom they will marry, what kind of cars they will drive, what kind of houses they will live in, and so forth. Children's traditional play activities often have underlying belief elements that help to explain the child's concerns and developing worldview.

Folk beliefs are often part of complex cultural processes that involve not only belief but also values and other behaviors and that find expression in

different genres of folklore. The widespread cross-cultural belief in the evil eye is expressed verbally as a direct statement, through gestures and sayings as a conversion ritual, and through elaborate cures to take away the effects of the evil eye; underlying this complex of behaviors are certain values that help to explain its meanings. Known in Spanish as *mal de ojo* and in Italian as *mal'occhio* and found throughout the Mediterranean and other parts of the world settled by ethnic groups from the Mediterranean region, the concept of the evil eye varies from culture to culture, but certain patterns persist. Often, the evil eye is given unintentionally by someone who is praising a person or an object. "What a beautiful vase on your mantel," someone remarks; two days later, the vase falls and breaks. "What a darling little girl," comments another; the next day, the child becomes ill, and the doctors cannot diagnose what is wrong with her. The evil eye may be the cause, according to folk belief.

The underlying value that seems to inform the belief and the behavior lies in the importance of envy. The assumption is that to praise a person or an object is an indirect expression of envy. The belief in the power of the evil eye is actually, then, a warning against envy because even the unconscious feeling of envy can cause destruction and illness. The cultures that have a belief in the evil eye also have folkloric means of dealing with it; there are conversion rituals that, when used with expressions of praise, can prevent the evil eye from having an effect. For example, in Puerto Rico, if one praises a young girl, one also touches her lightly on the head to ward off the evil eye. Among Italian-Americans, the praise is accompanied by a blessing: "What a darling little girl; God bless her." There are also traditional cures for the evil eye in Italian and Italian-American culture. A bowl of water is placed near the person suspected of having an illness caused by the evil eye, oil is dropped into the water, and words from Scripture are recited. The movement of the oil indicates the efficacy of the cure. In a large city in the northern United States, an Italian-American woman has even performed the cure over the telephone, indicating the way folk belief adapts to technological change. Since the ritual involves both healing and religion, the evil eye can be studied as both a medical and a religious phenomenon.

Folk medicine and folk religion are major areas of study in themselves, but both are fundamentally concerned with the study of belief and associated behavior. Folk medical beliefs or folk cures are traditional ways of dealing with health problems. They are often used in conjunction with scientific medicine, and, in fact, there is no clear distinction between folk and scientific medicine in terms of efficacy. Herbal cures, for instance, have been tested by traditional usage over long periods of time and are often found to have an empirical basis when examined scientifically. Studies of folk medicine have concentrated on rural and isolated areas that do not offer easy access to medical facilities; these communities have a correspondingly greater dependency on folk medical practices. Here, as with many other kinds of folk belief, the belief itself may be

carried forward in narrative form. Mary Lozier, who lived for years in an isolated hollow in the mountains of Kentucky, told the story of her young son being bitten by a deadly copperhead snake. The boy's grandmother knew of a traditional poultice made from chopped onions, which she placed on the snakebite to draw out the poison. By the time the boy's father, John, came home with the car, the boy was able to run out to meet him to tell him he was bitten by a snake. The narrative indicates a strong degree of belief, describes the actual practice of the belief in a specific situation, and serves to pass on the tradition to listeners.

Other studies of folk medicine show that when rural people migrate to cities, they take their folk practices with them and adapt them to the new environment. An Appalachian migrant in Detroit will not be able to gather wild yellowroot, which is used for coughs and colds, but she can often find packaged ground yellowroot at the drugstore. Because of a traditional distrust of doctors and hospitals, some ethnic groups turn to folk medicine even when other forms of medicine are available. Mexican-Americans in south Texas continue to consult traditional healers, *curanderos*, for such problems as *susto*, a sickness caused by a magic spell, because medical doctors might dismiss such a cause as ignorant superstition. Many Native Americans still prefer traditional medicine men to non-Native American doctors for religious reasons and cultural identity.

Faith healing is an area in which folk medicine and folk religion overlap since religious belief is the foundation for the curing process. Various forms of faith healing exist in different religions and cultures: The healing may be done by an individual within the church who has healing powers, or self-healing may be accomplished through prayer. Jesse Hatcher, an elderly African-American man from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, told visitors to his farm of the time he prayed to God to heal a goiter on his neck and found the goiter gone the next day. The memorate is once again the means of expressing belief by giving evidence in support of it.

Weather and planting signs are used to determine future courses of action. Weather beliefs usually have the sign condition structure since the conditions on which they are based are not seen as causal. Cloud formations, sunspots, wind direction, and halos around the moon do not cause the weather to change but rather are indications that help to predict the weather. Weather beliefs are not usually designed to attempt to control the weather but are used in outdoor occupations such as farming and fishing to plan activities ahead of time. Planting signs are used by farmers and gardeners to determine the best time to plant particular crops. Farmers' almanacs are important in this tradition because they print the signs of the zodiac in relation to the calendar. By consulting the almanac, the farmer will know what crops to plant under which signs in order to grow the biggest and best crops. As with folk medicine,

planting by the signs is often used in conjunction with current scientific agricultural techniques.

These examples from rural and ethnic groups should not be taken as an indication that folk belief is confined to cultures outside the mainstream; there is copious evidence to suggest that folk beliefs and associated behaviors are widespread throughout the population—at all income and education levels, in urban and suburban environments, and in technological fields of endeavor. Alan Dundes pointed out the influence of the magic number three on scientific and medical patterns and in academic textbooks. So-called New Age activities are another area in which folk beliefs currently are being widely practiced. Many New Age beliefs are borrowed from other cultures, such as the Native American culture, or are revived based on historical records of pre-Christian religions. We find educated, middle-class people in urban areas carrying crystals in pockets or purses in order to ensure good luck in their daily lives or people practicing ancient forms of belief such as Wicca, calling themselves witches. These new forms of traditional behavior have not been widely studied by folklorists, but they should be seriously examined by scholars interested in folk belief as part of human behavior.

The study of folk belief has come a long way from the nineteenth-century concern with primitive survivals to the late-twentieth-century concern with everyday behavior, from a model based on the progress of civilization to a model based on the social construction of reality. The early scholars thought of themselves as standing at the most developed point of civilization, examining inferior modes of thought of primitives and peasants. Contemporary scholars see *themselves* as practicing certain forms of folk belief, constructing their scholarly schemes for ordering the world in some of the same ways others use religion or folk belief to construct their own patterns. The anxiety-ritual theory, after all, fits the structural pattern of superstition with a cause condition (uncertainty) and a result (magic). This scholarly paradigm shift has taken place over a century of time, and many of the insights into folk belief, culture, and human behavior are still ahead of us if the model of progress has any validity at all.

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See also Belief Tale; Charm; Divination; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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BELIEF TALE

Folk narratives that, in the context of their telling, have degrees of belief as a factor. Folklorists classify folk narratives into a multitude of categories (genres) that overlap and cause confusion because these genres are based on different principles, such as content (themes, motifs, concepts, and ideas), context (degree of belief, social function, and distance between storyteller and audience), and texture (point of view, imagery, tone, and other stylistic variables). *Belief tale* is sometimes used as a term synonymous with *legend* because *legend*, in its broadest sense, is thought of as a story in which belief is a contextual factor that is either wholly or partially believed or rejected. Some folklorists define *belief tales* more narrowly as stories about the supernatural and distinguish them from historical legends about individuals and events. The classification problem in this case arises from using content and context in inconsistent ways; the broad category is based on context (belief), and the narrow is based on content (supernatural events).

Another problem is that the classification systems often combine etic categories, imposed from the outside by scholars, and emic ones, based on native distinctions. A particular story may be told as a joke in certain circumstances (emic), but based on the scholars' examination of content, it may be classified as a belief tale (etic). For instance, old sailors tell a story about a man who was becalmed while out on his sailboat; he followed an ancient folk belief and threw a half-dollar overboard to buy wind. The wind came, blew his sails and mast down, and overturned the boat, and his wife and children were drowned. The same basic story is often told without the tragic ending and with a punch line: "If you get that much wind for a half-dollar, fifteen cents'

worth would have been plenty.” Both stories contain the core folk belief about buying the wind, but the first story would be classified as a legend or belief tale by a folklorist, and the second story, with the same content except for the ending, would be called a joke by storyteller and audience alike.

The classification of belief tales is further complicated by shifting points of view. The story on buying the wind is told about an event that happened in the past and was not observed by the storyteller or by someone he or she knew. Because the event was removed from the experience of the storyteller, folklorists classify it as a legend, as opposed to a memorate—that is, a belief tale based on first- or secondhand personal experience. If someone tells a story about his or her own experience of throwing coins overboard to buy wind, then that narrative is a memorate. But, we might ask, who cares about this distinction? Certainly, the persons telling the stories do not care what folklorists label their narratives; again, we have the problem of scholarly categories not having much to do with actual behavior in specific situations.

Folklorists are now more interested in the processes of tradition, the ways in which belief, behavior, and storytelling about belief interact in everyday life. Telling ghost stories may serve to reinforce a belief in ghosts, or it may make fun of the belief in ghosts. Stories about supernatural events can help to relieve anxiety over fears of the unknown and provide ways of expressing emotions that may be difficult to articulate directly. For example, some people tell of visitations by the recently deceased. Often, the spiritual visitor reassures the person about the afterlife and advises the loved one not to mourn excessively. The belief tales based on these experiences help the person to cope with the loss and get through the mourning period.

The belief tale concentrates on inexplicable experiences in human life and helps to explain the mysterious and unknown. Whether the stories are ancient ones passed down as legends or new ones based on personal experience in the recent past, they are concerned with the supernatural and become part of the ongoing debate about the existence of a spiritual realm beyond the empirically observable world.

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See also Belief, Folk; Legend.

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BLASON POPULAIRE

Brief characterization of a group of which one is not a member. Sometimes, *blason populaire* (literally, popular emblem) is used as a synonym for *ethnic joke*, but the term more accurately applies to the stereotype that informs the joke. Ethnicity has been the most usual factor in generating such outgroup (or exoteric) folklore. But other kinds of outgroups (religious, geographical, or occupational, for example) may become the targets for pithy depictions; these, in fact, appear in a variety of folklore genres.

Perhaps the simplest form of *blason populaire* is the group nickname. Although they may communicate nothing specific in their characterizations of the groups they target, terms such as *nigger* or *spick* suggest derogation through their harsh, cacophonous sounds. Slightly more complex is the use of group names to characterize objects and behaviors (*Indian giver* or *French letter*). The *blason populaire* may also appear in traditional similes: "as tight as a Scotsman" or "like a Chinese fire drill." In addition, proverbs can arise from *blasons populaires*: "A Swabian has no heart but two stomachs."

Ethnic jokes and other narratives provide the opportunity for more developed use of the *blason populaire* in folklore. Such forms may assign particular characteristics to particular groups and play upon conventional stereotypes, such as that of the "dumb blonde." But specific characterizations often rest on a foundation that seems to figure into *blasons populaires* in general: that of the Other, one whose most important traits stem from differentness from the group among whom the *blason populaire* circulates. Hence, in ethnic jokes in the United States, where such virtues as efficiency, cleanliness, and orderliness are valued, the target of exoteric folklore, no matter what the particular group, is depicted as inefficient, dirty, and disorganized. *Blasons populaires* often imply the lack of humanity of their targets. For example, when Europeans began to contact the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere in the sixteenth century, they often depicted them as naked cannibals, their alleged eating habits and lack of clothing assigning them to subhuman status. During particular periods in a group's history, members of group may be the target of *blasons populaires*. During the last half of the nineteenth century, for instance, Irish immigration to the United States produced stereotypical depictions of

Irish men and women in various media. Joke cycles occasionally center for a while upon a particular group. The next time the cycle comes around, the same jokes may target another group. *Märchen*, *novelle*, folksongs, and material culture also make use of *blasons populaires*.

Research into *blasons populaires* by folklorists has focused mostly upon their manifestations in ethnic jokes. Some studies simply have reported and cataloged the phenomenon, but others have delved more deeply into the sociological, historical, and cultural factors that generate the stereotypical attitudes that the *blason populaire* captures. Seldom have studies of *blasons populaires* examined how these exoteric characterizations emerge in performance, an important exception being Keith Basso's investigation of depictions of the "whiteman" among Western Apaches. Sociologists and psychologists, who often rely on questionnaires rather than the ways *blasons populaires* occur in traditional culture, also have worked with these exoteric characterizations.

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See also Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Ethnic Folklore; Joke.

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BOAST

Formulaic praise of self or one's property and associates. The boast as a distinct verbal art genre almost always occurs in association with other forms, and boasting may occur in folklore when the boast as genre is not present. In most

cases, formulaic boasts are specific to particular contexts, especially those defined by age and gender. They are often a component of competitive displays that may be ends in themselves or that may lead to further competition, even physical violence.

Verbal dueling, usually an activity of adolescent males, provides an important context in which boasts occur cross-culturally. For example, the ritual exchange of insults that characterizes what is called “dozens,” “joning,” or “snaps” among young African-American males focuses principally on derogating the opponent and his family. But frequently, boasts of one’s prowess, especially sexual, contribute to the duel’s outcome, which depends upon verbal agility and one’s ability to undercut the opponent’s masculinity. Reducing the opponent to an image of passivity can be achieved at least partially through boasting of one’s active masculinity, a technique that also has been reported in verbal dueling among Turkish youths.

Boasts also occur in longer forms of folk literature. One characteristic of the epic hero, be he Achilles or Odysseus from Homeric Greece, Beowulf from Old English tradition, or the protagonists of the Balkan epics reported by Milman Parry and Albert Lord, is his boasting, an act that may figure into council scenes, serve as preparation for battle, or comprise a warrior’s account of an action in which he has participated. The humor of the American frontier produced similar boasts, which probably served to burlesque the characters’ uncivilized manners. Davy Crockett or Mike Fink would claim to be “half horse, half alligator” and able to “lick [his] weight in wildcats” before scuffling with an opponent. The toast, a long narrative poem recited by African-American males, often features a boastful protagonist who extols his own violent disregard of convention. Among Native Americans of the plains, boasts became part of the formula for coup tales, stories in which warriors recounted their military exploits, especially those that evinced particular daring. The tall tale provides another folk literary context for the boast. The focus of tall tales, though, may not be praise of self as much as of the country where one lives. For example, tall tales often include boasts about a land’s fertility and richness, the size and accessibility of its game, and the beauty of its women.

Boasts also may assume a negative cast, though their ultimate purport redounds to the boaster’s credit. For example, American humor includes boasts about the excessively inclement weather and general insalubrity of rural areas and the toughness of city neighborhoods. On one hand, these boasts derogate, but on the other, they stress the speaker’s prowess in being able to survive unpleasant, dangerous conditions.

Formulaic boasting seems to flourish in societies that stress the so-called “masculine” virtues of aggressiveness toward other males, women, and the environment. Folklore research has tended to examine such boasting in terms

of its linguistic patterning and psychological importance, the latter usually informed by Freudian assumptions.

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See also Verbal Duel.

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BROADSIDE BALLAD

In its more general sense, a narrative song (ballad) printed on one side of a single sheet of paper (broadside) and sold by a mobile peddler of the marketplace, fairground, and street corner sort. The broadside phenomenon emerged in Europe in the early years of the sixteenth century, flourished in major Old World and, later, American cities and towns up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and continued in less progressive locales (Ireland, for instance) into the early years of the twentieth century; it may be found in towns and villages of some developing nations, such as Brazil and India, even today. In lay speech, the phrase *broadside ballad* (or more commonly, just *ballad* or *ballet*) was not restricted to narrative songs but applied to any street-hawked printed songs at all; for the past two hundred years or so, however, folklorists have reserved the word *ballad* for a song that recounts a plotted story.

Each year from the early sixteenth century onward, many such newly made song-stories appeared for the first time on broadsides and were peddled in public places. Some were fictional, but most chronicled imaginatively some current, newsworthy event, such as a military victory, a sensational crime, or a society scandal. Few of them, however, changed their original status as popular literature to become folklore; that is to say, like their many nonliterary broadside kin—proclamations, pamphlets, tracts—they were bought, read, or

sung a few times and then forgotten. They did not, as we say, “enter folk tradition,” becoming imprinted in memory and re-created in divers day-to-day social encounters, sung by mothers to children by evening candlelight, by upstairs maids to each other after a lengthy day’s domestic service, or by a soldier to his comrades over a campfire far from home. But over time, the public showed a distinct preference for hearing, for singing, for remembering, and for experiencing again and again ballads from broadsides that exhibited a fairly distinctive set of traits. So in British folksong tradition, to take just one European example, the public had developed a preference for a certain “style” of such ballads by the latter half of the eighteenth century, and it is this style that folklorists have in mind when they talk about the broadside ballad in a *specific* sense: They do not mean just any song printed on broadside, and they do not mean—in the general sense mentioned earlier—just any narrative song printed on broadside. (Of those, we just say that they “appeared on broadside” or some such thing, as we do, for example, of the many lengthy, virtually unsingable song-tales printed in the older, heavy, ornate Gothic or black letter typeface common in Tudor and Stuart England that never became folklore.) What folklorists do mean in a *specific* sense is a folksong exhibiting a certain set of formal conventions, the development and popularization of which was closely bound up with broadside printing and dissemination. Indeed, in folklore terminology, a broadside ballad may never actually have appeared on a broadside at all—it only needs to exhibit the relevant stylistic traits of the genre!

In the tradition we know by far the most about, that of the British Isles and its North American continuation, these characteristics are best described in terms of their differences from the other major ballad style originating in Europe, the older medieval or “Child” ballad style. Thus, a broadside ballad, first of all, usually tells its story in a more linear, expository way than does the medieval ballad, which is more allusive, dramatic (with much direct, unscribed speech that retards the forward movement of the narrative), internally repetitive, and tableauxed in style. Consider, for example, the step-by-step account in “The Flying Cloud,” a nineteenth-century broadside ballad of slavery and piracy:

And when I struck Belfrazer shore I met with Captain
Moore,
The commander of the Flying Cloud belonging to
Baltimore.
He cordially invited me a slavery voyage to go
To the burning shores of Affaric, where the sugar cane
does grow.

The Flying Cloud was a clipper ship, four hundred tons or
 more.
 She could easily sail round any ship that sailed from
 Baltimore.
 Her sails were as white as the driven snow and on them
 not one speck;
 She had thirty-two brass guns, my boys, she carried upon
 her deck.

And in a short time after we had struck the African
 shore
 Eighteen hundred of those poor souls on board with us
 we bore.
 We made them walk out on our planks as we stored
 them down below;
 Scarce eighteen inches to the man was all that she
 would go.

The very next day we set to sea with our cargo of slaves.
 It would have been better for them poor souls had they
 been in their graves.
 For the plagued fever came on board and swept one half
 away;
 We drew their bodies up on deck and hove them in the
 sea.

And in a short time after we struck the Cuban shores.
 We sold them to the planters there to be slaves for
 ever more,
 To hoe in the rice and coffee fields beneath the burn-
 ing sun,
 To worry out a wretched life till their career was done.

As this excerpt from “The Flying Cloud” suggests, a second, related feature of the broadside ballad style is its relative concreteness and specificity: People, places, dates, professions, and motives are all detailed. The broadside ballad universe is quite distinguishable from the adumbrated, stylized, and more homogeneous medieval ballad world—and even more so, for that matter, from the extremely generalized world of another folksong type, the nonnarrative lyric song: Each story tends to be particularized, situated, and contextualized. To put this trait another way, a broadside ballad contains far more information of the quantifiable sort than does its medieval forebear, as the first two stanzas of “The Greenland Whale Fishery” illustrate:

BROADSIDE BALLAD

It was in the year eighteen hundred and one,
On March the twentieth day,
Our sheets were spread, and our anchors weighed,
And for Greenland we bore away, brave boys,
And for Greenland we bore away.

“Speed” it was our Captain’s name,
And our ship the “Lion” bold,
And we sailed away to that cold countrie,
For to face the storms and the cold, brave boys,
For to face the storms and the cold.

A third distinguishing feature of the broadside ballad, in contrast with the oft-noted impersonality and objectivity of the narrator point of view prominent in the medieval ballad, is that it strives for subjectivity. Songs often pass explicit moral judgment on the events at hand or express overt sentimentality. They expose clearly their characters’ attitudes and values, often going so far as to instruct the listener how to react emotionally or ethically to the events recounted. More often than not, this subjectivity is emphasized with the device, rare in the older ballad format, of a first-person narrator, as in “The Sheffield Apprentice”:

My friends, who stand around me my wretched fate to see,
Oh, don’t mourn for my downfall, but oh! do pity me.
A long while I’ve proved innocent, still death had sentenced me.
Oh, farewell, pretty Polly! I’ll die a-loving thee.

A fourth characteristic is that broadside ballads treat their subjects more realistically than do medieval ballads. In the newer ballad style, for example, supernatural personnel are rare: We find few revenants (ghosts who return from the dead to bid their sweethearts a final farewell), household spirits, and magical plants that, embodying the souls of dead lovers, sprout and entwine above the deceaseds’ graves. Similarly, broadside ballad language itself is less exaggerated, stylized, and formulaic, paralleling more closely the everyday standard language: Few broadside ballad heroes in folk tradition are shod in gold and silver, fewer heroines dressed in red while their accompanying retainers are clad in green, fewer trips away from home are described in the same way (“He hadn’t been in fair England / A week but barely three”). Of course, like all folklore, broadside ballads are imaginative art and do exhibit stock epithets (“Come all you gallant Christians, I pray you lend an ear”), but the broadside style of telling a story seems far more bound by empirical constraints than the medieval style; thus, broadside representations and language are more prone to reflect the world as experienced in everyday life.

Finally, a closely related trait should be noted: the distinctive world portrayed in the broadside ballad. In the medieval ballad, social organization, material culture, and customs and habits are distinctly premodern: Many heroines have pageboys at their command, live in castles, or can escape a parentally arranged marriage only by dying. In contrast, broadside ballads depict a more familiar, more recognizable world. Perhaps the clearest example of this sort of difference can be seen in the *dramatis personae* themselves. Even in twentieth-century versions, protagonists of medieval ballads are usually leisure-class men and women, often nobility and sometimes even royalty. Protagonists of broadside ballads, however, are much more commonly working people—laboring men and women, artisans, merchants, and formally trained professionals such as physicians and sea captains. And in this more modern world, heroines and heroes enjoy more options in all aspects of life than do their medieval forebears, most notably in the folksong's favored topic, love relationships:

It's of a rich merchant, I can't call his name,
 He had but one daughter and a daughter of fame,
 She courted a great many but slighted them all,
 For the sake of a sailor both handsome and tall.

This ballad tells of a father who disapproves of his daughter's choice of mate and has the sailor pressed to sea, but the daughter, disguised in male clothing, follows her lover and shares his nautical life. The two eventually return home to marry.

The five traits mentioned in the preceding passages constitute the primary textual markers of the broadside ballad as a folksong type. Other tendencies may be found in the genre that have less to do with the broadside ballad's literariness and more with its poetics—for example, an affection for 7/7/7/7 meter and for *abba* tunes, especially in the Irish-influenced strand of English-speaking tradition—but those qualities are not pervasive enough for definitional purposes. All five primary traits (most notably, the last two) are doubtless a function of the historical conditions attending the broadside ballad's more contemporary era (in Britain, the medieval ballad style had virtually ceased to be employed as a vehicle for new songs by 1700). The five traits also reflect the broadside ballad's greater dependence on print, as opposed to orality, for its origin, transmission, and reproduction.

In England by the mid-eighteenth century and in North America somewhat later, this broadside song-story style had achieved clear prominence in the folk aesthetic. Printers and the song makers they employed or contracted with turned out a much more varied set of items for sale on street corners and market stalls, but the public accepted into its personal performance repertoire of songs for everyday social use mainly ballads that manifested the charac-

teristics described. Even amateur village rhymesters who were moved to share with family, workmates, and friends songs on topics of strictly local interest that might never see a printed page—the drowning of some neighbor’s son in a nearby stream, a Maine woods logging accident—were as likely as not to follow the broadside model, as in this twentieth-century example:

Come all you Newfoundlanders and listen to my song,
I’ll tell you ’bout the moose we killed and the man that did
us wrong,
On a sunny morn, October third, I’m telling you no lies,
When Izzie Walters hollered out saying, “Get your guns,
my b’ys!”

“There is a moose down in the reach, he’s coming up the
lane,
Jim Keeping’s got him rounded up, I think he must be
tame.”
Our guns and ammunition we got without delay,
Lou Lemmon had the first shot I’m very sure to say.

George Croucher had the second shot if you want to
know his name,
Bill Munden had the third shot which brought him to his
end.
There were men, women, and children all gathered round
the hill
All looking for a piece of meat their appetite to fill.

Just as the populace preferred a certain way of telling a story in song when accepting popular culture into folk tradition, so too did it prefer certain topics. Ballads of armed conflict, by land and sea; of crime and outlaws; of tragedies and disasters (earthquakes, train wrecks, coal-mining cave-ins); of occupational experience (in Britain, especially of agricultural work and seafaring and in North America, of lumbering and cowboying); of sports and pastimes (horse races, foxhunting); and, of course, of the most popular topic by far (and the one most often made up rather than based on actual events), love relationships, with recurring plot-types about female warriors, returned and unrecognized lovers, murdered sweethearts, and so on. Over the years, these were the broadside songs that people preferred to learn, to pass on, and to remember. We base this assertion not on the numbers and kinds of actual broadsides preserved in museums, archives, and libraries or on printers’ inventory and sales figures but on just what songs folklore collectors have found

prominent in the repertoires of ordinary men and women over the last century or so.

The broadside ballad declined in popularity after the midpoint of the nineteenth century, with the greater availability and affordability of professional entertainment and the general decline of singing as a custom in everyday life. Concomitantly, the broadside style of song became overshadowed by the more sophisticated ditties that were heard in music halls and traveling shows, played on radios and phonographs, and transcribed in sheet music and songbooks. Increasingly, the public preferred songs of loftier topic and finer sentiment, of more mature humor, of greater inventiveness and skill, and of more general interest. The public now favored songs that were less dependent on the apparently dated plot-types (not to mention language, meter, and even tunes favored by the broadside muse) and songs that were more closely identified with particular professional composers and performers, rather than with anonymous, itinerant versifiers or with the even more anonymous “tradition.” In short, the broadside ballad style did not survive well in an era that was more technologically advanced, more market-driven, more consumer-oriented, and more supportive of bourgeois sensibilities.

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See also Ballad; Chapbook; Folk Song, Narrative.

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C

CANTOMETRICS

A method for defining societies' singing styles and correlating them with other cultural features. Coined by Alan Lomax, *cantometrics* refers to a method devised in the 1960s by Lomax, Victor Grauer, and other participants in the Columbia University Cross-Cultural Study of Expressive Style, which identifies stylistic patterns in singing from societies throughout the world. Based on 36 variables grouped under 7 headings, culture-specific approaches to singing receive ratings that have allowed the definition of 10 performance regions. Song performance features in each region correlate with and derive from social structure.

The cantometric method emerged with the availability of a body of recorded song samples from across the globe. Significant, recurrent features of performance, based on as few as ten individual examples from a society, have become the measures for creating a cantometric profile of the society's singing style. Such a profile identifies these characteristics of singing: vocal qualities, use of ornamentation (for example, glissandos and tremolos), dynamic features, melodic features, rhythmic features, level of cohesiveness, and group organization. Subcharacteristics of each of these general traits are scaled between two poles: For example, melodic form (one of nine melodic features) ranges from complex to simple, and vocal width (one of six vocal qualities) ranges from narrow to wide.

Similar profiles among several societies produce song-style regions, which correspond roughly to culture areas in George P. Murdock's *Ethnographic Atlas*. Song-style region 1, for example, represents pockets of hunter-gatherer cultures in Africa; region 6 corresponds to the tropical gardener cultures of Oceania and central Africa, and region 8 is the Old High Culture that extends from north Africa throughout most of southern and central Asia.

Moreover, the method adds an explanatory dimension to the construction of profiles and the definition of regions. Researchers using cantometric scales hypothesize correlations between singing performance and social structure. For example, harsh vocal timbres predominate in cultures that stress the development of aggressiveness in males. Narrow vocal widths and a high degree of nasality occur in cultures with tightly controlled sexuality. Rhythmic regularity reflects the inculcation in childhood of habits of obedience and adherence to structured rules, and irregular rhythms occur in cultures with indulgent child-rearing practices.

Lomax and his colleagues, who have done similar measures on dance and

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other expressive though nonverbal aspects of culture, have generated the bases for defining singing styles and the ways in which to scale them. They also have produced tapes for classroom use that afford students a global sample of singing styles and enable them quickly to master ways to identify specific performances according to song-style regions. Familiarity with these tapes also instructs students in constructing cantometric profiles.

To some extent, objections to cantometrics reflect folklorists' uneasiness with broad syntheses of data. Moreover, a society's song-style profile, critics aver, may reflect the scorer's subjective judgment, though informal experimentation has shown considerable consistency among individuals using the system. A general profile also can blur important variations within the society. That Lomax tended to release information about cantometrics piecemeal over a 20-year period also contributed to hasty, often negative appraisals of what was essentially work in progress.

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See also **Choreometrics**.

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CARNIVAL

Traditional celebrations that climax on the days immediately preceding Ash Wednesday throughout the Catholic world. Precise origins of carnival are unknown and most likely indeterminable. The place of the festival in the Christian calendar suggests that apparent links to pre-Christian celebrations, such as Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalia, are formal rather than directly historical. However, some scholars believe the church simply adopted pre-Christian customs into its liturgy when it found they could not be eliminated. Carnival has been documented in European cities from the fourteenth century and in towns and villages in the following centuries. Elements of

carnival eventually crossed the Atlantic and Mediterranean to mix with the traditions of indigenous and former slave populations in North and South American and in certain African countries, creating new forms of celebration. Common to carnival throughout its historical and geographic ranges are masking and costuming (generally restricted to the three to five days before Lent but also occurring sporadically from as early as St. Martin's Day, November 11, or Epiphany, January 6), public dramas and private ceremonies, and the stylized expression of social and political attitudes. Local social or occupational groups, known variously as guilds, schools, or cliques, often serve as festival organizers and actively prepare carnival celebrations throughout much of the year. More generally, carnival is an occasion for individuals to behave in manners that either invert or exaggerate the behavior practiced at other times of the year.

Carnival costuming ranges from the extravagant and elaborate regalia worn by performers in those groups known as samba schools in Brazil and troupes of Mardi Gras "Indians" in New Orleans to a bit of makeup or a nose mask worn by parade spectators. Costumes may draw on mundane materials, such as agricultural waste and rags, or utilize exquisite paraphernalia in their designs. In European tradition, fool and wild man figures predominate. Animals, witches, and local demons and comical figures frequently appear in Europe and elsewhere. Some costumes are ephemeral, making their only appearance during the few days before Lent in a single year; other traditions (such as those in southwest Germany or in certain Belgian towns) require that local residents preserve their costumes for use each year. Through such repeated appearances, these durable costumes come to represent the localities where they are worn. In all of these cases, costuming and the change of identity it creates encourage alternative behavior—from growling like a bear to revealing private body parts. However, individuals do not have complete license to behave as they choose during carnival.

Carnival dramas range in complexity from an individual reading a text or singing a ballad to parades, processions, and choreographed dances and festival plays lasting a day or more. These dramas frequently reorient the distinctions made between public and private spheres. For example, readings of "scandal sheets" (poetic accounts of local escapades, such as the priest who "lost" his foulmouthed parrot) make public knowledge that previously was passed through private gossip. Likewise, the practice of wearing underwear or nightshirts on the streets during carnival brings the private out into the open. Visits to homes by troupes of performers collecting donations for community celebrations and/or their own inebriation thrust reckless outdoor behavior into the private domain. Although these diverse displays form the centerpiece of the public carnival spectacle, smaller groups of locals hold annual balls, parties, and formal ceremonies behind closed doors.

CATCH QUESTION

The relative freedom of behavior afforded by the joyous carnival mood seems to encourage participants to voice their opinions about current affairs. Whether in the form of scandal sheets, street theater, or politically apropos costumes (e.g., that of a Chernobyl victim), carnival antics regularly mock local, national, and international citizens, institutions, and events, giving the playful festival atmosphere an underlying tone of seriousness. The politics of carnival also encompass struggles over the privilege to enact and shape the celebration. Historically, these struggles were played out between church and secular authorities and plebeian populations. More recently, competing ethnic groups have battled over control of the festival in urban settings, and established carnival organizers and local officials have tried to stage regulated, presentable festivals in opposition to the wilder revelry advocated by some participants.

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See also Charivari/Shivaree; Festival.

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CATCH QUESTION

A type of traditional enigma designed to “catch” the respondent by frustrating expectations. The catch question may exploit syntactic ambiguities: “I saw Esau sitting on a see-saw, how many s’s in that?—None” (the word *that* has no s’s). Or the catch question may use homonyms: “I know three monkeys. One’s called Doh, one’s called Ray. What’s the third one called?—Me.—Oh, I didn’t know you were a monkey.” Or the question may give a personal application to an apparently general question: “What do virgins eat for breakfast?—I don’t know” (thus, the respondent must not be a virgin).

Just as it shifts the frame of reference, the catch question also shifts the performance frame. Its efficacy results from a surprising emergence in another kind of discourse. In the middle of a riddling session, someone asks, “What has four legs, a tail, and barks?” The respondent, expecting a metaphorical or punning solution, ponders, gives up, and at last volunteers, “A dog?” The poser gives a condescending smile and replies, “Oh, you’ve heard that one.” The catch question may break into ordinary conversation: “You know your great-grandfather?—Yes.—No you don’t, he’s dead!” Sometimes, it comes disguised as a clever question with a recondite answer: “Where did King John sign the Magna Carta?—At the bottom.”

The catch question is used to embarrass, obliging the respondent to utter an obscenity, make an unintended admission, or simply appear foolish. It may serve to upset the accepted hierarchy of wit, pulling the rug from under a clever person. Or it may simply introduce variety into a riddling session.

A subtype of the catch question is the mock-obscene or double-entendre riddle, found widely around the world and often in cultures with strict norms of sexual propriety. The mock-obscene riddle presents a question with an apparently sexual solution. The respondent betrays awareness by offering this answer or by blushing; the poser then provides an innocent solution. An example is this Italian riddle: “You stick it in hard, it comes out soft. What is it?—Spaghetti.” Such catches are generally exchanged among children, as a way of introducing a forbidden but endlessly interesting topic, and in cross-gender gatherings of adolescents, among whom, as Anniki Kaivola-Bregenhøj has said, the mock-obscene riddle acts as “kindler of an erotic atmosphere.”

Dorothy Noyes

See also Enigma, Folk.

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CHAPBOOK

A nineteenth-century English word coined to signify the small, ephemeral books sold, among items such as needles and thread, by itinerant peddlers called chapmen. Chapbooks also were sold in shops. By 1700, chapbooks had

become an important part of the stock of such peddlers, and their subject matter included prophecies and fortune-telling, fables and fairy tales, and stories of devils and angels, love and hate, and scoundrels and heroes.

Chapbooks, with their modern typography, replaced the earlier black letter broadside ballads; usually measuring 3½" by 6", they also were easier to carry about than a pile of ballad sheets. By the end of the seventeenth century, they were typically printed in octavo, a sheet of paper folded three times to make 8 leaves or 16 pages, but chapbooks of 4, 8, 12, and 24 pages were also common. Printed on both sides of a sheet of paper, they were a better value than broadside ballads and became the main reading matter available for the poor, although they also were read by more well-to-do individuals. Chapbooks containing ballads were called "garlands."

In the nineteenth century, chapbooks were increasingly produced for children. No longer printed on coarse rag paper, they were better produced and often smaller in size. The quality of woodcuts and other illustrations was improved, and the illustrations were sometimes colored. Broadside ballads, no longer printed in black letter, replaced chapbooks for adult readers of the poorest class. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, more than 250 firms and individuals were involved in the production of chapbooks in London alone, with many more in such cities and towns as Newcastle upon Tyne, Banbury, Northampton, Gloucester, and York. Chapbooks were printed in Belfast, Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and throughout the English-reading world.

Ephemeral literature seems to exist wherever its means of production exist, and it is often late in its history before it becomes an object of study; its forms differ somewhat from country to country. *Folhetos* (pamphlets or little books)—or, colloquially, *folhetes*—are known to have been printed in Brazil since the late nineteenth century. Often 4" by 6½" in size and of 8, 16, 32, and occasionally 64 pages, these little books are much like English chapbooks. Printed on newspaper-weight paper, they contain stories in verse (with the exception of a small number of prayers in prose), thus differing from English chapbooks, which often were written in prose. In subject matter, *folhetos* reflect the culture in which they are produced. Most stories represent a series of trials, and their heroes and heroines are either saints or sinners. Almost all have explicit, serious messages, even though many are humorous and a few are pornographic. A recent title, *A contagiosa AIDS matando a humanidade* (Contagious AIDS killing humanity), reflects both a highly conservative view of sexual behavior and a plea for help for AIDS victims.

Because of the interest of middle-class visitors and their common use of the Portuguese phrase *literatura de cordel* (stories on a cord) for *folhetos*, such a little book is now commonly called a *cordel*, even though the items produced in Brazil differ from the Portuguese chapbooks to which they are related. The relationship between the little ephemeral books of Brazil and Portugal may be



An illustration of a mermaid from a chapbook. The subject matter of chapbooks often consisted of fairy tales and mythic creatures.

thought of as analogous to the relationship between chapbooks produced in England and the United States. Products of different people in different places, they differ accordingly.

The growing awareness of the existence and importance of ephemeral literature in many countries outside of the Western European tradition—Egypt and Pakistan, for example—and the increasingly detailed study of broadsides and chapbooks within the European tradition since the 1970s have resulted in a virtual revolution in our understandings of the place of these materials in society. The woodcuts used for chapbooks and broadsides once were called “crude” and their printing “vile,” but those words are now understood to reveal more about the privileged perspectives of those who uttered them than about the materials themselves. Working with limited resources, chapbook printers produced little books, many of enduring value.

Michael J. Preston

See also Broadside Ballad.

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CHARIVARI/SHIVAREE

Ritualized forms of popular justice intended to draw public attention to transgressions of the moral or social order and thus enforce community standards, appropriate behavior, and traditional rights. Also known as *Katzenmusik*, *Polterabend*, and *Haberfeldtreiben* in Germany; *Thierjagen* in Holland; *cencerada* in Spain; *scampanate* in Italy; *ceffyl pren* in Wales; riding the stang, skimmington, tin panning, kettling, Devon's stag hunt, and rough music in England and Scotland; and serenade, tin panning, and belling in North America, these traditional events show great variation over their distribution. Elements of charivaris derive from forms of punishment and folly that are over a millennium old, and they coalesced into a coherent ritual form by the Middle Ages. With the increasing dominance of civil authority over social life, charivaris have largely disappeared; they continue today primarily in isolated rural communities or in substantially altered form and function.

Central to all forms of the charivari is clamorous noise, usually produced with pots and pans, tins, bells, horns, or other traditional local instruments. Typically, participants gather at a designated public place and noisily proceed to the home of the offender, where they mock the victim with skits (particularly dramatizations of the offense), continue their clamor, and engage in festive activities including costuming, drinking, and licentious sexual activity. The scene may be repeated for several nights, and on many occasions, the crowd eventually invades the home of the victim, levies payment of cash or alcohol in exchange for ceasing the spectacle, or forces the subject from his or her home and subjects him or her to a variety of traditional punishments.

These include riding a donkey while seated backward, riding a pole, satirizing, and even beating and death. Mockery also can have traditional local form, such as a particular style of poetic proclamation or versified satire sung to the tunes of popular songs. Historically, the most common reasons for initiating a charivari were perceived domestic problems: quick remarriage by a widow or widower, extreme discrepancy between the ages of spouses, wife or husband beating, adultery, licentious conduct by a married person, a child born out of wedlock, or even marriage to an outsider. Locals also directed charivaris against strikebreakers or unpopular officials and policies. A related North American form, whitecapping, victimizes dissidents and oppressed or marginalized groups, such as African-Americans and immigrants. Best known in the form of Ku Klux Klan lynching, whitecapping does not include the clamor of charivaris, but it retains aspects of the traditional processional drama and punishment.

Some historical and by far the most common contemporary charivaris may be more aptly termed *reverse charivaris*. Rather than punishing their victims, they affirm the social belonging of the subjects by playfully celebrating their foibles and social transitions. Thus, newlyweds may be subjected to derision or be the focus of a street serenade; baby showers and retirement parties also feature mockery of the person entering a new stage of life. Similarly, during festivals such as carnival, celebrants may draw on elements of the charivari to satirize the behavior of individuals (for example, a drunk driver running his car into a tree), but the only punishment is the publicity the “victim” receives, and typically he or she enjoys the attention. Although reverse charivaris affirm local standing, they simultaneously remind participants, as traditional charivaris do, that the community watches over behavior.

Peter Tokofsky

See also Custom; Rites of Passage.

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CHARM

Folk belief and practice in which humans use magic to bring about particular outcomes in activities where there is uncertainty. Charms can be verbal or material, they can involve action, and they seem to be cross-cultural and found in all historical periods. Charms are important in several different areas of folk belief scholarship, including folk medicine, folk religion, ritual, and custom.

One of the most common forms of behavior involving charms is the practice of keeping or carrying amulets, fetishes, or talismans—material objects thought to ward off evil forces or bring good luck. People in ancient Rome used garlic to keep witches away; in medieval times, monks used the mullen plant as a charm against devils although the plant also was thought to be used in witches' brew; the Chinese sometimes carry peach wood or peach stones to ward off evil; and many people carry a rabbit's foot or hang horseshoes over doors for good luck in the contemporary United States. In religious terms, carrying a saint's medal or small statue is thought to help people avoid accidents on trips. This practice is not confined to Catholics; Protestant commercial fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico often carry saints' medals given to them by priests at annual blessings of the fleet. Scholars must examine the ritual context in order to understand why Protestants would carry Catholic medals. As with any kind of folk belief, it is important to study charms within the specific context of belief and behavior.

Verbal charms or incantations are an important part of healing traditions among many cultural groups. For example, the practice of bloodstopping in Appalachia depends on reciting a verse from the Bible several times. The verse is learned from certain family members and is usually thought of as a secret ritual that has to be learned and practiced in very specific ways. People who believe that excessive bleeding can be stopped through this verbal charm tell stories about the times they have witnessed the charm succeed, saving the lives of individuals who would have bled to death before they reached a hospital.

Often, to be effective, use of a verbal charm also must be accompanied by certain actions. For instance, Italian fishermen have a charm for dispersing a waterspout that could sink their boats. They recite words from Scripture, make the sign of the cross with a special knife, and say "tail of the rat" to keep the magic from harming anyone. As with bloodstopping, this charm must be learned from a special person under certain conditions—in this case, from an elderly woman on Christmas Eve. Again, stories are told about experiences that validate when a person has seen this charm work to break up a waterspout. Catholic Croatian fishermen in the Adriatic have a similar charm for waterspouts, but it involves an inscription, combining material and behavioral methods: They draw a Star of David on a piece of paper and throw it over-

board in the direction of the waterspout. This is another instance of using the religion of others as a source for folk belief.

Folk charms are associated with particular groups or communities, but knowledge of charms can pass to a broader, mass-media context. Traditional African-American charms have been popularized through music, novels, and the public interest in conjuration. Chicago blues singer Muddy Waters sang, "Got my mojo working, but it just don't work on you." The mojo, an amulet that can be made of different materials, is a powerful love charm; hence, the singer referred to his frustration that his mojo was not working on the woman he loved. Recordings of Waters' song have been played all over the world, and other singers have done versions of it. Charms are a cross-cultural phenomena, so that even though specific amulets and incantations vary widely, the concept of using a magical means for controlling fate seems universal.

Patrick B. Mullen

See also Magic; Medicine, Folk.

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CCHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

Those traditions that are learned, transmitted, and performed by children without the influence of adult supervision or formal instruction. Historically, concepts of childhood have varied widely. According to social historian Philippe Aries, in western Europe up until about the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, children were depicted in paintings and other visual media as miniature adults, complete with adult clothing and facial expressions. By the seventeenth century, there was a growing tendency to recognize and acknowledge children as separate from adults and worthy of special attention regard-

ing their dress, food, behavior, and so forth. Today (and certainly in the United States), children are generally regarded as a privileged class with special schools, toys, amusements, and medical care.

It was only in the late nineteenth century that the peculiar traditions of childhood—or children's folklore—were noticed, collected, and documented. The focus of scholarly interest in children's folklore has been primarily on western European culture.

The distinctive folklore that children acquire and perform on their own exists within what folklorists characterize as the "child-to-child conduit." In general, scholars agree that such childhood traditions are an integral part of the overall enculturation process because through mastering the rules of the games or the literary structure of oral genres such as riddles and rhymes, children learn some of the fundamental aspects of cooperation and strategy that are so integral to contemporary Western society. Furthermore, much of the interaction that takes place when children play games together involves negotiation of rules and the status of various players more than the actual performance of the game itself. Many researchers believe that analyzing the social interactions in which the games are embedded is at least as important as documenting the exact texts and tunes of the songs children sing or the rhymes they recite during hand-clap routines.

Children's folklore contains practically all of the principal genres of tradition, including games, narratives of many kinds, songs, customs, and material culture. The defining characteristic, of course, is that the targeted traditions circulate within an informal children's network or folk group. A growing body of recent research concerns scatological materials, which are more common among children than many more conservative educators have been willing to accept.

Comparative scholarly research makes it clear that many of these genres of children's folklore are extremely widespread, enjoying international distribution in form if not in language. Riddling, storytelling, and games, for example, are almost universal among European, Australian, Canadian, and American children.

One notable aspect of children's folklore is the rapid transmission of the ever changing materials over vast distances, such as from one coast of the United States to the other in a matter of days. The general hypothesis is that children, just as adults, rely on the media (including long-distance telephone service as well as television and other electronic media) for the spread and transmission of these shared materials. The mass media certainly play a role in the transmission of traditions that involve popular culture, such as games played with various action figures or the wearing of Halloween costumes based on media characters.

Another characteristic of children's folklore is that many of the genres involve both a kinesic component and an oral component, as in singing games,

jumping rope and its distinctive rhymes, or hand-clapping routines. The physical action and the verbal texts are so integrated that children find it almost impossible to satisfactorily perform one without the other, as evidenced when researchers ask for jump-rope rhymes without letting the children jump rope as they recite them. Likewise, many children who are accustomed to the traditional versions of the game cannot maintain the intricate rhythms of jumping rope unless they recite the rhymes. Folklorists in the past who collected the verbal components without the physical components of the games were usually collecting "fossilized" memories from adult informants rather than collecting from the children, the active bearers of the traditions.

Perhaps one reason for the widespread distribution of children's traditions is inherent in the very nature of tradition itself, namely, the informal, non-institutional nature of the acquisition, maintenance, and transmission of these various cultural items, whether they be oral, customary, or material. The informality and expansiveness of this vast communicative network is due, in large part, to its lack of dependence on literacy and fixed form. Children, although taught in school to read and write, operate among themselves in a world of informal and oral communication, unimpeded by the necessity of maintaining and transmitting information by written means. In fact, one could theoretically regard the performance, process, and content of children's folklore as a paradigm for folklore in general.

The concept of the folk group is fundamental to folkloristics. Folk groups, quite simply, are groups of people, no matter how large or how small, who are validated and bonded primarily by the traditions they share. Children, therefore, constitute one of the largest and most accessible folk groups that folklorists regularly study.

Of course, within the larger folk group of children as a whole are innumerable smaller and more intimate folk groups in which children interact and transmit their almost infinite repertoire of folklore. It is also likely that any individual child can be part of numerous such groups, including the child's family, grade cohort and playground playmates at school, neighborhood playmates of varying ages, daycare members, as well as many others such as groups at church, at camp, on vacation, and so forth. The guiding principle in recognizing children's folk groups is that they provide a context in which the children can teach, learn, and share their distinctive traditions without outside influence or interference.

Because the concept of the folk group is integral to folklore theory, researchers do not regard those materials that adults teach to children as being within the purview of children's folklore. The social matrix within which playground supervisors or day-care attendants teach songs, games, and such to groups of children under their care is quite different from the process of transmission when children learn from and teach one another. If, however, a child who has learned a particular item from a teacher at school in turn teaches a



Ole Luk Oie, a nursery spirit of Danish and Swedish children's folklore. This tiny elf is believed to protect sleeping children and ensure good dreams.

version of that item to younger brothers and sisters at home and then that item becomes part of the active repertoire of that small folk group, the item would be of interest to folklorists.

Age is also a factor that must be taken into consideration in identifying children's folklore because the traditions commonly shared by children are quite distinctive from those of adolescents. In general, childhood has been regarded as the span from kindergarten through about the sixth year of school or about ages 5 through 12. Recently, the pervasiveness of child care for the children of working parents has lowered the age bracket to about age 4 because the social context of many day-care centers is quite conducive to very young children learning traditional items from the older children with whom they are in such constant contact. The limited language acquisition and undeveloped physical coordination of very young children prevent children's folklore from circulating among those younger than about 4 years of age.

Until the 1960s, the main studies of children's folklore were in the English language, undertaken primarily in England and the United States. Since the mid-1970s, Australian folklorists have produced a sizable and well-regarded body of scholarship and collections. Scholars throughout Europe also have begun to publish collections and analytical studies based on their fieldwork.

The earliest studies of children's folklore were the massive collections undertaken by the noted British scholar Lady Bertha Gomme (1894—1898) and the American William Wells Newell, a founder of the American Folklore Society and first editor of the *Journal of American Folklore* (1888–1900). Both of these early scholars in the discipline of folklore were interested in preserving what they regarded as the dying traditions of childhood; both also focused on games, especially games with an spoken or sung component.

Since the 1940s, American and British folklorists have produced a large body of scholarship, encompassing both field-collected material and analytical studies. Dorothy Howard was a pioneer in the technique of collecting directly from children rather than focusing on adult memories of their childhood traditions; she advocated this technique in her 1938 dissertation on ball-bouncing rhymes, one of the first analytical studies of childlore. Howard continued her study of children's folklore throughout her long lifetime. The most influential phase of her career was the period she spent studying and collecting children's folklore in Australia in 1954–1955 on a Fulbright grant. Her work greatly influenced a number of younger scholars, including New Zealand native Brian Sutton-Smith and June Factor of Australia, founder of the *Australian Children's Newsletter* and the author, collector, and editor of numerous studies of Australian childlore.

Perhaps the most significant of Dorothy Howard's protégés were the British husband-and-wife team of Peter and Iona Opie, who depended on her early in their careers for advice and support. The Opies devoted their professional lives to the documentation of the world of childhood, including not only folklore but also literature and commercially produced toys and games.

A number of studies have followed the trend established in the Opies' *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, the most highly regarded collection in the field. The annotated collections of Simon Bronner and Mary and Herbert Knapp are widely used as textbooks in American folklore courses. In Finland, Leea Virtanen edited a similar volume, *Children's Lore*. There are, of course, numerous other studies in this field.

In 1979, the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society was established. This section has flourished over the years and produces the journal *Children's Folklore Review*. *A Handbook of Children's Folklore* was published in 1995.

A perusal of the early studies of children's folklore reveals the outdated and largely discredited theoretical styles and trends of the times. For example, Lady Gomme, an ardent survivalist, was convinced that the words and lyrics of children's songs and rhymes contained references to or were survivals of ancient rites. In the game of London Bridge, for example, she saw evidence of ancient "foundation sacrifices" made when bridges were built.

Children's folklore also was used in the service of another popular late-

nineteenth-century theory, namely, devolution. According to this theory, children's traditions were really misunderstood remnants of adult traditions that had filtered down or "devolved" from adults of previous generations to the current generation of children. Another feature of this theory held that children represented the savage stage of human development and therefore had to be civilized (in part, by learning how to behave) before they could become responsible adults.

Those who study and document children's folklore today grapple with what Brian Sutton-Smith termed the "triviality barrier" or the lack of respect stemming from the refusal of scholars in other fields and disciplines to take seriously any research dealing with the world of children. Folklorists are unusual among humanists and social scientists for their acceptance of children and their traditions on the children's own terms, as a folk group worthy of study in its own right rather than an adjunct of an older or more sophisticated body of informants.

Collecting and documenting children's folklore presents both problems and delights for the serious researcher. In general, children do not perform their folklore within earshot of adults, in order to avoid the interference or derision of those adults who are on the other side of the "triviality barrier." Folklorists, therefore, must first convince the children from whom they wish to collect that they are seriously interested in the materials and that the children will not be punished for revealing any traditions of which adults generally disapprove, such as scatological jokes and rhymes.

The spontaneity of much children's folklore frequently precludes advance notice of its performance. Consequently, folklorists must be ready to note down or observe these performances as they occur, which frequently makes video taping or audio recording difficult. However, members of a play group who are very comfortable with a particular adult researcher usually are willing to perform their traditional lore "on cue" if the researcher asks them to do so. The ideal research situation would be to document the same item both as a spontaneous performance and under prearranged circumstances and then compare the two.

Another approach to collecting children's folklore is by way of what many call "adult memory culture"—adult memories of the traditions they knew as children. This was the preferred method of the early-nineteenth-century folklorists. Since many adults have a tendency to remember selectively, this method is less reliable than collecting directly from the children themselves. Adult memory culture, however, does provide a diachronic context for contemporary children's folklore.

Sylvia Grider

See also Family Folklore.



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CHOREOMETRICS

A method for describing and rating dance and everyday movements in general qualitative terms, with the aim, according to Alan Lomax, of “recording and noting regularities and contrasts in movement patterns which are sufficiently frequent and gross to produce units universally applicable in cross-cultural studies.” The basic ideas behind this method are that movement style in dance is a crystallization of the most frequent and crucial patterns of everyday activity and that the distribution of dance styles in the world corresponds closely to the distribution of cultures. Thus, in this method, dance is considered only as a representation and reinforcement of cultural patterns.

Choreometrics is an offspring of the Cantometrics Project, which was created in the 1960s by ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax. He and dance researchers Irmgard Bartinieff and Forrestine Paulay developed a rating system, based on a revised version of Rudolf Laban's effort-shape scheme, that describes the characteristic stances and modes of using energy that underlie social interaction, work, and other types of activity in a particular culture. Film sequences collected from all over the world, showing people in dance

CLEVER QUESTION/WISDOM QUESTION

and at work, have been, for practical reasons, the main empirical source. On a special coding sheet, a number of parameters are rated and measured, such as the most active body parts, number of parts used, shape of transition, shape of main activity, energy of transition, energy of main activity, degree of variation, and spread of flow through the body.

The key concepts underlying the Choreometrics Project are style, dance type, culture type, global units, and universal and cross-cultural attributes. Taken together, they indicate both the kind and level of goals and the theoretical and methodological problems inherent in the study of dance. Historically, the ideas behind the project are closely related to the German *Kulturkreis* school in ethnology and the diffusionist school in folklore (the historic-geographic or Finnish School), which emphasize typologies, distribution, and mapping of cultural styles and artifacts. The main problems of the method are the claims for the universal validity of the results, the modeling of culture upon languages (“people belong to movement communities just as they belong to speech communities”), the assumption that cultures are objectively existing bounded entities that can be mapped globally, the idea of a close relation between dance and everyday movements in all cultures, and the assertion that this relationship can be measured on the basis of a limited number of filmed examples.

Owe Ronström

See also Cantometrics.

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CLEVER QUESTION/WISDOM QUESTION

A type of traditional enigma in which the solution cannot be guessed from the question but lies in specialized cultural knowledge. The clever question is found as a pastime in cultures that emphasize the oral examination in question-and-answer form as a means of socialization.

In many Protestant U.S. communities, the tradition of catechism in religious instruction has given rise to the posing of biblical questions. In strict groups, this instructive pastime often substitutes for other amusements viewed as immoral. Biblical clever questions do not address central questions of faith

and doctrine but stretch the wits in a different way, as in the question, “How many names in the Bible begin with an *h*?” Others, although their solutions are still literal, come closer to trick questions (“Who in the Bible speaks and yet goes to neither Heaven nor Hell?—Balaam’s ass”).

In the United States, the clever question has become a profitable means of structuring and encouraging popular participation in mass culture. The manufacturers of baseball cards expanded their market after World War II by covering the backs of the cards with questions about batting averages and World Series scores, thus giving their customers a way to use the cards in interaction and multiplying the number of cards to be collected. A radio station connects with its listeners by offering a prize to the first person who calls in and correctly names, for example, the first drummer of the Beatles. Television quiz shows increase the prestige to be gained in a display of knowledge by carrying it to a national audience, with the added inducement of financial gain. The board game Trivial Pursuit takes the burden off the players’ shoulders by posing the questions for them.

Even the high-culture industry has learned from popular culture’s example. A few years after the Trivial Pursuit fad of the early 1980s, the literary scholar E. D. Hirsch declared the “culturally literate” to be those who could successfully identify a series of quotations, literary figures, scientific theories, and other things “that literate Americans know.” Hirsch’s proposed list of 5,000 items constituting the Western cultural lexicon provoked a more anxious form of trivial pursuit among those seeking to be literate and created a miniature publishing boom in rival lists and dictionaries.

The Christian catechism and university entrance exams demand the display of knowledge encapsulated in succinct answers to specific questions as the price of admission to a group. In the same way, the clever question can be a means of gaining entry or prestige. The lasting effects of adolescent male ludic competitions provide the comic subject for Barry Levinson’s film *Diner*, in which a young man subjects his fiancée to an excruciating football trivia quiz before he consents to marry her.

The popularity of the clever question in the contemporary United States also relates to a lingering utilitarian contempt for most forms of amusement as “wasted time”: Practices such as Trivial Pursuit and crossword puzzles can be defended as educational. Finally, games of clever questions exemplify an important assumption in the socialization of Americans: Knowledge, construed as a collection of discrete facts, leads to advancement and financial reward. The ethos of competitive accumulation (of both facts and goods) is played out in miniature in boys’ trading of baseball cards and in the nightly broadcast of *Jeopardy*.

Dorothy Noyes

See also Enigma, Folk.



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C

COMMUNAL ORIGINS THEORY

The assumption that an aspect of culture was invented by a social group as a whole, rather than by an outstanding individual. This hypothesis has its roots in eighteenth-century romantic mystical philosophy, which attributed benevolent qualities to “savages,” and in nineteenth-century romantic nationalism and associated ideologies that glorified ethnic and national groups (often labeled *races*). The general cultural atmosphere of the romantic period promoted debates about the inevitability of historical processes and the creative powers of the folk.

Friedrich Karl Savigny—one of the founders of the historical school and mentor to Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm—argued that “each historical process does not spring from conscious individual intention but rather carries in itself its own organic life, which develops through the effect of a force inaccessible to reason.” Reflecting this mystical postulate, Jacob Grimm stated that “every epos must compose itself.” Taken along with the conviction that “the folk creates,” the two basic building blocks of the communal origins theory were put together.

By combining these two beliefs about creativity as an inevitable historical process and the folk as an active entity, the view that certain artistic cultural expressions arose through inevitable accident at the hands of unsophisticated social groups was formulated.

The most explicit expression of this idea is associated with Francis B. Gummere’s explanations of how ballads originated through a singing-dancing throng. Gummere asserted that in the “primitive” stage of the development of poetry and in certain surviving cases, groups of illiterate individuals, without the ability to conceive of the future or to relate their experiences either to the past or to the experiences of other groups, gathered in festive settings, and through singing, accurate rhythm keeping, and dancing, these individuals expressed sentiments about local events that held immediate appeal and reflected a common interest. This, according to Gummere, was the cultural foundation of poetry: “In point of poetic process here is the social as opposed to the individual element. This festal throng and its rude choral verse are just

as much a fact, apart from question of value, as a young man in the library and his poem.”

The exact process by which such a creative exercise actually works has never been observed. Half a century after the introduction of Gummere’s theory, ballad scholars such as D. K. Wilgus argued that “no adequate summary of Gummere’s theory of communal origins has ever been made, possibly because no critic seems to have understood the peculiar union of faith and method by which Gummere convinced a generation of literary scholars that the ballad must be studied as a survival of primitive poetry.” Today, the communal creation theory has been largely discredited. Arguing for a process of “communal *re-creation*” of narrative poems composed by individual authors constitutes a more plausible theory of ballad origins.

Hasan El-Shamy

See also Ballad; Bard; Evolutionary Theory; Folksong, Narrative.

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C COMMUNITAS

A concept of symbolic anthropology, meaning an antistructural fellowship typical of ritual contexts. The term is from the Latin word meaning community. *Communitas* is a social relationship that differs from the normal social and ideological order of things (i.e., the ordinary structure of the community).

The term was introduced by Victor W. Turner (1920–1983), one of the most prominent figures in the anthropological study of religion and symbolic analysis of ritual. In developing his own theory and terminology of symbolic anthropology for the study of religious symbols and ritual contexts, Turner singled out models that were observable in most ritual contexts. His labels for these common sequences in the ritual process were *communitas* and *liminality*. These concepts were very closely interrelated and represented further developments of Arnold van Gennep’s ideas on liminal phases. In Turner’s opinion, *communitas* represented one of the two major models for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating between the structured and hier-

archical systems and the unstructured community emerging within liminal periods.

The concept of “structure” coincides with that of “social structure.” It is suggested that *communitas* and “antistructure” characterize the liminal stage within a ritual process, where the juridical and political character of structure is challenged; *communitas*, by contrast, is a description for the community liminality. The distinction between the structure and status system and the liminal and *communitas* as their counterparts stresses not only their difference but also their complementary nature in the understanding of social and ritual life within a society.

Thus, the existence of this polarity between structure and antistructure is not limited to ritual contexts only but is also seen to characterize the whole human community. Social life is analyzed as a kind of dialectical process: All human interactions are perceived as consisting of two opposite and alternating forms, the stratified society and the egalitarian, closely knit liminal fellowship—*communitas*. According to Turner, every individual and community has to face alternating exposures to either structure or *communitas*. Transitions within the ritual procedures or within the individual’s life history govern one’s life experiences in any society.

Communitas can be characterized as a social form of liminality. *Communitas* is a relationship between those individuals who are not segmented according to roles and status but who confront one another in an unstructured way. Although *communitas* is supposed to be antistructural by its nature, it is not possible to maintain the spontaneity and immediacy of *communitas* for very long. *Communitas* then produces its own structure in which free relationships between individuals become converted into norm-governed relationships between social personae. The relationships or structure that *communitas* produces can be distinguished into three categories: (1) *existential* or *spontaneous communitas*; (2) *normative communitas*, in which, under the influence of time, the need to mobilize and organize resources, and the necessity for social control among members of the group in pursuance of these goals, the existing *communitas* is reorganized into a better social system; and (3) *ideological communitas*, which is a label one can apply to a variety of utopian models of societies based on *communitas*.

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See also Rites of Passage.

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COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY

Broadly construed, any study of mythology that attempts to reach conclusions through cross-cultural investigation; in a narrower usage, a tradition of philologically based comparative investigation of mythologies within the Indo-European language family. The precise delimitation, history, and classification of this language family has been a matter of some controversy. In his recent summary, *Comparative Mythology*, Jaan Puhvel delineates the following language groups as underlain by the Indo-European protolanguage: Indic, Iranian, Tocharian, Anatolian, Armenian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Baltic, and Slavic. One of the prime motives behind the study of Indo-European mythology has been the assumption that Indo-European civilization formed the essential source of Western civilization; the research of certain recent scholars, notably Martin Bernal, suggests the necessity of reexamining this assumption in light of evidence supporting a greater Afro-Asiatic influence. Traditions of comparative study also have developed within other, non-Indo-European language families (e.g., the Malayo-Polynesian family); these have sometimes incorporated methods from the Indo-European model. Because it is historically and methodologically so important, the distinction between the "narrower" and "broader" conceptions of comparative mythology will be used throughout the present discussion.

Comparative mythology in the narrower sense was set in motion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, less by considerations specific to mythology than by discoveries in the field of comparative philology. Such scholars as William Jones, Franz Bopp, and Jacob Grimm demonstrated parallels between certain languages of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, which in turn led to the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European as a parent language. These philological researches lent major impetus to the detailed investigation and historical reconstruction of the relationships between the mythologies of the various Indo-European societies. Attempts to reconstruct the history and content of pantheons proved a particularly compelling pursuit, one that was frequently accompanied by nationalistic concerns.

Such historical reconstructions of mythologies via philology reached a

crescendo under the intellectual leadership of Friedrich Max Müller, a scholar schooled in German comparative philology but working at Oxford amid the emerging social evolutionism of middle- and late-nineteenth-century England. Müller's comparativism rested on a partially secularized variant of the biblical ethnography that had, in previous centuries, provided a means of accounting for cultural parallels noted among widely dispersed peoples. In biblical ethnography, such parallels were held to be remnants of the degenerated original revelation of Eden; in Müller's version, they were remnants of an original period of natural poetic sensibility and speech, which had achieved an archaic greatness in India. Though many of Müller's efforts were devoted to the mythicoreligious works of India and to tracing connections to other Indo-European societies, his works sometimes also suggested that one might expect to be able to follow out such historical interconnections through the entire world.

The attempt to explain the occurrence of mythological parallels as matters of historical interrelationship became, through the course of the nineteenth century, increasingly polarized against the methods of evolutionary anthropology, which sought to explain such parallels as independent invention; this in turn would confirm the thesis of unilinear evolution. E. B. Tylor, the leading evolutionist, thought that mythology offered evidence of the erroneous form of reasoning that defined the first evolutionary stage; he juxtaposed the mythologies of numerous societies in order to demonstrate the universal character of human thought at this stage. Logically, historical-diffusionist principles and evolutionary principles are incompatible; they provide competing explanations of the occurrence of ethnographic parallels. It is one of the ironies of Müller that, committed as he was to historical-philological reconstruction, he also put forward theories about the origin of mythology that could easily be read as asserting universal psychic processes—processes lying quite beyond anything specific to the Indo-European tradition.

The most famous of the more generic aspects of Müller's theories of myth was the "solar" hypothesis—essentially, the claim that mythology was produced as a spontaneous poetic reaction to observed celestial phenomena; the thesis was enthusiastically embraced by many followers. The solar hypothesis was accompanied by a postulated "disease of language," processes of inevitable change in language, including a contraction in the range of meanings of particular terms. Such changes rendered the original poetic utterances unintelligible, if not bizarre, for later generations, who designated such utterances as "mythology." The solar and the disease hypotheses were illustrated by Müller largely through Indo-European material, but many of his followers, swept up in the solar hypothesis, were much more interested in a programmatic theory of myth interpretation than in working out specifically Indo-European issues. And methodological distinctions that are clear in the

abstract are often muddy in practice. From Müller onward and even in James Frazer's world-spanning myth study, *The Golden Bough*, it is often simply unclear whether, at any given moment, the comparative dimension rests on a universal human psychology or a postulated cultural-historical interrelationship.

Comparative mythology of the narrower kind underwent a change—in certain respects, a decline—toward the end of the nineteenth century. Several reasons can be cited. The methods of Müller and his followers had many shortcomings, most notably a tendency to rest great claims on small bits of evidence—in some cases, a postulated cognate relation between words or even single syllables. The vast sweep of world languages characteristic of Müller and his followers conveyed the impression of enormous linguistic erudition. But their work was frequently carried out on the level of words and syllables, and much of it required little more than patience and a set of dictionaries. The smallness of the data was mirrored, inversely, by the extravagance of the speculation. It was largely the looseness and ad hoc nature of the methods that Andrew Lang, gadfly of the solar mythology movement, attacked, once even parodying such methods by using them to prove that Müller was himself a solar myth. Increasing data and types of data rendered some of the original postulated connections untenable.

Finally, as has been suggested, much of the swirl surrounding Müller had been stimulated by those aspects of his theories that were least intimately bound up with Indo-European mythology specifically. So the seeming contraction of interest in comparative mythology in the narrower sense at the end of the nineteenth century perhaps marked not so much a decline in Indo-European mythology as a decline in certain extravagant theories, such as the solar hypothesis and the disease of language, on whose coattails Indo-European mythology had ridden into an unusually prominent place in scholarly and popular consciousness. Comparative mythology of the narrower type, following the decline of Müller's school, tended to become the specialized province of disciplines concerned directly with Indo-European languages, such as departments of classical languages and literatures, and it was supported by such fields as ancient history and archaeology.

The most influential theories of myth in the twentieth century have not been constrained by an Indo-European border but have instead been comparative in the broader sense—seeking to isolate underlying commonalities in myths of different cultures, often with little interest in historical interrelationships. Among these one may count the “myth-ritual” school, the Freudian and Jungian schools, and the structuralist school of Claude Lévi-Strauss. The myth-ritual school and the Freudian and Jungian schools retained some of the assumptions of nineteenth-century evolutionism, especially the so-called comparative method. This method, a corollary of unilinear evolution,

consisted of the assumption that one could expect to find correlations between non-European “primitive” cultures and the culture of the European historical past. The Freudian and Jungian schools also frequently invoked a further parallelism—between the psychic development of the individual and the general cultural evolution of humanity, so that, for example, childhood anxieties would have counterparts in the myths and rituals of “primitive” peoples.

Lévi-Strauss utilized the methods of structural linguistics (especially as developed by Roman Jakobson and Ferdinand de Saussure) to discover and analyze underlying patterns in myths and in their transformations through time and space. Though he dealt with patterns at many levels, Lévi-Strauss’ most celebrated and controversial claims had to do with postulated universal patterns, which he attributed to universal properties of the human mind. *Vis-à-vis* previous comparativists, Lévi-Strauss was distinguished by his insistence that the successful interpretation of a myth necessitates an understanding of its “structure”: It is not any particular image or scenario but rather the way in which elements of a myth work as an ensemble that makes signification possible. The structures that Lévi-Strauss explored were, for the most part, varieties of binary oppositions arranged as proportions; for example, he claimed that the opposition of “raw” versus “cooked” in myth encoded a universal human distinction between “nature” and “culture.” Lévi-Strauss’ interest in developing formal methods to decode meanings did much to bring about the now assumed interrelationship between comparative mythology and semiotic theory—a development that has remained fruitful even in the aftermath of the structuralist movement.

Each of the schools of myth research mentioned here has its own particular methods and theories, but they all operate on the assumption that myth is uniform enough to allow the scholar to abstract general conclusions from a cross-cultural pool of data. But the twentieth century also has seen some movements in the study of mythology that have carried anticomparativist tendencies; most significant among these are the “functionalism” of Bronislaw Malinowski and certain interpretations of Boasian “historical particularism.” Neither one of these perspectives totally precludes comparison; yet each, in its own way, affirms the value of detailed analysis of myth in context over the search for recurrent, cross-cultural patterns. Malinowski, in “Myth and Primitive Psychology,” specifically developed his functionalist approach as a counter to the speculative exuberance that was characteristic of Müller.

A significant revitalization, with innovations, of comparative mythology of the narrower type occurred in the mid-twentieth century, stimulated by the prolific writings of Georges Dumézil. Dumézil’s success rested largely on the fact that he was able to devise strategies of comparison that incorporated a functionalist emphasis on myth in sociopolitical context—an orientation that he developed through an acquaintance with the Durkheimian tradition of

comparative sociology. What Dumézil compared, among Indo-European mythologies, was not so much lexical items as sets of interrelated sociopolitical institutions. Most persistent was his claim that widely dispersed Indo-European mythologies expressed a common, underlying, tripartite “ideology,” in which society was seen as built around three main activities or “functions”—epitomized in priest (magico-religious/judicial order), warrior, and cultivator. An interesting quirk of Dumézil’s “comparative mythology,” then, was that the real object that was compared from society to society was not necessarily mythology but rather “ideology.” Ideology might be expressed in myth, but it might also be expressed in numerous other possible forms, such as genealogies, class divisions within social structure, or narrative genres other than myth. An example of the last is found in *Archaic Roman Religion*, in which Dumézil juxtaposed the war and eventual merging of the Romans and the Sabines, as recounted in Livy’s history of Rome, with Scandinavian accounts of a war and eventual merging of two tribes of gods, the Æsir and the Vanir. Taking a clue from the fact that the Vanir, like the Sabines, represented the values of fecundity and opulence, Dumézil found a commonality between the Roman and the Scandinavian narratives. In each case, claimed Dumézil, there was a depiction of the completion of the tripartite ideology through the addition of fertility, the third function. In this sense, the Roman and Scandinavian accounts, one “historical” and the other “mythical,” reflected a shared Indo-European ideology.

One of the main criticisms of Dumézil is reminiscent of a criticism that had been made of Müller—that the methods of comparison allowed the scholar to incorporate too much, eventually obliterating any border around the Indo-European family. In Müller’s approach, this happened because of the smallness of the pieces compared: One could always find a syllable that could be postulated as cognate with some syllable in the next language family. In Dumézil’s approach, the same thing happened, but it happened because of the largeness—the abstractness and generality—of the entity compared, that is, the tripartite ideology. For it could reasonably be argued that what was depicted in Dumézil’s tripartite ideology was not so much an Indo-European speciality as a set of functional prerequisites for any society. In fact, Dumézil’s arguments frequently have been picked up by scholars working in societies without any demonstrable connection with the Indo-European world. Once again, theories originating within the study of Indo-European mythology have had, for some scholars, the effect of breaking down the alleged distinctiveness of Indo-European mythology vis-à-vis other mythologies. Dumézil’s methods have occasioned many criticisms, but even the critics have often applauded his fresh insights into the relation of myth and society and his refocusing of interest on Indo-European mythology and/or mythology in general.

The present climate is not particularly favorable to cross-cultural method-

ologies; emphasis is on the local and the incommensurable, and there is acute skepticism of methodologies that suggest “totalizing” ambitions. Still, there are signs that the present-day skepticism is discovering its own limits and that a conviction is returning regarding the value and even the necessity of a discourse of human commonalities and interrelatedness to complement the discourse of differences. Fueled by developments within maturing fields such as cognitive science, we can expect a resurgence of interest in comparative mythology in both the narrower and broader forms—that is, both bounded by particular, historically related language families and oriented toward human universals. The vastly enlarged pool of ethnographic and textual data now available will permit analyses to be more empirically grounded than was possible in Müller’s time, yet our findings may prove to be no less amazing than anything devised in Müller’s speculative flights.

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See also Evolutionary Theory; Myth-Ritual Theory; Philological Approach; Structuralism.

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COMPUTER-MEDIATED FOLKLORE

Folklore generated by the computer-user subculture or, more generally, any folklore communicated through computer networking (electronic messaging).

Electronic messaging began in the late 1960s as a brainstorming tool for computer programmers. Today, a giant maze of electronic pathways referred

to as “the Network” (or usually, just “the Net”) links computer users around the world via fiber-optic telephone cables, making it possible to send almost instantaneous messages (electronic mail, or E-mail) to a user on the other side of the globe.

An outgrowth of these networks since about 1980 has been a proliferation of topical information-sharing forums in which individual users can take part. Topics range broadly and include academic specialities and subspecialities and also hobbies and special interests. Thus, small, temporary communities defined by special interests provide the context and the occasion (and computer networking provides the medium) for communication that is both like and not like that which folklorists more commonly study. Familiar genres such as contemporary legends and topical jokes are frequently communicated via the Net, along with audience commentary, additional variants, and analysis. The extent to which the medium and its technology influence the content and performance of folklore transmitted via the Net, however, and the exact nature of that influence are topics still being explored.

Although hackers like to distinguish between themselves (experts and aficionados) and mere users (who use the computer as a work tool rather than playing more creatively with the medium), the conventions and the jargon that the hacker subculture has evolved have spread widely among all users, and obvious lack of familiarity with the forms is the mark of the uninitiated (or *newbie*). Folklore actually generated by and for computer-mediated communication has been chronicled in electronic format by the computer-networking community itself since 1975. Expanded and updated on an ongoing basis, versions of *The New Hacker's Dictionary* were published in book form in 1983 and in 1991.

Hacker folklore that already has been widely noticed includes the use of *emoticons* such as the sideways smiling faces (smileys) used to make up for the lack of visual cues to indicate emotional content in hastily constructed prose. For example, the basic smiley :-) is inserted when the writer wants to indicate that what he or she has just written should not be taken too seriously or as an insult. Variations on the basic smiley, however, have proliferated in ways that indicate a premium on humor and creativity rather than on clearer communication. The same figure, moreover, can have multiple interpretations. For instance, the figure 8-) is sometimes said to be a user wearing glasses and sometimes an excited user (i.e., a user with wide eyes). A number of glossaries of smileys are in circulation on the Net, as are a number of files on frequently asked questions (FAQ files). Compilations of folklore such as topical jokes or urban legends are often available as FAQ files posted in order to avoid tedious repetitions.

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See also Xeroxlore.



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CONDUIT THEORY/MULTICONDUIT THEORY

A theory developed by Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi to explain why folklore genres persist in a limited number of remarkably stable and crystallized conventional forms while in the processes of transmission and dissemination. Reproduction in context results in limitless personal and culture-specific variants. The theory asserts folklore texts do not pass through an orderly, regulated trail from person to person but generate their own, specific chain linkages that carry messages through society. These linkages, named *conduits*, consist of individuals united by similar mind-sets—people who react similarly to similar messages and thereby qualify as senders and receivers of similar messages within given systems of communication. If a message—a folklore text—travels through its proper conduit, it goes unchanged from one person to another; however, if the message, on its course, reaches an inappropriate individual, it will either reach a dead end or survive by undergoing modifications, and thereby, the message deviates from its original trail and lands in another conduit whose members respond to the modified message. The forms of oral transmission are as diverse as people, and the eventualities of affinity between people and folklore are as multifarious. Thus, the legend conduit unites legend fanciers, the joke conduit is made up of a sequence of witty people, and tales progress through the tale conduit shaped by storytellers. Furthermore, within a single genre, type clusters, episodes, minor incidents, motifs, and formulas also constitute their own conduits to be identified as subconduits or microconduits. In transmission, further ramifications of the conduit result in a complex, multi-conduit system that is the key to the folklore process.

Observation of multiconduit systems in natural contexts or reproduced in laboratory experiments can contribute to the understanding of the nature of folklore transmission, as affinities link contents and forms, variants emerge,

degeneration and regeneration of texts lead to the “extraordinary stability” observed by Walter Anderson when amassing widespread and multifarious variables of the riddle tale AT 922. Conduit analysis also explains how personal preferences lead to innovation and specialization in the building of regional, ethnic, and personal repertoires of magic tales, ghost stories, saint’s legends, murder ballads, or tall tales.

The conduit theory is based on the realization that participation in the communication of folklore depends on spontaneity, the participant’s freedom to tell or not to tell a story. Transmission of traditional messages in natural contexts is essentially free; arbitrary limitation of this freedom encroaches upon the normal functioning of the conduit.

Studying people’s ability to remember and forget, learn and re-create, psychologists, anthropologists, and folklorists experimented with serial reproduction of prose material. Experiments by Frederick Bartlett, Robert Lowie, Walter Anderson, and others were based on the artificial lining up of volunteers, not traditional bearers. This work showed that denying participants the right of choice leads to the gradual devolution of the text. In the retelling procedure, participants react with psychological defense mechanisms by forgetting or falsely remembering, forcing the message into inadequate conduits. The conduit theory argues for the analysis of the mistakes made by participants in artificial serial reproduction situations, complementing such findings with independent psychological personality testing.

Linda Dégh

See also Performance; Repertoire; Transmission.

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C ONTEXT

The conditions or circumstances, either transitory or lasting, within which a given item of lore (or some other aspect of culture or society) is expressed. From the perspective of the individual (or group) eliciting the expression, each external element perceived at the time it is being produced has motivational value (i.e., it becomes a “stimulus situation”); thus, such perceptions affect the item itself as it is being performed. The conception of stimulus situations, as stated by social psychologists, deals with objects and situations in their contextual relationships; the individual experiences and reacts to social objects, persons, groups, cultural items (e.g., furniture, tools, words, music) in terms of meaningful relations prevailing in the characteristic patterns of these stimulus agents.

In folklore scholarship, awareness of the roles played by such intermediary, contextual forces on a given item (and vice versa) may be seen as resulting from the influence of empirical observation by folklorists. This is due also to the impact of psychological learning theories on the functional approach to culture studies, especially the terms proposed by Bronislaw Malinowski and presented to folklorists by William Bascom. In anthropology, the need for contextual data grew from attempts to comprehend correctly social and cultural phenomena, especially verbal texts, radically different from the anthropologist’s own. The works of Franz Boas in North America and those of the Finnish School in Europe were both criticized for reducing the field of folklore to the study of lifeless texts severed from their normal social and cultural contexts.

Thus, anthropologists and folklorists began to see the need for additional information about the “given” norms and values of the community whose verbal lore was being studied. For example, in their research on the Dahomean tales of West Africa, Melville and Frances Herskovits recognized the need to study Dahomean culture as a whole. Their fieldwork was facilitated by a knowledge of contextual data on patterns of family life, economic structure, educational techniques, aesthetic values, religious concepts and ritual, and political development. Similarly, in studying Clackamas Indian narratives from North America, Melville Jacobs realized the importance of

social and cultural forces on the process of narrating; thus, he sought to establish the role of these forces as a prerequisite to understanding the narratives themselves.

Consequently, folklorists began emphasizing the roles of these conditions in the study of the various fields of lore—especially the impact of such factors as economic conditions, religious beliefs, audience, and the time and place of an activity—on traditional expressions. Linda Dégh emphasized the importance of the narrating community in understanding a given narrative; Alan Dundes expanded folklorists' principal interests to include "text, texture, and context." Studies emphasizing context, often at the expense of the text, were labeled "contextual"; scholars applying such an approach were designated as "contextualists."

Another aspect of the contextual approach may be explained in terms of the influence of frames of reference on how individuals perceive the properties of physical, as well as social and cultural, objects within a given set of conditions (context); for example, with reference to physical perception, what determines judging an item as light or heavy, small or big, and so on. Meanwhile, regarding kinship relations, a narrator may perceive a certain character in a folklore text as a man, a king, a brother to a sister, a brother to a brother, a husband to a wife or woman, and so forth. Each of these perceptions would entail the relevant traditional roles associated with the character (e.g., kindness, rivalry). In a cognitive behavioristic analysis of these roles, Hasan El-Shamy demonstrated that the narrator's judgment with respect to each kinship relationship is a function of the total series of relationships that serve as a frame of reference in the given situation. Such psychological processes, which are responsible for the style or semantics of texts, are typically termed *part-whole* or *frame of reference* perceptual principles and are an aspect of the broader concept of context.

Hasan El-Shamy

See also Audience.

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COSMOLOGY

The culturally appropriate view of and way to study or contemplate the universe in its creation and present aspect. A people's cosmology includes their cognitive and ideational accounts of how the universe came into being and its physical characteristics. Often, the accounts include a set of moral imperatives as well. The accounts may be in prose or in poetry and usually are highly metaphorical and full of allusion. In some societies, cosmology may be fully known only to a select and highly trained few. In other societies, any member of the group who expresses an interest will be taught the cosmology. In mainstream U.S. culture, young people often complain of being forced to learn cosmology through attendance at Sunday schools or similar religious training classes.

Cosmologies usually include not only philosophy and moral precepts but also theories about how and why the universe came into being. They provide a rationale for who we are, what we represent, why we are here, and what our proper behavior should be. Often, in discussing cosmology, as much attention is given to the consequences of a failure to believe or behave properly as to the details of the construction of the universe.

Cosmology is closely related to cosmogony, which is an account of the physical creation—and usually also the ordering—of the universe; cosmogony, however, does not normally include morality or offer exemplars of proper behavior. The terms *cosmology* and *cosmogony* also are used by those in other disciplines, especially by astronomers. However, folklorists put a slightly different spin on these words. For an astronomer, *cosmogony* refers to the physical construction—or coming into being—of the universe, and *cosmology* concerns ideas on the functioning of the universe.

Folklorists usually look for cosmology in the myth sequences of a people and expect the cosmology to be peopled with animals that have the ability to speak or at least communicate, with feats of will and character seldom seen in the modern world, and with beings who are larger than life and greater than human; they also expect to find in cosmology lessons on how not to live as well as how to construct a proper life.

Once having established the universe, the world of the people, and acceptable patterns of living, the cosmology portion of mythic narrative is completed. Additional episodes that follow the cosmology usually are consid-

ered to be an integral portion of mythic narrative but qualitatively different from the cosmological portion of the narrative. There may be competing cosmologies in operation in any given culture; in contemporary American culture, for example, the Judeo-Christian-Muslim account, creationism, and science all offer differing cosmologies. However, once a cosmology is accepted by a person or group and established within a culture, it remains essentially fixed; myth, by contrast, is subject to change in response to a changing world and interactions within it.

Claire R. Farrer

See also Culture Hero; Myth.

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COSTUME, FOLK

Any manner of stylizing, marking, or manipulating the appearance of the human body with culturally understood symbols and forms. The term *costume* includes not only clothing but also other body adornments, such as jewelry, cosmetics, hairstyles, masks, tattoos, and scarification, and it can refer to everyday adornment as well as dramatic, ritual, or festival costuming. Costume draws on the expressive power of the individual body to produce social identities within the terms of community aesthetics. Folkloristic studies of costume generally consider how adornment style participates in the bodily performance of individual and group identity, as well as how folk manipulate and transform adornment signs and practices within the framework of their own aesthetics.

Costume often is conceived as a symbolic language, composed of clothing signs. Petr Bogatyrev, in his influential study of folk costume in modern Slovakia, pointed out that costume is both an object and a sign having multiple functions, such as the ritual, aesthetic, practical, and ideological. In contexts in which a costume's practical function is downplayed, costume functions as a sign; it becomes an ideological reality. As ideological reality, costume embodies the associations individuals have with the social structures of family, economy or polity, region, ethnicity, religion, and caste or class. The type of



A Bahamian Junkanoo dancer with horned-toad mask and brilliantly colored costume participates in Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival, a celebration of south Florida's black Bahamian immigrants.

folk costume discussed by Bogatyrev often has emerged in colonial or touristic contexts in which self-conscious presentation to outsiders is a key way of negotiating identity. In western and eastern Europe, such folk costumes are invariably codifications of past peasant styles representing regional differences, and they often involve symbolic inscription on women's bodies as regional or ethnic symbols. In this way, folk costume is implicated in the maintenance of the cultural or political boundaries of ethnic groups, regions, or nations, particularly in touristic, festival, or colonial contexts.

Folk costume plays a key role in the negotiation of personal and community boundaries, both inside and outside folk groups. Significantly, folklorists who discuss adornment have concentrated on costume's socializing force—its relationship to the maintenance of individual and group identities and the articulation of power relations. This important work on folk costume has considered adornment as an important means of communicating an individual's relationship to a group or community and its traditional values. According to Don Yoder, folk costume expresses identity in a symbolic way, functioning as a "badge of identity" for members of ethnic, religious, and occupational groups. Costume outwardly represents the identity of the folk community and expresses the individual's manifold relationships to and

within that community. In many plain religious sects discussed by Yoder, such as the Amish, Mennonites, and Shakers, the rejection of fashion in plain dress historically articulated group separation from mainstream society by embodying the principles of sectarian doctrine and establishing a “hedge” against the temptations of the world. In this way, sect members would be perceived and perceive themselves as different from others. Thus, folk costume promotes group solidarity and maintains personal and group boundaries as individuals embody a community by reshaping their bodies in keeping with group values.

In addition to outwardly embodying identities, costume also plays a key role in the definition and reconfiguration of personal identities and social boundaries within any folk group. In ritual contexts such as rites of passage, for example, adornment practices articulate an individual’s relationship to the community by marking culturally significant moments in that individual’s life. Young men and women passing from childhood to adulthood often adopt adult attire (such as long trousers or skirts) as a symbol of their new status in the community. Their change in status is accomplished, in part, by the reconfiguration of their physical appearance in costume—physical transformation embodies personal transformation. Marriage and mourning costumes, contrasted with everyday clothing, indicate the wearers’ participation in ritual passage and transformation. In this way, clothing induces individuals to become or remain members of a community by physically representing their integration into the community and their acceptance of group values and distinctions related to age, sex, and status. Within this approach, clothing perpetuates a dominant social code by defining hierarchies and marking separations.

Costume also possesses the power to reconfigure those hierarchies and separations. In other ritual and festival contexts, costume transforms the body’s everyday appearance and redefines its boundaries temporarily in fanciful costuming, masking, or clothing that represents and helps enact new, fictional, or performative roles. Masquerade and cross-dressing are major media for inversion and other renegotiations of social boundaries, commonly adopted when individuals try on new roles or identities and when the barriers between individuals are broken down during a period of license. In carnival contexts, elaborate costumes are an important way in which a sense of fun and license is engendered. A key feature of such carnival costumes is often their aesthetic of excess. Elaborate and expensive, these carnival costumes exaggerate and distort the features and proportions of the body, opening up the body and extending its boundaries. This exaggeration and excess contribute to the sense of spectacle and a carnivalesque aesthetic that celebrates the excesses of the body and its pleasures. Costume signs in carnival contexts are multivalent and often potentially subversive; that is, they involve the play and transformation of everyday attire, renegotiating its conventional meanings, if only temporarily.

Costume is likewise dynamic and subversive in cultural contexts in which

dress is contested or manipulated through what Elizabeth Wilson has termed “oppositional dress.” In oppositional dress, the body is transformed into a site of struggle by disenfranchised groups or disaffected subcultures as they attempt to define themselves by redefining the appearance and meaning of their bodies. Oppositional dress can take several forms, usually through processes of refusal and appropriation. For instance, retentions or revivals of traditional dress by indigenous peoples in colonial contexts in the face of pressures to adopt fashionable, Western dress constitute a form of refusal—self-definition as a strategy of resistance to colonial control or Western cultural imperialism. In some cases, traditional dress becomes a symbol of political movements for economic and political independence. Mahatma Gandhi’s use of traditional Indian textiles and dress as a symbol of resistance to British imperial control in the mid-twentieth century signified both economic and cultural independence. By advocating traditional dress, he redefined the colonial social body as Indian, not British, and reasserted the power of native Indian materials, industries, and production techniques. Resistance through costume also can take the form of revivals of indigenous or traditional dress in postcolonial situations, as expressed by women in Islamic revolutionary contexts who readopt the *chador*, the full veiling prescribed by traditional Islamic law. Again, this costume signifies in complicated ways, both reinscribing women’s bodies in traditional gender roles and challenging outside religious or cultural control.

In other cases, new costume forms emerge as subcultures or groups within complex societies appropriate normative clothing forms in an oppositional way. In Western societies, feminist groups historically sought equality through dress reform by appropriating men’s jackets and ties for women’s professional costume. In western Europe and the United States, the wearing of black clothing to articulate alternative or decadent sensibilities by nineteenth-century dandies and twentieth-century bohemians was an appropriation of both customary mourning costume and historically respectable bourgeois male dress, exaggerated for everyday wear. This alternative costume draws on the contradictory associations of the color black with death, sexuality, respectability, and monasticism to articulate a complicated stance against mainstream respectability. In these cases, the conventional meaning of any costume style changes, even as its new status as oppositional still relies on the memory of previously respectable associations.

Appropriation also plays a central role in the oppositional costuming practices of contemporary youth subcultures, such as punks who reassemble conventional working-class clothing with symbols of transgression and violence (rips and tears, crosses, and multiple body piercings). Members of these subcultures express complex and contradictory sexual and social identities through adornment practices that appropriate normative or fashionable commodities, signs, and values and reassemble them in terms of their group aesthetic, with the aim of shocking. Dick Hebdige has characterized the style

of subcultural groups as a “signifying practice” that draws on the polysemic range of meanings in clothing signs by appropriating available images and symbols from dominant culture and manipulating them in ways that defy conventional assumptions about appropriate appearance. Such styles insist on shifting the terms of any discourse of dress by adding new elements, inverting old elements, and transgressing norms as a means of articulating a challenge to accepted values, foregrounding a sense of difference and asserting self-possession or personal power in the face of powerlessness. This signifying practice is fundamentally polysemic in that appropriated signs do not lose their previous associations—they merely gain new meanings that are foregrounded in uneasy tension with older, more conventional associations. This juxtaposition of seemingly conflicting meanings highlights and expresses larger conflicts in society that these groups wish to address.

In local settings, folk costume does not develop in isolation, and much of contemporary folk costume is polysemic in nature. Like language and other aspects of material folklife such as foodways and architecture, contemporary costume bears the signs of historical struggles, contacts, borrowing, and exchanges in any locality. In the context of colonization and cultural displacement, new creole forms emerge from the interaction of different cultural groups’ adornment practices. An example of such creolization is the new forms of African-American hairstyling that emerged from the collision and renegotiation of different cultural notions about the body in the African diaspora. Kobena Mercer referred to these styles as “ethnic signifiers” that reflect African understandings about hair while incorporating European styles to create new styles specific to African-Americans. These styles, which may appear to be “African” or “white” but with a difference, articulate the complex cultural heritage of African-Americans and, according to Mercer, are inevitably politicized in the context of inequality or cultural hierarchy.

Even though the trend toward global, transnational flows of fashion commodities continues, folklorists can expect to see folk costumes increasingly characterized by creole forms and styles. Mainstream fashion is an influence on folk costume that often shapes style and form at a local level. Although some scholars have postulated a distinction between rapidly changing fashionable dress and relatively unchanging folk dress (or what Ted Polhemus and Lynn Proctor have called “anti-fashion”), sustained costume studies reveal a more dynamic folk design process in which fashionable and folk ideas commingle, collide, and interact in local settings. Individuals appropriate new ideas and integrate them into their wardrobes within the terms of their own cultural aesthetic (which might include cut, color, accessory, or rules of assemblage). In addition, international fashion designers increasingly appropriate ideas for styles from folk or “street” fashions, ransacking the past and present for novelty and inspiration and thereby further complicating any clear distinction between “fashionable” and “folk” costume.

More recently, folklorists have moved from looking at clothing merely in terms of an outward, identifiable form or signification to considering the relationship between costume and the body. Costume not only reflects social or group identities but also constitutes them in bodily practice as an integral part of the everyday and habitual practices through which the body is culturally managed and supervised in any culture, practices that produce relationships of power. Thus, dress practices cannot be understood in isolation from other bodily practices, such as food consumption, deportment, gesture, and speech, that stylize the “natural” physical body and render it culturally comprehensible by imbuing it with recognizable attributes linked to identities. Costume, then, is linked to the study of “bodylore” and provides a lens through which to see how identities are formed, contested, or redefined through the body and its appearance, boundaries, and sensations.

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See also Carnival; Festival; Mask; Material Culture.

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CRAFT, FOLK

Skill or process of creating goods, usually by hand. Craft first attracted folkloristic interest in the nineteenth century because the skills involved clearly showed transmission through tradition and because the products of these skills could be compared across time and space. Craft was essential to utilities in daily life and also could have decorative and spiritual functions. In addition to the skills and processes that provide the basic equipment of domestic life—tools, furnishings, houses, clothes—crafts include ritual, religious, and artistic

objects, and they foster beliefs about the highly skilled workers who produce them, as in oft-collected legends of blacksmiths.

The concept of craft is closely related to perceptions of art. Craft in nineteenth-century conceptions of folk cultures characterized folklore more than art because of the assumption that art represented originality and leisure and craft symbolized work and repetition more in keeping with the stereotype of folk culture. In a modification of this view, scholars pointed to arts such as Pennsylvania-German painted furniture that grew out of traditional crafts. Up until the 1970s, the dominant perspective viewed craft as having utilitarian intent and application and art as having a principally aesthetic character. Thus, many of the objects categorized as art were decorative, and crafts were treated as tools. The limitation of this simplification emphasizing form and function is that artifacts have multiple functions, and the artistic appreciation of skill and beauty in folk design can apply to nondecorated objects. Considering craft and art as behavior rather than form, scholars recognized craft and art as parts of each other, a symbolic kind of action. Craft had an active role, referring to the process of construction and its integration with aesthetic or artistic judgments and traditions.

The shifts in the conception of craft and art reflect changes since the nineteenth century in the kinds of approaches used to study craft. Many early folkloristic studies of craft considered the products of traditional crafts in a "natural history of civilization" or cultural evolution from the primitive to the industrial. Another early approach took up questions of diffusion and transmission of tradition across cultures and used variations among crafts to interpret cultural borrowings and map regions. Because crafts reflected daily life, another approach arose to document the folklife or historical folk culture of a regional-ethnic community. Closely related to the examination of crafts as products meant for an entire community is the role of craft as the product of an individual with creative and aesthetic goals. Especially since the 1970s, other approaches have arisen that focus on craft as a form of communication. The process of creating, consuming, using, and changing crafts has received attention as an important type of nonverbal behavior humans use to express themselves.

EVOLUTION

In 1871, following Charles Darwin's theories of origin and development in nature, Edward Tylor promoted the study of cultural evolution through "survivals." Traditional crafts among tribal societies in the world, he surmised, were evidence of a low, "primitive" stage of development that led to the highest level of industrial invention in "civilization." Evolutionists following Tylor organized crafts by technological type and typically arranged them by level of advancement to form a global evolution of civilization.

DIFFUSION

One problem with early evolutionary doctrine was that it did not explain similarities in customs and crafts among widely separated groups. The comparisons that were made were typically ahistorical in that the cultural occurrence was assumed to be part of a universal level of advancement rather than a period in a group's history. If cultures move and influence custom because of historical migrations and cultural contact, however, then the progressive explanation for civilization could be challenged. In addition to questions of origin and development, questions of diffusion and transmission arose to show that cultures not only developed in place but also moved and influenced others. Crafts became important evidence of such movements because types of crafts could be visibly traced and comparisons could be made according to date of manufacture. The most prominent example is the explanation for the similarity of many Native American and Asian folk shelters and crafts. In 1904, Waldemar Bogoras, for example, wrote on the comparable material culture in Siberia and Alaska, supporting a migration from Asia across the Bering Strait into North America.

A notable movement called the *Kulturkreislehre* (culture-cluster school) arose in German-speaking countries to examine diffusion of folk ideas as demonstrated in folk crafts. Fritz Graebner, Wilhelm Schmidt, and Wilhelm Koppers, to name some notable figures in this movement, reconstructed the diffusion of crafts by determining clusters of cultural traits that moved together. The assumption was that migrations and contacts reduced the importance of the environment. Mapping diffusion according to this assumption could lead to a failure to deal with historical accidents, local or individual developments, and social change.

COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL

Rather than slavishly following an all-encompassing culture, traditional craftworkers observed by many scholars expressed their individuality within community traditions. Reacting to the German emphasis on cultural clusters, Franz Boas leaned toward the study of the variety of cultures, rather than their inevitable unity. Fieldwork among Eskimos during the 1880s alerted him to the control that a people maintained over their traditions and over the integrity of a cultural whole as a small community. He argued that the focus of research should be not on survivals but on the processes by which culture has developed.

This accounting for craftwork taking on the character of negotiation between individual and community could be accomplished by studies of the history and ethnography of individual societies. Although diffusion emphasizes



Toys are a common type of folk craft. Here, Japanese kite craftsman Hideo Matsutani displays one of his works. Kites play a very important role in Japanese culture.

similarities over space, individual and community studies offer views of variance influenced by personality and local conditions. A movement related to this idea is in folklife or folk cultural (from the Swedish *folkliv* and the German *Volksleben* and *Volkskunde*) studies emerging during the late nineteenth century, usually emphasizing holistic study of everyday practices, artifacts, and expressions in community context. Crafts became significant as representations of living traditions pointing to the integrated life and labor of regional-ethnic communities. From its relatively minor role in English-American folklore scholarship during the late nineteenth century, folklife study gained prominence in the United States, particularly after World War II.

Rather than using models of closed peasant societies, many American studies have applied an ethnographic approach centering on the personality and process by which individuals have the need to create and the urge to express themselves. Influenced especially by Michael Owen Jones' *The Hand Made Object and Its Maker* (1975), these studies have offered a special folkloristic mission to describe the role of tradition as evidenced by the creative process of handcrafting in complex, industrial societies. A spate of "life histories" and psychologically oriented studies of craftworkers maintaining tradition and innovation in urban and industrial settings appeared to underscore the continual relevance of handwork and tradition in modern life. In such

studies, craftworkers' motivations and social functions were examined closely. Rather than belonging to one community, craftworkers had many communities to serve and had individual reasons for presenting the styles and forms they followed.

COMMUNICATION

The results of close examinations of individual craftworkers suggested that the process of craft is an everyday activity that often arises in response to certain situations. Although popular belief in postindustrial societies suggested that humans would not be involved in creative activities because of the rise of electronics and a service economy, folkloristic studies, since the 1980s particularly, have proposed a close examination of the symbols and metaphors communicated when humans "make things." Crafting in such a view becomes a metaphoric model for doing, rather than a technical procedure for turning out a product. With craft, there is the suggestion of drawing on tradition and innovation for use, of taking time to convert nature into something personal and meaningful. Stories and environments can be crafted as well as chairs and baskets.

The material process of crafting grasps ideas in ways that speech cannot. In addition to the recovery of historical crafts, such as basketry or pottery, that is common in scholarship, some folklorists suggested many noncanonized traditions, such as cooking meals, renovating houses, arranging yards, and folding papers, as everyday efforts of grasping ideas through craft processes. In a study of the construction and readjustment of tract houses in Los Angeles, Michael Owen Jones argued that such modern activities revealed processes of tradition and creativity. Homeowners often announced their intentions for establishing an identity through the process of construction. The approach implied more directly behavioral interpretations rather than sociocultural ones, with attention to the reactions and responses of particular individuals to the patterns, qualities, or symbols of activities as well as objects.

Such an approach broadened the scope of the concept of folk craft from the materials of tradition to the process involved. Some kinds of materials previously neglected in folkloristic study became open to inquiry. Tourist and revival crafts came under study because they presented opportunities to examine the meanings of tradition as it is altered when sold or used in certain situations. Such examinations have also considered the role that consumption and reuse play in the perception of crafts in contemporary society. In addition, the role of ceremonial crafts in rituals and festivals received renewed attention as vehicles for symbolic communication.

Many of these studies were situational, much as ethnographic studies of speech communication are, and had as their goal the uncovering of ways that

meaning is communicated and perceived. Some authorities on verbal behavior, such as W.F.H. Nicolaisen, began using craft as an essential metaphor for folklore because it stressed the process of bringing materials into an aesthetic form relying on individual creativity and communal tradition. Craftsmanship was a model of action, a “praxis,” as some scholars have described it, appropriate to cultural expression generally, for it recognized individuals making use of material at hand in response to audience and environment, injecting variety into a process of repetition.

Simon J. Bronner

See also Art, Folk; Material Culture.

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CULTURAL RELATIVISM

A key methodological concept in anthropology that is universally accepted within the discipline. This concept is based on theoretical considerations that are fundamental to the understanding of “scientific” anthropology, just as they are basic to the understanding of the anthropological frame of mind. Cultural relativism posits that all cultures are of equal value and need to be studied from a neutral point of view. The study of any culture has to be done with a cold and neutral eye so that a particular culture can be understood on its own merits and not those of another culture. Historically, cultural relativism has been combined with historical particularism—the notion that the proper way to study culture is to study one culture in depth. The implications of cultural relativism and historical particularism have been significant to anthropology and to the social sciences in general.

The roots of cultural relativism go to the rejection of the comparative school of the nineteenth century on the basis of exact and specific ethnological information. This information rejected the comparative school's methodology and, as a result, its evolutionary conclusions. Furthermore, because the basis of cultural relativism is a scientific view of culture, it also rejects value judgments on cultures. There is, in this view, no single scale of values that holds true for all cultures and by which all cultures can be judged. Beliefs, aesthetics, morals, and other cultural institutions can only be judged through their relevance to a given culture. For example, labels of good and bad are culture specific and cannot be imposed in cultural analysis. The reasoning behind this view is, of course, that what is good in one culture may be bad in another. This indicates that every culture determines its own ethical judgments to regulate the proper behavior of its members. An offshoot of this view is the assumption that most individuals would prefer to live in the culture in which they have been enculturated. It must be added that the *cultural* in cultural relativism and historical particularism refers to specific cultures and not to a more abstract, singular, and general concept of culture.

The reasoning behind all this comes from two distinct sources: the reaction to the inaccuracies of the evolutionary schemes of the comparative school and the desire to study culture from an objective value perspective. To be a scientific concept, culture has to be studied as an object without evaluative consideration. When we are not able to do that, we no longer have a science of culture. Among the many anthropologists associated with this point of view are Franz Boas and his students Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Melville Herskovits, Ruth Benedict, Paul Radin, Margaret Mead, and Ruth Bunzel. Franz Boas was the key theoretician in this group.

Boas published his views on the comparative method in 1896 in "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," the first exposition of cultural relativism. According to the tenets of cultural relativism, there are no inferior or superior cultures; all cultures are equal. To order cultures in an evolutionary scheme is unfeasible. All premises of good and bad and/or upper and lower are culture-bound and ethnocentric. Put that way, we can see that schemes of evolution are ethnocentric, not objective.

According to Boas, there are four major limitations to the comparative method: (1) It is impossible to account for similarity in all the types of culture by claiming that they are alike because of the unity of the human mind, (2) the existence of like traits in different cultures is not as important as the comparative school claims, (3) similar traits may have developed for very different purposes in differing cultures, and (4) the view that cultural differences are of minor importance is baseless. The differences between cultures were, Boas asserted, of major anthropological significance. Boas did not stop his critique of the comparative school there. He also delineated a methodol-

ogy to replace it. His new method emphasized that culture traits have to be studied in detail and within the cultural whole and that the distribution of a culture trait within neighboring cultures also should be examined. This approach suggests that a culture needs to be analyzed within its full context.

Boas thought that this approach would help the anthropologist understand the environmental factors that shape a culture, explain the psychological factors that frame the culture, and illuminate the history of a local custom. Boas was trying to establish the inductive method in anthropology and abandon the comparative method. He emphasized that the primary goal of anthropology was to study individual societies and that generalizations could come only on the basis of accumulated data. Thus, he argued that anthropology should be an objective and inductive science. In an age when the scientific method was important, this change in the discipline resulted in the establishment of anthropology in universities. Boas' students were among the first to establish some of the most important anthropology programs on U.S. campuses.

Moreover, Boas attacked racism throughout his career; he summarized his views on racism in *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911). According to Boas, the sweep of cultures, to be found in association with any subspecies, was so extensive that there could be no relationship between race and culture.

Following Boas and his emphasis on studying as many societies as possible, Alfred Kroeber, the best-known anthropologist of the period, produced a good deal of ethnography. In his "Eighteen Professions" (1915), which is a credo, Kroeber affirmed two of the basic tenets of cultural relativism: (1) All men are completely civilized, and (2) there are no higher and lower cultures. Much later in his career, Kroeber made three additional points in regard to cultural relativism: (1) that science should begin with questions and not with answers, (2) that science is a dispassionate endeavor that should not accept any ideology, and (3) that sweeping generalizations are not compatible with science. Another major cultural relativist of the period was Robert Lowie, whose work is most significant among his peers for its development of cultural relativism.

Lowie probably came closer to Boas' views on the proper practice of anthropology than any other anthropologist of his time. He was deeply rooted in the philosophy of science and accepted cultural anthropology as a science. His views and criticism of theoreticians such as Lewis Henry Morgan were based on this scientific worldview. His critique of Morgan's evolutionary theory was based on epistemology, namely, that Morgan's evolutionary scheme for the development of kinship systems was speculative and had no proof. Furthermore, Morgan's data were often erroneous, according to Lowie.

Additional refinements of the concept of cultural relativism were suggested by Ruth Benedict. For Benedict, cultural anthropology was the

discipline that studied the differences between cultures. This approach was fully Boasian in character. In this approach, the *s* that was added to the word *culture* by Boas and others became crucial. The interest had shifted from culture to cultures. In addition, when the focus shifted to a particular culture, there was a concern with what happened to the individual in that culture. A culture was integrated, and it was more than the sum of its parts. Finally, every culture was different from every other culture. Benedict took the Boasian program a step further through the concept of cultural configurations or patterns that allowed her to engage in cross-cultural comparison. Although her use of this approach was extremely reductionistic, it represented a new direction in cultural relativism by transcending the data collection of historical particularism and attempting to organize the data in an explanatory manner.

The attempt to understand cultures on their own terms and the attempt to pursue objective ethnography are the major accomplishments of cultural relativism. These accomplishments have sometimes led to a lack of theoretical depth and an undervaluation of the ethnographer's own culture. However, the battle against ethnocentrism and the objective view of cultures remain permanent contributions of cultural relativism.

Mark Glazer

See also Anthropological Approach; Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Ethnic Folklore.

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CULTURAL STUDIES

Interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and often counterdisciplinary projects to describe, analyze, and theorize the ways in which cultural practices are entangled with and within relations of power. Cultural studies (sometimes termed *cultural criticism* or *cultural critique*) is an international set of discursive practices in which culture is viewed as a site of serious contest and conflict over meaning. The questions of how meaning is made, what meaning is made, who makes meaning, and for whom meaning is made are explored through borrowings from Marxist—in particular, revisionist (sometimes known as “neo-” or “post-”) Marxist—writings on class; feminist writings on women’s cultures; postcolonialist writings on race, ethnicity, and nation; lesbian-and-gay-studies writings on gender and sexuality; and poststructuralist and post-modernist writings on language and other signifying systems. Positioning itself, as noted in a collection of essays edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, as being “committed to the study of the entire range of a society’s arts, beliefs, institutions, and communicative practices,” cultural studies rejects the traditional humanities’ equation of “culture” with “high culture.” Instead, these essayists concluded, cultural studies practitioners work to disclose the politics that underlie hierarchical distinctions such as high and low or elite, popular, and folk, arguing that all “forms of cultural production need to be studied in relation to other cultural practices and to social and historical structures.” Cultural studies practitioners work within an intellectual and political tradition that seeks not only to record culture but also to intervene actively in it.

Initiated by Raymond Williams’ attempt to define the relations between culture and society, E. P. Thompson’s work on class identity, and Richard Hoggart’s work on literacy, cultural studies was first institutionalized as a discipline with the creation of the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham, England, in 1964, under Hoggart’s directorship. In 1968, Stuart Hall became its second director. Focusing on how meanings are generated and circulated in industrial societies, participants in the Birmingham Center developed an interest in class-based power relations, in the production, marketing, and consumption of popular forms of expressive and material culture as well as vernacular uses of those forms, and in subcultural theory. Key to British cultural studies discussions during this period were continental influences, especially the work of Marxist theorists Theodor Adorno, Antonio Gramsci, and Louis Althusser.

As cultural studies grew into an international set of discursive practices, its focus became more diverse. For example, scholars in American cultural studies, though influenced by the Birmingham model, have also been drawn

to the work of anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner, literary and social theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, and writers associated with the initiatives of multiculturalism—for example, Patrick Brantlinger, Chandra Mukerji, and Michael Schudson. Cultural studies now encompasses critiques of sociocultural constructions of gender, race, ethnicity, nationalism, and sexuality in addition to class and maps the interrelations of the traditional, the emergent, the local, and the global in addition to (though frequently as part of) the popular. Still heavily revisionist-Marxist, its practitioners draw insights from the writers associated with poststructuralism (Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, and Gilles Deleuze), from the theorists of postmodernism (Walter Benjamin, Jean-François Lyotard, and Frederic Jameson) as well as postcolonialism (Edward Said) and subaltern studies (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak).

Folkloristics intersects with cultural studies when it follows Américo Paredes' challenges of the 1970s "to place questions of the politics of culture at the heart of the discipline of folklore." As Charles L. Briggs and Amy Shuman noted in their 1993 "New Perspectives" issue of *Western Folklore*, this means, on the one hand, "understanding that folklore is already (in Derrida's terms) a politics of culture" and, on the other hand, understanding that the discipline of folkloristics is, through its representational practices, also a politics of culture. In other words, when folklorists address how folklore is shaped by and in turn shapes sociocultural power relations, they participate in the cultural studies project.

Exploring the matrix of folk, vernacular, popular, and local performances as a politics of culture, folklorists have begun to theorize cultural production from both global and local positionings. Marxist folklorist Jack Zipes, for example, has disclosed the workings of ideology in popularly reproduced fairy tales. John Dorst has described the traditionalizing practices of an elite U.S. suburb that, in a postmodern turn, inscribes and markets itself through "pamphlets, brochures, glossy travel magazines, gallery displays, postcards, tourist snapshots, amateur art, styles of interior decoration, and suburban architecture and landscaping." And Susan Davis has analyzed the way in which public parades, although frequently used to assert the dominant culture's ideological agendas, may also function for subordinated groups "as vehicles for protest as well as for historical commemoration." José Limón has historicized and localized the study of social contradictions of race, class, and gender in Mexican-American social poetry, and Barbara Babcock has explored how Cochiti women "have contrived to tell stories" through their pottery about men's storytelling, thereby subverting "masculine discursive control" and disturbing "the distribution of [local] power profoundly." Alesia García has articulated the ways in which indigenous storytelling functions as a form of cultural resistance and preservation. Deborah Kapchan has explored the emergent politics of gendered perfor-

mances in the Moroccan marketplace, and Arjun Appaduræ and colleagues, focusing on south Asian expressive traditions, have brought together a set of essays that cumulatively call for a “full and direct encounter between the problematics of performance and textuality, on the one hand, and of social and cultural history, on the other.” Situating their work in respect to a movement “toward somewhat larger-scale ideas of context, in which broader ideological frameworks, historical currents, and social formations are brought into the conceptualization of” such key concepts among folklorists as “context,” Appaduræ and colleagues foregrounded a process that is furthered in “Common Ground: Keywords for the Study of Expressive Culture,” a 1996 special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* edited by Burt Feintuch that invoked Raymond Williams’ seminal work.

Finally, disclosing folkloristics as a politics of culture, folklorists such as Richard Bauman and John W. Roberts have addressed the ways in which the discipline has been, from its early foundation in romantic nationalism, participatory in the dominant culture’s appropriations of folk culture as a means of enhancing hegemonic ideological agendas. Like their anthropological colleagues, folklorists have begun to critique the scientific essentialism of folkloristic paradigms and methods, in particular, as Camilla Collins has argued, the fallacy of scientific objectivity and the subject-object relations constructed with the discourse of older participant-observation positionings. In short, the broad range of folkloristic representational practices, as well as the ways in which those practices are enmeshed within the socioeconomic politics of our supporting institutions, have been resituated through discursive practices that are increasingly self-conscious and politically aware.

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See also Deconstruction; Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gender; Marxist Approach; Postmodernism.

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CULTURE HERO

The central figure in a myth or myth cycle whose story tells that he lived at the beginning of—or before—time, experienced extraordinary adventures and achievements, conquered or tamed environments for human use, gave life, provided the things needed to exist, and was responsible for the life designs that exist in cultures. Oedipus of Greece, Se'ehe of the Pima Native Americans, Cu Chulainn of Ireland, Manixi of New Guinea Highlands, and I'toi of the Papago, for example, are culture heroes.

Most scholars who have analyzed culture heroes have attempted either to discover the formulaic structure of the myth cycles or to interpret them as meaningful expressions of societal values, beliefs, and behaviors. In 1864, Johann Georg von Hahn published the earliest documented analysis of the formulaic pattern of culture hero myth cycles in the modern sense. Many mythologists since then—including Alfred Nutt, Otto Rank, Vladimir Propp, Joseph Campbell, Jan de Vries, and Clyde Kluckhohn—have applied the

method to the study of culture heroes. Most of these studies have agreed that folk culture heroes are a very common part of myth traditions of the world. They have also noted that there are distinct similarities in the biographies of heroes from many cultures and that there are clearly detectable trends toward regularities in the narrative content and structures of culture hero myths. This research has proved that duplication, triplication, and quadruplication of elements, reinterpretation of borrowed narratives to fit preexisting cultural aesthetics, and endless variation upon central themes are constant structural tendencies of hero tales.

Structural mythologists advanced many other theories and descriptions as a result of their attempt to discover and explain the formulaic pattern of culture hero myth cycles. Lord Raglan's myth-ritual theory held that the worldwide monomyth—the culture hero narrative structural pattern—reflected a birth, initiation, and death ritual for an individual, possibly a royal personage, who also was considered the incarnation of a god. He also concluded that the similarities of the cycles around the world proved culture heroes were not historical, that religious ritual was the source of all myths, and that, in turn, myths were the precursors of all other folklore.

Following the division in approaches developed in linguistics, Claude Lévi-Strauss argued for a structuralist approach to myth that sought to reveal culture hero stories' "deep" structure rather than their surface structures. He analyzed many myths from many cultures and found binary opposition underlying them all. He used his analyses to develop his theory that myth and mythic thought proceeded from an awareness of binary opposition toward their progressive mediation.

Joseph Campbell's popular books and lectures presented a simple, three-part summation of the pattern of culture hero myths: separation, initiation, and return. Campbell's pattern was a composite that drew single incidents from the lives of many heroes from multitudinous cultures in order to create a hypothetical monomyth.

Otto Rank applied the psychoanalytic approach to myth developed by Sigmund Freud and adapted by Carl Jung to the analysis of culture hero stories as a guide to understanding the unconscious mind. Clyde Kluckhohn supported psychoanalytical interpretations of culture hero stories that held that some themes and the linking of certain features of them exemplify a large number of ego defense mechanisms, and he provided supporting examples from his fieldwork with the Navajo. These mythologists, with the exception of Kluckhohn, based their varied theories upon library research rather than fieldwork and shared the methodology of structural analysis of culture hero texts.

R. R. Marett issued the first call in the modern era for research interpreting culture heroes as meaningful expressions of societal values, beliefs, and



The mythical adventures and achievements of Oedipus define his role as a culture hero in Greek folklore.

behaviors. In his 1914 presidential address to the Folk-Lore Society and in subsequent presentations, he argued that researchers had to understand and interpret oral folklore as a meaningful expression of a culture. His call was very much in keeping with the ideas and methods of the functional movement in anthropology. Two years later, Franz Boas published his seminal work *Tsimshian Mythology* in which he emphasized the importance of fieldwork in order to understand folklore in general and myth in particular. Boas, however, attempted to use myths primarily to reconstruct the past of cultures rather than to understand how they function in the present. The first forty years of

the twentieth century were, in retrospect, a golden age for the collection of culture hero stories and for attempts to interpret culture hero stories in terms of their meaning to the people who were their customary audience and performers. Many of Boas' students collected culture hero tales in their natural contexts, and some—most notably Ruth Benedict—used their data for understanding how the stories functioned in cultures.

Functionalism gained even more support in the 1950s when William Bascom presented his functional approach to folklore in his presidential address before the American Folklore Society. By the 1990s, it had become a truism that culture hero stories function directly, indirectly, and inversely within cultures.

Many field research-oriented anthropologists and folklorists of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s applied a functionalist approach to the study of culture heroes. Brian M. Du Toit collected a cycle of stories about a culture hero of the Gadsups of the New Guinea Highlands, recorded their performance and cultural context, and interpreted the stories as meaningful expressions in the culture of their audience and performers. Tomás ó Cathasaigh analyzed the concept of the hero in Irish myth and concluded that myths and their structures evince native ideology and explore a culture's concepts of the nature of men and the gods.

Many theories developed by the functionalist researchers who attempted to discover and understand the formulaic structure of culture hero myth cycles had few adherents in cultural studies by the 1990s, but the general conclusions they reached remained very important. Cultural studies of the 1990s, in general, accepted the later functionalist field studies that interpreted culture hero myths as meaningful expressions of societal values, beliefs, and behaviors. The most promising methodology for future folk culture hero research is a structural-functional approach uniting the study of lore with the study of the folk and the study of the past with the study of the present.

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See also Hero/Heroine, Folk; Myth-Ritual Theory.

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CUSTOM

An activity performed with such regularity that it is considered expected behavior or a part of social protocol. Simply put, custom is the traditional and expected way of doing things. Customs that assume the authority of unwritten law are called *mores*, and some customs and mores may become part of a written legal system.

Custom includes a vast aggregate of human behavior. Ethnographers regard customary actions as part of the daily routine in people's lives. Folklorists tend to consider custom as a component of folk belief or folkways. Recent folklore studies generally do not deal with the national or broadly practiced ethnic customs but instead are restricted to collecting and analyzing customs maintained by discrete folk groups. For example, the agricultural customs practiced by the Pennsylvania Dutch or the occupational customs of Chicago firefighters are the type of customs that received attention from folklorists. Moreover, recent folklore publications also indicate that folklorists who deal with custom focus their efforts on rural customs, religious customs, occupational customs, and children's play customs. More often than not, those studies that employ the term *folkways* refer exclusively to rural practices, especially those closely associated with agriculture and animal husbandry.

People learn customs and when to use them appropriately in a variety of ways. Sometimes, a knowledgeable member of the group tells the uninitiated or by action indicates what kind of behavior is expected in a particular situation. The family unit, for example, plays a major role in continuing customs by telling children when and how certain practices are expected in particular contexts.

Folklorists consider customs to fall into four major categories: (1) calendar customs (i.e., practices associated with certain dates or times of the year), (2) rites of passage customs (i.e., practices associated with pivotal moments in the human life cycle), (3) customs associated with significant communal events (i.e., festivals and other large group celebrations), and (4) customs linked to folk belief (i.e., practices that result from holding certain beliefs). Although these categories serve the academic purpose of cataloging, rarely do they not overlap in actuality.

Calendar customs in the United States are less common than they are in Europe. Although most Americans celebrate calendar holidays, such as the Fourth of July or Thanksgiving, they may maintain regional and familial traditions that distinguish the way in which one group of people commemorates these holidays from the ways of other groups. Since the mid-nineteenth century, celebrating Thanksgiving has been a national custom, but rather than focus their attention on Thanksgiving as a national harvest celebration, folklorists research regional and family customs that develop as part of cele-

brating Thanksgiving. How special foods are prepared and served, who performs what activities associated with preparing and serving the meal, and even deciding when and where the meal is to be served are ruled by custom. The males in some extended families in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and upstate New York customarily spend Thanksgiving Day morning and early afternoon deer hunting while the women remain at home to prepare the traditional turkey meal. In some families, this hunt customarily marks the opportunity for younger children, in the company of their fathers, uncles, and older brothers, to go on their first hunt. Seldom are any animals shot this day, but the hunt and male bonding accompanying it manifest an important social dimension associated with Thanksgiving Day, and for some of the participants, the custom becomes a rite of passage.

The calendar offers various groups opportunities for practicing different customs. Ringing in the New Year may be replaced by shooting in the New Year among German- and Italian-Americans. Recently arrived ethnic groups such as the Vietnamese and Cambodians have introduced the celebration of Tet with its accompanying customs into American culture. Many Catholics continue to have their throats blessed on St. Blaise's Day, February 3.

Regional customs often mark the changing seasons. Vermonters customarily start their tomato and pepper plants indoors on or shortly after Town Meeting Day, the first Tuesday of March. Many Vermonters who tap maple trees for their sap customarily celebrate the beginning of a new sugaring season by using the first maple syrup for sugar-on-snow, which is customarily accompanied by dill pickles and plain doughnuts.

Some U.S. calendar customs, such as sending Father's Day and Mother's Day cards or passing out sweets and flowers on St. Valentine's Day, are supported more by commercial interests than by folk tradition.

Rites of passage serve to mark major transitions in the lives of individuals, and customs associated with them are important ways for folk groups to recognize the changes. From conception to death, folk groups have produced an enormous number of customs that measure the growth and development of its members. Deciding on the name of a child may be left up to the whim of parents, but in many cases, family or ethnic custom dictates that the parents follow the custom of naming the child after an ancestor or other relative. Customarily, the tooth fairy trades candy or money for the child's baby tooth when it falls out. Although this tradition may have had ancient roots in superstition, the custom as now practiced in most of the United States simply marks a stage in the physical transition of a child into adulthood, and it also promotes a safe and easy way for parents to dispose of an unneeded tooth. Peers may punch the arm of the birthday child, one punch for every year of age. Customs associated with courtship and marriage persist in the United States. Among some Mexican-Americans, it is customary for a group of the

young man's friends to visit the girl's family to ask permission for the courtship to begin. Decorating cars after a wedding and parading through the bride's and groom's neighborhoods while honking the car horn remain part of community and ethnic traditions. In parts of the southern and midwestern United States, the marriage celebration does not end until after the newlyweds' first night is disrupted with a surprise and customary shivaree. The bride and groom are expected to invite the nighttime revelers into their home and give them food and drink. Customs associated with dying and death are equally widespread. Some families consider it customary to stop their clocks to mark the time that someone in the house died. In parts of the South, pottery and medicine bottles decorate graves. A widespread practice that is held after the graveside ceremony is the meal to which the mourners are invited in order to celebrate life. In many places, it is customary for the survivors to maintain their relative's gravesite and to decorate it with flowers, candles, or other ornaments on the anniversary of the death and on particular calendar celebrations.

Folk festivals provide the opportunity for a large degree of community involvement. In the Scottish-American Highland games held annually in New Hampshire, descendants of Scottish families can celebrate their heritage. The women prepare the customary dishes of Scotland; the children, dressed in kilts, perform the Highland dances, and the men compete in games that test their strength. Folks in backwater communities of Louisiana celebrate Mardi Gras following old customs unlike those practiced in the massive, more commercialized Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans. Among many Italian-Americans, December 26 is visiting day. They customarily leave their front doors open, set out drinks on nearby tables, and arrange for viewing the gifts received on Christmas. Then they visit their neighbors' homes, calling on folks who themselves may be out making other visits. The custom provides the opportunity to show generosity to friends and to display signs of prosperity.

Festivals also provide a context in which to perform various customs. Native Americans gather for national powwows, at which they share, invigorate, and revitalize traditional, tribal, and newly created pan-Native American customs. Most state and national folk festivals are hybrid products of surging popular interest in folk traditions, especially folk music, storytelling, and crafts. Many of these would not exist on the scale they do without federal and state support and without large, professionally oriented organizations behind them.

Certain customs are closely associated with folk belief, sometimes making it difficult—and perhaps unnecessary—to distinguish custom and ritual. But the custom and ritual, at least in the abstract, are different. Ritual is usually performed in order to affect the future. Custom, in the abstract, is practiced to influence the present. To break custom can bring criticism or censure from members in the folk community. The practice of dressing a male infant in blue

and the female in pink, for instance, partly derives from a primitive European belief that blue protects infants from harm. Although the belief itself generally has died out in the United States, many Americans follow the practice because “that’s the way things are done.” Similarly, if the gender of an expected child is not known, baby gifts are bought in a neutral color—yellow or green. The origin of this custom is probably unknown to most of those who follow it, but custom demands that the practice be followed.

To avoid bad luck, some people customarily throw salt over the left shoulder after having accidentally knocked over a saltshaker. But when the original belief associated with the custom disappears, customary actions often continue to be practiced. These actions may take be associated with new beliefs, or they may simply be practiced by habit. Many Americans may still knock on wood even though they do not know or believe in the Germanic belief behind the custom.

In the broadest sense, much of folklore is itself a part of custom because folklore is appropriate and often expected behavior in certain contexts. An ill person by custom seeks advice from the herb doctor; custom tells the Native American storyteller to wait until winter to tell certain tales; the singer frames the performance of a song with customary opening and closing formulas. Though remedies, tales, and songs are not necessarily considered customs, the practice of each may be decided by folk custom.

Material culture may also be directed by custom. Historically, custom dictated whether a chimney was built inside or outside the house or where outbuildings were located in relationship to the house. Custom may also limit the functional design for the interior of a house. For many years in the East and Midwest, lilac bushes were customarily planted in the front yards of country homes. Even the most modern styles of housing may reflect customary expectations as folk tastes adopt them to a certain way of life.

As folklorists look at folk traditions in the workplace, they discover a whole range of customs. Richard Dorson’s research among lumberjacks in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan discerned a code of behavior that prescribed a number of customs. For example, the jack, after spending months in the woods, was by custom expected never to walk away from a fight, to be courteous toward women, and to spend all of his wages on drinks for himself and his fellow lumberjacks. Lumberjacks also hold their own carnivals at which they customarily compete in various games that demonstrate their logging skills. In other occupations, custom dictates a hierarchy—for example, new workers on an assembly line may be expected to do the unpleasant tasks. The customary coffee break provides both white- and blue-collar workers with a time for gossip, sharing stories, and playing practical jokes. In this context, too, new workers learn more about the social and work protocols expected of them.

CUSTOM

Determining when a traditional craft should be undertaken also may be bound with custom. In some regions of the United States, it is a custom for a young girl to complete her first quilt—usually a doll-sized version—before reaching puberty. The finished quilt is stored in her hope chest until she marries, and eventually, it is used to bundle her first child.

Families may have their own customs, such as parents sitting at the head of the table or the youngest child opening the first gift on Christmas morning. Custom may dictate that the main meal on Sunday will be eaten in the early afternoon, although dinner meals throughout the rest of the week are eaten in the evening.

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See also Belief, Folk; Foodways.

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D

DANCE, FOLK

Concept of a specific type or repertoire of dances belonging to the folk, developed in the latter part of the eighteenth century, in close relation to the social, political, and economic development in western and central Europe. In other parts of the world, the notion of folk dance as distinct from other kinds of dance has been less common or even totally absent (as, for example, in parts of Africa and eastern Siberia). During the nineteenth and especially the twentieth centuries, the notion was exported to most parts of the world, with the result that it is now likely that one may find something called “folk dance” everywhere.

Common definitions of the concept usually rest on a combination of at least three criteria: (1) the social and/or geographical origin of the dances and/or the dancers; (2) the forms and types of dances and/or the ways of dancing; and (3) the ways, forms, and means of transmission of the dances. However, the term *folk dance* often is used in a more general and descriptive sense also as a generic label (in much the same way as, for example, the terms *ballet*, *jazz*, *rock*, and *latin* are used) for a large and varied repertoire of dances, practiced in organized forms by specially recruited and trained groups for the purpose of either recreation or stage performance.

A standard textbook definition, compiled from a list of the most commonly used criteria, might read: Folk dances are dances that belong to and represent a specific part of the lower strata of the population, usually the peasantry (or all the lower strata of the population or the entire population) of a culturally and/or geographically bounded region or nation; the dances being collectively and anonymously created and choreographed and passed on in tradition from generation to generation, orally or nonverbally, in nonwritten form, outside formal educational institutions. As a result, folk dances exist in many different variants and are performed by unself-conscious, nonprofessional dancers primarily for functional purposes (e.g., for magical or religious rites, ceremonies, and initiations or for the promotion of social cohesion or cultural identity).

To date, there is no generally accepted definition of folk dance, and it must be understood that such a definition, for logical and empirical as well as social and political reasons, is impossible to establish. Nevertheless, over the years, there have been many attempts to define the term, resulting in a growing confusion about the meaning and use of the concept. The confusion has a variety of causes. One obstacle is the many different usages of the word *folk*. Another is the idea that folk dance is an authentic representation of an



Smoki snake dancers of Prescott, AZ. The snake dance is enacted to expedite the peoples' prayers to the gods.

ancient heritage and cultural identity of a folk or a nation. This belief has led to a quest for typical and representative dances, and political rhetoric sometimes deliberately obscures the two different denotations of the word *typical* in this context (i.e., “the most commonly used” versus “the most characteristic and distinctive”). Furthermore, the idea of the folk as a homogeneous, culturally and geographically bounded entity has encouraged a static view of folk dance and a neglect or even denial of local and regional variations, class differences, transcultural influences, processes of improvisation, innovation, creation, and change. This in turn has created a need among some scholars and performers to introduce a distinction between “unchanged,” “true,” or “authentic” folk dances (e.g., “folklore,” “folk dance in its first existence,” “survivals”) versus “changed,” “false,” or “unauthentic” folk dances (e.g., “folkish” or “folkloristic dances,” “folklorism,” “fakelore,” “folk dance in its second existence,” or “revival dances”).

The often uncritical and naive application of the specifically European folk concept of folk dance to non-European societies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has led to further confusion and elicited severe criticism. As a result, a set of related terms have been introduced, such as a *national dances* and *primitive dances*. These labels rose to prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *National dances* was not only a synonym for *European folk dances* but also applied to all forms and types of non-European dances; *primitive dances* was usually applied to dances in “primitive” societies, especially in Africa and Asia.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, a growing dissatisfaction with the term *folk dance* among scholars and performers led to the introduction of yet other terms, such as *traditional dance* (used to include also other orally transmitted forms, such as the Indian *kathak*), *popular dance* (modern ballroom recreational dances but also often including folk dance, especially in Great Britain), *ethnic dance* (a term introduced in the 1960s referring to the dances of minorities in multicultural societies, especially in the United States), and *vernacular dance* (introduced by the U.S. dance ethnologist Joann Kealiinohomoku to include jazz dance and other popular forms).

Like *folk dance*, most of these terms and concepts have been vaguely defined, usually by combining some or all of the criteria mentioned earlier. In practice, most of these terms have been used to describe more or less the same dance types or forms as were previously studied as folk dance. Often, these terms have been arranged, implicitly or explicitly, in an evolutionary hierarchy, from primitive dances through folk dances and popular (or social) dances to classical dances (the two middle categories may sometimes be reversed).

The difficulties in defining *folk dance* originate with the fact that many of the criteria ascribed to folk dance are contrastive and can only be understood in relation to other forms of dance in specific historical contexts. In the history of folk dance, it is possible to identify at least three periods when such contrastive relations have stood out as especially important.

Crucial to most definitions is the notion that folk dance only exists in societies that also maintain art or classical dance forms. This idea can be traced back to the political and social situation in western and central Europe in the late eighteenth century. Introduced by German and French bourgeoisie intellectuals, the category “folk” intentionally was constructed in a distinct contrast to the ruling classes of postfeudal Europe. Thus, the theatrical and social dances of the cultivated few were understood to be new—individually created for aesthetic purposes by well-known, artistically self-conscious choreographers and dance masters. In contrast, folk dances were held to be old, collectively and anonymously created, and performed for functional purposes by unself-conscious peasants far from the towns and castles of the nobles. Whereas the dances of the nobles were perceived to be complex in structure

and technically sophisticated—dances whose creation and performance demanded special training—folk dances were understood to be simpler, possessing natural dignity.

From this period stems the ambivalent discourse about folk dance as, on the one hand, uncultivated and therefore less valuable and as, on the other, natural and therefore more valuable. This ambiguity has been a constant feature of the concept since the late eighteenth century. Also, the emphasis on the most rustic and ancient of the dances found among the rural classes, a constant feature in definitions of folk dance, can be explained as an intended contrast against the classical and aristocratic social dance forms of the time. We also can trace the ambiguity concerning who is to be considered the folk to this period. Though some argued that only the peasants could be taken into account, others maintained that other members of the population, such as workers, could also be classified as folk. Nevertheless, it remained self-evident for both sides that the noble classes had to be excluded.

The second important period in the history of folk dance was the late nineteenth century. Then, folk concepts (such as folk dance, folk music, folk costumes, and folklore) were again evoked by the European urban bourgeoisie, this time to contrast the music and dance forms of the modern industrialized society and the urban working class. In Hungary and other eastern European countries and in Germany, folk dance, folk music, and folk costumes became fashionable among young intellectuals as symbols of a national awakening and of a growing dissatisfaction with the cosmopolitan elite culture. In Sweden, students and intellectuals founded the first folk dance organizations, which propagated “authentic folk dances” on a massive scale, in order to fight what were considered to be the foreign and degenerative influences of modern, urban life on the ancient Swedish folk dance traditions. Around the turn of the twentieth century, similar organizations had been founded in most European countries.

Through this contrastive use, folk dance developed even stronger associations with the old as opposed to the modern, the peasantry as opposed to the urban working class, the native as opposed to the foreign, and the national as opposed to the international. As a result, an ideal model of the peasantry as the bearers of a distinctive and homogenous national culture was firmly established, a model that still is prominent in the field of folk dance today.

Before and immediately after World War II, folk dancing again became popular in western Europe and the United States, often as a means to promote regional or national cultural identity but also as a symbol of peace and feelings of international understanding. In San Francisco, New York, Amsterdam, Stockholm, and many other cities, so-called international folk dance clubs were established, where young urban people met to practice dances from different parts of the world, especially the British Isles, the Balkans, the Nordic

countries, and Israel. Although some of the dances belonged to the traditional repertoire of these countries, others were new compositions in folk style, made specifically to meet the demands of these new organizations.

After World War II, folk dancing became very popular in the new socialist states in Eastern Europe. In Yugoslavia, a whole generation enrolled in amateur organizations to learn the folk dances of their new confederates. This movement, described as *folkloromanija* by the Serbian ethnochoreologist Olivera Mladenovic, had its counterparts in all socialist countries and was enthusiastically supported by the prevailing regimes as a means to instill new socialist national and cultural identity in the population. During this period, parts of the old romantic concept of folk merged with the socialist notion of “the people” to form a rather unique Eastern European definition of folk, which later came to influence the discourse about the folk and folk dance in many Western countries, as well as in the Third World.

The postwar interest in folk dance brought about the development of a class of highly stylized, typified, and formally representative national folk dances intended for stage use, together with certain types of events (international folklore festivals) at which such dances could be performed. To improve the standards of folk dancing, professional state folk dance and folk music ensembles were set up in all Eastern European socialist countries, (e.g. the Kolo ensemble in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1948). These ensembles were modeled upon existing state ensembles in the Soviet Union (especially the Pyatnitskij and Moisejev ensembles), and sometimes they even were under the direct control of Soviet advisers. The creative mixing of old folk dance traditions with the organized forms of folk dance cultivated in the amateur associations, modern dance theater, and ballet gave rise to a new dance genre, which, under the name of folklore, was exported to Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Mongolia, and many other countries in the Third World. Paradoxically, this very national, even nationalistic, genre today has become one of the most international dance genres in the world and probably the one that attracts the biggest number of participants and audiences. Folk dance is an obligatory part of the national state inventory, even in countries where distinctions between classical or folk dances never existed (for example, Tanzania).

Therefore, a range of different usages and levels of meaning are stored in today’s folk dance concept. As the concept became more polysemic and multivalent, it became easier to utilize—but also more difficult to define.

RESEARCH ON FOLK DANCE

There are many noteworthy documents on dance and dancing by explorers, travelers, and ethnographers dating many centuries back (i.e., the famous Indian dance book *Bharata Natya Shastra*, from the first centuries A.D.), as well

as some important studies by folklorists and musicologists from the last century. However, a genuinely systematic folk dance research began only in the first part of the twentieth century. In most parts of the world, dance research never has been an independent academic discipline. The bulk of dance studies have been carried out by European (most notably, Eastern European) and U.S. scholars trained in musicology, ethnomusicology, folklore, ethnology, anthropology, and related disciplines. Therefore, the theories and methods used in folk dance research have developed in close connection to these disciplines, and they have followed the same trends.

Over the years, folk dance scholars have pursued several goals simultaneously. There has been a profound difference between those scholars emphasizing structural aspects of the dance itself (forms, types, and structures) and those emphasizing dance in culture or “dance as culture” (functions and meanings of dance and dancing). There also have been crucial differences between the historically oriented research that developed in Europe, addressed questions of origin and distribution, and emphasized recording and documentation, on one hand, and the type of anthropologically and linguistically inspired research that has dominated in the United States, on the other. Although European scholars have tended to focus mainly upon the folk dance traditions of their own countries, many of the dance scholars in the United States have devoted more attention to dance among Native Americans or the peoples of Europe and Southeast Asia. As a result, much of the European folk dance research has tended to be, implicitly or explicitly, preconditioned and circumscribed by nationalist ideologies, and much of the U.S. research has tended to lack historical depth and to describe dance as mirroring other (and by implication, more important) aspects of culture.

Since the late 1960s, dance research has grown considerably in scope and in depth, both theoretically and methodologically. As a result, many of the differences between the European and the U.S. research traditions have been reduced, and important links have been built between the “danceologists” and “culturologists.” Although issues of forms, types, and structures of dances and dance as a cultural expression remain important, recent international economic, political, and cultural changes have called forth new fields and questions. For example, small and cheap but technically advanced video cameras have made it possible to document and analyze not only dances but also entire dance events, which has led to a growing number of studies on improvisation, creation, and dancing as process. Continuing massive urbanization and large-scale migration from the poor regions of the world to the rich areas has led to a growing interest in the meanings and functions of dance among migrants in urban and multicultural societies. The creation and rapid, worldwide distribution of new forms and types of dancing, as well as contexts and reasons for dancing, has led to an interest in the roles of dance in trans-cultural processes and culture building at large.

Folk dance researchers today often call their subject “ethnochoreology,” “dance ethnology,” or “dance anthropology” (“anthropology of dance”), depending on their education, professional affiliation, and fields of interest. Although there are special national organizations for folk dance researchers in some countries (for example, in the Nordic countries), most ethnochoreologists and dance anthropologists are members of national and international anthropological, ethnological, and musicological scientific associations. This can be explained by close theoretical and methodological connections and also by the continuing strong personal connections between researchers in these fields.

Two major trends in modern dance studies that may arise from this situation can be identified. First, there is a strong tendency to give up the notion of “folk dance” for “dance,” to pass on from “folk dance research” to “dance studies”—which gives room for studies of all kinds of dance, in all parts of the world. Second, there is a tendency to extend the scope of interest from dance as an object to dancing as a process. Taken together, these tendencies imply a broadening of perspectives that may lead to a more general focus on dance as human expressive behavior.

EXAMPLES OF DANCE RESEARCH

For many reasons, it is impossible to survey the folk dances of the world except in the most general and abstract way. For example, an overview from the perspective of how the body is used would probably only reveal that there is a tendency to stress floor activity, legwork, and footwork in Europe, a tendency to stress hand, arm, and upper torso movements in Asia, and a tendency to use all the body, often polyrhythmically, in Africa. The meaningfulness of such an overview must be seriously questioned. An important reason for the difficulties involved in this type of study is, of course, the overwhelming variety of forms and types of folk dances, styles and ways of dancing, and occasions and reasons for dancing. Other reasons, as noted earlier, are the problems of definition regarding folk dance and the theoretically, methodologically, and empirically still rather limited scope and content of folk dance research. Though there are relatively many studies of folk dance in Europe, especially Eastern Europe, there still are few from most other parts of the world. Even in Europe, the results of the research are often fragmentary, scattered, and difficult to compare and synthesize. Nevertheless, attempts at developing an overview have been made, the most notable and initially promising perhaps being Alan Lomax’s grand-scale *choreometrics* project. The results, however, raise as many questions as the study attempts to answer.

A limited overview of existing folk dances in Europe today, however, is possible. Historical studies of folk dance in Europe have revealed the existence of several different layers of dance types and forms. The most ancient layer,

surviving mainly as parts of old rituals and ceremonies, consists mainly of dances with a rather simple formal structure, which are performed collectively by large groups. There are, in addition, some more complicated solo dances with turns, skips, jumps, and movements imitating animals. The medieval layer consists mainly of collectively performed round dances and chain dances, and the Renaissance layer consists more of solo dances, dances performed with sticks and weapons. To the baroque layer belong a rich variety of group dances in squares and lines (*contredanse*, country dances), and during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, couple dances, such as the waltz, schottische, and polka, became popular over most parts of Europe. The twentieth-century layer is primarily composed of a large number of couple dances (e.g., foxtrot, one-step, tango, jive) and by a type that could be termed “mass solo dances” (in many countries, these are called “disco dances”), a new phenomenon in the Western world.

The folk dances in Europe also could be surveyed from a geographical perspective. In southeastern Europe, there is a predominance of chain dances and round dances (the Serbian *kolo*, Bulgarian *horo*, Greek *choros*, Rumanian *hora*), often led by a specially gifted dancer. In central Europe, couple dances of different kinds are predominant (*csardas*, polka, waltz); in northern and western Europe, both couple dances (schottische, polka, *polska*, waltz, *krakowjak*) and group dances of different kinds (chain dances, round dances and “contra dances” in squares and lines) have been popular.

From a structural point of view, it may be noted that a very common pattern in European dances can be schematically written A-B-B1 (a step, followed by a different step in the same direction, then the last step again but with reversed direction). This simple formula is known all over Europe and the Near East—from the Turkish *hasap*, the Romanian *sirba*, the *branle simple* of the medieval aristocracy, the dancing to ballad singing in the Faroe Islands, and the foxtrot of today’s dance restaurants. A structural analysis of a number of dances from Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia demonstrates that many other and more complex dances, with longer motives and more phrases, are built on the same structural pattern as well. A similar structural analysis of Hungarian men’s dances, *legenyés*, by the Hungarian dance researchers György Martin and Ernő Pesovar has revealed the existence of a kind of dance vocabulary, consisting of a large number of short formulas that are repeated and combined in different ways, according to certain structural rules. A subsequent structural analysis of chain dances in Europe by the Danish ethnochoreologist Lisbet Thorp has shown that most chain dances are constructed by combining a fairly small number of formulaic motives in different ways, according to a kind of “grammar.”

These and many other studies point to redundancy as a fundamental quality in folk dancing. The redundancy leads to a well-known phenomenon

in the field of folk dance (as well as in other forms of folklore) that could be described by paraphrasing the English historian Peter Burke: The same dance is different, and different dances are the same. A dance may be differently performed at different occasions and by different dancers, yet it is considered as the same dance. Likewise, two dances can be made up almost entirely by the same set of motives or phrases and still be considered different.

Owe Ronström

See also Choreometrics.

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DECONSTRUCTION

The critical activity that attempts to subvert the idea that there can ever be closure in interpretation. This activity, whose formal origin is attributed to the French philosopher and literary critic Jacques Derrida, defies classification as a theoretical branch of poststructuralism due to its transitory and often playful rendering of its own construction, which continually reinterprets and redefines the function and form of the idea of deconstruction.

As an activity, deconstructionism subverts the meaning or the truth of an interpretation by revealing that which an interpretation must necessarily

repress—conflicting and anomalous interpretations—in order to give the illusion of meaningfulness. In doing so, the deconstructionist grants an audience to the multiple meanings available for interpretation and thereby endlessly defers the anticipation of arriving at an ultimate conclusion. The deconstructionist, then, is generally skeptical of the traditional methods used in interpretation whereby closure is achieved. This is not to suggest that the deconstructionist views interpretation as meaningless; rather, the deconstructive activity presumes that interpretation is capable of infinite meaningfulness.

One of Derrida's most effective conceptual activities used in subverting the idea of closure is the anomalously spelled *différance*. This term plays on the French verbs for “to differ” and “to defer” by insinuating both of their meanings. In doing so, the term confronts Ferdinand de Saussure's notion that meaningful language depends on the recognition of distinctive signs by proposing that meaning must be infinitely deferred since the play of meaning goes on and on. In other words, meaning cannot be passed between minds through words since additional oppositional distinctions lie, for instance, on both sides of the original distinction that informs the transmitted sign, and these oppositional distinctions extend outward in a chain that lures the listener from the speaker's intended meaning.

In deconstructionism's desire to upset the traditional methods of interpretation, deconstructionist texts often prove difficult to read. This difficulty is not due to any inherent complexities of the activity, but it serves as another attack on the certainty upon which interpreters and their audiences traditionally have relied. Deconstructionism, continuing its attack on traditional interpretation, encourages a suspicion of all research and scholarship that has laid claim to a stable interpretive context for the research, for stability has little place in an activity that values continual rereadings.

Although there tend to be few folklorists who explicitly adopt the critical activity of deconstructionism (i.e., the rigorous inversion of the binary and a teasing out of the multiple meanings) in their scholarship and research, the idea that meaningful closure is illusory is being reflected in much of the discipline's current work. This reluctance to adopt a deconstructive activity is shared with many other academic disciplines as well, for the admission that terms such as *meaning* and *truth* are relative at best and fictions at worst undermines the perceived role of the educational institution and its efforts at interpretive analysis, critical investigations, transmission of knowledge, and, therefore, the institution's mission.

Charlie McCormick

See also Cultural Studies; Postmodernism.

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DIACHRONIC/SYNCHRONIC

Distinctive approaches to the study of language that have been extended to folklore studies. Ferdinand de Saussure sharply differentiated a diachronic (or historical) approach to the study of language, which views language as constantly dynamic, from a synchronic (or nonhistorical) approach, which perceives language in unchanging stasis at a particular point in its continual development. The distinction has entered the discourse of folklore studies in two ways.

When Claude Lévi-Strauss introduced his structural study of myth, he suggested that two ways of reading myth corresponded to *langue* (Saussure's synchronic approach) and *parole* (the diachronic approach). Interpreting myth diachronically resulted in a narration that presented the elements of myth in the nonreversible sequence demanded by the story chronology. For Lévi-Strauss, understanding myth synchronically meant that one should focus on recurrent patterns that appear at different points in the narration. Reading several instances of a recurrent pattern in relation to occurrences of other patterns allowed an understanding of how the myth reflected the tendency of the human mind to work toward mediated binary opposition. Some folklorists and other students of narrative have used the term *syntagmatic* synonymously with *diachronic* and *paradigmatic* to equate with *synchronic*.

The distinction between the terms *diachronic* and *synchronic* has had more significant impact on folklore studies through their application to general methods of research and analysis. Diachronic approaches to folklore involve looking at particular genres or specific text-types in terms that remove them from their performance context. These approaches (for example, the historic-geographic method) work toward constructing genre and text-type histories, but they do so by conceiving folklore as an artifact that can be isolated from its immediate contexts. Synchronic approaches, influenced by the ethnography of speaking introduced by Dell Hymes and John J. Gumperz, view folk-

lore as text and/or process within a specific context that includes the immediate performance situation, the cultural background in which that situation occurs, and the psychosocial influences that have affected the participants (performers and audience) of the community.

Critics of diachronic approaches have argued that focusing on the historical or cross-cultural dynamism of texts without contexts makes folklore a lifeless entity, analogous to a collection of museum specimens. Critics of synchronic approaches have suggested that they lose what is distinctive in the study of folklore, substituting the methods and interpretive tools of ethnography and sociolinguistics for those that have developed within the history of folklore studies. The study of folklore becomes an examination of behavior rather than of the products of artistic creativity.

The gulf between diachronic and synchronic approaches to folklore study was wide in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Although the first generation of academically trained folklorists in the United States had defined folklore study in diachronic terms, many of their successors, whose manifesto was a special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* published in 1971, advocated synchronic perspectives. That gulf persisted into the 1990s, but its significance for folklore studies lessened as some folklorists found ways of bridging it and as new concerns in folklore study emerged.

William M. Clements

See also Paradigmatic/Syntagmatic.

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DIALOGISM

The term used by late-twentieth-century scholars to describe Mikhail M. Bakhtin's (1895–1975) epistemology of mutually influencing relations among entities. Bakhtin himself employed the term *dialogue* (also *dialogization*). Dialogue served as Bakhtin's master metaphor in a semiotic "architectonics" (i.e., in Michael Holquist's terms, a "science of relations") that emphasized the concepts of emergence, relativity, tension, selection, and value. To Bakhtin, no entity had meaning in isolation. There are three basic aspects of this assertion. First, in conversational dialogue (Bakhtin's simplest framing of the term), utterances respond to one another and thereby take on meaning relative to one another. Somewhat analogously in epistemological dialogue, any entity (e.g., the human self, a literary text or character or author, an interpretive strategy, an ideology) acquires meaning only in terms of its interaction with other entities (other human selves, literary texts). This interaction may occur between entities of like kind (e.g., one character in a text in light of other characters in the same text) or between entities of differing kinds (e.g., a character's identity relative to the author's identity or the tenets of an ideology relative to the *chronotope* [i.e., the circumstances of time and space and the sociocultural contexts implied thereby] in which that ideology developed). Second, dialogue is mutually influencing to the entities involved. Thus, not only does an entity A take on significance in relation to entities B and C, for example, but *simultaneously* B and C also acquire meaning relative to their interaction with A. Third, meaning also depends on the particular power relationships obtaining among the entities. In other words, meaning arises within and exists in tension. It emerges in dialogue among *different* entities, each of which has its own viewpoint to promote. In a dialogic relationship, meanings may, for example, be altered, deleted, conjoined, or substituted as each particular viewpoint or "voice" struggles for dominance.

Any dialogue involves interaction among a multiplicity of voices operating simultaneously on several different levels—that is, in the condition Bakhtin termed *heteroglossia*. In any act of meaning-making, participants must choose which voices-in-dialogue to heed. Thus, meaning is the result of the value-based action (i.e., choice or "authorship") of its participants and not simply of the participants' perception. The quality of "novelness," which in literature is demonstrated most strongly in the genre of the novel, is that condition of human perception that is most sensitive to heteroglossia.

Because meaning is always positional (i.e., emergent within a situation of relationships), no single viewpoint can ever *validly* claim or completely maintain absolute, unitary authority (i.e., the perspective Bakhtin termed *monologism*). Confrontation with the Other will always arise because response to the

Other is intrinsic to the development of meaning. Bakhtin used the term *carnival* to refer not only to a type of medieval festival but also to any popularly based situation of fluidity that challenges the stasis of authoritative, official (i.e., monologic) culture. In carnival, novelty is most potently symbolized in the *grotesque body*—the body of extensions, apertures, and effluvia that is constantly open to the Other and thus constantly in the act of becoming.

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See also Carnival.

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DILEMMA TALES

A narrative verbal puzzle (Motifs H620, “The unsolved problem: enigmatic ending of tale,” and Z16, “Tales ending with a question”). Presenting a dilemma tale to an audience constitutes a synthesis between riddling and narrating activities. These two broad attributes of the genre may be clarified further. With reference to riddling, the dilemma tale belongs to the category of the “puzzle” in which emphasis in solving the problem is placed on the riddlee’s own abilities (such as intellectual or motor skills); in this respect, a puzzle differs from a “true riddle,” in which emphasis is on the riddle’s structure and contents that contain clues to the camouflaged answer. As for the narrative component, the dilemma tale is typically a traditional “fantasy” prose narrative, told with the intent of entertaining or instructing and training; although some dilemma tales may contain a historical or belief component, they seem not to be narrated as legends or belief narratives.

A dilemma tale differs from similar nondilemma tales that incorporate true riddles or puzzles as part of the plot; in this category, the tale’s characters (*dramatis personae*) may debate among themselves and offer answers, but members of the audience are not required to participate, and they remain spectators (e.g., AT 851, “The Princess Who Cannot Solve the Riddle”; AT 875A, “Girl’s Riddling Answer Betrays a Theft”; and AT 1579, “Carrying Wolf, Goat, and Cabbage across Stream”). By contrast, in the dilemma tale

situation, the audience is required to take part by offering answers to the problem the tale poses. The various and often conflicting solutions offered by members of the audience (each acting in dual roles as listener to the tale and as riddlee) reflect the personal viewpoints of the members proposing them; also, the answers would be based on the cultural norms (mores, folkways, laws). Consequently, the community's value system becomes a subject for debates and reevaluations. For example, a tale that appears as an African dilemma (AT 653A, "The Rarest Thing in the World") poses a situation in which three brothers, each using a precious commodity or service in resuscitating a girl, asks the question, To whom does she belong? Typically, the means utilized are information, transportation, and treatment; these may be viewed as aspects of the economic or a related culture institution whose worth will be debated.

Most of the dilemmas posed constitute decision making ("Choices," Motifs J200-J499); meanwhile, the puzzles posed belong to themes addressed under other motifs (Motifs H630, "Riddles of the superlative," and H660, "Riddles of comparison").

Although the dilemma tale has been reported from various parts of the world, its strongest presence is in sub-Saharan Africa, especially the western and central regions. Since many African dilemma tales also are known throughout the world as nondilemma tales, the occurrence of these narratives in the northern and eastern regions of Africa (in Arab, Berber, and adjacent areas) poses an interesting problem. In view of the close geographic and historical contacts between the two portions of Africa, two arguments may be advanced: (1) The northern Africans borrowed dilemma tales from the south and provided stable answers for them, thus converting them into nondilemma tales, or (2) the sub-Saharan groups took nondilemma tales from the north and omitted the concluding episodes that rest on value systems different from their own, thus converting them into dilemma tales. A third argument is that both traditions developed totally independently.

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See also Enigma, Folk.

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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The study of language in social interaction. A branch of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis offers insights into daily processes of expressive behavior and interaction. By accounting for minute features of conversation, the field provides a means of examining folklore as part of a unified communicative system.

Discourse analysis developed as a refinement of descriptive linguistics. Like sociolinguistics, it proceeds from the observation of what language accomplishes (i.e., its functions), discovering the structures and means by which that accomplishment takes place. Discourse analysis focuses in particular on the moment of interaction, be it face-to-face or transmitted by mass media.

Folklorists have made ready use of discourse analytical methods. Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj draws on studies of comprehension and memory to discuss the ways in which a single narrator remembers and performs his or her repertoire. Gary Butler similarly draws on insights into conversational roles and communicative function to shed light on such familiar genres as proverb and memorate. Deborah Tannen explores conversational style as expressive behavior. Discourse analytical frameworks deepen folkloristic understandings of performance.

Discourse analysts themselves have undertaken studies of interest to folklorists. The field is characterized by an interest in socially relevant topics. Volume 4 of the *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, for instance, offers examinations of such phenomena as gendered speech and the social use of xenophobic urban legends. Doctor-patient and politician-constituent relations form the focus of other discourse-analytical works. Such studies enrich understandings of communication and its role in social life.

A number of ethnographers have adopted discourse-analytical frameworks for addressing social issues. Conflicts between Native American modes of communication and those of Anglo schoolteachers are explored by Susan Philips. Group conflict and its resolution have been studied in ethnographies of Pacific societies.

With its descriptive apparatus and theoretical significance, discourse analysis demonstrates the tremendous expressive content of daily interaction and life.

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See also Linguistic Approach.

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DITE

A statement that implies but does not recount a narrative. C. W. von Sydow coined the term *dite* in 1937 to help classify a broad body of materials grouped as *Sagn* (a concept comprising both narrative and nonnarrative statements of folk belief). He defined it as “what people have to say about one thing or another without characterizing that which is said as true or false, believed in or fictitious.”

He divided this concept into two subcategories: (1) the *affirmate*, a statement that points out a generalized fact (“In that place, a light has been seen”), and (2) the *consiliate*, a precept that asserts what should or should not be done in a given case (“One should spit three times when a cat runs across the road”). Sydow also characterized whimsical or fanciful dites as *ficts*, expressions that have no basis in truth (such as “that stone will spin round whenever it catches the smell of newly baked bread”).

In Anglo-American taxonomies, many of Sydow’s dites would be termed *proverbs* or *superstitions*. But Sydow intended the term *dites* to contrast with *memorates* and *fabulates*, these being fully developed narratives that tell exactly what happened in a given instance. The dite may be a summary of a given narrative, he noted, or a dite may inspire an informant to expand it into a narrative.

For this reason, many scholars have seen such brief texts as types of legend. Susan Kalcik, for instance, found “kernel narratives” told in conversational contexts in which those present were familiar with the full story. Such “metonyms” (as condensed, allusive narratives also are called) still function as complete, finished performances in context. Linda Dégh argued that “the

legend text” itself consists of *all* elements, fully narrated or not, as long as they form part of a contentious conversational dynamic.

But some dites express beliefs that are *never* narrated. Sylvia Grider described the common claim that Halloween sadists put razor blades in trick-or-treat goodies as a “legend” but never found it related in the form of a story. Similarly, John Widdowson studied verbal threats that control children’s behavior by invoking evil (often supernatural) entities as completed linguistic performances, not summary narratives. In such cases, the term *dite* may be appropriate and useful. Likewise, the term *fict* accurately characterizes the widespread whimsical claim (rarely corroborated by experience) that certain statues on college campuses move or otherwise respond when a virgin passes.

The dite concept, however, assumes that we agree on how much plot constitutes a narrative. Robert Georges observed that many brief texts in context could equally be considered legend or belief statements. The distinction between legend and dite is often fuzzy, and so the latter is best understood as a term describing form rather than defining genre: A dite has the potential to be a narrative, but *in its present form*, the full story is left unexpressed.

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See also Belief, Folk; Belief Tale; Legend.



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DIVINATION

Intuitive, revealed, and inspired knowledge obtained through the use of diverse methods, techniques, tools, and devices, eliciting the nature of time and events, the path of human life and destiny, and the unfolding of a meaningful cosmos. A general term, *divination* (from the Latin *divinus*, meaning “one inspired by the gods” or “soothsayer”) refers to the culturally encoded processes of extraordinary human insight arising spontaneously from intuition and reflection or through the extrahuman agency of inspiration and prophecy by indwelling spirits and the direction of deities. Divination entails perspec-

tives on time and space spanning regression into the past and foreknowledge of the future. Another related term, the *mantic arts* (from the Greek *mantis*, meaning “prophet”) is often used to refer to the range of techniques and methods that form systems of divination, from the systematic interpretation of the personal and idiosyncratic to the perception of meaningful patterns in the natural world and the cosmos. Many types of divination have been named by the suffix *mancy*, (e.g., oneiromancy, hydromancy, and geomancy), identifying their status as disciplines that engender inspired and prophetic activity. Divination is a subject of interest within the study of folklore and folklife because it is a realm of human experience that is virtually always initially expressed and practiced orally, even though it is often later recorded in writing, in art and architecture, and in the material culture of domestic space. Divination is also equally folkloristic in that it is universally a folk practice, embraced by the common people and expressing their concerns, as well as an elite, empowered, hierarchically privileged practice of rulers, aristocracies, and professional adepts.

Since its historical range is enormous, its cultural and linguistic expression complex, and its range of tools and techniques bewilderingly diverse, divination may be best categorized along phenomenological lines. Such an approach facilitates cross-cultural and diachronic comparison and analysis. The following phenomenological categories, therefore, are offered as a comprehensive listing not of particular manifestations of divination but of types of divinatory experience.

Personal visionary and auditory experiences form a wide range of divinatory media, particularly dreams (or oneiromancy) and conscious presentiments, such as second sight, visions, soothsaying, psychic awareness, and extrasensory perception (or ESP). The mediation of knowledge communicated by the world of spirits is another important arena of divination, especially when communicated by the spirits of the dead as in necromancy, shamanism, séance, and channeling. These inspired communications can be transmitted in various ways: by indwelling spirits, gods, and the powers of nature both during and after possession and mediumship, as in speaking in tongues (or glossolalia); by prophecy via direct divine inspiration as found within Judeo-Christian-Islamic scriptures, the Zoroastrian Avesta, the Hindu Vedas and Upanishads, and so forth; by the wisdom literature embodied in the Greek and Chaldean theurgic oracles; and by other mythopoeic oracles such as archives of interpretive verses in West African and Afro-Caribbean Ifa divination.

The principle of meaningful chance and the importance of randomization are central to many divining systems. Thus, the perception and interpretation of signs or omens of luck, fate, or meaningful chance are represented in divination by lots (or sortilege, also called cleromancy); divination by the

flight of arrows or the casting of arrowheads; divination by the use of mirrors; or divination by games of chance such as dice (or lithomancy). The meaningful randomization of numeric and symbolic forms together is central to several interrelated families of divining systems, including alphabetic and numeric correspondence and the creative and cosmogonic power of numbers known as numerology, as in the medieval systems that continue into modernity of Jewish *gematriya* and Islamic *jafr*, inspired by the Pythagorean and neo-Pythagorean numerology of late antiquity. Related is the practice of name reading (or onomancy) and various types of name magic that calculate the numerical values of the letters in names and interpret their effect (for good or ill) on the life path or destiny of the individual so named. Other systems based upon meaningful chance (or randomization) of numbers and pictorial symbols usually combine with narrative or poetic traditions of interpretation. These ideographic and pictographic systems are exemplified by the relationship of numeric and pictorial images as in the tarot and other types of card reading and their traditional narrative interpretation; the relationship of alphabetic symbols and oral traditional lore in the casting of runes; the I Ching hexagrams formed by the fall of coins or yarrow stalks and their traditional narrative corpus of interpretation in the Book of Change; and the figures of Ifa formed by the numerological sequence of the casting of palm nuts or divining shells and their mythopoeic archive of interpretive Ifa verses.

Divination systems that concentrate on meaningful patterns in the relationship between earth and all heavenly bodies include the diverse historical and cultural expressions of astronomy and astrology worldwide (Babylonian-Chaldean, Hindu, Chinese, Mayan, Greco-Roman, Islamic, and European), much of which survives recombined in modern practice. Astronomy and astrology were considered twin disciplines in medieval thought, both Islamic and European. Astronomy was based on acute physical and mechanical observation of the heavenly bodies and the mathematical calculation of their regular movements. These measurements were accompanied by the complex systems of associative significance encoded by astrology. Astrology's aim was to discover the essence of universal harmony that lay in the relations between the spheres. This harmony of solids and motion was seen in the revolutions of the spheres (spherical bodies moving in what was then believed to be circular patterns). Thus, metaphysical speculations on the cosmic significance of number and practical calculations and observations required for advanced astronomy went hand in hand. Astrology is a symbolic system that has blended easily with other systems of belief and practice since late antiquity. The combinations produced, among others, astrological medicine; astrological divination, as in geomancy; astrologically grounded alchemy; and other astrological magical practices, such as astrological talismanry. Astrology charts and analyzes the meaningful patterns of structure in the heavens, that is, the

constellations that form the signs of the zodiac, the spatial relationships of heaven and earth that form the houses of the zodiac, and the changing interrelationship of transiting planetary and luminous bodies with each other over time that form the ongoing process of cosmic history. The particular nature and “influence” of the heavens upon the earth can be read as a portrait of the life path of each individual (natal astrology), the meaning and outcome of particular events in time and space (horary astrology), and the unfolding of the life course of rulers, governments, and nations in history (judicial astrology). Thus, astrology as a system of divination is formed of two interrelated activities: (1) the casting of a chart of any one of the relationships mentioned earlier through mathematical and astronomical calculation, and (2) the intuitive, inspired, and revealed process of narrative interpretation of the chart’s significance in relation to a particular question (whether it be the destiny of a person according to date and time of birth, the meaning of a particular event, the timing of a life passage, the beginning or ending of some enterprise, or the guiding of the ship of state and interactions between nations and governments).

Many other divining systems rely upon the structuring and interpretation of patterns of meaning in the earth, as encoded in its topography, its weather formations, and its natural forces and objects. Various systems of earth divination, known as geomancy, survive in living practice. For example, within the Islamic world, there are diverse practices within the larger science of Islamic geomancy, *ilm al-raml* (the science of the sand), and the divination of micro- and macrocosm represented by Chinese geomancy, *feng-shui* (divination by “wind and water”), continues in both the East and where it has been transplanted in the West. Divining the earth has often been specialized into various elemental subspecialties (according to the Greeks, the basic elements out of which all existence substance is composed are earth, water, fire, and air). Divining the presence of minerals in the earth or water or other objects is known in European and North American cultures as hydromancy, or cultivating visions in pools or surfaces of water (an activity long religiously associated with spiritual questing and interior reflection), and pyromancy, or seeing visions within candle flames or firelight have, since ancient times, been means used in diverse cultures for inspiration by the higher mind, by the gods, and by the elemental spirits of nature. Other expressions of elemental divination must include crystal gazing and stone reading, that is, seeing visions within spherical, ovoid, or other shapes of clear, colored, or reflective stones. Stone reading, allied with the magical and medical use of crystals, gemstones, and minerals in Greco-Roman antiquity, became widespread in the late medieval and Renaissance West and continues in modern times. Crystal gazing usually involves use of clear and translucent colored quartzes; diamonds and other translucent gemstones (such as emerald, beryl, ruby, sapphire, and topaz);

opaque and mirrorlike stones and gems (such as polished hematite, black obsidian, jet, and black onyx); or opalescent and reflective stones, frequently in spherical or semispherical shapes or cut as cabochon jewelry (such as varieties of agates, moonstone, rainbow and golden obsidian, tiger's eye and cat's eye, and opals). The interior reflection and mirrorlike intensity of stone reading and crystal gazing are direct parallels to the guided searching of mirrored surfaces of water described earlier. Related to this type of earth divination is the reading of meaningful patterns in natural materials such as tea leaves or coffee grounds, which are believed by tea- and coffee-drinking cultures worldwide to bear the print of life left by the one who held the cup and drank the brew.

Finally, patterns of meaning within the bodies and movements of animate creatures are divined as animal signs and omens. Within the cultures of Mediterranean antiquity and pre- and early-Christian Europe, as well as diverse tribal cultures worldwide, these patterns of meaning have been established and communicated through augury and auspices, as in interpreting the passage and flight of birds and their cries (or ornithomancy), as well as interpreting the behavior and movements of herd animals such as the horse and the behavior and movements of fish, insects, or reptiles. Through the perception and interpretation of animal portents and prodigies, the diviner alerts the community to the often malign significance of spontaneous appearances of extraordinary, anomalous, or unnatural animal forms. The divining of portents focuses individual and communal awareness on the advent of unavoidable hazards, whether stemming from the gods or from the forces of nature or human society. The reader of portents advises how to minimize and contain their danger by propitiating the forces that sent them with rituals of purification and sacrifice. Portents also can function as signs foretelling and confirming a path of extraordinary destiny communicated to an individual or community by the gods and personifications of fate.

As a subset of divining the body, there are divining systems, elements of which can be found virtually worldwide, that concentrate on the observation and analysis of the meaningful characteristics of the human body alone, believing it to be a microcosm of the meaningful universe. The divination of meaningful patterns in the human microcosm is generally identified as physiognomy, or anthroposcopy. The divination of the bodily and facial features can be broken down into several subsystems, among which are phrenology, or reading the character and mental capacity from the conformation of the skull, and metoposcopy, interpreting the lines that appear in the soles of the feet and the palms of the hands, the latter being identified independently as chiromancy, or palmistry. As a discipline in itself, palmistry reads the character and destiny of the individual from the convergence of lines and markings on the palm and the shape of the fingers and nails. Meaningful patterns also have been gleaned from human and animal remains in ancient and tribal cultures

worldwide through practices entailing sacrifice of the living creature and extraction of the organs (the viscera) or gathering of the skeletal remains of a creature already dead by natural causes. The first method is generally known as haruspicy, the sacrifice to the gods or powers to propitiate and incline them to impart hidden knowledge of present and future situations to the questioner. The reading and documentation of answer given by the gods or powers lie in the interpretation of the physical characteristics of the internal organs of the sacrificed creature. The second method relies on similar interpretive techniques but does not employ sacrifice—for example, scapulimancy and plastrancy, the induction (through the application of heat) of cracks and reading their meaningful patterns in the bones and shells of once living animals gifted to the diviner by land and sea.

It must be noted that there is considerable overlap of the characteristics of these systems, and many forms of divination share several sets of the qualities and methods listed here. Scholars often have categorized these divinatory phenomena and experiences as discrete and separate categories, whereas in individual systems of divination, the phenomena are found interlinked and interdependent. A given form of divination, for example, may involve a series of ritual acts, including the incubation of dreams, casting of symbols using physical means, numerological and astrological calculations, consultation and performance of inspired or revealed oral and/or written bodies of interpretation, sacrifices to the deities in thanks for their inspired communications and propitiating their proper action on behalf of self or client, and the preparation and administration of medicines or talismanic remedies.

The diversity of these dispersed and disparate historical and geographic practices, the complexity of their rationales and cultural and artistic forms, and the variety of their techniques and tools are consistent only in an overarching purpose that might best be described as healing. This healing purpose operates in individual terms as identification of the personal and immediate causes of spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical ills and asks for guidance in order to effect healing through appropriate action or response. The healing purpose operates also in communal terms to pinpoint the causes of domestic, communal, tribal, or national disease and disharmony and prescribes a cure often requiring a sacrifice or some other expiation that restores the health of society. Its ultimate referent is the discovery of the root cause and nature of disorder on a planetary, celestial, and cosmic scale, which offers healing through counseling individual and/or communal action to reestablish the universal or divine order. Thus, divining systems are devoted not only to knowing what is hidden about human and extrahuman affairs but also to providing tools and techniques for healing the disturbances that underlie and motivate recourse to divination. The sacrificial, ritual, verbal, and material prescriptions that often append the act of divination encompass a

range of healing processes, techniques, substances, and interactions. This dual preventative and curative function encompasses roles that modern society has separated and secularized. In the Western context, for example, these functions include, among others, psychological therapy, spiritual ministry, physical medicine, family counseling, communal arbitration, government liaison, international negotiation, environmental lobby, and science and technology advising.

The history of the scholarly literature on the subject of divination and the mantic arts is extremely diverse, with the greatest emphasis on historical and literary systems. Theoretical discussions and analytical categorizations of divination have been offered by the history of religions approach to this material, such as the useful summary by Evan M. Zeusse in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987), which emphasizes the types of religious experience and categories of perception that are the dominant features of particular divinatory systems even though they may be (and usually are) found in combination. Zeusse's typology of divination offers three main rubrics of experience and perception within which to understand divination: *intuitive divination* through dreams and visionary experience; *possession divination* by spirits and deities of nonhuman agents and of human agents; and lastly, *wisdom divination*, or systems of knowledge and techniques of interpretation based on numeric, geologic, and bodily patterns. Zeusse also distinguishes the ecstatic (intuitive and possession divination) from the nonecstatic (wisdom divination), based upon Plato's criteria of categorization (*Phaedrus* 244 and *Timaeus* 72) and the criteria of many later thinkers. He correctly emphasizes the importance of concepts and practices of sacrifice in relation to all divining systems since all divining is seen as a gift of wisdom and healing that requires a propitiating response on the part of the diviner and/or the client to the gods, ancestors, spirits of nature, powers and directions, or the cosmos as a whole.

The divination systems of the ancient and late antique world based in the cultures of the Middle East and the Mediterranean (Babylonian-Mesopotamian, Canaanite—ancient Israelite, Egyptian, Greco-Roman), which left partial to extensive textual and archaeological records, have perhaps received the greatest share of academic attention from scholars of ancient Near Eastern languages, historians, and classicists, second only to the study of Indian and Chinese divination by south and east Asian specialists. Attention has been focused on the place of divination primarily as religious and philosophical institutions of the aristocracy and ruling body, administered through a priestly class or technical college or guild of practitioners. Systems of divination that flourished during the medieval period in the West, whether Islamic, Jewish, or Christian in orientation—astrology, numerology, cards, geomancy, necromancy, hydromancy, pyromancy, dreams and second sight, physiognomy, foreknowledge and insight through the holiness of saints and

spiritual masters, divination by judicial ordeal, divining by means of sacred scripture, and so forth—have been treated less intensively by historians and religious studies scholars whose attention has focused more strongly upon the normalization of religious institutions and sacred texts during the medieval period. Although there are many medieval texts devoted to these forms of divination (particularly astrology and geomancy), it is also true that many of these practices are found within the interstices of textual and historical record, with little material or archaeological evidence to document their forms and methods.

The study of living systems of divination, predominantly in the contexts of close-knit pastoral and nomadic societies worldwide since the nineteenth century, has been an outgrowth of the anthropological attention paid to the religious beliefs and practices of diverse and discrete tribal and peasant communities in sub-Saharan Africa as well as North Africa; of Native American communities of North and South America; of the shamanistic communities of the Alaskan, Canadian, and Siberian tundra; of Polynesian and Melanesian islanders; of the Malay Archipelago; of Aboriginal Australia; and of the folk traditions of south and east Asia. This anthropological attention has been devoted primarily to the study of folk and traditional systems of divination outside of the context of complex or urban communities or to the survival and adaptation of such traditional systems as a result of modernization.

Divination has not been widely considered in folklore and folklife scholarship. Two works on divination, however, are often referred to by folklorists—William Bascom's *Ifa Divination* and Evon Z. Vogt and Ray Hyman's *Water Witching U.S.A.* These two works addressing two different forms of geomancy, although dated in theory and approach, are still considered classics and are used consistently in folklore and folklife classroom presentations of divination. Interestingly, these books do not share any common method or theoretical perspective. Their representative character regarding the study of divination lies in two approaches: treating divination from a folklore perspective and treating divination as a folk system without recourse to folklore methodology.

Bascom's *Ifa Divination* offers a consistent folkloristic emphasis on oral forms of religious practice. Ifa divination involves a series of steps beginning with dream inspiration, followed by repeated geomantic castings of figures using cowrie shells or palm nuts, and distributing that pattern of figures in wood dust on a divining tray or other surface. Numerological calculations of these castings result in the "figures of Ifa," the deity of divination. It is the visual representation of the numbers that is drawn in wood dust on the tray. Recourse is then made to the oracles of Ifa in order to interpret those figures, after which counsel is given on the correct sacrifices to be made to the Ifa deities. The final step in the cycle of Ifa divination is the prescription of spir-



Pythia pronouncing the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. This legendary Greek oracle is an example of theurgic divination.

itual and physical medicines by the diviner to remedy the spiritual, familial, and social problems that spark the client's original motivation to seek out divination. Contexting Ifa divination within its social and material nexus (through text and illustration), Bascom's work appropriately emphasizes the folkloristic importance of the selection and performance of oral traditional interpretive verses that are the oracles of the gods accompanying the physical process of casting the figures of Ifa, the master-disciple relationship and received traditions by which diviners are trained and the Ifa oracles are transmitted, and the status and social interactions of the diviner serving the small community. Bascom's approach as a folklorist is not limited to emphasis on oral forms or the folk community but also extends to the credibility given to his informants and the interview process, which is one of the unique hallmarks of folklore method and allows folklore fieldwork to openly engage the world of belief within the framework of nonparticipant observation.

Vogt and Hyman's *Water Witching U.S.A.* treats a folk system—dowsing—from a nonfolkloristic perspective, emphasizing historical and sociological analysis. The diverse names for this form of divining detailed in the work reflect the historical, cultural, and linguistic origins and geographic dispersion of this practice. Divining by a rod, wand, pendulum, or other device is known by many names—dowsing in England, water witching in the United States, *radiesthésie* (or radio-electric detection) in France, and *pedelforschung* (or pendulum research) in Germany. According to early textual references, dowsing began in Renaissance Europe as a mining technique to divine from the

surface the presence and depth of underground minerals. It rapidly spread to searching for underground water and lost objects and even came to be applied to seeking out criminals and missing persons. Through intuitive-psychic and, according to other views, electromagnetic connection with the unseen subsurface or otherwise distant objects, the diviner locates and identifies the objects, signaled by the movement of wand or pendulum. For Vogt and Hyman, dowsing qualifies as a folk system, at least in the United States, since it originated and is predominantly practiced in rural areas by ordinary, less educated individuals within folk communities, although it has also come to exist as an urban phenomenon as well. Vogt and Hyman's only truly theoretical examination of water witching is as magical divination, a designation undergirded by a reworked version of the two-tiered model—in this case, “the magical mind” and “the scientific mind.” According to this model, which Vogt and Hyman critique and yet in the end support, the beliefs and practices of the “folk,” particularly the rural folk—such as dowsing—are dominated by “the magical mind” and associated with an “emotional and unreflective attitude,” which make the beliefs and practices superstition. In this view, the authors mirror a trend in folklore scholarship that has long associated and devalued magic as superstition. The most significant drawback of *Water Witching U.S.A.* as a work utilized by folklorists is its lack of folklore content. This work reflects no particular emphasis on oral forms (although a brief section on “witching folklore” is included). There is little attention to the traditional received nature of transmission of practice or training of practitioners. And most telling, there is an a priori distrust and rejection of informant belief, experience, and testimony, which is counter to folklore methodology. Vogt and Hyman's consequent method of fieldwork, using the set questionnaire without reflecting any interviews that may have been conducted, represents a much more statistically oriented approach to social data gathering and analysis, coming out of an older and less sophisticated strata of folklore and sociology theory.

On the methodological approaches available as models for the study of divination, a number of critiques of divination as religious practice and as folk practice must be offered. The weakness of religious studies and history of religions typologies in the study of divination is their inability to reflect the complexity and interactive quality of these systems, which often rely, as has been noted, on several categories in their performance. Since discovering the presence and nature of folk divining practices is more difficult due to the paucity of written sources and material remains, the scholarly examination of divination from antiquity through the Middle Ages has concentrated on the relationship of institutional religious forms and sanctions to popular forms of divination existing outside of the institutional religious context and interacting with it at different levels, from conflict to complementarity. Thus, insuffi-

cient attention has been given to systems of divination considered in their own right, independent of institutional religious contexts; to the interaction between practitioners of divination and the folk; and to folk rather than elite systems of divination. The complex interactions between educated and elite cultural systems of divination arising to serve royal courts and wealthy aristocracies and the dissemination of popular variants of court systems among the diverse divining practices of the common people, as well as the reverse trend of the intellectualization of folk divining into elite narrative traditions, have yet to be adequately studied. Finally, very little attention has been given to modern systems of divination, which rely upon dissemination by mass media and have a broad popular appeal and expression within the complex urban societies of the West. Modern European and North American divinatory beliefs and practices communicated by print and other forms of mass media—such as astrology, numerology, tarot, channeling, Ouija board and other forms of mediumistic divination, speaking in tongues and prophecy, I Ching, runes, crystal gazing, ESP and precognitive dreaming, past-life regression, astral and out of body experience, urban dowsing, and psychometry—have not received the depth and seriousness of scholarly treatment as the same or similar systems have in either historical or anthropological contexts.

ESP, for example, is a topic in the context of modern divination that relies upon the conceptual categories of parapsychology and the modern study of paranormal phenomena. ESP, in traditional folk contexts, would have been termed “second sight,” and according to Finnish folklorist Leea Virtanen’s 1977 study of historical and contemporary memorates regarding ESP experiences, it embraces the faculties of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition of future events. The use of such parapsychological terminology may seem unrelated to a discussion of divination, but the phenomena identified with ESP cover a range of mental, emotional, and sensory perceptions that are central to all forms of intuitive divination, such as precognitive dreams and visions, auditory and olfactory sensations, inner voices and directives, illusions and hallucinatory experiences, heightened and changed emotional and physical states, perception of signs and omens in animals and plants, and so forth. The rubrics of extrasensory perception and psychokinesis, also known as psi awareness and psi activity, distinguish a polarity of experience from spontaneous awareness to focused action. Similarly, particular forms of divining rely on the spontaneous reception of knowledge through intuitive, unconscious, and otherwise altered mental states or acquisition of knowledge through the use of techniques and instruments of divination.

Regarding modern systems of divination practiced in the West, it also may be appropriate to consider the significance of the term *psychic* in relation to the impact of mass media on popular belief and practice. Many of the systems listed earlier that are widely practiced in the contemporary West are

often allied with the term *psychic*, and thus media characterizations of such phenomena often use the term in various pairings—for example, *psychic astrology*, *psychic numerology*, *psychic tarot reading*, or merely *psychic reading*. The meaning of the term *psychic* in these contexts is difficult to identify concretely but seems to refer to a wide range of skills that are generally understood to be intuitive and precognitive and that function in conjunction with the various techniques of divination. Thus, astrology, which is based in numerological and astronomical calculation and its symbolic interpretation of potential destiny, is wedded in the term *psychic astrologer* with the notion of the reader's precognitive ability to predict and achieve certitude in interpretation of past, present, and future events. Similarly, numerology as a system of significance is combined with belief in the efficacy of psychic prediction to yield luck in numbers and money with such diverse applications as choosing the winning lottery number; selecting the correct day to go to gambling casinos in order to win at slot machines and card tables or the right number of the horse or dog to bet on at the racetrack; and propitious or malign days for important life events and passages (weddings, divorces, birthdates, major trips, and so forth). Finally and perhaps most characteristic is the appellation *psychic tarot reader*. The client's belief and trust in the reader's ability to effectively apply the traditional oral narrative interpretation of numerical and pictorial symbol (whether in the 78-card tarot deck, the regular 52-card playing deck, or any number of other types of card decks available) to his or her needs is reliant upon the reader possessing the innate faculty of psychic prediction (of future events and situations), intuitive and inspired interpretation (of past and present events and situations), and empathic awareness of persons, places, and objects. Psychic ability, with its attendant faculty of empathy or sensing the emotions of persons, places, and objects, can involve direct physical contact (laying on of hands, placing an object on the face or body) or nonphysical apprehension (which can include visual or auditory experience) or emotional sensation alone. The generic label *psychic reader* includes several interrelated faculties and types of divinatory prediction that operate independent from divining tools such as psychometry, séance with the dead, discovering past lives, and others. A specific application of the empathic talent as part of the psychic reading is the practice of psychometry, or the empathic reading of objects brought by the client (photographs, jewelry, or small mementos of family, loved ones, children, close friends, or suspected enemies). The perspective that objects bear a unique and personal emotional "signature" that can be read by the psychic encompasses two interrelated beliefs: (1) the reader's innate ability to perceive empathically, whether in physical contact or not, and (2) the principle of contagious magic—that objects are believed to absorb the emotional and spiritual energies and intentions of persons and events by direct physical contact or propinquity. In the modern Western context, with

its prevailing rationalism and empiricism, the intuitive, empathic, and precognitive faculties assigned to the psychic are often considered to be extraordinary and the result of a unique and personal gift, innate to the individual. This gift cannot be taught or otherwise transmitted, although there is a strong folk belief, which survives in this popular context, that these faculties are inheritable (similar to folk beliefs that the seventh son or daughter has second sight or that second sight runs in families) and arise spontaneously. It is perhaps an irony that the diverse rituals and techniques of divination that continue in living folk and popular practice around the world are all that remain and survive intact of many of the great religious and philosophical traditions of the ancient and medieval worlds. The relegation of divination as a folk practice to the fringes of religious attention and historical and contemporary inquiry is, from this perspective, all the more questionable. The cultural range of the treatments of divination as a living practice within folklore scholarship and treatments of folk systems outside of folklore as a whole has been amazingly narrow. Such treatments are limited, for the most part, to individual examples within tribal and simple societies or rural communities within complex societies that have strong oral traditional elements and folk art forms. If the subject of divination and its theoretical exploration within folklore and folk-life is restricted to early definitions of the “little” community, if religious belief and practice are limited to oral and traditionally received forms, and if religious material culture is confined to a narrow characterization of folk art, then the range of contemporary belief, practice, artifact, environment, and lifeways that relate to divining worldwide is not being addressed. A vast range of contemporary systems of divination, communicated by various forms of print and electronic media (as well as oral traditional received forms), are yet to be found by folklorists—systems that exist within and outside living world religious systems, in rural and urban communities within complex societies, and in simple agrarian and nomadic communities.

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See also Belief, Folk; Magic; Religion, Folk.

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D DRAMA, FOLK

Performances deploying recognizably dramatic techniques in the presentation of traditional materials under the auspices of a recurrent social activity of which they are a regular but subsidiary feature. To this theoretical paradigm, lived reality will conform only to one degree or another. There is no traditional drama. There are only traditional performances that are more or less dramatic and dramatic performances that are more or less traditional; there are also traditional dramatic activities that are more or less performances. And the theoretical ideal is the optimum combination of these elements (traditional, dramatic, performance) rather than the maximum degree of any one

of them. An activity can be insufficiently dramatic to qualify as drama but too dramatic to qualify as traditional or insufficiently traditional to qualify as a tradition but too traditional to qualify as drama.

An activity qualifies as performance to the degree that it is possible to distinguish between those who perform and those who observe the performance. However convincing the new identities assumed by participants in a dance-induced trance may be, for example, the activity is more akin to ritual than to drama if all participate, and the trance is observed or celebrated rather than performed. With whatever gusto children throw themselves into the roles of cowboys and Indians, mothers and fathers, doctors and patients, if no one is watching or if the children are not aware of those who are watching, their activity is more akin to game than to drama, played or enjoyed rather than performed. But, at the opposite extreme, if the distinction between active performers and passive spectators becomes too marked, too akin to the theatrical, the traditional status of the activity is threatened under other headings.

A performance qualifies as dramatic to the degree that it deploys recognizably mimetic features and to a mimetic end: the representation of reality other than that of the performance event itself. A physical performance, however spectacular the costumes or movements of performers are, is dramatic only to the extent that these aspects are designed and taken to be mimetic. Is a costume of ribbons, straw, or hair merely visual spectacle, or is it a means to the representation of a god or a beast? Are painted faces a device to conceal identity, of ritual significance, merely decorative, or representative of a different ethnic identity? Are movements, postures, and gestures purely locomotive (as in a dance), purely entertaining (through grotesque drollery), or mimetically imitative of some other being in the process of doing something else? Correspondingly with regard to verbal performance (song and speech), an utterance is dramatic only to the degree that some attempt is made to give the impression the speaker is someone other than him- or herself. Telling a folk-tale is not traditional drama; it may modulate into the dramatic if direct speech is rendered, through posture, gesture, or voice, in character. At the opposite extreme, again, there are performances that are so close to regular, theatrical drama in costuming, acting style, dialogue, and staging (and in the distinction between performers and spectators) that their credentials as traditional dramatic performances are compromised. Mimesis is an aspect of traditional drama, not its ultimate aim.

A dramatic performance is, in itself, traditional to the degree that there is substantial continuity in subject and/or form between individual performances. But here, too, both too little and too much are equally problematic. Some traditions (for example, the English mummers' plays) evince fairly extreme stability over time, but this may be a more recent phenomenon and, indeed, symptomatic of the tradition's loss of vitality. The late-medieval

German *Fastnachtspiele*, in every other way analogous to the mummers' plays—short dramatic interludes performed by small groups of men in the course of the community's seasonal perambulation—may be more typical of traditional drama. In a given town (Nuremberg is the best-documented example), a new play would be written each year, but it would be traditional in the recurrence of overall form (prologue, dramatic interlude, epilogue, dance), structures (speech sequence, altercation), plot items (fight, cure, trial, contest, wooing), characters (peasants, fools), and tone (unrepentant scatology). Absolute discontinuity (a totally new play each time, with different characters, plots, themes, and structures) would qualify the activity as regular theater; absolute continuity (a sequence of performances evincing exact recapitulation of cast, costume, movement, and gesture and verbatim reproduction of the text) suggests attitudes and purposes that would be more characteristic of (and might define the activity as) ritual rather than drama. Because it is the relationship to context that is definitive of traditional drama, there will be neither extremely little nor extremely much continuity between performances. The recurrent context prompts and requires a degree of continuity in the performance that is a part of it, but this context, as a living social and personal reality, will vary from one occurrence to the next, and the performance, which is subsidiary and therefore responsive, will vary likewise.

Traditional drama is traditional primarily by virtue of its context and particularly its subservient relationship to that context. The context is recurrent: a set of circumstances whose occurrence prompts a dramatic performance but that do not reoccur for the sole sake of the performance; the drama is therefore dependent upon and subsidiary to the context. A series of dramatic performances, however repetitive in content (*commedia dell'arte*, pantomime, puppet theater), does not qualify as traditional if its auspices are specifically theatrical, that is, if the social activity concerned (going to the theater, sitting on the beach in front of the Punch-and-Judy stall) is for the sake of the dramatic performance itself. Traditional drama is always part of something else that would live (if less vitally) without it. Much medieval drama and Renaissance pageantry are delicately poised on this functional axis: Were performances of the medieval mystery cycles, which qualify as traditional drama under most other headings, theatrical occasions accompanied by some pious festivity, or were they piously festive occasions accompanied by some drama (which only in the latter case qualifies as traditional)? Did Renaissance monarchs go to their banqueting houses to see masques (which would make these theatrical occasions) or were masques put on to provide diversion at royal banquets (which would qualify them as traditional)?

It is this contextual factor that militates against traditional drama being too dramatic (in terms of mimesis) or too theatrical (in terms of the distinction between performers and audience): The purpose of the performance, ulti-

mately, is less, more, or other than an entertainment achieving absolute mimesis; other factors are operative and even dominant. And unlike the other features that define traditional drama, subservience to context is the one criterion of which there can be too little but not too much.

Traditional drama was one of the terms suggested in the 1970s and 1980s in the pursuit of an acceptable alternative to the term *folk drama*, whose connotations were considered no longer accurate or appropriate and which had become associated with a research approach that had gone out of fashion. *Indigenous theater* also was mooted, but *vernacular drama* may be a better alternative. Originally referring to homebred as opposed to imported slaves in the Roman Empire and later applied to language, handwriting, and architecture, *vernacular* has appropriate connotations of the local and the useful—not to mention the underprivileged—for those who see traditional drama as essentially different from and opposed to the theatrical traditions of the social and cultural elite. The important segment of traditional drama forming part of seasonal or occasional customs might then usefully be distinguished within the overall field as *customary drama*.

From its inception in the mid-nineteenth century and until fairly recently, research on traditional drama was almost exclusively approached from a survivalist perspective, focusing on ultimate origins, which were believed to be the fertility rituals of savage communities. Folk drama, largely in the form of the English mummers' plays and analogous European forms, was therefore seen as a direct survival of the fertility-inducing ritual (involving the death and rebirth of a king, scapegoat, god, or the fertility principle itself) posited by anthropologists of the evolutionary school, such as Wilhelm Mannhardt and James G. Frazer. The connection was manifest in the seasonal incidence (typically, the dead of winter when fertility needed invigorating), the animal or vegetal costumes, the exclusively male performers, the ambient scatology, and appropriate action such as death and revival or wooing and mating.

This approach had both positive and negative consequences for the study of the traditions concerned. On the positive side, the ancient pedigree accorded the otherwise humble and obscure customs of modern villages considerable significance for the study of primitive religion and mentality and hence for the later cultural traditions believed to spring from them. In consequence, folk drama was appealed to in "myth and ritual" approaches to ancient Greek drama, medieval theater, and the Elizabethan stage, to medieval literature as diverse as the *Elder Edda* and the grail romances, and to witchcraft, as providing evidence of the prehistoric ritual for which prehistoric evidence was inevitably scarce. This celebrity came at the price, however, of neglect and distortion in other ways. Only those forms of folk drama with credibly ritual features were accorded attention, to the neglect of those not so endowed, and the focus of study was these supposedly ritual features rather than others that

might, from perspectives other than ultimate origins, be interesting or significant. Given that the period concerned is as recent as about 1850–1950, we are surprisingly ill informed about aspects of the performance itself (such as the text or the comic figures and episodes) and, above all, about aspects of the context (such as who performed the plays, for whom, why, and on which subjects). Indeed, the major legacy of the ritual origins theory, whatever its merits, is the neglect of the living traditions of folk drama that might have been observed in hundreds of villages in the period concerned in England; the picture is similar—and for similar reasons—in much of Europe.

The general shift of folkloristics in the 1970s to a more social orientation manifested itself in this field in the widening of focus to encompass other dramatic traditions, together with an increasing awareness of material outside the European sphere, and, above all, in the emphasis accorded to the recording and analysis of recent traditions and their contexts; this was accomplished by direct observation where possible, by interviewing those with memories (as performers or spectators) of now defunct local traditions, and by searching in local documentary (typically journalistic) sources. This approach, too, has its drawbacks, particularly the reluctance to contemplate historical dimensions and the consequent lack of work on the undoubted significance of traditional drama within late medieval and early modern cultural history—for example, as an influence on (as opposed to the origin of) the early theater.

Distinctions within the field of traditional drama can be made according to a number of criteria, which include (not surprisingly, given their significance in its definition) the auspices of performance, i.e., the recurrent social activity of which the performance is a part.

Of such auspices, the most significant, certainly in scholarship and probably also in tradition itself, are the customary auspices, and of these, the seasonal customs are the most familiar. In most parts of the world, the passing year is marked by the recurrence of regular calendrical festivals. Their precise incidence depends on cultural factors such as religion and agricultural practices, but there is a distinct tendency to reflect the near universal rhythms of light and darkness, warmth and cold, rain and drought. Many such observances involve spectacular displays, often with quasi-religious status, and many such spectacles (or parts of them) evince distinctly dramatic features. Their incidence can be strictly calendrical, on the same date each year (in relation to the locally relevant calendar), or merely seasonal (for example, concurrent with the onset or completion of agricultural tasks, which vary slightly from year to year). Other customs providing the milieu for dramatic performances have a biographical rhythm, marking important phases or transitions in the human life cycle (birth, maturity, couple-formation, death), as, for example, the wake-games of Ireland. A third, smaller cluster of customs are purely sporadic, prompted by events (political, social, domestic) unrelated to

any other rhythm; most familiar is the demonstrative parade (charivari) provoked by domestic behavior found unacceptable by the community.

Traditional dramatic performances also can occur under purely recreational auspices, that is, when a group of people gather under circumstances and in a mood conducive to entertainment, some of which can have mimetic characteristics. Some of these occasions are afforded by seasonal festivals, but the dramatic performances are less organically embedded in the occasion and can feasibly occur under other auspices. Many of the semidramatic dance-games more recently associated with children previously were dramatic entertainments at convivial gatherings of adults or adolescents. Dramatic skits of various kinds likewise figure among gatherings of pupils and students of North American educational institutions.

Some performances, finally, are effectively utilitarian, in that they are a means to a quite practical end, such as selling goods or services. Advertising cures for sale has been accompanied by entertainment of a distinctly dramatic character, from the medieval charlatan to the Wild West medicine show. And the spiel of other vendors, in street markets, for example, also can acquire dramatic elements.

An alternative system of typology can be applied on the basis of the immediate context of performance, particularly in terms of the processes by which performers and audience are brought together. Amidst much variation, there are basically two such alternative systems.

When performers and spectators already are gathered at the venue, the context is an assembly, be it in an enclosed indoor space or an outdoor one defined by some focal point or perimeter. There will be considerable variation in the degree to which an area is physically adjusted for the performance. The more this is the case (for example, with a substantial raised stage and/or seating arrangements for spectators) and the more this is done in advance, the closer the performance is to the theatrical and the less traditional its contextual status becomes. Most performances qualifying as purely recreational under the preceding heading tend to belong, contextually, to the assembly.

Many if not most performances qualifying as customary, however, are associated with a different physical context, one in which there is a deliberately achieved encounter between performers and spectators; further divisions are possible in terms of the movement of the groups (relative to each other and to the surrounding topography) by which this is brought about. Many take the form of a parade, in which the performers progress through the landscape, performing for spectators encountered along the way as they move and/or at a number of stations where the performers halt. Instances of this type range from the medieval mystery cycles and passion plays performed on wagons in the streets of European cities to the sword-dance plays of twentieth-century Yorkshire and Durham. Much less common is the reverse form,

the interception, in which passersby are encountered (and transformed into spectators) by stationary performers, on the model of the more familiar beggars and buskers of modern cities. The stationary tableaux with which medieval and Renaissance cities welcomed incoming mayors and monarchs conform to this pattern, as do the mountebank and street-vendor shows under the utilitarian heading. Most familiar of all is the customary house visit, in which performers penetrate, welcome or not, into the homes of those who thus become spectators. The reverse of this pattern, the reception of incoming visitors by performing hosts, is virtually restricted to the welcomes accorded by noble households to visiting monarchy in the Renaissance period. Some customs combine the parade through the community with visits to a number of houses in what may be best described as a perambulation.

The matter and form of traditional drama naturally vary a great deal, but there are nonetheless several widely recurrent features. Some of these features perhaps reflect the limited theatrical resources and other than purely theatrical ambitions common to most traditions, as well as the shared tendency to be linked to particular auspices, such as seasonal festivals.

Given the wish or need to make an impression within a context that does not guarantee attention, characters (and the costumes used to achieve them) tend to the unusual or the spectacular. For example, the more or less accurate impersonation of beasts (bears, horses, bulls, goats, rams) exists alongside figures from the fauna of local myth and fantasy (dragons, giants, trolls, ethnic grotesques), with an elaboration varying from the blacking of the face to unwieldy contraptions manipulated by several performers.

Similar factors favor dramatic structures that (whatever the plot motivating them) involve fairly simple but striking patterns. There are simple confrontations between two figures of an antagonistic nature (two gods, two warriors, hero and monster, man and wife, master and servant) or a sexual nature (female and wooer/seducer); there are also multiple confrontations between two groups distinguished on ethnic, political, or religious lines. These horizontal patterns are matched vertically by downward and upward movements. The variously achieved "slaying and revival" theme common to many traditions, of which much was made by scholars employing a ritualist approach, may owe its ubiquity, if not its origins, to a simple dramaturgical circumstance: A figure falling down and getting up is the most striking visual effect that can be achieved in traditions whose theatrical resources are largely confined to the bodies of the performers and what is done with them.

Whatever the specific matters and forms involved, the dominance of context over mimesis gives traditional drama a characteristically presentational, rather than fully representational, dramaturgy. While consciously representing something other than themselves and the time and place of performance, performers remain conscious of themselves as presenting a show

to an audience in a given time and place. Dramatic illusion, though aimed for or gestured at to one degree or another, is therefore breached consistently by awareness of context and relationship to the audience: in prologues and epilogues that refer to the occasion (for example, the season or the venue and purpose of the show) and facilitate the transition between the real and dramatic worlds; by the elaborate introduction of new figures; by direct address from within the fiction of the play world to the audience or even interaction (verbal and/or physical) with spectators.

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See also Charivari/Shivaree; Custom; Evolutionary Theory; Festival; Fool; Mask; Mumming; Myth-Ritual Theory.

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E

EMIC/ETIC

A conceptual framework that distinguishes between two strategies used to categorize human behavior: *emic*, often referred to as native, ethnic, internal, or insider point of view in relation to a specific cultural system, and *etic*, representing scholarly, analytical, or external constructs employed by outsiders, primarily for the purpose of cross-cultural, comparative study.

Linguist Kenneth Pike coined the terms *etic* and *emic* from the corresponding linguistic terms *phonetic* (referring to the classification of speech sounds) and *phonemic* (referring to sound features as they are related to each other in a particular language system). He intended for *etic* and *emic* to mean for human behavior what the terms *phonetic* and *phonemic* mean for language study. An etic approach, Pike argued, is nonstructural, whereas in emic approaches, the emphasis is on systemic relationships in a specific culture. For example, an etic approach as conceived by Pike might describe dance costumes worn at a festival one by one, listing colors, sizes, and numbers of sequins and feathers, whereas an emic approach might describe the function of a particular group of dancers as a whole, how their costumes complemented each other, and how one group's costumes competed or clashed with another group's costumes at the same festival, as well as how the dance festival itself functioned in general for that particular community. Emic approaches strive to present comprehensive systems of relationships present within one specific culture, but etic units are nonstructural and free-floating.

When Pike introduced the two terms in 1962, he thought of etics as a starting point from which a scholar could begin to grasp a culture's emic categories; he envisioned describing emic units as the goal of a final analysis. Ideally, he proposed, the two vantage points would be stereoscoped into one unified vision, the etic terms gradually being modified until they accommodated the emic units of description. He emphasized that these two complementary perspectives did not constitute a dichotomy but rather combined to give the analyst a three-dimensional perspective: two views of the same data collapsed into one unified understanding.

Anthropologist Marvin Harris criticized Pike's "emic bias" and turned the equation around: One had to collect emic units to develop etic units. "Etic analysis is not a steppingstone to the discovery of emic structures, but to the discovery of etic structures," Harris wrote. "The goal is neither to convert etics to emics nor emics to etics, but rather to describe both and if possible to explain one in terms of the other." Harris' interpretation of the etic/emic

concepts permits the acknowledgment of hidden or unseen systems that have a direct bearing on human systems of meaning. (For example, Hindus do not kill cattle, and yet the mortality rate of bull calves is unnaturally high; as Harris implied, a strictly emic analysis would not permit the etic deduction that Hindus allow male calves to starve to death since emically, Hindus do not kill cattle.) Harris' conception also permits diachronic analysis, the comparison of the same culture at different points in time.

Alan Dundes adopted the etic/emic distinction in proposing a more logical system for the international classification of narrative units than current tale type and motif indexes. He proposed that *motifemes* (also known as *emic motifs*, both terms equivalent to Vladimir Propp's *function*) be used as the primary structural unit in narrative classification. Thus, using Dundes' example, the motifeme of "helpful animal," holding a slot on the emic plane, could be filled by any number of appropriate etic "allomotifs," such as cow, cat, bird, and so forth. The motifeme itself would be positioned according to its relationship to a higher sequential context (such as a particular episode or tale type). To date, however, few have accepted Dundes' challenge to develop a more logical classification system; the job is apparently too massive.

On a broader basis, the etic/emic distinction has burgeoned into several brands of ethnoscience, ethnosemantics, new ethnography, and ethnography of speaking that emphasize not just rigid descriptions but also analyses of cultural dynamics. The diversity of culture is acknowledged, and native categories for sorting out the world are eagerly sought. The new ethnographers emphasize developing good emic descriptions now in order to develop good etic frameworks in the future. Ideally, after enough detail is gathered, generalizations and hypotheses about human behavior can be made cross-culturally. The emic/etic movement is often criticized, however, for becoming bogged down in microscopic emic detail while failing to significantly advance etic theory.

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See also Linguistic Approach; Motifeme.

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ENIGMA, FOLK

A cluster of genres that share a structure of puzzle and solution and a norm of dialogic performance. The *riddle* and such related forms as the *clever question*, *catch question*, *riddle joke*, and *neck riddle* generally take an overtly interrogative form. The poser asks a puzzling question, and the respondent attempts to guess the answer; the proffered solution is then accepted, rejected, or, if the respondent could give no answer, provided by the poser.

Enigmas are not ordinary questions; the poser does not want the information contained in the answer. They also are not rhetorical questions, in which the answer is assumed beforehand or contained in the question. They are true questions in that they demand an answer. But the answer, like the question, is conventional, and the enigma is constituted of both elements together.

Traditional enigmas are one of the most widespread and earliest documented forms of verbal art, found in Sanskrit hymns, the Bible, and Greek tragedy (as in the famous riddle of the Sphinx from *Oedipus Rex*). There appears, however, to be a correlation between the prevalence of riddling in a society and the presence of oral interrogation as a means of carrying on such business as the education of children and the exercise of justice. Where questioning is important in the work of a culture, it is important in play as well.

Cross-culturally, enigmas are most important among children, although they are never limited to them entirely. Many scholars have observed the ways in which riddling functions to socialize and enculturate children. In African cultures in which skills in argumentation are vital to adult prestige and power, children engage in vigorous debate over the acceptability of riddle solutions. In European peasant cultures, riddles seem to be less flexible and serve principally to teach cultural rules and categories. In Madagascar, Lee Haring argues, the importance of the enigma lies primarily in its question-and-answer form, which becomes the paradigm for more complex dialogic interactions in adult speech genres.

Although children generally perpetuate riddling traditions on their own, without encouragement from adults, adults also appropriate the enigma as a technique of formal pedagogy. The Socratic method and the Christian catechism, not to mention school entrance examinations, are part of a worldwide use of enigmas in initiation ceremony, as the means of access to a restricted

code and entry into a restricted group. Deliberate obscurity and special or archaic language often enhance the exclusionary power of the enigma. An outsider who successfully penetrates this obscurity displays intelligence and resource and thus worthiness to be accepted into the group.

Enigmas construct a hierarchical relationship between poser and respondent. The questioner has authority over the questioned and may refuse a solution. Certainly, a refusal may be disputed by the larger group or undercut by the questioner's failure to provide the acceptable alternative solution, and a group may set limits to the questioner's control of the floor in a riddling session. However, as a rule, the riddler retains authority as long as he or she shows competence in the role. Good riddlers often take advantage of their skill to humble rivals in other domains, and riddling sessions easily become contests for prestige and power.

Young children seem to understand riddling as a model of parental authority. Their first riddles are simply questions with arbitrary answers, as arbitrary as adult instructions and reasonings often appear to be. To be the riddler is to have a parallel authority within the riddling frame: A solution is right "because I say so." Moreover, play with enigmas prepares participants for other hierarchies of knowledge. Not everyone in a society has the right to ask questions or to acquire privileged information; low position generally means low access. However, playing at riddles also teaches a helpful lesson in coping: Someone in a low position can rise in or overturn the hierarchy by virtue of cleverness. In narratives incorporating neck riddles, the protagonist triumphs by posing or guessing an apparently insoluble riddle. In the same way in life, younger children can gain prestige among their elders by skillful riddling performance, old women rich in traditional knowledge can disconcert their university-educated grandchildren by posing questions they cannot answer, or a presuming folklorist from outside the community may be put in his or her place with an embarrassing catch.

The power relationships negotiated in the riddling process often are reflected in the content of enigmas. West Indian riddles often present the object described as the property of the father, the chief authority figure ("My father have a cock and every time it crow, it crow fire—A gun"). In Malagasy riddles, paradoxes based on size allude to inversions of power relations ("When the little one comes, the great one takes off his hat—The great water pot").

Riddling sessions form part of various larger events and forms of sociability. A riddling session may open an evening of singing and storytelling in European peasant cultures or come in the middle of an event to revitalize interaction after a long series of monologic performances. Often, the riddling brings children and outsiders into active participation, not only out of a desire to test and initiate newcomers but also for a quite practical reason: A community's stock of riddles is generally limited, and it is not easy to find a native adult who has not heard them all before. In Scotland in the 1960s, Kenneth

S. Goldstein found that the only adults to riddle were the “travelers” or “tinkers,” a subculture of peddlers, who, because of their itinerant lifestyle, had constant access to new enigmas.

In some cultures, riddling is restricted to specific occasions. In traditional Philippine Tagalog society, riddles were told during wakes, at harvest time, and in courtship, and these are important occasions for riddling in many societies. The confusing language of riddles seems to be significant in the dangerous periods of wake and harvest, when spirits are believed to be uncomfortably close to living people. It has been suggested that, like the interlocked designs and mazes sometimes used as apotropaic devices on doorways and talismans, the enigma serves to block and turn away evil spirits. Aesthetically, the binary form of the riddle, both linking and separating its halves, mimics the situation of the wake, when the dead are both part of the group and distinct from it. The frequency of the “living and the dead” motif in neck riddles performed during West Indian wakes comments directly on the disruption of everyday classifications at such liminal times.

In courtship, the conjunctive potential of enigmas is played upon. Posing a riddle to a specific person is a way of creating a binary interaction within a larger group without committing the participants to more risky personal topics. Putting the respondent on the spot may be a practical test of wit and resource in a potential mate: The Queen of Sheba used this tactic with Solomon, as did Turandot with her suitors. More common is the apparently obscene catch question, used to stimulate an erotic awareness. Even the general suggestion of unspoken levels of meaning inherent in enigmatic discourse may serve to create a consciousness between riddler and respondent. Often, the content of riddles in peasant cultures plays on traditional gender distinctions, and the structure of the *true riddle*, with its postulation of a unity bringing apparent opposites together, has as its base metaphor, James Fernandez suggests, the conjunction of the sexes.

Enigmas, then, both conjoin and separate; they confuse and they clarify, depending on the emphases of the culture, the performer, and the particular riddle. In intimating a deeper level, alluding to things hidden, they allow the unspeakable to be spoken. Neck riddles tell of incest, sacrifice, and pollution at society’s foundations; the riddle proper points up the problems of fit between the world and our representations of it; riddle jokes insist on the scandals and disasters that undermine our confidence in the systems we have made. The apparent triviality of the form, its small size, and its fixity allow us to contemplate flux and chaos with relative impunity.

VISUAL AND GESTURAL ENIGMAS

The enigma follows cultures into literacy. Literate peoples may develop riddles that depend for their solution upon a knowledge of orthography:

mark secret meeting places: The Greek word *ichthys* could be read as an acrostic for “Jesus Christ Son of God Savior.”

Rebuses are also found in heraldic emblems, playing with the folk etymologies of proper names. Thus, the city of Solsona in Catalonia has a blazing sun on its arms, a reference to the Latin word *Sol*. And the abbot of Ramsey in thirteenth-century England made his arms legible even to the illiterate with a drawing of a ram in the sea.

The pictorial rebus leads us to such contemporary amusements as the *droodle*, a visual form of the riddle joke. The droodle is a simple, apparently abstract drawing, revealed by the poser to stand for some absurdly complex phenomenon. Thus, the narrator of Antoine de Ste.-Exupéry’s *The Little Prince* draws what looks to his parents like the outline of a man’s hat: He tells them it is really a boa constrictor that has swallowed an elephant. Other droodles rely on an unfamiliar perspective to confuse the viewer: A circle inside a bigger circle is revealed as a bald fat man seen from above.

The enigma also takes gestural or mimetic form. In some cases, this gestural form allows the observance of speech prohibitions, as in the Native American northern Athapaskan enigmas about bears. In the Athapaskan culture, it is considered dangerous to mention bears in the presence of women, for women are said to have the ability to warn the animals of approaching hunters through their dreams. So one man who has found a bear’s den communicates his discovery to another man by walking clumsily with his toes pointed inward or by throwing a handful of hair into the fire (to recall how the bear’s skin is singed after the kill).

Other gestural enigmas enhance the interactional potential of the riddle by turning it into full-scale dramatic play. In nineteenth-century England, the genteel amusement of the literary charade, a verse form describing each syllable and then the complete word of the solution, became a performance using costuming and staging.

Charlotte Brontë’s novel *Jane Eyre* provides an artful but realistic rendering of an upper-class house party playing at charades. The hero, Mr. Rochester, and Blanche Ingram, a woman in search of a suitable husband, enact a charade for which the solution is “Bridewell,” a prison. A mimed wedding procession stands for the first syllable, “Bride”; the biblical Rebecca giving water to Isaac’s servant is “Well”; and Mr. Rochester, in rags and chains, performs the complete word. The performance provides the occasion for the opulent Miss Ingram to display herself in suggestive and flattering guises, for much flirtatious byplay between herself and Mr. Rochester, and for Mr. Rochester to convey to Jane, his true love in the audience, that marriage with Miss Ingram would be a prison to him. Like the oral riddling session or the literary charade, the performed charade allows multiple levels of communication between participants.

Both visual and performed enigmas, then, carry on the main preoccupations of oral riddles. The visual enigma further exploits the ambiguities of representation. Performed riddles enact the disjunctions and conjunctions between the sexes or between actors and their roles. The dyadic interaction of poser and respondent remains at the heart of the form.

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See also Catch Question; Clever Question/Wisdom Question; Neck Riddle; Rebus; Riddle; Riddle Joke.

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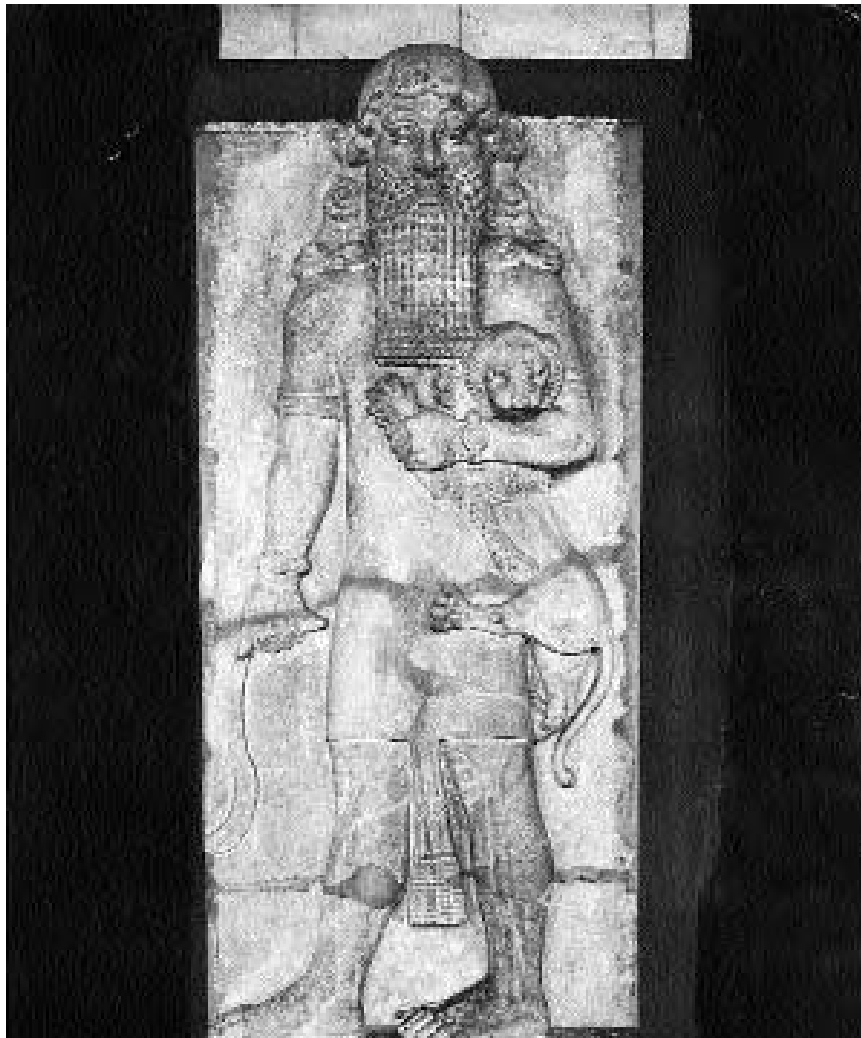
EPIC

A collection of narrative poems of varying length that presents a specific universe of beliefs and occurrences of a people within the cultural context. Epics often have a central figure, a protagonist, whose adventurous life experiences form the substance of the epic narrative.

There are both written and oral epics. Literary epics are extended narra-

tive poems that establish a particular universe of the imagination by means of, for example, cosmogonic mythologies and sacrificial ritual drama. Oral epics constantly change, but epics preserved in the written form have become records of particular worldviews, histories, and religious attitudes, such as *Mahābhārata*, *Shah-namah*, *Beowulf*, *Manas*, and the *Kalevala*.

In folkloristics, epic is a narrative couched in poetic language and subject to special rules of texture, structure, style, and form. Usually, epics contain hundreds or thousands of verses and present a complex narrative full of wonders and heroism, often centered around the exploits of a main personage. The generous use of stock phrases and conventional scenes explains how



Assyrian depiction of the colossal figure of Gilgamesh, hero of the Babylonian epic poem (circa 2000 B.C.).

a performer can innovate and still adhere to the required poetic form. Innovations introduced by performers within traditional epic frameworks lead to many different versions of the same narrative. Great variability occurs because different performers assemble different episodes within a given epic—not only because individual passages are expanded, contracted, or altered.

Epics may remain in traditional circulation longer than other oral poetry. Even when particular epics disappear, their substance is either cannibalized for later epics or transformed into, for instance, folktales.

All types of epics—classical or folk, literary or oral, long or short—are directly related to worldview. The epic characteristically involves its audience in the fundamental issues of human existence, such as evil and good, suffering and reward, guilt or innocence, human nature and its destiny, and the origin and destruction of the cosmos and the people in it. Epics often are dramas of violent conflicts between the human and divine worlds, and as such, they often pose problems of history, theology, fate, death, regeneration, and salvation. For this reason, epics are dominated by protagonists whose destinies reinforce essential religious concepts. Such concepts materialize in the roles of the hero or heroine as shaman or warrior, in certain concepts of space, order, time, and deity, as well as in fundamental interpretations of the meaning of death and salvation.

The theme of the shaman who travels to the netherworld and establishes defenses against the evil forces that impinge on the human world is less common, however, than the theme of the warrior in the world of the living who conquers not by supranormal powers but by such qualities as strength, courage, and personal honor. Certain theories developed in the comparative analysis of myth may explain this widespread tradition. Comparative studies have suggested the religious significance of a proto-Indo-European warrior tradition and have argued that the warrior occupies an important median position in a three-class human social hierarchy.

Another prevalent epic theme describes founding the world anew: reestablishing world order, time, and space by means of the holocaust of battle. Narratives turn into epics when, drawing on the poetic power of the blood shed by popular heroes or heroines, they serve as the songs of peoples who are striving to establish national or ethnic identities, to legitimize traditions of particular places and events, and to validate authority.

The Finnish epic the *Kalevala*, compiled and edited by Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884), serves to illustrate these epic features. This epic presents a more unified interpretation of the history of the world than do the Finnish folk narratives from which Lönnrot drew. Utilizing a variety of folk materials, he developed a narrative that proceeds from primal creation to destruction of the supreme god, Väinämöinen. In Lönnrot's nineteenth-century Lutheran Christian worldview, the *Kalevala* described the “good” pagan Finnish prehis-

tory before the advent of Christianity; the latter, of course, was considered the high point of “real history” (i.e., western European academic history). The *Kalevala* ends with the victory of the Christian faith over the pre-Christian religion of the ancient Finns. As a consequence, the pagan myths of the epic are arranged according to the Christian linear concept of time and history, a concept in which time is seen as a segment of a line with beginning and end points and in which God creates the world but then withdraws to appear again during the eschatological events that end the world. Though the structure of the epic is fundamentally Western and Christian, the worldview of the rune singers is cyclic. Nevertheless, the *Kalevala*, like epics in general, provides an ethnic and historical reference point that validates identity and solidarity within the group.

Even outside their original contexts, the epics of many peoples have proved to be universally appealing. During the performance of epics, channels open to a more pliable time and space; thus, the primal “drama of transformation” itself becomes a powerful means of renewal.

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See also Bard; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Oral-Formulaic Theory.

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EPIC LAWS

Superorganic and transcultural “laws,” which give rise to the traditional structure of narratives. The concept of epic laws was introduced by Danish scholar Axel Olrik, who formulated eighteen such laws at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Although the Norwegian folklorist Moltke Moe introduced, in 1889, the concept of fundamental epic laws to denote the operative forces in the process of traditional composition, the scholar who focused particular attention on the question of regularities in narrative formation was Axel Olrik, who developed the theory of epic laws in narration in 1908. Olrik argued that, cross-

culturally, narrative tradition is governed by universally applicable rules; he made a departure from the terminology of his time to employ the concept of *Sagenwelt* (world of folk narrative, folktale world) to characterize the cross-culturally applicable rules that operate within folk narratives. Although Olrik agreed that particular national traits also exist in narrative, he believed that, in comparison with general regularities, these variations were analogous to differences in dialects. Olrik stated that these principles were termed *laws* because they limited the composition of oral literature by means of a strict set of rules.

The first rule concerns the formalized opening and closing sentences that begin and end narratives (the Law of Opening and the Law of Closing). The Law of Repetition concerns the reiteration that occurs at many levels: For example, events, dialogues, phrases, and single words are often repeated three times, thus forming a kind of rhythmic emphasis at different structural levels. The Law of Three alludes to the fact that, for instance, there are three tasks or that a task is performed in the course of three days. According to Olrik's theory, there are usually only two people occupying the narrative's "stage" at one time (the Law of Two to a Scene). Opposed character types come into confrontation: protagonist and villain, good and bad, rich and poor (the Law of Contrast). The weakest and youngest proves in the end to be the strongest and cleverest (the Importance of Initial and Final Position). The Law of Action means that characteristics are not described by means of a series of adjectives but in terms of deeds and events whose content should indicate concretely the characteristics of the personage described. According to Olrik, the *Sage* (local legend, plural *Sagen*) follows its own textural norms, which differ from those that govern written literature; these rules of oral narrative are called the Law of the Single Strand, the Logic of the Sage, and so on.

The way in which Olrik set forth his laws indicates that he considered them to be universally true, irrespective of time, nationality, or culture. Epic laws were, he believed, superior to and in control of the individual narrator. Olrik's epic laws, therefore, were superorganic. The essence of this notion is that, in addition to the organic level that is controlled by man, there is also a superorganic level that is beyond human influence but that largely governs human behavior. Olrik felt that the narrators obey epic laws blindly and unconsciously. Carried to the extreme, this view of the significance of epic laws might lead one to underestimate the individual and social component in the narrative cycle. A competent tradition-bearer, however, not only reproduces previously learned material but also, according to mastered rules, transforms familiar elements into new performances.

Many of Olrik's observations are undoubtedly of considerable value for studying folk prose, and his hypotheses may be applicable to other genres as well. It should be emphasized that Olrik's arguments were based on studying

texts and not on the analysis of the communication process itself. Scholars should try to discover the unwritten rules of communication for each particular genre; Olrik's laws should be studied as hypotheses, taking into account the differences between genres and the nature of the holistic communication process as both an individual and a social phenomenon.

Axel Olrik maintained that epic laws are superorganic and transcultural. This is highly improbable. It would be more correct to say that they are conventional patterns of composition, varying among different genres and within different cultural areas. Moreover, Olrik's epic laws focus on a range of different qualities. They may be stylistic commonplaces or statements of details of style, form, content, or structure, to which certain analogs may be added by continuing to analyze techniques of narrative performance.

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See also Aesthetics; Superorganic Theories.

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EROTIC FOLKLORE

Traditional and emergent sexual practices and representational practices that are expressive of love, desire, and sociosexual relations. Erotic folklore and folklife encompass the sexual acts we engage in, our beliefs about those acts and the bodies we perform them with, the language (both literal and figurative) we use to articulate our desires and fears, the material erotic objects we make, and the stories, jokes, rhymes, songs, gestures, and games we perform. Erotic folklore constitutes the entire domain of that which is variously identified as “romantic,” “bawdy,” “vulgar,” “obscene,” “pornographic,” or simply “the dirty bits,” each expression being indicative of a differently situated politicized aesthetic concerning the body and its sexualities, as well as a response to

degrees of sexual explicitness in representational practices. As a physical, emotional, psychic, and intellectual creative power and as a form of discourse, the erotic is the product of both the essentialist needs of our bodies and the cultural representations that construct those needs and those bodies.

Cultural theorists of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Michel Foucault, Sherry B. Ortner, Harriet Whitehead, and Thomas Laqueur, argue that the body and its sexualities, like gender, are sociocultural constructions, that the terms and dynamics of sexual desire are a political language, and that representations of desire are forms of political power. Thus, one way to view erotic folklore is as a rhetoric that seeks to construct sociocultural relations by traditionalizing and thereby naturalizing extant or emergent power relations. As a political language and a political power, erotic representational practices may be used to construct and reinforce hegemonic interests (those of dominant sociocultural groups) or to construct and reinforce the variant interests of differing folk groups, localized communities, imagined communities, and subcultures.

At once participatory in and contestive of public rhetorics, erotic folklore is, as Horace Beck says, “part of every society. Its form, its degree of prevalence set one group off from another.” And as Gershon Legman argues, erotic folklore stands in relation to the larger corpus of various peoples’ folklore “in about the same proportion as the physical sexual parts stand [in relation] to the body,” if not more. He suggests the figure of about 22 percent. Yet until recently, as Legman repeatedly notes, “the record of erotic folklore . . . has only seldom—and then usually only privately—been committed to print” due to private and public censorship. To censor is to erase, and the erasure of erotic folklore from public discourse is a form of political control of bodies (both one’s own and those that may differ from one’s own in respect to gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality). Furthermore, censorship distorts one’s view of what it means to be human. As Vance Randolph cogently notes, “If a collection of folksongs [and by extension, folklore in general] contains no obscenity, it cannot fully reflect the taste and preference of the people.”

One way in which people encode their “taste and preference,” while seeking to construct their own and others’ lives, is through language usage. Diction level and choice of metaphors, even in a very small sample of the English erotic lexicon of a particular sexuality, are quite suggestive. Heterosexuals, for example, may “copulate,” “fornicate,” “sleep together,” “have conjugal relations,” “make love,” and engage in “coitus.” In other words, they “do it”—“it” being “the act” or the “Big F”—which has also been known as “nigging” (1565–1820); “bulling,” “tiffing,” and “quiffing” (eighteenth century); “nubbing” (eighteenth and early nineteenth century); “hogging” and “tomming” (nineteenth century); “grinding,” “getting a valve job,” or “getting an oil change” (nineteenth and twentieth century); and “putting your floppy in someone’s disk drive” (twentieth century). Similarly, the male genitalia—

the “penis,” “privy part,” “prick,” “whang,” or “whacker”—which is frequently envisioned as the active agent, may be provided with a “Christian” name (“Peter,” “Dick,” or “John”) or euphemized as a man’s “third leg” or as one of various “tools” and “instruments.” The female body and female genitalia are envisioned, most frequently in the passive mode, as, for example, a landscape to be cultivated, an instrument to be played, or a fruit to be harvested. The extent to which such language usage constructs a system of gender dominance has been noted by many, but just as language may be used to construct dominant ideologies, it also can be used to deconstruct and contest assertions of dominance. This idea is hinted at (either intentionally or unintentionally) in the recuperative language of the title of Barbara Babcock’s essay “Taking Liberties, Writing from the Margins, and *Doing It* with a Difference” (emphasis added)—a feminist disclosure of male uses of the female body as a semiotic object.

Similarly, plastic and visual art objects, both those for everyday use and otherwise, encode a variety of human erotic acts as well as cultural attitudes toward those acts. For example, a pre-Columbian Andean culture, the Moche (or Mochica), crafted pots that were decorated with three-dimensional body parts (penis and vulva) and with three-dimensional subjects caught in various erotic positions: conventional heterosexual intercourse, heterosexual anal intercourse, male homosexual anal intercourse, lesbian digital stimulation of the vagina, fellatio, cunnilingus, male masturbation, and zoophilia. Although the erotic has been associated with the spiritual in many cultures (for example, in ancient Greece and Persia), artifacts like the Moche stirrup-spout pots suggest the ways that the erotic can simultaneously be a source of a more worldly humor: In this case, the drinking spout configured as a penis or a vulva requires that the drinker perform a type of displaced fellatio or cunnilingus in order to quench his or her thirst. Analogously, the margins of medieval European manuscript pages were sometimes decorated with figures engaged in a variety of erotic acts, and forms of twentieth-century photocopy and fax lore provide graphic visual representations of erotic fears and pleasures.

And what our linguistic lexicons and our art objects encode, our sex manuals (ancient and modern), conduct books, collections of literary and vernacular tales and songs, and inscriptions of folklife elaborate on. Sex manuals, for example, circulated in China as early as the second century B.C., Rome had Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* by the end of the first century B.C., and India produced the *Kamasutra* sometime between the third and fifth centuries A.D. Each is a complex mixture of public and folk practice and fantasy that, to varying degrees, is inflected by theological and ideological prescription. During the Middle Ages, bawdy folktales were appropriated for literary use (*The Arabian Nights*, Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*). Also, early modern Europe transmitted sexual practices and fantasies through

(among other genres) song, both in oral performance and print; examples may be found in Thomas D'Urfey's *Wit and Mirth, Or Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1719–1720) and Vivian de Sola Pinto and Allan Rodway's *The Common Muse: An Anthology of Popular British Ballad Poetry, XVth-XXth Century* (1957). Additionally, books such as *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, an anonymous compendium of information drawn from earlier printed sources and period folklore and first printed in the late seventeenth century, documented early modern beliefs concerning the body, its genders, and its sexualities.

Western modernity has had its Freudian case studies, its Kinsey reports, and the work of Havelock Ellis and of William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson. A myriad of popular articles frequently linking sex, etiquette, and domestic and public economy have appeared in women's and men's magazines. Oral historians, such as Steve Humphries, have recorded vernacular personal narratives about the heteroglossic erotic life of a nation during a specific historical period. Similarly, cultural anthropologists Elizabeth Lapousky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis have used women's oral histories to document the life of a particular sexual community in Buffalo, New York, from 1930 to 1960. Other anthropologists have inscribed the erotic life of diverse cultures and subcultures: Owen M. Lynch's *Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotions in India* (1990); Richard Parker's *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions: Sexual Culture in Contemporary Brazil* (1991); *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*, edited by Gilbert Herdt (1984); Will Roscoe's *The Zuni Man-Woman* (1991); and Esther Newton's, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (1979).

In turn, folklorists have focused on various representational practices. For example, collected folktales as well as folksongs and ballads (although sometimes elliptical, particularly when "adapted" for public consumption) encode various peoples' attitudes toward the body, sexuality, and hierarchical social systems based on class and gender. Different textual traditions and situated performances of "Cinderella," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Bluebeard," for example, at once assume and construct heterosexuality as a cultural norm while exploring, according to differently situated scholarly interpretations, the erotic in children's developing sexualities, the relationship between sex and violence, incest, and the erotic attraction of the gender-ambivalent cross-dresser. Similarly, romantic songs and ballads construct heterosexual and homoerotic relations while sometimes documenting various cultural-specific erotic taboos. For example, in Anglo-American ballads of domestic tragedy, sibling incest is invoked in versions of "Lizzie Wan," "The King's Tochter Lady Jean," "Bonny Hind," "The Cruel Brother," "Babylon," and "Sheath and Knife."

Folktales and their popular redactions in particular have been critiqued by Western feminist scholars Marcia Leiberman, Kay Stone, and Jane Yolen

as misogynistic constructions of female gender, female sexuality, and cross-gender relations, as well as for their production of an erotic economy based on the mystique of romance and female domesticity. However, scholars also have suggested that such tales, when contextualized by specific performance frames, may be negotiated by women for their own purposes. Finally, such tales also have been analyzed as sites for the disclosure of male fears of both female and male sexuality.

Other textual and performance traditions revel in graphic sexual representation and witty euphemism. Although publicly censored (for example, the blank space that potentially categorized sexual themes in the Stith Thompson *Motif-Index* was not redressed until Frank Hoffmann began the task in 1973), sexually explicit folklore not only survives but also thrives, providing, as do the trickster figures of bawdy tales, important forms of psychological and cultural renewal. As social theorist Mikhail Bakhtin has argued, bawdry—with its emphasis on the “grotesque” material body—is at the heart of cultural deconstruction and renewal: “The essence of the grotesque is precisely to present a contradictory and double-faced fullness of life. Negation and destruction (death of the old) are included as an essential phase, inseparable from affirmation, from the birth of something new.” In this way, bawdy stories (folktales, as well as personal narratives, anecdotes, and contemporary legends), poems, jokes, songs, ballads, blues, graffiti, gestures, and toasts encode attitudes toward the body and the erotic while using representations of the body and the erotic for purposes of psychological release, group and dyadic bonding, and sociopolitical commentary.

As editor of *Kriptadia: The Journal of Erotic Folklore* and author of *The Horn Book: Studies in Erotic Folklore* (1964), *The Rationale of the Dirty Joke* (1968), *No Laughing Matter: Rationale of the Dirty Joke, Second Series* (1975), *The Limerick* (1964), and *The New Limerick* (1977), as well as innumerable articles, prefaces, and introductions, Gershon Legman has been, in the twentieth century, the leading bibliographer and editor of sexually explicit folklore. But of particular importance for folklorists are the field collections of scholars such as Vance Randolph, whose *Pissing in the Snow & Other Ozark Folktales* (1976), *Roll Me in Your Arms: “Unprintable” Ozark Folksongs and Folklore, Volume 1* (1992), and *Blow the Candle Out: “Unprintable” Ozark Folksongs and Folklore, Vol. 2* (1992), when contextualized within Randolph’s entire collected corpus, bawdy and nonbawdy, offer what Rayna Green has described as “a picture of expressive behavior unparalleled by any other American region’s or group’s study.”

Although Randolph’s field collections record the erotic representational practices of a particular region during a particular time, other scholars have focused on different communities and various genres. Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger’s *Travellers’ Songs* (1976) records, in the context of a broad singing tradition, the bawdy songs collected primarily in Scotland from a

specific social and ethnic group, and Guy Logsdon's *The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing* (1989) documents the bawdy song tradition of a specific occupational group (American cowboys). Roger Abrahams' *Deep Down in the Jungle: Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia* (1964) situates a localized racial community's representational practices within their immediate sociocultural context, and Bruce Jackson's *Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me* (1974) records and analyzes African-American toasts (recitations and brags). Rayna Green's "'Magnolias Grow in Dirt': The Bawdy Lore of Southern Women" (1977) decenters any notion that "trashy talk" is limited to male performers, and Joseph P. Goodwin's *More Man Than You'll Ever Be* (1989) not only contextualizes erotic representational practices within a particular sexual community (Midwestern American male homosexuals) but also explains how members outside of that community may misunderstand its representational practices. And Wendy Woenstein, Mary and Herbert Knapp, and Sandra McCosh have recorded children's erotic jokes, rhymes, riddles, games, catches, and pranks.

Psychoanalytic approaches to bawdry, particularly those stemming from the works of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), explore the ways in which sexual humor functions variously as seduction, aggression, and exposure. Such approaches have been foregrounded in Legman's work as well as that of Martha Wolfenstein's and Alan Dundes' analyses of a wide-ranging collection of cultural phenomena: photocopy lore, oral jokes, folktales, sacred stories, children's toys and rhymes, and even the Easter Bunny. Among Dundes' classic articles are his study of heterosexual homoeroticism in the game of American football and his study of male pregnancy envy, anal eroticism, and ritual homosexuality in aboriginal Australia, native North and South America, Africa, Europe, and the United States in respect to a sacred ritual object and secular toy—the bullroarer.

An alternative to the psychoanalytic approach to erotic materials has focused on localized folk performances whose meanings are contextualized within specific sociocultural relations of a specific time and place. An important study in this respect has been Margaret Mills' *Rhetorics and Politics in Afghan Traditional Storytelling*. Inscribing an evening of storytelling by two Moslem elders who were brought together by a Marxist subgovernor so that an American woman might record their performances, Mills' book offers a record of a situated and contextualized performance in which bawdry is used as a means of establishing a homosocial bond between the storytellers and their all-male audience. The men in this audience are distinctly contestive of sociocultural and hence ideological influences that emanate from outside their worldview (that of both the Marxist subgovernor and the American female folklorist). Similarly, Cathy Preston's "'Cinderella' as a Dirty Joke: Gender, Multivocality, and the Polysemic Text" addresses the function of

gender and class in negotiating the way meaning is made of differently situated American performances of a bawdy joke.

Finally, folklorists—for example, Debora Kodish and the contributors to a 1990 special issue of *Southern Folklore*, “Folklore Fieldwork: Sex, Sexuality, and Gender,”—have begun to address the ways in which gender and sexuality affect fieldwork relationships, as well as critiquing the ways in which ethnographers, in their write-ups of fieldwork, have eroticized the relationship between the ethnographer and the ethnographic subject. Among other things, they argue that older models of ethnography inscribed the erotics of colonialist conquest and penetration and that newer models explore the erotics of surrender and affiliation. Both models inscribe fantasies, and though the politics of metaphorical surrender may seem preferable to those of metaphorical rape, either fantasy may be appropriative of bodies other than one’s own for one’s own needs.

To the extent that the erotic (such as sexual bodies, genders, and sexualities) is a cultural construction, what is experienced as erotic, as well as the meanings attributed to erotic practices, may or may not cross cultural or historical boundaries. Furthermore, the erotic’s representations of pleasure do not necessarily always translate as pleasurable when crossing gender, class, ethnic, racial, or religious registers even within the same culture—in part because such forms of representation and practice inevitably encode sociopolitical power relations and thus function as contestive sites of cultural production. In other words, what is pleasurable to one person in a particular performing context may be distasteful (or worse, if experienced as an expression of violence, dominance, and conquest) to another person in the same or a different performing context. Herein lies the dilemma in which arguments for censorship are embedded. The complexity of this issue is well illustrated by anthropologist Gayle Rubin, among others; from her groundbreaking 1979 essay on gender and sexuality, “The Traffic in Women,” to her essay on hegemonic hierarchization of different sexualities, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality,” her work has consistently explored sexual and gender-based politics while defending the expression of sexual diversity.

Censorship—the product of conflicting class relations and changing constructions of gender, race, and diverse sexualities and nationalisms—involves the attempted public erasure and silencing of voices that are sometimes disruptive of traditional and emergent hegemonic interests. Inasmuch as theorists have argued that the public “production of specific forms of desire” creates and maintains “specific forms of political authority,” the inscription of erotic folklore is imperative to our understanding of cultural differences and to our constructions of cultural and political histories.

Cathy Lynn Preston

See also Joke; Obscenity; Scatology.



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ESCHATOLOGY

Mythic narratives about teachings concerning the last things, the end of the world, the destruction of the old world, and the creation of a new world. In the religious traditions of mankind, eschatological texts differ greatly. Eschatological myths, theories, and stories that deal with the end of the universe are to be found in almost every society. These works give descriptions of the developments of the universe after the final catastrophe in varying styles, either in imaginative mythic narrative or in scientific formulas or the language of physics. Eschatological myths lay the ground for the ethical requirements of human existence, describing the future expectations and destiny of both mankind and the universe.

In prophetic religions like Parsism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the end of this world implies entering into the realm of God. Based on this model, world and human history are unified and based on a linear model. In contrast, the Hindu philosophy of religion espouses a cyclical concept of time. The destruction of the world is expected to take place several times: The world will return to chaos again but will be created anew. Eschatological myths (e.g., "The Revelation of St. John") characteristically tell about the collapse of the firmament, floods, universal conflagration, terribly cold winters, bloody wars, and other horrors.

Myths are central to the religions of the world. They usually are held sacred in their cultures and are considered to be true explanations of the origins of the cosmos as well as the events related to both the genesis and the collapse of culture. They relate in detail how the world, humans, the animal kingdom, and central elements of culture were created, thus establishing the world order. These myths are often incorporated into the present by means of rituals. In myths, religions offer provocatively different answers to people's "why questions." Myths, however, deal not only with the questions of origin but also with the end of the universe and destiny of man; therefore, a culture's cosmogonic and eschatological myths together form an essential fabric of the culture's worldview.

There is always a difference between reality as depicted in myths and the human, societal, cultural, and physical realities of the people that maintain these fundamental explanations about their human existence. The crucial difference between historical and mythic time interpretation is related to the model used for comprehending temporality. Historical time is linear, continuous, and composed of unique events, but mythic time is cyclical and repetitive. The latter encompasses and unites two temporal dimensions: the original time and the present. In traditional cultures, a wealth of myths are devoted to explaining the origin and destination of the universe. These myths can be categorized, respectively, as cosmogonic and eschatological myths that clarify the structure, function, and origin of time, as well as its end. The fundamental questions about the origin and destination of the universe are addressed in every human culture or community, without exception. Although the creation and the end of the universe and mankind are characteristically dealt with as elements of the myths of human cultures, very different promises and expectations are provided. In their efforts to locate the causes of variation, scholars have noted that there is a relationship among certain ecological settings or niches, worldview, and eschatological expectations and beliefs.

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See also Cosmology; Myth.

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ESOTERIC/EXOTERIC FACTOR

Element in folklore that stresses a group's sense of its identity in relation to other groups. Coined by William Hugh Jansen, the set of contrasting terms has four dimensions. The esoteric factor in folklore refers both to a group's self-image and to its perception of what people from other groups think of it. The exoteric factor includes a group's image of another group and its notions of what that group believes that image to be. Examples of folklore evincing the esoteric factor are origin myths and legends that relate an ethnic community's beginnings (for instance, emergence myths among some Native American groups in the Southwest) and jokes told by African-Americans about white attitudes toward blacks. Folklore with strong exoteric tendencies is represented by ethnic jokes—those that offer actual characterizations of the targeted population and those that depict the population's alleged perception of the joketeller's attitudes.

Jansen believed that the esoteric/exoteric factor figures with particular prominence in the folklore of groups that demonstrate three features. Most important is isolation, whether the distancing factor be geography, religion, ethnicity and language, age, or some other marker of difference. A second contributor to a strong esoteric/exoteric component in a group's folklore is its being privy to knowledge and skills that seem especially arcane or specialized. Finally, Jansen suggested, groups that come to be regarded as especially prestigious or admirable may possess a pronounced esoteric/exoteric factor in their folklore.

Though Jansen himself viewed the esoteric/exoteric factor in folklore as pertinent to groups whose focus of identity might be occupational, religious, regional, or, in fact, related to any other distinguishing trait, most applications of his idea have occurred in the study of interethnic folklore, especially joking. Moreover, emphasis has most usually been directed at the exoteric member in the set of terms. Folklorists have, for example, defined a set of traits imputed to ethnic (and sometimes regional) others by mainstream culture in the United States: lack of efficiency, dirtiness, sexual promiscuity, inappropriate appetite, and laziness being some of the features that comprise a generic exoteric characterization. To these (and occasionally in place of some of them), particular features may be added to complete mainstream culture's exoteric view of a particular ethnic other. The Jew may be mercenary, the Scot may be stingy, the Italian may be cowardly, and the African-American may be criminally violent, for example. Occasional studies have focused on exoteric depictions of mainstream culture and its participants from the perspective of ethnic minorities, one of the most developed presentations being Keith Basso's treatment of Western Apache skits depicting the "whiteman."

Some folklorists have recognized that ethnic jokes have esoteric as well

as exoteric significance since the qualities imputed exoterically to the ethnic outsider stand in direct contradistinction to how the joketeller would characterize his or her own group, at least ideally. Consequently, the joketeller who mocks the laziness and inefficiency of the ethnic other also may be asserting a sense of his or her own group's qualities of industry and efficiency.

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See also Blason Populaire; Ethnic Folklore; Joke.

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ETHNIC FOLKLORE

The traditional expressive behavior of ethnic groups as they migrate, resettle, and interact with other groups. Initially conceived of as the content of a distinctive ethnic identity—part of the constellation of cultural traits that together distinguish one group from another—ethnic folklore is now generally defined in terms of its role in the creation, maintenance, and negotiation of cultural boundaries between ethnic groups. A discussion of this shift in defining characteristics provides a theoretical history of ethnic folklore scholarship both in Europe and in the United States.

In Europe, the study of folklore actually originated in the political struggle of various groups for ethnic recognition even though they were affiliated with large empires. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ethnic groups used various folklore forms to bolster their claims for national independence, becoming instrumental in the establishment of modern nations. Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, Johann Gottfried von Herder, and other romantic nationalists encouraged the rise of national pride through the reinforcement of ethnic identity and the perpetuation of values they defined as "ethnic."

In Europe, ethnic groups are the result of many centuries of an uninterrupted, slow process of oppression, relocation, and transplantation. As Linda Dégh has pointed out in her survey of European ethnic folklore scholarship, "The Study of Ethnicity in Modern European Ethnology," these groups have necessarily been studied by ethnologists as historical formations and as parts of a European cultural continuum. European ethnologists have tended to analyze the folklore of these ethnic groups either as the products of regional dialect groups comprising a general national culture or as the lore of alien minority groups, language islands, or colonies within nations. In the first instance, ethnographic field data are placed in the context of historical, geographical, ecological, and demographic factors believed to account for the specific combination of cultural elements that characterize the ethnicity of a regional group. Thus, *ethnic specifics*, local variations of national stereotypes, have been the focus of much of the research on the expressive culture of European ethnic groups.

Although research on the folklore of what Dégh has called "alien ethnic colonies" within larger European nations produced similar investigative strategies, the overall goal of that research was quite different. In fact, scholars often were completely disinterested in alien minorities such as itinerant Gypsy tribes or communities of eastern European Jews; the research of these scholars often supported assimilationist government policies. Historically oriented and profoundly influenced by Herderian nationalism, these ethnographers regarded the lore of emigrant colonies as the final vestiges of the national ideal. The Soviet school of ethnology provides one of the best examples of the justification of folklore research, especially research on ethnic folklore, for political reasons.

Likewise, in Germany, where World War I had both crippled the economy and deflated national pride, the study of ethnic folklore, grounded firmly in the heritage of the German romantic nationalists, became one of the most powerful tools of Nazi folk and race theorists. Focusing particularly on German ethnic groups in southeast Europe, agents of the Reich worked to organize individual communities as German nationals. Ethnic folklore research, then, was almost exclusively directed ideologically, toward imperialistic expansionism.

After World War II, a new generation of scholars finally came forward to critique the reconstructionism of traditional German *Volkskunde*. The post-war era provided these ethnographers with a rich variety of contexts for the study of German ethnic folklore as the resettlement of various groups began to take place. This focus on the processes of change that occur as ethnic groups interact became most prominent in European ethnology after the war, as ethnic group relocation between nations and internal migration became so widespread. In these contexts, studies of acculturation flourished, and folklore forms were analyzed as clear indicators of the acculturative process.

In Europe since the 1950s, the study of interethnic relations has grown into a special field. Community studies of areas in which several ethnic groups and/or nationalities interact have often included the analysis of folklore genres. In multiethnic regions of southeastern Europe, for example, a number of cooperative studies have produced careful folklore analyses of multilingual interethnic communities. Such studies have served to disturb the traditional definition of ethnic groups according to trait combinations since the research indicates that changing contextual factors continually disrupt the stability of those very combinations. The exploration of expressive culture in interethnic relations in Europe today focuses rather on the ways in which social interaction among ethnic groups and individuals produces a dynamic range of folklore forms that continually both maintain and create cultural traditions.

In the United States, many of the particular theoretical and methodological issues concerning ethnic folklore differ considerably from those of concern to European ethnologists. However, the folklore of ethnic groups has been a prominent concern of American folklorists since the very inception of the American Folklore Society (AFS). In fact, the 1888 AFS charter mentioned the traditions of Native Americans, African-Americans, and other ethnically distinct communities as particularly appropriate sources of data for folklorists.

Like their European precedents, the first studies of the folklore of American ethnic groups were collections of "survivals." The assumption behind these collections of songs, stories, superstitions, and other Old World forms was that these treasures would somehow be lost as soon as acculturation (specifically, linguistic acculturation) had taken place. The task of the folklorist, then, was to document these Old World traditions before they disappeared during the process of Americanization. Initially, British ballads, songs, and folktales were the foci of such studies, which concentrated on recovering these relics of British countryside traditions—especially in the upland South, New England, and the Ozarks. As Roger D. Abrahams has pointed out in his thorough discussion of the history of American ethnic folklore scholarship in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of Ethnicity*, a hierarchy of forms and even items was established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the actual collection of such items in North America was not carried out extensively until the 1920s and 1930s. These collections, several of them conducted under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, focused primarily on determining the oldest and most widespread texts of ballads and folktales and estimating how widely they might be found and in what range of versions and variants.

A wide range of ethnic folklore research has been conducted employing this kind of antiquarian approach to the collection and analysis of ethnic lore of groups as diverse as Pennsylvania Germans, Louisiana French, and south-

western Mexican-Americans. Such studies have served primarily to document the conservative, traditional preservation of Old World ethnic traditions in these often isolated communities.

Studies of Native American folklore developed along somewhat similar lines. In the nineteenth century, the collection of Native American folklore, however, also was used to foster a kind of nationalistic sentiment. Native American lore was collected in order to identify distinctly "American" cultural roots that might serve to distinguish the young nation. These collections soon provided indexes of the rate of survival of Native American cultural forms since, unlike the study of the folklore of Euroamerican ethnic groups, no previous baseline studies of precontact narratives, songs, and rituals were available.

Other scholars, particularly those studying Euroamerican folklore, combined similar collecting techniques with a somewhat different analytic perspective. In these studies, the collected texts served to index not only the degree of preserved ethnicity but also the degree of "assimilation" of the particular ethnic group. Conducted primarily in culturally conservative communities where ethnic distinctiveness was highlighted, this kind of ethnic folklore research compared the collected material to Old World repertoires in order to gauge the various stages in the process of acculturation. The clear assumption was that the more Americanized an individual ethnic group became, the fewer vestiges of Old World forms would remain and that, in time, ethnic differences in American culture simply would disappear. Following the work of early-twentieth-century historians and social scientists interested in ethnicity, then, folklorists viewed ethnic communities as living laboratories in which the processes of assimilation and acculturation could be observed and analyzed firsthand. Such studies served to highlight the selective maintenance of traditional forms and practices within particular ethnic communities.

A similar perspective also has been used to suggest, however, that African and Native American repertoires or styles have been eliminated in the process of colonization. This deculturation perspective is most frequently identified with African-Americanists E. Franklin Frazier and Robert Park, although it was maintained by other collectors of African-American lore until well into the 1960s. Such a Eurocentric position has been rebutted easily by a number of prominent scholars, who have demonstrated a strong maintenance of African expressive forms, styles, and performance patterns in the United States. The work of Melville Herskovits has been particularly influential in formulating a more complex model of the ways ethnic folklore forms function as indicators of degree of acculturation. Herskovits has distinguished three modes of continuity and adaptation: straight *retention*; *reinterpretation*, in which forms are maintained in new environments with new uses and mean-

ings; and *syncretism*, in which similar elements of two or more cultures merge. This attention to the cultural dynamics of intergroup contact in which expressive forms change and emerge redirected scholarly attention away from folklore items themselves and toward an analysis of the various factors affecting the use of these forms as displays of ethnicity.

Most twentieth-century folklore studies on ethnicity have focused on the changes in ethnic groups and their lore that came about as the result of culture contact. In 1959, in his influential *American Folklore*, Richard M. Dorson formulated a set of questions that served as guidelines for folklorists interested in the lore of ethnic groups for at least the next ten years: "What happens to the inherited traditions of European and Asiatic folk after they settle in the United States and learn a new language and new ways? How much of the old lore is retained and transmitted to their children? What parts are sloughed off, what intrusions appear, what accommodation is made between Old Country beliefs and the American physical scene? These are the large questions that confront the assessor of immigrant folk traditions."

Many folklorists took up Dorson's call for studies of immigrant traditions and answered these questions. A fine example of such acculturation studies is Robert Georges' work with the Tarpon Springs, Florida, Greek community, in which he analyzes the ways narratives, rites of passage, and holiday celebrations help to maintain the traditional belief system of these fairly isolated transplanted Greek fishermen. Georges demonstrates both the survival and reinforcement of Greek traditions in one small American community. Folklorists have continued to document both persistence and change in the ethnic traditions of immigrant groups. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's study of traditional storytelling in a Toronto Jewish community, Robert Klymasz' study of Ukrainian folklore in Canada, and Elli Köngäs-Maranda's analysis of Finnish-American lore, for example, document the various factors effecting change in ethnic traditions in the New World.

European models of ethnological research have formed the basis for the "acculturation model" research of folklorists such as Linda Dégh, who has called for case studies that will provide an analysis of the assimilation process as it affects groups in contiguous and intermittent contact over a period of time. This process of "cultural adjustment" requires the observation of transgenerational folkloric expression as various ethnic groups come in contact with each other. Dégh has continually suggested that the determination of ethnic boundaries and the examination of intercultural borrowing should be the focus of research on ethnic folklore.

In this insistence on the analysis of the process of ethnic interaction, Dégh's work is representative of the ways in which American ethnic folklore scholarship since World War II has moved away from a concern with "survivals" of Old World forms as the cultural content of ethnic groups and

toward an understanding of the processes of ethnic boundary maintenance or negotiation. Like their European colleagues, American folklorists have drawn extensively on the work of Norwegian ethnographer Fredrik Barth in making this shift in theoretical emphasis. Barth's 1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* proposed an understanding and definition of ethnic groups based not on the identification of a cluster of culture traits for each particular ethnic group but rather on the *process* that a group and others use to separate and define the group itself. Barth argued that the focus for the analysis of ethnicity should be "the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses." This simple but powerful notion of boundaries has proven to be one of the most theoretically useful concepts in clarifying the ways in which ethnic identity is articulated and actively negotiated in interaction within and between ethnic groups. Such a perspective points clearly to the influence of contextual variability on ethnic identity: As social, economic, and political conditions change, so may systems of ethnic identification.

Attention to the role of folklore in the process of boundary making was first articulated by William Hugh Jansen in his 1959 "The Esoteric-Exoteric Factor in Folklore." Jansen discussed the range of factors associated with boundary making and maintenance as they are revealed in oral narrative. His work suggested that by examining the folklore of a group's own self-image as well as that of its images of other groups, one might better understand the role folklore plays in the creation, negotiation, and maintenance of ethnic boundaries. Jansen's work focused primarily on the ways in which folklore operates as a "function of shared identity," binding groups together, but Richard Bauman has pointed out that differential identities and asymmetrical relationships also can be the basis for folklore performance. Américo Paredes has explored the relationship between "gringos" and "greasers" in the joking behavior of Mexican-Americans as dramatizations of real social inequities. Roger Abrahams also has suggested that folklore performances may additionally operate as a means of distinguishing separate or even antagonistic segments within the same ethnic community, as Alan Dundes' work on Jewish-American humor demonstrates.

As members of ethnic groups negotiate the construction, manipulation, and exploitation of boundaries between themselves and others, they draw on a wide range of cultural and linguistic resources in multiple cultural repertoires. In her 1983 essay "Studying Immigrant and Ethnic Folklore," Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggested that a special feature of the folklore of ethnicity is a heightened awareness of cultural diversity and self-reflexivity, so that the relevant research questions become: "To what extent, how and to what effect is folklore used to make cultural comparisons and to mark cultural distinctiveness? How is folklore used to define cultural differences, incongruities and convergences? What are the nature and content of these compar-

isons, of this marking or foregrounding?" Attention to these questions required a shift from studying the lore of a particular named group to an examination of the settings, social occasions, and events in which boundary negotiation is an important activity.

Clearly, this shift in focus was at least partially a response to the new attention to folklore performance in the late 1960s and 1970s. With Dan Ben-Amos' 1971 redefinition of folklore as patterned expressive communication within a group meeting together face-to-face came an emphasis on the folk *group* rather than on solely text-centered analyses and on the folklore *process* rather than product. For scholars interested in ethnicity, this particular theoretical move opened the discipline in new ways to serious considerations of the manner in which ethnic group members use folklore in the creation and maintenance of cultural boundaries. In addition, the concept of emergence proposed by Dell Hymes and Richard Bauman—that folklore forms, contexts, and performances are constantly emerging—helped to undermine the long-held assumption that ethnic folklore traditions gradually and inevitably erode and disappear. Instead, folklorists now concentrated on the creative, ever-changing ways in which ethnic groups and individuals display their own ethnic identities.

At the same time, rising ethnic consciousness within the United States in the 1960s and 1970s created an increasing public interest in understanding the dynamics of ethnic interaction. Folklorists sometimes found themselves in the position of "ethnicity brokers" as they became involved in the public display of ethnicity in a variety of festival settings, ranging from the Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C., to small, local gatherings. Such festivals became means of dramatizing ethnic persistence in a particular region or community. The process of "going public" raised a whole new set of questions for both folklorists and members of ethnic groups, questions such as: What happens to folklore forms when they are performed within large heterogeneous groups that have come together only to be entertained, rather than within close, face-to-face, homogeneous communities with shared cultural values and expectations? What happens when ethnic identification becomes marketable? What is the effect on the ethnic community itself? Is the social base of ethnic folklore completely undermined in such performance contexts? Or are these festival situations simply different occasions on which boundary negotiation takes place, new responses to ethnic persistence in a truly pluralistic society?

During the late 1970s and 1980s, American folklore scholars began to extend their analyses of ethnic groups and their lore to consider the wide variety of contexts in which ethnicity is constantly negotiated and renegotiated. Many of the articles in the 1977 special issue of *Western Folklore*, "Studies in Folklore and Ethnicity," edited by Larry Danielson, demonstrated this range of concerns.

Acknowledging that ethnic meaning arises only out of the social interactions of individuals whose expressions of ethnicity may be affirmed, contested, and/or celebrated by other participants, researchers began to examine the interactions of particular ethnic individuals. As Shalom Staub pointed out in *Yemenis in New York City*, "Ethnicity is therefore an identity which resides not within the individual person, or even the particular group, but *between* individuals and *between* groups engaged in social interaction." The 1991 collection of essays on ethnic folklore edited by Stephen Stern and John Allan Cicala, *Creative Ethnicity*, represented this new direction in ethnic folklore scholarship. Through an examination of the forms, symbols, strategies, and stylistic resources of the folklore performances in a variety of ethnic contexts, the authors attempted to demonstrate the richness and diversity of ethnicity as it is experienced on a dynamic, personal level.

Today, scholars interested in the folklore of ethnic groups no longer confine themselves to the task of documenting survivals and chronicling acculturation patterns. Instead, folklorists around the world attempt to take into account both the broad historical conditions that influence ethnicity and the factors affecting specific individual negotiations of ethnic identity as they are played out within particular social interactions. The analysis of creative expressions of negotiations of ethnicity is crucial to an understanding of the ways in which groups and the individuals who comprise those groups continually articulate and reshape the meaning of their own ethnic identifications.

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See also Blason Populaire; Esoteric/Exoteric Factor.

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ETHNOAESTHETICS

Study of the artistic communication and human creativity of a culture or group, incorporating both individual and communal ideas about what is “good,” “beautiful,” “artistic,” “appropriate,” and/or “well made.” As the term itself indicates, *ethnoaesthetics* is concerned with a group’s own perceptions about what is pleasing or beautiful. Scholars who pursue this study generally reject the notion that such values are universally determined, attempting instead to discover the characteristic cultural qualities inherent in the artistic expression of particular groups. From this perspective, such forms of communication constitute eloquent statements about how certain people think, live, and behave in distinct places and times, demonstrating both continuity and change in the way they view the world. Although the approach is seldom used in this manner, it could refer as easily to the verbal arts as it does to the visual arts and would be quite productive in delineating the interrelationship between the two communicative processes.

Historically, the designation *ethnoaesthetics* has been employed more frequently by anthropologists than folklorists, indicating especially the cultural expressions of non-Western peoples, including those aptly described by Nelson Graburn as inhabiting “the fourth world,” that is, native peoples without countries of their own whose art is seldom manufactured for their own use. Whether they specifically adopted this terminology or not, folklorists began to apply the methodology consonant with this concept as they became more concerned with context, performance, and dynamic process, giving less credence to their former emphasis on isolated objects and texts that were often regarded as if frozen in time and generated anonymously. This new direction in folklore scholarship reflected a major shift in the discipline that took place in the mid-1970s, entailing a concentration on the individual rather than on broad generalizations, classifications of types, delineations of groups, and regional trends.

In folk art studies, the behavioral orientation is well represented by Michael Owen Jones’ wide variety of publications that demonstrate his inter-

est in individual motivation, focusing on the material object as a means by which to illuminate the mind of a particular maker and user. Significantly, Jones, like anthropologists who study tourist art, explores appreciation as well as creation, considering the attitudes of both the consumer and the traditional artist. Jones' influence is evident in a range of later publications whose authors began to question overarching assumptions about tradition and culture. John Vlach, for instance, directly acknowledges Jones' intellectual contribution to his own research. In *Charleston Blacksmith: The Work of Philip Simmons*, Vlach examines the perpetuation of tradition in the urban environment, stressing the ways in which this environment actually encourages the retention of folk aesthetics and creative processes. Many of Simon Bronner's numerous books and articles also situate studies of individual craftspersons within specific community, economic, and environmental contexts. Additionally, although his early regional and structural studies would hardly fall within this disciplinary shift, Henry Glassie's *Passing the Time in Ballymenone* is exemplary in its attention to context, as well as its interweaving of the multiple verbal and visual expressive performances that occur in this folk community.

All of these studies have been the subject of controversy as well as admiration. Their emphasis on individual creativity is laudable, but their lack of attention to the politics of production is highly problematic. Too frequently, folk art scholars underscore the importance of aesthetics while neglecting critical aspects of social conflict and power relationships. Issues of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity have yet to become central to this area of academic concern.

An extensive overview would reveal that the canon in folk art or folk material culture scholarship is composed largely of the publications of male folklorists writing about male artists. The tacit assumption behind the existence and perpetuation of such an accepted body of scholarly works is that women neither study nor make the most significant forms of folk objects. Yet the most recent generation of folk art scholars comprises quite a number of women who have moved into the seemingly male-dominated and public realm of folk art study. But it is not the concentration on a specific category of folk art that distinguishes the scholarship of these women; rather, it is their endeavor to interrelate a variety of forms of artistic communication. Motivated by advances in feminist theory and performance theory, they have dissolved the traditional boundaries between verbal and visual expressive behavior, investigating the aesthetic principles that unite rather than separate these domains. It is this sort of research, conducted by scholars who sometimes designate themselves as folkloristic anthropologists, anthropological folklorists, or symbolic anthropologists, that fits most clearly within the ethnoaesthetic approach to human creativity. These innovative scholars include Barbara Babcock, Claire R. Farrer, Nancy Munn, and Barbara Tedlock, among

others. They, in turn, have influenced their students and colleagues to analyze multidisciplinary, multivalent aspects of traditional artistic or symbolic behavior. Whether they explicitly describe this method as “ethnoaesthetic” or not, their approach constitutes one of the most productive directions in contemporary folk art studies.

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See also Aesthetics; Texture; Tradition.



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ETHNOGRAPHY

A method of studying cultures in which researchers immerse themselves in ways of life to perceive them as they are lived and then recount and interpret their fieldwork to help their readers understand what it is like to be a part of the cultures studied.

The four major types of ethnographies in the 1990s include the scientific, classical, and experimental ethnographies found within anthropology and folklore and ethnographies employed in research disciplines other than anthropology or folklore. The four approaches share a research methodology based on observing, recording, and, as fully as possible, participating in the daily activities of cultures and then writing accounts stressing descriptive detail. Each approach follows different literary conventions in reporting field experiences.

Scientific, classic, and experimental ethnography, the three primary approaches employed in folklore and anthropology in the 1990s, share an ancient history and method. Herodotus (484 B.C.–425 B.C.) wrote the first ethnography in anything like the modern sense, and in 1727, Joseph François Lafitau published his description of the Iroquois written from their point of view—the first modern field ethnography. Since Herodotus' time, many travelers, traders, missionaries, and government officials have conducted informal research among peoples and written about their experiences.

The word *ethnography* was first used in 1834 as a synonym for the then current term *anthropography*. Five years later, Harry R. Schoolcraft published his ethnography centering upon the folklore that he and his wife had collected from the Native American tribes of the eastern United States, and he published his best-known ethnography in 1848. This book, *The Indian in His Wigwam*, opened with an impressionistic account of Schoolcraft's first trip to the American West and ended with an Indian war song. Lewis Morgan wrote and published the first comprehensive field ethnography in 1851. Frank Hamilton Cushing, the first participant-observer in folklore and anthropology, lived in a Zuni pueblo from 1879 to 1884 and published a romantic account of the experience in *Century Magazine*. In 1888, Franz Boas published a field ethnography of the Baffin Island Eskimos. Alfred C. Haddon organized and led the first field ethnography team of trained observers in 1898.

All these early researchers were important in the development of ethnography, but Boas was arguably the most influential because, beyond his personal contributions to the field, he made Columbia University's Anthropology Department the most puissant training center for ethnographers in the United States during the first 30 years of the twentieth century. His students included Ruth Benedict, Ruth Bunzel, Melville Herskovits, Zora Neale Hurston, Alfred Kroeber, Robert H. Lowie, Margaret Mead, Paul Radin, and Leslie Spier; in 1926, every anthropology department in the United States was chaired by a former student of Franz Boas. During the same period, English anthropology produced its own set of ethnographers who affected the form, including A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Edward Evans-Pritchard. These British ethnographers tried to demonstrate the efficacy of functional theory, whereas the Americans attempted to salvage the past and accepted functionalism later. Both groups, however, produced classic ethnographies. Malinowski's 1922 description of the ethnography method as "an attempt to grasp the native's point of view and see his world through his eyes" characterized the approach of both groups.

These early, classic ethnographies—also called realistic ethnographies because of their similarities to the realist movement in literature—were far from uniform, and some of them were innovative and experimental. As time passed, however, ethnographers developed an inflexible set of genre conven-

tions that included the use of a third-person, omniscient point of view to present a set of topics in a set sequence, as well as the elimination of any references to the investigator.

This predictable pattern was broken in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s by pressures from different directions. In the 1960s and 1970s, ethnoscience argued that ethnographers should bring the rigor of the scientific method to ethnography, urged the replacement of the nonstandard selection of information of classic ethnography with a more precise framework for data collection and interpretation, and developed statistical tools to achieve these goals.

In the 1980s and 1990s, other voices argued for making ethnographies more personal and literary. *Reflexive*, *interactive*, *postmodern*, *experimental*, and *narrative* are all terms used to describe the varied attempts during these decades to restructure ethnography as a literary genre. Most ethnographers of this period included the field researcher as a part of the field, used the first-person voice, and did not follow chronological order, and many of them experimented with novelistic techniques. Drawing inspiration from Schoolcraft, Cushing, Hurston, James Agee, and Hunter S. Thompson and supported by the theoretical works of Clifford Geertz, David Schneider, Michael Owen Jones, Robert Georges, and many others, experimental ethnographers sought ways to include more direct representation of the experience of fieldwork itself into their written reports and to use writing to gain theoretical insights and more fully present the experience of other cultures.

Ethnography proliferated in the second half of the twentieth century in research fields other than folklore and anthropology. Nonanthropological, nonfolkloristic ethnographers adapted and developed methodologies to fit their needs from scientific, classical, and experimental ethnographies.

Various critics attacked both classical and experimental ethnographies in the 1980s and 1990s as unscientific and scientific ethnographies as too subjective and nonreflexive. It is impossible to predict the future directions the form may take with absolute certainty. Considering the long and useful history of ethnographies, however, it seems highly likely that ethnography will continue as a major research method and literary genre in some form—or forms—within folklore, anthropology, and other research fields.

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See also Anthropological Approach; Fieldwork.

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ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

The study of music that stresses the importance of music in and as culture. Ethnomusicology holds that music takes meaning from its cultural context. The term, which contracts *ethnology* with *musicology*, was first used to denote the discipline in 1950 by Jaap Kunst, replacing *comparative musicology* (from the German *vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*), the accepted name from the late nineteenth century. Kunst argued, along with others, that comparison neither distinguished nor sufficiently delineated the research in this discipline.

At the onset, studies focused on music outside the Western art music tradition. Early researchers came from a range of disciplines and geographic areas—ethnology and anthropology in the United States, musicology and music folklore in the United Kingdom, eastern Europe and Latin America, and psychology in Germany and Austria. The disparate academic backgrounds of the researchers imparted an interdisciplinary cast that persists in ethnomusicology, albeit with changing disciplinary shades.

Musics outside the Western tradition continue to hold an important position within ethnomusicology. However, the study of Western art music often has been implicit, through comparison, in the research. A few scholars explicitly have made Western music, even art music, a focus of their work. Moreover, research concerned with music in urban and complex societies has emerged as an important concern of ethnomusicologists. More generally, ethnomusicology seeks to explain and champion neglected and undervalued musics and to denounce ethnocentric attitudes toward the musics of other communities and cultures.

Ethnomusicology distinguishes itself from other academic disciplines through specific topics and issues of interest: origins and universals of music, musical change and conflict, the function of music within society, and relationships between language and music, to list a few historically prominent examples. Partly because of this issue-based orientation, scholars today most often define the discipline by means of a shared, if eclectic, corpus of research theory and methodology, rather than by geographic area.

Ethnomusicology can be characterized further by the persistent examination of the bounds and objectives of the discipline and by critical inquiry into its own definition. Charles Seeger argued that the most general term, *musicology*, would best describe this discipline that views all musics from all times

with equal scholarly import, rather than restricting the general term to *historical musicology*, a discipline largely concerned with Western art music. And George List, writing in 1979, questioned if a single definition was even possible. Other writers have argued similarly. The inquiry into definitions stems, in part, from the divergent theoretical and methodological bases of the researchers seeking common modes of discourse. Another aspect of this questioning involves efforts to gain institutional support and position for ethnomusicology vis-à-vis other more established disciplines, especially anthropology and historical musicology.

Guido Adler, in his 1885 definition of musicology and its divisions, saw the focus of comparative musicology as the classification of the musics of the world. Thus, at Adler's christening of the discipline within academe, comparison was the discipline's central feature. Two technical developments made the comparison of oral-tradition musics feasible: the invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison in 1877 and the development of a pitch measurement system by the English physicist and phonetician Alexander J. Ellis. The phonograph facilitated the collection of music data, previously a Herculean task limited by one's musical ear and access to cooperative performers. Ellis' cents system of measurement, outlined in his 1885 article "On the Musical Scales of Various Nations," made possible a more objective comparison of pitch elements based on the division of the octave into 1,200 equal units.

Comparison as practiced by Erich M. von Hornbostel of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, along with his students and colleagues, was concerned largely with analysis of music elements such as scale tones, intervals, melodic movement, and rhythms. Based on analyses of recordings and musical instruments collected by colonial ethnologists, these studies produced grand, if not grandiose, classification schemes. The most renowned sought to illustrate global distribution of musical styles and artifacts. Important works of this period were Hornbostel's *Blasquinten* (blown fifths) theory relating the structure of musical scales, now discredited (see Kunst's "Around von Hornbostel's Theory of Cycle of Blown Fifths" for discussion), and Hornbostel and Curt Sachs' "Classification of Music Instruments," published in 1914, still a standard for musical instrument classification.

Comparison also infused much early ethnomusicological research in the United States. From the nineteenth century, scholars working on Native American music, most conspicuously Alice Cunningham Fletcher and Frances Densmore, created monographs on the music of individual Native American cultures. Stemming, in part, from the Austrian *Kulturhistorische Schule* (culture history school), students of Franz Boas, however, sought to organize Native American cultures into geographic areas established by shared cultural traits. George Herzog, who had worked with both Hornbostel and Boas, applied the notion of culture areas in his "The Yuman Musical Style" (1928). Helen

Roberts used this approach to classify Native American musical styles and instruments in her 1936 book, *Musical Areas in Aboriginal North America*.

Comparison was explicit in researching the relationships between African-American musical practices and those found in Africa, seen most notably in the work of Melville Herskovits and Richard Waterman. Alan Lomax's research methodology of cantometrics, exemplified in the 1968 publication *Folk Song Style and Culture*, linked musical style with social organization and took comparison as its central feature.

The use of the term *comparative musicology* declined in the 1940s, to be replaced eventually by *ethnomusicology*. The new term gained credence with Kunst's call to rename the discipline and was institutionalized with the establishment of the Society for Ethnomusicology in 1955. Coupled with this change in labels, there was a sharp decline in work concerned with cross-cultural comparison. In this new milieu, comparison was criticized and seen as premature until more detailed, accurate descriptions of individual cultures existed. Alan Merriam, in his 1964 book *The Anthropology of Music*, admonished much early research as considerably less than systematic in its use of comparison. In a 1966 review of Merriam's book, John Blacking added that comparison could yield spurious results in that superficial musical elements might seem similar but be based on different cultural models of behavior and belief. Such discussions corresponded to a realization that each culture's music deserved study in its own right, in terms appropriate to that culture and built around methods and theories that emerged from the study of that culture and its music.

Early comparative studies invariably focused on music expressions as artifacts, with little concern for the context of their existence. The shift toward the view of music as part of culture stressed methods of fieldwork, thereby making fieldwork a defining feature of ethnomusicology. Indeed, Bruno Nettl suggested in *The Study of Ethnomusicology* that a history of ethnomusicology could be written as a history of fieldwork. From the 1890s to about 1930, the collection of artifacts was accomplished with only short periods in the field. Data usually were collected by people other than the music researcher, with the exception of the fieldwork-based research by Americans on Native American music. During and beyond this period, some scholars were equally concerned with collecting and preserving entire music repertoires. Scholars feared that much of the music of the world was on the verge of extinction, and as a result, major archives of recordings were begun in Germany and the United States. The next period, roughly from 1920 to 1960, stressed research for extended periods in small communities. Studies from this period took a broader concept of fieldwork, in which the collection of music artifacts was coupled with a concern for the complete context of any music's existence. Since the 1950s, parallel to the conviction that music expressions are important facets and indicators of a culture, there has been a further shift toward

participant observation and more involvement with music. Moreover, interest in the music of complex and urban societies, where mediated forms of music such as radio broadcasts and sound records must be considered, has brought new methods of fieldwork while maintaining the significance of the participant observation method for ethnomusicology.

Since the late 1950s, ethnomusicological activity often has been characterized as oriented toward the methods and theories of either anthropology or historical musicology. Alan Merriam, the foremost champion of the anthropological orientation in ethnomusicology, suggested in *The Anthropology of Music* that the label *ethnomusicology*, combining ethnology with musicology, implies this division. Merriam drew upon methods and theories of anthropology, notably participant observation with extended periods of fieldwork and the theories of structuralism and functionalism. He argued as early as 1960 that ethnomusicology should be concerned with music in culture, later refined to music as culture, and he explicitly joined music to its cultural context in *The Anthropology of Music* through a definition of music that connected musical sound and musical behavior to a culture's beliefs and concepts of music. Mantle Hood, though sharing with Merriam a disapproval of the early comparative research and an endorsement of extended periods of fieldwork, was the strongest advocate for the musicological orientation to ethnomusicology. Hood's approach centered research around the mastery of non-Western music performance—what he called in 1960 “bi-musicality”—and he argued that training in performance, long basic to the European art music tradition, was equally applicable to the study of non-Western music. One component of this method was the development of a conservatory of music at the University of California, Los Angeles' Institute of Ethnomusicology, with artists representing cultures from around the world. Since the 1970s, there has been a general move away from interest in artifacts such as music compositions and genres toward an interest in processes. This change in emphasis has drawn the musicological and anthropological orientations within ethnomusicology closer together.

In Europe during the nineteenth century, research into local, oral traditions was driven by an interest in creating nationalist musics fortified and sustained through materials from peasant cultures. Composers such as Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály working in Hungary, Romania, and Transylvania and Percy Grainger in England drew upon indigenous folk music to create new art music compositions. Similarly, folk music enthusiasts, collectors, and analysts such as Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles researched the music of England and its immigrant offspring in the United States. Sharp's interest in melodic analysis and classification, as discussed in *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions*, is an important legacy, an antecedent of such work as Bertrand Bronson's research on the tunes of the Child ballads. Thanks in part to Karpeles, these and other folk music scholars gained an organized forum for

their research with the founding, in 1947, of the International Folk Music Council, renamed the International Council for Traditional Music in 1981.

Ethnomusicology in Latin America displays the clearest correspondence to European folk music research. Comparable to their European counterparts, Latin American music scholars began to comprehend the relevance of local traditions as nationalizing forces. This recognition coincided with nationalist movements throughout Latin American—for instance, the Andean *indigenismo* and the Brazilian *modernismo* movements. In this context, such traditions were viewed as part of the opposition to dominant elite social classes who disregarded local traditions in favor of European-derived expressive forms. This research also paralleled European folk music scholarship in its emphasis on the study of the music artifact and its devaluation of performance and contextual issues. The trend was well represented by Isabel Aretz's *Síntesis de la etnomúsica en América Latina*.

Important as all this research is, its relationship with ethnomusicology is vague. Folk music scholarship rarely has drawn upon theory that relates music and its performance to performers and social contexts, although there are important exceptions, such as Philip Bohlman's *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*. The influence of folk music research in ethnomusicology has been circumscribed, too. The attention given to oral-tradition musics in ethnomusicology stems, in part, from early folk music research. However, with a theoretical framework that stresses comparison, folk music scholarship's import was more significant during the early periods of ethnomusicology, especially in the domains of melodic analysis and tune classification. This research did not fall neatly within or completely outside definitions of ethnomusicology.

The term *ethnomusicology* today has currency remote to the academic discipline. Activities such as the performance and dissemination of non-Western and oral-tradition musics and the teaching of such musics in primary and secondary schools are often linked with ethnomusicology. Moreover, the term often is invoked to describe the work of Western composers who make use of the musical possibilities of non-Western sources, as well as those people involved with non-Western musics as part of a global economic marketplace. Somewhat alarmed by these uses of the term, Alan Merriam in 1975 made the distinction between ethnomusicologists and others whose activities draw upon ethnomusicology.

In 1956, Willard Rhodes, arguing the importance of ethnomusicological scholarship for both the social sciences and humanities, warned against narrowing the discipline's scope and goals. His caveat evidently has been taken to heart, given the wide range of research and activities that now fall under the rubric *ethnomusicology*.

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See also Ballad; Broadside Ballad; Cantometrics; Folk Music; Folksong, Lyric; Folksong, Narrative; Hymn, Folk; Lullaby; Musical Instrument, Folk.



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ETHNOPOETICS

The study of aesthetic structures within oral performances. An outgrowth of the performance school, on the one hand, and structural linguistics, on the other, ethno poetics seeks to discover and present the distinctive features of oral performances. Its aim is both descriptive and analytical. Although ethno poetics was developed initially through the analysis of Native American narrative, it has been applied to a variety of other oral traditions and has influenced the ways folklorists present and interpret transcribed narrative in general. It offers valuable insights into such folkloristic issues as orality, literacy, translation, cultural change, and the relation of language and worldview (the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis).

The study of ethno poetics draws largely on the insights of two researchers, Dennis Tedlock and Dell Hymes, who have shaped the issues of the field. For Tedlock, oral performance differs from prose narrative in its reliance on the expressive capacities of the human voice. Through pauses and phonological cues (e.g., stress shift, intonation, amplitude, tone), the performer adds stylistic dimensions that become meaningful and entertaining to the native audi-

ence. Folklorists must find ways to express such oral texture in print through innovative use of visual signs. Even when presenting texts in translated form, folklorists can thus convey aesthetic features.

Proceeding from the realization that narratives in a number of Native American languages resemble poetry more than prose, Hymes and other researchers analyze texts to discover the formal means by which rhetorical structure and aesthetics find expression in oral narrative. Attention to details such as grammatical structures, parallelism, and repetition can help the researcher perceive not only poetic lines within the text but also grouping of lines into larger units, culminating in an overall aesthetic architecture of the performance itself. Often, the pattern number(s) of the culture in question plays a key role in determining the structure of a narrative.

Whereas folklorists working within Tedlock's framework stress the universal aspects of oral performance—its reliance on the voice—folklorists following Hymes' approach focus on the culture- and language-specific means by which aesthetic form is achieved. Assumptions of universality must be first tested cross-culturally. Both traditions represent important developments in folkloristics today.

Thomas A. DuBois

See also Aesthetics; Ethnoaesthetics; Performance; Texture.

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ETIOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

An explanation of how things came to be the way they are or were at a given time or under certain conditions. The adjective *etiology* is derived from a late

Latin and Greek composite word: *aetiologia*, meaning “cause description” (*atia*, cause + *logia*, description); it is used in a number of fields to signify the science of causes or origins (e.g., in medicine to refer to the origins of a specific disease).

In folklore, the term *etiology* has been applied frequently in conjunction with other folkloristic concepts to designate the explanatory function of an item, commonly in narrative form. A story may belong to any of a number of genres, depending on the story’s form, style, and contents, as well as on the narrator’s intent for telling it (or the tale’s function). Generally speaking, a traditional account of how a thing originated would be perceived as factual and taken seriously by narrator and listeners. Thus, etiological narratives are typically classified as falling within one of two main categories: belief (religious-sacred, mythological) and historical (legend, ethnic history, historical anecdotes). These two categories often overlap; such narratives also appear in instructional didactic roles (e.g., as moralistic fables or religious exempla). Laurits Bødker cites such Germanic terms as *Aetio fable*, *Åtiologiske sage*, *Åtiologiske märchen*, and *Åtiologiske tierfabel*.

An etiological belief narrative may be labeled a myth or sacred story (e.g., biblical, Koranic)—myth being a belief whose validity is not accepted by the person applying the term. Consequently, Stith Thompson classifies the bulk of etiological themes as “Mythological”; Hasan El-Shamy expands the scope to “Mythological [and related belief] motifs.”

Examples of such motifs include the following: A20, “Origin of the creator”; A110, “Origin of the gods”; A510, “Origin of the culture-hero (demigod)”; A980, “Origin of particular places”; A1335, “Origin of death”; A1370, “Origin of mental and moral characteristics”; A1610, “Origin of various tribes”; and A2221, “Animal characteristics reward for pious act.” Examples of legendary (historically possible) motifs are: A1464.1.1, “First poetry composed in imitation of tone of hammer on anvil”, and Z21.1. “Origin of chess.” Meanwhile, the formulaic theme to which such a tale belongs has been recently designated as new Motif Z19.3§, “Etiological tales: ‘that-is-why’-tales” (the sign § designates additions to Thompson’s motifs).

A number of etiological tales appear cross-culturally as tale types. Among these are a few *animal tales*, such as “Why Dogs Look One Another under the Tail” (AT 200A) and “Why Dog Chases Hare” (AT 200C*). Infrequently, an etiological tale may be an *ordinary folktale* (compare with *Märchen*), such as “Why the Sea Is Salt: Magic Salt Mill” (AT 565); it may also appear as a *formula tale*, as in the case of “Origin of Chess” (AT 2009). The majority, however, are cited under the category of *religious tales* (AT 750–849), such as “Origin of Physical Defects among Mankind” (AT 758A), “Mushroom from Peter’s Spittle” (AT 774L), and “Why Big Trees Have Small Fruit” (AT 774P).

Hasan El-Shamy

See also Belief Tale; Folktale; Legend; Myth.



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EUHEMERISM

The practice of explaining folk narratives as oral records of actual, historical events. By extension, the term might be applied to similar explanations of other kinds of folk traditions, such as nursery rhymes. The term is taken from the name of a Greek philosopher of the third century B.C., Euhemerus, who argued that the gods had once been mortal heroes and royalty who had been deified. Hence, myths were accounts of the historical deeds of the gods. Euhemerists would argue that fantastic elements in folk narratives that cannot be taken literally are later accretions around a core of historical truth. Folklorists and historians most commonly conceive the term *euhemerism* as having negative connotations, as being applicable not to all attempts to uncover historical bases for folk traditions but only to such attempts that are naive and uncritical, at least by modern standards.

There has been a continuous tradition of euhemeristic interpretation, particularly in regard to myths, since ancient times. Early Christian writers found the concept appealing, for it gave them an intellectual tool with which to attack the sacredness of pagan narratives, reducing them to being considered distorted historical accounts involving mere mortals. However, in the Middle Ages, when it was no longer necessary to refute paganism, euhemeristic approaches allowed scholars writing universal history to use ancient myths as historical sources.

Medieval euhemerists eventually turned ancient gods and legendary heroes into human benefactors who had introduced knowledge and arts or who had been responsible for founding modern nations. These ideas continued into the Renaissance, with gods sometimes becoming historical progenitors of rising royal houses. As the age of rational inquiry evolved in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, some thinkers considering the

nature of myth developed euhemeristic approaches. Antoine Banier (1675–1741), for example, argued that the ancient myths would not have been accorded respect had they not had historical substance.

More recently, euhemeristic approaches have had particular appeal for writers seeking to establish unorthodox theories. These authors have seen oral traditions as conveying information not found in more conventional sources. In the late nineteenth century, Ignatius Donnelly discussed oral traditions about great floods from numerous cultures to prove the existence of the lost continent of Atlantis; he also offered mythic and legendary accounts from many parts of the world to establish that in prehistoric times, a great comet had hit or come close to earth, causing calamities that were remembered in these oral traditions. In the 1960s, Erich von Daniken used myths and legends, among other materials, to argue that astronauts from outer space had visited the earth in ancient times.

In recent years, folklorists and others have carefully and critically examined the historical bases for folk traditions and the relationship between folklore and history. Richard Dorson stressed the need to understand American folklore in the context of American cultural history. Jan Vansina developed rigorous methods for examining African historical traditions, and Dorothy Vitaliano looked at ancient myths and legends in the light of modern geological knowledge.

Frank de Caro

See also Historical Analysis.

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EVIL EYE

An ancient belief, still commonly held, that certain people can cause damage to something valuable by gazing at it. In the third century A.D., Heliodorus

wrote, “When anyone looks at what is excellent with envious eye he fills the surrounding atmosphere with a pernicious quality and transmits his own envenomed exhalations into whatever is nearest him.” The common view, as illustrated here, has been that the eye is a source, rather than a receptor, of light and other emanations.

It is widely reported that envy is the motivating force behind the evil eye. That is, the malefactor sees something desirable, experiences envy, and emits a force from his or her eyes that damages the object. It is usually people (most often, a child or a bride), crops, or animals that are harmed, and it is the excellent or beautiful that is most at risk. Also, the damage is usually specific, not general; the evil eye is responsible for children failing to thrive or cows going dry, rather than for famines or droughts. The person who casts the evil eye, however, may not be aware that he or she has this power. Often, suspicion falls on particular individuals because they are outsiders or have a distinctive look to them, such as eyes of a color different from the norm or eyebrows that meet in the middle.

Because envy motivates the evil eye, expressions of admiration may be seen as dangerous and either be avoided or followed by reciting a formula (e.g., “God bless him”) or committing an act intended to avert the evil, such as spitting on or touching the supposed victim (or even touching spit onto the victim) or perhaps giving the praised object to the person who praised it. Reversals are often reported: One may deliberately call a pretty child ugly or, in dressing a child, turn a sock inside out so as to ward off the evil eye.

Such protection takes many forms. Often, something is put near or on the enviable object to draw the gaze, such as a smudge of dirt or a colored ribbon or thread. The colors and objects vary by area: a black goat’s tail or pot in Morocco, blue beads in rural Greece, the red *mano cornuta* (or horned hand) among Italian-Americans. Because the point of these objects is either to attract the gaze—thereby deflecting it from the vulnerable person or animal—or to ward off the evil, both the obscene (phalluses) and the holy (crucifixes) can serve for protection.

Paul Barber

See also Assault, Supernatural; Belief, Folk; Medicine, Folk.

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EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

That theory that proposed that human culture evolved through stages over time according to a uniform and logical process. This theory was a mainstay of folklore and anthropological studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in Great Britain. It related to folklore in that folk traditions were seen as “survivals” from earlier times that could help in understanding earlier culture and the development of culture.

As the science of anthropology developed in the mid-nineteenth century, it adopted an evolutionary paradigm. Although Charles Darwin (1809–1882) did not originate thinking about evolution, his ideas in natural history were influential. Especially with his second landmark book, *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin—as well Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895), who played a key role in making known and defending Darwin—put human beings into the context of biological processes by establishing that humans did not remain apart from physical evolution. Knowledge of fossils and prehistory also was expanding in this period, and physical anthropology was developing as a field of study. The knowledge gained in these areas of study provided a new scientific basis for indicating not only the antiquity of the human race but also a continuous process of human advancement. As the science of anthropology took shape, its proponents logically looked to evolution (though evolution remained a controversial idea in society at large) as a theory that could unify their endeavors, for those who shaped the science of anthropology sought to understand the origin and historical development of humanity and of such social institutions as law, religion, and morality.

Anthropologists came to see human societies as evolving through stages, generally referred to as savagery, barbarism, and, finally, civilization. The American Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881) argued, for example, in *Ancient Society* (1877), that humans were a unitary group and followed certain logical steps in their advancement. He further divided the first two stages of development into lower, middle, and upper and associated particular developments with each stage (such as the use of pottery with the stage of lower barbarism).

Folklore became an aspect of evolutionary theory primarily through the writings of Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), commonly regarded as the principal founder of cultural anthropology, and his disciples, notably Andrew Lang (1844–1912). Tylor sought to show that culture evolved and to establish a comparative method for examining that process of development. In part, he was attempting to refute the positions of certain religiously oriented thinkers who argued that some humans had, in fact, devolved from a higher state to a lower one. This conception ultimately went back to the biblical story of a fall from grace but was primarily the result of an upsurge in the

European Christian missionary activity that followed upon the expansion of colonial empires. For missionary work, it became useful to believe not only that the “savages” who were being evangelized had degenerated but also that, as a result, they were incapable of spiritual progress without the help of the “superior” white race. Tylor relentlessly amassed evidence to prove the consistent evolution of culture and to bolster the optimism of those who believed in the inevitability of human progress.

Tylor thought that archaeology could fill in some of the gaps in the history of early humanity but that it could provide knowledge only about material culture, not about the mental and spiritual sides of human development. To fill in that particular gap, “survivals” were to be examined, compared, and analyzed. Like Morgan, he believed that nothing happens but in logical sequence. In terms of material culture, all evidence pointed to evolution. None of his contemporaries, he reasoned, would use an arrow as the ultimate weapon, and one could readily see how the bow was replaced by the gun and how simple tools were replaced by more complex ones. The same was true of nonmaterial aspects of culture, he asserted. Tylor began by asking how it was that a whole range of customs, beliefs, and processes that did not seem sensible for present-day culture nonetheless existed. The answer, he said, was because these were “survivals” from earlier cultural stages (just as antique bows and arrows were left over from earlier days). These beliefs and customs made perfect sense in their own historical context, and though society in effect evolved around them as a result of “sound judgment and practical reason,” the beliefs and customs remained (because of some “efficient cause,” such as psychological dependence) and could guide us in understanding that earlier context. According to Tylor, survivals were “processes, customs, opinions . . . which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has evolved” (from his 1871 work, *Primitive Culture*). Tylor probably took a clue from the work of earlier scholars and antiquarians who had established that folk traditions were “remains” or “relics” of earlier times and hence historical documents. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, for example, had argued that the folktales in their famous collection were among the last surviving pieces of an older Germanic culture. But Tylor established a more systematic and more informed and sophisticated conception within the grand framework of evolution.

Though Tylor looked at a wide range of cultural facts (particularly in *Primitive Culture*), many of the aspects of culture he examined were folkloric elements, for these often involved actions or ideas that seemed not to be fully rational in terms of the perspective of the educated elite of the late nineteenth century and that also could be presumed archaic. In looking at culture, Tylor developed a comparative method that involved fixing upon a particular

presumed survival and then examining whatever information was available on manifestations of culture that appeared to be similar and related. Information might be drawn from older written materials, travel literature, the accounts of human behavior (which were multiplying as the result of observations made in colonial contexts), or other sources. The information might be about the mores of historical peoples, newly encountered, contemporary “primitives” (who had not yet evolved as fully as had civilized peoples), or European peasants (who, of course, were coming to be considered the prime repositories of folklore). Once the information had been amassed and compared, conclusions could be drawn as to what was revealed about earlier culture, how earlier humans thought and acted, and how certain aspects of culture had developed.

Tylor’s best-known analysis, which explained a custom very widespread even today, aptly illustrates his method—his explanation of why we say “God bless you” (or something similar) when someone near us sneezes. Looking to a number of cultural contexts, he noted various similar customs. A member of the Zulu (who believe themselves surrounded by both good and evil spirits) said, when he sneezed, “I am now blessed; the ancestral spirit is with me,” and asked for favors. He believed that a good spirit had entered his body. At one time in Guinea, when someone important sneezed, others would fall to their knees, kiss the earth, clap hands, and wish each other prosperity. Pacific islanders considered a sneeze a bad omen. Among the Amakosa, a sneeze was an occasion to call upon divine ancestor spirits. The Zulu also saw in repeated yawning a sign of approaching spirit possession. Persians ascribed yawning to demoniac possession, and modern Moslems, Tylor added, avoided yawning because the devil could leap into one’s mouth when it was opened so wide. A Jewish proverb said, “Open not thy mouth to Satan,” Celtic sneezers might be carried off by fairies, and members of a certain religious sect would spit and blow their noses to expel evil spirits that they might have breathed in. And the Zulu saw a sick person’s sneeze as a sign of impending recovery. This compilation of information on oral lore, customs, and beliefs indicated to Tylor that at an earlier stage of culture, men and women believed that spirits could enter and leave the human body through the facial orifices. Though we have evolved beyond such a belief, its vestiges survive, enabling us to understand something of its former existence and nature. Tylor thought that, though culture evolved logically along certain lines in a progressive direction, not all individual cultures evolved at the same pace. Thus, even at the end of the nineteenth century, societies could be found where the older ideas persisted, not merely as isolated customs (as with European peasants) but also as more integrally related to a context. Hence, information about the “primitive” groups of the world was believed to be particularly valuable in understanding human development.

Tylor's ideas were used by the ethnologist John Lubbock (Lord Avebury) (1834–1913) and popularized by the writer James Anson Farrer (1849–1925), and they greatly influenced a generation of folklorists. Andrew Lang in particular sought to develop the study of folklore along the lines of Tylor's theories and methodology, and other folklorists of his day had their work shaped by Lang's interpretations of Tylor. Tylor had never suggested that folklore was necessarily always a survival or that all survivals fell into the realm of folklore, but Lang was to declare that folklore was the science of survivals and to argue that folkloric survivals were the virtual equivalents of geological fossils and archaeological artifacts. In *Custom and Myth* (1893), he insisted that the very motive for folkloric study was to look for an "irrational and anomalous custom" and to compare it to a context "where a similar practice is found . . . in harmony with the manners and ideas of the people among whom it prevails." If, for example, we could not understand why the ancient Greeks danced with serpents in their hands, we could look to Native Americans who still did so. We could understand why the Native Americans practiced the custom through ethnological investigation and thus "conjecture that similar motives once existed among the ancestors of the Greeks." In folklore, according to Lang, we would find "the remains of ideas as old as the stone elf-shots, older than the celt or bronze." And folklore was to be studied primarily because it could help us to understand the early state of mind from which we evolved.

Among other folklorists, Edwin Sidney Hartland (1848–1927) looked for traces of ancient religious rituals in later folk narratives, and Edward Clodd (1840–1930) examined the folktale best known by its German name—"Rumpelstiltskin"—to understand ancient name magic. The powerful influence of Tylor and Lang's evolutionary perspective is perhaps best seen in how matter of factly it was incorporated into Charlotte Burne's *Handbook of Folklore* (1914), intended as a basic introduction to the subject. The introduction emphasized that, through folklore, "the study of rudimentary economic and political forms should enable us to trace the *lines of development* of the several systems of civilized nations from their source" (emphasis added).

The evolutionary perspective was not without its critics, even among those who adhered to its basic tenets. Sir George Laurence Gomme (1853–1916) argued, in a number of publications, that his colleagues were not sufficiently tied to specific historical or geographic contexts, implying that to be concerned only with cultural evolution in the broadest terms was to deal with the development of human institutions too vaguely.

As the twentieth century moved ahead, the evolutionary perspective in folklore studies declined in interest and importance. Folklorists and anthropologists increasingly realized that the equivalences that had been drawn between customs and beliefs in widely diverse cultures had often been based on tenuous similarities. Careful fieldwork frequently showed that seemingly

similar cultural practices had very different functions and meanings for different groups and thus really could not be compared to yield evolutionary explanations. Further, written sources that described various cultures had often been accepted uncritically and in fact presented very incomplete or misunderstood data. In general, particularly because of the trend toward fieldwork (which gave individual researchers profound insights into contemporary, whole societies), there was a move away from historical and genetic explanations and toward functional and symbolic ones.

Frank de Caro

See also Anthropological Approach; Comparative Mythology; Myth-Ritual Theory.

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EXEMPLUM

A short narrative using real or at least realistic events to illustrate a cultural belief. This type of story was recognized as one of the basic devices of rhetorical argument by Aristotle, who termed it *paradieigma* (paradigm). Roman rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian termed such stories *exempla*, a word originally meaning “a clearing in the woods.” The genre was based on historically verifiable incidents but often included frankly fictional narratives that involved animals (fables), comparisons drawn from ordinary life (parables), or realistic stories that were not verifiable but that *could* have happened.

Exempla became an important element in Christian homiletic writing, as preachers used such stories in sermons to lay audiences. As a guide, anthologies of such narratives circulated, beginning in the sixth century with Pope Gregory the Great’s *Homiliae in Evangelia*. Such “example-books” enjoyed their greatest vogue from 1200 to 1400, when they circulated in Latin

and many vernacular languages. The *Gesta Romanorum* was one of the most influential of these works in Latin, and several of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, including the Pardoner's, Summoner's, and Monk's Tales, drew on vernacular versions from this genre.

Originally drawn from classical histories or saints' lives, these collections eventually included many traditional narratives. Hence, example-books have proven a useful guide to anecdotal oral narratives of the medieval and Renaissance periods. Exempla were used for a wide variety of purposes: Preachers could employ historical figures as good or bad examples to exhort listeners to practice virtue and avoid sin. But many more contemporaneous examples were used to frighten them with the wages of blasphemy.

One such exemplum was "The Dancers of Kolbeck," about individuals who insisted on dancing and singing outside a church during mass and were punished by being compelled to dance without stop for an entire year. Word of this event, which allegedly occurred in 1012, spread rapidly through Europe as a sermon exemplum, and beggars even carried letters claiming to prove that they had themselves been participants in the event. A number of other horrific events, such as accounts of bleeding hosts, accidental cannibalism, ritual sacrifice, and *penis captivus* (imprisoned penis), also are found in collections of exempla.

As time passed, however, these collections began to emphasize stories intended to amuse rather than scare. Hence, many examples in later collections resemble jokes or fabliaux, illustrating the sexual lapses of monks or priests and their parishioners. However, traditional narratives remain an integral part of folk preaching, and Véronique Champion-Vincent, in fact, has argued that contemporary legends are best understood as the historical descendants of exempla. Indeed, many such legends continue to circulate as sermon illustrations: Televangelist Oral Roberts recently used a version of "The Vanishing Hitchhiker" as an exemplum.

Bill Ellis

See also Belief Tale; Legend.

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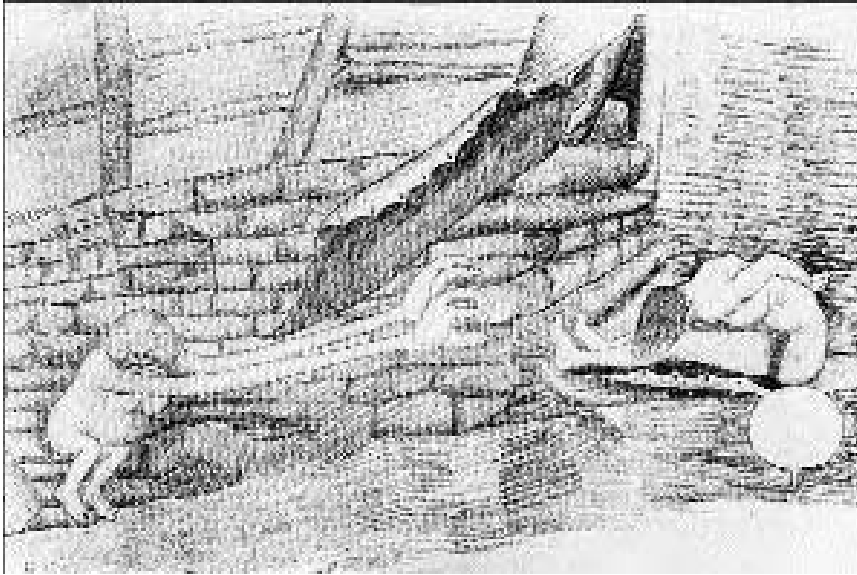
EXORCISM

The practice of dislodging an evil spirit from a person, often by prayers or charms. Sickness may be seen as the entrance of a malevolent spirit into the afflicted person, and this spirit may be removed to the exorcist (via transference), who temporarily suffers the pain of the patient. Commonly, the process begins with some type of divination, which identifies the spirit and determines propitious signs for a cure. Both exorcist and patient typically put themselves into a hypnotic state by means of drumming, dancing, and various other forms of either sensory stimulus or sensory deprivation.

The exorcist expels the spirit not through his or her own efforts but through an appeal to a higher authority. He or she typically talks to the demon rather than the patient and tries to induce it, by threats or commands and in the name of the friendly deity or spirit, to leave the possessed person. The demon (or demons) may balk or even strike a deal, demanding something in return for leaving the victim, and it is not uncommon for the exorcist to profit from such transactions. Cures by exorcism may be quick and efficient, although in the Christian church, cures by a single application of exorcism appear to have been rare; more often, exorcisms have lasted days, weeks, months, and even years. If the first attempt at exorcism is unsuccessful, the methods used may become more extreme. Sometimes, patient and healer negotiate the cure. Carmen Blacker describes a Japanese healer telling a patient that she will have to undergo the “cold water austerity” night and morning for 21 days; then, when the patient rejects this solution, the healer proposes the recitation of the Heart Sutra every night at half past midnight.

Often, the exorcism ceremony involves a laying on of hands. In the Japanese Mahikari cult, the hands are held up, palms out, and thought to exert a curing force on the subject. Here, as in many other belief systems, if the subject becomes physically sick and vomits, a purification is believed to be taking place.

Historically, outside observers have often viewed curing rituals by exorcism as a kind of flimflam intended to bedazzle gullible subjects and spectators. Such a view supposes the curer to exist in another belief system than the audience. As Seth and Ruth Leacock have pointed out in their study of an Afro-Brazilian cult, “Far from being a ceremony designed to mystify the uninitiated, a curing ritual is a performance before a knowledgeable and critical audience.” Moreover, some contemporary scholars have recognized that, just as modern medicine has advantages over traditional medicine, the converse is also true. Winston Davis has observed that “although [modern medicine] can diagnose terminal illnesses with terrifying accuracy, it may offer no hope at all for their cure.” Traditional curing, involving the exorcism of spirits, virtually always offers the possibility of a cure; it is steadfastly optimistic. And



An exorcism in Siberia. The ghost of Amo enters a house, called by the bound exorcist. Exorcism is common to many religions, from shamanism to Christianity.

it is difficult to deny the evidence from modern scholars, such as William Sargant, that a good deal of real curing, in particular of psychological trauma, does take place in curing ceremonies.

Paul Barber

See also Assault, Supernatural; Medicine, Folk; Possession; Shamanism.

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F

FABLIAU

A humorous narrative treating a sexual or obscene theme. Originally a medieval French dialect variant of *fable* (meaning story or folktale), the term *fabliau* first appeared as a self-descriptive label in a series of verse poems at the end of the twelfth century. Though literary in nature, these works may have been intended for oral performance; in any case, they incorporated themes from contemporary oral tradition. About 125 poetic versions of fabliaux survive from medieval French, and the genre was also used in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (circa 1350) and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (circa 1380), two literary works that mimic oral storytelling sessions.

Critics of the literary fabliaux agree that their distinctive style and structure reflect awareness of an underlying folk narrative aesthetic. Fabliaux tend to be brief, focusing on an intrigue that is usually erotic in nature. The typical plot structure involves some kind of deception or ruse perpetrated by the main figure, who uses the ruse as license to commit some kind of cultural misdeed. In medieval examples, the story presents women as unfaithful and sexually unrestrained (modern examples often invert this stereotype). The story's style is characterized by irony, both in its commentary on events and in its use of elevated, "courtly" language to describe sexually explicit or scatological events. Many narrative themes found in the literary fabliaux have since been collected from oral tradition in many cultures.

In contemporary American folklore, fabliau-type narratives survive in several distinct formal genres. Themes of female infidelity appear in ballads such as "Our Goodman" (Child 274), in which a husband finds more and more evidence of his wife's infidelity, such as "a head lying on my pillow." He is, however, pacified by her witty explanations of the incriminating items as common household objects, such as "a cabbage head." Many folktales and jokes also continue fabliau themes: the widespread "Rabbit Herd" (AT 570), for instance, shows the hero using a magical object to seduce a king's daughters and wife and humiliate the king, often by having him kiss his donkey's rump.

Some medieval fabliaux begin by asserting the "truth" of the story that follows; hence, it is interesting that some contemporary legends relate fabliau-like plots that "really happened." In "The Nude Birthday Party," for example, a would-be philanderer is taken home by his secretary. Assuming a conquest is forthcoming, he strips naked and jumps through a doorway, only to find that his wife and friends have arranged a surprise party for him there.

FABULATE

The fabliau in the modern sense is best characterized as a narrative that plays with the bounds of public decency, both in its subject and in its style. Most of the modern examples deal with potentially obscene themes but in ways that leave them suitable for “polite” mixed audiences. Thus, perhaps the hallmark of the genre is its ability to deal with sexual or scatological topics through clever indirection rather than directly through vulgarity.

Bill Ellis

See also Erotic Folklore; Joke; Obscenity; Scatology.

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FABULATE

A migratory legend that does not reflect personal experience but instead is told principally for entertainment. Coined in 1934 by C. W. von Sydow, the term *fabulate* was intended as a contrast to *memorate*, a narrative reflecting an individual’s contact with the supernatural. Fabulates, Sydow said, may have some elements based in experience, “yet they do not immediately come from these, but from a mental image that has originated from elements of this type in which they, so-to-say, crystallized.” To this extent, he concluded, the events narrated in the fabulate “could not have actually happened in the form that they take in the telling; they were shaped much more by the creative art of the folk.”

Sydow used the term *fabulate* to refer to a variety of narratives, many of which would be classified as legends in the Anglo- American system. But his sense of the term extended beyond the belief legend to jocular narratives, such as the “person fabulates” told about Germanic trickster Till Eulenspiegel: These would more likely be termed *Schwanks* or jocular tales today. Sydow’s vague sense of the concept’s defining trait, Juha Pentikäinen has noted, led succeeding folklorists to use the term in confusingly diverse senses. It has been used as everything from a global term for *all* prose narration to a more judg-

mental label for a story that “clearly contains invented, empirically unbelievable elements.”

This emphasis on the notion that fabulates were objectively untrue has raised opposition. Such a claim assumes that truth-falsehood claims, particularly about supernatural events, can be resolved objectively by folklorists. So the term *fabulate* (like the related term *urban legend*) may imply the collector’s belief that the teller is ignorant or irrational.

But Sydow’s essential distinction between stories as stories and stories as evidence for belief has some basis. Gillian Bennett has contrasted urban legends told with conviction and those told more for their value as narratives, and she found a large number of rhetorical differences. For her, legends told “for laughs” may be morphologically identical to folktales, and so there is value to identifying them and considering them separately from narratives told “for true.” However, the term *fabulate* then becomes a descriptive term appropriate only to a given performed text; given changes in context, the same informant may relate the same events “for laughs” or “for true.” Judgments about the empirical truth behind the narrative simply become irrelevant.

Pentikäinen, like most European scholars, restricts the term *fabulate* to narratives that subordinate matters of belief to the artistic form of the performance itself. Hence, the fabulate is essentially a narrative developed and standardized by the narrator’s desire to tell an entertaining story. Characters included may take roles or perform actions that are more in line with characters in *Märchen* than in belief legends. Consequently, the fabulate is a better guide to a culture’s storytelling aesthetic than to living folk belief.

Bill Ellis

See also Legend.

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FAKELORE

Fabrication claiming to be authentic folklore; also called *pseudofolklore*. Richard M. Dorson introduced the concept in an article in the *American*

Mercury in 1950. For more than two decades, Dorson remained the principal American academic voice fighting against the spread of fakelore. He wrote against literary, commercial, and political producers of fakelore, and within folkloristics both his definition of fakelore and his often polemical broadsides against what he perceived as dishonest popularization and distortion remained largely uncontested. Only during the 1980s did the reflexive examination of folklore's history lead to a theoretical examination of the concept, as well as to an effort to integrate "fakelore" into the larger European discourse on "folklorismus."

Fakelore was subsumed into a number of emergent discussions on the ways in which folklore, politics, and commerce intertwine. Folklore has always been a powerful agent in nationalistic attempts at cultural legitimation, and similarly, ethnic groups have revived and invented traditional heritage to enhance their cultural identity in multicultural societies or to bolster their claims for political independence. The globalization of the Western market economy has led to the further commodification of folklore, that is, the preparation of seemingly unique cultural goods or performances for mass consumption. Given the pervasive nature of the politics of culture, labeling such processes as "fakelore" and excluding them from study could eventually no longer be upheld.

Dorson's initial targets were Paul Bunyan stories, which he portrayed as not based on oral tradition but as literary fabrications potentially designed to boost the image of the lumber industry. Next, Dorson attacked Benjamin A. Botkin's highly successful *Treasury of American Folklore* and its regional spin-offs. Using the treasuries as an example of fakelore, Dorson postulated a distinction between properly documented oral folklore collected from real people in the field and rewritten materials that, from Dorson's point of view, misled the gullible public. During the Cold War period (1960s through 1970s), Dorson expanded his attack to include not only commercial fakelore but also the ideological manipulation of folklore, targeting in particular Communist creations of workers' lore. He also used his arguments in an unsuccessful attempt to forestall a legislative cut of federal funding for folklore research by presenting the properly trained folklorist as an important servant of democracy, capable of obtaining genuine knowledge of the traditional ideas of the anonymous millions.

Dorson's formulation made manifest the latent authentic-versus-fake dichotomy in folklore studies and put it to use in solidifying folklore's place in academe. He portrayed folklorists as the only academics capable of recognizing, documenting, and analyzing folklore: Subjected to interpretation by the untrained, authentic folk materials would be spoiled. In the 1980s, the analytic attention paid to the notion of tradition seriously undermined the assumed dichotomy between the genuine and the fake. This debate has

brought forth an appreciation for the created, invented aspects and the often consciously strategic deployment of all expressive culture in settings such as ethnic festivals, political propaganda, and, most pervasively, market settings such as the tourist trade.

Regina Bendix

See also Authenticity; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Invented Tradition.

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FAMILIAR

A theological designation for an auxiliary spirit used by a witch. Familiars usually appeared in animal form, and in the learned view, they were quite simply demons. The familiar was supposed to have been either given to the witch by the Devil himself or purchased from another witch. The notion of the familiar is not, as has been claimed, peculiar to England; indeed, it is so widespread that it must be said to be one of the regular elements in the belief in witches. In Scandinavia, there was a particular type of familiar that sucked the udders of cows and afterward regurgitated the milk for the witch; this familiar took the shape of a hare. Familiars are depicted in medieval church murals, testifying both to the popular nature and the age of the belief.

One special popular feature was that one did not need to be a witch to have such a demon in one's service; one simply had to make sure to be rid of the familiar before one died, as one's soul was otherwise lost. Familiars also played a prominent role in learned magic, where they often constituted a salable commodity. Indeed, Adam Squire, master of Balliol College in Oxford



Familiars were believed to be demons in disguise. Appearing primarily in animal form, these auxiliary spirits were thought to be given to witches to by the devil himself.

in the 1570s, almost lost his job for allegedly selling gamblers a “fly” that would guarantee success at dice.

Gustav Henningsen

See also Witchcraft.



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FAMILY FOLKLORE

Traditional expressive behavior and its products that are transmitted by family members to family members and that pertain to relatives, family events, and family ways of being and doing. Family folklore includes stories, jokes, and songs about family members and events, as well as the ways relatives share those items with one another; festivals the family celebrates, such as religious and national holidays; festivals that celebrate family, such as weddings, reunions, and funerals; foods, cooking instruction, ways of eating, and ways of

gathering to eat within a family; family naming traditions; a family's ways of dancing; expressions and gestures a family uses; visual records of family life, such as arrangements of items inside and outside the home, photographs, photograph albums, videotapes, embroideries, and quilts; occupational, song, story, and craft traditions carried on within a family; and fieldwork methods used within family settings.

A review of folklore studies shows that folklorists have long been welcome in the homes of families. Once back at their desks, however, most professional and amateur folklorists before the 1970s discussed the rich material they collected in families as regional or ethnic, religious or occupational folklore. They approached the family as a source of folklore materials, not as the subject of their study.

Several folklorists, though, published a family story or two as "family folklore," usually without analysis, in state journals. Then, in 1958, Mody Boatright put out the call to folklorists to collect "an important source of living folklore"—the "family saga," featuring individual stories with a variety of themes that preserved a family's way of seeing itself in history. Interested in a generic approach, Boatright asked what forms and motifs made up the family saga. A second mode of inquiry, a small-group approach, came in 1961 when Kim Garrett suggested that every family that recognizes itself as a unit has its own traditions, including stories, taboos, and expressions.

In the mid-1970s, the study of family folklore burgeoned. Folklorists' growing interest in folklore as communication within and between small groups, their continuing interest in contextual studies, the focus of feminist scholarship on women's lives and concerns, the consideration of more privatized forms of folklore such as personal experience narratives, and the airing of Alex Haley's television series *Roots* exploring his African-American family's history, all contributed to an increased interest in studying the family as the subject of its own folklore.

FAMILY AS A FOLK GROUP

Many family folklorists follow the lead of L. Karen Baldwin, who suggested in 1975 that the family is not just a group that generates its own traditions but rather is the "first folk group, the group in which important primary folkloric socialization takes place and individual aesthetic preference patterns for folkloric exchange are set." The family, then, is the social base of folklore.

FAMILY GROUP AND DIFFERENTIAL IDENTITY

Families offer the opportunity to study how folklore differs within a group since most families exist as conglomerates of subgroups—as households and "branches," as gender and age subgroups, as subgroups of individuals who

resemble or act like each other, and as other subgroups that families identify as important to themselves. Family members often tell different versions of the same story for their own, compelling reasons. Age groups within families have differing traditions. And families constantly change as they add in the traditions of other families through marriage. Thus, different racial, ethnic, and class traditions must be negotiated as newlyweds from two different ethnic groups, for example, prepare to celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah for the first time. When children are born, all titles and some nicknames in the family—father, mother, sister, and brother—shift in one great generational wave to grandfather, grandmother, aunt, and uncle. Hugo Freund's work with one family's Thanksgiving reveals how relatives' differing perceptions of celebration create different meanings for the same family event.

FAMILY FOLKLORE AND IDIOSYNCRATIC FORMS

Much of folklore is identified by its transmission and variation through time and space. One family's folklore, though, includes much material that does not resemble any other family's material in content, though it may be similar in structure. For example, most families have words they use for taboo subjects, such as the words a child may use to indicate a need to go to the bathroom. One family's word may never occur in any other family, but structurally, most families have such words. Thus, family folklore offers the chance to study materials in this more individualistic, privatized sphere.

ADDING NEW TOPICS TO FAMILY FOLKLORE STUDY

Because many of the first family folklorists worked with their own families and were bound by family requests for privacy, little discussion of the painful side of family life emerged until researchers turned to studies of many different families outside of their own. The work of Steven Zeitlin and others in the Family Folklore Section of the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife, for example, shows how families experiencing divorce or the abandonment of the family by one parent used ritual and storytelling in the reconstruction of their single-parent family. Elizabeth Stone, interviewing families across the United States, records family members' stories of abuse and abandonment and how individuals transformed stories about hurtful relatives into stories that could lead them down new and healthier paths of life.

INCORPORATING NEW MATERIALS INTO FAMILY STUDIES

In addition to photographs, videotapes, embroideries, quilts, and other documents of family history and tradition, family folklorists in the last few years

have studied newspaper obituary poems, miscarriage announcements in African-American newspapers, and narratives about family pets.

WIDENING THE DEFINITION OF FAMILY

Although most published family folklore studies to date concern extended families made up of heterosexual, married couples and their children, all families are open for study, including one-person families with support systems, two-person families, single-parent families, blended families, households of nonrelated friends, and gay and lesbian families. Joseph Goodwin's research on gay male families, for example, discusses the structure of gay families as that based almost totally on levels of closeness, in addition to the families' use of nicknames, jokes, stories, and ritual. Increased study of family and homosexual folklore may bring explorations of ceremonies of commitment and now-legal marriage ceremonies in Denmark and Norway, as well as work on the effect of AIDS on homosexual and heterosexual family traditions. Artificial insemination, egg-donor programs, surrogate mothers, and increasingly complicated adoption cases also may affect family folklore discussions.

Scholars of family folklore have much to contribute to the current national melee over "family values," a phrase used to signal "conventional, heterosexual family" rather than a discussion of any family's moral and ethical foundations. Family sociologist Jan Dizard discusses the debate—and its underlying paradox—well:

On the one hand, unconventional families are accused of threatening the values and commitments for which families stand. On the other hand, when they attempt to demonstrate those very same commitments and values, they are denied the opportunity to incorporate them into their lives. For most Americans, familism and the conventional family are so strongly associated that efforts to infuse nontraditional living arrangements with the values and commitments of familism seem like yet another assault on the already fragile family. Thus cohabitation, communal and group living arrangements, and homosexual couples, no matter how deep and conventional the sentiments and commitments that bind them, are judged by many as a threat to the very idea of family.

Future scholarship may see more family folklorists writing of the traditions alive in all forms of committed relationships.

INDICATORS OF SOCIETAL CONCERNS

Many folklorists see family traditions, especially stories, as indicators of broader, societal concerns. Stanley Brandes has studied family narratives of lost fortunes that are told by white, lower-middle and working-class citizens of the United States. He finds that the tellers of such stories are seeking to deflect onto ancestors the anxiety they feel for not achieving top economic success in a capitalist country that maintains that all individuals can become economically successful. Alan Dundes, Ed Walraven, and Janet Langlois have considered parent-child interaction as it is configured in dead-baby jokes, stories of child throwaways, and legends of La Llorona in a garbage dump. Kathryn Morgan has discussed her African-American family's use of their stories as "buffers" to protect the family from the ravages of racism. And Marilyn White has used her African-American family stories to describe interracial and intraracial relationships in rural Virginia from 1865 to 1940.

TRANSMISSION

How traditional materials are passed down through extended families has been the subject of several studies. Lucille Burdine and William McCarthy, for example, show how folklore is not handed down "en bloc" from person to person, generation to generation; rather, each element of folklore finds its own sympathetic channel of transmission in different members of a family. Other studies by Baldwin, Margaret Yocom, and Jane Beck discuss gender differences in transmission, as well as attitudes of ownership and deference between generations.

GENDER STUDIES

Folklorists have been concerned about the ways in which gender intersects with family folklore. Some have turned to evidence of gender-role stratification in stories. Others have explored how gender difference influences folkloric forms and processes. Baldwin and Yocom, for example, have studied how family stories and storytelling differ among men and women in their Anglo-American and Pennsylvania-German families. They found women's telling to be more collaborative, interruptable, and filled with information and genealogy; men's telling, by contrast, is often uninterrupted and more competitive, the story beginnings and endings are formally marked, and the men's stories "make a point worth telling." Yocom has explored gender differences in the transmission of woodcarving and knitting skills in an extended Anglo- and French-Acadian family in Maine. And Thomas Adler's study of gender and family food preparation shows that men's cooking traditions in the family are often limited to one or two celebratory meals a week—often Sunday

breakfast—or to outdoor meals with meat; women cook the mundane, everyday, diversified meals.

PROCESSES WITHIN ONE FAMILY

Studies that look closely at how one particular family performs its traditions have interested scholars such as Patrick Mullen and Susan Roach, who have looked at how a couple encounters and resolves conflicts within family storytelling and how quilting reveals the cultural and familial values of the family. Many studies already mentioned, such as those by Baldwin, Freund, White, and Yocom, also explore traditions and traditional processes within one family.

GENRE STUDIES

Folklorists have puzzled over the generic nature of family stories and how the individual stories relate to the whole of a family's repertoire. Family stories, often brief and elliptically told, usually do not take the form of legend, folktale, or memorate. Boatright and William Wilson see family stories as anecdotes that together comprise a larger "saga" or "novel" and emphasize that each anecdote must be heard in light of other anecdotes for the larger story to be understood. Baldwin stresses that a family's "narrative" is a "composite of changing and interchangeable parts" and that since no one person is the ultimate source, many people must be heard so their "piece" of the "narrative composite" can be included. Zeitlin details the similar themes that sweep through family stories in the United States, themes that revolve around the characters of family members (heroes or heroines, survivors) and the transitions in family histories (migrations, courtships).

FAMILY AS CONTEXT

Folklorists primarily interested in craft, occupation, and storytelling have turned to families as sources of information. Though family folklore is not the subject of their studies, much about the family context of tradition can be seen in their work. Beck's work with the last basketmaker in Vermont's Sweetser family and John Burrison's study of the pottery families in Georgia show how families amassed and passed on their skills.

FAMILY FOLKLORE FIELDWORK

Discipline-wide and regional fieldwork guides have often described family folklore fieldwork as ideal for the novice folklorist because it is easily gathered. As more and more folklorists began working with their own families, however,

the discussion about such personal-family fieldwork deepened. Baldwin, Yocom, and Susan Sherman have detailed concerns particular to such fieldwork; they and others also have challenged the notion of “objectivity” as an impossible goal for anyone and a counterproductive one for personal-family fieldworkers in particular. These scholars have discussed the importance of including one’s self in family activities as a member of the group, as well as the necessity of exploring and using one’s “involvements”; anthropological discussions of reflexivity and reciprocity and feminist reminders that the personal is political reinforce family fieldworkers’ positions.

FICTION WRITING, NONFICTION WRITING, AND NEOTRADITIONAL STORYTELLING

Fiction writers, writers of biography and autobiography, and, more recently, neotraditional storytellers who perform for paying audiences incorporate family folklore in their presentations. Michael Ondaatje’s description of a day’s storytelling in his Ceylonese family provides a taste of the riches to be found in such creations:

We will trade anecdotes and faint memories, trying to swell them with the order of dates and asides, interlocking them all as if assembling the hull of a ship. No story is ever told just once. Whether a memory or funny hideous scandal, we will return to it an hour later and retell the story with additions and this time a few judgements thrown in. . . . All day my Aunt Phyllis presides over the history of good and bad Ondaatjes and the people they came in contact with. Her eye . . . will suddenly sparkle and she will turn to us with delight and begin “and there is another terrible story.”

Studying family folklore, then, offers researchers the opportunity to preserve and enjoy family traditions and to question the concept of family and the nature of folkloric creations.

Margaret R. Yocom

See also *Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship*; *Gay and Lesbian Studies and Queer Theory*; *Gender*.

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FEAST

Ceremonial meal that reaffirms social solidarity while providing culinary gratification to an assembly of individuals. Feast is the sensuous and symbolic display of food and a quintessential metaphor for a surfeit of consumption. As eating beyond the point of satiation, feasting is forever shadowed by its obverse: socially mediated hunger, food asceticism, or fasting. In addition, feasting often has sacrificial connotations. Humans may share with deity in the consumption of specially consecrated foods and ritually slain divine victims.

Although food customs and habits vary significantly from culture to culture, feasting often occurs at key points in a community’s food supply cycle: sowing, first fruits, harvest, beginning of the hunting season, and so on. Cosmic events relating to the agricultural cycle also may cause feasting: the change of seasons, the new year, or the appearance of moon, sun, or stars. As symbolic imitation of hypertrophy, bountiful feasting provides a means for redistributing an abundant harvest or kill in the spirit of celebration and

thanksgiving. Mundane work responsibilities usually are suspended on feast days, during which hard work is compensated by the meal.

Feasts often are scheduled to mark special periods in the life of the individual. Here, banqueting is one element in a complex of celebratory events, including ceremony, procession, or dance. Birth/circumcision/naming, weaning, confirmation/initiation, marriage, retirement, anniversaries, or funerals are some of these life-passage events. Solidarity between social groups may be invoked through exchanges that include food sharing, as in the case of potlatch funerary feasts of the Native American cultures of the Northwest.

The term *feast* (from the Latin *festum*) has a specialized use to describe major celebrations in organized religion and is often used interchangeably with *festival*. Feast days are devoted to celebrations of faith and are times to refrain from profane work (aside from the work of food preparation). Feasts usually occur in relationship to fasts or other penitential observances in the religious calendar.

Until the latter part of the twentieth century, writers on Jewish tradition used *feast* to discuss the weekly Sabbath, the first day of the new lunar month, and a number of annual calendar celebrations: Rosh Hashanah, Sukkoth, Pesach, Shavout, Hannukah, and Purim.

Agape, or love feast, is the shared celebration of early Christians that is connected with Eucharist practices today. The Western Christian church distinguishes several festal cycles. Sanctoral or movable feasts such as Easter or Pentecost fall on different dates each year. Temporal feasts, also called feasts of obligation, occur on fixed calendar dates. These include Sundays; the feasts of: Nativity (Christmas), Circumcision, Epiphany, Ascension, Holy Trinity, and Corpus Christi; and the five official saint's feasts: St. Joseph, Sts. Peter and Paul, Assumption, All Saints, and the Immaculate Conception. Localities celebrate feast days for their patron saints; families may celebrate on individual members' name days. Other feasts in world religions are scheduled at the conclusion of the fast of Ramadan (Islam), at key points in the life of Buddha (Buddhism), and during Holi (Hindu).

Feasting emphasizes excess and bodily processes and is usually a feature of festival representations and allegories. The medieval feast of Fools coincided with the feast of Circumcision. This temporary inversion of social strata burlesqued ecclesiastical procedures, often featuring the election of a Lord of Misrule, Pope of Fools, or Boy Bishop.

Recent scholars have highlighted the importance of gender in food practices. Food is often controlled by women and may be used by women to control and transform the self and effect change within a community.

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See also Custom; Festival.



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FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON FOLKLORE SCHOLARSHIP

A theoretical reorientation of the discipline that encompasses the gendered nature of all aspects of this academic pursuit, bringing to light the hitherto neglected area of women's expressive behavior and entailing the construction of new paradigms centered on women's experience both as folklorists and as folk.

Conscious and unconscious gender biases, especially biases against women, have pervaded the discipline of folklore since its inception. Such a statement could be made about many academic disciplines. This is quite likely a reflection of the patriarchal nature of Eurocentric society more generally, but it is a particularly disturbing commentary on a field of study that purports to pay scholarly attention to individuals and groups who have been marginalized or entirely omitted from historical and contemporary written records. Gender as a particular area of theoretical discourse usually has been neglected by folklorists, both male and female, but a few folklorists, mostly women, have begun to rectify this imbalance in their research, scholarly writing, and teaching. Although gender and women's studies are not synonymous, feminist theory's emphasis on women's roles can be employed to highlight men's roles as well. For instance, emphasizing the distinction between the traditional expressive behaviors of women and men illuminates a folk group's particular ideas about gender as a whole. In contrast, the virtual equation of men with culture in folklore theory leads not just to the absence of folklore *about* women and performed *by* women but also to the omission of that which is specifically men's lore. The solution to this dilemma from the perspective of feminist scholarship entails challenging implicitly male-oriented paradigms and constructing alternative and oppositional models that incorporate women's experience within the realm of folk culture and performance.

It has been a slow and arduous task to change the historical orientation of the discipline: Few publications focusing on gender and folklore appeared between 1975 and 1995, and those that have seen print frequently have been subjected to such extensive revision and scrutiny that their timely publication has been impossible. Furthermore, such scholarly writings—and more specifically those produced by women—are largely missing from the “folklore canon,” that is, the academic books and articles accepted by folklorists as most significant to the field, such as those that appear on the Ph.D. reading lists of major folklore departments, those that receive major disciplinary awards, or those that are included in histories and overviews of the field. Courses on gender and folklore, women and folklore, and/or men’s folklore are not regarded as standard offerings for most folklore curricula, and the number of female faculty hired by the major folklore departments and programs is insufficient. Not only do the majority of folklorists neglect the gendered aspects of folklore but folklorists who are women also find themselves in situations that involve the unequal distribution of status and power.

It is of special note that this disciplinary gap persists at a time when most folklorists are proudly discussing new directions in the theoretical underpinnings of the discipline, explicitly questioning who they are and what they study. Edited volumes with titles containing phrases such as “new perspectives,” “frontiers of folklore,” and “urban folklore” and consisting mostly of contributions by men have been partially responsible for changing the shape of the field. Academic discourse during the early and mid-1970s gave rise to an innovative approach to the study of folklore—one that emphasized performance and context, behavior, communication, and process, bringing about more dynamic definitions of “the folk” and “folklore” and breaking down rigid traditional genres so that they became regarded as emergent, flexible social phenomena rather than normative, mutually exclusive categories. Still, although this new perspective has greatly benefited the practical and theoretical study of folklore in general, it has done little to give the folklore of and about women its proper place in folklore scholarship. An exciting new concept of social group now characterizes the discipline, but attention to gender and related concerns is often lacking; the voices of women, both folklorists and folk, remain largely unheard, and their presence goes unnoticed in this reexamination of the field.

Nevertheless, some academics have developed gender-oriented scholarship in folklore and in other related disciplines, such as anthropology and literary studies. The recent evolution of feminist folklore scholarship was initiated by the concerted and successful attempt to identify and validate women’s traditions, leading to the political interpretation and reinterpretation of these gender-based materials and paving the way for the utilization of feminist theory at all levels of data collection and analysis.

Folklorists who employ feminist theory and methodology have incorporated these advances in their research, promoting new ways of thinking that have radically changed their disciplinary outlook. Although genre theory and the performance perspective enriched the discipline with their event-centered focus, feminist theory examines a broader range of materials and acknowledges a greater time depth in the generation of folklore. For feminist folklorists, the study of folklore begins when a member of a folk group initially learns how to produce or perform an item of expressive behavior, and it continues as this individual decides to actively engage in artistic communication and, later, to transmit this traditional knowledge to others. A feminist folklore perspective thus explores the initial production of folklore and its subsequent reproduction. Moreover, it includes the criticism of the final product and/or performance, as well as a critique of the entire procedure by the folk community and the folklorist. This approach also entails an investigation of the creation and/or re-creation of particular forms of folklore by various performers in different time periods. It is, therefore, significant to recognize that, in addition to highlighting the role of women in the study of folklore, bringing to light entire areas that have been neglected, feminist folklorists have also significantly changed the theoretical orientation of the discipline.

Earlier folklore publications had indirectly addressed the omission of gender and women, but it was not until the 1975 publication of *Women and Folklore* (initially a special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore*) that women's folklore began to be explicitly regarded as a legitimate area of academic focus. Challenging inflexible boundaries and predetermined dichotomies such as those promoting the oppositions of male/female, public/private, culture/nature, and powerful/powerless, the various authors in this volume examine the prevalent images of women and the subsequent genres through which women's creativity has been viewed, suggesting that new images, genres, and disciplinary directions need to be developed in the study of women and folklore. This collection of exploratory essays falls short of providing a theoretical basis for the study of women's expressive behavior, but it does serve to focus attention on an emergent area of folklore research. Unfortunately, this book was not followed by the spate of scholarly articles on gender theory or women's expressive behavior that the volume editor, Claire R. Farrer, and the other essayists had hoped to spark; few articles or books providing a theoretical framework for an approach to women's or men's expressive behavior specifically or artistic communication between men and women more generally have been published to date. The twenty years following Farrer's 1975 publication, however, witnessed the formal establishment of the women's section within the American Folklore Society and the subsequent publication of a newsletter devoted to furthering gender awareness within the discipline. Furthermore, conferences, symposia, books, and schol-

arly articles specifically addressing gender, women's folklore, and feminist perspectives are beginning to become recognized components of the study of folklore, both nationally and internationally.

Published in 1982, *Spiders and Spinners: Women and Mythology*, written by Marta Weigle, details the images of women in men's myths and rituals in Eurocentric societies, calling for further research that would look to different cultural traditions and women's mythologies within those traditions. There is a wealth of fascinating material in this book, but it suffers from the lack of both critical commentary and an overall synthesis. Echoing the earlier assertions of the essayists in Claire R. Farrer's edited volume, Weigle's writings, including her subsequent 1989 volume, emphasize the need for a reevaluation of traditional categories and the establishment of new and more flexible paradigms that would give women a significant role in the symbolic realm of cultural mythologies and folklore. In fact, this latter point illustrates a major contribution of feminist theory to folklore scholarship in general and is characteristic of all of the publications and conferences discussed in this essay; they are solidly situated within the contemporary, "postmodern" discourse that eschews arbitrary divisions in all areas of knowledge, affirming instead the multidimensional aspects of experience.

Frank A. de Caro's *Women and Folklore: A Bibliographic Survey* (1983) is a useful compilation of publications on women's folklore, folklore about women, and related topics, taking great strides in the task of reclaiming this body of lore for serious consideration and study. Similarly, "Women and the Study of Folklore" (1986), written by Rosan A. Jordan and Frank A. de Caro, provides an excellent overview of this topic, although it is limited primarily to verbal art. This article locates discussions of women and folklore in the public arena, appearing in *Signs*, a well-respected journal that incorporates academic perspectives from diverse disciplines. Although most of the material included in these two publications is not distinctive from a theoretical or methodological perspective, there are far-reaching philosophical implications in such attempts to create and validate the scholarship of gender, discovering differences not *between* folk groups and genres but *within* such groups and preestablished expressive categories.

Recently, other folklore scholars, primarily women, have published articles that highlight women's roles as folk performers and practitioners of artistic communication, whether the communicative mode is verbal or visual. They have challenged the idea that domestic implies insignificant, revealing the considerable power women wield in the private domain, as well as the way in which women's forms of folklore reflect the serious concerns of community life. Furthermore, they discuss situations in which women are effective performers in the public sphere and focus on material items created by women that serve as symbols of cultural identity and social continuity. Finally, these

scholars point out that women's humor is not only distinctive but also artfully used to negotiate gender interactions, often in a manner that is oppositional or contestational.

Ten years after the publication of Farrer's groundbreaking edited volume, *Women's Folklore, Women's Culture*, edited by Rosan A. Jordan and Susan Kalcik, appeared. The various articles included in this book serve to describe women's expressive behavior in a variety of situations, emphasizing its frequently collaborative nature. This volume is divided into sections that portray the private world of women and discuss performances within the intimate circle of family and friends, as well as outlining the neglected areas of women's folklore in the public arena. Additionally, the essayists examine the dynamic interactions between public and private spheres and between male and female activities. The book as a whole, however, neither characterizes "new genres" that are exclusively women's genres nor provides a coherent theoretical framework within which to analyze these genres. A number of significant categories of women's folk performances are missing from this book, as is serious attention to the claim that "studying women makes a difference." This volume achieves significance by focusing scholarly attention on women and folklore, pointing to the need for the development of a theoretical framework that would give the folklore of and about women its proper place in folklore scholarship and laying the foundation for new orientations in data collection and analysis.

In 1985, concerned that feminist theory was not being adequately addressed or developed within contemporary folkloristics, a group of women scholars associated with the Folklore Program at the University of Texas, Austin, with the help of many other folklorists, formulated and organized an all-day symposium on folklore and feminist theory. This conference stemmed from the belief that folklore, like all academic disciplines, operates within certain paradigms that reflect the ideologies of the intellectual climate in which they originate. Thus, in the mid-1980s, gender bias in all forms of folklore scholarship—publication, fieldwork, research, teaching—was reflected in the absence of the female and/or the dominance of the male, or it appeared as the denigration of female experience, all of which served the interest of male privilege. The need to address specifically such biases within the formal organization of folklore as a discipline was regarded as a necessary step in reorienting disciplinary concerns. The conference, officially entitled "A Feminist Retrospective on Folklore and Folkloristics," was part of the 1986 annual meeting of the American Folklore Society in Baltimore, Maryland. The purpose of the symposium was to discuss and debate not only women's folklore (as had a 1979 women and folklore conference held at the University of Pennsylvania and several earlier publications on women's folklore) but also and more importantly to introduce feminist theory into the study of folklore

and bring folklore scholarship to bear on feminist theory. This included the consideration of why and how the analysis of women's lore changes the study of all folklore, why studying any folklore with a feminist eye makes a difference, and how folklorists can contribute to the growing body of feminist scholarship that is developing in many disciplines.

Several publications directly or indirectly arose from this conference: special issues of the *Journal of American Folklore* ("Folklore and Feminism," edited by Bruce Jackson) and the *Journal of Folklore Research* ("Feminist Revisions in Folklore Studies," edited by Beverly J. Stoeltje) and two edited volumes, *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore* and *Feminist Messages: Coding in Woman's Folk Culture*. The conference and these publications have been variously successful in meeting the challenges as noted above.

Published in 1993, *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore*, edited by Susan Hollis, Linda Pershing, and M. Jane Young, is a collection of essays that achieves a new degree of sophistication in feminist approaches to the study of folklore, calling into question not only case studies but also any theoretical formulations that fail to take into account women's experiences and perceptions. This book is an attempt to provide a resource for those seeking a more comprehensive view of the contemporary research being conducted on the intersection of feminist theory and folklore. Additionally, many of the authors in this volume focus on women's expressive genres to further an understanding of symbolic modes that serve women's own interests, distinguished by a process-centered female aesthetic. The book is divided into three parts, each addressing a specific theme and beginning with a theoretical introduction to that theme: feminist reexaminations of folklore theory and the development of the discipline, new ways of looking at the types of materials conventionally studied by folklorists, and the exploration of hitherto unapproached or little recognized materials in folklore and feminism.

Joan Radner's edited volume, *Feminist Messages: Coding in Women's Folk Culture*, also published in 1993, takes a somewhat different direction, specifically addressing the coding of women's folklore forms rather than the more general application of gender-related concepts to the study of folklore. The articles in this volume draw extensively on feminist theory, pointing to a need for increased communication with feminist theorists across a variety of disciplines and conducting research in diverse cross-cultural areas. Coding, as it is defined by these authors, refers to women's frequently disturbing or subversive expressions of resistance, necessitated by the fact that their lives often have been controlled, dominated, or made peripheral by men. Such coding—sometimes deliberate, sometimes unconscious—is essentially ambiguous, conveying diverse messages and thus serving to protect women from those who might find such messages rebellious, and, therefore, threatening. Radner's book is especially significant in providing a framework within which to interpret

women's creative practices that have conventionally gone unnoticed or have been devalued by the dominant culture.

All of the conferences and publications mentioned since the appearance of Farrer's 1975 edited volume concentrated primarily on folklore of and about women in cross-cultural contexts; the need for new images, genres, and approaches; and the significance of using feminist theory to illuminate this area of inquiry. Although the political implications of the analysis and interpretation of women's folklore was central to these discussions, the political nature of the fieldwork conducted by folklorists remained largely ignored until the 1990 publication of "Folklore Fieldwork: Sex, Sexuality, and Gender," a special issue of *Southern Folklore* edited by Camilla A. Collins. As indicated by the title of this particular issue, the authors emphasize gender in general and from a number of perspectives rather than choosing only to highlight women's traditional artistic behavior. Furthermore, this publication delineates the way in which folklorists discuss gender issues in their fieldwork, constructing personal anecdotes frequently passed on informally. Thus, the distinction between "folk" and "folklorist" becomes blurred as the folklorists create their own folk narratives to describe their experiences doing fieldwork. The various essays make it clear that sex, sexuality, and gender influence the methods employed by folklorists to collect data, as well as the sorts of phenomena that they choose to investigate. Here, too, rigid categories and boundaries are discarded so that the divisions between subject and object or folklore and folklorist become more fluid as fieldwork is characterized as made up of conversations rather than formal interviews and the establishment of friendships rather than reserved relationships. These authors stress the subjectivity of such interactions, pointing out the necessity for folklorists to recognize their own feelings and perceptions, as well as those of their interviewees. They also insist that folklorists give more thought to the attitudes and perspectives generated by the gendered aspects of all fieldwork, recognizing the need to negotiate and interconnect both men's and women's domains in the field.

Fieldwork that incorporates the perspective of "the other" is crucial to contemporary folklore scholarship, just as it is to the "new ethnography" in anthropology. Certainly folklorists must revise the authoritative way in which they write about "the folk," but first they must examine the biases inherent in their fieldwork. Too often, perhaps because of their academic status, folklorists are blinded by their own perceptions of their importance, entirely unable to perceive the frequently negative manner in which they are regarded by those they presume to study. Seen from this viewpoint, folklorists take on a more marginal position; rather than valiant discoverers of folk performances—usually male "heroes" who compose romantic tales of their fieldwork exploits—they are sometimes unwanted intruders who are skillfully managed in the everyday lives of the folk who themselves are fully aware of the value

and power of their artistic behavior. Feminist scholars suggest that folklorists listen more carefully to what their informants say about the interrelationship of form, function, and audience in their expressive behavior—a point that is significant to the discipline in general, over and above gender considerations.

The volumes on gender or women and folklore published since the mid-1970s demonstrate that folklore and feminism can contribute a new understanding of women's marginal status in defined cultural contexts. On the one hand, women's marginality in male-dominated cultures is imposed; patriarchy enforces the rule of men from the very center of a society's organization (i.e., through the formation of laws, customs, and institutions that promote and preserve male domination) and leave women at its periphery. On the other hand, marginality encourages women to remain detached from the status quo. Their peripheral position may point to an incompatibility with established norms, leading to innovation, especially in expressive domains, and the development of alternative theories of knowledge. In reviewing women's expressive culture from a feminist stance, it is particularly important to look for ways in which women use their marginal status to creatively undermine the prevailing system by the invention or maintenance of traditions that signal the viability and appropriateness of a different way of thinking and behaving.

The feminist lens has given folklorists a new way of looking at the gendered nature of their endeavors. It is, however, important to recognize that other sorts of social concerns have remained largely unaddressed. For instance, none of the publications discussed here sufficiently incorporate feminist approaches to the folklore of women who are often doubly marginalized in our society by virtue of other factors in addition to their gender; these include women of color, lesbians, women with disabilities, and older women, who seldom have been the focus of folklore research. Although attempts have been made to fill this gap, it remains an area of folklore scholarship that deserves considerable attention in the near future. Furthermore, the broader focus on gender that feminism brings to folklore also points to the necessary inclusion of other critical concerns, such as the intersection of gender with race, class, ethnicity, and sexual identity.

Although feminist theory can expand and enhance folklore theory by generating new analytical models, this is not a one-way process. Women's folklore also can supply new data for and encourage the development of theories that define feminist scholarship. By providing a cross-cultural spectrum of traditional texts in various aesthetic media that address gender-related difference, women's folklore significantly enriches the examination of sexual difference in regard to hierarchy, power differentials, and the political imagination. A claim for the value of traditions that formulate female-centered considerations presupposes a need to allow folklore to speak for and about the traditions of women's difference as this is manifested in their material life activities and then

given voice through a range of expressive means. These specific features of women's material life activity carry important consequences for understanding and constructing all social relations, not just those that pertain to a particular arena of traditional production or performance. Thus, both folklore and feminism conjoin in their mutual validation of the regenerative aspects of social and cultural life, augmenting relationships of power with humanistic insights.

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See also Family Folklore; Gender.

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FESTIVAL

A periodic celebration representing through traditional observances, performances, rituals, and games the worldview of a culture or social group. Virtually universal, festival may be the most complex social and symbolic event to persist in tradition. The etymology of the term goes back to the Latin word *festum*, originally meaning “public joy, merriment, revelry” and used commonly in the plural form, which suggests that a plurality of activities and celebrations characterized the festival from ancient times.

From the Latin *festā* derive the Italian *festā* (singular), the Spanish *fiesta*, the French *fête*, the Portuguese *feira*, and the Middle English *feste*, *feste dai*, *festial*. The word *festival* was originally in English (and in French) an adjective indicating the quality of certain events, before it became the noun for

the celebrations themselves. Secondary meanings of the term in different languages indicate single structural elements of the festival or forms of it. *Festa* were sacred offerings in Latin, a *feast* in English is a very abundant and joyful meal, a *fiesta* in Spanish is a public combat to show ability and bravery, a *fiesta* in Romanian is a malicious and humorous prank, and a *fête* in French is also a birthday celebration or simply a rather formal party. In current usage, *festival* may mean: a time of celebration, sacred and/or secular; the annual celebration of a special person or a memorable event; the harvest of a particular crop; a series of performances in the fine arts, dedicated to an author or genre or mass medium (i.e., Shakespeare, music, cinema); or generic gaiety and cheerfulness.

In the social sciences, *festival* commonly means a periodic celebration composed of a multiplicity of ritual forms and events, directly or indirectly affecting all members of a community and explicitly or implicitly showing the basic values, the ideology, and the worldview that are shared by community members and are the basis of their social identity.

Festivals traditionally have been classified as either secular or religious. This conventional dichotomy, made popular by Émile Durkheim, is currently maintained in the social sciences, despite the fact that each type of festival usually includes several elements of the other. Secular festivals resort to religion and metaphysics to deepen their impact and social significance; religious festivities always have political and economic aspects.

An equally widespread classification opposes rural and urban festivals. The former are commonly considered older, celebrating fertility and based on myths; the latter are conceived to be more recent, celebrating prosperity and based on history and legend.

A recent classification based on social and class structure tries to distinguish among festivals given by the people for themselves, those given by the establishment for its own sake, those given by the people for the establishment, and finally, those given by the establishment for the people. The latter category, by far the largest, is the modern counterpart of the *panem et circenses* (bread and circuses) of Roman times.

Festive behavior has been studied as a social phenomenon having one basic characteristic. Most scholars have underlined transgression and symbolic inversion as typical of social behavior at festival times; others have remarked that festival finally confirms the world-as-it-is, and festive behavior parallels daily behavior, although in a more stylized form and with greater symbolic meaning.

Both approaches appear correct, albeit incomplete. Since festival periodically renews culture by representing chaos and cosmos, nature and culture, disorder and order, it requires the simultaneous presence of all basic behavioral models of daily life (even if inverted, stylized, disguised, or distorted by the



Enactments of ritual drama are part of many festivals. Actors often wear elaborate masks and costumes to represent mythological characters, as in this depiction of an Indonesian festival demon.

festive scenery). In fact, both symbolic inversion and intensification are present in festive behavior, together with the element of symbolic abstinence from work, play, study, or daily habits. During festival times, people who participate do something they usually do not, abstain from something they normally do, carry to the extreme consequences behaviors regulated by measure and common sense in daily life, and invert standard patterns of social life. Abstinence, reversal, intensification, and trespassing are all basic facets of festive behavior.

A morphology of festivals must indicate their minimal units and the possible sequences of these units. Such a theoretical operation, analogous to what Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp did for the constituent parts of the folktale, may aim at an archetype accounting for all festivals or, more accurately, at "oicotypes" accounting for a class of festivals of the same kind or from the same cultural area. Studies have indicated that several constituent parts seem to be quantitatively recurrent and qualitatively important in festive events. These units, building blocks of festivals, can all be considered ritual acts or "rites" since they happen within an exceptional frame of time and space, and their meaning is considered to go beyond their literal and explicit aspects.

The framing ritual that opens the festival is one of *valorization* (or for religious events, *sacralization*), which modifies the usual and daily function and meaning of time and space. To serve as the theater of the festive events, an area is reclaimed, cleared, delimited, blessed, adorned, and forbidden to normal activities.

Similarly, daily time is modified by a gradual or sudden interruption that introduces "time out of time," a special temporal dimension devoted to special activities. Festival time imposes itself as an autonomous duration, not so much to be perceived and measured in days or hours but to be divided internally by what happens within it from its beginning to its end, as in the "movements" of mythical narratives or musical scores. The opening rite is followed by a number of events that belong to a limited group of general ritual types. There are *rites of purification* and cleansing by means of fire, water, or air or those rites that are centered around the solemn expulsion of some sort of scapegoat, carrying the "evil" and "negative" out of the community. If the rationale of these rites is to expel the evil that is already within, as in exorcisms, other complementary rites aim at keeping away the evil perceived as a threat coming from outside. These rites of safeguard include various forms of benediction and procession of sacred objects around and through significant points of the festival space setting, in order to renew the magical defenses of the community against natural and supernatural enemies.

Rites of passage, in the form described by Arnold van Gennep, mark the transition from one life stage to the next. They may be given special relevance

by being part of a festive event. These may include forms of initiation into age groups, such as childhood, youth, and adulthood, or initiation into occupational, military, or religious groups and even public execution of criminals.

Rites of reversal through symbolic inversion drastically represent the mutability of people, culture, and life itself. Significant terms that are in binary opposition in the “normal” life of a culture are inverted. Sex roles are inverted in masquerade, with males dressing as females and females dressing as males; social roles are inverted as well, with masters serving their serfs. Sacred and profane spaces also are used in reverse.

Rites of conspicuous display permit the most important symbolic elements of the community to be seen, touched, adored, or worshipped; their communicative function is “phatic,” of contact. Sacred shrines, relics, and magic objects are solemnly displayed and are visited by individuals from within the immediate boundaries of the festival or pilgrims from faraway places. In sacred processions and secular parades, the icons and symbolic elements are instead moved through space specifically adorned with ephemeral festive decorations, such as festoons, flower arrangements, hangings, lights, and flags. In such perambulatory events, along with the community icons, the ruling groups typically display themselves as guardians and keepers and as depositories of religious or secular power, authority, and military might.

Rites of conspicuous consumption usually involve food and drink. These are prepared in abundance and even excess, made generously available, and solemnly consumed in various forms of feasts, banquets, or symposia. Traditional meals or blessed foods are among the most frequent and typical features of festival since they are a very eloquent way to represent and enjoy abundance, fertility, and prosperity. Ritual food is also a means to communicate with gods and ancestors, as expressed in the Christian belief that Christ is present in the sacred meal of Communion, the Greek tradition that Zeus was invisibly present at the ritual banquets of the Olympic Games, or the practice of the Tsembanga Maring people of New Guinea who raise, slaughter, and eat pigs for and with the ancestors. In far less frequent cases, as in the Native American potlatch, objects with special material and symbolic value are ritually consumed, wasted, or destroyed.

Ritual dramas are usually staged at festival sites, as rites have a strong tie to myths. Their subject matter is often a creation myth, a foundation or migratory legend, or a military success particularly relevant in the mythical or historical memory of the community staging the festival. By means of the drama, the community members are reminded of their golden age, the trials and tribulations of their founding members in reaching the present location of the community, the miracles of a saint, or the periodic visit of a deity to whom the festival is dedicated. When the sacred story is not directly staged, it is very often hinted at or referred to in some segments or events of the festival.

Rites of exchange express the abstract equality of the community members, their theoretical status as equally relevant members of a *communitas*, a community of equals under certain shared laws of reciprocity. At the *fair*, money and goods are exchanged at an economic level. At more abstract and symbolic levels, information, ritual gifts, or visits may be exchanged; public acts of pacification, symbolic *remissio debitum* (remission of debt) or thanksgiving for a grace received may take place in various forms of redistribution, sponsored by the community or a privileged individual who thus repays the community or the gods for what has been received in excess.

Festival typically includes *rites of competition*, which often constitute its cathartic moment in the form of games. Even if games are commonly defined as competitions regulated by special rules and with uncertain outcomes (as opposed to rituals, the outcomes of which are known in advance), the logic of festival is concerned with the competition and the awards for the winner; the rules of the game are canonic, and its paradigm is ritual. The parts or roles are assigned at the beginning to individuals as equal and undifferentiated “contestants,” “hopefuls,” or “candidates.” Then, the development and the result of the game create among them a final hierarchical order—either binary (winners and losers) or by rank (from first to last). Games show how equality may be turned into hierarchy. Besides games in the strict sense, festival competitions include various forms of contests and prize giving: electing the beauty queen; selecting the best musician, player, singer, or dancer, individual or group; or giving an award for a newly improvised narrative or work of art of any kind or for the best festive decorations. By singling out its outstanding members and giving them prizes, the group implicitly reaffirms some of its most important values.

Athletic or competitive sporting events include individual or collective games of luck, strength, or ability. These have been considered “corruptions” of older plays of ritual combats with fixed routine and obligatory ending, such as the fight between Light and Darkness representing cosmogony; fights of this type were then progressively historicized and territorialized into combats between, for example, the Christians and the Moors or representative individuals, with the champion (literally meaning the sample) carrying the colors of the whole group.

In their functional aspects, these types of games may be seen as display and encouragement of skills, such as strength, endurance, and precision, that were required in daily work and military occupations; this was, for instance, the rationale of medieval mock battles. In their symbolic aspect, festival competitions may be seen as a metaphor for the emergence and establishment of power, as occurs when the “winner takes all” or the winning faction symbolically takes over the arena (or the city) in triumph.

At the end of the festival, a *rite of devalorization*, symmetrical to the open-

ing rite, marks the conclusion of the festive activities and the return to the normal spatial and temporal dimension of daily life.

It is obvious that one should not expect to find all the morphological elements listed here in each festival, just as one should not expect to find all of Vladimir Propp's "functions" present in every fairy tale. A complete festival morphology will correspond to the complete festive cycle, and several of its parts will form the configuration of each of the actual festive events. This fragmentation of the festive complex into events distributed all along the calendrical cycle follows the course of history and its trends of centralization and decentralization in social life, as well as the interplay of religious and secular powers and their division in the running of social and symbolic life and its "collective rituals." Furthermore, in today's Western and Westernized cultures, larger and often more abstract and distant entities try to substitute themselves for the older, smaller, tightly woven communities as reference groups and centers of the symbolic life of the people. Today, we try to bring the audience close to the event by means of the mass media or to bring the event close to the audience by delegating smaller entities, such as the family, to administer the event everywhere at the same time; we also may try to fragment the old festivals into simpler festive events centered on one highly significant ritual. Such fragmentation is seen in the United States, where the ritual meal is the focus of Thanksgiving, the exchange of gifts is the highlight of Christmas, and excess is the hallmark of New Year's. Military might and victories are celebrated on the Fourth of July, and civic pride is championed at the Rose Parade. Carnavalesque aspects underlie Mardi Gras and Halloween. And symbolic reversal is nowhere more evident than in the demolition derby. Even the tradition of dynastic anniversaries is present, modified though it may be, in celebrations of George Washington's and Abraham Lincoln's birthdays; competitions are perfectly typified by the Indianapolis 500, the Superbowl, and the Kentucky Derby. Even the archaic tendency to consider the ritual games of the festival as cosmic events may be surfacing in the use of the term *world championship*, obstinately applied to events that, in the strict sense, are really encounters of local teams playing a culture-bound and territorially limited game, such as American football or baseball. Festive rites of passage take place on Valentine's Day, at debutantes' balls, and in drinking celebrations on one's twenty-first birthday and at fraternity and sorority rushes. Rites of deference and confirmation of status include presidential inaugurations, Father's Day, and Mother's Day. The archaic Kings and Queens of the May have their functional equivalents in the yearly beauty pageants of Miss, Mister, and Mrs. America. Plays have been grouped in various yearly festivals of the arts that range from Shakespeare festivals to the Oscars ceremonies in Los Angeles, through symphonies, jazz festivals, and fiddling contests. And the modern *ferias*, the county fairs, are numerous and ever present.

If not festival proper, such events are part of a festive cycle, a series of events that in other times and cultures would fall within tighter boundaries of time, space, and action. This festive complex is constantly changing and evolving. But with all its modifications, festival has retained its primary importance and continues to celebrate life, remaining the most important showcase for culture's values and worldview.

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See also Carnival; Custom; Feast; Fool.

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FIELDWORK

Firsthand observation and documentation of folklore. Fieldwork is the key research act for most scholarship in folklore, anthropology, and oral history. In 1964, Richard M. Dorson wrote, “What the state paper is to the historian and creative work to the literary scholar, the oral traditional text is—or should be—to the student of folklore.” Today, few folklorists would limit the field-gathered information to “texts,” and many could not even agree on what the word *text* means, yet Dorson’s observation still holds true.

Fieldwork consists of observing and documenting people where they are

and doing what they do. It is one of the three major modes of acquiring primary information in the social sciences. (The other two—statistical surveys and decontextualized interviews or performances—are rarely used in primary folklore studies.) Fieldwork information is gathered with various media: notebooks, film and video cameras, and audio recorders. Fieldworkers may seek items in active tradition (things people do now) or things in passive tradition (things they know and recognize and may even have an aesthetic for but wouldn't, unless solicited, perform or utter). Fieldworkers may join in the events going on (*participant observation*), or they may pretend to be totally outside those events (except in large community events, such as festivals and parades, it is difficult for a fieldworker to be totally invisible). They may be active in their pursuit of information (interviewing, asking for items, asking for explanations), or they may be passive (waiting, observing, recording).

Some folklore researchers use preexisting print or electronic media as the sources of primary information (for example, studies of the apparent scope, character, and function of folklore materials in commercial advertising or political speeches or folklore in the works of Homer, Shakespeare, and Mark Twain or folklore on the Internet). But such studies are predicated on ideas of folklore derived from fieldwork. Milman Parry and Albert Lord's hypothetical and theoretical work on the nature of Homeric performance and composition was extrapolated from their extensive fieldwork among Serbian epic singers. They were able to assert that certain materials in classical texts were grounded in folklore performance and transmission only because their fieldwork let them understand the character of such performance and transmission.

Even folklore scholars whose work is totally theoretical are dependent for the substance underlying their generalizations and speculation on the fieldwork of others. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to theorize cogently and relevantly about the meaning of folklore in a community unless someone had first gathered information about what folklore exists in that community and what functions the folklore performs. Comparative folklore studies (texts or behaviors from different places or times compared for differences in aesthetic or functional aspects) is predicated on the quality and scope of the field-gathered material.

Folklorists doing fieldwork may be looking for specific genres or kinds of folk behavior: ballads, recipes, survivals of older traditions in modern communities, modern folkways in technological communities, or the nature of folk performance. It is difficult to know the social meaning of an item of performance without knowing about the conditions of performance. For example, the place and function of ballads in a community are interpreted differently if many people in that community sing many long ballads on a regular basis to a wide local audience that knows and enjoys such ballads or if, by contrast, the performers sing their songs only when collectors come in from the outside to solicit them. The words and tunes may be the same, but what we make of

them may vary. One may analyze a particular ballad text differently if it was learned from a book, a recording, a school chum, or a grandparent.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars often examined texts alone, much as literary scholars examined texts of poems as freestanding items. Today, however, folklore texts are rarely examined without consideration of collateral information. Only through fieldwork can researchers gather the items, provide information for identifying folk genres, and locate the nature of folklore performance in ordinary life.

It is not just that scholars are more sophisticated now about the questions that might be asked; it is also that the equipment available today frees the fieldworker to ask more sophisticated or multidimensional questions. When fieldworkers had to take down all words by hand, approximations of narratives or tunes were sufficient. Now that machines capture the words and music, fieldworkers can examine context—not just context of performance but also context of recording, the relation between scholar and source. Put another way, it is no longer just the joke that is investigated. Rather, modern researchers ask a host of questions: Who tells which jokes to whom and under what circumstances? How are the jokes interpreted? Who laughs, and who does not laugh? What part do those jokes play in the social event going on? How does that redaction of that joke relate to others made of the same words? Is the meaning the same if the context is different? What is the relation between observer and observed? The whole reflexive movement in field sciences in recent years (see, for example, Clifford and Marcus' 1986 work, *Writing Culture*) is predicated on a technology that can document the observer at the same time that it documents the observed.

Fieldwork is a technology-driven endeavor. The kinds of questions one asks of field-gathered material are based on the kinds of information that can be gathered in or brought home from the field. Fieldworkers approaching complex events will define their options differently if they have access to various kinds of image and sound recorders and know how to use them effectively and efficiently. Fieldworkers studying material culture have different questions and therefore may incorporate different technologies than fieldworkers interested in narrative tradition or matters of custom or belief. Fieldworkers trying to document the folklife of a community may need a wider range of technical expertise than fieldworkers focusing on genres or items.

Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century folklorists depended on simple recording devices and techniques, including notebooks and memory. They used bulky machinery to record musical performances on cylinders and then on large flat disks. These machines were capable of recording only a few minutes of performance before they had to be wound up and supplied with a new recording surface. Furthermore, unless the recordist struck a tuning fork or other device of known frequency at the beginning or ending of the record-

ing, there was no way for a listener to know exactly at what speed these recordings were to be played. That meant listeners never knew if they were hearing the recordings at the right tempo or pitch. Because the equipment was so bulky, movement was difficult, and performers often had to be brought to where the machine was located. Cameras used large glass plates and required a great deal of light, either natural or flash powder.

What the great folklorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided us were not so much records of performances but rather interpretations or versions of performances: They were not only editors of what they found but also participants in the line of performers they documented. When, for example, folklorist Vance Randolph spent an evening listening to stories or songs and then went home and wrote up the stories he had heard or sat at the piano and worked out songs he had heard, he was doing exactly what many folk performers do.

Folklorists now can gather more complex field documents because they have at their disposal instruments that provide a record of transient detail that was impossible to obtain a half century ago, such as: small, automated, 35mm cameras weighing less than a pound that zoom from wide-angle to telephoto shots and focus and set apertures automatically, using film capable of making images in moonlight; video cameras easily held in one hand that record high-quality images in low light and high-fidelity stereo sound on tape, using rechargeable batteries that last two hours each; audio recorders controlled by crystals, with tapes that are therefore replicable on any crystal-controlled machine anywhere; and, for the truly sophisticated user, digital audiotape (DAT) machines with real-time coding. A fieldworker can carry a full complement of this new equipment—video camera, still camera, crystal-controlled audio recorder, enough tape for a dozen hours of video and sound recording and enough film for hundreds of separate images—in a shoulder bag. The effects of all this technology are multifold.

First, the fieldworker is capable of acquiring an enormous amount of information—far more than was ever possible previously. Before mechanical means of reproduction were available, documentation of even the simplest text was at best an approximation, limited to what someone could write down in the midst of an event that could never be redone exactly. With early means of reproduction, it was possible to make crude recordings and obtain still photographic images in a narrow range of situations. With modern equipment, it is possible to get extremely accurate sounds and images in a wide range of situations. Second, the fieldworker has been freed of the need to concentrate on capturing items (the machines do that) and allowed to consider more complex questions, such as the way various parts of performance or enactment interrelate or minute complexities of performance itself. The performance analyses of Dennis Tedlock, for example, would be impossible without accurate recordings that can be listened to again and again with

equipment that lets the analyst find exact moments in performance. Third, the problem of how to get information has been replaced by what is to be done with the great mass of information so easily acquired. A nineteenth-century collector of ballads or animal narratives had no difficulty managing his information; it was easy enough to organize the songs and stories and provide simple annotations giving the specifics of performance. A twentieth-century fieldworker coming home with videotapes, audiotapes, and photographs of a complex event has a far more difficult job of documentation, storage, and analysis.

In the field, the researcher looks at a world of nearly infinite possibilities: so many songs, dances, stories, images, recipes, redactions, processes, interactions, moments, movements, facial expressions, and body postures. Once home, the researcher deals with a world of specific and limited possibility: the kind, quality, and range of information brought home, no more and no less. What is not in the notes, on the film or tapes, or in memory is gone. Subsequent analysis will be predicated not on what existed out there in real life but on what made it back. Since field documents may be used in studies never envisioned by the fieldworker at the time of the fieldwork and since analysis may occur long after memory has had time to impose its confusions, proper documentation is of key importance in all fieldwork projects. Without notes on who was doing what and under what conditions the documentation and event occurred, sound recordings, videotapes, and photographs may, in time, be nearly useless.

Fieldworkers also deal with the problem of preservation. A large portion of the audio cylinders made early in the twentieth century, for instance, have already turned to carbon dust, and no one knows how long information on audiotapes and videotapes will last. Audiotapes made in the 1960s often present problems today because the recording material has pulled away from the backing. And notes made with felt-tip pens fade. The most lasting form of documentation is graphite pencil on acid-free paper. Such paper is enormously resistant to decay (it lasts centuries), and the graphite particles, imbedded in the paper fiber, are not subject to fading or oxidation.

The immediate result of fieldwork is the acquisition of various kinds of documentary materials. A long-term result is involvement in a range of ethical questions and responsibilities. To whom does the material one brings home from the field belong? What obligations are there regarding privacy and ownership issues? Who is owed what if material is used in a book or a recording or a documentary film? What obligations obtain toward other researchers working in the same area or on the same materials? Fieldwork is only one part of a complex series of personal, intellectual, and ethical acts and decisions.

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See also Participant-Observation Method.



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FILM, FOLKLORE

A term commonly applied to a film that documents folklore for research and other purposes. Such films, when edited to be shown to an audience, are called, in the term coined by Sharon Sherman, *folkloric films*. The terms *folkloric film* and *film and folklore* also refer to nonacademic or so-called Hollywood films that use folklore as a major theme. Videotape use and production often are encompassed in the larger term of *film and folklore*. As the scope of videography increases and its use continues to grow, video has become the medium of choice (at least until the next major technological development), and *folklore and video*—or, preferably, *folkloric videos*—will become the commonplace term, incorporating film within its definition, much as the current term incorporates video.

Compared to their contemporaries in the social sciences and other fields, folklorists began to use film as a tool at a much later date, but the film movement in folklore reflects all of the techniques and preoccupations of earlier filmmakers who created the field of documentary film. Like the “films of fact” shot in the early 1900s, folkloric films are often made up of short clips of interesting phenomena captured for posterity. The earliest such documentation of folklore on celluloid is a *March of Time* series film made in 1935, which depicts John Lomax interviewing musician Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter) and record-

ing his folksongs for the folksong archive of the Library of Congress; a second film on Leadbelly appeared in 1945. American folkloric films were not produced again until the late 1950s. The first call for film reviews in the *Journal of American Folklore* (published by the American Folklore Society) did not appear until 1974. Despite this somewhat late acknowledgment of the importance of film, these reviews demonstrate the growing interest in film among folklorists during the 1970s when new theories about performance began to gain acceptance.

In Europe, short, straightforward camera shots of folkloric subjects were taken for documentation purposes by the Institute für den Wissenschaftlichen Film. After World War II, the institute sponsored a program in fieldwork to train ethnologists in the use of film equipment. In 1959, the institute published its own rules for documenting ethnology and folklore and demanded that fieldworkers document only authentic events filmed without elaborate camera work. The institute organized a film archive in 1952 and began editing the *Encyclopaedia Cinematographia*. The ethnological films, which are categorized first by world region, then by country, and finally by region within each country, are of great value for comparative folklore research. They are short and unnarrated and deal with only one subject, such as a children's game from West Africa, a festival dance in South Africa, or the performance of an epic heroic song in Romania.

Other folkloric films have a heavily narrated and expository style similar to those documentaries made prior to World War II and on through the 1960s. Certain folkloric films utilize either a cinema vérité or post-vérité approach, which combines synchronous sound or voice-over with linear depictions for the recording of complex expressive events (including interactions, performances, and the many facets of creative processes) in their entirety. Yet others are reflexive and intersubjective, incorporating the filmmaker as one of the subjects. In the realm of nonfiction film, certain trends have become firmly established. Stylistically, then, the folkloric film does not differ from documentary and ethnodocumentary film.

On a theoretical level, many folklorists who use film are tied both to the models used by their documentary film forerunners and to the conceptual premises of early folklore scholars. Some folkloric filmmakers tend to focus on romantic visions of the noble savage or preindustrial folk. Just as this bias on the part of folklorists gave way to more enlightened notions of the folk as any people with a common tradition, filmmakers also shifted their attention from romanticism to examine present-day issues involving diverse groups of people. In folkloric films, one can find both attitudes existing side by side.

In *Nanook of the North* (1922), Robert J. Flaherty's romanticization of native Arctic life, the focus on the individual as a representative figure for a culture that Flaherty saw fading and the involvement of Nanook and the

Inuit in the filming process are elements of a filmic model that folklore documentary filmmakers emulated. In folkloric films, the rural often takes precedence over the urban and the past assumes greater importance than the contemporary. John Cohen's search for Child ballads in Appalachia, documented in *The High Lonesome Sound*, Jorge Preloran's documentation of little-known peoples in the isolated regions of Argentina, and Les Blank's depiction of Cajun and Creole culture in the Louisiana bayou all fit this pattern. Yet none of these filmmakers is locked into this pattern. All of them have examined very contemporary activities and the urban scene as well. Often, like Flaherty, they begin with a romantic, stereotypic notion of the folk for their initial films and then recognize a need to broaden the definition of their work as their film corpus grows.

Just as Flaherty selected Nanook, folklore filmmakers often choose a biographical "everyman" to represent the group. Les Blank, in several films, has Marc Savoy explain aspects of being a Cajun; Jorge Preloran looks at Hermogenes Cajo as an exemplar of religious folk artists; Bill Ferris documents James Thomas as a bluesman and storyteller; and Sharon Sherman presents quiltmaker Kathleen Ware and chainsaw sculptor Skip Armstrong. As one might expect with the passage of time and the changes in techniques and styles, such folklore filmmakers have taken Flaherty's approach a step further by documenting people both as cultural or artistic representatives and as unique personalities. Having film subjects participate in the filming process, as Nanook did, is only now becoming a common means of sharing the authority for the film, as is evidenced by Zulay Saravino and Jorge and Mabel Preloran in *Zulay, Facing the 21st Century*.

Folklore filmmakers most interested in texts will often employ the techniques of montage inspired by Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov. Like folklorist Vladimir Propp, Vertov was primarily interested in form. He thought that the recombination of filmic elements could create a new "truth," which he called *Kino-Pravda* (film truth). In *Man with a Movie Camera* (1928), he not only shows a day in the life of Moscow, he also edits the material to demonstrate what he thinks about the subject he has filmed. Vertov reveals how film operates by showing himself at the editing table with the images he has shot tumbling into various places to create new meaning, thus anticipating a post-modern view of film.

Accused of concentrating on form rather than content by the Stalinists of the 1930s, Vertov lost favor with his government. His influence can best be seen in the work of avant-garde filmmakers such as Jean Luc Godard. In addition, Vertov's *Kino-Eye*, which must "document from life," is the precursor of cinema vérité, a technique aiming at film truth that was made popular in the 1960s with the advent of portable sync-sound equipment. French anthropological filmmaker Jean Rouch deliberately uses the term as homage to Vertov.

Vertov establishes reflexivity in film, showing the viewer the means by which representation is achieved. But unlike Flaherty and Rouch, who tried to incorporate the reactions of those being documented, Vertov's film "truth" is solely the filmmaker's own truth as he or she constructs it. In contrast, Flaherty wished to present the worldview of those he documented. These two approaches, that of Vertov and that of Flaherty, dominate documentary practices today. Neither practice is easily bounded or that distinct, except perhaps in terms of form. Whereas those who "play with" form are overtly providing viewers with their vision, other filmmakers still present their own stamp of authority while deluding themselves into thinking they are allowing their subjects to shape the film. Although one might suppose that Flaherty was reproducing the natives' attitudes because he tried to include his subjects' ideas, his methods for *Man of Aran* and *Moana* indicate otherwise. Vertov, despite his domination of the film, does reveal how his authority is constructed. Both styles underscore how subjective film is, but Vertov's work is more blatant about the impossibility of objectivity. Likewise, the admonition of British filmmaker John Grierson that documentary must expose social problems has led to a number of films whose editing styles reveal the ideologies of their makers. In folkloric film, the montage structure employed in such films as Ferris's *I Ain't Lying* and *Made in Mississippi* and Blank's food films (e.g., *Garlic Is as Good as Ten Mothers*) provides a means for discovering what the filmmaker thinks about the subject being documented.

For folklorists, cinema verité provided the first real opportunity to document events from beginning to end and to allow fieldwork tools to match the new theoretical perspectives about folklore as human behavior established in the late 1960s. Long takes and sync-sound filming became the rage. At last, the people being studied could speak for themselves in sync-sound and provide their own functional analyses without the imposition of a narrator or scholar. A number of documentary films demonstrated to folklorists how filmmakers might focus on and document individuals to arrive at a "truth"; such films included: *Salesman* (1969), which pictured the life of a door-to-door Bible salesman, and *Showman* (1962), a portrait of movie mogul Joseph E. Levine, by Charlotte Zwerin and Albert and David Maysles'; *Lonely Boy* (1961) by Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroiter, about teenage idol Paul Anka; and *Don't Look Back* (1967), D. A. Pennebaker's film on Bob Dylan.

The problem was that cinema verité did not provide "the answer" folklorists wanted. If anything, it raised more questions. Films are edited to suit filmmakers' theories. Those films that seem most appropriate for documentary in general and folklore in particular acknowledge their power to seemingly represent experience *and* reveal the means by which they do so. Such films go beyond the ideals of cinema verité into the openly subjective realm of what Sharon Sherman terms *post-verité*, in which the art form of the documentary

is a given. Whereas cinema vérité was art masquerading as objectivity, post-vérité unmasks the illusion of objectivity and displays it. For example, in *Gimme Shelter*, flashbacks confuse what is “real”; in *Woodstock*, an observational camera style is fused with split-screen images, sound mixes, and rhythmic shots chosen for their balance with the audio track. The long takes disappear into edited rhythms, as they do in Roberta Cantow’s folkloric film *Clotheslines*. The interview, abhorred by cinema vérité for proclaiming the constructed nature of film, may occupy a central role in post-vérité, as in such folkloric films as Tom Davenport’s *A Singing Stream*, Judy Peiser’s *All Day, All Night: Memories from Beale Street Musicians*, and Paul Wagner’s *The Grand Generation*. For *Paris Is Burning*, Jennie Livingston creates a post-vérité film from a mélange of interviews, cinema vérité, and intertitles.

In the United States, for the most part, cinema vérité films were used to tell the stories of the “other people,” those without access to media production. With post-vérité, the “others” may become the cinematic weavers of their own stories, directly addressing the camera as the “experts.” In recognizing the blatancy of film as art, post-vérité films may also cross into the realm of reflexivity. Zulay Saravino takes over the making of a film about her culture and turns it into one about her transcultural experiences in *Zulay, Facing the 21st Century*. Akin to Vertov, Saravino shows herself editing the film about herself. The window for objectifying people becomes a dialogue with and in film. In *Carnival in Qeros*, the carnival becomes secondary as the Qeros interact with John Cohen, striking a bargain for payment in alpacas in exchange for Cohen’s right to film the villagers.

Unlike documentaries, which look at people within the filmmaker’s own society, films that Sharon Sherman calls *ethnodocumentaries* tend to document the “other”—people who are conceptualized as being unlike the film team or ethnographer. Examples include Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s *Trance and Dance in Bali*, one of the first films to document a single event; John Marshall’s many films on the !Kung bushmen; Robert Gardner’s interpretative *Dead Birds* on the Dani of West Irian; Jorge Preloran’s film on the Warao; and Timothy Asch’s work on the Yanomamö and the Balinese. Folkloric films combine the goal of the documentary to record unstaged events with the goal of the ethnodocumentary to provide information about culture. As ethnographers have become less concerned with cultural overviews and more interested in *events* in culture (such as a feast, a funeral, a festival), their films have become more like folkloric films. The folkloric film focuses primarily on traditional behavior, documenting many of the most fundamental features of our lives, ranging widely from rituals, ceremonies, folk art and material culture to folk narrative and folksong and to the lore of various peoples bonded by ethnicity, age, gender, family, occupation, recreation, religion, and region.

Unlike most ethnodocumentary filmmakers, the folkloristic filmmaker

does not limit himself or herself to so-called exotic, primitive, Third World, or aboriginal peoples. In contrast, the folklorist, as Richard M. Dorson has pointed out, need not travel far to discover folklore being generated and can conduct fieldwork at the folklorist's "back door." It can be argued that those folkloristic filmmakers who are the most successful have, in fact, examined traditions in their own locales, sometimes even among their own families.

These differences of major focus and locale set the folkloric film apart from other documentary film traditions. Both documentary and ethnodocumentary filmmakers have included footage whose content is of interest to folklorists, e.g., a Wolof woman making pottery, two Yanomamö narrators telling a myth, Bert Haanstra's segments of hand glass blowing in *Glass*, and Vertov's use of folksong in *Three Songs of Lenin*. Such films represent the precursors of the folkloric film, for they include folkloric material and predate the use of film by folklorists per se. Any film having folklore content might aptly be called a *folkloric film*. Just as anthropologists define certain films as ethnographic when they successfully elucidate anthropological approaches or lend themselves to the dictates of anthropological research or teaching, the true folkloric film may be defined as one whose content deals primarily with topics that folklorists study and whose intent is to meet the dictates of folkloristic research and teaching. Such films include ones created about folklore by folklorists themselves or by nonfolklorists who are filmmakers or videographers recording folklore. Put simply, the point of these films is to document folklore.

The filmmaker's theoretical assumptions about folklore are disclosed by and determine the techniques that the filmmaker uses. Those films that purport to deal with folklore (in the broadest sense of creative expression) generally focus upon either (1) the individual performer or artists; (2) the community (region, family, occupational group) or the "culture"; or (3) texts, technological processes, or artifacts. Furthermore, notions of folklore as having a space-time continuum often generate films with a historical or topological focus.

Analyzing how filmmakers apply form to content offers a method for revealing their intent. Films that profile individuals or community members tend to demonstrate creative interactional processes and events. Such films are most often not narrated and are shot and presented in a *verité* or observational style, with sync-sound or the sound-over voices of the participants. Occasionally, a single event—as seen in the work of wartime documentarians and television films such as *The Murrow-McCarthy Debate*, as well as in the ethnodocumentary films of Bateson and Mead, Marshall, and Asch—has served as the organizing principle for certain works of folkloric filmmakers: John Cohen's *Carnival in Qeros*, Tom Davenport's *It Ain't City Music*, Bess Hawes' *Pizza, Pizza, Daddy-O*, and Sharon Sherman's *Passover, A Celebration*

and *Tales of the Supernatural*. On the other hand, films that attempt to demonstrate technological processes, examine texts and artifacts, and set up typologies or reconstruct the historicity of folklore productions generally make use of narration and a montage of images that are unrelated in filmic time to actual events. This style also predominates in interpretative films in which a narrator explains either the action on the screen or the thoughts of the filmmaker (or the people in the film). For historic reconstruction, such as Pat Ferrero's *Hearts and Hands*, the narration may be assembled from the words of journal, diary, and letter writers. Such films are edited to convey the ideas of the filmmaker about the subject.

The reasons for these methodologies are readily apparent. If the filmmaker's concentration is upon people and their creative processes, then the film generally will allow these people to convey their own tastes and aesthetics to the audience. Narration may be used as a complement to add information lacking on the audio track, but individuals will speak for themselves. In this way, the individual shapes the work of the filmmaker, who must structure the film around a sequence of linear events in which the individual is engaged. Occasionally, that structure is determined openly by both the filmmaker and the persons being filmed, and the process of the negotiation becomes part of the completed film.

A unique twist to the study of film and folklore is the popular use of folklore as the primary plotline or unifying thread for feature films. *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, for example, exploits the practices of voodoo. The urban legend about a babysitter frightened by a telephone caller is the basis for *When a Stranger Calls*. *Avalon* plays upon family and ethnic narratives to structure the larger narrative of family and ethnic neighborhood dissolution in the United States of the 1940s through the 1960s, using one family as exemplar. *When Harry Met Sally* relies on the courtship narratives of many different couples as a transition device.

Memorable in its re-creation of folklore is *Candyman*, in which a folklore graduate student conducts research on the legend or horror tale of "the hooked-arm man," who has scared teenagers in lovers' lanes for decades. In this film, the legend comes to life, and the man with the hook torments the graduate student. That which is being studied within the film becomes the framework for the film. With the popularity of Jan Brunvand's books on urban legends, this genre of folklore is familiar to a vast audience, and thus viewers have undoubtedly seen the irony.

Nonacademic feature films in general release often incorporate folklore as a detail—for example, a woman singing "Barbara Allan" (Child 84) in *The Piano*. Animated films, such as *Anansi the Spider* and *John Henry*, are targeted at the educational market, but the folkloric films perhaps the most popular with general audiences are Walt Disney's animated *Märchen*. From *Cinderella*

to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Beauty and the Beast*, the Disney studio has presented a number of “Disneyized” folktales to huge audiences. The viewers may accept these renditions as the original tales, an idea reinforced by “spin-off” products such as books, dolls, games, and other toys.

On a thematic level, a similar process occurs. Folk beliefs about vampires and werewolves have spawned a whole genre of horror films. Folklike heroes and plots emerge in stories created or adapted from books by screenwriters, such as *The Never-Ending Story*, *The Princess Bride*, and *Friday, the 13th*. Other visual forms of popular culture appropriate themes such as “the quest,” “journey,” or “adventure” found in folktale and epic, reconfiguring them in video and computer games. In these ways, popular culture “swallows” folklore, reinterprets it, and spits it out in a new form. The facile quality of video cameras has encouraged people everywhere to become videographers who document their lives. In essence, what filmmakers and videographers choose to record in both professional films and home movies or amateur videos often involves presenting a vision of the self by documenting the central aspects of life, such as rites of passage (birthdays, bar mitzvahs, sweet sixteens, graduations, weddings); calendrical and religious holidays (Christmas, Passover, Mardi Gras); and performance events (from children’s sports to ethnic festivals). Folkloric films also create biographies of individual folk artists, documenting the traditional processes in which they are engaged (for example, play activities, folk singing, craft creation). These subjects form the key narratives of the folkloric film and the folkloric video, which build upon these “narratives of life” by explaining how such events and processes function in the lives of those depicted. At the same time, filmmakers who document, interpret, and present folkloric themes actually use such themes to present self-images. Thus, film not only offers a multilevel means of capturing facets of a culture, an ethnic community, a family, and/or an individual folk artist or performer, it also constructs a comprehensive image of the self.

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See also Fieldwork; Popular Culture.



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FOLK CULTURE

The customary beliefs, social forms, and material constructions of specific folk groups. Folk culture includes the totality of associated elements such as speech patterns, social actions and activities, beliefs, behaviors, ideology, and artifacts specific to the group. It arises out of the organizational core of the group's identity to reflect the particular aims, interests, standards, and activities of the group. As opposed to more academic forms of culture, it is learned by interaction and participation within the group rather than through formal channels.

Culture can be defined in terms of the learned patterns of behavior, beliefs, art, rituals, institutions, and expressions characteristic of a particular group and how these elements are expressed. This pattern of learning and transmission is not limited to strictly oral or strictly written forms of transmission: Either or both may be employed in the learning process. Folk culture is both a representation and a reaffirmation of the total identity of a particular group, and it is learned by way of membership and interaction within the group.

Folk culture is usually viewed in contrast to elite culture. Some of the early definitions of folk culture focused on the idea that it was something separate from *urban* or *mass* culture, and that is representative of the beginnings of civilized culture. Folk culture was considered something that existed only within small, isolated, homogeneous, nontechnological groups, whose members were generally illiterate or nonliterate and lived in some form of preurban society. Early studies focused their attention on groups considered to be representative of preurban culture: peasants, aboriginal groups, or ethnic minorities, for example. Since the 1960s, studies of folk groups have broadened the scope of folk culture to include groups of any level on the folk-to-urban continuum and recognize that the folk culture of "rural" groups can and does manifest itself in new forms in an urban setting.

Closely allied with the concept of folk culture is the notion of *folk society*, a group of individuals who are organized around some common interest, shared institutions, and a common culture. The folk society is a self-perpetuating entity that bases its identity on shared institutions and culture. There is generally a dichotomy between folk culture and folk society, which views culture as

the values, ideas, and symbols of the group and society as the actual mechanics, the way culture is represented through the social interaction of the group's members. Some scholars and studies have and do use the terms interchangeably and consider the distinction a moot point. To some extent, there is very little difference between the concept of folk culture and folk society, for the two do not exist in singular and separate states. However, the distinction between folk culture and folk society is beneficial for distinguishing between a study that focuses on the ideological constructs of a group versus one that focuses on how those constructs are manifested through group interaction.

The study of folk culture may encompass such diverse methodological tools as ethnography, folklore theory, cross-cultural comparisons, historical documentation, historic-geographic corollaries, psychological analyses, economic impact analyses, and a host of other methodologies. Folk culture studies also occur in a "hyphenated" form, in which one particular feature of the culture is the focus. For example, studies of material folk culture (alternately, folk material culture) focus on the material constructs of a particular group as representations of the group's culture.

As noted earlier, the definition of folk culture and the focus of its study has changed. Early ideas of folk culture tended to be based on romantic ideas of antiquarian survivals, wherein the folk culture of peasants, whether their own or borrowed from their "betters" (*gesunkenes Kulturgut*) could be viewed as vignettes of our more civilized culture in its earlier stages. Some early ideas and studies focused on folk culture in nationalistic terms in an attempt to trace cultural lineage and establish ethnic superiority and like reasoning. Though the views of romantic nationalism are not in the fore of modern folklore theory, there are some applications in which such a study of folk culture has been used to establish tribal claims on property or recognition as a truly distinct group.

Richard Dorson pointed to the 1960s as the period in which folk culture studies were broadened by what he called a new type of folklorist. These changes are identified by a shift from concentrating strictly on rural groups and looking for romantic survivals to an acceptance of modern realities and a search for reinterpreted traditions in the urban setting and even emergent traditions. Studies have included changes and retentions in folk culture among urban immigrant groups, such as Hungarian steelworkers and Hmong and Vietnamese shop owners, as well as the uses of new technologies to carry on old traditions and even emergent traditions in gay and lesbian groups, occupational groups, avocational groups, and so on. As with earlier definitions and studies of folk culture, there is an interest in finding the continuities within which to identify the culture of the group.

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See also Anthropological Approach; Folk Group; Folklife; Folklore.



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FOLK GROUP

Usually referred to in academic literature as “the folk” (plural, “folk groups”), a social group whose members share a traditional culture; also known as the “common people.” From a sociological viewpoint, the term *folk* designates a group of persons whose relations are characterized by cohesion and a primary group’s patterns of social interaction.

A *primary group* (compare *Gemeinschaft*, or community) is differentiated from a *secondary group* (compare *Gesellschaft*, or society) according to certain criteria, including: size, purpose, duration, patterns of communication (interaction), type of social control, and degree of inclusiveness (or how much of the individual’s life is involved in the group’s activities).

Typically, a primary group is small in number, of multiple and varied purposes, and formed with the intent of being long-lasting; within a primary group, members usually interact via unrestrictive media and all available patterns of communication, typically face to face. Conformity to group rules of conduct (mores, folkways, and other social norms) is achieved through informal but very effective means (e.g., by generating a sense of shame, sin, or honor; by gossip; by fear of the supernatural), and group activities involve “the whole person” (from familial, economic, political, and related standpoints in both the personal as well as the impersonal aspects of life). For a member, life within the primary group is usually satisfying. By contrast, a secondary group is typically large in number and of specified and limited purpose(s), and it may be either transient or long-lasting. Within a secondary group, members interact via restrictive media and limited bureaucratic channels and modes (usually in writing). Social conformity is imposed on members by means of formal laws and bureaucratic regulations affecting only facets of the individual contractu-

ally involved with the secondary group (e.g., knowledge of electronics in a large electronics-manufacturing corporation). For the individual, life within a secondary group lacks a sense of satisfaction and belonging.

Naturally, due to recent accelerated rates of social and cultural changes, only a few social groups will manifest all these criteria at once. Whether a social group may be viewed as primary or secondary is determined by a patterned combination of a number of these factors (e.g., a tribe may count the number of its members in the thousands or even hundreds of thousands, but other factors such as a stronger sense of belonging would compensate for this potential impersonality). Within a secondary group setting, primary groups characteristically develop and prevail. A folk group may be viewed as a primary group.

The term *folk* has been used in a variety of academic fields and over a period of more than one and a half centuries. Various nationalistic and political ideologies, in addition to recent academic orientations, have contributed to the development of a variety of interpretations of that term and have generated a number of controversies about who the folk may be.

As a discipline, folklore is historically a European science, emerging out of elite intellectual developments subsequent to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' philosophy of romanticism. Following the postulates advanced by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), romanticists believed that human beings came into this world in a state of savagery, yet it was a noble state because nature accorded everyone freedom and equality. They also viewed "civilization" as corruptive, for it robbed individuals of nature's gifts of freedom and equality, as exemplified at that point in history by life under European imperial governmental systems. Longing for that past "state of nature," romanticists began a search for the "noble savage" overseas, beyond the geographic and cultural boundaries of civilized Europe and its extensions in the new (colonized) world. Romanticists focused their attention on the tales, proverbs, riddles, songs, manners, customs, beliefs, and related traditions of peoples perceived then to be living at stages of human development closer to savagery and not yet corrupted by civilization. They also reflected on the meanings and inherent goodness of these "savage" forms of expression but discovered that inequality and loss of freedom already had marred the lives of those nations thought to be free of the evils of civilization.

The failure to locate the philosophical ideal of the noble savage gave rise to disillusionment and futility in the works of the romanticists. Yet they became aware of the cultural creations of the non-European peoples within whose cultures they had searched for purity, equality, and freedom. Subsequent reflections on residuals of the "noble state of savagery" led Romanticists to theorize that such a state also must have existed in Europe prior to onset of and consequent corruption by civilization. This evolutionary

notion led to the discovery in Europe of forms of cultural expressions similar to those gleaned overseas and thought to date back to the ancient past and its noble savage.

These materials characteristically were sought among the least “civilized” groups in Europe. Consequently, the association was made between a certain social group of lower-class standing and the cultural data resembling those gleaned from non-European groups. In England, such materials were labeled *popular antiquities* until William Thoms, in 1846, offered the term *folk-lore* as a substitute.

The word *folk* first appeared in ethnological studies in Germany as an adjective in such composite terms as *Volksleben* (folklife), *Volkslied* (folksong), and *Volks Glaube* (folk-belief). In the English language, it was used first by William Thoms for the purpose cited earlier. Thus, from the time of its emergence on the academic stage, the term *folk* has been used to denote social groups other than the cultural elite and similar social and cultural categories of a population; typically, it referred to the segment of the population whose members were perceived to have not been corrupted by civilization. However, with the fading of the romantic glorification of savagery, the introduction of the evolutionary theory, and the application by Sir Edward B. Tylor of that theory to the realm of culture, the term *folk* lost its connection with nobility and acquired new connotations. Among these are the following, identified by Åke Hultkranz:

1. *Folk* refers to the nation. This definition is quite adequate in certain languages such as German (*Volk*), French (*pueblo*), Spanish (*pueblo*), and Arabic (*sha`b*); however, it is impossible in English.
2. *Folk* designates the lower stratum (*Unterschicht*). This interpretation, given by M. Manhardt, Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, and Hans Naumann, played a major role in German *Volkskunde*. It designated social masses who were unsophisticated and unanalytic. Since the 1920s, this distinction between the “elite” and the “folk” has been severely criticized.
3. *Folk* refers to an old-fashioned segment within a complex civilization—civilization being “complex and usually wide-spread culture characterized by advanced technological resources and spiritual achievements of high order (in science and art).” In Europe and Latin America, the lower stratum was considered identical with peasant society and rural social groups. Robert Redfield described the “folk” as including “peasants and rustic people who are not wholly independent of cities.” In this respect, reference is to the concept of a dependent society or “half society,” which, unlike a “primitive” community, does not stand in isolation from the rest of the nation. By contrast, primitive cultures are excluded from the folk category because they are, at least theoretically, complete in themselves and are isolates.

4. *Folk* labels the basic culture-carrying social stratum within a complex society. This viewpoint has been particularly emphasized by the American sociologists. It is especially applicable to large societies with a population composed of diverse ethnic groups, each with its corresponding culture (e.g., Italian-, French-, Japanese-, and African-American). One “culture” is perceived as the basic one; others are not.
5. *Folk* denotes a social group connected by a common tradition and a peculiar feeling of communion, the basis of which is a common historical background. This mystical definition is based on a group’s esprit de corps; it allows for a very flexible view of the criteria according to which a primary group is reckoned, with an individual’s sense of belonging playing the decisive role.

More recently, folklorists and anthropologists have found these and similar descriptions of the “folk” unsatisfactory in light of a number of theoretical considerations. The most dissonant of these is the fact that certain non-European social groups that could not be characterized as “folk groups” possessed folklore and that individuals from all walks of life—including the most sophisticated—use folklore during the course of their daily living.

Anthropologists sought to eschew the term *folk* altogether; consequently, such labels as *oral literature* (Robert Redfield) and *verbal art* (William Bascom) were proposed as substitutes. Some anthropologists (e.g., Ruth Finnegan) adamantly refuse to consider “oral literature” (in Africa) as folklore.

Seeking to provide a rationale for a folklorist’s presence among nonfolk groups, folklorist Richard Dorson adopted a radical form of the viewpoint expressed in Hultkrantz’ third definition, cited earlier. He stated that two conditions for the study of folklore were then, in the 1970s, being realized in sub-Saharan Africa. These were “the appearance of an intellectual class with a culture partly different from that of the mass of the people” and “the emergence of a national state.” Dorson explained that “in the tribal culture all the members share the values, participate in the rituals, and belong fully to the culture, even if some hold privileged positions as chiefs or diviners.” Meanwhile, “in the national culture a schism divides the society.” Dorson concluded that “at this stage of development the concept of *folk* becomes useful. Tribal culture, as it fragments under the impact of modern ways, turns into submerged folk culture in the new nation.”

Previously, in 1965, Alan Dundes had sought to redefine the term *folk* in a manner that would allow for the presence of lore among those who, according to academic definitions, may not be viewed as “folk.” He stated that the term “can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is.”

Bold as these and other justifications may be, students of folklore should remember that “lore” is a category of culture, whereas “folk” is a sociological

entity. Although it is believed that there is no folk without “lore,” it should be stressed that there is no person who is lore free. The likelihood that the presence of folkloric components in the culture that an individual shares with other members of the community would not automatically transform that individual into one of the “folk” is equal to the likelihood that the presence of an academic component in the culture of a genuine member of a folk group would transform that individual into a member of the elite.

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See also Folk Culture; Great Tradition/Little Tradition.

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FOLKLIFE

The total lifeways of any human community, including its artifacts, art, craft, architecture, belief, customs, habits, foodways, costume, narrative, dance, and song, among other cultural expressions. In this sense, folklife means specific cultural creations, as well as the discipline for the study of the process and form of such creativity. *Folklife studies* refers to the discipline or scholarly movement and its sensibility for appreciating the culture of everyday life in complex societies. It also evokes the long-standing disciplinary dichotomy between oral culture and material culture that represents a major intellectual fissure within world folkloristics. The contemporary folklife studies movement asks its own scholars to be as attentive to the documentation and analysis of contemporary culture as they have been to rural, agricultural, and peasant historical and traditional life. Folklife studies challenges both academic and nonacademic sectors to appreciate, learn from, and analyze the cultural production of all people and communities within a society, not just the socially elite, academically trained, or politically powerful. Folklife especially emphasizes that scholarly attention be paid to all those cultures found within the context of the local region.

Within the European context, the foundation of the discipline of folklife studies can be observed in a long history of antiquarian interest evidenced in Latin and vernacular texts and in a series of royal questionnaires sent to municipalities essentially as inventories of the geography, buildings, trades, shrines, relics, customs, honors, and so forth of those territories, with an eye to their value as economic or political resources. There are several important sources in this regard. In the 1200s, Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* (The tales of the Danish people) described legendary accounts of Danish kings, as well as religious practices of the people. Olaus Magnus' *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (History of the northern peoples) recorded a 1555 view of the countryside and people of Sweden. Philip II's 1575–1580 questionnaires (*Relaciones geograficas*) concerned the cultural and regional history of all elements of his Spanish empire (including Latin America). Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus' Council on Antiquities in 1630 commissioned its representatives to conduct comprehensive research on the old objects, ideas, and practices of the king's subjects, as well as the geography of their regions. A 1789 questionnaire administered only to Catalonia by an official of the Spanish Crown inquired about cultural geography, agricultural practices, games and pastimes, labor organization, behavior during public festivals, and other similar matters. The questionnaires of 1811 sent to many of Napoleon's possessions also asked about diverse dialects, customs, and practices of countryside inhabitants. The Napoleonic example served as a transition point between the old-style royal surveys of local resources and the romantic nationalist concern with the particularities of cultural difference. Such writings suggest an early attention to recording historical and contemporary regional culture, with the idea of custom being specifically bound up in place and material life.

Folklife developed as a scholarly discipline in Scandinavia and Germany. Folklife studies was conceived within the context of a number of influential movements and ideas. European romanticism had great enthusiasm for examining the lives of the peasant class, who, it was believed, maintained a simpler and less complicated style of life evocative of a cherished rural past. These qualities, according to the romantics, were eroded by industrial changes, and they needed to be salvaged and documented. Folklife, therefore, developed because of the feared disappearance of the essential culture that scholars wished to study. Another major influence was the fervor of European nationalism, in which the identification of distinctive forms of culture could be used to help bolster national identity.

The primary genesis of the English word *folklife* comes from the Swedish *folkliv*, a term formulated in the nineteenth century and defined as the life and ways of the folk (the common people or, more specifically, the peasant class) as subject to rigorous, empirical scholarly investigation. In 1909, the term *folklife research* (in French, *étude de la vie populaire*; in Spanish, *estudio de la vida del*

pueblo; in Greek, *laographia*; and in Norwegian, *folkelivsgransking*) was coined at the University of Lund when lectures in *Svensk folklivsforskning* (Swedish folklife research) were begun by Sven Lampa. This term was an equivalent of the German term *Volkskunde* (the knowledge of the folk, folklore), which first appeared in 1805–1808 when Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim edited and published their folksong collection, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The boy's magic horn).

Volkskunde has been defined and explained in many different ways by scholars in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria since that time. As *Volkskunde* developed, the emphasis was on the collection and preservation of the oral and material life of the German "Volk." Attention usually fell on the rural peasantry as the "Volk" or "people" in question, but scholars did not investigate the traditions of this group solely to gain a historical or cultural understanding of this perceived "lower level" of German society. Rather, *Volkskunde* scholars strove to understand something about the essential nature of the German people as a whole, and the study of peasants and their narratives and customs was seen as the key to this understanding. Their research produced rich studies, with folk art and architecture as well as folk religion of the Roman Catholic and Protestant regions given special attention. *Volkskunde* developed into a complex discipline, and it experienced many challenges, changes, and crises. The most disturbing development was its use by the National Socialists prior to and during World War II for furthering their agenda of Germanic biological determinism and racial superiority. The discipline was used during this time to discern what was perceived as the true and false characteristics of German culture as evidenced in the pure German *Volkskunde* of the peasant. Today, German *Volkskunde* could best be described as the discipline that studies the variety of cultural traditions found within German-speaking countries. It is a vital field focusing scholarly concern on the central issue of culture and its empirical analysis as related to all segments of society, with a specific interest in contemporary issues such as the impact of mass media, representations and falsifications of the traditional, tourism, ethnic relations, and the culture of everyday life.

Folklife studies was greatly influenced by theories of history and culture current during the early twentieth century in Germany and Scandinavia. The philological and historical orientation of folklore studies, affected as it was by evolutionist and diffusionist theories of culture, had a profound influence on the work of the early folklife scholars. The historical-geographical mapping employed as a way to show the development of oral forms and the illustration of regional variations were applied to material culture as well. Peasant culture continued to be the source for discoveries of ancient remnants of history evidenced in the peasants' simple, pastoral lives. Scandinavian folklife research was influenced by the German ethnology of the pre-1914 period to

follow a cultural-historical approach. This meant that it usually opposed evolutionary explanations of cultural transformation emphasizing diffusionary explanations of cultural movement and dispersion. Like the German-speaking scholars, the Scandinavian and Nordic folklife scholars emphasized the study of the culture area as central to typologizing a region's elements of material culture, such as houses, barns, carts, or farm implements. The distribution and relation of these elements to traditional peasant culture could then be plotted onto cultural maps to see evidence of development, similarity, and survival. After this was accomplished, it was the scholar's task to turn to well-documented archives and historical sources for purposes of comparison and assessment. This cartological and research method for studying all aspects of folk culture and their historical development became a hallmark of European folklife methodology, and folk cultural atlases were produced as evidence of this meticulous research.

Sigurd Erixon (1888–1968), an influential leader of Swedish folklife research (and the second professor of Nordic and comparative ethnology at the University of Stockholm), saw *folkliv* as a regional branch of general anthropology. In his conceptualization, regional ethnology was comparative cultural research on a regional basis with a sociological and historical orientation and certain psychological implications. It emphasized the study of material life, custom, and belief, but Erixon also included oral folklore as a part of the overall picture. Erixon believed in the importance of collecting traditional resources, preserving them in archives, and seeing how they functioned for individuals, families, and small communities. German and Swedish folklife scholars promoted methods of empirical and data-based research, such as personal visits, extended field interaction, field interviews, questionnaires, indexes of materials collected, and direct correspondence for the study of still existing cultural expressions, as well as the examination of newspapers, travel accounts, wills, memoirs, diaries, autobiographies, collections of letters, and account books to assist historical work.

Gradually, especially after World War II, many scholars of European folklife began to expand the scope of their work away from survivalistic, static, peasant-based studies. Regional groups were no longer perceived as permanent static culture-bearers. Erixon himself felt that, by this time, the phase of folklife collection was coming to an end due to the gradual dilution of traditional material among rural informants. Under the influence of functionalist theory in the 1940s and 1950s and a more sophisticated view of cultural systems, the focus of folklife research shifted away from the historical and developmental concerns of the researchers and their culture and toward the complexity of the informants' cultural context. As the twentieth century progressed, the objective, positivist research that emphasized elements in life (the hammer, the sled, the patchwork quilt, the song, the memorate) over the context and

process of living (work, play, craft, speech, belief) gave way to a focus on research with humans as subjects. Scandinavian and Nordic ethnologists, like their German-speaking counterparts, still engage in historical research, but they also recognize the potential for folklife research in varying contexts of contemporary culture, including urban life, social class dynamics, and cultural transformation due to immigration and emigration.

An important corollary to the agenda of folklife research in Sweden was the development of a new type of museum. Beginning in 1891, Artur Hazelius (1833–1901) founded, near Stockholm, the first open-air folklife museum and called it “Skansen.” (Hazelius had previously opened the Nordic Museum [*Nordiska Museet*] to study Swedish peasant culture.) Skansen served as the public access to rural and town vernacular architecture from all parts of the country, placed on display in re-created natural settings. These rebuilt structures (e.g., farmhouses, manor houses, barns, a church) were complemented by furnishings brought from many areas to represent the variety and excellence of regional types. This museum concept presented the results of ethnological research of the material and social aspects of national and regional culture. Such research could represent everything from investigations of past methods of bee-keeping in Wales and funeral customs in the Romanian countryside to the making of fish spears in coastal Norway and sickles, hooks, and scythes in Bavaria. These institutions exist to teach visitors about the past as well as to conserve significant examples of cultural history. They maintain agendas of research, as well as being repositories of tape recordings, photographs, tools, furniture, clothing, decorative arts, paintings, and religious material culture—from silver votive offerings to carved wooden statues to hand-colored religious chromolithographs. Open-air museums, or outdoor museums of folklife, vary in size and quality, and they spread from Scandinavia to other locations throughout continental Europe, Great Britain, and North America. The folklife museum concept continues to exist in every size and international context, from sixteen different open-air museums in Romania to unmarked, even clandestine museums of revolutionary culture in Central America.

Folklife studies in Great Britain can be traced to eighteenth-century antiquarianism, but it was more specifically influenced by the *Volkskunde* and *Folklikesforskning* movements and their historical-cultural approach to ethnological research. Retaining a strong tie to the study of traditional life—that is, rural, preindustrial life—the documenting and analysis of material culture forms continue to be central concerns of folklife studies in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and England. Work also has been conducted on calendar customs, festival, occupation, leisure, and systems of belief. The first institutionalized folklore and folklife research in the British Isles was conducted by the Irish Folklore Institute, commissioned by the Irish government in 1930. This

development occurred because the Folklore of Ireland Society (formed in 1927 on a voluntary basis), with its aim of collecting folklore, became overwhelmed and appealed to the government for assistance. The Irish Folklore Institute became a larger and better equipped organization and was renamed the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935 under the leadership of James H. Delargy (1899–1980). In 1971, it became the Department of Irish Folklore at University College, Dublin. In Great Britain, the center for folklife research has not been university-based departments, of which there are few, but folklore institutes and museums, such as the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan's, outside of Cardiff (opened to the public in 1948 and started by Iorwerth C. Peate [1901–1982]), and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (started in 1958 by E. Estyn Evans [1905–1989]).

As in Great Britain, there has been a historical division between folklife and folklore as applied in the United States. Folklore emphasizing the study of oral forms, especially narrative and song, was stressed, whereas the study of material culture, for example, was excluded from scholarly concern. Starting in the 1950s under the influence of U.S.-trained but European-influenced scholars Alfred L. Shoemaker (1913–) and Don Yoder (1921–), the concept of folklife studies was introduced to the American academic environment. Centering their interest on the ethnic, regional, and sectarian cultures of Pennsylvania, scholars of American folklife (as Yoder called it) concentrated on rich traditions of material culture, religious and medical belief, custom, festival, food, costume, and so forth. Yoder saw this approach as applicable and necessary throughout the American context, and he was especially interested in how the approach would add new dimensions to the study of U.S. history and the preservation of vernacular heritage. He conceived of this approach as part of a movement for the study of American historical and contemporary ethnography. Yoder also subsumed folklore—that is, the oral components of a culture—into his conceptualization of folklife, in agreement with the holistic understanding of traditional culture conceived of by his European counterparts. Among his diverse research interests were folk art and architecture, folk religion, folk medicine, folk cookery, and folk costume. American folklife's emphasis on all the elements of local culture and environment as keys to understanding the total picture of American civilization influenced the study of geography, art history, history, museum studies, anthropology, religious studies, historic preservation, and American studies.

Folklife as a discipline and movement has developed slowly throughout the world in a variety of professional and nonprofessional ways. Folklife institutes with extensive research libraries and archives are connected to universities or stand alone with state or private support. Elaborate and modest museums exhibit aspects of everyday life. Government-supported, public sector folklife research and festival presentation has become an important

means of presenting folk arts and folk artists within a region, state, or country, as well as encouraging the financial support and academic study of such expressive culture. Regional folklife societies, clubs, and voluntary associations have been organized with a focus on local traditional culture. Individuals interested in their own regions may lack a theoretical focus but enjoy the investigation of their own past and present cultural forms.

The multiplicity of regional names representing the expressions of traditional culture and the study of those expressions—folklore, folklife, ethnology, *folklivsforskning*, *Volkskunde*—has not assisted the discipline of folklife and its search for an acceptable identity and presence in the academic world. Sigurd Erixon preferred to call *folkliv* research *regional ethnology*, which he proposed as an international designation for the discipline that studies national folk cultures or folk culture in general. He also worked to achieve a uniform notion of European folklife research, or “European ethnology,” among the diverse European academic communities. Participants at two meetings of folk culture scholars attempted to resolve this terminological issue. The first was the Arnhem Congress, which met at the Dutch Open-Air Museum at Arnhem in Gelderland in 1955 for the specific purpose of determining disciplinary terminology for folklore/folklife research. Certain delegates favored *ethnology* or *European ethnology* for the international name of the discipline. The German-speaking contingent opposed the decision to stop using *Volkskunde* because of its established presence in academics and government in their countries. In 1969, Scandinavian and Finnish scholars met jointly in Jyväskylä, Finland, and agreed that *etnologi* should replace *folkliv* as the official name for their academic subject. By 1970, German scholars also were agreeing with the change as a positive response to the search for an international term. Most contemporary academics in Western Europe now refer to the study of folklife as *ethnology*, with the thought of emphasizing its international aspect. Still, multiple names and institutional auspices responsible for what could be called *folklife* abound in various regions in European nations. For example, for local historians or individuals working in the public sector in the Romance-language-speaking countries, *folklore* or *culture populaire* are used, especially if the individuals are openly engaged in local promotion, preservation, or resistance. In France, *ethnology*, along with *ethnography* and *anthropology*, are seen as stages in the overall process of research into human cultures, whether at home or elsewhere. In Canada and the United States, contemporary terminological usage and conceptual understanding of “folklife studies” maintains its close association with folklore studies, and the two scholarly fields are understood as one discipline, referred to as *folklore and folklife*.

The term *ethnology* may exist, but it still stands for two disciplinary orientations: one with a material and social outlook (folklife) and the other with an oral folkloristic character (folklore). Standard European and North

American conceptualizations of folklife describe it as the total traditional lore, behavior, and material culture of any folk group, with particular emphasis on the customary and material categories. In reality, folklife has represented the study of material aspects of folk culture, especially rural, agricultural, and peasant culture, in the face of a predominant emphasis by scholars on oral and text-centered products of a community. This division can be best exemplified by the two contemporary academic journals of ethnology in Sweden, *Etnologia Scandinavica* and *ARV-: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, or by the journals *Folk Life* and *Folklore* that serve folkloristic interests in Great Britain. This disciplinary split personality makes little difference to some academic communities and is a point of contention for other groups of scholars, especially those competing for meager financial resources or academic positions. Such divisions manifest themselves in the composition and direction of academic departments, museums, and government agencies; in the contents of scholarly journals, books, and other community publications; and in the funding of programs for the preservation and maintenance of living but sometimes barely surviving or visible traditional ways of life.

Folklife remains an autonomous discipline in the sense that it is not a composite of various disciplines concerned with the study of regional culture; however, it has not become a theoretically self-sufficient discipline. In this sense, folklife's greatest strength has been phenomenological, but it has provided little epistemology for its students. It continues to depend heavily on theory and analytical studies of history, material culture, architecture, performance, language, religion, culture, and society. Among the other disciplines that are related to folklife studies in sharing subject matter and a kinship with examining regional culture and that the folklife approach may have directly or inadvertently influenced are: agricultural history, rural and urban sociology, human relations, ethnohistory, oral history, ethnomusicology, social psychology, medical history, art history, architectural history, history of diet and nutrition, cultural geography, medieval studies, historical archaeology, historical preservation, local history, maritime history, industrial archaeology, history of technology, dialectology and linguistic geography, and cultural studies.

More than a field of otherwise excluded categories of expressive culture, the past and present folklife sensibility represents an integral approach to noticing, collecting, mapping, preserving, archiving, displaying, analyzing, protecting, and promoting the entire traditional creative and/or utilitarian output of the individual, family, community, region, or nation. These traditions may be transmitted by face-to-face communication, imitation, or various forms of media, such as print, film, computer, audio tape, telephone, or facsimile. Some folklife scholars also are working on the dynamic nature of the culture of the individual as an important corollary to studies of community tradition.

Contemporary folklife studies shares with folklore studies a common interest in describing, analyzing, and comparing the culture of small communities and the variety of traditional cultural systems interacting within such communities. These communities can be defined through shared geography; age; gender; occupation; leisure; and religious, medical, political, or other belief system. Both contemporary folklife and folklore emphasize aesthetic or artistic creation; historical process; the construction of mental, verbal, or material forms; and the relationship and balance of utility and creativity to such forms within a particular culture. Their methodology emphasizes intensive historical research using all available sources and field studies in which people speak for themselves and use their own aesthetic and classificatory systems to explain themselves and influence those scholars who have been allowed to understand, appreciate, and learn from their lives.

Leonard Norman Primiano

See also Art, Folk; Craft, Folk; Folklore; Material Culture; Volkskunde.



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FOLKLORE

Term coined by Briton William John Thoms who, in 1846, proposed that the Anglo-Saxon compound *folklore* be used instead of the Latinate *popular antiquities* to describe “the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs” and other materials “of the olden time.” Although the word *folklore* appears to have been new at that time, an interest in the phenomena of the field was not. Rulers in different parts of the world had long ordered the collecting of heroic songs and other traditions through which they could glorify themselves. Religious leaders and learned scholars periodically gathered superstitions in order to expose them and weed them out. However, during the romantic currents in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Europe, intellectuals insisted that the traditions of peasants were valuable remnants from a remote past and should be collected before they disappeared. Thoms himself was inspired by the works of the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. They in turn were indebted to Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) who saw in the arts of common people (*das Volk*) a reflection of the true spirit of a nation. It is not astonishing that the idea of folklore as a priceless national or panhuman testimony from antiquity gained force at a time when industrialization caused rapid transformations of traditional landscapes and ways of life. Also today, both

the formal study of folklore (*folkloristics*) and the informal interest in it are linked to nostalgia for the past and uneasiness with modernity.

Long used primarily by English speakers, the word *folklore* is now accepted internationally. In some countries, it has replaced native terms; in others, it is used alongside them. But though nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scholars often investigated the origin and distribution of selected tales, songs, or games, folklorists today employ a wide range of approaches to study an impressive variety of verbal, material, and other expressive practices, including funeral laments, quilt making, and vernacular house building. Some investigate traditional tales to understand the structures of human thought. Others study storytelling as a social accomplishment, paying attention to the relationship between folklore forms, the people creating them, and other contexts. Many scholars, among them feminists and representatives of formerly colonized peoples, also are engaged in changing the biases that in the view of many contemporaries have been inherent in folklore research.

FOLKLORISTIC PERSPECTIVES

It has, not unexpectedly, proven difficult to define the term *folklore*. Recent attempts range from suggestions that *folklore* stands for “traditional cultural forms that are communicated between individuals through words or actions and tend to exist in variation” (Bengt af Klintberg) to the idea that it is “artistic communication in small groups” (Dan Ben-Amos). Many folklorists, however, dispense with definitions. Concerned that folklore not be regarded as lists of things, they prefer to look at it as one of several perspectives from which “a number of forms, behaviors, and events may be examined” (Elliott Oring). Among the many words used to characterize such perspectives, the following will be considered here: *folk*, *medium of communication*, *tradition*, *genre*, and *aesthetic processes*.

Folklorists around the world long took it for granted that the word *folk* connoted illiterate peasants and other groups that from the folklorists’ standpoints were old-fashioned or exotic. It was self-evident that these groups would be more tradition bound and would carry more folklore than the elites, who were believed to shun the yokes of tradition. However, during the last few decades, folklorists have increasingly come to think that the folk are all human beings. All people are involved in folklore processes, regardless of group—sometimes as performers, often as audiences. During their lifetimes, all people come to share the folklore of many groups, often cross-cutting social and territorial boundaries.

Yet despite their conviction that all humans partake in folklore processes, folklorists continue to study some humans more than others. Some critics argue that folklorists privilege male informants and masculine forms, and others point out that folklorists continue to study and celebrate the creative

expressions of poor and marginal peoples even as they ignore the deplorable living conditions of these individuals. The ways in which researchers come to terms with such issues are of central importance to the future of folklore study.

Mode of communication is another phrase that recurs in discussions of folkloristic perspectives. Scholars long emphasized that folklore is primarily communicated orally or in the practices of everyday life. They also stressed that, largely due to such informal channels of communication, folklore forms exhibit variations within standardized structures or plot outlines. Each time a traditional log house is built, there are changes of a kind that do not occur in industrially produced houses. In oral tradition, there are as many versions of the Cinderella story as there are narrators, whereas the wording of a poem written to be printed is not changed even if it is read aloud.

However, informal channels cannot be seen as the sole modes of communication because folklore has long been transmitted in numerous other ways, not least in legal or religious documents, in newspapers, or, recently, via television, video, and all the electronic media. Furthermore, traditional themes and structures have long been communicated through the works of well-known artists and authors. Western classical ballet shares some of its stylized and repetitive character with the European folktale, and Shakespeare often built his plays on folklore. Paradoxically, folklorists say that they study orally communicated forms, yet these forms are available for investigation thanks to various media, including print.

Some of the success of many films, comic books, and advertisements can be attributed to the fact that they are based upon ancient and widely circulating themes. Superman travels through space in a womblike vessel, only to be found and raised by a poor North American couple. His story has parallels in the stories of Moses, Cyros, and other heroes who are similarly found as children floating around in small containers. Furthermore, identity changes are characteristic not only of Superman but also of most heroes and heroines of tradition. The transformation of the poor and orphaned fairy-tale heroine into a rich and beautiful queen is reenacted over and over in films, magazines, and real-life stories. Some folklore themes have a psychological force that makes people re-create them century after century in different modes and media.

This brings us to *tradition*, a slippery key word in discussions of folkloristic perspectives. Basically, folklorists long regarded tradition as a store of standardized themes, structures, and forms of knowledge, more or less widely distributed in the world and at the same time adapted to diverse cultures. These themes, structures, and forms were said to have been passed on from generation to generation in tradition-directed groups.

Recently, however, folklorists have begun to think of tradition less naturalistically and more as a construction in which the past is always interpreted in a given present. In that sense, all tradition involves change. The interpretations of the past may be unconscious or conscious, unintentional or inten-

tional. National symbols all over the world tend to be inventions based upon traditional forms that people perceive to be particularly valuable. The invention and selection of national symbols, therefore, involve important issues of cultural politics. This is true also of many other phenomena, such as those traditions that people select as the genuinely representative ones to be displayed in museums or presented to tourists.

Genre is another concept that has long been central to discussions of folkloristic perspectives. A genre may be seen as a bounded, distinguishable form characterized by a specific combination of stylistic traits and elements of content. People tend to make all kinds of culture-specific distinctions between expressive forms in their repertoires. At the same time, some stylistic or structural elements recur in the folklore genres of many cultures, among them symmetries, alliterations, parallelisms, and all kinds of repetitions. The tendency toward tripartite repetitions, for example, can be found in a variety of Western genres: fairy tales, textile patterns, interior decoration, houses, ballads, jokes, or games. In the traditions of some Native American peoples, on the other hand, four is a more common unit of repetition. But regardless of the specific numbers, repetitions help performers to achieve control over their materials. A firm, repetitive structure aids memory at the same time as it frees fantasy and improvisation. The given patterns simultaneously offer restrictions and creative freedom.

Some genres, such as proverbs and riddles, were long called “fixed” because they were believed to change less than “unfixed” forms, such as narratives. However, recent studies of folklore in social interaction make such distinctions untenable. Fixed forms change, too, since people in daily life often do not cite them in full but merely hint at them through tone of voice. More recently, folklorists have increasingly observed that genres are malleable social phenomena that people often blend and mix so that artful hybrids emerge.

Aesthetic process, finally, is a notion combining two important words in recent discussions of folkloristic perspectives. Although some scholars argue that the word *aesthetic* has become overemphasized in folkloristics, many others stress that not only are folklore genres aesthetically or poetically shaped but also that folklore is an artful way to affect social life. Indeed, it is because of its aesthetic force that folklore becomes a powerful vehicle through which people can examine or critique the lives they lead.

PARADOXES, NATIONAL PATHS, AND INTERNATIONAL TRAJECTORIES

In folklore, people thus create or challenge, mirror or express, maintain or disprove values that are central to them. Even the simplest anecdote may

articulate profound existential questions. Here, we touch upon some perplexing paradoxes. One is that people articulate both the best and the worst in their lives in folklore. To those who have fled from one part of the world to another, a few beloved songs, stories, or dishes become symbols of a precious inheritance that must be preserved in order to be reconstituted. Conversely, folklore can incarnate some of the worst aspects of life, such as detested symbols of racism and humiliating jokes directed at one's own group. Folklore can be invoked to hold communities together or cruelly separate them from one another.

Another paradox is that folklore materials, at one and the same time, can be international and national, global and regional, local and deeply personal. The patterns of a hero tale may be spread across the earth at the same time as one special hero incarnates the fate of a nation. The guessing game "how many horns has the buck" is ancient and widely distributed, but it lives in the fleeting moments when it is played; a simple, mundane event is thus placed in a vast comparative perspective.

Some of the paradoxes of folklore materials and processes are true also of the study of them. Folkloristics regards itself as an international field. At the same time, it is almost everywhere a construction in service of national or other political interests. The vagaries in the designations of the field are indications of this. In post-World War II Germany, the previously used term *Volkskunde* has increasingly been avoided because Hitler used it for propaganda reasons. Many Latin American scholars prefer *popular antiquities* over *folklore* because they associate folklore with colonial imperialism. In India, various native terms, among them the south Indian *janapada*, have been proposed as translations of *folklore*, a word that was introduced by the British during the occupation. In Sweden, *etnologi* is now used instead of the older term *folklivsforskning* (folklife research) because the component *folk* is regarded as a tainted leftover from the class-biased days when the objects of study were peasants and manual laborers.

Folklorists everywhere have been involved in nation building and concomitant class and power struggles. In the nineteenth century, when Finland was freeing herself from Sweden and Russia, the *Kalevala* epic, which scholars pieced together from songs collected in oral tradition became the first example of literature in the native language. At that time, the field of folkloristics was a matter of national concern in Finland, just as it is today. And in recently reestablished nations, folkloristics plays an important part in efforts to recapture a national identity. In post-Soviet Latvia, for example, the most up-to-date scholarly methods are applied to reconstitute the country's folksong tradition.

In other previously colonized nations, the study of native folklore by native scholars is a way of self-assertion not only vis-à-vis colonial occupants but also

vis-à-vis anthropology, in the sense that the scholars themselves or their forebears have been the perpetual “others” in studies by Western anthropologists. In the views of some contemporary Asian and African folklorists, anthropology is even more of a colonialist creation than folkloristics. Although there are well-established folklore departments in such large countries as Japan, India, or Nigeria, the folklore of other African and Asian nations is still primarily studied by Westerners. But many scholars who now wish to investigate the folklore of their own countries face obstacles. Which of the many ethnic or tribal groups inside the borders are to study which other groups? To what extent is it possible or desirable to establish unifying folklore archives and folklore centers?

Over and over, folklorists have set out to collect, preserve, and protect national folklore heritages that have been seen as vanishing. Over and over, they have established national institutions, ranging from the impressive Folklore Archives in Helsinki to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. However, in recent years, some folklorists have worked to expand the national confines, calling for the safeguarding of folklore everywhere under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Yet such efforts raise many questions. Whose heritages and what materials should be safeguarded by whom? Will the peoples with power preserve and protect the traditions of the powerless? Future understandings of folklore depend to a great extent on how issues such as these are resolved.

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See also Folk Group; Folklife; Genre; Tradition.

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FOLKLORISMUS/FOLKLORISM

Folklore outside its primary context, or spurious folklore. The term *folklorismus* has been applied to visually and aurally striking or aesthetically pleasing folk materials, such as costume, festive performance, music, and art (but also foods) that lend themselves to being extracted from their initial contexts and put to new uses for different, often larger audiences. The term surfaced first at the turn of the twentieth century as an analogy to *primitivism* when avant-garde circles took an interest in the expressive visual and musical forms of both “primitive” and Western folk cultures. Before the 1960s, the term appeared as *neofolklorism* in French and Russian discussions, referring particularly to the adaptation of folkloric materials in the high cultural contexts of music, art, and literature. In the German discourse, the term appeared in a sociological lexicon in 1958, but it was the folklorist Hans Moser who introduced it into German *Volkskunde* in 1962 and who urged his colleagues to study the seemingly fake in addition to “real” folklore and folk cultures. Over the course of nearly three decades and against much initial resistance, the discourse about and study of folklorism contributed to a thorough revision of *Volkskunde*’s canon, and it broadened the interdisciplinary scope and relevance of the discipline. Although the term itself is now rarely used, the issues originally addressed under the label have become major foci of research. For instance, the staging of folk dance or festivals for tourists, previously shunned as commercial and hence spurious, is now an important area of study. The same holds true for political applications of folklore, be this in historical eras, such as romantic nationalism or Stalinist communism, or in contemporaneous settings, such as ethnic territories struggling for political independence. Less contested but equally vigorous was the folklorism discourse in the Soviet Union and the former Eastern Bloc countries. Communist cultural policy openly valued the use of folk materials for altering societal patterns, and depending on the particular situation of academe in a given state, applied folkloristics and sophisticated analyses of folklorism-related processes occurred side by side. From 1979 until the mid-1980s, the Hungarian scholar Vilmos Voigt sporadically organized conferences on the theme and published the *Folklorismus Bulletin*, which offered ready access and overviews to these otherwise difficult-to-trace developments. In the United States, a similar but more narrow discussion centered on the term *fakelore*.

The German folklorism discourse unraveled the dichotomous premise underlying the definition of folklore that had confined true folklore to communal, preferably peasant settings and excluded materials and groups tainted by the forces of modernity, such as industry or media. This eventually led to a differentiated view of cultural processes, involving folklore in modernity. Moser suggested *folklorism* as a term for the journalistic promotion of culture and the propagandistic use of folklore in branches of the economy. The term was purposely conceived broadly: On the one hand, it addressed the interest in and nostalgia for things folk in an age in which mass communication and industrialization seemed to lead to a loss of cultural distinctiveness; and on the other hand, it encompassed the ways in which the need for distinctiveness was satisfied, strengthened, or awakened. Moser isolated three forms of folklorism: the performance of traditionally and functionally determined elements of folk culture outside that culture's communal context; the performance of folk motifs in another social stratum; and the purposeful imitation and creation of folklike elements outside any tradition. Moser also acknowledged differences in folklorism arising from political economies. In Western capitalist nations, he saw a preponderance of folklorism due to the expansion of industrial markets, ranging from tourism to commodity goods. In communist states, the cultural-political mission of folklorism was emphasized. And in developing, postcolonial nations, folklorism seemed to be used as a shield against radical progress.

Most productive for an introspective turn in *Volkskunde* was Moser's discussion of folklorism and *Rücklauf* (literally, flowing-back) of academic theories and studies into communities and voluntary organizations. This necessitated an examination of the history and present of the cultural and political roles of public sector *Volkskunde* and opened up the way toward recognizing the discipline's interrelationship with nationalism. More fundamentally, such introspection revealed the dichotomous bias in the way "authentic" folklore was defined as separate from spurious cultural materials.

Although a majority of scholars throughout the 1960s and 1970s preferred to use *folklorism* as a descriptive label for everything not included in their discipline, a vigorous minority pressed for a complete revision of *Volkskunde's* canon. Hermann Bausinger argued that contrasting folklorism with "genuine folk culture" drew the latter into a closed circle in which it inevitably mutated toward folklorism, that so-called first- and secondhand traditions merged in many respects, and that, by excluding one realm from research, scholarly results were inevitably falsified. Bausinger and Konrad Köstlin linked folklorism to processes of modernization and globalization that increasingly rendered identity into a consciously molded rather than a traditionally provided set of practices and symbols—a dynamic that has been closely documented for ethnic groups in the United States. Furthermore, industrialization had made possible the mechanical reproduction of what had

formerly been unique items of expressive culture embedded in communal contexts. Rather than confining themselves to vanishing cultural enclaves untouched by modernity, German scholars recognized the need to study folklore's altering roles through time in settings such as political displays, tourism, and arts, crafts, and music markets.

The term *folklorism* has been increasingly abandoned because it lacks specificity. In its stead, more accurate explanatory concepts have been sought. The preparation and presentation of folkloric materials in emblems representing a more wholesome age or way of life has been called *cultural therapy*, the medicinal effect likened to that of a placebo. The English terms *invention of tradition* and, more frequently, *revitalization* have been adopted to describe the use or manipulation of isolated folkloric materials for anything from efforts at regional promotion to politically inspired movements. The Hungarian Tamas Hofer has labeled the emergence of the discipline at the turn of the nineteenth century—intertwined as it was with the rise of nation-states—a revitalization movement whose ideology simmers latently in folkloristic theory and practice. The discourse on folklorism has contributed substantially to making folklorists conscious of these legacies.

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See also Authenticity; Fabelore; Invented Tradition.

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FOLK MUSIC

Tunes sung, with or without verbal texts, or played on instruments in folkloric performance settings. Contemporary perspectives stress the idea that such music, whatever its origins and previous usages, can be considered folk music when its use is primarily for the enjoyment of performers and listeners in noncommercial settings. This definition, like many recent definitions of folklore in general, stresses *behaviors in contexts*—in particular those that are more informal than formal—that exist outside performance settings typically associated with popular and elite or art music in Western cultures.

Earlier definitions of folk music stressed *textual* aspects. Thus, the often quoted definition promulgated by the International Folk Music Council (IFMC) in 1954 described folk music as “the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission,” a process entailing continuity, variation, and communal selection. This definition views folk music as a special kind of text, shaped unconsciously in a Darwinian manner by a community to fit its own needs and values. Here, melodies are considered as texts, too, and those that are transmitted aurally are privileged over sight-readable music “texts.” The formative scholarship on folk music stressed its value as a representation of a special kind of community, one imagined to exist among a homogeneous group of nonelite people within a peasant, working-class, ethnic, or regional community. These types of communities were held to be particularly important by early folklore scholars who were strongly influenced by populist cultural nationalist agendas. Thus, through processes of borrowing, co-optation, and canon formation, the music associated with nonelite communities became an important symbol of identity for intellectual elites involved in nationalist enterprises.

Consequently, folk music was analyzed in terms of musical elements thought to be characteristic of such national/communal settings. Because one type of verbal folksong text, the ballad, was recognized in the eighteenth century as having important connections with elite literature, its musical aspects received considerable scholarly attention. The ballad, as performed in western Europe and in other parts of the world colonized from this region, was typically performed solo and a cappella. Consequently, musicologists who focused upon folksong generally concerned themselves with monophonic sound. This concern reflected, as well, the limitations of data collection in the era prior to the widespread use of sound recordings, for at that time, it was rarely possible to accurately notate more than a single line of melody. In this context, certain aspects of melody—particularly scale and, to a lesser extent, melodic contour—were thought by influential scholars such as Cecil Sharp to be diagnostic of cultural *geists* (spirits). So, for example, considerable weight was given to tunes with scales that, because they had less than a full octave or

were modal rather than harmonic, might be considered to be survivals of very old music practices. Considerable attention was also paid to developing the idea of the “tune family,” utilizing selected aspects of melody for comparative analysis that paralleled the research into the history of verbal folksong texts that led to schemes of classification and typology, such as those of Francis James Child and Malcolm Laws.

The growth of the discipline of ethnomusicology in the twentieth century, coupled with the advent of convenient sound-recording technology, led to a broadening of perspective. Alan Lomax, studying the relationships between folksong style and culture, developed cantometrics, a system of analysis designed to describe recorded musical performances using standardized terminology. Cantometrics’ 37 different parameters encompass a variety of factors, including: the social organization of vocal groups and orchestras, levels of cohesiveness and explicitness, rhythmic organization, melodic complexity, embellishment, and vocal stance. Lomax sought to describe aspects of *texture* as well as text.

As a descriptive system, cantometrics is much more inclusive than previous musical analysis systems, most of which have suffered from the fact that they utilize the prescriptive notation developed by Western art music, which biases the description. Lomax’s analytic uses of his descriptive system, however, also have proven contentious. Utilizing Freudian ideas about human behavior, he suggested certain relationships between aspects of sound and musical organization, on the one hand, and broadly conceived cultural patterns, on the other. This reflected Lomax’s own preference for theory-driven survey research rather than in-depth, data-driven field studies.

Nevertheless, Lomax’s work served to broaden the scope of musical description, something that was necessary given the contemporary approach described at the beginning of this entry. Indeed, the problem folk music scholars now face is one of the boundaries of their field. Is, for example, the music made by a group of friends who gather occasionally to play Bach or Beethoven for their own enjoyment to be considered folk music? One argument against calling such performances folk music is that in these performances the musicians intend to follow closely the composer’s original score; the emphasis in folk music, by contrast, is upon a variety of intentions related to the perceived history, meaning, and uses of the music. Clearly, though, the differences between these intentions are a matter of degree rather than of opposition, for folklorists have shown that noncommercial musical traditions such as fiddling and Sacred Harp religious singing often place considerable emphasis upon the score as a document of the intention of the composer. However, such musics tend to fall outside the realm of elite art music, which is perpetuated through formal training based not just upon scores but also upon an extensive interpretive literature.

A second parallel dilemma is raised by the fact that there are many exam-

ples of musical performance that are called folk music but that take place in commercial or formal settings. These examples may reflect an understanding of folk music in cultural nationalist terms. Or they may be using folk music as a metaphor for the values associated with informality and noncommercialism. Whatever the case, when one analyzes the musical aspects of such performances, one usually finds considerable differences, particularly in terms of textures, in comparison with the same musics in noncommercial and informal settings. So, for example, when folklorist MacEdward Leach collected “The Blue Velvet Band” from folksinger William Riley of Lance au Loup, Labrador, in 1960, Riley closely followed the lyrics and melody of the song as first recorded by its author—professional country music singer Hank Snow—in 1937. But in terms of texture, there is a world of difference: Riley sings a cappella in a rubato parlando style; Snow accompanies himself with a guitar to a faster fixed tempo. Further, Riley’s performance omits both Snow’s opening spoken introduction, which contextualizes the song as a fictional cowboy bunkhouse performance, and Snow’s closing yodel, an ornamental feature characteristic of his commercial musical domain.

This example reminds us that folk music researchers continue to focus upon issues of variation—whether in text, texture, or context—reflecting an underlying assumption that individual folk music pieces are, to a greater extent than other forms of music, constantly changing. The idea of viewing folk music as a mode of expression that frees singers and instrumentalists to re-create and improvise within the arena of a collective or shared *music-culture* (a term coined by Mark Slobin and Jeff Titon) recalls the IFMC’s communalist definition mentioned earlier and suggests the importance of a perspective that moves beyond individual items and performances to consider entire repertoires.

Many studies of individual folk tunes exist, but folk music is nonetheless conventionally thought of in a plural sense as an aggregation of tunes. Although contemporary scholars tend to follow the strategy of viewing folk music in terms of individual behaviors in specific contexts (as suggested in the definition offered at the outset), a considerable number of those who speak of folk music think of it in these aggregational terms. It is useful to think of such aggregations as *canons*. Philip Bohlman suggests that canon formation is an essential aspect of folk music in the modern world. He offers several models of canon formation, ranging from local to national, in his discussion of the ways in which groups of people participating in folk music performances perceive their repertoire. Such canon formation is assessed critically and analytically by contemporary scholars as a source for data about the realities of folk music from a contextual point of view. Beyond this, however, it must be recognized that the entire body of writing about folk music, scholarly and otherwise, constitutes the most important and influential canon that shapes perceptions about what is and what is not folk music.

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See also Ballad; Broadside Ballad; Cantometrics; Ethnomusicology; Folk Song, Lyric; Folk Song, Narrative.

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FOLKSONG, LYRIC

Traditional song type that “expresses” rather than “depicts” or “narrates.” A lyric folksong does not so much examine a situation by listing salient component parts (as catalog folksongs, often called just *songs*, do) or re-create an event by recounting the sequence of its stages from beginning, through middle, to end (as ballads do) as it expresses an emotional reaction to a significant experience. Religious lyric folksongs, for example, often look forward eagerly to the release from earthly travail that death will bring when the individual is finally united with the heavenly family in a joyful, eternal afterlife:

O when shall I see Jesus and dwell with him above;
 And from the flowing fountain drink everlasting love?
 When shall I be deliver'd from this vain world of sin?
 And with my blessed Jesus drink endless pleasures in?

In contrast, secular lyric songs more often look backward and lament rather than rejoice, as does this Irish emigration song from the nineteenth century that expresses grief at forced departure from a beloved native land:

The morning was bright,
 But my heart is now low,
 For far from those dear hills

I'll soon have to go
 Across the wide ocean,
 Forever to roam,
 And leave far behind me
 The hills of Tyrone.

My poor heart is breaking
 With sorrow and pain
 For friends and companions
 I'll ne'er see again.
 I'm bidding farewell
 To the friends I have known,
 And adieu to the wee lass
 I leave in Tyrone.

However, religious lyric songs such as “O When Shall I See Jesus” that treat our relationship with a deity and even those secular lyric songs such as “Hills of Tyrone” that treat our relationship with social conditions, institutions, or habitations are in a distinct minority in British and American folk-song repertoires, as they almost certainly are in other cultures as well. By far the most common kind of lyric folksong is that which treats interpersonal relationships with “significant others,” particularly male/female romantic entanglements. Indeed, such a topic is so dominant within the genre that many folklorists would consider “love song” virtually the equivalent of “lyric song”—or at the very least, definitive of the type.

As epitomized in love songs, the most striking feature of a lyric folksong (or just *lyric*) is the aforementioned quality of its appeal to affect. The lyric song is more directly about the feelings it expresses—regret, longing, despair, ecstasy—than it is about a lengthy sea voyage to a new country or about a lover who, despite vows of fidelity, soon abandons one for another. These feelings are not so much *implied* by the topic as they *are* the topic, and they cluster around the two poles of joy and sorrow, often represented textually in images of life and death:

Come, all young maidens, take a warning from me
 Never build your nest on the top of the tree
 The roots they will wither, the branches decay
 Like that false-hearted young man, they will soon fade
 away.

Other features common to lyric songs seem to be logical extensions of the primary trait. For instance, lyric folksongs almost always adopt the first-person

point of view, so that the circumstances, the worldview, and most prominently of course, the feelings are all offered from the perspective of the speaker himself or herself, as in this ancient Chinese example:

The meadow grasshopper chirps
 And the hillside grasshopper leaps.
 Until I have seen my lord,
 My anxious heart is disturbed.
 But as soon as I shall see him,
 As soon as I shall join him,
 My heart will have peace.

I climb that southern hill
 There to gather the ferns.
 Until I have seen my lord,
 My anxious heart is tortured.
 But as soon as I shall see him,
 As soon as I shall join him,
 My heart will be gay.

A third characteristic is lack of concreteness. Lyric love songs in particular give almost no details of the journalistic sort, seldom specifying where or when circumstances to which the song alludes took place. Names of protagonists are invariably absent, as are specific identities—rich ladies from London, Turkish damsels, bold lieutenants. Medieval (or “Child”) ballads too are vague in detail but in a stylized, adumbrated way; lyric songs carry this trait to an extreme, so that details are not just stylized but generic and universal. Males are “young men,” females are “maidens,” place is a generalized outdoors, time is an implied spring or summer, and character and motives are predetermined. Even the circumstances that contributed to the condition lamented are but barely sketched since presumably they are typical and so already well known to all:

I once had a sweetheart but now I have none,
 And since he has left me I care for none;
 And since he has left me, I'll have you all know
 That men are deceitful, wherever they go.

A fourth characteristic of the lyric love song folklorists often stress in describing the type is its heavy employment of verbal formulas. This feature is found in all folklore that depends extensively on oral composition, acquisition, retention, and transmission, but it is, once again, especially prominent

in the lyric. Thus, the Anglo-American folksinger has lamented in song after song that “if I had wings like an eagle I’d fly” or that “I wish, I wish, but I wish in vain / I wish I were a maid again,” and the African-American blues singer has claimed over and over that he or she “woke up this morning feeling sad and blue / Woke up this morning, didn’t hardly know what to do.” Such set pieces have been called “floating stanzas” by some folksong scholars because they seem to fit comfortably into quite distinct songs.

A fifth trait is the lyric’s consistent employment of figurative imagery. Favored images are those of the natural environment: topographical features of the landscape, such as mountains and valleys; birds, such as larks, nightingales, and linnets; and a wide range of botanical phenomena, especially flowers—roses, for instance, or lilies. In other types of folksong, such natural imagery is basically just setting, but in lyric songs, nature enjoys a far more prominent role and far more semiotic significance:

I thrust my hand into some young bush
Thinking there the sweetest flower to find
I pricked my finger to the bone
And left the sweetest flower alone.

I leaned my back up against some young oak
Thinking it was a trusty tree
But first it bended and then it broke
And so my true love did to me.

Perhaps the most complex trait of lyric songs is their semantic structure, by which we mean the particular kind of relationships the essential images in the text bear to each other. In other genres of song, this structure is quite straightforward: In the ballad, for example, relationships are causal and sequential; in catalog songs—such as lullabies, worksongs, ritual songs, and play songs—images are related by part/whole correspondences, by physical propinquity, or by some other shared empirical characteristic. In lyric song, however, the dominant relationship is what might be called thematic resonance; for example, there is clear association in the vitality of soaring birds, burning sun, frolicking lambs, or a girl running through meadows gathering flowers indiscriminately, as there is in the immobility of a dead lover, a marble tombstone, or a hushed cuckoo. These images can truly be called symbols; they signify such concepts as amplification, intensity, profusion, verticality, activity, and their opposites—silence, stillness, singleness, and so on—that cluster around the two paradigmatic themes of life and death, with their associated emotions of joy and sorrow, as in this Russian example:

“Ah, why, little dove, are you sitting so unhappy
 So unhappy are you sitting and so sad?”
 “How can I, a little dove, be happy,
 Be happy and joyful?
 Last evening a pretty dove was with me,
 A pretty dove who sat by me,
 In the morning my dove lay slain,
 Lay slain, shot!”

Although enough songs in folk tradition exhibit the features here enumerated to gain them recognition as a type, none of the traits, not even the type's most essential ingredient—that it treats emotional effects of a significant experience—is necessarily restricted to lyric songs. Employment of an emotional perspective is only one way of representing and communicating about human affairs; recounting their evolution over time is another way, and anatomizing their constituent parts (the approach taken here in elucidating lyric song itself, for instance) is yet another. These three ways of articulating experience in sung verse are the most common in British and Anglo-American tradition, and any single song will invariably draw upon the conventions of more than one method. Thus, a narrative stanza or two will often appear in a lyric song, telling at least a bit of the lovers' original meeting, for instance, but ballads will frequently arrest the progress of their narratives to express affective response to the events so far recounted. Indeed, some songs may so vary from singer to singer that ballad stanzas may be dropped wholesale and lyric stanzas may be augmented—or the other way round—so that genetically related versions of the same song may be categorized differently, one as ballad, another as lyric. When we categorize any version of a song, then, whether as a lyric or as something else, we are saying only that it draws upon certain formal conventions more than on others.

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See also Folk Music; Hymn, Folk; Lullaby; Worksong.

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FOLKSONG, NARRATIVE

A concept that assumes two things: first, that the item or complex in question is linked to the repertoire of a particular group (that is, it must have entered tradition at some level), and second, that its textual material is rooted in a sequence of past actions of dynamically involved characters, normally progressing through stages of stasis, disequilibrium, and resolution.

The recognition of narrative as a significant category of folksong has a long-standing history, dating in British scholarship to correspondence between Thomas Percy and the poet William Shenstone in the 1760s. On at least two occasions, Shenstone proposed a distinction between ballads, whose defining feature was action, and songs, which expressed emotion. To eighteenth-century neoclassicists, it made perfect sense to conscript two of Aristotle's divisions of poetry—epic and lyric—as frames for sung verse. It is perhaps more surprising that this literary generic construct remains accepted in today's more ethnographically oriented studies. Indeed, constituting genres solely on the basis of textual features may seem regressively item oriented, possibly obscuring relationships between songs within particular contexts and distorting our view of the cultural function of song. In some cases, however, ethnographic research reveals corresponding native distinctions: In Scotland, the concept of *muckle sang* corresponds generally to the notion of ballad, and in Newfoundland, a distinction between songs and ditties or, in some areas, between stories, songs, and ditties embodies a separation of narrative and lyric. So the categories are not completely analytic, but as with any generic frame, they must not be adopted in a way that prioritizes one group or the other or in a way that fails to account for how the various categories interrelate in practice. Conversely, researchers should be alive to formal, thematic, and poetic differences within categories, as they too may contain clues for the interpretation of cultural processes.

An apposition between the narrative and the emotive, unfortunately, does not pave the way to a clear and easy means of classifying songs. With the broadening of the term *folksong* as an intellectual concept in the twentieth century, not only has the bipartite division proven insufficient but there also has been little progress toward the development of a system of classification that is both comprehensive and based on truly logical principles. Folklorists have expanded the literary model to include descriptive songs, which are purely expository and document certain aspects of a situation without weaving them into a story or presenting one's opinion of them one way or another. Moniker songs, which name and then briefly characterize members of a group, are good examples. But the model leaves little room for songs in which mode of expression is secondary to function, as, for example, in some work songs or

in dance or game accompaniments. Further, beyond the difficulty of establishing suitable categories, there is the equally problematic question of deciding where a specific song might fit. If a moniker song characterizes through action or dialogue, it is difficult to ignore the narrative component. Likewise, many nineteenth-century lyric songs contain at least the essence of a narrative, and often, the singer's attention is divided equally between telling a story and expressing his or her feelings about it. Further complications arise if one stops to ask what constitutes the song? Is it bounded solely by the text and melody? What other types of cultural and/or aesthetic information are applied in the interpretation of a song performance? Anna Caraveli's crucial revelation of "the song beyond the song" demonstrates that all sorts of satellite knowledge attaches itself to songs in particular situations. This can include oral narratives that explain or give grounds for a lyric evocation. Hugh Shields, writing of the predominantly lyric tradition in Gaelic Ireland, and Vladimir Propp, discussing lyric songs in Russia, have both noted the importance of an implied or assigned narrative to their respective materials. Even when narrative has little or no overt influence at the level of text, tradition nonetheless may hold it as an integral aspect of the song.

Bearing such difficulties in mind, we can say that as an intrinsic concept, narrative folksongs are oriented, at a textual level, toward the specific past actions of one or more characters and follow a conflict through to its resolution. In broad stroke, it includes everything from oral epics to *cante fable* (singing tale) and narrative obituary verse, though the most prevalent form in the recorded song traditions of western Europe and the Americas is the ballad, which consists of several subgenres: (1) the classical ballad, (2) the print-generated broadside ballad, (3) the native American ballad, and (4) the blues ballad. The underpinnings of these categories are complex and not always consistently applied, for they are founded on certain assumptions about context of production that do not coincide well with the repertoires either recovered from oral singers or assembled in the broadside collections of antiquarians. Formally, all ballads are stanzaic, except for some southern and eastern European traditions, which are stichic but molded by a strophic melody, and though specific forms differ, in Teutonic balladry (of which the Anglo-American tradition is a part), the most common is a quatrain of alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines, rhyming *abcb*. Where melody demands, this basic form can be rendered as a "double stanza" of four seven-stress lines rhyming *aabb*, a pattern common in broadsides. In terms of isolating subgenres, however, the key elements are differences in narrative method and poetic style, and the ethnographic validation of maintaining subgeneric divisions hinges on the assumption that each particular style is rooted in a specific set of cultural circumstances. For historical reasons, it makes sense to deal first with the classical and broadside varieties.

The classical ballad, on the basis of its thematic substance alone—its grounding in traditional belief systems, its emphasis on kinship, and its setting in a world that is at once aristocratic yet characteristically rural—suggests a cultural environment that is if not strictly medieval as some propose then at least premodern. Although there are manuscript texts in ballad form dating as far back as the thirteenth century, it does not logically follow that all ballads are medieval, as was the tacit assumption in earlier scholarship. Contemporary approaches urge that ballads be treated as coterminous with the lives of the singers, even if chivalric themes suggest a more antiquated setting and despite purported links with such late-medieval literary genres as metrical romance. Within this framework, the cultural trait overarching classical ballad style is orality, that is, the genre appears to emanate from nonliterate culture. Emphasis on orality avoids grounding the ballad in a specific historical era, linking it instead to a cultural condition extant in at least parts of Europe and America until well into the nineteenth century. Stylistically, the oral nature of the classical ballad is evidenced by formulaic diction and stanzaic sequencing based on repetition and chiasmic structuring, resulting in a condensed, “gapped” method of narration often described as “leaping and lingering.” Other conventionally cited narrative traits—concentration on a single narrative episode, dramatic development through dialogue and action, and impersonal or objective tone—are not of themselves markers of orality, but they do echo Axel Olrik’s Epic Law of Single-Stranded Plot and his insistence that, in oral narrative, action is everything. They also highlight the degree to which the story takes center stage in the classical ballad, leaving most other common features of narration—description, characterization, and evaluation—to be inferred subtextually.

The broadside ballads, printed on single sheets of paper and hawked in the streets and at fairs, developed with the rapid expansion of cheap, popular literature in the wake of the invention of the press (in 1454). The earliest broadside poetry mimicked elite forms of the day, but by the mid-sixteenth century, the ballad form had become a common medium for broadside writers, probably due to its popularity among the reading public. Formally and to a lesser extent thematically, the broadsides and the classical ballads share common ground, but the former’s literary provenance shows stylistically in a greater emphasis on description, idiosyncratic language, and linear structure. Where formulas appear, they are conventional rather than intrinsic, found, for example, as convenient opening or closing stanzas, not as part of a totalizing poetic language. Natascha Würzbach has argued that the most prevalent broadside commonplaces are the “come-all-ye” formulas directing the audience’s attention to the singer/seller, thus highlighting the commercial basis of the genre.

The subject matter of the broadsides also tends to grab one’s attention in

very obvious ways; in fact the comparison between broadsides and contemporary tabloids has been made often. The early “black letter” ballads, so-called because of their gothic typeface, revel in bawdy tales, rustic humor, and accounts of the fantastic, as well as in political and religious issues. By the late eighteenth century, by which time roman “white letter” type replaces black letter, crime and punishment become the mainstays of the trade, coupled with a tendency for romantic narratives to emphasize class difference and emigration as the greatest obstacles to a happy union, such that tales of love are played out in response to emergent social pressures of the times. Thus, the broadsides, in contrast to the classical ballads, are fundamentally modern and urban, resulting in shifts not only in theme but also in attitude. First, they are rational, depicting a world much more in line with the empirical surroundings of the singers and their audience. The supernatural occupies only a very small place in broadside narratives, and otherworld figures tend to be confined to those sanctioned, however equivocally, within modern ideology, mainly ghosts and the sacred. For the most part, the marvelous in broadsides consists of natural curiosities that challenge credulity rather than reinforce belief, and one might even allow that its components include extraordinary social roles filled by human characters, such as warrior women and laborer heroes who achieve dramatic rises in wealth and class standing. Second, the broadsides are more subjective than classical ballads, often stating the moral to be drawn from the narrative through conventionalized warnings to the audience. This, coupled with frequent metanarration and asides to the audience, gives the narrator’s voice a dynamic presence in the text, and it is not uncommon for the narrator to appear as a character, either as a witness to the events or even as the protagonist.

These generic descriptions and distinctions, however, must be accepted in the abstract, for even though any number of texts can be put forward as representative of one subgenre or another, attempts to construct concrete boundaries are destined to fail. As stated at the outset, the division assumes particular styles emanating from particular cultural contexts, leaving to one side the fact that individual items are highly capable of flourishing outside their matrices. To approach the topic diachronically, a concomitant distinction between oral versus literate, vis-à-vis context of production, and oral versus print (or recording) vis-à-vis medium of transmission, is essential, for in reality, the classical and broadside ballads constitute parallel traditions that existed in immediate proximity for almost four centuries; traces of interchange and mutual influence are extensive. Broadsides have been disseminated widely through oral transmission, and several “oral” ballads owe at least part of their circulation to print. Where such exchanges occur, it has been widely demonstrated that songs can become shaped by the aesthetic conventions of the adopted milieu. Emendations to classical ballad stories reworked for the

broadside press commonly include the addition of descriptive detail, nonformulaic language, subjective interpolation by the narrator, and other typically broadside traits. Similar processes are operative in oral transmission in later stages of tradition, as, for example, the tendency toward the lyrification of classical ballads in the nineteenth century, noted by Tristram Coffin.

Coping with the sheer dynamism of tradition has proven the greatest obstacle to a clear definition of balladry at any level or in any form, which, coupled with the divergent intellectual and cultural interests of those who have studied the form, has meant that virtually all efforts toward ballad classification and analysis have been open to challenge. Understanding something of the history of the scholarship may at least put some of the debate in perspective, even if it resolves nothing completely. Much of the early antiquarian writing probably was based on a familiarity with the urban broadsides, as is evidenced by the general adoption of the term *ballad*, or *ballet* as it was frequently spelled, which in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries normally indicated a song printed or written on a sheet of paper. Ongoing antiquarian research, particularly in the wake of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), led to the "discovery" of the traditional (classical) ballad, then still common in rural areas of Britain, especially in northern England and lowland Scotland. Subsequent collectors, influenced by national-romantic conceptions of *das Volk*, became increasingly drawn to the ballad as folk poetry, and by the time William Motherwell collected in the 1820s, there was at least an intuitive understanding of the difference between the classical and broadside forms. During roughly the same period, the Grimms formulated their notion of *das Volke dichtet* to account for the esoteric features stamped on the products of oral tradition.

The central figure of late-nineteenth-century Anglo-Scots ballad studies was Harvard professor Francis James Child, whose monumental anthology, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, appeared between 1882 and 1898. Years earlier, his curiosity about the nature of ballads had been piqued while preparing an edition for a general series on British poets, and in subsequent research, conducted in collaboration with the Danish folklorist Svend Grundtvig, he attempted to concentrate solely on the traditional form, which he termed "popular." What he could not ignore, of course, was the degree of mutual exchange between the popular and the "vulgar" (broadside) forms, and he often gave the nod to print material that possibly had traditional roots or parallels. It is also quite possible that he was unable to break completely free of the antiquarians, who had derived their understanding of the ballads largely from broadsides. Several of the most famous ballad types—"The Chevy Chase" and much of the Robin Hood material, for example—existed only in versions that displayed greater stylistic affinity with the broadside than with the oral form. Unfortunately, Child died before writing the essay explaining

the process that guided his specific choices, and in the absence of this statement, the collection was left to speak for itself.

Where Child's erudition carried the voice of authority, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* stood as a five-volume definition of *the* ballad, and more ardent disciples granted traditional status only to versions of Child ballads. Broad-sides were regarded as, at best, poor cousins, and those that Child himself included were assumed coarse vestiges of once pristine traditional compositions. Critics, on the other hand, insisted that the collection be taken at face value, and because of the multiformity of its content, they argued that a distinction between broadside and traditional forms was if not arbitrary then virtually impossible to define, concluding, as Thelma James did, that a Child ballad was little more than a ballad selected and anthologized by Child. This position became increasingly tenable in light of renewed song collection, which revealed traditions in which classical ballads mingled freely with broad-sides and singers who rarely made any palpable distinction between them. Even though most song collections deferred to the influence of Child by placing classical ballads first, a practice D. K. Wilgus criticized as constituting a "Child and other" approach, the bulk of the narrative material in tradition in the twentieth century consisted of either broadside versions or the two other forms of modern balladry—the so-called native American ballad and the "blues" ballad.

The native American ballad (NAB) is very closely related to the broadside; many types within this subgenre are, in fact, products of the American broadside trade and are, at times, stylistically indistinguishable from British broadsides. As a subgenre in its own right, however, the NAB brings to the fore three elements that either are not apparent or exist as secondary considerations in the print ballads: (1) a concern for occupation, (2) journalistic style, and (3) in contrast to the ribaldry and moralization of the broadsides, a focus on puritanism, sentimentalism, and an often fatalistic resignation to the hand of providence. It should be pointed out that none of these characteristics make the NAB a distinctly American form, for contemporaneous songs in Europe—Scottish *bothy* ballads, Norwegian *rallarviser*, Irish street ballads, and even many Victorian broadsides—reveal similar influences, which highlights one problem in discussing this form—the inadequacy of the term that defines it. Moreover, the current understanding of the NAB tends to exclude non-English-American parallels, such as the Mexican/Chicano *corrido* in the Southwest and the francophone *complaintes* in Canada. Proposing a term that successfully encompasses all these traditions is no easy task, but it is possible to account briefly for some of the features common to many, if not all of them. The style appears to be a logical evolution of the broadsides, conditioned by a number of social developments of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The concern for occupation can be correlated to the transition from

petty production to industrial labor as the basis of rural working-class economy, particularly in resource-based industries (such as mining, lumbering, offshore fishing, transportation industries, and others) with which the NAB is so strongly associated. Details of occupational life and work technique receive a great deal of attention, and many narratives are set against a background of harsh working conditions, especially in inherently dangerous trades. Employer/worker relations are a prevalent theme, though they are not always expressed antagonistically; if social differences between worker and boss are not immediately relevant to the narrative, they are likely to be ignored.

The late nineteenth century marks the first period in history in which literacy rates in Western, industrialized countries approached the 100 percent level, and in addition to the varieties of chap literature purchased for entertainment, one of the more prevalent sources of reading material was the newspaper. It is therefore not surprising that ballads of the time should exhibit journalistic influences, among them a pronounced concern for details relating to time and place, an increased tendency toward reportage as opposed to dramatic narration, and a notable reliance on actual events, especially murders and disasters, for subject matter. Anne B. Cohen's study of the journalistic and balladic responses to the murder of Pearl Bryan in 1896 shows clearly the ballads' reliance on news reports not only for specific details but also for viewpoints and thematic formulas. Journalism, as a prominent arbiter of Victorian ethos, may also account to some degree for the puritanical and sentimental quality of the NAB, though there are likely other influences operating here, including religious and temperance movements and the rapidly expanding popular music industry, all of which relied heavily on sentimental and moralistic material to attract audiences. From a stylistic perspective, one of the main outgrowths of the infusion of sentiment is a drift away from the focus on a single episode toward a presentation not only of the event itself but also of its reverberations. A narrative of disaster will generally move quickly past the scene of the tragedy to its impact on relatives, giving full vent to their grief and the uncertainty of their future.

The blues ballad, although its name suggests a strictly Afro-American form, has been shown by D. K. Wilgus to constitute a syncretism of black and Irish traditions, one of a number of prominent nineteenth-century forms resulting from this particular cultural fusion. Thematically, though it responds to many of the same occupational impulses as the NAB, focusing on the worker or strong man as modern hero, it deals bluntly and at times sardonically with the topics of crime, violence, and sex. Its protagonists are commonly antiheroes and almost never passive. Perhaps its most notable feature is the degree to which it emphasizes character over narrative sequence, maintaining as the primary objective the praise or satirization of its human subject. Like the NAB, much of its subject matter derives ostensibly from

actual events, but rather than re-create the narrative in verse, the blues ballad assumes the audience's familiarity with the details of the incident and offers instead brief, highly formulaic, and often stylized allusions to events and character reactions, generally weaving a pastiche of commentary around an implied narrative; it leaps but rarely lingers. In addition to textual features, a crucial element of blues ballad style is the accompaniment, provided by guitar or banjo, that, as in the blues proper, acts as an independent voice within the song, providing a textural response to the vocal line and, through the placement of instrumental breaks, structures groups of stanza into thematically connected units.

To varying degrees, collectors and analysts in the twentieth century have been confronted with all the styles simultaneously, and no ethnographically sound study of modern tradition should regard them as discrete but should explore their many interconnections in all their richness. Nor will such a study find that the interrelationships fall neatly into a historical model, with one form evolving into another. If the stanzaic form of the classical ballad turns up in the blues ballad, it is equally true that the instrumental component of the blues ballad, by virtue of its broad influence on contemporary popular music, has ultimately shaped the performance of classical ballads in the folksong revival. From an ethnohistorical perspective, however, individual styles can remain the subject of focused analyses. The development of the oral-formulaic theory and other approaches to the study of formulaic poetry have reawakened scholarly interest in the classical ballad, which remains the most broadly documented example of oral literature in anglophone culture and offers great potential for research into our preliterate past. Likewise, a number of recent works have examined the broadside as a dominant form of early popular culture. Regardless of perspective, the study of both theme and style in narrative folksong can contribute to the understanding of tradition, for there is as much to learn from the way a story is told as from the tale itself.

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See also Ballad; Broadside Ballad; Epic Laws; Folk Music; Incremental Repetition; Oral-Formulaic Theory.

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FOLKTALE

A traditional narrative; more narrowly, a traditional fictional story in prose. Fictional folktales, told as entertainment, can be distinguished from myths and legends, which are intended to convey information or at least a point of view. Even fictional folktales, however, educate by illustrating or explaining particular cultural ideas and especially by cautioning against undesirable behavior. *Traditional* means handed down or passed on; traditionality is most obvious in folktales that are manifested in many more or less different versions (or variants). The tale types most common in Europe, the Middle East, and India are listed in *The Types of the Folktale*, an index introduced in 1910 by Antti Aarne and enlarged twice (in 1928 and 1961) by Stith Thompson. Each tale type is assigned a number designated by AT (in honor of the compilers) or Type.

The shortest and most numerous tales are the *humorous anecdotes* (AT 1200–1874), most of which deal with cleverness, stupidity, or both. As with jokes, these anecdotes often use stereotypes to ridicule broad classes of people: numskulls, con artists and their dupes, unfaithful and otherwise disagreeable spouses, ungodly parsons. The subjects of some of these anecdotes, many of which were found in early written sources, are now archaic, but others remain current in oral tradition. Of course, numerous anecdotes exist that have not been indexed. Gershon Legman's work compensates for the habitual scholarly neglect of erotic material.

Animal tales (AT 1–299) are much like anecdotes in that they tell of tricksters and their victims. These tales, which are generally satirical, are popular throughout the world, but in different cultures, they tend to follow different

patterns. The animals talk and act like humans, and some of the tales correspond exactly to anecdotes with human agents. For example, in AT 43, “The Bear Builds a House of Wood, the Fox, of Ice,” corresponds to AT 1097, “The Ice Mill”; AT 153, “The Gelding of the Bear and the Fetching of Salve,” corresponds to AT 1133, “Making the Ogre Strong (by Castration).” Many other animal tales duplicate or reflect on motifs in human-populated tales. For example, in AT 50, “The Sick Lion,” and AT 91, “Monkey Who Left His Heart at Home,” victims are to be sacrificed for the alleged curative properties of parts of their bodies, just as in human-populated tales, a diseased character hopes or pretends to hope to be cured at the expense of a sacrificial victim. Animal judges mock corrupt and foolish human judges. Animal tales make use of stock characters, and different animals assume some of the same roles: the fox, the jackal, the monkey, or the coyote is clever, as are the rabbit and the hare; the bear, the wolf, or even the human is stupid. Other objects, even inanimate ones, occasionally appear as folktale characters. In an African tale that was carried to the New World, one or two people are terrified by objects and animals that speak (Motif B210.1).

Tall tales (tales of lying, AT 1875–1999) are anecdotes that begin realistically but culminate in the incredible. When they are performed, the narrator takes the role of the con artist, and the audience becomes the dupe. Tall tales, especially about hunting and farming, have flourished in the New World in response to its promise of abundance. *Formula tales* (AT 2000–2399), which rely on a firm structure, are similar to formulaic prayers. Some of these tales, evidently honed on audiences of young children, are silly; others explore sacred subjects. This affinity of the sacred and the profane is expressed overtly in a tale in which a man, reproved for playing cards, assigns to each a symbolic, religious significance (AT 1613, “Playing-Cards Are My Calendar and Prayerbook”). *Cumulative tales*, such as “The House That Jack Built” (AT 2035), add one phrase at a time and require the narrator to rattle off a series of events, often in reverse order. In an *endless tale*, numerous sheep have to cross a bridge or ants have to move a heap of sand; a *round* (AT 2320) is a story that ends where it began and then begins again.

Some folktales depend on the response of an audience. *Dilemma tales*, which are popular in Africa, involve the audience in a particularly important role: The story sets up a situation with no easy answer, such as one in which various characters must share an indivisible reward, and the audience discusses the merits of the possible solutions (e.g., AT 653, 945 II). In *catch tales* (AT 2200–2205), also called *hoax stories*, the audience is asked what it thinks will happen next, and it responds with a well-known folktale convention (“The lost object is in the fish’s stomach” [Motif N211.1], “The attic is full of horrors”). But in the end, all is mundane (the fish’s stomach contains only guts).



Children listen captivated to the gypsy tales of this storyteller in 1989.

Tales with divine characters, such as God, Jesus, St. Peter, or an angel, are grouped together (AT 750–849). These naturally tend to be didactic, but even here, some are humorous.

Tales composed of more than a single episode are called *complex*. The best-known complex folktales are those with magical motifs (AT 300–749).

Realistic complex tales are called *novellas* or *novelle* (AT 850–999). Many depict cleverness and wisdom: A clever hero wins the hand of the princess, a clever woman proves herself worthy of her husband, or a wise peasant out-riddles the king. Sage advice leads either to success or, just as often, to disaster. Some *novelle* describe social and marital problems: A poor peasant obtains the property of the rich man; an innocent woman suffers unjustly; a haughty wife is reformed. Others testify to the inevitability of fate.

Traditional tales and episodes are combined in various ways. Many complex tale types are composed of a string of episodes that relate to a particular theme, such as persecution, separation, or heroism. Animal tales and humorous anecdotes are sometimes joined together on the basis of a similar cast of characters: the fox and the wolf or the rogue and the dupe. Such combinations can become traditional. Other humorous complex tales consist of a frame into which various short tales are set: for example, “The Bargain Not To Become Angry,” AT 1000; “The Husband Hunts Three Persons as Stupid as His Wife,” AT 1384; and “Clever Elsie,” AT 1450. Frame tales are also noteworthy features that lend unity to several literary collections of folktales: the pilgrimage in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*; the house party in Straparola’s *Pleasant Nights*; the storytelling session set into a magic tale (a version of “The Needle Prince,” AT 437) in Basile’s *Pentamerone*; Shahrazad in *The Thousand and One Nights*. Modern literary authors, balancing a need for realism with a desire to tell a good story, occasionally employ embedded narrative, establishing a situation in which a character narrates a folktale. The same device, which distances the author from the tale, has been used in films (for example, *Dead of Night* [1945]).

The categories that Aarne devised for *The Types of the Folktale* represent qualities that are not exclusive to the tales listed for each. For example, the clever cat in “Puss in Boots” (AT 545B) is a close relative of the clever fox in

animal tales. Many tales not classed as formula tales depend on accumulations of events. The hero meets a series of strong men with special abilities, all of whom, usually in order, help with the quest or task ("The Helpers," AT 533), or traveling companions learn a few words of a new language that, recited in order, convict them of a crime they did not commit ("We Three, for Money," AT 1697). Magic tales can include religious motifs: The foster parent in "Our Lady's Child" (AT 710) can be either a religious character (the Virgin Mary), a demonic woman, or a male ghoul.

Humor is not confined to anecdotes but is important in both magic tales and novelle. In several tale types, in which the hero must make the melancholy princess laugh or speak, the audience too will be amused (AT 559, 571–574, 945). In "The Rabbit Herd," AT 570, and in "The Birthmarks of the Princess," AT 850, members of the royal family put themselves in compromising positions in an effort to obtain some special object from the hero, and then they have to give him whatever he wants to prevent him from broadcasting what they did. The humor of "The Hero Catches the Princess with Her Own Words," AT 853, comes from conversational double entendre.

Puns and verbal misunderstandings are common sources of folktale humor. Often, a misunderstood statement leads to surprising success (AT 1641, "Doctor Know-All"; AT 1563, "Both?"). Other misunderstandings are unfortunate. A fool, thinking that a messenger has come from heaven, gives the messenger valuables to take to a dead relative (AT 1540, "The Student from Paradise"), or another fool gives away the family savings, earmarked for "Hard Times," to someone who claims to be just that (AT 1541, "The Long Winter"). Anecdotes about the misunderstandings of deaf people (AT 1698) are very much current in oral tradition, as are dialect stories that make fun of heavily accented speech.

The Types of the Folktale is intended to be a finding list (an index), not a logical classification. However, Aarne's arrangement corresponds in a general way to the noteworthy aspects of the tales: animal or supernatural characters, magic objects, wise answers, and so forth. In many cases, the purpose of a tale seems to be to permit the expression of a particular, interesting episode or motif. Rhymes or songs are also memorable features that help to stabilize tales: Any reader of the Grimms' collection recognizes "mirror, mirror, on the wall" and "flounder, flounder in the sea." The plaints of murdered or transformed souls are often versified (AT 403, 720, 780), as are riddles (AT 851, 927) and warnings (AT 955, 1360C). Prose tales interspersed with songs or rhymes, called *cante fables*, are known from Indian, Arabian, Persian, and medieval European literary traditions.

Cross-references in *The Types of the Folktale* show that, although by definition each is supposed to stand for an independent tale, some tale types are not entirely separate from each other. In several cases, a single number covers

separate tales. For example, “The Ungrateful Serpent Returned to Captivity” (AT 155) includes the tale summarized there, in which the villain is tricked back into a trap, a longer form in which a series of judges initially condemns the man for his own ingratitude, and also an Aesopic fable in which the snake bites the man and the man dies. The references to “The Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Stone of Pity,” AT 894, contain three separate tale types, all of which end with the same episode with the stone that swells in sympathy. Tale types that share their contents are said to belong to the same cycle of tales or to have an affinity for each other. There is, for example, a cycle of magic tales and novelle in which a villain makes away with the heroine’s newborn children and another of stories with cruel stepmothers. Gordon Hall Gerould observed that initially separate tales join together because they share a “point of contact.” The references, summaries, and divisions between tale types in *The Types of the Folktale* represent the tales from northern Europe better than they do those from the south. To defend against this bias, confirmation can be sought in such sources as R. M. Dawkins study of Greek tales and Aurelio Espinosa’s Spanish tale collection.

As much as we would like everything to be neatly organized, folktales have too many dimensions to permit them to be classified to everyone’s satisfaction. This is true even of the definition of the folktale. The same story can be told in different genres—for example, as a legend and a fictional folktale, a folktale and a ballad (“The Singing Bone,” AT 780; “The King and the Abbot,” AT 922), a folktale and a myth, or a folktale and a riddle (“The Princess Who Cannot Solve the Riddle,” AT 851; “Out-Riddling the Judge,” AT 927). In such a case, the genre naturally affects the form of the story. And if a tale is known in two forms, in different genres or even as different subtypes within the same genre, these are likely to affect each other. Legends are turned into magic tales when their aesthetic impact outweighs their belief component (“The Juniper Tree,” AT 720; “The Girl as Flower,” AT 407). Novelle and anecdotes have long been incorporated into plays (e.g., Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, AT 901). Dramatic productions also have suggested or reinforced characters and scenes for folktales. An impostor disguised as a doctor or other learned man (Motifs K1825, K1955–1956) is such a figure, as is the commonplace farcical situation of illicit lovers who are threatened with discovery.

Some of the tales or components of tales found in Europe and the Middle East also are known in other parts of the world, but the European-centered tale type index is unsuitable for global research. Nevertheless, there are both motifs and whole folktales that are found throughout great regions. In order to facilitate access to all traditional literature, Stith Thompson created *The Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. Complete tales are identifiable through the numbered motifs that refer to incidents. Some of these are known, as independent tales or as components of longer tales, throughout most of the world.

One ubiquitous episode is the “Obstacle flight” (Motif D672), in which objects thrown to hinder pursuit grow into obstacles: a twig into a forest, a stone into a mountain, a flask of water into a lake. In Europe and Asia Minor, this motif appears sporadically in several different magic tales and regularly in AT 313, “The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight.” The oldest example of the “Obstacle flight” motif comes from eighth-century Japan in a myth about an escape from the land of the dead. The motif is also known in Polynesia and Africa. In the Americas, it has come from prehistoric Asia and, more recently, from Europe. There is an analogous episode of a “Transformation flight” (Motif D671), in which the fugitives disguise themselves in other forms, such as a church and a priest or a lake and a duck. In the ancient Greek story of Jason and the Argonauts, objects are thrown to hinder pursuit, with no transformations (Motif R231, “Obstacle flight—Atalanta type”): Medea scatters pieces of the dismembered body of her brother, which her father, who is pursuing her ship, stops to gather.

Another such episode is the “Mysterious housekeeper” (Motif N831.1), in which a woman emerges, unobserved, from an object (such as an animal or a chip of wood) and secretly does the housework. The fortunate resident, puzzled, hides and spies to see what is happening and then disenchants the housekeeper. This is part of AT 408, “The Three Oranges,” in the Middle East, Europe, and India and is an independent tale or a part of other tales in Africa, Southeast Asia, China, and the Americas.

“The disguised flayer” (Motif K1941) is also widespread. The idea of putting on a skin disguise may not be distinctive enough to warrant being called a tale type, but, in places as far apart as northern Africa (Berber), Madagascar, Japan, and (native) America, this happens just after a particular scene in which a character discovers someone hiding in a tree that hangs over a well, and one of them kills the other. Widespread, presumably ancient episodes such as these can be found by looking for large blocks of references in the *Motif-Index*.

In addition to motifs and episodes, there are other characteristics of folktales that warrant cross-cultural investigation. A significant part of folktale humor is not bound to any single culture: Paul Radin noticed qualities of the trickster (which he identified in the tales of the Winnebago Indians) in clowns and in Punch-and-Judy shows, both of which come from *commedia dell’arte* tradition. Quests, too, are universal: This common pattern in hero tales and myths has long been recognized. Other patterns that describe other broad genres of tales—for example, stories in which the protagonist is a victim of persecution—can be identified. Oral-formulaic theory is investigating, among other things, the idea that there are general principles such as those expressed in Axel Olrik’s Epic Laws of Folk Narrative. Poetic devices such as contrast and exaggeration are common in folktales. Rhythmic properties, not

only repetition and replication but also framing, anticipation, and recapitulation, are quite general. People use narrative to give form to both real and imaginary events, and folktales are an important source of material that shows how this happens.

Thompson developed his expertise at motif classification using material from Native Americans and Europeans. Folktales from other continents were not so well indexed. Fortunately, since the motif index was last revised in six volumes (1955–1958), a considerable amount of additional narrative material from underrepresented regions has been published and indexed. The South American collections of Johannes Wilbert and Karen Simoneau are indexed with motif numbers, and several indexes are now available for Africa. Recent indexes in the Folklore Fellows Communications series include Lee Haring's for Madagascar (FFC 231, 1982), Nai-tung Ting's for China (FFC 223, 1978), Hiroko Ikeda's for Japan (FFC 209, 1971), and Patricia Waterman's for aboriginal Australia (FFC 238, 1987).

Genres of narrative defined according to European concepts are not always generalizable: For example, in Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas, there are mythical folktales, cosmogony used for entertainment. Two such examples are "Snaring the sun" (Motif A728), in which the sun is caught with ropes, and the "Earth diver" (Motif A812), in which, when the world is flooded, an animal brings some earth to the surface and thus creates the land. Certain tales have been shown to have migrated from Asia to (prehistoric) America or from Africa to the Americas. This latter migration is recent enough that tales of the same type can be identified with certainty.

Although they also can be dramatized or written, folktales are most often manifested as oral performances. Almost anyone who can understand the simplest folktales can narrate those, but elaborate stories require special expertise to be told properly (that is, not just as a summary). Accomplished narrators are able to animate a bald plot, turning it into a fascinating story. They can add to and delete from traditional tales, but, in Europe at least, the continuation of the same tale types proves that narrators are often happy to retell the same old story. Depending on social expectations and the personality of the individual narrator, folktale performance can be understated or highly dramatic (see Performance). Dialogues between the characters alternate with descriptive passages. Like the product of any traditional artist, a version of a folktale belongs both to tradition and to its narrator. Occasionally, a narrator creates a new tale from traditional structures and motifs. It has sometimes been difficult to separate traditional tales (folktales) from idiosyncratic, individual tales, especially outside of Europe, but as more and better indexes have become available, it becomes easier to identify traditional elements.

The apt term *Homo narrans* was coined by Kurt Ranke to remind us how

peculiarly human is the ability to tell stories. Tale telling is undoubtedly as old as humankind, and written examples of folktales begin early. The oldest magic tale, “The Two Brothers or Bata and Anubis,” from ancient Egypt (1250 B.C.), is described as a composite of AT 302B, 318, 516B, and 870C*. There are Sumerian fables, with the usual characters such as the fox, the wolf, the sheep, and the dog, from the sixth century B.C., and the Gilgamesh epic, which is Sumerian and Babylonian, contains a number of important folktale motifs. Stories of the Assyrian sage Achikar (circa 420 B.C.) come from the same mold as do modern wisdom tales. Written folktales from ancient times seldom are the same as later complex tales, but simple tales are easily recognizable as identical to modern ones. Odysseus’ blinding of the Cyclops (in book 9 of *The Odyssey*) is now told as an oral tale (AT 1137), as is the idea that a sailor should walk inland until no one recognizes his oar (in book 11). Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* (also called *The Golden Ass*, from the second century A.D.), contains several witch legends and the earliest version of a magic tale corresponding to a complete modern tale type (“Cupid and Psyche,” AT 425B). The tradition of Aesopic fables has long been both oral and written; in addition to Greek and Roman texts, there are fables in the Sanskrit *Pañchatantra* (before 500 A.D.). The beast epics (Reynard the Fox) of the Middle Ages reveal the satirical potential of animal tales.

Another Eastern source of early tales, in addition to the *Pañchatantra*, are the *Jatakas*, describing the former lives of the Buddha, which are replete with magical transformations. Some of these motifs and tales exist in oral tradition—for example, one in which a self-sacrificing hare, who immolated himself to feed a beggar, is sent to the moon, where he can still be seen (no. 316; compare Motif A751.2, “Man in the moon a rabbit”). An eleventh-century Indian collection, Somadeva’s *Ocean of the Streams of Story*, is an early source for many of the motifs in European magic tales. The *Arabian Nights* was first published in French as *Mille et Une Nuit* (1703–1713), but part of it is as old as the ninth century; it includes tales from Persia (tenth century), from Baghdad (tenth and twelfth centuries), and from Egypt (eleventh to fourteenth centuries), as well as contemporary material.

Anecdotes and novelle are present in the works of Boccaccio and Chaucer (fourteenth century). Collections of humorous anecdotes were made in Germany, beginning in the thirteenth century and continuing, there and elsewhere in Europe, through the eighteenth century. There are anecdotes, magic tales, and novelle in Straparola’s *Pleasant Nights* (1550–1553) and magic tales in Basile’s *Pentamerone* (1634–1636). Collections of fairy tales were popular in France in the eighteenth century. In contrast to the Enlightenment belief in the superior virtue of reason, magic tales represent fantasy. Beginning in the 1760s, folktales were the basis of dramatic entertainments, homely subjects chosen for their contrast with the pretentious ones

avored by aristocratic culture. Spectacular entertainments (films, musicals, operas, puppet shows, and British Christmas pantomimes) continue to employ folktale plots in this manner.

In the modern world of mass culture, anecdotes are still oral, but longer folktales are more often printed or filmed. Traditional tales are rewritten and illustrated for children and occasionally also for adults. Children hear a variety of folktales from parents, teachers, and librarians and are encouraged to discuss the precepts therein. "The Three Bears," which is easy to narrate, is one of these juvenile mainstays, as is "The Little Red Hen," which is also easy to tell and in addition endorses a work ethic. Folktales from foreign countries are used in schools to teach geography and multiculturalism. In spite of a general feeling that folktales (as opposed to jokes) have been relegated to the nursery, many adults still appreciate them. Cartoons in magazines and newspapers refer to well-known nursery tales. Storytellers tell folktales even to adult audiences, and some psychotherapists use them with their patients. Fables are sustained by proverbial references: for example, to sour grapes and putting all the eggs in one basket. In the scholarly realm, anthropologists utilize folktales to elucidate subtle aspects of the cultures they seek to describe, and the idea of using folktales to explore the human psyche was legitimized by Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung.

Folktales have long been central to folklore scholarship, which is often said to have begun with Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. In their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and household folktales) (1812–1815 and later editions), they identified many of the narrators who told them the tales and included references to other oral and written variants. Although they did not believe that variants of the same tale had developed from an identifiable original form, later scholars did. The comparative method, adapted from philology, was applied to folktales in the belief that the tale's original form and original home could be identified.

Regardless of its sometimes questionable ability to establish an original form, a comparative study, which identifies the amount of variation present in a tale, its region, and its oldest known variants, is the only way to determine the extent of the tradition of a tale. But geography is only one source of social separation. In Europe, judging by studies of folktale narrators and by the names of narrators published in folktale collections, men tend to narrate tales with a male hero, and women tell those with a female; however, this is only a preference, and there is considerable crossover so that people of both sexes narrate tales with male and female protagonists. In societies where the sexes are more separated, strong sex-linked traditions develop, with separate repertoires. Chief characters also give some indication of the groups of people who are likely to appreciate certain tales: farmers, soldiers, travelers, spouses, and children.

Analyses of modern folktales (including jokes), which emphasize the narratives' ability to express social tensions, are able to take into account the

relevant aspects (sex, ethnicity, social class) of the narrator and the audience. Intensive collecting from limited areas, which is able to identify the contributions of certain individuals to the folktale tradition there, proves that tradition is nothing other than the cumulative result of individuals' efforts. Folklorists refer to the "logical composition" of tales and even describe tales as living organisms. Stith Thompson and others used the phrase "life history of a tale." "Folktale biology" (from Max Lüthi) refers to the study of tales as they fit into their social and cultural contexts, and the "oikotype" (from C. W. von Sydow, formed from the Greek root of the English word *ecology*) refers to subtypes that have been specially adapted to conform to local folk belief.

European folktale scholarship developed in the nineteenth century, partly in the tradition of Indo-European philology; coupled with the scholarship's strong emphasis on cultural geography, this has resulted in a tendency toward racism. Some early folklorists maintained that tales were inherited, much as words were, in forms that changed in rather regular ways. Others emphasized diffusion: The tale was thought to have traveled from one country to its neighbors. Such notions can be very helpful to describe the pattern of a tale's variations, but they are hypothetical, not proven facts, and thus not strong foundations for further argument. In particular, most so-called Indo-European tales are known to neighboring peoples who speak other kinds of languages (Semitic, Uralic, and Altaic, for example). Especially as more Middle Eastern, African, and Asian variants become known, racial theories of the origin of well-known folktales become difficult to maintain. Rather, scholars must attend to the overall stability of the tales and look for culturally, psychologically, and aesthetically based explanations of their variations.

Johann Gottfried von Herder, reacting against the universality envisioned by philosophers of the Enlightenment, called attention to the uniqueness of each culture, and soon after, the Grimms were pointing to mythology and folklore as expressions of the German spirit. This attitude is untenable when the folklore in question is also found in other cultures. Most collections of folktales are intended to represent particular countries or regions—many books are titled something like *Folktales of [wherever]*, or *[African/Italian/Mayan/etc.] Folktales*, and folklore archives are regional or national. But most of the tales in such books and archives are told in other places as well. The borders between cultures are indistinct and constantly shifting because contact between neighbors and traders is and always has been very common, and folktales, which can be given away for nothing or swapped for a drink or a meal, are among the most often-traded commodities.

The romantic attitude of the Grimms is still present in the idea that an appreciation of cultural and social context is important for understanding why a particular tale (or a particular joke or song) is performed. (This idea is not very different from that of the historic-geographic scholars regarding the importance of establishing the period and place of origin of each folktale, in

order that its origins, history, and prehistory could be determined.) But the same tale, if it is at all popular, is also performed in other, quite different social and cultural contexts. Thus, a tale is able, to some extent, to transcend its context. It is this property that justifies comparative folktale scholarship. It is to be hoped that, as more tales are collected as performed in their natural contexts, the extra information thus obtained will be used along with the knowledge about the forms of the tale that only a comparative study can provide, thereby enhancing our understanding of the tradition.

Christine Goldberg

See also Dilemma Tales; Epic Laws; Fabliau; Fabulate; Historic-Geographic Method; Legend; Legend, Contemporary; Legend, Urban; Magic Tale; Motif; Myth; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Romantic Nationalism; Tale Type.

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FOODWAYS

The culture-based definition of the edible and the body of customary, verbal, and material traditions that pertain to the utility of food as an instrument of cultural continuity, a sign of group identity, and a significant aspect of folk culture.

The term *foodways* is more unique among the lexicon of folklore and folk-life than the concept behind it. When William Graham Sumner introduced the term *folkways* in 1906, he intended to provide a way of describing the knitted wholeness of folk culture—the way in which custom, belief, and expression yield a unique imprint for each of the world's observably different societies. Among the many kinds of things folklorists study, only food approaches the broad vision of Sumner's coinage—an attribution that holds interesting clues to the oddly tangential position foodways has held within the range of folk expression.

Foodways means nothing less than the full consideration of how food and culture intersect—what food says about the people who prepare and consume it and how culture shapes the dietary choices people make.

The first of these areas has more often been the province of popular and academic ethnographers, for whom the observation of eating habits has provided a primary means of differentiating between peoples, often according to the locales they inhabit. The most basic and stereotypical of cultural characterizations—the stuff of elementary school geographies and popular travelogues—make primary reference to the specific foods various peoples eat and often describe the physical or cultural attributes of whole societies in terms of these foods.

Whatever the accuracy of statements about the foods particular people subsist upon, folklore's relatively late coming to the study of food and culture has meant that folklorists are more likely to focus upon particular foods as significant *choices*, implicitly rejecting physical determinism in favor of a cultural model—one in which the foods that people eat are believed to say more about who they are than about the edible stuff they have at hand.

In this sense, foodways is a tacitly modern way of looking at some very old traditions, a view informed more by the consumerist decision making of Western market economies than anthropological or archaeological precepts. Therein lies the basis for both the departure of folklorists who study food from the ranks of other social scientists and the appeal of the term *foodways*.

The significant predispositions of pioneer American folklorists toward spoken, sung, or performed expression were confirmed and energized by international folksong revival movements in the postwar era. As a result, emerging western European configurations of folklife, including the so-called material culture areas of architecture, craft, and costume, entered American folklore scholarship more quietly than they might have. Anthropological interest in the intersection of food and culture had been focused upon during the two decades preceding the folksong revival by the National Research Council's Committee on Food Habits. Under the leadership of Margaret Mead, the committee focused anthropology's prevailing internationalism upon American ethnicity, finding in "food habits" an evident, tangible link

between ethnic identity and patterns of commerce, between cookery and community.

The Committee on Food Habits was created in response to wartime concerns about the acceptability of food rationing, the effects of embargoes limiting international commerce in foodstuffs, and the loyalty of immigrant “nationality” groups to the U.S. war effort. Thus, adherence to deeply held traditions, usually considered by folklorists to be a positive cultural indicator, instead designated several American ethnic groups as potential “soft spots” in regard to wartime morale and national security. Despite this odd and unfortunate application of research, the Committee on Food Habits performed an essential transition in the study of foodways. By bringing social scientific rigor to bear upon the everyday eating habits of ordinary Americans, Mead and her colleagues established scholarly precedent for ethnological interest in the social meanings, functions, and values of food, particularly as an accessible marker of cultural community.

To a comparable degree, Don Yoder was instrumental in translating European scholarship into American practice, principally by illustrating European ethnological theory with ongoing fieldwork and historical analysis of Pennsylvania’s Old Order Amish and Mennonite communities. The quiet integrity of Yoder’s scholarship on recognized folk communities enabled the larger and more challenging theoretical assumptions at the heart of this scholarship to pass into American folkloristic usage almost unnoticed. What was noticed and marginalized at first was the term *folklife*, which seemed from its first American usage in the late 1950s to denote a concept too broad and holistic to coexist peaceably with the more established and accepted *folklore*.

But it was not so much the grand interdisciplinary purpose of folklife studies—to identify and document tradition wherever and however it expressed itself in community life—that opened the door for folklorists’ study of food. Rather, it was the specific attention Yoder, Warren Roberts, Louis Jones, and others devoted to activities less frequently regarded by folklorists as culturally significant—most notably, cookery and costume.

The entry of foodways into the canon of traditional expression had the unintended effect of making the methods and materials of narrowly focused European folklife studies the means to a more inclusive view of tradition in contemporary American society. Foodways rendered moot standing distinctions between “the folk” and “nonfolk” based upon individual repertoires of traditional expression. Since these distinctions were in turn based upon well-established folklore genres of considerable tenure, the folklife movement, with foodways at its ideological bow, succeeded where the folksong revival had failed in reconnecting the notion of tradition to ordinary people and the communities they constituted. Today, foodways and its fellow folklife *émigrés* suggest a domestic, conservative profile of an established discipline against which the idiosyncratic folk artist or protest singer departs. The fact that these

contemporary impressions vary so greatly from historical and ideological realities confirms both the infusive effects of folklife studies and American cultural predispositions toward hearth and home.

Even as foodways came to be recognized in American society at large as properly belonging in the niche created for the handmade, the old-fashioned, and the homespun, the ubiquity of the edible made the topic an odd fit for academic taxonomies and nomenclature. Whereas terms like *folk art*, *folksong*, and *folk craft* had come to refer as much to the formal (i.e., *informal*) character of these expressions than the people who produce or understand them, *folk foods* or even *folk cookery* failed to register a comparable degree of recognition or usage. In this regard, foodways benefited considerably from those theoretical advances in folklore studies during the 1970s and 1980s that pushed performance to the forefront of analysis. Proponents of performance theory were not particularly concerned with using its precepts to expand the canon of folk expression, but foodways studies benefited from the introduction of larger units of study, including events that display skill, symbol, and strategy.

If the American vocabulary used to describe culture-as-food and food-as-culture has lagged, foodways by any name has advanced in less than one generation from import to export. Folklorists have laid claim to foodways. In a real sense, foodways seems equally at home in a discipline concerned with how communities express and (in so doing) sustain identity. A five-part division of both the subject and its scholarship reveals what one might expect from a relatively young discipline: a little theory, a great deal of description, efforts toward definition, and a refreshingly high degree of respect for the work of journalists, nutritionists, historians, critics, and social scientists of every stripe.

PRODUCTION AND GATHERING OF FOODSTUFFS

Focusing on hunting, agriculture, fishing, gardening—from the lore of determining when to plant potatoes or where the blue crabs are running to the preservation of exotic seed stock—this category groups traditions that thread among issues and enterprises as varied as deciding what is edible and songs that synchronize a dozen hands drawing a fishnet against the current. Folklore's deep chronicles of challenging occupations—cowboys, commercial fishers, migrant farm workers—yield fresh insight when viewed in the context of the long processes they set in motion.

DISTRIBUTION OF FOODSTUFFS

This area of foodways study considers how the products of farm and stockyard find their way to the cooks who transform them into food. Calls of street vendors and tobacco auctioneers, pyramids of grapefruit meticulously arranged

for market display—these are the artistic evidence of a culture of commerce. Underpinning this culture are assumptions about regions and regionalism that inform a large part of American folklore scholarship. Boundaries observed and crossed construct patterns of place, as specific as a roadside stand in corn country and as general as the custom of giving fruit baskets as a sign of hospitality or sympathy.

COOKERY

For much of the relatively brief history of American foodways, cookery has held the high ground, subjugating all else to context. Most apt for performance studies, the centrality of cooking as transformation focuses attention on skills as well as secrets. Unfairly reduced to the brief notation of recipes, cooking is, by definition, individuated and nonreproducible. The traditions associated with cooking range from gender-specified roles and settings to elaborate “scripts” that contain, enact, and signify the relationship between master and apprentice, mother and daughter.

DISTRIBUTION OF FOODS

What people do with food when it is ready to be eaten is simply to express with it and through it the substance of identity, sentiment, and community. Such matters as why homemade cakes are being sold at a church bazaar or how the individual bakers who prepared them are identified may matter more than recipes or taste. Yet virtually everything a potluck casserole, table for two, or clambake signifies is allusive and implicit. By examining the array of events in which food is sold or shared, folklorists connect the descriptions of food and travel writers to basic tenets of social science. Image and action are complementary—the groaning table and the feast.

CONSUMPTION OF FOODS

Because we are dominated by an obsessive self-consciousness about what we eat, such matters as when, where, and how food is taken have been largely overlooked. Yet the rules that govern a child’s behavior at mealtime or the custom of eating Thanksgiving dinner in midafternoon are as fixed in most American households as preferences for particular foods (enjoyed or forbidden). Oreo cookies consumed filling first or pie-eating contests are obvious examples of how well food serves other needs beyond nourishment—to play, to compete—and a confirmation of how seldom the consumption of food is driven and determined by hunger alone.

Foodways provides a vocabulary of experience that demonstrates the pres-

ence and power of tradition in everyday life. The variety of this vocabulary is ample evidence of cultural continuities and identities that are not always easy to exemplify by other means. However, the degree to which food and culture are intertwined renders much of what may be gleaned from the arrangement of a place setting or the clientele of an ethnic food store too common to matter. In this regard, foodways presses a point about which much is assumed but little is said: Is tradition cause or consequence? Is the observable fact that people express themselves—who they are, what they value—through food an imperative for further inquiry or a truism too trite to pursue?

Foodways foregrounds the ordinary in a rhetorical sense but enables, as do other kinds of expression, the extraordinary to become distinguished as the consequence of reasonable comparison. People who do not sing, whistle, or play a musical instrument every day may consider themselves uninvolved in musical traditions. Such people are often gladdened by reminders of the lullabies they have sung to their children or the evening in a tavern when verses of popular songs rose unexpectedly in their throats. In the same sense, it is not the fact that all people eat that makes foodways culturally significant. Many people do not cook, are not choosy, and eat alone. Such people are involved in foodways when food enables them to connect with family members or friends, practice their faith, or assist someone less fortunate.

Special occasions in which food plays a prominent role, such as Thanksgiving dinner or a country fair, are of particular interest because they are invested by those who participate with a high degree of significance and importance. What has been too frequently overlooked is the less conspicuous role food plays in other sorts of social commerce—from courtship to wedding cake, from potluck to potlatch. Locating significance in this muddy mix of subject, appetite, science, symbol, currency, and taste is a daunting but engaging task. The need to ask (and to know) how people express themselves through food demands attention to circumstance and process, intention and outcome. The contexts in which food assumes significance are as many and as varied as songs and singers, but they often lack the recognizable features that signal a performance in progress. So it is that foodways is perhaps the most common and least comprehended of traditional expressions.

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See also Custom; Feast; Festival; Folklife.

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FOOL

A stock character in folk literature, seasonal festivities, and traditional performances and representations, usually associated with the European Middle Ages and Renaissance but displaying characteristics with parallels among diverse figures over great historical and cultural range. Basic to the fool role is actual or performed madness or idiocy. Due to a mental deficiency and consequent inability to function in ordinary society, the fool occupies the margins of culture. Here, the fool gains license to speak freely and to reflect on the foibles of others. The familiar costume and cliché antics of the fool frame this “free speech” so that it seems to be mere playful babble or nonsense. However, many cultures perceive a certain wisdom or at least alternative view of the world underlying the contrary, topsy-turvy behavior of the fool. This ability to see the world differently than others and to remain isolated from the mainstream invests the fool with considerable ambiguity, which is sometimes believed to afford this individual divine or clairvoyant powers.

The specifically European fool role and imagery have rather limited historical contexts and, in some cases, very specific allegory. Yet many characteristics of the fool resonate widely with other figures. Inversion, antiauthoritarianism, parody, sexuality, ambiguity, and earthiness are essential to fools, tricksters, shamans, and clowns. On the one hand, these figures are essential to their cultural contexts; on the other hand, they reveal the weakness and limits of their cultures by burlesquing and debasing sacred ceremonies and objects, highlighting the foreign, playing with language, and associating with misfortune. The linguistic play of Groucho Marx may be worlds away from Zuni clowns speaking Spanish or English to the gods, but both demonstrate the power of foolery.

COSTUME AND SYMBOLISM OF THE FOOL

Traditional European fools utilize a fairly consistent repertoire of costume elements and implements that draw attention to their special status. These

costume motifs, which developed over hundreds of years but became fairly stable by the early modern period, assist the fools in their commentary on society and are themselves open to diverse interpretations. On the head, the typical fool wears a cap topped with bell-tipped ass ears. Fools often tote bells on their scepters, shoes, or belts as well. In addition to serving as audible attention-getters for the fool, bells on the costume may have originated as a satire of a medieval fashion element that began among the elite and then became a veritable fad among citizens. The prominent ass ears in representations of the fool suggest that the fool is as obstinate as this notorious beast. The ears perhaps also indicate the pronounced and unrestrained sexuality common to the animal and the fool. Some fools also feature a rooster's comb on their heads. At times, the behavior of fools can be likened to the crowing, masculine boasting of the cock. Many implements carried by fools reinforce the phallic imagery of the fool: stretching shears that extend to pinch women, fur-tipped poles also used to taunt female bystanders, and handheld sausages. In festivals, fools frequently grab and harass women. The plowing fool who spreads seeds or even tiny images of the fool is also a familiar character in festivals and traditional pictorial representations. Contemporary folklore in areas where fools inhabit carnival celebrations tells of masked fools seducing and impregnating young women, who must bear the children out of wedlock when the fathers remains anonymous. These and other children born in late fall as a result of the heightened sexuality and increased license associated with fools and their springtime rites are sometimes referred to as carnival children.

The dress of fools consists of a motley of colors and fabrics. A patchwork of rags or other material commonly covers the body of the fool. This apparel might owe its origin to the lowly status of the fool, who must make do with available materials. Some interpreters see the patches as Christian allegory of the sins committed by fools and others distant from the teachings of the church. Another view holds that this costume derives from earlier representations of wild men and creatures believed to live on the periphery of towns and villages. The colorful, patchwork apparel does bear resemblance to more mystical figures, such as the pied piper of Hamelin and shamanic figures in many cultures. Whether or not these similarities are historical, all of these figures do embody the mysterious power of ambiguity.

An alternate dress for the fool features the more refined tights and bicolor scheme of the harlequin. Here, theatrical stylization has replaced elements of folk belief, but traces of duality and ambiguity remain in the binary pattern.

Items fools hold in their hands include mirrors, books, scepters, baubles, and animal bladders. Mirrors and books can symbolize both the vanity of the fools themselves and their propensity to depict and document the foolishness of others. A fool gazing into a mirror differs little from a fool standing face to face with a scepter adorned with a fool's head. In either case, the fool admires its own external features and prefers them to those of ordinary folk. Likewise,



The character of the fool can be found throughout history and across cultures. Fools play a variety of roles in culture, depending on the context in which they appear.

a glass bauble can serve as a distorting mirror, reflecting the image of the fool. The scepter or bauble also serves as a parody of the paraphernalia of the royals who frequently employed fools. A pig's bladder, often attached to a stick made from a dried ox phallus, resembles a glass bauble but is used instead to beat the ground. This behavior shows the impishness of fools, while also linking them to fertility rites that involve pounding and stomping the soil.

CONTEXTS OF THE FOOL

In European tradition, we can distinguish among professional fools, actors playing the role of fool, and literary fools. Professional fools are those who earn a living on the basis of their recognized mental and social deficiencies. Their profession dates to ancient Greece and Rome and appears in Italy, France, Germany, and England from the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The European court fool is the best-known incarnation of the professional fool. References to this figure date from the twelfth century, but some evidence suggests this fool is derived from Eastern, Celtic, and Roman predecessors. Court fools often had physical deformities, which, like mental flaws, prevented them from participating in ordinary social roles. In this regard, they are similar to the "freaks" (e.g., dwarfs and grotesques) and exotics who appeared at carnivals and fairs. The activities of court fools ranged from serving as a sort of lap dog accompanying royalty or roaming in and out of the court and into local taverns and establishments (much like a village idiot) to more formal performances at feasts and gatherings. Some court jesters would regularly read the news to the court, much like contemporary comics such as Jay Leno or Howard Stern who base their routines on reading and commenting on news stories.

Mimetic fool performances occur in the theater, folk dramas, and festivals. Numerous playwrights, Shakespeare foremost among them, have relied on the characteristics of fools for dramatic effect. Often, fool figures serve to point out the foolishness in all people, that is, they provide a mirror in which other characters and the audience may see themselves so that they may correct their weaknesses. In act 1, scene 2 of *As You Like It*, Celia remarks to Touchstone, the fool: "By my troth, thou sayest true; for, since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes a great show." Until the late sixteenth century, theatrical fools were modeled primarily on the existing social type of the fool. By the seventeenth century, a purely theatrical creation, the harlequin, began to provide the model. The harlequin role emphasizes physical agility rather than the traditional symbolism associated with the fool. Although retaining the fool's lack of moral sense, the harlequin does not derive from social ideology and therefore has no mystical or subversive tendencies.

A variety of traditional plays also feature fools in important roles. Among

these plays are the sketches performed by traveling troupes that thrived prior to the Enlightenment. These skits often revolve around jest figures, such as Hans Wurst (John Sausage), who fail to perceive basic realities of everyday life properly, thus finding themselves in all manner of laughable predicaments. Similar sketches are featured at local celebrations where town residents become amateur performers to stage humorous plays, such as “The Old Wives’ Mill” in which a series of farmers rejuvenate their haggard wives until the fool causes the mill to malfunction and produce an even less desirable mate. These amateur comic plays provide a counterpoint to local productions of religious plays (such as reenactments of the Passion of Christ).

Certain calendrical festivals, such as carnival or the Feast of Fools (December 28), have given rise to special groups of fools (fools’ guilds, *sociétés joyeuses*) that perform their antics in public. Unlike professional fools, these actors do not take their roles because of their physical or mental disabilities but rather because of the license provided them—often as one of various rights given to trade guilds—by civic authorities. Festival fools draw on the same costume elements, behavior, and symbolism as other fools. They also go beyond these specific motifs and engage more generally in the inversion of the ordinary by constructing entire worlds in the mirror image of the normal, thus criticizing and satirizing ordinary society and engaging in licentious behavior. These fools do not provide an ongoing voice opposed to the mainstream but rather engage themselves and their audiences in a periodic release of the tensions of the everyday and offer alternative visions of social organization.

Fools also appear as central characters in European popular literature, beginning in the late Middle Ages. Works such as *The Ship of Fools* and *Till Eulenspiegel* continue to be widely translated and read and to provide inspiration for new representations. The former recounts, in rhyming verse, many of the features of the fool and relates how these characteristics afflict many of us. The latter follows the life of a rogue. Although Eulenspiegel does not dress like a typical fool, his adventures come about because his limited wisdom and understanding lead him to perceive situations and language incorrectly or literally. For example, he mistakes a kitchen mustard plant for hemp and defecates on it as he was instructed to do when encountering the latter plant. In some episodes, Eulenspiegel is downright malicious rather than ignorant. His antics resemble those of tricksters found in various oral traditions as much as those of traditional fools. Despite their differences, both of these character types share an emphasis on lower bodily strata—sexuality, excretion, exhibitionism—and antiauthoritarian tendencies. Audiences for these works in different eras and cultures certainly have different understandings of the motifs depicted, but these general tendencies seem to have universal appeal.

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See also Carnival; Drama, Folk; Festival; Trickster.



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FORMULA

Smallest functional “word” or unit of phraseology in oral-formulaic theory, defined by Milman Parry as “an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea.” First investigated in the ancient Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the formula was initially understood as a symptom of traditional diction, of a compositional idiom fashioned over generations and passed down to Homer. Primary examples include noun-epithet formulas (e.g., “swift-footed Achilles,” “white-armed Hera”) and complementary, line-filling verbal phrases (e.g., “he/she spoke”). Parry later concluded that traditional formulaic language also must be oral, furnishing the bard with a ready means of composing in performance, and he consequently undertook textual analyses of passages from the Homeric epics to illustrate the density of formulas and the poet’s dependence upon them.

The first expansion in the concept arose from Parry’s and Albert Lord’s fieldwork on still extant oral epic poetry in the former Yugoslavia. On the basis of correspondences between ancient Greek, known only in manuscript texts, and south Slavic, which they were able to experience and record firsthand, Parry and Lord argued by analogy that Homer’s poems were oral and traditional. Both poetries revealed many examples of phrases repeated either verbatim or with patterned variation, with individual formulas composed of “formulaic systems,” or groups of phrases related by their metrical and syntactic identity. The phraseology also showed extension (in the number of formula within a given system) and thrift (“the degree in which [a formulaic system] is

free of phrases which, having the same metrical value and expressing the same idea, could replace one another”).

From this basis, scholars pursued the phenomenon of formulaic phraseology in numerous different traditions, many of them manuscript-based poetries—Old and Middle English, Old French, medieval and later Spanish, and medieval German—and the method was extended to biblical studies, Chinese, international ballad studies, Finnish, central Asian epic, Russian, medieval and modern music, and numerous other areas. In many cases, the object was to demonstrate a certain percentage of formulaic density and then to pronounce the given text “oral” or “written” on that criterion alone. In recent years, the reliability of the quantitative approach as a litmus test has been strongly questioned, and universal definitions and concepts have been pluralized to reflect inherent differences among traditions.

Formula studies have consistently raised the issue of whether a performer dependent on this idiom was also its prisoner, that is, whether the compositional method was so constricting as to hamper artistic expression. Another problem that has arisen is the unpredicted persistence of this originally oral-traditional diction after the introduction of writing and in fact its actual use by literate authors. Both issues may be addressed by observing that formulas activate a metonymic network of meaning, the concrete part standing for the untextualized whole, and that this network persists after the advent of texts as long as there is an audience able to “speak the language.” Phrases such as “swift-footed Achilles” are neither merely mechanistic nor uniquely appropriate to each context; rather, they use a telltale detail to summon the named character, object, or situation in its full traditional resonance. Formulas do much more than provide ready metrical solutions for compositional challenges, then; they amount to keys to the implicit word-hoard of tradition.

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See also Bard; Oral-Formulaic Theory.

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FRAME

A set of metacommunicative premises or expectations guiding the exercise and interpretation of activity and perception. A frame can be explicitly or implicitly signaled by *framing devices* (i.e., a type of extant metacommunicative cue) that suggest the relevant premise set as well as the boundaries of the message set to which those premises should be applied. In short, a frame provides information about how messages “contained within” the frame (i.e., delimited by the frame’s signaling devices) are intended to be understood.

In 1955, Gregory Bateson introduced the concept of the “psychological frame” to account for the ways in which individuals indicate to one another the level of abstraction at which messages are intended. Bateson based his insights in part on his observation of monkeys interacting with one another at the zoo. The monkeys employed seemingly hostile signals resembling those typically associated with combat in order to indicate that their actions were actually to be understood as noncombat—specifically, as play. Bateson concluded that the monkeys had engaged in a type of *metacommunication* (i.e., communication about communication): The monkeys had signaled the frame-indicating message “This is play.”

Drawing in part on Bateson, sociologist Erving Goffman developed the transsituational analysis of frame in terms of the domain of social ritual he called the *interaction order*. With this term, Goffman referred to participants’ structuring, process coordination, and interpretation of their own and each other’s involvement in face-to-face interaction. For Goffman, social meaning was situated; thus, his basic unit of study was the social situation. In his 1982 American Sociological Association presidential address, Goffman described the social situation as providing a “natural theater” whose achieved orderliness resulted from its participants’ application of “systems of enabling conventions.”

To Goffman, one of the more important of these enabling conventions was the idea of frame. In *Frame Analysis* and *Forms of Talk*, Goffman treated frame as both a cognitive resource and a socially emergent and indicatable tool by which participants organize their interactional experience. He began his analysis by discussing *primary frameworks*: schemas of interpretation by which people understand the “basic facts” of (1) natural activity (e.g., the assumption that time is singular and irreversible), and (2) social activity (e.g., the assumption that the sounds emitted from an individual’s mouth constitute speech or the interpretation that two individuals are “actually” fighting as opposed to “just” play-fighting). Goffman then turned to two major ways in which primary frameworks can be transformed (i.e., framed): keyings and fabrications. A *keyed* frame patterns activity—in whole or in part—on some primary framework, but its participants share an implicit understanding that another type of activity (other than that of a primary framework) is occurring.

Events that are keyed to varying degrees include: animal play, human play (including ludic folklore, such as riddling or the telling of narrative jokes), daydreaming, dramatic scriptings (such as folk and theatrical plays and televised dramas and situation comedies), sporting contests, and instrumental demonstrations. Keyings are themselves vulnerable to the transformation of *rekeying* (i.e., reframing), as in instances of mimicry or parody (e.g., anti- [or catch] legends that poke fun at scary story legends). In contrast to keyed frames, fabrication frames are transformations of unequal *footing* (i.e., of unequal alignment in participants' relationships to their own and their coparticipants' involvement and to the messages contained within the frame). In short, in a *fabrication*, one or more participants manage activity such that other participants are encouraged to have a false idea about what is going on. Examples of *benign fabrications* (in which the dupe's personal interests are not seriously jeopardized) include surprise parties, benign practical jokes, and experiments in which subjects are hoaxed into a false understanding of what the experiment is testing. Examples of *exploitative fabrications* (in which the construction is inimical to the dupe's personal interests) include undercover spying, false witnessing, and financial cons and scams.

Goffman also raised the issues of frame anchoring, frame clarity, frame involvement, and out-of-frame activity. According to Goffman, framed activity is anchored to (i.e., grounded in) the enviroing world in several ways, among them: (1) through participants' use of initial, medial, and/or terminal framing devices called *brackets* (e.g., the chairman's gavel calling a meeting to order and later adjourning it; narrative beginning and ending formulas, such as "once upon a time" and "they lived happily ever after"; or the signals given for time-outs during a football game), and (2) through the fact of participants' bodily presence in the interaction (e.g., the physical relationship of person to adopted interactional role is said to be in balance when an actor is hired to play the role of a villain in part because the actor can sneer in a particularly effective manner; alternatively, in Goffman's words, "role gives way to person" when, for instance, a performer must cancel a performance due to personal illness). *Frame clarity* (i.e., the arrangement obtaining when all participants share a working consensus as to what is going on) can become ambiguous during instances of (1) *misframing* (as when the sound of a car backfiring is mistaken for the sound of a gunshot), or (2) *frame disputes* (e.g., husband-wife arguments about who did what to whom and why). A participant's *frame involvement* (i.e., the level of engrossment in a framed activity) is held up to question when the participant *breaks frame* (i.e., he or she engages in activity to which the official frame cannot be applied). Examples include: (1) *flood-ing-out* (e.g., when an individual dissolves into laughter or anger at an inappropriate moment), and (2) *downkeying*—that is, frame movement toward or into a primary framework (e.g., when playfulness gets out of hand—perhaps

during the use of ritual insults—and a participant becomes angry, feeling that his or her personal interests have been violated). Finally, Goffman argued that multiple *laminations* (i.e., layers of frame) can be developed in any situation and that information from multiple channels can become available during any given interaction. Some of this latter information can result from *out-of-frame* activity (i.e., activity that is alternate to the interaction's official focus and to which participants either only partially attend or try officially to ignore). Examples include information presented (1) through an *overlay channel* (e.g., the announcement of a storm warning that runs across [i.e., overlays] the bottom of one's television screen while another program is in progress), or (2) in sounds that participants relegate to the *disattend track* (e.g., participants' trying to ignore the sound of a baby crying during a church service).

In contrast to Goffman, who often based his consideration of frame on anecdotes of behavioral situations drawn from mainstream American life, sociolinguist John Gumperz treated frame in light of conversational discourse obtained from members of culturally heterogeneous, urbanized communities. Gumperz argued that cultures can differ markedly in their expectations for *communicative competence*, which (when viewed in interactional terms) includes knowledge not only of linguistic grammar and the lexicon but also of the social conventions by which speakers signal information about communicative intent and conversational cooperation. During conversations, a speaker uses such conventions to prompt his or her hearer to make *conversational inferences*—that is, to develop situated or context-bound interpretations of the speaker's current intent as well as to formulate expectations of what is to come. Such inferences contribute to the listener's development of frames (in the Bateson-Goffman sense of the interactive frame—that is, frames developed during social interaction) for understanding the conversation. At this level of interpretation, participants attend to what Gumperz called *contextualization cues*—that is, message signals (usually culturally learned) that acquire implicit but context-specific meaning by virtue of their use in actual conversations. Such cues function as framing devices, but they also often occur in sets and can operate at a greater degree of interactional subtlety than devices typically discussed by Goffman. Examples of contextualization cues include: the speaker's use of code, dialect, and/or style switching (as in bilingual joke telling among ethnic participants or a non-Brooklyn-raised storyteller switching to a Brooklyn dialect to represent the speech of a story character), prosody (including intonation, changes in loudness, and utterance chunking through pauses), lexical and syntactic choice (e.g., a storyteller's simplifying of vocabulary and syntax to represent the speech of a child character), formulaic expressions (such as “in-group” language), and conversational opening, closing, and sequencing strategies. Nonverbal cues include facial and kinesic signs (e.g., a listener's frowning to indicate displeasure, a speaker's snapping his or her fingers to reinforce the meaning “just like that!”

or a storyteller's flexing a bicep to indicate a character's strength), body postures (e.g., a storyteller's bowing the shoulders to indicate the advanced age of a character or, in social interaction, the turning of one's back on a coparticipant to indicate one's disgust with that person), proxemic distance (e.g., a speaker moving in close to a coparticipant during the sharing of a secret), and gaze direction (e.g., looking one's coparticipant straight in the eye to suggest the truth of what one is saying). Contextualization cues can be ambiguous or even uninterpretable if considered individually. Therefore, in interpreting conversational utterances in situ, competent listeners look for multiple cues that fit culturally learned *co-occurrence expectations*; in other words, the cues co-occur at various levels of communication within the same stretch of the speaker's talk, and the cues reinforce each other such that the constellation (or set) they form is interpreted as indicating meaning. A constellation of contextualization cues can be used to signal, for example, the speaker's membership in some group (e.g., one's smiling and employing hugs or slaps on the back when joining a group of friends), the speaker's attitude (Goffman's "footing"—for example, a listener's raising the eyebrows and mouthing "Wow!" to indicate surprise at a speaker's message), or the conclusion of the speaker's turn at talking (e.g., a speaker's extended pausing coupled with a direct and anticipatory gaze at the coparticipant). Gumperz also used *frame* in terms more recently associated with the concept of *schemata*—that is, as "a set of expectations that rests on previous experience." To Gumperz, the interpretive process in a conversation begins with the participants' making implicit but culturally informed guesses about the type of speech activity being developed—for example, "chatting about the weather" or "telling a story." Participants base their guesses on their previous experience with similar situations and on cultural knowledge. Informed guesses allow participants to anticipate, for instance, the turn-taking procedures, overall themes, and possible outcomes of the conversation. Whether treating frame in the sense of schemata or of interactive frame, Gumperz pointed out that frames relevant later in a conversation are subject to interpretation in terms of frames that were pertinent earlier in the same conversation. Alternatively, frames pertinent later in a conversation can be used to reframe understandings believed to be relevant earlier in the same conversation. Gumperz emphasized that the development of meaning in and throughout a conversation is not a matter of unilateral action but is "rather [one] of speaker-listener coordination involving [the] rhythmic interchange of both verbal and nonverbal signs."

Sociolinguist Deborah Tannen has distinguished between the concept of *interactive frame* (based on Bateson's and Goffman's work) and the frame-related concepts of *schemata* and *script*.

Since much verbal folklore (story and joke telling, riddling, ballad singing, and so forth) and nonverbal folklore (such as folk gestures) constitute either framed activity or behavior that can frame other activity, the consider-

ation of contextualization cues and frame use is especially pertinent to folklore study. Many contextualization cues (such as the shrugging of one's shoulders to indicate doubt) are culturally learned and thus traditional. Some, though, are emergent within their context of use (e.g., a storyteller's marked [perhaps sarcastic or exaggerated] reuse of a particular phrase or gesture in order to suggest narrative continuity or to encourage audience participation). Whether the cueing devices are traditional or emergent, participants' use and understanding of them represent valuable information for the fieldworker, signaling the participants' commitment to the interaction as well as the participants' attitudes toward each other.

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See also Discourse Analysis; Linguistic Approaches; Performance.

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FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

The theory and techniques developed by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founder of psychoanalysis. The term is also applied liberally by nonspecialists to label approaches of “depth psychology” investigating unconscious mental processes and to certain methods of psychotherapy that are attributable, directly or indirectly, to Freud. Such approaches and methods are so characterized when they address data that are erotic, incestuous along parent-child lines, noncognitive, and symbolic.

Freud was born in Freiberg, Moravia (now in Příbor, Czech Republic), and raised in Vienna. He was considered the brightest of the eight children of a Jewish businessman of modest means and given preferential treatment; he was trained as a medical doctor and began his professional life as a clinical neurologist. He soon became aware of the profound impact that sexual experiences had exerted on the minds and bodies of certain patients, and his search for explanations to this phenomenon led him gradually to the components of his theories. The cornerstones of Freud's psychoanalytic approach are the interplay between unconscious and conscious psychological processes, the

hereditary nature of instinctual drives, and the three-level systemic structure of the mind (or psyche).

One of Freud's cardinal contributions to the study of human psychology was his identification of the unconscious as a psychic entity controlled by considerations and forces different than those governing the conscious mind. Within the unconscious, feelings and ideas assume ever shifting patterns—combinations and configurations of the concrete and the abstract, the tangible and the intangible, the known and the unknown, the logical and the illogical, and so on—all under symbolic guises. Thus, two dissimilar ideas or images may be fused into one; experiences that are interconnected may be shifted or displaced out of context; feelings and thoughts may be portrayed in the form of dramatic images rather than expressed as abstract concepts; and certain objects may be represented in symbolic guise by images of other entities, although the resemblance between the symbol and the original object may be incomprehensible.

Recognition of these unconscious mental modes of operation made possible the understanding of such previously mystifying psychological phenomena as dreaming and, by extension, such cultural phenomena as myth making, and similar group experiences.

A basic premise of Freudian theory is that instinctual impulses (drives), especially the sexual, which originate in childhood, trigger unconscious conflicts. Thus, adult sexuality is a product of a complex process of biological development beginning in childhood; this development goes through stages determined by a variety of body functions or areas (zones) and the child's relation to adults, especially to parents. These psychosexual stages are: the oral, the anal, and the phallic or genital.

According to Freud, the child becomes capable of an emotional attachment to the parent of the opposite sex for the first time during the *Oedipal stage* (four to six years of age). However, physical and intellectual immaturity prevent the child from satisfying these desires (that is, they frustrate realization of fantasies); consequently, the desires are unconsciously associated with failure and suppressed. These early patterns of conflict serve as prototypes for an individual's development (and conflicts) during later stages of life, especially in such situations as relationships to parental figures and authority and dependency on others.

The structure of the psychic system is designated in a three-level hierarchy: the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. The *id* signifies the sexual and aggressive tendencies that arise from the *Triebe* (primary or biological drives, libido, and so forth); it is primitive and pleasure oriented. The *superego* refers to internalized standards initially imposed by parental figures and subsequently by all acquired religious, ethical, and moral rules of conduct; the *superego* controls the *ego* in accordance with these rules. If the person fails to conform to the

admonitions of the superego, he or she may feel shame or guilt (compare with anxiety). The ego is the domain of such functions as perception, thinking, and motor control that can accurately assess environmental conditions. It mediates between the dictates of the id and the constraints of the superego. Defensive mechanisms (e.g., repression, projection, rationalization, identification) protect the ego against the injurious effects of these early experiences and similar unacceptable impulses. Nonetheless, like water in an earthenware jar that filters out through its porous wall (weak points), the contents of the unconscious are externalized through dreams and folk narratives (Freud's critics facetiously labeled this aspect of his theory *hydraulic*).

Evolutionary postulates about the human "primordial horde" presupposing the genetic transmission (biological inheritance) of historical experiences provide the rationale for the origins of the Freudian theoretical model and also argue for the universality of its constituents (e.g., the Oedipus complex). Adjustments introduced into this biologically determined Freudian model are referred to as neops psychoanalytic (neo-Freudian). Typically, revisions place more emphasis on social and cultural considerations.

In folklore and anthropology, drastic criticism has been leveled at Freudian approaches, ranging from their blindness to social and cultural factors to their sensationalism, and they have been attacked as comprising "a non-theistic" belief system (i.e., a matter of unquestioning faith) whose dogmas lie beyond verification. Yet the various Freudian approaches have been dominant in the study of learned traditions—to the detriment of other cognitive types of psychological systems, especially those dealing with the psychology of learning.

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See also Jungian Psychology; Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Folklore; Psychological Approach.

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FUNCTIONALISM

In folklore studies, the view that every folklore item must have a function. Here, the expectation is that every proverb, tale, folk belief, or ballad must satisfy some important cultural, social, or psychological function. This view of the functional in folklore is parallel to Bronislaw Malinowski's position that everything in human life must have a function.

On a more theoretical level, three kinds of functionalism play an important role in social sciences literature on the topic. The first posits that it is the needs of the psychobiological human entity that are at center stage, the second emphasizes the roles and functions of social structures within the group, and the third approach to functionalism argues for social cohesion through the shared mental structures of the "conscience collective." The first of these is represented by the work of Bronislaw Malinowski, the second by the writings of Reginald Radcliffe-Brown, and the third by writings of Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. Given that a great deal of folklore consists of either beliefs or the oral aspects of culture, it would seem that the works of Durkheim and Mauss are the most significant for many folklorists. Malinowski's biopsychological work, however, is relevant for folklorists who are interested in material folklore.

As one of the great fieldworkers of all time, Malinowski was convinced that every detail of a culture (and this most certainly would include its folklore) had a function. If any social scientist would have the exclusive rights to be called an archfunctionalist, that would certainly be Bronislaw Malinowski. In anthropology, he and Radcliffe-Brown are viewed as the founders of modern functionalism. However, their functionalisms are dramatically different. Radcliffe-Brown's is a structural functionalism, whereas Malinowski's functionalism is based on human biology and psychology. It must be noted that this biopsychological approach pays close attention to the individual and de-emphasizes the importance of the social system as having a reason of existence beyond that of the individual; for Malinowski, functionalism is a metamorphosis of the seven needs of the individual: nutrition, reproduction, bodily comforts, safety, relation, movement, and growth into the secondary needs of society. The needs of the individual are satisfied by the social structure of his or her culture, whose function it is to satisfy those human needs. In other words, every social institution has a need to satisfy, and so does every item in a culture. For folklorists, this means that even the smallest item one collects, such as a single folk belief, has a function to perform both at the level of the individual and at the level of the society and the culture. Malinowski gives us the ultimate in a functional approach. In contrast to Malinowski's interest in the individual and biopsychological approaches, Radcliffe-Brown was interested in the functioning of the social structure.

Radcliffe-Brown has had significant influence in both anthropology and sociology. The functionalist dimension of his work and its structural underpinnings constitute the foundation of structural functionalism in social anthropology as well as in sociological thought. In a period when American anthropology under Franz Boas' influence was putting increasing emphasis on fieldwork, Radcliffe-Brown's main interests remained in generalization and theory. His two major methodological positions were (1) that the individual is of no account and that it is only the social system that matters, and (2) that the organic analogy should be used. Both these points have often been rejected in American anthropology.

Radcliffe-Brown derived his concept of function from physiology. He believed that the term *function* in the social sciences meant the same process as in biology. A different way of putting this is to say that function is the contribution an element makes to the whole social system. The difference between Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski is, then, that Malinowski started with the individual, whereas individual needs were incidental to Radcliffe-Brown, who regarded the system of human interactions rather than human beings as being central in a functionalist approach to society.

Structure refers to a system of organized parts. These parts are individual persons who participate in social life, occupying statuses within the system. The social network is made up of social relationships between individuals of a society. The individual is in turn controlled by norms or patterns. Folklore's function is to maintain these norms and patterns. It is in his use of the concept of structure and its maintenance that Radcliffe-Brown made his major contribution to functionalism. His approach is markedly different than Durkheim's or Mauss' view.

The work of Durkheim has had a profound influence on the social sciences; his views on why and how society functions have become an integral part of our intellectual heritage. The main subject that preoccupied Durkheim on this topic throughout his life was that of social solidarity or cohesion. He wanted to understand, more than anything else, how a social unit holds its members together. He used concepts such as *organic solidarity* and *conscience connective* to address this issue.

In "The Division of Labor in Society" (1893), Durkheim concentrated on increased specialization of individuals as the key to social solidarity. Societies that have a great amount of specialization possess *organic solidarity*; each individual must work with others to survive. On the other hand, societies that have no differentiation of this type are held together by *mechanical solidarity*. Individuals in such societies have a strong sense of sharing common experiences, but cooperation with others is not necessary. What binds the group together is the cohesion of common experiences. Folklore is a very important part of this common experience, as every group and subgroup shares a folklore

that helps cement the solidarity of the group. An aspect of this can be seen in internally undifferentiated occupational groups in contemporary culture where such groups have their own lore.

Later, Durkheim added another explication of social solidarity: that which centers around the conscience collective. The meaning of this phrase in English is something like “shared awareness” or “common understanding.” Society must be studied by studying *social facts*, which are parts of the shared awareness in a society. For Durkheim, social facts were what anthropologists understand to be culture. An example of this can be seen in the *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* in which Durkheim claimed that the totem, the sacred object, is a representation by which society symbolizes itself. The totem is the society rationalized through religion. Such a belief implies that a totem, like any other symbol, is a *collective representation*. This value is given to the representation by the society itself. This results in an epistemology that claims that individual knowledge results neither from the “mind” nor from the senses; rather, we know what we know because we learn socially devised “collective representations.” Folklore encompasses a group of these representations that comprise social knowledge and social facts. Durkheim contributed further on this topic with Marcel Mauss.

Two aspects of Mauss’ works that have had a major influence on social scientists are his analysis of gift giving and his analysis, with Durkheim, of “primitive” classifications. Mauss and Durkheim saw primitive classifications of categories of phenomena as being the first scientific classifications known to man—a view not very different from contemporary views about folk belief. They regarded such classificatory systems as systems of cognitive categories. The main function of these classifications was to make the relationship between phenomena understandable. As to gifts, Mauss recognized that gifts are obligatory and a part of a network of social obligations. In other words, gift giving and the repayment of gifts represent responsibilities within the social fabric that contribute to cohesion and social solidarity. The underlying importance of functional approaches for folklore studies is the theoretical contextualization of folklore materials within a conceptual framework that folklorists generally assume but do not attempt to cultivate. In this perspective, all folklore materials are a function of a human need, a social and structural necessity, or a device for social cohesion.

Functionalism—viewed as Malinowski’s biological and psychological given, Radcliffe-Brown’s interplay between the structures of society, and Durkheim and Mauss’ social cohesiveness or cultural matrix—provides folkloristics with a multifaceted theoretical matrix for any item in folklore.

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See also Anthropological Approach.

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G

GAMES, FOLK

Play forms, usually with explicit rules, known to a particular group of people. Although artifacts recognizable as games have been among the archaeological finds of ancient Sumer, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, and China, scholars continue to disagree over definitions of the genre. Games range from the covert, xeroxed visual riddles in office folklore, baby tickling styles, and adolescent courtship rituals to the large-scale painted games within urban graffiti and performances at public festivals.

Games are both observable and, simultaneously, inside the minds of the players. Perhaps the most profound paradox in game scholarship was framed by William Wells Newell, collector of children's folklore, who noted that players were simultaneously conservative and inventive with their games. Games are a solid and collectible—yet slippery and evolving—phenomenon.

The Study of Games, by Elliot M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith, contains historical references for specific forms of games and traces the word *game* to its Indo-European root—*ghem*, meaning “to leap joyfully, to spring.” The study isolates the three most familiar usages for the word: first, “a form of play, amusement, recreation, sport, or frolic involving specific rules, sometimes utilizing a set of equipment, sometimes requiring skill, knowledge, and endurance”; second, “a condition of a leg, when someone is lame or injured and they limp”; and third, “wild animals, birds, or fish that are hunted for sport, or for use as food.” A game as folklore genre combines the notion of the form, condition, and object.

The prominence of rules in game definitions serves as the game's primary marker. Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky noted that in games, there are overt or revealed rules and concealed drama, whereas in other forms of play, there is revealed drama and concealed rules. As there are layers of rules to each game, one could argue, so there are layers of drama. Historically, the overt thematic dramas of the games were given research priority, with the emphasis on the game's spoken texts. Recently, it is the covert dramas that are being written about, with the emphasis on the game's symbolism and its connection to context and larger cultural patterns.

The more popular phenomena for game research have been: the verbal play of jump-rope rhymes, singing games, ball-bouncing rhymes, and riddles; board games such as chess, backgammon, and go; chasing and fighting games; and games focused on objects, such as string games and doll plays. Typically, in the collections of games, the texts are of a specific genre cross-culturally,



Danish girls enjoying hopscotch, a folk game that is found throughout the world, from New York to New Delhi.

such as singing games, or of a particular genre prominent in one place, as in stylized ball play.

All games in active traditional circulation among players are considered folk games, yet some games are traditionally associated with certain peoples and often highlighted in game study, such as hunting games associated with a particular hunting-and-gathering culture. Even the highly regulated popular sport of basketball has its own folk variations, which themselves can be considered folk games. Although adults and children alike play games, the folklore literature has emphasized either the festival games of adults or the vast repertoires of the most prolific of game players—elementary-school-age children.

The most comprehensive cross-cultural collection of folk game studies to date is Helen Schwartzman's *Transformations: The Anthropology of Children's Play*. Cross-referenced by specific game genre and locale, this volume serves as an encyclopedia of game types and play lore, as well as a catalog of films on folk games. A reference book for both ethnographic and psychological studies, *Transformations* serves as a reminder that alongside the history of specific games, the study of games in general has had its own traditions.

The main thrust of much nineteenth- and mid-twentieth-century game lore research was directed to finding early, if not "original," versions of games. There is a certain adventure in following a game's historical path as we trace chess, according to E. B. Tylor, from its likely start as an eighth-century Indian war game of *draughts*, through Persia and its acquisition of the name of the *shah* (or king), to the name's transformation to *schach*, *eschees*, and *chess*. There is romance in connecting the marital lyrics of girl's circle dances to biblical courtship rites, as Iona and Peter Opie have done, and mystery in postulating the possible meanings of the nonsense words of verbal play. This retrospective process sheds light on the history and the migration of the game, but it tells us little of what the games actually mean or meant to the human players.

Although histories of specific games were attempted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, games were not collected formally in Europe until the 1800s, when the folklore societies began to search for survivals of early cultural rituals and traditional forms that embodied national character. Pioneered by Alice Bertha Gomme in England, Scotland, and Ireland and by William Wells Newell in the United States, the first collections of games were focused on region. Like the folktale or folksong, games were examined historically and geographically as artifacts from a passing time and initially were gathered through the sifting of a tremendous number of written sources. For example, François Rabelais' sixteenth-century French tale of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* contains perhaps the earliest categorization of folk games, thus making it a classic resource comparable to Pieter Breughel's sixteenth-century painting of Flemish village games, circa 1560.

In the mid-twentieth century, Iona and Peter Opie expanded upon the earlier, primarily literary tradition of game collection with their direct obser-

vations in *Children's Games in Street and Playground*. Like Newell, the Opies gathered and categorized texts of songs and games and printed them verbatim based upon fieldnotes. Musical notation was included in this as in earlier studies, but there was a great elaboration upon the comparative footnotes. Unlike the overt evolutionism of the nineteenth-century cross-cultural game histories represented by the work of E. B. Tylor, the works of the mid-twentieth-century folklorists tended to emphasize one region in detail. Brian Sutton-Smith's *A History of Children's Play: The New Zealand Playground, 1840–1950* exemplified this later focus. His study further expanded upon the historical emphasis of earlier studies and introduced a new research technique: the collection of games by means of the methodology of oral history as well as through written documentation. In Sutton-Smith's work, the recording of individuals' game recollections gracefully demonstrated the significance of historical context in the development of the games themselves.

In the 1970s, Rivka Eifermann expanded upon the concept of geographic mapping developed in the earlier English works by surveying Israel's games and comparing groups of players and their games by age, game size, physical context, and ethnic variation. Unlike folklorists who conducted other psychological studies that had appeared around this time, studies in which the game was examined in order to understand some other process (e.g., cognition or moral judgment), Eifermann, like Sutton-Smith, examined the game as a cultural form. The assumption behind Eifermann's study was that the games, like other cultural phenomena, served some purpose: child training, subversive expression, or physical pleasure, for example. The study of games in their varying contexts could then reflect and legitimate the differing needs of the cultural communities in which the games were played.

The author of each of the classic works on games cited in the preceding passages attempted to categorize play forms in a particular way. The Opies categorized by motion: "chasing" versus "catching," or "seeking." For Newell, the categories were romance and survivalism: games of "love," "histories," and "mythology." Categorization by action in general becomes difficult since the same text may be a hand-clapping game in one area, a jump-rope rhyme in another, and a verbal taunt in a third. Similarly, a soccer game may be played with a ball in one country but with bottle caps in another. Categorization by theme, on the one hand, provides too little latitude for textual variation and, on the other, allows too many opportunities for theoretical bias (e.g., game texts as "broken-down" myths). Sutton-Smith examined a century's worth of games in his ethnographic research and offered thematic patterns by era and indexed them by game name. The alphabetical approach of the Gomme collection was an attempt to avoid the classification problem by merely listing titles; however, even titles or first lines of games are subject to change. Asking the participants in a specific study for their own terms and classifica-

tion often proves to be the most useful approach, as we recognize that classification is in itself a game tradition, either imposed or brought out by the players themselves.

Games also have been classified by occasion, and this raises questions regarding the significance of spatial and temporal context in folk game research. Some games only appear during certain seasons, over certain holidays, and among certain age groups (e.g., snowball fights, April Fool's pranks on April 1, bobbing for apples at Halloween, and adolescent kissing games). Even these patterns will generally shift over time in any given place and across contexts.

For Roger Caillois, in *Man, Play and Games*, there were four basic categorical elements in game play: *agon* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (simulation), and *ilinx* (vertigo). Caillois' scheme remains a popular model among researchers, despite the fact that though many games emphasize one of these elements, most combine many. Categorizations, like any set of lenses, are useful in that they allow new ways of seeing phenomena, but categories also can serve as blinders as observations are placed into analytic boxes.

Dorothy Howard, in her introduction to Alice Bertha Gomme's collection *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, noted that methodologies of game research have to be examined in their own historical context. In the late nineteenth century, Lady Gomme was not allowed to watch the playing of the games she described, given her gender and nobility; therefore, her skills and interests had to be limited to the antiquarian's armchair. Collectors through the first half of the twentieth century, although utilizing direct observation and fieldnotes, could not capture as much detail as those who did fieldwork in the day of the audiotape player. Currently, with the availability of film and videotape, subtleties in the performance of games are recordable in a manner not possible a generation ago.

Pioneered by both anthropologists and psychologists in the 1940s and 1950s, the use of ethnographic film and video is both highly valued and underutilized in game study. *Trobriander Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism*, a 1973 film by Jerry Leach and Gary Kildea, was able to capture not only the formal game rule adaptation of the colonial game among Melanesian Trobriander tribes but also the joking, dancing, costumed midgame ceremonies that were their own play forms, parades, and parodies. *Pizza, Pizza, Daddy-O*, a 1969 film by Bess Lomax Hawes and Robert Eberlein, demonstrated the style, rhythm, formation, and mood of the singing games of African-American girls in a manner not tenable on the written page.

As ethnographic methodology became more accepted and recording technology became more precise, the emphasis in game study shifted to the processes involved in the playing of the game. Based upon his ethnographic study of the Balinese cockfight, Clifford Geertz developed the notion of "deep

play,” a model in which the game serves as an icon for a culture’s basic character. Geertz made the case for the significance of folk games in understanding the values of the larger culture, and by doing so, he elevated the game’s status from the peripheral to the central. B. Whitney Azoy’s study *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan* made a similar argument and expanded the anthropology of gaming to a book-length ethnography. For these researchers, the study of the game was synonymous with the study of the larger culture, and the games were stylized models of that society.

The variety of research on folk games ranges from sociological and geographical surveys to psychological small-group studies, from sociolinguistic studies of riddling and joking games to layered ethnographies of games and sports. In 1974, the Anthropological Association for the Study of Play formed and soon reorganized as the Association for the Study of Play in order to incorporate a diversity of disciplines involved in the study of folk games. The types of questions asked now vary almost as much as the forms of games themselves.

Work focusing on the highly studied, international game of hopscotch provides a useful example of the range of folk game research and also of the significance of audiovisual recording. Known in Australia as “hoppy,” in New York City as “potsie,” and in French Switzerland as “*la marelle*,” hopscotch has a sizable but limited literature, in that the literature emphasizes almost exclusively the physical construction of the hopscotch form. In this slow-paced game of physical skill, each player typically tosses a marker, such as a stone, onto the chalked hopscotch board, which contains squares in a pattern, each with a number from 1 to 10 or more. Then, the players sequentially hop from square to square, alternately land on one foot and then two feet, and then attempt to pick up the stone without falling. It is a competitive game in which the player who progresses the farthest, without erring in either tossing or hopping, wins.

Sometimes drawn in a spiral, sometimes as a large rectangle, and sometimes in a circle, the form itself varies and is the most discussed variation in the game literature. According to Newell, “This is one of the universal games, common from England to Hindostan.” He noted it was called “The Bell” in Italy and “The Temple” in Austria, and in Italy, the last three divisions of the chalk patterns are the *Inferno*, *Purgatoria*, and *Paradiso*. The Opies found English references to the game in eighteenth-century documents, and American folklorists Mary and Herbert Knapp claimed that a hopscotch diagram is still visible on the pavement of the Roman Forum. Yet all this description in the literature, although significant in our understanding of the game’s popularity in general, tells us nothing of how the game has actually been played. For this, we need real voices in transcription, stories about rules and the breaking of rules, and the ethnographic description of real times and places where real people get to play.

Among European-American and African-American girls in an urban elementary schoolyard in Pennsylvania, the folk variation lay not in the form or in the labels of the boxes but in the rules themselves. In one study, carried out in 1991–1992 by Ann Richman Beresin, children watched videotapes of themselves at play and gave their own commentary on game meaning, rules, and style and on the interconnection between game rules and power. Since the form of their hopscotch was a rectangle with a rounded top, numbered and drawn in paint by the elementary school officials, their folk variation was in the terminology and rule flexibility. For example, they used rules such as “walksies” and “no walksies” or “helpsies” and “no helpsies,” meaning forms of acceptable movement in the game. All of these stylized movements had to be “called” at the beginning of a game, and it was the calling that shaped the game. The fixing of the game in paint by the school officials, as opposed to the more studied child-drawn chalk game, implicated larger historical trends visible in Western children’s folklore—namely, the subtle control exerted by adults over what had been a children’s domain. It can be said that the new rules invented by the children were a direct response to such control.

Nowhere in the English-language folk game literature are such rule variations examined, making one wonder how we can know a game without knowing the players or the plays. The variations have been skipped over in most collections—one could say, across the board. Audiovisual technology makes possible the expansion of questions about the game process, and the opportunity for observation over time, in one place, allows for the examining of larger cultural patterns related to the players, the school, and the larger society.

Descriptions of playful bodies and studies of their games, as in wrestling, chasing, stunts, or pranks, are still rare, due in part to the underutilization of audiovisual recording as a methodological tool and in part to the blinders of Western culture’s romanticism. Speech and rhyme have been given priority, even in the very physical games of rope jumping and hand clapping and ball bouncing. Large-scale ethnographic studies of game genres and game processes are needed, especially in this time of increased adult control over children’s play (particularly in Western culture) and emphasis on official sports and generalized rules.

Also underrepresented in the English-language literature are the games of non-Western countries and games of Western minorities. As Helen Schwartzman pointed out, in the early ethnographic reports of tribal cultures listed in the Human Relations Area Files, as well as in the modern psychological literature on minority groups, peoples mistakenly have been described as not having any games at all. The fallacy of such a notion lies in the complexity of fieldwork in unfamiliar cultures, the misdirection of the questions asked about play and games, the lack of time depth in most studies, and the secrecy often surrounding a folk group’s customs.

Another neglected area involves the pre- and postgame rituals that may be significant to the playing of the game itself. Rituals and minigames—such as the opening anthem before the ball game or the chanting and hand pointing of “Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe,” and the making of a tower of fists in “One Potato, Two Potato” as players set the terms of the game—often precede the full games and begin the competition, drama, or performance. Real players of real games can attest that the boundaries researchers have made around the games listed in books are often neat and artificial ones, as games often blend into one another or cross genres during play.

Seekers of information on other forms of folk games not readily found in the game text literature need to comb ethnographies of particular populations, daily life histories, and fictional and nonfictional films and narratives, as well as the treasures hidden in the related areas of folk gesture, folk drama, dance, and ritual. Students of adult festivals and observers of animal play will find games and a corresponding relevant literature in these areas as well. Many games are listed as songs, both in educational instructional publications as well as in ethnographic reports, and sometimes a game description can be found hidden behind the folk toy in a collection of material culture. For the most authoritative resource on folk games, one should seek out the players. Through incorporating their views, the folk game literature can be verified or challenged.

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See also Children’s Folklore; Toy, Folk.

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GAY AND LESBIAN STUDIES AND QUEER THEORY

The study of the cultures of homosexual men and women and a theoretical approach that considers these cultures on their own terms. In 1869, Károly Mária Kertbeny first used the term *homosexualität* (homosexuality) in his writing opposing the German Confederation's plan to adopt Prussia's antisodomy law. Other opponents of such laws, including Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, K.F.O. Westphal, and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, proposed other, less enduring terms to designate sexual acts and attraction between people of the same sex. Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Berlin in 1897 and established an extensive library of material pertaining to homosexuality. He eventually had to flee Germany; his collection was burned by the Nazis. These men, through their interest in the origins of homosexuality and their opposition to legislation against same-sex relations, laid the groundwork for what became the modern gay rights movement.

The early twentieth century saw the spread of homophile organizations to other parts of Europe and to the United States. Henry Gerber established the Society for Human Rights in Chicago in 1924. Activity declined during the years of the Great Depression, only to resume after World War II—perhaps encouraged by Alfred C. Kinsey's monumental studies *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953). In response to Sen. Joseph McCarthy's attempts to identify and prosecute homosexuals, Harry Hay founded the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles in 1950. Five years later, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon organized the Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco. These two groups sought acceptance for gay men and lesbians. Their respective journals, *One* and *The Ladder*, contain some of the earliest contributions to gay and lesbian studies.

Emboldened by the social upheaval of the 1960s—the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War protests, the women's movement, and the sexual revolution—homosexual people began to become more visible and to demand an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation. The fledgling gay liberation movement received a significant boost from the Stonewall

Rebellion in 1969—100 years after Kertbeny's first published use of the term *homosexual*. Frustrated by police harassment, patrons of the Stonewall Inn in New York City's Greenwich Village fought back when the police raided the bar on the night of June 26, 1969. The struggle continued for the rest of that month.

Seemingly overnight, gay and lesbian organizations sprang up, and with them came a significant increase in the attention paid by scholars to homosexuality. The medical and psychological studies that had predominated in the field gave way to more ethnographic depictions of lesbian and gay life published throughout the 1970s. The latest Kinsey studies documented a variety of lifestyles, embodied in the title of one of the volumes: *Homosexualities*.

In the 1980s, gay and lesbian studies exploded. The existence of a gay and lesbian culture—or cultures—became irrefutable. In 1980, one could have read virtually everything published in the field; by 1990, however, one would have been hard pressed to read most of the titles on a single aspect of homosexuality. Corey Creekmur and Alexander Doty's 1995 *Out in Culture* included a 24-page bibliography of publications on lesbian and gay popular culture alone.

Although Christopher Isherwood made a foray into lesbian and gay studies in *The World in the Evening* (1956) by mentioning camp—a prototypical gay sensibility—Susan Sontag might be credited with making the first theoretical contribution to the field with her 1964 essay “Notes on Camp.” (Camp is a style of humor that inverts and subverts values, often by playing with stereotypes. It frequently has a serious edge, serving to mock heterosexual norms.) Several writers contributed articles on gay men's language to both popular magazines and scholarly journals during the 1960s and 1970s. Esther Newton's 1972 volume *Mother Camp: Female Impersonation in America* was a cultural anthropological study of drag queens. Michael Bronski, in his 1984 book *Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility*, documented the impact of gay culture on popular culture. Another 1984 volume, Judy Grahn's *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds*, offered an interesting but largely unsubstantiated speculation about the origins of gay and lesbian traditional culture. Many homosexual people embraced Grahn's book because it proposed a gay and lesbian mythos. The first book on gay men's folklore, Joseph P. Goodwin's *More Man than You'll Ever Be: Gay Folklore and Acculturation in Middle America*, appeared in 1989. Comparable lesbian studies are yet to be published, although some progress was made with the publication in 1994 of *Prejudice and Pride: Lesbian and Gay Traditions in America*, a special issue of *New York Folklore*.

As the field of lesbian and gay studies has grown, the terminology has changed. *Homosexual* gave way to *gay*, which in turn was expanded to *gay and lesbian*. In the late 1980s, homosexual people increasingly began to appropri-

ate the term *queer*, which had been used as a tool of oppression for decades by the majority culture. Adapting the term as an emic concept (a name the community applied to itself) imbued it with pride, inverted it, denied the conflation of sex acts with homosexuality, pointed out the ridiculous aspects of the stereotypes the word referred to, and threw the term back into the faces of those who opposed equal rights for queers. But the word has a more mundane value, as well: It subsumes not only *gay* and *lesbian*, but also *bisexual*, *transsexual*, and *transgendered*, offering a succinct term for several categories of outsiders. Queer is a subversive concept since it calls into question traditional gender roles and ideas of what constitutes appropriate behavior. The study of queer culture contradicts traditional notions of homosexuality as sin or illness. It documents the existence of a dynamic, widespread, living culture.

About 1990, gay and lesbian studies gave rise to queer theory. Although not yet codified, queer theory has had a great impact on recent studies of lesbian and gay culture. (Studies on the culture of bisexual, transsexual, and transgendered people only began to appear in the mid-1990s.) Drawing from rhetoric and discourse, philosophy, deconstruction, postmodernism, rereadings of psychoanalytic theory, and especially feminist theory, queer theorists seek to reframe issues. The “white heterosexual male” is no longer the benchmark against which everything else is measured. Thus, gay, lesbian, and queer cultures are not defined in relationship to heterosexuality. Instead, they are documented and analyzed as inherently valid manifestations of ways of being.

One of the continuing debates in gay and lesbian studies is whether homosexuality is innate (the essentialist point of view) or the result of social forces arising fairly recently (the social construction theory). Social constructionists maintain that sexuality takes its meaning from its culture, just as feminist theory holds that gender roles are socially constructed. To interpret homosexual acts in ancient Greece using contemporary American gay male culture as a frame of reference, therefore, is anachronistic. According to some proponents of this point of view, gay and lesbian culture could not have existed until homosexuality was labeled in the nineteenth century. Michel Foucault has suggested that the beginning of the social construction of homosexuality can be traced to Westphal’s 1870 writing on “contrary sexual feelings.”

In covert novels and short stories written for homosexual people before Stonewall (and even since), coding allowed the audience to read queerness into the texts. The readers were adept at deciphering ambiguous diction and esoteric symbols. In recent years, queer people have begun reading texts as queer even when the messages were not (consciously) encrypted by their authors. This kind of “cross-reading,” according to Creekmur and Doty in their introduction to *Out in Culture*, depends on camp. They explained the queer resonance that the movie *The Wizard of Oz* has for gay men and lesbians by pointing out that almost everyone in the film lives a double life: “Its

emotionally confused and oppressed teenage heroine longs for a world in which her inner desires can be expressed freely and fully. Dorothy finds this world in a Technicolor land ‘over the rainbow’ inhabited by a sissy lion, an artificial man who cannot stop crying, and a butch-femme couple of witches.”

Authors can invert coding as a subversive queer act. Michèle Aina Barale, in her essay in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, offered an example of a queer reading of a queer text. In considering Ann Bannon’s 1962 novel *Beebo Brinker* from a queer point of view, Barale demonstrated how a lesbian novel ostensibly written for heterosexual men is actually a subversive text that forces the straight male reader into a complicit acceptance of the homosexuality of the characters in the book.

Like words, appearances have been coded in gay and lesbian culture. Various “types” have been common during the twentieth century. The most familiar types may be the lesbian presentations of self as *butch* or *femme* (conforming to visual and sometimes behavioral stereotypes of masculine or feminine). Sue-Ellen Case, in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, used a study of the “butch-femme aesthetic” to support Teresa de Lauretis’ concept of a feminist subject, as distinct from a female subject. According to de Lauretis, the postmodern concept of the female subject is described in (and locked into) heterosexual terms and cannot escape from that ideology. The feminist subject (butch and femme lesbians in Case’s essay) is not restricted in this way. She can take action and move beyond heterosexual ideology.

Queer theory can challenge folklorists to question their assumptions and to look at their subject from new points of view. Although folklorists have traditionally worked with marginalized groups, people who are outside the official power structure, they are just beginning to explore the richness of gay and lesbian culture; they have not even begun to consider the possibilities of bisexual, transsexual, and transgendered cultures. If these groups are socially constructed, their cultures are perhaps just being born. Researchers should begin documenting them now.

Joseph P. Goodwin

See also Family Folklore; Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gender.

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GENDER

Identification of a person as male or female according to culture-specific criteria. In everyday speech, the terms *sex* and *gender* tend to be employed interchangeably to indicate the aggregate of structural, functional, and behavioral differences that distinguish females and males from each other. Folklorists and other social scientists, however, draw a significant distinction between these two concepts. In their more precise terminology, *sex* denotes only those physiological and functional features that are direct manifestations of one's genetic endowment with two X chromosomes (female in humans) or one X and one Y chromosome (male in humans). *Gender* denotes that much larger body of behaviors, roles, and expectations that, although regarded by members of a society as appropriate only for members of one biological sex or the other, vary considerably across cultures and historical periods and hence must be culturally conditioned rather than biologically determined. Though it is common if not universal to make the male/female distinction the first and most crucial division among people, this does not mean that the concepts "woman" and "man" are universal categories since what it means to behave appropriately for one's gender may be radically different in different societies.

In most if not all societies and cultural traditions, including the Euroamerican cultural and philosophical tradition from which the discipline of folklore emerged, those distinct roles seen as proper for men and women are believed to be natural, that is, biologically determined and/or divinely ordained. These roles are not only in specifically sexual activity but also in work, family, religion, government, recreation, expressive culture, and other aspects of social interaction. A gender perspective decouples the biological structure and function of the male or female body from the behaviors, feelings, and roles deemed appropriate to that body. Thus, a gender-informed perspective is often linked with a critical feminist philosophy that seeks to free

women from the (generally devalued and limited) social roles to which they were formerly restricted, although the study of how to be a (cultural) man is as significant as, if less common than, the study of how to be a (cultural) woman. The study of gender likewise implicates the study of sexuality since the structure/behavior decoupling fundamental to this perspective argues that even the apparently inevitable roles within intimate sexual relationships and an individual's sexual attraction to persons of the same or opposite gender are substantially influenced by cultural attitudes. A gender-informed approach to folklore thus has strong connections to gay and lesbian theory and serves as a counterbalance to psychoanalytic approaches to the extent that they posit universal and distinct psychosexual developmental pathways for women and men.

Both biology and culture may contribute to those behaviors seen as gender-specific, but it is rarely possible to determine the exact extent of their relative contributions. Empirical research and philosophical debate continue. The crucial contribution of a gender perspective is to recognize that there is a separation, not a complete congruence, between biological and cultural factors and that consequently the question must always be asked about the extent and nature of possible connections between them. This inherently cultural-constructivist perspective also makes it clear that the very perception of a characteristic as natural, biological, or hormonal can itself be a social expectation. For example, those societies that attribute greater aggressiveness to males may perceive aggression as an essential, hormonally determined male trait, but other cultures see aggressiveness and the willingness to fight fiercely (usually to protect the young rather than to acquire territory) as an essential female trait.

The study of gender in folklore has historical roots extending back as far as the 1920s. Mark Azadovskii's work revealing the influence of gender on tale-tellers' repertoire and performance choices (1926) and Margaret Mead's comparative study documenting extreme cultural variability in gender roles in tribal societies (1935) presaged issues still being considered today. Simone de Beauvoir's philosophical exploration of the way women have been defined as "not man" (1953) was particularly important in sparking the political feminism of the 1960s and the explosion of feminist scholarship in folklore as well as other disciplines in the 1970s and 1980s. Works by Carol Gilligan and the multiple authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing* further elaborated the groundwork of the gender perspective, arguing that women in Euroamerican cultures have been culturally conditioned to have fundamentally different (but not deficient) ways of understanding and responding intellectually and ethically to the world. The constructivist position on gender is closely tied to the deprivileging of authoritative discourses and decentering of the unitary subject central to deconstruction and poststructuralism. This perspective is also

entirely congruent with the movements within folklore that stressed the value of contextual interpretation, with the role folklore plays in communication between persons who identify with distinct and even hostile groups as well as within homogenous folk groups (differential identity), and with the dialogic construction of identity through aesthetic expression—that is, with the paradigms of the contextual/performance revolution in folklore theory of the 1970s and 1980s. Significantly, however, gender was not taken into account in the original formulation of these theories. Feminist critics have had to note the telling omission and argue for the essential place of gender in approaches to folklore study that rely upon a problematized notion of personal identity and group membership.

A gender-informed perspective also has shaped both topical and methodological considerations in the study of folklore. In terms of topic, perceiving gender as a cultural construct has prompted the realization that gender roles and identities are themselves traditional forms of expressive communication, that is, they are social, aesthetic accomplishments and forms of folklore in their own right. Groups defined by gender and/or sexual orientation are appreciated as significant folk groups with their own lore, practices, and types of group-internal and group-external communication. New genres and new perspectives on genre have emerged as folklorists realized that one's practice as a narrator, humorist, craftsman, singer, or performer/creator of any type is likely to be influenced by one's gender and one's responses to gender norms in one's society. An awareness that gays and lesbians as well as heterosexual women have been defined primarily in terms of absences and deficiencies (in contrast to heterosexual male practice, silently accepted as the human norm) has prompted explorations of the positive qualities of the expressive skills practiced within these groups. Conversely, folklorists now recognize that gender must be taken into account as a source of potential difference within families and ethnic or racial groups formerly treated as homogeneous. The recognition of cross-cultural, cross-racial, cross-class, and historical variation in definitions of gender also deflects feminist folkloristics from the attractions of essentialism, counterbalancing the disposition to identify universal "women's styles" or "women's experiences."

In terms of fieldwork methodology, a gender-informed perspective has been one of the theoretical approaches most influential in overturning formerly dominant concepts of objectivity in research. Feminist folklore scholars (following the critical work of Evelyn Fox Keller and Sandra Harding in the natural and social sciences, respectively) argue that the valorization of objectivity and distance in ethnographic research has been a way of privileging a conventionally male interaction style. Current practice recognizes that the self does not have to be defined by separation from the other and that empathic and participatory ways of understanding the ethnographic subject

are as valid as an objectifying, purely intellectual approach. While insisting that gender identity is variable and changeable, this perspective recognizes that the researcher's effective or perceived gender identity and sexual identity have a profound effect on fieldwork. One's own perceptions and experiences (including the lived experience of gender and sexual orientation) will necessarily influence what issues are important to the researcher and hence not only what questions one asks but also what one sees and hears in the course of complex aesthetic communicative events. Gender identity also influences access: Who the researcher is perceived to be will have an effect on how people make sense of that individual, what they think they should talk to her or him about, and hence what she or he learns about a culture or situation. Ethnographers need to learn to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by gender. Particularly for stigmatized groups—gay and lesbian communities as well as heterosexual women—many communicative activities are intentionally coded to avoid exposure. Thus, potential informants are likely to be willing to reveal themselves and share lore only with those who share their gender or sexual identity or who demonstrate that they are sympathetic. A shared gender identification may also be crucial in enabling the researcher to make sense of cues or to interpret communicative forms properly. A complete commonality between researcher and informant on the basis only of shared gender should not be assumed, however, given the variation within gender definitions.

In studying folklore through the lens of gender or studying gender by means of its expression in folklore, a constant tension exists between constructivist and essentialist tendencies. The role of ethnographic and empirical work in the social sciences (in contrast to philosophical and psychoanalytically informed theories) is to document actual cultural, racial, and class variation in gender roles, practices, and expectations. Nevertheless, given the logical explanatory connections between observed expressive forms and common gender-based activities (for example, between intentionally interruptable narrative styles employed by women and the demands of child care), it can be a tempting act of gender solidarity to generalize. Furthermore, it appears that, in practice, each person (researcher or subject) must essentialize to some extent, concluding that some ways of being or behaving are crucial to his or her identity as a gendered subject. To the extent that a gender perspective is allied with feminist theories advocating transcendence of the Cartesian mind/body split, this approach recognizes that a person's sense of self depends upon the experience of living in a particular (gendered) body with particular qualities and capabilities—although all “experience,” even bodily experience, must be seen (from an Althusserian perspective) as ideologically informed and thus culturally constructed. One solution, advocated by Diana Fuss, argues that essentialism is implicated even within the most critical constructivism:

A cultural-constructivist position replaces the idea of an essential natural, biological human gender identity with the concept of gender as necessarily (essentially) created through social interaction.

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See also Family Folklore; Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gay and Lesbian Studies and Queer Theory.

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GENRE

A French word, from the Latin *genus*, used to describe a basic concept in literary theory and criticism, variably termed *form*, *kind*, or *type*, depending upon the period and the theory. Plato (*The Republic*) distinguishes, in the arts of the rhapsode, between narration, imitation, and the mixture of the two, while considering the art of the actor essentially mimetic. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle differentiates narrative epic poetry from the imitative action of drama. The

basic triad of generic categories—the epic, the dramatic, and the lyrical—is a Renaissance formulation that has remained viable in literary discourse up to the present. From the inception of folklore scholarship, the definitions of specific genres—the *Märchen*, the *Sage*, the legend, the ballad, the proverb, the riddle, the fable, and many others—have forged the genre as a principle concept of the discipline. Referring particularly to its literary renditions, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) compares the *Märchen* with the *Romane* (romance, novel), considering the former to be not just a genre but also an entity that possess a spiritual quality that permeates other literary forms. Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm’s assertion that “the fairy tale is more poetic, the legend is more historical” remains the cornerstone of many analyses of folk narrative.

Such descriptive definitions, which project the writer’s own attitude, emotions, and response to the text, have failed to provide the precision in generic distinctions that is necessary for systematic research. To complicate matters, genre terms are words in ordinary languages, subject to ambiguity, vagueness, synonymy, and historical changes. The attempt to employ them with analytic precision inevitably has been burdened by their semantic history in multiple languages. Comparative analysis has addressed the problems of differing cultural perspectives, attitudes, and belief systems that have made the construction of an analytical system of genres even more difficult.

Faced with such complex systems of generic distinctions, folklorists have taken two distinct directions in their attempts to resolve the indefiniteness of folklore genres and the concept of genre in folklore. The first approach seeks ways to overcome these difficulties and to construct the concept of genre as a category of analytical classification; the second proposes to explore the difficulties and to conceive of genre as a category of cultural discourse.

GENRE AS A CATEGORY OF ANALYTICAL CLASSIFICATION

The viability of any classification system lies in its relationship to the reality of the information it stores. The system has to correspond not only to a logical order of things but also to the reality of the information in material, biological, and social life. Therefore, the formulation of a classification system of folklore genres requires a theoretical explanation that will establish its relationship to the literary-visual history, cultural use, and artistic creativity of folklore forms. Within folklore scholarship, it is possible to delineate two basic theories that answer that need, albeit from two opposing points of view. These are the theory of primary forms and the theory of ideal types.

The theory of primary forms initially was advanced by André Jolles, though it is not exclusive to his writings. The primary forms are the first verbal manifestations of human cognition that crystallize around specific semantic

domains. According to Jolles, folklore forms are universal and have been known throughout history and in all cultures, though they may take different literary representations. The semantic domain of the holy manifests itself in the legend, and that of the family is manifest in the *Sage*; the nature of the creation of the universe is shown in myth; and the principle of inquiry is expressed in riddles. Proverbs represent experience, and the *Kasus* ethics. The concern with factuality crystallizes in the *Memorable*, as naive morality does in the *Märchen*. The comic spirit finds venue in jokes. These are the elemental forms of human creativity that have the potential to evolve, multiply, and transform as society changes and moves from orality to literacy. At the basis of the generic categories, there are, hence, semantic domains that persist as elementary forms that permeate later and technically more advanced forms and means of expression. Kurt Ranke proposes to substitute psychological-spiritual needs for Jolles' semantic domains. It is the function of different genres to fulfill these needs. Accordingly, the *Märchen* function to express human aspirations for a higher order of justice, the *Sage* manifests resignation in the face of worldly tribulations, and myth expresses human needs to mediate between the known and unknown. The theory of primary forms assumes the universality of folklore genres since they are generated either by cognitive semantic domains of language or by psychological-spiritual needs that are fundamental to human beings in all societies and cultures. Therefore, as analytical categories of classification, genres have their roots in human categories of thought and language.

The theory of ideal types, which draws on a fundamental concept of Max Weber, considers genres as heuristic constructs that reflect the reality of folklore forms by approximation only. Lauri Honko, who has been the principal proponent of this theory, considers genres to be distinct configurations of contents, form, style, structure, function, frequency, distribution, age, and origin. Each genre is a construct category that involves an ideal configuration and criteria that are appropriate for each form. No single folktale, ballad, legend, or proverb, to use some common folklore forms as examples, has to meet all the standards of its ideal types; it can and need only approximate them. Genres are, hence, classificatory categories that involve not one but several distinctive features, and it is the task of researchers to determine the relations between the category and the texts that people narrate, sing, or utter in society. A failure to establish such a relation may be indicative of the formation of a new genre, the criteria of which require formulation. Honko himself has not outlined a systematic scheme of folklore genres as ideal types, but others have, even though they do not refer explicitly to Honko's theoretical formulation.

Limiting himself to the three basic forms in prose narrative—myth, legend, and folktale—and summarizing the scholarly consensus of his time, William Bascom proposes the following generic configuration:

FORM	BELIEF	TIME	PLACE	ATTITUDE	PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
Myth	Fact	Remote past	Different world: other or earlier	Sacred	Nonhuman
Legend	Fact	Recent past	World of today	Secular or sacred	Human
Folktale	Fiction	Any time	Any place	Secular	Human or nonhuman

Scott Littleton adds *history* and *sacred history* to the genres he considers, positioning them on a grid of two polarities: the fabulous and the factual, the secular and the sacred. As the configuration between these four components changes, historically and culturally, the narration of a particular theme moves from one ideal generic pattern to another. In this scheme of analytical categories, folktale is fabulous and secular, myth is fabulous and sacred, history is factual and secular, and sacred history is sacred by definition and factual. The legend occupies a central position in relation to all four factors.

Heda Jason and Roger Abrahams, respectively, propose two of the most comprehensive schemes for the classification of folklore genres. Jason employs, first, a five-part classification system of modes: the realistic, the fabulous, the numinous, the marvelous, and the symbolic. These modes then manifest themselves in the realistic, fabulous, and symbolic genres of folklore. In her descriptions of specific genres, Jason retains theme, time, space, structure, and function as terms of analysis. Abrahams, on the other hand, extends the classificatory principles to account for the rhetoric of folklore and its social interaction. Consequently, he divides all folklore genres into three major groups: conversational genres, play genres, and fictive genres. In his scheme, it is not only the genre itself that is an analytical category. He constructs a graded scale between two polarities of interpersonal involvement and detachment (his term is *removal*). Each genre, not each text of each genre, relates to these two extreme configurations by approximation. In turn, each performance of each text may have its own position on the generic arch that Abrahams constructs.

The theories of primary forms and ideal types assume the universality of folklore genres, and in their applications to the available classificatory models, they provide for variation, modification, change, and transformation that are inherent in the social dynamics of folklore.

GENRES AS A CATEGORY OF CULTURAL DISCOURSE

The idea of genre as a category of cultural discourse involves a different set of assumptions, problems, and research goals. First, the universals are not the genres themselves but the division of speech into different forms. In every society, speakers divide their speech into categories that they perceive and name. Apparently, there are a few recurrent principles that are universal: The idea of truth distinguishes facts from fiction, the perception of rhythm separates poetry from prose, and the ability to use tropes in language differentiates between figurative and nonfigurative language. Taking these features as given, genres of discourse become subject to specific inquiries of cultural cognition, linguistic representation, and performance. Speakers in every language name or label by other means the genres they use. These names or signs reflect the cultural taxonomy of speech, representing the features the speakers consider most distinctive in their forms of folklore. They constitute a system of local knowledge of rhetoric and speech making, a theory coded in generic names and practices.

Second, since a universal and scientific classification system becomes irrelevant to the exploration of genres as categories of cultural discourse, the identification of a particular text in terms of a preformulated system of pigeon-holes becomes methodologically irrelevant as well. The inquiry into the nature of folklore genres shifts from a deductive to an inductive method, exploring the use and performance of the genres in society through the formulation of their forms and structures, their conception within the cultural cosmology, the rules and principles for their performance, and the textual and social interrelations between the genres themselves.

Morphological-structural analysis explores generic discourse on a semantic, dramatic, or metaphoric level. The sequence of episodes in a narrative—the relationship between actions, characters, objects, or other symbols, whether in a tale, a legend, a ballad, or an epic—constitutes a dimension of the generic discourse that distinguishes one genre from another in specific societies. Morphological-structural relations serve as the generic grammar of folklore forms. Speakers, narrators, and singers—though they may not be able to formulate the grammar—have the ability to be aware of that grammar. Therefore, such an analysis becomes an essential part of the ethnography of folklore genres. Although morphological-structural analysis originally purported to advance definitions of folklore genres, assuming them to have similar patterns in all traditions, it is possible to modify this methodology in order to examine the ethnic genres of specific traditions.

In many societies, the generic system amounts to a complex set of relations between folklore forms, which their speakers relate to other domains of social life, such as religion and politics. As people establish connections

between their speech genres and their ideas about their world, they establish a cosmology of speech that includes ideas about the creation of speech in general and certain genres in particular. They place religious value on traditional genres of prayers, invocations, and ritual songs and consider other forms of speech as mundane, profane, or ordinary. There are narratives that account not only for the creation of speech but also for its different forms and stories about great orators and singers who excelled in delivering one genre or another. Such a “mythology of folklore genres” is an essential aspect of genres of discourse because it provides the basis for the use of such genres in society as rooted in cultural ideology.

The pragmatic exploration of ethnic genres requires an examination of their names, their cultural taxonomies, and their performances in social life. Their names reflect their cultural conception and significance, their history in tradition, and their import and function as their speakers view them. Their taxonomies underscore their relations to each other in terms of their prosodic features, the spaces and times of their performances, and their association with particular segments of society. Their performances are the basis for any analysis of the poetics of folklore genres, the use of formulas and frames, the alteration between prose and poetry, and the use of any genres of speech within or in relation to other genres of speech.

There is not a necessary and exclusive direct correspondence between genres and events as cultural categories of folklore. A single cultural event is often the occasion for the performance of several genres. The rules that dictate which genres are appropriate for which occasions are part of the cultural conventions. Similarly, a single genre may include other culturally recognized genres. Tales often include songs, epics include other tales as well as proverbs and riddles, and proverbs and riddles, when performed by themselves, may allude to tales and songs, thus semantically including themes known in different genres. Such combinations do not necessarily imply neglecting the principles of genres but rather an artistic and often playful use of these cultural categories of discourse.

Dan Ben-Amos

See also Aesthetics; Ethnoaesthetics; Ethnopoetics; Linguistic Approach; Literary Approach; Text; Texture.

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GESTURE

Movement of the body, including the face, that expresses an idea or emotion. The study of such movement, called *kinesics*, has a place in several disciplines concerned with human communication, especially linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and ethnology. Folkloristic interest in gestures, though drawing from these branches of study, has focused in two particular directions: on body movements and facial expressions that contribute to the articulation of verbal and material folklore forms—that is, gestures that contribute to the paralinguistics of folklore performance—and on movements that have traditional meaning in their own right. Although recognizing that every movement means something either latently or overtly, folklorists have concentrated primarily on those gestures that are conscious and traditional.

One major category of gestures studied by folklorists are those known as *emblems*. These gestures have a direct verbal translation, generally known throughout the folk community. Performers use them with the conscious intent of sending a specific message, particularly when such factors as distance or poor acoustics have made verbal communication impractical. Emblems may stand on their own, without any verbalization. One of the simplest emblems used in various cultures is nodding one's head to signal either the affirmative or the negative. Waving upon greeting or upon leave-taking is another widely known emblem. Other familiar examples of gestures that function as emblems are “the bird,” the upraised middle finger used as an insult, and a shrug of the shoulders, suggesting the gesturer's ignorance of the subject under consideration.

In some traditional contexts, especially occupations in which the noise of heavy machinery may drown out speech, systems of emblems may develop to enable workers to communicate with one another. Two gestural systems relying on emblems that have elicited folkloristic interest are the sign language used for intercultural communication among Native Americans and American Sign Language, used by the hearing- and speech-impaired. The latter, in fact, offers a method for communicating folklore forms circulated orally in other performance situations.

Illustrators are the other major category of gestures that folklorists study. Gestures that are designated as illustrators are clearly linked to another mode of communication, usually speech, and occur when spoken words need amplification or clarification. Speakers may use illustrators to indicate the size and shape of an object, to designate a direction, to emphasize a point being made, or to enumerate related elements in a discourse. A fisher, for example, may demonstrate the length of “the one that got away” by holding his or her open palms the appropriate distance apart; a pointed finger may indicate the road

to be taken when someone verbally gives directions; a storyteller can suggest the suddenness of the protagonist's escape from a threatening revenant with a snap of the fingers; and a homilist may differentiate the points in a sermon by ticking them off one by one on the fingers. Some performers of folklore may become associated with a particular illustrator. African-American storyteller James Douglas Suggs, whose performances were reported by Richard M. Dorson, characteristically depicted the hasty departure of a character by slapping his hands together and then sliding one quickly off the other. Ozark ballad singer Almeda Riddle became associated with the circles she made with each hand to maintain the tempo as she sang.

Folklorists also may have some interest in the category of gestures known as *regulators*, those gestures that help to guide the flow of verbal interaction by signaling beginnings and ends of discourse, topic shifts, or turns at speaking. Nodding, pointing, or changing facial expression or posture may serve such purposes.

Few studies focusing exclusively on gestures have appeared in the literature of folklore studies, though most fieldworkers recognize the necessity of recording and reporting gestures that they observe during verbal performances. The most extensive study of a single gesture, using the historic-geographic method, is Archer Taylor's examination of the "shanghai gesture" (known by other folk names), an emblem of insult in which the thumb is touched to the nose and the fingers are wagged. Other gesture studies by folklorists take a more ethnographic approach and examine gesture use in particular contexts. For example, a study of two gestures, cutting one's eyes to indicate disapproval and sucking the teeth to signal anger, suggests their African origins, but the study focuses principally upon the gestures' context-dependent meanings and usages among African-Americans in the West Indies and the United States.

Potential approaches to the study of gestures by folklorists include examining the role gestures play in affirming group identity. The signing used by urban gangs exemplifies this role of gestures, as does the use of secret handshakes by members of clubs and other organizations. Gestures may be overt signs of group identity based on religion (for example, crossing oneself), ethnicity (the Black Power salute and handshake), or voluntary association (the Boy Scout sign).

Folklorists also may concentrate on how gestures complement or replace other forms of communication. When an infielder in a baseball game raises the first and little fingers to indicate to outfielders that two players on the opposing side have made outs, he uses that particular gesture because verbal communication may be hampered by distance and crowd noise. Furthermore, raising the first and second fingers might not be as easily distinguishable as the gesture he uses.

Folklorists also may note the culture-specific meaning of gestures that appear to be identical but actually have different meanings. The gesture used by the infielder to mean “two outs,” for example, closely resembles the gesture of the “horns,” which has both insulting and prophylactic significance in Mediterranean cultures and their extensions in the Western Hemisphere. When directed at a married man, the horns emblem suggests that his wife is being unfaithful, that he is a cuckold. When directed in response to a compliment made by someone whose intentions may be suspect, the same gesture wards off the evil eye. Sports fans in the U.S. Southwest recognize the gesture as a spirit-rouser for supporters of the University of Texas athletic teams, who are known as Longhorns. Another gesture that has multiple meanings is the upraised first and middle fingers held slightly apart. This may simply mean the number two, but it also has significance because of its resemblance to the letter *v*. Associated with Winston Churchill, the British prime minister during World War II, the gesture has come to stand for “victory.” During the antiwar movement of the 1960s in the United States, the gesture came to represent peace and, in fact, became an integrative device among members of the counterculture for whom its significance extended to a range of activities associated with their lifestyle.

In addition to examining how gestures are used by storytellers and other verbal artists, folklorists should look at gesture usage in such contexts as traditional ritual, where the exact way in which something is done (for example, whether the right or left hand is used) may affect the efficacy of the procedure. Moreover, gestures frequently constitute important features of games, dances, and dramatic performances.

One hindrance to the study of gestures has been the failure to develop a simple, uniform system to record them. Although some folklorists have tried to use methods based loosely upon systems such as that developed by Rudolf Laban for transferring body movement to the printed page, most have found Laban notation too cumbersome and have opted for verbal descriptions of the gestures. When the gestures are part of the performance of some other kind of folklore, transcribers may have difficulty integrating them into the text of the performance. General comments about body language in a performance note may substitute for precise indication of which gestures appeared at what precise point in the performance.

William M. Clements

See also Frame; Performance.

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GESUNKENES KULTURGUT

The idea that noteworthy cultural materials originated among the elite (or upper stratum of society) and subsequently descended to (were copied by) the lower stratum, or folk. A movement in the opposite direction is termed *gehobenes Kulturgut* (elevated culture materials). If the process involves social groups at various levels within the same presumed evolutionary stage, it may not be labeled as evolution or devolution.

The term *gesunkenes Kulturgut* was coined by the German Hans Naumann at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1902, Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer suggested that folktales did not spring from a particular social class present in all societies, contrary to the views of romantic nationalism. He further postulated: “The folk do not produce, they re-produce.” Naumann—who had espoused (in company with other folklorists such as Arnold van Gennep and Pierre Saintyves) the view that folklore originated in primitive rituals—embraced this new argument and developed it into a theory. His new postulate credited the origin of folklore to a socially superior *Oberschicht* (upper stratum, intelligentsia), whose creative responses were borrowed, copied, or imitated by the socially inferior *Unterschicht* (lower stratum, peasantry, folk). From a psychological standpoint, although the process was one of “matched dependent behavior,” the behavior of the model (the *Oberschicht*) degenerated into folklore in the course of being acquired and

reproduced by the *Unterschicht*. These folkloric responses of the *Unterschicht* were degenerated imitations of the original *Oberschicht* models because they were garbled and because they reflected the ignorance and misunderstanding of the unsophisticated *Unterschicht*. Naumann called the product of what was adopted from the *Oberschicht* models *gesunkenes Kulturgut*.

The arguments of Naumann, Hoffmann-Krayer, and others who viewed folklore in nationalistic terms were later incorporated into Nazi political ideology. Thus, what began as an academic, sociological, and anthropological thesis became fundamental to the development of the extreme nationalistic *Herrenvolk* (master race) ideology. The roots of this doctrine lie deep in German political theory and practice, backed by the firm beliefs that racial and folk ideals are basic to the state and that intense nationalism is an important means of survival.

In their search for the spiritual and national ancestry of the German peoples, Nazi folklorists adopted this view. Thus, the theory of the *Herrenvolk* became synonymous with the earlier concepts of the leading, higher, or formative social strata of a population—respectively, the *Führerschicht*, *Oberschicht*, and *Bildungsschicht*. All of these strata were thought to have served as models for the imitative behavior of lower, less gifted social groups or nations.

Thus, the first step toward a theory of imitative learning in culture was introduced by folklorists at the beginning of the twentieth century but never gained popularity because it was used by political ideologists as a scientific justification for extreme nationalism. The defeat of the ideology doomed the theory as well. With the violent downfall of the Nazi regime, Naumann's theory became debased, and the concept of imitative learning in culture was aborted.

Another form of *gesunkenes Kulturgut* is that designated in the idea of the deterioration of higher forms of cultural expressions into lesser forms. Within the realm of verse (poetry-song), this phenomenon was labeled *Zersingen* (to sing to pieces) by Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829)—a philologist and ideologue of German romanticism. He postulated that folksongs are formulated by a process of deterioration through transmission, whereby sophisticated poems are unwittingly rendered into songs. This hypothesis was accepted by folk narrative scholar Albert Wesselski, who was convinced that only through writing, a higher level of culture, could narrative survive. Wesselski sought to use Schlegel's postulate in order to discredit Walter Anderson's theory that attributed the stability of folktales to oral transmission and audience.

The turbulent career of Naumann's imitative-degenerative theory concerning the acquisition of folkloric responses by the *Unterschicht* from the *Oberschicht* created a hostile attitude toward the mere discussion of such a learning process. Ironically, a similar theory proposed by Lord Raglan remains little known in European folklore circles because it did not acquire the political notoriety of Naumann's theory. Without referring to any specific race, nation,

or social class, Raglan formulated a theory of the ritualistic origin of folklore. According to Raglan, the origins of narrative genres are to be sought in ancient, dramatic “royal ritual,” developed and phrased by the royal and priestly classes. This ritual drama was imitated by the masses (lower classes), who were too unsophisticated to understand its meaning, and through an evolving process of degeneration, the ritual drama reached its present state as folklore. Thus, epic, legend, myth, and folktale were invented by an upper class and imitated by a lower class, which rendered them into their present forms.

Raglan argued that the invention of such genres could not be credited to “peasants” and “savages” (his labels for nonliterate peoples). “No popular story-teller has ever been known to invent anything,” Raglan asserted, and “the peasant and the savage, though they are great hands at making up stories, are nevertheless incapable of making up the simplest story of the doings of ordinary human beings.”

Raglan’s theory implies that creative imagination is a sophisticated phenomenon found only among the upper classes and that the peasant and savage or illiterate possesses only “memory [which] is more or less retentive, but will add nothing to his or anyone else’s ideas since it can invent nothing.” Thus, the peasant and savage or illiterate merely imitates and distorts, responding negatively, and is unable to create anything himself.

In summary, Raglan’s theory of the imitative learning of folkloric responses from superior classes is almost identical to Hans Naumann’s. Raglan merely spoke in general terms of royalty and peasantry, whereas Naumann’s theory described European *Oberschicht* and *Unterschicht*, which would later be interpreted as definite *Führerschicht* (leader stratum) (as opposed to the ignorant masses) and German *Herrenvolk* (in contrast to inferior races).

At the close of the twentieth century, the concept of or belief in the principle of sunken culture materials saw a political renaissance. The argument that culture and its institutions (economic, political) flow from the upper strata of society down to the lower strata and that the lower strata benefit from the upper’s riches (possessions) became a viable theory (ideology) and social program (policy) attributed to the Republican Party in the United States. In the parlance of contemporary economic theory, it is referred to as “trickle-down economics” or “Reaganomics.”

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See also Audience; Context; Psychological Approach.

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Gossip

A form of discourse between persons discussing the behavior, character, situation, or attributes of absent others. Gossip is a speech act in which people make sense of their world by providing a charter for belief in the moral character of known social actors. Folklorist Sally Yerkovich defines gossip so as to emphasize its “morality”: “a form of sociable interaction which depends upon the strategic management of information through the creation of others as ‘moral characters’ in talk.” Unlike rumor or other forms of hearsay, most gossip is not assumed to be false; rather, its defining feature is that its target is not present while moral judgments are made.

Social scientists take three basic approaches to explain the motivation for gossip: the functional approach, the transactional approach, and the conflict approach. The functional view argues that gossip serves a function for a social system by asserting collective values. Gossip is an indirect sanction that avoids direct confrontation and strengthens group boundaries. To gossip is to be part of a community.

The transaction approach emphasizes the strategic value that gossip has for its narrator. Gossip projects individual interests through information control and is a form of impression management. Often, gossipers will become the center of attention and be viewed as people “in the know.” The decision to spread gossip is closely connected to the relationship between narrator and audience and to the narrator’s expectation of the receptivity of the audience.

The conflict perspective emphasizes how gossip has the potential to be utilized as a political strategy by groups for their collective purposes. The discrediting of an oppositional force through gossip, or propaganda, is a well-known technique used by those who wish to persuade others. Although gossip

has not been extensively studied by Marxists, it is clear that ruling classes might encourage negative gossip against indigenous revolutionary figures to split the working class.

Many have remarked that gossip has expanded in the twentieth century through its central placement in media outlets. Gossip columnists such as Hedda Hopper, Louella Parsons, or Walter Winchell became forces to be reckoned with in the twentieth century. In the United States, gossip has seemed even more prevalent in media outlets in recent years, with the growing popularity of the *Star* and other tabloids, of *People* magazine and its imitators, and of television shows such as *Hard Copy* that center on the dissemination of personal information about celebrities. Stories about “personalities” have long had an important role in popular outlets. Sociologists Jack Levin and Arnold Arluke (1987) emphasized that media gossip has its own rules and limits, and they demonstrated that most media gossip is positive and that most gossip reporters behave in an ethical fashion.

Because oral gossip is moral discourse, concerned with the reputation of the teller and the target, its production in conversation is quite complex. In the words of Jorg Bergmann, gossip is “discreet indiscretion.” The parties delicately construct the meaning of the gossip in such a way that their views of proper behavior are upheld by others. Gossip topics are proposed and accepted. Moral indignation is deployed and responded to. As Bergmann and others have demonstrated, the conversation analysis of gossip holds considerable promise for demonstrating the significance of this traditional genre.

Gary Alan Fine

See also Rumor.

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GRAFFITI

Written, anonymous, short, and frequently traditional commentaries placed on public walls, desktops, subway cars, sidewalks, and other flat surfaces. The media of choice include spray paint, pencil, and ink, or the commentaries may be scratched or etched in the surfaces. The term *graffiti* has come into English from the Italian, derived from a word meaning “to scratch.” It was first used extensively by art historians to refer to the scratched or etched political slogans discovered on the walls of ancient Pompeii and to artistic designs created by scratching away the outer color layer to reveal the contrasting color beneath. A related term is *latrinalia*, or writings on public bathroom walls, which frequently tend to focus on more profane, sexual, and scatological topics. Graffiti ranges in form from doggerel to epigrams to slogans to single words, often personal names and place-names. Some graffiti is elaborate enough to be regarded as an art form, especially when stylized lettering and dramatic color schemes are utilized. Written form characterizes the genre, distinguishing graffiti from murals and other public artistic displays.

The content of graffiti usually is topical, responding to current events, political trends, and local issues. For example, “stop the bombing,” “get out of Cambodia,” and “make love, not war” were common graffiti during the Vietnam War. AIDS, homosexuality, and feminism became common topics during the 1990s. Whimsicality and wittiness also are distinguishing characteristics of the genre. One example is the enigmatic “Kilroy was here,” which originated in World War II. Many slogans on T-shirts, bumper stickers, and coffee mugs represent a popular culture exploitation of the form. Because of its topical subject matter, most graffiti is short-lived, being either deliberately erased or replaced by another writer.

The subjects addressed in graffiti, however, are as varied as the graffiti artists themselves. Much research has been conducted regarding the differences in graffiti in various college and university buildings—the chemistry building versus the fine arts building or the men’s gym versus the women’s gym. Of course, the graffiti in these specialized locales generally reflects the interests and concerns of the students (and faculty) who frequent them.

Another characteristic of graffiti is its interactive quality, expressed as conversations or “runs” in which a variety of successive writers add to and comment on the original statement. For example, many sources report variations on the following run: “God is dead”—“Don’t worry, Mary is pregnant again”—“God isn’t dead. He just doesn’t want to get involved”—“Who is god anyway?” Sometimes these runs continue until the available wall space is used up.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is urban graffiti that consists of a

single person's nickname or a gang name or symbol. As a rule, the defacing of such graffiti is the catalyst for gang retaliation. A distinctive Mexican-American graffiti, *con safos* (or its abbreviation, *c/s*), functions to prevent the defacement of any name graffiti that it accompanies because of the folk belief among Mexican-Americans that to deface such distinctively protected graffiti is to reflexively harm oneself. An oral folk rhyme expressing this same sentiment is "I'm rubber, you're glue. What you throw at me, sticks to you."

As mentioned, much urban graffiti is gang or "turf" related, and thus it functions as a boundary marker. In hotly contested areas or intersections, practically all of the walls and sidewalks may be covered with contrasting graffiti. The subway cars of New York City have provided the most dramatic example of excessive graffiti. Such gang-related graffiti utilizes a combination of gang colors, names, and symbols. In such cases, municipal authorities usually regard creating graffiti as defacing public property or vandalism punishable by fines and imprisonment. The problem with such regulations, however, is that the writers of graffiti are inherently anonymous, which usually precludes their apprehension by the authorities. In some communities, as part of negotiations to end gang violence, the authorities will work out a truce in which the various gangs come together publicly to wash off and paint over the offending graffiti of all the involved groups.

Graffiti can be classified as folklore for many reasons. Although most researchers regard graffiti as a separate and distinct genre, others make a strong case that graffiti is a specialized kind of written folk speech because of its poetic and narrative characteristics. Regardless of genre classification, graffiti is undoubtedly traditional, with a pedigree extending back historically to the ancient Romans and possibly further. It also employs traditional, doggerel verse forms that reappear generation after generation, such as latrinalia with the common introduction "Here I sit. . . ." The anonymity of the graffiti writers is another characteristic that places graffiti squarely in the purview of folklore. Finally, graffiti is associated with distinctive folk groups, ranging from the habitués of various university buildings to socially deviant groups such as gangs to various ethnic groups.

Sylvia Grider

See also Inscription.

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GREAT TRADITION/LITTLE TRADITION

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GREAT TRADITION/LITTLE TRADITION

The distinction between the higher, elite levels of a civilization (*great tradition*) and the folk or popular levels (*little tradition*). Little traditions are most often associated with the preurban stages or nonurban, nonliterate/illiterate levels of society and are products of the village or the common people. The basis of the great tradition is rooted in the little traditions of the folk level. As a society undergoes primary urbanization, the little traditions become codified, evolve into great traditions, and often fall subordinate to the aesthetics and learning of the great traditions.

In contrast to little traditions, great traditions represent the highest levels of the intellectual and aesthetic achievements of a civilization, and as such, they are transmitted and preserved in some codified, stylized “text” form. As the codified and developed cultural heritage of the society, they provide the sources for identity among members of the society by providing the rules of conduct, the primary philosophy, religion, standards, cultural norms, and aesthetic sensibilities. Great traditions are the product of the reflective, literate, philosophic few, and they are a result of urbanization. Further, they represent the mediated, codified, and intellectualized little traditions extant in a

culture. The existence of a set of great and little traditions within a civilization depends upon consciousness of a common culture built on the common cultural artifacts within the little traditions.

The study of great traditions is most often associated with textual studies, such as history, the classics, or comparative religion. The focus of these disciplines is, typically, the understanding of various cultures through their great traditions. Most of these studies find their models in the traditional studies of ancient Greece and Rome and the "Oriental Renaissance" studies of classic Persian, Chinese, Japanese, and Indic texts. Little traditions, however, are most often the realm of the cultural anthropologist, the ethnographer, and the folklorist.

The useful definition and study of great and little traditions began in earnest with Robert Redfield's studies in the 1930s and with his joint projects with Milton Singer in the 1940s and 1950s. Basic to these definitions was Redfield's idea of the folk-urban continuum, which traces societies on a scale from tribal to urban as a part of human cultural development. According to this system, a society evolves from a simpler, tribal system, with its own sets of beliefs, norms, and standards (little traditions), to a more sophisticated, primary urban center, with a codified set of norms, beliefs, and aesthetic and intellectual achievements interpreted by a ruling elite (great traditions). The creation of these primary urban centers occurs in a process that Redfield defined as *orthogenetic transformation*, in which an evolving ruling group interprets and mediates between the several little traditions surrounding the developing urban center to develop and codify a great tradition.

Like little traditions, great traditions can evolve when a primary urban center comes in conflict with another culture or even with conflicting ideologies. The mediation between the cultures leads to the development of a secondary (or tertiary, quaternary, ad infinitum) urban center, with the conflicting traditions mediated by a select intelligentsia who present the new traditions to the indigenous culture and explain the existing great traditions to the interlopers. Robert Redfield defined this process as *heterogenetic transformation*, in which a conquering group destroys and replaces the great traditions of the indigenous group by way of the intelligentsia. Milton Singer offered the example of Madras in India as a heterogenetic city. There is no singular great tradition in Madras, but there are several overlapping versions of the Hindic great tradition, with a great deal of admixture among the competing versions. As a colonial city and later the primary government and commerce city for the British in southeast India, Madras was the communication point for many of the great traditions that existed there, as well as the relay point for transmitting the British ideologies to the local citizenry.

The concepts of great and little traditions are polar types; folk and urban lie at opposite ends of the spectrum, with evolving stages of little traditions turning into great traditions falling in intervals along the continuum. The

traditional bias, though, has been to view the continuum in a linear fashion, with folk giving way to urban. Inherent in this bias is a view of the folk as rural and of folk groups as existing only in a rural, nonliterate or illiterate setting. For the folklorist, though, it is more useful if the term *little tradition* is defined as the traditions particular to a specific folk group and the term *great tradition* is defined as the mediated, codified, intellectualized little traditions extant within a specific culture.

Randal S. Allison

See also Folk Culture; Tradition.

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H

HEMISPHERIC APPROACH

Theory that each Western Hemisphere country's folklore should be studied in its distinctive ethnic and historical contexts. Developed by Richard M. Dorson in the 1950s, the approach sought to distinguish American folklore (specifically, that of the United States) from the traditions of Europe and other sources of immigration. The initial colonization of the Americas, the importation of slaves from Africa, and continuing waves of immigration from various cultures, especially Europe and Asia, created a set of folk traditions that lacked the holistic national identity and long-standing rootedness found in Old World societies. Western Hemisphere folklore emerged from such processes of culture contact as acculturation, retention, and revitalization. Coupled with the particular histories of Western Hemisphere nations, these processes have generated heterogeneous sets of folklore traditions.

Dorson focused primarily on the folklore of the United States. He identified several historical forces that contributed to the distinctiveness of American folklore. His list of these forces changed with the development of the approach; the final catalog of them (published posthumously) cited colonization, the revolution, the frontier, slavery, the Civil War, immigration, and industrialization. (Earlier lists had also included the presence of aboriginal Americans and the influence of the mass media.) Dorson contrasted his hemispheric approach with theories and methodologies that focused cross-culturally on themes, symbols, or patterns in folklore without regard to their cultural contexts and with approaches that examined a limited number of texts or performances of folklore only in terms of their immediate situation. A folklorist who adopted Dorson's hemispheric approach, by contrast, would place the materials of folklore within the broad currents of American cultural history. The ways in which folklore reinforced the dominant ethos of a particular society became the most important target of investigation.

Dorson positioned his approach as contrasting "American folklore" with "folklore in America." The latter perspective analyzed folklore encountered in the United States using the same methods that applied to folklore encountered elsewhere. A structural study of an Appalachian Jack tale, for instance, would utilize structural methodology that might work equally well on a *Märchen* collected in Germany. However, the hemispheric approach would consider the folktale in the context of American history and life, perhaps emphasizing the importance of regionalism in shaping its content.

The hemispheric approach's almost exclusive focus on surface content and lack of interest in structure, function, symbolism, and performance limited

its appeal for folklorists concerned with those features of folklore. Moreover, folklorists who did not study Western Hemisphere folklore (or that of Australia, whose cultural history Dorson believed to be similar to that of Western Hemisphere nations) found little to interest them in the hemispheric approach. Consequently, when Dorson reviewed the approach a decade after he first published it as a formal statement, he could cite only a few studies besides his own that might be identified as using that approach. His final articulation of the approach, published two years after his death, concluded by noting that very little had been done by folklorists using the perspective.

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See also Historical Analysis; Worldview.

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HERO/HEROINE, FOLK

A character depicted as the center of action in real or fictitious accounts of life and living. The attributes of the hero/heroine depend on the narrator's intent (i.e., the genre through which a given cultural expression is made), as well as the psychological composition (national character, modal personality) of the social group to which the hero/heroine belongs. Also, within the same social group, demographic factors (e.g., gender, age, religion) will affect how a hero/heroine is presented and perceived. Whatever the specifics of the situation may be, a hero/heroine will evoke in the listener or reader a sense of belonging through certain psychological processes associated with vicarious instigation, such as modeling, empathy, sympathy, and positive identification. As the model, a hero/heroine's success is gratifying, and his or her failure is punitive. In certain cases in which a character's heroic attributes are not pronounced, such a narrative persona may be referred to as a protagonist. Typically, a hero/heroine is opposed to a villain—also labeled an antihero. A villain evokes a sense of alienation through negative identification; his or her failure is gratifying, and his or her success is punitive.

Certain folklore genres are more commonly associated with heroic char-

acters and action (e.g., epics, sagas, and myths); the little-used term *hero tale* (compare *Heldensage*) was introduced to designate such narratives. Yet the hero/heroine appears across a broad spectrum of cultural expressions, being the most common and best-known figure in world folklore and mythology. The heroic character reflects the qualities needed to conquer chaos and overcome the temptations advanced by the forces of evil or darkness. Thus, in many myths and folktales, the sun, the giver of light, is identified ideally with the hero/heroine figure. The cult, lore, and mythology of the hero/heroine have thrived since prehistoric times due to the demands of war and to the traits and behaviors associated with heroism, which humanity has felt the urge to accentuate, glorify, and record in oral, graphic, and written form.

Heroic behaviors include saving individuals and nations from destructive forces or leading them from danger, discovering hidden treasure, and reuniting people with deities or the life principle. Moreover, among hero/heroine figures, there is a great variety of types—for instance, the deity-like culture



A woodcut of pioneer American folk hero Davy Crockett fighting with the Great Bear. As with most folk heroes, Crockett's attributes were determined by the social group to which he belonged.

hero, the historical figure, the trickster, the strong man, the strong woman, the ignorant hero, the ingenue, the beautiful youth, the saint, and the magician. A small sample of motifs dealing with heroes/heroines may illustrate the great diversity of this theme as it occurs in folk literature: A500–A599, “Demigods and culture-heroes”; A511.1.2, “Culture-hero speaks before birth”; A511.1.3.2, “Demigod son of king’s unmarried sister by her brother”; A511.3.2, “Culture-hero reared (educated) by extraordinary (supernatural)

personages”; A512.3, “Culture-hero as son of god”; A522.3.1, “Spider as culture-hero”; A522.22, “Raven as culture-hero”; L100–L199, “Unpromising hero (heroine)”; L101, “Unpromising hero (male Cinderella)”; L102, “Unpromising heroine”; L111.3, “Widow’s son as hero”; L111.5, “Bastard hero”; L112.3, “Deformed child as hero”; L114.1, “Lazy hero”; L114.4, “Cheater as hero”; L160, “Success of the unpromising hero (heroine)”; M361, “Fated hero. Only certain hero will succeed in exploit”; Z292, “Death of hero”; and Z293, “Return of hero” (compare K2200–K2299, “Villains and traitors”).

Joseph Campbell has shown that although hero/heroine tales and myths occur around the world and may vary in detail, close analysis reveals these stories have structural similarities that persist across cultures and historical periods. Such stories have, in other words, a universal pattern, despite arising from groups or individuals having no direct contact with each other. Repeatedly, one observes tales describing a miraculous but common birth, demonstration of superhuman strength and ability, rapid rise to prominence or power, triumphant struggle with the forces of evil, proneness to pride, and ultimate decline through betrayal or sacrifice resulting in death. Moreover, in many such stories, early weakness is offset by the emergence of a powerful mentor or guardian figure who assists in the execution of superhuman tasks that cannot be accomplished alone. For example, among Greek heroic figures, Theseus had Poseidon, god of the sea, Perseus had Athena, goddess of wisdom, and Achilles had Chiron, the centaur, as guides.

The central example of the hero/heroine motif in Western culture is the story of Jesus Christ, who is born humbly but with numerous associated miracles, reveals superhuman abilities and wonders, rises quickly to a position of high esteem among his followers, struggles with the forces of evil represented by Satan, and then suffers death through betrayal as the ultimate sacrifice for humanity. The only one of the elements listed earlier that does not appear in the Christ-as-hero story is proneness to pride. Also, the Christ story contains the added component of a miraculous return to physical life after death.

More typically, the hero/heroine sets out from a mundane home environment, is called to a quest or adventure, crosses a threshold of some kind, and is subjected to a number of trials or ordeals, culminating in an ultimate test of will and virtue—a struggle with a dragon or other creature representing the forces of darkness (in psychological terms, the unconscious). Victory over the monster is rewarded with a treasure, such as a kingdom and a beautiful princess as bride.

Cross-culturally, the hero/heroine’s first goal is the conquest of self; so, besides folklorists, psychologists and students of religion are attracted to the study and analysis of heroic myth and lore. For instance, according to dream and folktale psychoanalytic interpretation, the hero/heroine embodies the

triumph of the developed ego over the primitive forces of the id, or primal instincts. And from the more heterodox psychoanalytic perspective of Otto Rank, the following elements are typical of the lives of heroic figures such as Moses, Paris, Siegfried, Romulus, and Lohengrin:

1. Birth to royal or noble parents, with gestation and birth being shrouded in secrecy.
2. A tyrannical father who wishes to suppress or kill his offspring.
3. Abandonment of the offspring in a mysterious place until the child is found and raised by impoverished parents, by a poor woman, or by animals.
4. Growth to maturity, discovery of the tyrannical father, and vengeful killing of him.
5. Elevation to the father's status, along with celebration as a hero or deification.

This sequence of life events differs markedly from the one noted by Campbell as occurring in heroic myth and folklore, and it reflects early psychoanalytically inspired ideas on the universal occurrence of infantile fantasies about the father, or "the Oedipal complex," in which the father is an object of sexual envy by the son.

In contrast, from the perspective of Jungian analysis, the hero/heroine's life takes on a more spiritual cast, in which his or her typical solar attributes reflect a deepening and broadening of consciousness through the raising of unconscious images and feelings to conscious awareness, that is, illumination or enlightenment. In Jungian terms, the hero/heroine is the most widely accepted archetypal symbol of the libido, psyche, or spirit, and in the heroic life, the historical and symbolic are seen as identical, with the evolution of the hero/heroine's greater personality or self through various trials being termed *individuation*.

In interpreting heroic myth and lore at the level of culture, the hero/heroine may be seen as the restorer of healthy, positive functioning in circumstances in which a group has deviated from its pattern of collective cooperation or integration. This societal-cultural level of symbolism parallels the individual level, in which the ego or outer personality is restored to functioning in harmony with the inner self or higher nature.

Thus, across cultures, folklore and myths about the hero/heroine unfold in ways that reflect the general stages of human growth or transformation. Winnebago Indian myths, for example, show a typical development from primitive to highly sophisticated conceptions of the hero/heroine as symbolic figure representing personal evolution.

Paul Radin, in examining Winnebago hero tale cycles, reveals four

discrete stages in the hero's journey through life: Trickster, Hare, Red Horn, and Twin. The Trickster cycle involves the earliest and least evolved phase of human development, when primary physical demands predominate and the hero behaves instinctually, boldly, and often childishly. This figure initially takes the form of an animal who goes through a series of mischievous adventures, being represented in American folklore by Brer Rabbit. Through the course of these exploits, Trickster changes and begins to resemble a mature individual at the end of the cycle.

The next cycle in the Winnebago tale series is that of Hare, who, like Trickster, first appears as an animal without full human attributes but nonetheless is viewed as the progenitor of human culture. This figure reflects an advance on the character of Trickster, in that Hare is becoming socialized, modifying Trickster's self-centered and childish cravings.

Red Horn, the third figure in the Winnebago hero series, reflects ambiguous qualities and meets the criteria of the typical folk hero by passing various trials, proving his courage in battle, manifesting superhuman powers, and having a powerful mentor, a thunderbird named "Storms-as-he-walks," who compensates for Red Horn's deficiencies. With the Red Horn figure, the level of humanity has been reached, albeit haltingly, and the help of supernatural powers is required to guarantee the hero's triumph over evil powers. Toward the end of the cycle, Red Horn's mentor departs, leaving him to his own devices and showing that a human being's security and well-being derive from within him- or herself.

The theme of the last cycle in the series, that of the Twins, reflects the question of how a person is to be successful in life without succumbing to his or her own pride or ego—in folk or mythic terms, the jealousy of the gods. The Twins, Flesh and Stump, although said to be sons of the Sun, are basically human and comprise a single individual, reflecting the two sides of human nature—introversion or inward directedness and extroversion or assertiveness, respectively. For a long period during the tale cycle, these figures appear to be invincible, defeating all challengers. But over time, they fall victim to pride, and their unbridled behavior brings about their downfall. Their sentence is death, but since they have become so frightened by their own reckless abuse of power, they agree to live in a constant state of rest—symbolically, the two sides of human nature thus become balanced.

The universal or archetypal quality of hero/heroine myths and folktales have given them great appeal for people of all cultures through the ages. Since they symbolize and reflect the process of both individual and societal growth and development, they resonate with the inner and outer needs and desires of all human beings and have thus attained a place of cross-cultural prominence.

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See also Culture Hero; Folktale; Jungian Psychology; Myth.



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HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Method of scholarship that examines folkloric texts over time and as a process. Since folklore is a discipline that studies traditional processes (i.e., items or performances that are rooted in the past but continue to adapt and change for current use), most folklorists have looked at historical developments to shed light on changes in a particular tradition rather than to study history as an element of folklore. Scrutinizing folklore as a process that changes over time enables us to recognize patterns and structures. This method also reveals versions and variations among and between texts and cultures, which would not be recognizable without some degree of historical depth. Thus, studies of material culture, folksong, traditional narrative, folk drama, and so on include, of necessity, a historical component. Although there are folkloric theories that do not depend upon the development and change of traditional culture to explain their perspectives, those that do look to those processes to explicate a particular outcome, provide a model to test a particular theory, or reconstruct a group's perspective of its past and rationale for the present.

The study of folklore began as the search for survivals of elite culture among European peasants. The eighteenth-century German theologian Johann Gottfried von Herder, known as the father of romantic nationalism, regarded the oral traditions of the "folk" as encompassing the wisdom of the Germanic forefathers; in the face of the French domination of Europe, such a philosophy provided a refuge in a historical past whose traditions could serve only to inspire the cultural and political unification of the Germanic states. Nineteenth-century philologists such as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected and arranged *Märchen* (or folktales) in order to justify their theories about

language and culture transmission, as well as to rediscover the authentic soul of “the people” during the development and consolidation of European nationalism. In nineteenth-century England, Edward Tylor, like other evolutionary anthropologists and early folklorists who were followers of social Darwinism, regarded items of traditional culture as evidence of stages in the social evolution of colonial and European cultures: Customs and beliefs among Africans or Pacific Islanders could be taken as representative of the primitive stage of humankind, and the survivals of folk customs among European peasants illustrated the barbaric stage of European peoples. Although not very good historical analysis, the perspective of Tylor and other evolutionists did depend upon a notion about historical processes that strongly influenced folklore scholarship—that the past could be reconstructed by studying contemporary “survivals” of traditional culture. Hence, the ballad studies of Francis Gummere, George Lyman Kittredge, Francis J. Child, and others constituted attempts to prove that contemporary fragments or whole texts of folksongs represented the survivals of a historical golden age, rather than functional living texts for those who performed them.

Myth-ritual scholars also were fascinated with the evolutionary question of whether ritual (action) or myth (explanation) came first. Most of the early scholars in this field did not investigate living cultures but speculated about the probable evolution and relation of myth and ritual based on classical texts. James Frazer, Max Müller, Jane Harrison, Stith Thompson, Lord Raglan, William Bascom, and others carried on years-long scholarly debates over this issue. Such analyses came to be seen as *passé* because of their emphasis on origins rather than function or cultural context.

Early social scientists Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung also looked to the folklore of “primitive” peoples to illustrate their theories about political, social, and psychological developmental stages. Using historical texts derived from the Bible, creation myths, and personal narratives, they re-created their versions of human evolution. Interestingly, their scholarly antecedents tended to disregard the historical component and focus on issues of function, geographical determinism, and the structural underpinnings of cultures.

Literature scholars such as Francis J. Child also looked for and at relics, fragments, or survivals of folksong texts rather than at their performance contexts. The goal of such scholars was to speculate about the devolution of elite culture as preserved by the lower classes, as if the latter were merely vessels for past glories. Child compiled a multivolume compendium of ballads, versions, and fragments, which he arranged in a “chronological” order based on the topics of the songs. Although Child was an armchair scholar, folksong scholars Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles were involved with actively collecting songs from real people in England and in the United States in order to reconstruct a national folklore and teach it to schoolchildren. With the twen-

tieth-century focus on sociology and psychology as opposed to history, the ballad and folksong scholars who persisted in debating the historical origins and transmission paths of their texts had begun to seem almost anachronistic by the time their evolutionary and devolutionary theories were summarized and laid to rest by D. K. Wilgus in 1959. By the end of the 1960s, Albert Lloyd, a member of a socialist scholars' circle in England that was consciously involved with rewriting English history to conform to a Marxist evolutionary model, had recast the story of folksong and ballad scholarship to reveal the working-class roots and thus the authenticity of Child and broadside ballads.

In the United States, a similar nationalistic impulse fueled a movement among folklorists to recover the unique American roots of traditional culture. During the early and middle years of the twentieth century, folklorists looked to American balladry to illustrate the American character and history as distinct from those of Europe. Folksong scholars employed oral history interviews and field collection methods to compile collections such as Malcolm Laws' work on Native American balladry. John Lomax and later his son Alan Lomax looked to the folksong and lore of occupational, criminal, and African-American groups to demonstrate the existence of a vibrant lower-class American culture—again as distinct from a passive European peasantry.

Twentieth-century linguists also were interested in the history of various items of folklore and particularly in traditional narratives and their component parts—motifs—in order to test theories about the spread of language over space and time. Scandinavian scholars developed what became known as the historic-geographic or Finnish method to search for the “ur” or prototypical form of a traditional narrative in order to trace the path of transmission. The American scholar Stith Thompson finished the work of Antti Aarne and published his multivolume motif index. Later scholars have tended to disregard the historical impulse that inspired the Finnish School and instead use the motif index to show how tales and fragments of tales from different cultures resemble each other.

Thompson, like American anthropologists, also looked to the folklore of indigenous peoples to demonstrate theories about the development of cultures. He focused on the transmission of narrative motifs and still employed analysis of texts as they existed over time, but others, such as Franz Boas, Melville Herskovits, Ruth Benedict, and other students of Boas, tended to take into account only “factual” history in their investigations of cultural psychology and social organization. Unlike many cultural anthropologists, however, certain folklorists who utilized a psychological or cultural approach continued to employ historical analysis to elucidate the continued relevance of traditional narratives—from blood libel legends to European *Märchen*. Alan Dundes and Jack Zipes in particular have fruitfully employed an examination of beliefs, legends, and folktales as they have developed over time to elucidate the persistence of anti-Semitism and divergent national identities.

During the middle years of the twentieth century, a new sort of historical analysis was coming into vogue, one that focused on the past and traditions of everyday people as opposed to those of the elite. During the 1930s, the Federal Writers' Project sponsored surveys by folklorists such as Benjamin Botkin, Zora Neale Hurston, Alan Lomax, Herbert Halpert, and others. Their goal was to collect and record on cylinders the lore of working people and that which exemplified regional culture. Hurston, for example, did considerable work collecting the folk history, songs, and narratives of African-Americans in her native state of Florida. Best known for her fiction, Hurston used folkloric accounts of the past to construct a feminist critique of southern life during the first half of the twentieth century.

At the same time, anthropologists were taking a renewed interest in the history of the peoples they studied. Ethnohistory, a scholarly account of a culture group's past (often before the time of contact), though recognized as a field in the early 1950s, did not come into vogue until the 1960s and 1970s among anthropologists who had come to recognize the fictive and ahistorical nature of the concept of the ethnographic present. Although such scholars as Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown themselves engaged in historical researches in the 1920s and 1930s, their students tended to disregard history in the service of discovering the function of cultural practices and the structures of social institutions. Anthropologists such as E. E. Evans-Pritchard reemphasized the importance of historical research for anthropologists, but most scholars since have tended to emphasize economic, social, and psychological structures when they have looked at traditional cultural practices.

Even though such theoretical analyses did spur advances in one direction, they begged the question of change and development among individual societies—as opposed to the evolutionary stages of human society. Although scholars were slow to realize that oral tradition among both nonliterate and literate peoples actually recorded a very specific view of the past, anthropologists and folklorists eventually recognized that the native view of history was critical to understanding motives and actions in the present.

During the egalitarian 1960s, folklorists began to employ the techniques of oral history as well as library and textual sources to learn about context and function. Those who have developed the most useful theories and models have disregarded the anachronistic anthropological notion of the ethnographic present and incorporated folk and oral history from their informants into their investigations. Richard Dorson, who came out of an American civilization background at Harvard, was particularly interested in the historical development of American folklore and American and British folklorists. His book-length studies of those developments became as seminal as the work of Wilgus in explicating how folklorists came to study and theorize about their discipline. Dorson may be best known among folklorists for his use of archival data to unveil the existence of fakelore employed by lumber companies, which

promulgated the legends of Paul Bunyan for commercial motives. Lynwood Montell's groundbreaking oral history of Coe Ridge demonstrated the rich possibilities available to folklorists who investigated living memories. Henry Glassie's studies of both architecture and later of Irish traditions also employed the techniques of oral and folk history to elucidate the function and context of traditional processes. Although his perspective is reminiscent of that of nineteenth-century romantic nationalists, Glassie's explicit political analysis of folk history was part of the focus on cultural empowerment and authenticity that emerged in the 1980s.

Also working in the 1960s and relying on a communications model, Dell Hymes shifted the focus of folklore research to performance studies in which context and audience as well as aesthetic criteria were the topics of study. Richard Bauman added a historical component to this approach by using records of oral performances by seventeenth-century Quakers as case studies. His use of archival texts to test an explicitly ahistorical theory reintroduced the notions of process and time. Bauman's work, combined with that of Roger Abrahams and Américo Paredes in the 1970s, resulted in a series of studies examining the historical development of perceptions about group identity. Works by Paredes, Bauman, Abrahams, and José Limón laid the groundwork for studies of authenticity and politics and the relationship of folklore to those issues.

Folklorists and anthropologists are not the only ones who have investigated the history of traditional expressive culture. Historians, particularly those of the *Annales* school in France and from the History Workshop and Manchester University in England, have looked specifically at folkloric items and events to construct cultural histories of European society. Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, Eric Hobsbawm, George Rudé, Natalie Davis, Robert Darnton, Peter Burke, Bob Bushaway, E. P. Thompson, Raphael Samuel, Peter Laslett, and Paul Thompson are just a few of the social historians who have noticed the persistence of patterned behaviors and the commentary on them by contemporary peoples in their letters, diaries, and memoirs. Unfortunately, most of these historians, because of their Marxist perspective, tend to take the view that folklore is always dead or dying, and they use that notion to prove that modernization, industrialization, urbanization, and particularly capitalism were responsible for destroying the old world of reciprocal responsibility between classes. Though none of those historians seems to have read any folklore studies, the analytic perspective is reminiscent of the folklore/fakelore debate; in the social historians' analyses, however, authenticity and invention are opposed with little comprehension of the complexities of how traditional processes grow and change.

Barbara Babcock edited the seminal work that combined historical and symbolic analysis of folklore in the 1970s, but it was not until the mid-1980s that other folklorists picked up on her direction and insight. Studies by folk-

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lorists interested in the relationship among politics, tradition, and display events and those concerned with the construction of ethnic and regional identity have engaged specifically in examinations of the historical roots and contexts of traditional enactments. Such studies both shed light on more general theoretical problems central to folklore, such as perceptions about authenticity and tradition, and provide some of the most creative elucidations of unique historical processes, which have in turn contributed to broader cultural discussions on the development of social identity in a multicultural society.

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See also Euhemerism; Evolutionary Theory; *Gesunkenes Kulturgut*; Historic-Geographic Method; History, Folk; History, Oral; Myth-Ritual Theory; Philological Approach; Romantic Nationalism; Transmission.

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HISTORIC-GEOGRAPHIC METHOD

A research method developed for the study of folklore in the 1870s, based on the comparison of variants and aimed initially at the discovery of the original form, place of creation, and age of a given item of folklore, as well as its local redactions and pathways of diffusion.

THE ROOTS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE METHOD

The historic-geographic method—also known as the comparative method or, especially outside the United States, the historical-geographic method, the Finnish method, and the typological method—was born in Finland during the 1870s in the initial studies of Julius Krohn and their continuation by his son Kaarle Krohn. Julius observed that the greater the distance between two places, the greater the differences in their respective folklore. Further, differences and commonalities in oral tradition from one locale to the next could be studied profitably in terms of geographic distribution and spread.

The method was based on the text-critical approach of philology, aimed at determining the relations between extant manuscripts. Using this approach, for instance, the critic attempted to ascertain whether Manuscript A derived from Manuscript B or whether the two represented wholly independent developments. On the basis of such judgments, the scholar could then deduce the possible origin and authorship of a given narrative.

It should be borne in mind that the application of this method to folklore, as outlined by Julius Krohn, only could occur on the basis of a sufficiently large corpus of collected variants. Finland proved an ideal laboratory for studying the method in practice since both Finland and Estonia had amassed immense folklore archives as a product of romantic nationalism. In Krohn's time, these archives consisted primarily of folk poetry, although many *Märchen* texts had been collected there as well. Finland also was situated at the crossroads of eastern and western Europe, making it the recipient of influences from many places, and finally, the Baltic-Finnic region itself contains many distinctive cultural subregions, each with its own folklore.

Other intellectual movements of the day influenced the initial development of the Finnish method as well. Already in the first decade of the nineteenth century, German romanticist scholars had pursued the possibility of reconstructing the core of ancient mythology on the basis of extant folk beliefs. Current folklore and belief were seen as the shattered fragments of a once-coherent system. This devolutionary premise was countered in turn by the late-nineteenth-century development of evolutionary theory, which persuaded scholars that human expressions began as scattered and unrelated elements and gradually evolved into broader and more coherent entities.

Kaarle Krohn transformed his father's so-called local-historical method into the Finnish comparative method. In the process, the findings of experimental psychologists were brought to bear on the topic, especially their studies of the laws of retention and loss of memory. Krohn conceived of the development of folk poems as beginning with simple, isolated themes that subsequently underwent a long process of growth and change. Later, he proposed an entirely different theory of the development of Finnish folk poetry in his major study, *Kalevalastudien* (1924–1931). According to this later

view, the heroic poems had been composed in their entirety in western Finland, undergoing transformation and devolution in the eastern tracts, where they had survived into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In either case, however, the pathways of development were regarded as completely predictable, demonstrable on the basis of extant evidence. The phenomena were reducible to general patterns and laws.

The historic-geographic method was formulated to study the migration of folklore and was evolutionist in the sense that it sought to apply Darwin's theory in detail to folklore itself. The discovery of mechanical laws of development became a prime goal of research in all of the humanities during the nineteenth century. Diffusionism is a broad-based research perspective that seeks to explain similar features shared by different cultures as signs of earlier contact. It engendered many similar approaches parallel to—but independent of—the Finnish method in the folklore research of other countries as well.

The historic-geographic method has become so broadly and variously adapted, however, that we can no longer speak of a single method but rather must include differing methods, researchers, and schools of thought associated with it. The so-called typological method replaced the geographic element by the 1930s. In this later development, redactions are determined on the basis of formal typology rather than geographic provenience. Because all research contains an element of comparison, it becomes difficult at times to distinguish when a study is based on the historic-geographic method itself, on a later derivative research trend of refinement, or on some entirely unrelated method.

The main purpose of the Finnish method was to use existing performances of folklore—a folk poem, *Märchen*, belief, or other item—to determine its original form, contents, idea, or core. During this early period of folklore study, researchers were less interested in what the item meant to its present performer than in where it originated and how it had spread in the past.

The historic-geographic method promoted and assumed an international orientation. In 1907, the Finn Kaarle Krohn and Dane Axel Olrik founded an organization entitled the Folklore Fellows, whose series of scientific publications—Folklore Fellows Communications—continues today. Many of the most influential folklorists of the day were students of Krohn, leading to even greater cooperation and exchange. Notable in this respect are Walter Anderson of Estonia, Bertalan Korompay of Hungary, Séamus O'Duilearga of Ireland, and Archer Taylor and Stith Thompson of the United States.

The basic concepts of the method are the *variant*, *normal form*, *hypothetical original form* (*Ur-form*), and *redaction*. The last term is subdivided into the categories of *subredaction* and *base redaction*. Different recordings of a given folk poem, legend, proverb, or other item are designated as *variants*; even separate performances from the same performer are distinguished from each other under this rubric. Variants that seem to resemble one another more than any of them resemble other collected variants are grouped under the term *redac-*

tion. As an aid to dealing with a large number of different forms, the folklorist constructs a “normal form” of the folklore item, bringing together the central or most salient features of the item as reflected in the corpus of texts. Sometimes, the reconstructed Ur-form of an item is identical to the normal form of a given period.

The purpose of redaction analysis is to discover the relations between different redactions and hypothesize an Ur-form or “original core.” The primary or secondary nature of a given feature of a redaction or variant could be ascertained through reference to certain criteria for originality, developed by Walter Anderson. For instance, an older element could be recognized by its numerical prevalence in the collected texts, broad geographic distribution, unusualness of detail, logical fit with other old features in the reconstructed text, archaic features of language or style, and aptness as a possible source of other later developments.

A secondary feature could be recognized by its narrow geographic distribution, occurrence with other alternative features, lateness of collection, or closer fit with other genres or items of folklore. A tradition does not usually develop in the reverse direction—that is, it is unlikely that features running counter to a late, local version would prove to be original. The researcher also must take into account that the age of a feature under investigation may differ from the age of the item of folklore itself. Distinctions or connections between redactions could be observed through content or motif indexes, charts of features, or cartographic methods.

The historic-geographic method has undergone many modifications and innovations over the course of the twentieth century. It is sometimes impossible to determine the original form of an item of folklore—for example, a folksong—if the item never possessed a fixed form at the outset. Initially, folklorists assumed that the method could be applied mechanically to all genres of folklore; later, the different “life histories” of various folklore genres became recognized.

In the study of *Märchen*, the work of Antti Aarne proved very significant. Aarne’s type index, *Verzeichnis der Marchentypen*, published in 1910, became the basis of international folktale research. The numbering system contained in Stith Thompson’s enlarged and reedited version of the index, published in 1961, remains the internationally accepted standard for the field. In his *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Thompson further sought to classify and index all narrative motifs, in other genres as well as in *Märchen*. Type indexes of *Märchen* and other narrative genres represent valuable tools for historic-geographic research, and the Folklore Fellows Communications series alone has published some 49 separate indices of this kind. The same typological method has been applied to other genres as well (e.g., Archer Taylor’s systematized catalog of riddles, Matti Kuusi’s index of proverbs), aiming at the elucidation of the relations of different variants over space and time.

Märchen, because of their relative length, proved an apt genre for the application of the historic-geographic method: They were international in distribution, and their types could be characterized readily. Walter Anderson's 1923 *Kaiser und Abt* (Emperor and abbot) was one of the classic applications, after which a long series of other monographs appeared devoted to specific *Märchen* or legend types. Typical examples are Jan-Ovind Swahn's *Tale of Cupid and Psyche* and Anna-Birgitta Rooth's *Cinderella Cycle*. The method has been applied to riddles, games, and legends. Of comparative studies of proverbs, Matti Kuusi's monograph on proverbs related to the co-occurrence of rain and sunshine (*Regen bei Sonnenschein*) has provided the greatest breadth. The author carefully determined the genetic relations of an international collection of variants.

In Finland, the typological method was aptly suited to the study of epic and lyric folk poetry. Matti Kuusi's major work has been to further the historic-geographic study of this genre through redaction analysis. Using this method, Kuusi discovered stylistic periods that could be differentiated from each other by formal features. He placed a large portion of the collected folk poetry in the oldest stylistic category, ascribing it to a period extending from the arrival of the Finns in Finland to the beginning of the current era.

Cartographic studies and folklore atlases, a side development of the historic-geographic method, became popular in the 1930s under the influence of German *Volkskunde*. Cartographic methods are useful for representing essential similarities and differences in redactions in all kinds of genres, oral as well as material. The map always requires some explanation, however, since diffusion not only occurs as a simple product of geographic proximity alone but also reflects historical and economic relations, religion, cultural differences, and, occasionally, temporary or nebulous factors. For example, the study of cultural similarity or difference through the quantitative comparison of proverbs is an area of historic-geographic research pioneered in the study *Proverbia Septentrionalia: 900 Balto-Finnic Proverb Types with Russian, Baltic, and German Scandinavian Parallels* (1985).

Redaction analysis can bring forth a picture of the typical singing style of a given area. With this picture as a reference point, it becomes possible to examine a singer's own improvisation or typicality of repertoire on a line-by-line basis. Groundwork of this kind also contributes to the study of collagelike techniques of composition. The personal styles of *Märchen* raconteurs also can be characterized with reference to norms of narrative performance specific to a given area and recognizable through historic-geographic analysis.

APPRAISALS

The historic-geographic method was criticized from the outset, and many critical characterizations have helped hone and strengthen the theory. It has been

claimed that researchers do not pay enough attention to literary influences, although the study of a given folklore item itself generally began with the scrutiny of written and “nonauthentic” sources. Scholars have been criticized for paying too much attention to geographic aspects and too little to historical ones—for example, overlooking the possibility of vertical diffusion. The best results have been obtained when the method has been applied to folklore within a single language area; international and global connections usually prove more speculative. Although the method stresses careful attention to detail and great exactness, the conclusions of historic-geographic studies sometimes have been (somewhat maliciously) characterized as claims to scholarly clairvoyance, especially when charting diffusional pathways on a global level.

Although the historic-geographic method always has been informed by its own issues, it is nonetheless only a scholarly tool—a system of characterization that can be used as the basis for a variety of different kinds of study. It has been used too generally and for purposes for which it is ill suited. Often, the method’s harshest critics have relied on the method itself as a basis for arriving at their viewpoints, rendering their criticisms more like adaptations or by-products than real challenges. Such can be said, for instance, of structuralist approaches, which represent but one of many analytical frameworks suitable for the study of folklore.

The contribution of the Finnish method to folklore research is to be found not only in the range of applications offered for redaction analysis but also in the method’s insistence on consistent, scientific criteria as the basis of research. Scholars aimed at the goal of completeness in collection and analysis, preventing them from drawing conclusions based solely on a handful of selected examples. All source materials must be carefully considered and ranked according to accepted criteria. Further, the argument, once assembled, must be presented in such a way that any other scholar trained in the method could reach similar conclusions. The notion that another scholar should be able to reach the same conclusions on the basis of the material presented and principles followed remains important today.

Although the historic-geographic method is often viewed as a somewhat antiquated product of turn-of-the-century scholarship, it is evident that the significance of folklore can never be adequately described without knowledge of the cultural influences impinging from the surrounding milieu.

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See also Historical Analysis; Literary Approach; Motif; Philological Approach; Tale Type.

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HISTORY, FOLK

A community’s collective perceptions about past events. Every folk group has its own notion of the past, which influences the thoughts, actions, and perceptions of its members. Although often used as a synonym for *oral history*, *ethnohistory*, and *oral traditions*, the term *folk history* is distinct in that it involves a collective perception about what the members of a group determine to be significant about the past and about how that past affects the present. In contrast, oral history pertains to a group’s or an individual’s commentary and recollections about events the interviewer deems important. Folklorists are interested in a group’s perceptions about its past because they contain and provide the context for all kinds of folklore, from traditional crafts to aesthetic expressions, as well as providing in-group perspectives on what has been culturally meaningful over time.

A folk history is not the same as a life history. A single individual’s oral narrative, for example, does not necessarily constitute the accepted version or versions of a self-identified group. Folk history is also not merely ethnohistory, an account by scholars of a group’s history before contact with outsiders. Rather, folk history encompasses a *community’s* beliefs and evaluations about particular occurrences, rationales about why particular events were critical to a community, and explanations as to how particular events have affected the present. Although folk history is passed along through oral tradition, not all

oral tradition is folk history, for the latter includes a range of customary expressions that have more to do with artistic meaning or passing along a skill than with a chronicle of past events. Not all folk history is found in oral tradition, and certainly, it is not found exclusively among nonliterate peoples. Diaries, letters, the media, novels, and memoirs, as well as formal historical texts, constitute sources for folk history, for all provide a specific perspective that can be found to impart a group perspective on significant historical events.

Unlike historians, folklorists do not regard folk history simply as another document to be validated or dismissed, as a document used to support or exemplify other data, or as a last resort in the absence of other sources assumed to be more reliable because they are in print. Unlike anthropologists, folklorists do not regard folk history as the sum of informal unwritten recollections or as the official narratives of the elite among non-Western cultures. Instead, folklorists rely upon a range of sources, including specific narratives about the past and the implicit evidence found in folksongs, anecdotes, legends, memos, and personal experience narratives to examine the in-group view of circumstances and the contextual meaning of symbolic expressions.

Although folklorists, like anthropologists, seek cultural patterns in their field data, there is more of a tendency among folklorists to accept the information given at face value. Neil Rosenberg noted that historians provide their own interpretation of the past, whereas the goal of folklorists is to understand their informants' perspective. Like historians, folklorists tend to regard traditional history as a conscious expression on the part of their informants rather than considering it, as many anthropologists do, as the key to unconscious structures and thus to social, linguistic, or economic systems. Indeed, they even regard the performance of folk history as a significant text in and of itself and analyze its structural and aesthetic similarities to other forms of folklore.

For any group—national, ethnic, occupational, geographic, religious, or whatever—folk history provides a representation of the past. Such representations can justify motives and actions, explain social structures, and establish an alternative worldview. Although outsiders may view folk history as downright fabrication because it may contradict the dominant story of the past, the debate over those in-group perceptions is often couched in terms of legitimacy and authenticity or about whether the dominant or the minority view of events and motives is correct.

Although some scholars have posited that folklorists collect while historians interview informants, such a dichotomy is more theoretical than actual. Contemporary folklorists probably spend more time in the field than do oral historians, becoming familiar with community members and their culture, but they also engage in directed interviews as well as in a more general "collecting" of texts. In recording folk histories, the fieldworker encounters many versions and pieces of a story from informants. Narratives may vary according to the age, gender, occupation, or status level of the informant. After several



Johnny Appleseed is a prominent figure in traditional American folk history.

narratives have been heard, however, the elements of a coherent story emerge. No one person knows or relates the entire tale, but different informants can confirm, validate, or temper the perceptions of other group members.

Folk history, like oral history, has carried a fair amount of political baggage, which has worked over time to diminish or heighten its value. Viewed by many as the history of “the people”—oppressed, marginalized, or otherwise discounted—folk history has tended to be regarded as the province of leftist scholars. Richard Dorson, who received his training in American civilization, particularly objected to this characterization, which grew out of the leftist intellectual movement of the 1930s, and noted that “the folk” often hold conservative views about the past that differ considerably from those of the scholars who romanticize about the folk. Two of Dorson’s students, Lynwood Montell and William Ivey, produced notable studies of community history that demonstrated the value of traditional, albeit nonarchival, sources. Interestingly, in commentary by anthropologists and historians on the topic, neither man is recognized as a folklorist but is instead regarded as a historian.

The particular contribution of Dorson, Montell, and Ivey, as well as Henry Glassie, was to demonstrate that the authenticity of folk history rests upon its depiction of what is significant in the past for members of a community. Hence, recent analyses by folklorists of Native American histories, occupational and community studies, studies of wars, and even analyses of performance events have made it their aim to reconstruct a past from the perspective of in-group members. Whether a particular side represents freedom fighters, patriots, rebels, or revolutionary insurgents depends upon whose folk history provides the rationale for recounting significant events. Such a perspective has been paralleled by the works of the *Annales* school of French historians who focus on meaningful structures in history, by British social historians who investigate how different groups construct their pasts, and by American cultural historians who seek to uncover the perspective of those viewed as not significant by the dominant culture.

Historians, anthropologists, and even folklorists have not always accepted the value of folk history as a legitimate account of the past, rather, they have regarded it as, at best, something that can fill in the blanks in the absence of more “reliable” accounts or, at worst, as a misrepresentation or downright falsification of what has occurred. Like other genres of folklore, it has been regarded as fictive filler, as an invention, or as re-creation. In fact, there are common structural elements or motifs in folk histories that are similar to those in local legends, anecdotes, and personal experience narratives. And familiarity with such motifs and/or the ability to spot probable structural patterns is necessary for a critical use of folk history. Yet rather than revealing the unreliability or inauthenticity of folk history, the very patterns and repetitious structures and motifs of community histories reveal the culturally significant data they carry and transmit. Furthermore, the collection of folk histories of a

community at different periods and from different sources can reveal, as do more standard historical sources, the ways in which a community's or a status group's perspectives on the past (and thus on the present) change over time. Careful attention to folk history can therefore reveal the logic for revitalization movements, riots, massacres, wars, and other apparently "irrational" and traditionally patterned behaviors.

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See also Historical Analysis; History, Oral; Invented Tradition; Legend; Life History; Memorate; Personal Experience Narrative.

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HISTORY, ORAL

Spoken narratives recounting and commenting upon significant past events. Folklore fieldwork inevitably involves collecting narratives about the past, but not all that is in oral tradition is oral history. Although many folklorists use the terms *oral tradition* and *oral history* synonymously, historians make the distinction between conducting formal interviews with directed questions and collecting verbal traditions that comment directly or indirectly on historically significant events. For oral historians, historical significance resides in what scholars or other recognized authorities determine to be important to the society at large. Thus, oral narratives about John Kennedy's assassination or the

depression are appropriate topics, but individual or community recollections about a local murder or mining disaster are relegated to the realm of folk history. The latter, in contrast to oral history, provides commentary on what members of a socially “insignificant” group believe to have affected their lives. Although such distinctions exist, most folklorists have disregarded them in practice and used the directed methods of oral history to elicit full-fledged narratives as well as commentary about locally and nationally significant events.

It was the advent of the tape recorder in the 1940s that made documenting the words of regular people possible for those not in the broadcasting or recording industries. In 1948, Alan Nevins founded the Columbia (University) Oral History Collection to record the testimony of “great men” on their works, instead of relying on the evaluation of obituary writers. According to folklorist Neil Rosenberg, not until the 1960s, however, was oral history regarded as more than a supplement to the written record; in fact, the transcripts, not the tapes, were believed to be the important documents. The Oral History Association, founded in 1966, heralded the recognition that oral history was a special approach and not just a technological development. Oral history, which documents recent history that would otherwise go unrecorded, also gained popularity in reaction to the quantitative methods of social and labor historians in the 1960s and 1970s. Records of the lives of everyday people provide the human side of “scientifically” constructed statistics.

It could be argued, however, that the real shift in historical approach to sources occurred during the late 1930s and early 1940s, when members of the Federal Writers’ Project set out to interview people from all backgrounds and occupations about their experiences during the depression and at the start of World War II. Folklorists such as Benjamin Botkin, Zora Neale Hurston, and Stetson Kennedy collected life histories of common people, of the “inarticulate” classes. Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Alan Lomax, Herbert Halpert, Studs Terkel, and others also were involved in the Federal Writers’ Project, recording vernacular speech and lore as well as the average person’s views on what was significant about the 1930s.

In 1966, in an address to the Oral History Association, folklorist Wayland Hand noted that folk legends and beliefs were particularly important sources of the history of the common man because such traditions provided oral history with a time depth. Richard Dorson, writing in 1970, expressed the need to enlarge the scope of oral history to include folk history. He emphasized, as did his students Lynwood Montell and William Ivey, the need to record a community’s view of what was and is important in its past—not just commentary on elite categories.

Jan Vansina drew a further distinction between oral history and oral tradition by specifying that the latter consists of verbal messages from the past beyond the present generation; oral history consists of recollections and

commentary about events within the informant's lifetime. Thus, oral history can be regarded as comparable to written documents, media reports, and so on that involve a first assessment of events. Because such narratives may be repeated or recorded at a temporal distance from the original event, however, the interviewer needs to be aware that memory, selection, elaboration, condensation, and the use of formulaic motifs as well as cultural styles of performance can all affect the historical account. Such factors become even more apparent with folk history, which may consist of reports passed along from previous generations.

Folklorists can provide a valuable perspective on oral history analysis because of their familiarity with the processes of oral traditions. Combining the methods of oral history with that of folklore collecting can serve as a corrective to culturally irrelevant questions on the part of the researcher. Ivey's study of local history in Michigan's Upper Peninsula particularly made the point that faulty methodology can skew the data. He noted that when he stopped asking the directed questions of the oral historian and began asking his informants to tell him what was significant for them, he elicited historical commentary that was far more relevant to the lives of those he was studying. That such data pointed to different or complementary interpretations of events, or when significant socioeconomic change occurred, only served to reconstruct a broader and more authentic history.

Montell's ethnographic study of Coe Ridge, which combined the sources of oral histories, local legends, anecdotes, ballads, letters and diaries, and archival research, further demonstrated the necessity of gathering data from whatever is available to reconstruct a community's folk history. He also made the critical point that oral histories are valuable historical documents in their own right and not just merely supplements to the written record.

Folklorist Henry Glassie specifically described folklore as the discipline that recorded the story of events and people that history had forgotten. In 1970, Montell noted that oral folk history consisted of a core of truth with narrative embellishments. The historical distortion that occurred could be attributed to patterning, telescoping, and legend displacement. Montell stressed that oral folk history provided a complement to written historical literature, for it added the human side and presented the individual as a person—a perspective usually absent from written documents.

Scholars from the fields of anthropology, history, and folklore suggest that what each has in common with the other is the oral interview. More than that, however, they share the philosophical perspective that oral interviews can elicit the stories of those ordinarily unheard by most of society. Dorson and Glassie particularly made the point that folklorists ought to be more aware of the historical perspective of their informants. Ivey, Glassie, and Vansina further stressed that oral history records the psychological truth about a community's past and its beliefs about the present.

Methodology as well as philosophy is critical to studying oral history. The folklore and fieldwork guides of Kenneth Goldstein, Bruce Jackson, Edward Ives, and Peter Seitel provide recommendations for approaching informants, working with tape recorders, documenting contextual data, and eliciting usable narratives. Although the techniques of folklore fieldwork overlap with those of oral historians, there are some differences in perspective and purpose; thus, such manuals should be read in conjunction with Vansina's discussion of methodology in researching oral traditions.

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See also Fieldwork; Historical Analysis; History, Folk.

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HYMN, FOLK

Most generally, a song praising God and sung in a folk group. Folk hymns may be found today in two kinds of setting: as survivals of older (often quite elaborate) practices, usually among marginal religious groups or in folk revivals, and as comparatively informal and spontaneous music for worship both within and without the religious mainstream. In the United States, folk hymns may be found among various ethnic groups and religious denominations—Jewish, Islamic, African-American, Pentecostal, Amish, Baptist, and so forth. Since the 1960s, in an attempt to attract youth, various mainstream churches have introduced innovations such as folk masses and original songs accompanied by guitars in the style of folk music revivals. Other mainstream churches have experimented with gospel music choruses characteristic of

charismatic denominations. Marriage ceremonies written in part by the participants often have featured original or borrowed lyrics set to folklike melodies.

As a result of a research tradition in Europe and the United States, the term *folk hymn* has come to stand more narrowly for a particular type of Christian song whose tune exists in oral tradition. Irving Lowens defined *folk hymn* as a “secular folk-tune that happens to be sung to a religious text.” Indeed, the practice of setting Christian songs to secular tunes was endorsed by Martin Luther, who asked, “Why should the devil have all the good tunes?” Lowens’ definition emphasizes that though the words of a folk hymn may remain unchanged over time and place, the tune exhibits the variations that one expects from oral tradition. Scholars have further distinguished folk hymns from various other types of Christian religious folksong: *religious ballads* (folk ballads with religious texts, sung solo), *camp-meeting* and *revival spirituals* (folk hymns to which refrains and choruses were added in the nineteenth century), and *gospel music* (first-person texts that emphasize the Christian’s relation to Jesus, trials and temptations in this life, and the joys of heavenly homecoming in the next). In most cases, Christian folk hymn texts are products of eighteenth-century hymn writers, such as Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. Many emphasize God’s grandeur and humankind’s depravity. The majority of tunes tend to be in gapped or pentatonic modes rather than diatonic.

Lining-out is practiced in some folk hymn traditions. In this antiphonal practice, which dates back to the seventeenth century, a song leader gives out the words to a line of verse by speaking, intoning, or singing them, and then the congregation joins the leader to repeat the words, more or less in unison, to an elaborate tune different from the lining tune. Lined-out folk hymns represent one of the oldest layers of folk music tradition in the United States. They can be found among the Amish, among Old Regular Baptists (and some United Baptists) chiefly in southeastern Kentucky and southwestern Virginia, and in many African-American Baptist churches, where they are termed *meter* or *Dr. Watts* hymns. Another major folk hymn tradition in the United States is a tradition of singing conventions and gatherings using shape-note songbooks. This is a part-singing practice (the notes are written in the songbooks in various geometrical shapes to aid in identifying pitch), in contrast to the unison singing of the lined-out folk hymn tradition. Shaped-note hymnody originated in a late-eighteenth-century music literacy movement designed to supplant the lined-out “old way of singing.” Many of the tunes in the shaped-note songbooks existed in oral tradition when they were written down in the nineteenth century. Today, shaped-note hymnody is undergoing a revival, and singing conventions gather in most parts of the United States.

Musicological scholarship on folk hymnody has centered on the nineteenth-century American shaped-note songbooks, chiefly in order to classify and analyze the tunes and in an attempt to trace their histories. George Pullen

Jackson pioneered in this area; Charles Seeger and Dorothy Horn employ more sophisticated musical analysis. Using a broader definition of folk hymnody and within a framework involving the study of performance and ritual, folklorists and ethnomusicologists have done historical and ethnographic research on living traditions, in which one of the chief attractions is a well-articulated body of native beliefs about the meaning of this music. Outside the United States, the School of Scottish Studies has documented a tradition of lined-out folk hymns (psalms) in Gaelic on the Isle of Lewis. Research of European folk hymn singing has been particularly strong in Finland, where F. O. Durchman notated hymn melodies from oral tradition as early as 1837 and Ilmari Krohn began a systematic collection in the 1890s. Päivikki Suojanen's *Finnish Folk Hymn Singing: A Study in Music Anthropology* shows that the tradition remains very much alive.

Jeff Todd Titon

See also Folk Music; Folksong, Lyric; Religion, Folk.

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FOLKLORE

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MUSIC, AND ART

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Oxford, England

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MUSIC, AND ART

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I

INCREMENTAL REPETITION

Narrative development through sequential, verbally patterned episodes in which at least one element changes with each progression. The term *incremental repetition* was coined by Francis B. Gummere to refer to clusters of ballad stanzas based on close repetition that move the narrative forward through the introduction of a new idea with each iteration, as in the following statement and response sequence from the opening of “Child Waters” (Child 63B).

‘I warn ye all, ye gay ladies,
That wear scarlet an brown,
That ye dinna leave your father’s house,
To follow young men frae town.’

‘O here am I, a lady gay,
That wears scarlet an brown,
Yet I will leave my father’s house,
An follow Lord John frae the town.’

In balladry, there are many variations on the basic concept of incremental repetition. W.F.H. Nicolaisen has shown that the repetitive element ranges from half lines to binary and trinary stanza groupings to sequences of as many as four separate stanzas, as in the murder episodes of the ballad “Babylon” (Child 14). The device, however, is not confined to the ballads and commonly appears in such oral genres as *Märchen* and jokes. Though incremental repetition has been regarded mainly as a compositional device, an important one in oral transmission in which patterned units allow for easy learning and recall in performance, it has an important aesthetic function as well. As in the prior example, where the opposition of prohibition and violation creates a dynamic tension, successive repetitions not only advance the narrative but also intensify the conflict, presenting what MacEdward Leach called a “minor climax.” Much of the tension in oral narrative is created and sustained through the artful manipulation of these repetitive patterns.

James Moreira

See also Ballad; Folk Song, Narrative; Oral-Formulaic Theory.

INFORMANT

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INFORMANT

The person who has a competent knowledge of the target community's cultural performances and who is willing to share this knowledge with the fieldworker. Although an informant usually is a member of the target community, he or she might also interact with the target community on a frequent basis as an accepted outside associate.

An informant's primary role is interpreting, from an insider's (emic) point of view, the different aspects of the target community's cultural system. Although the informant need not be an active bearer of the culture's traditions to function effectively, he or she should be thoroughly versed in what constitutes an appropriate performance of the tradition, and the informant should furthermore be able to interpret this performance in a manner that is consistent with the rest of the community's interpretation. Additionally, informants should introduce the fieldworker to other community members who may have special knowledge or performance abilities that they will share with the fieldworker.

The informant's roles will be fulfilled only after the fieldworker establishes a truthful dialogue with the informant (occasionally this does not happen). This dialogue results from the fieldworker's and the informant's realization that the informant is more than just a paid employee (if the informant receives some type of compensation); instead, the informant is the link between the outside world and the target community. The cultivation of this dialogue is further assisted by the fieldworker's realization that the informant must be guided through a discussion if the necessary information is to be elicited.

Charlie McCormick

See also Fieldwork; Participant-Observation Method.

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INITIATION

Rites formalizing the passage of an individual or group into a new social or religious status. Puberty rites, ceremonies that symbolize the transformation of youths into adults, are the most common form of initiation worldwide. However, formal ceremonies of initiation precede admission into communal organizations of all kinds, including priesthoods, military orders, schools, sodalities, secret societies, and clubs.

The nature of initiation rites varies widely. Some are intensely public occasions distinguished by ritual scarification or circumcision. Others, especially if initiation entails the acquisition of secret or special knowledge, take place away from the public eye under remote or private circumstances. Extraordinary ordeals and rigorous group tests are commonly part of the initiation procedure if solidarity among initiates and the organization they are entering is a primary goal. Still other initiations merely signal the altered status of the initiates with unexceptional rituals little removed from ordinary social behavior. Among occupational groups, initiation may take the form of pranks in which the new person on a crew is made the butt of a work-related practical joke.



Puberty rites are the most common form of initiation worldwide. Here, two Apache girls in ceremonial costumes stand before offerings at a traditional puberty rite.

INSCRIPTION

The French folklorist Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957) was the first to recognize that, despite specific differences in content, initiation rituals throughout the world tend to have similar, tripartite structures. According to him, such rites invariably consist of an initial phase that symbolically separates the initiates from their former status, a marginal or liminal period of transition, and a final phase of reincorporation with the group at the new status. Van Gennep also noted that initiation rituals share this tripartite form with weddings and funerals, two other key *rites de passage* that ritually symbolize and sanctify progressive transit through life and society.

D. Bruce Dickson

See also Custom; Occupational Folklife/Folklore; Rites of Passage.

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I NSCRIPTION

Signifies meaningful marks upon a surface. Narrowly conceived, the term *inscription* may be understood as encompassing graffiti, desktop inscriptions, carvings on trees, autograph rhymes, cattle brands, rebuses, tattoos, and rocks arranged to form letters on the Salt Flats in Utah. More broadly defined, *inscription* also may include the entire print tradition. For this entry, the term will be limited to uninstitutionalized and largely individual acts of making marks to convey meaning, the greater proportion of which is counter-hegemonic.

Farmers sometimes plow messages into their fields for aerial viewing and photography, and people stamp out SOS messages in the snow. Long ago, the cartoon tradition appropriated such inscriptions through its conventional representation of SOS with rocks on a tiny island with a single palm tree, emblematic of all deserted islands. The motives of such actions range from making political comments to conveying life-and-death concerns to producing humor. All such messages are culture-specific.

What can be written on a specific blank surface with a specific implement differs significantly. How it is understood also differs significantly, often from one culture group to another. The traditional book inscription “Steal not this book, my trusty lad, / For fourteen bucks it cost my dad,” written with a pen in a textbook, signifies ownership when signed, not unlike the cattle brand A—X (“A Bar X”) burnt into the hide of a steer; both may also be seen as mutilation.

Personalized “vanity” license plates on automobiles represent a legalized means of playing within the limitation of the seven or eight alphanumeric allowed by various governments, and people are as inventive within that restraint as institutional censors permit. “4NIK8,” which makes use of the rebus principle, has been disallowed, but “TIHZ”—intended to be read in a rearview mirror—has been issued. Many vanity plates represent car owners’ initials, cryptic references to occupation (“BEEF,” “DRYWALL,” “TREES,” and “BOOZE”), or playful statements (“IYQ” and “IYQ2”). Like cattle brands, they mark ownership, and police report that stolen cars with vanity plates are more frequently recovered.

Of a more controversial nature is the current concern with “subliminal” messages and images in contemporary advertising, movies, videos, and cartoons. Much of this concern—and, indeed, a basis for the occasional acting out of this concern—may be traced to the popular books of Wilson Bryan Key and Vance Packard’s earlier *Hidden Persuaders*. These also buttressed popular concerns about verbal messages, such as “Paul is dead,” that some believe may be heard if one plays recordings of specific popular songs backwards. Certainly, on the cover of the video of Disney’s *Little Mermaid*, one may see the representation of a penis in the castle in the background, but why such a graphic image is present may be debated. However, there is little evidence that *Who Killed Roger Rabbit?* contains anything sexually explicit or that the word *sex* is represented in a specific scene of *The Lion King*. Such “readings” seem more often idiosyncratic rather than based upon specific marks upon cellular surfaces.

Forms of inscription less commonly known involve either the mutilation of coins or the appropriation of the means of minting to produce on metal discs images that are at variance with general understandings of what is appropriate. Coins have been mutilated to produce “love tokens,” often by shaving the minted images off one side and then engraving letters and images appropriate to a specific circumstance. More like the product of a minting process, “elongated” cents (and other coins) have been produced by running the coins through rolling machines that have various images and messages etched or engraved on their rollers. And those who mint one-ounce silver bars have known, for some years, that their surfaces may bear images and messages that make them of greater appeal to specific markets. Love tokens may be assumed to have been produced for specific personal circumstances, but elongated cents and silver “art” bars were produced for a specific event or a celebration of a specific place, despite their appropriation of mass-production technology. All three have often involved traditional images and messages.

Inscription may take many forms, such as printing particular letters in an otherwise innocuous passage in boldface to spell out a transgressive message or to represent a particular image. Meaningful inscriptions may be made upon almost any surface.

Michael J. Preston

See also Autograph Book; Graffiti; Popular Culture; Rebus; Xeroxlore.



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I NVENTED TRADITION

A term proposed by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger to describe recently developed symbolic social practices that serve to establish continuity with “suitable pasts.” During rapid social change, they argued, “instant formulations of new traditions” (such as national anthems, costumes, and ceremonials) provide comforting links to imagined ancient stability while lending “historical” validation to sponsoring elites. The notion of tradition as fluidly constructed rather than rigidly transmitted has profoundly affected thinking about historical processes, including nationalism, ethnogenesis, and folk behavior.

Among students of folklore, of course, the “invariant” past had sparked antiquarian longing since the eighteenth century, and salvaging popular traditions became the discipline’s *raison d’être*. That situation did not change substantially until 1972, when the influential anthology *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore* stressed the contextual variability of traditional material and explicitly denied the stability of “handed-down” texts. Although its contributors did not invoke invented tradition *per se*, the anthology radically reshaped folklorists’ affection for the “authentic” and thus prefigured the Hobsbawm-Ranger thesis.

In the folklore literature proper, fruitful applications of that thesis have been made by Richard Handler, Jocelyn Linnekin, and Regina Bendix. In a paper revising Edward Sapir’s famous distinction between genuine and spurious culture, Handler and Linnekin contended that tradition is “inevitably invented

because it enters into the construction of social identity” as mediated by both personal and nationalist concerns. From fieldwork among Quebecois and Hawaiian “folklore popularizers,” they redefined tradition as “a model of the past . . . inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present.” In her analysis of Swiss *folklorismus*, Bendix argued that, in the modern world of intercultural contact, tradition invention is the norm rather than the exception and a worthy, however staged, form of expression. Newly traditionalized “display events,” she wrote, can be liberating affirmations of local culture.

Bendix’s paper also usefully addressed the burgeoning literature on tourism, one important area in which the invented tradition model—working in tandem, as it were, with Benedict Anderson’s equally popular “imagined communities” model—has fueled a reappraisal of ethnic nationalism. The nation-state, in fact, takes center stage in many recent studies of tradition invention. Hobsbawm and Ranger themselves set the tone by focusing on the inventions of British colonialism. Michael Bommès and Patrick Wright, anticipating Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* by a year, deconstructed the British countryside as the faux nostalgia of a corporate “heritage” industry, and Dave Harker similarly debunked traditional music, skewering the support of “fakesong” as a statist plot. A less doctrinaire but no less scathing exposé of nationalized tradition was Ana Maria Alonso’s deft dissection of Mexican “state cannibalism.”

Studies of the manipulated past are not, however, invariably grim. Alonso, Handler, Linnekin, and Bendix were all alert to the negotiation involved in tradition invention—to the creative innovations of common people, often against the hegemonizing of elites. This was true as well in Hanson’s work on Maori identity and of the essays contained in two provocative anthologies. In Jay O’Brien and William Roseberry’s volume on imagining the past, “A Variety of Modern Tracks toward the Traditional” revealed the constancy of exchange between hegemonic and subaltern. In Gregory Urban and Joel Sherzer’s work on Latin America, contributors highlighted the resilience of native peoples in expressing indigenous music, dress, and language. Thus, the *folklorization* of the powerless, a statist project, may itself be the subject of popular reinvention.

Tad Tuleja

See also Authenticity; Fakelore; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Tradition.

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J

J OKE

A form of stylized verbal, visual, or physical play that is meant to be humorous within its performance frame. Jokes frequently take the form of brief oral narratives—for example, the tall tale, the shaggy dog story, the comic anecdote, and the humorous folktale. There are also riddle jokes, gesture jokes, and various forms of pictorial jokes. Or a joke may be condensed into a witty one-liner and spoken in conversation or written on a public wall. And dyadic jokes (private jokes between two people), intentional or unintentional, may emerge interpersonally and become a traditional feature of a particular personal relationship. Spoken, written, printed, drawn, or gestured—whether performed one on one in small intimate groups and before large groups convened for the purpose of secular or religious ritual, photocopied and passed or posted anonymously in offices, distributed by electronic mail, faxed halfway around the world, or appropriated by popular culture to be sold as jest books, on coffee cups, and on T-shirts—jokes provide moments of witty entertainment while disclosing culture as a site of constant conflict and negotiation.

Performances of jokes, as a form of humor and play, are culturally “marked” forms of communication—that is, they are invoked through some culturally agreed upon means as not being earnest or serious information-conveying modes of everyday communication, and yet they can, as anthropologist Mary Douglas argues, offer “a symbolic pattern of a social pattern.” Jokes involve what linguist Victor Raskin calls “non-bona-fide communication,” what Sigmund Freud (the founder of psychoanalysis) refers to as “displacement,” and what sociologist Erving Goffman describes as a socially “framed” sphere or domain set apart from the “real” world. The joking frame appears to be a negotiated domain. Its license must be sanctioned by both performer and audience. Thus, jokes and joking performances, like any other form of cultural production, are enmeshed within sociocultural power relations that they simultaneously map and disrupt.

The secular joking frame may be theorized as a liminal or liminoid domain akin to that identified with religious ritual by anthropologist Victor Turner, just as the performance of a joke might be seen as analogous to the various forms of licensed “clowning” that are performed cross-culturally. Liminality places such performances on the edges of things, betwixt and between, in a metaphorical communicative border country. This is the domain of symbolic inversion, which, as folklorist Barbara Babcock explains in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, “may be broadly defined as any act of expressive behavior which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an

alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms be they linguistic, literary, or artistic, religious, or social and political.” The result of such performances is the “carnavalesque” laughter associated by Mikhail Bakhtin, in *Rabelais and His World*, with the marketplace—a domain in which high and low meet, creating through transgression a multivocal or polyphonic dynamic ambivalence toward extant power relations. Bakhtin identifies this space and its ensuing “carnavalesque” or “grotesque” laughter with the dismemberment and re-creation of sociocultural bodies, a process that both maps ideology and decenters it. For Bakhtin, jokes and their accompanying laughter are pregnant with possibilities, what he calls “bodies in the act of becoming.”

Folklorists have been particularly active in documenting and analyzing jokes. Ronald Baker's *Jokelore, Humorous Folktales from Indiana*, Elliott Oring's *Israeli Humor: The Content and Structure of the Chizbat of the Palmah*, and Paul Smith's *Reproduction Is Fun: A Book of Photocopy Joke Sheets* focus, respectively, on the jokes of a particular region, folk group, and form of transmission. Other folklorists have turned their attention to specific joke cycles (American “dead baby” jokes and “Helen Keller” jokes, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, and Polish “Chernobyl” jokes, Romanian “Nicolae Ceaușescu” jokes, or German “Auschwitz” jokes), and yet others focus on such joking traditions as the Nigerian *Igbo njakini* (a form of satirical verbal dueling) and the function of the fool in English Morris dancing. Folklorists also foreground a need to contextualize jokes within actual performances and in relation to the broader cultural traditions specific to certain groups (Roger Abrahams' *Deep Down in the Jungle: Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia*, Rayna Green's “Magnolias Grow in Dirt: The Bawdy Lore of Southern Women,” and Joseph Goodwin's *More Man than You'll Ever Be: Gay Folklore and Acculturation in Middle America*), in relation to performers' life histories and personal aesthetics (Elliott Oring's *Humor and the Individual*), in relation to social and political contexts (Alan Dundes' *Cracking Jokes: Studies of Sick Humor Cycles and Stereotypes*), and in relation to socioeconomic contexts (Archie Green's “Boss, Workman, Wife: Sneaking-Home Tales”). And folklorists have added to our understanding of how joking and related traditions enable people to acquire linguistic and cultural competence as well as to our understanding of how that competence may be used confrontationally to map interpersonal power relations.

Generally, explanations of jokes and their performances have fallen into three broad categories of humor theory: cognitive-perceptual theory, social-behavioral theory, and psychoanalytic theory. Cognitive-perceptual theory addresses the question of why jokes are funny by focusing on linguistic and semantic inappropriateness: the use of exaggeration and distortion, misdirection, paradox, double entendre, the disclosure of hidden similarities between dissimilar things, and the linking of that which is pragmatically plausible and that which is not. In other words, jokes play with forms of textual and extra-textual incongruity and the tenuous resolution of such incongruities. Two

formulations of the cognitive-perceptual approach are Victor Raskin's "semantic script-based theory" and Arthur Koestler's "bisociation theory." Raskin, for example, proposes that each joke evokes culturally extant linguistic scripts (a reference to language and its nuances) and nonlinguistic scripts (pragmatic or "encyclopedic" knowledge of the culture), which are in some way opposite to each other. Humor is thus explained in terms of the performer's ability to play on these scripts and the audience's ability to decode the (in)appropriate relationship between the scripts evoked by the performance. Similarly, Koestler argues that humor results when a situation, experience, or idea is associated or bisociated with "two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference." But rather than arguing for an aesthetic resolution, Koestler foregrounds the ways in which jokes creatively "vibrate simultaneously on two different wavelengths." Humor is thus the product of the slippage between otherwise disassociated contexts. Christie Davies applies Raskin's theory to ethnic jokes, particularly those told by dominant groups about subordinate groups: Americans about Poles, the French about Belgians, Mexicans about Regiomontanos, the English about Scots, Indians about Sikhs, Greeks about Pontians, Brazilians about the Portuguese, and eastern Canadians about Newfoundlanders. And Kenneth Lincoln uses Koestler's theory to analyze bicultural play in Native American humor.

Although cognitive-perceptual theorists address incongruity in order to explain why jokes are humorous, sociobehavioral theorists examine joking relationships in order to identify social structure (kin-based joking relationships in preindustrial societies and such non-kin-based joking relationships as small-group formations based on friendship or work in industrial society) and to explain the purposes that joking serves, for example, how "social structure is linked to life processes" through actual joking performances. Anthropologists, as Mahadev Apte notes, have explained how joking releases sexual and aggressive impulses, provides emotional catharsis and communication, establishes social etiquette, enhances and defines small-group identity, releases work-related tension, and enables social bonding and an exploration of closeness or intimacy in social relations. R. H. Lowie was, for instance, among the first anthropologists to suggest that joking functions as a form of social control—in other words, that jokes enculturate people within extant power relations. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown has argued that by serving as a means to reduce hostility, release tension, and avoid conflict, joking enhances social harmony and stability. And Mary Douglas, though acknowledging that jokes are a form of "permitted disrespect," has disclosed the ways in which jokes provide "an image of the levelling of hierarchy, the triumph of intimacy over formality, of unofficial values over official ones." As Lincoln explains, "it could be that jokes *disorganize* the monostructures of society in order to *reorganize* a static and suspect order into polymorphous, kinetic 'play.'"

Whereas sociobehavioral approaches examine joking relationships in order

to theorize social relations, psychoanalytic and related “release” theories explore suppression/repression in respect to the individual psyche. Arguing that all people operate under constraints to think, speak, and act in certain ways, release theories suggest that laughter “provides relief from mental, nervous and/or psychic energy and thus ensures homeostasis after a struggle, tension, strain, etc.” Thus, Freud suggests that the “pleasure in jokes has seemed to us to arise from an *economy in expenditure upon inhibition*,” or, as others also argue, “our sense of humor frees us from the chains of our perceptual, conventional, logical, linguistic, and moral systems.” Freud further explains that when “a joke is not an aim in itself—that is, where it is not an innocent one—there are only two purposes that it may serve, and these two can themselves be sub-sumed under a single heading. It is either a *hostile* joke (serving the purpose of aggressiveness, satire, or defence) or an *obscene* joke (serving the purpose of exposure).” Martha Wolfenstein’s *Children’s Humor: A Psychological Analysis* and Gershon Legman’s *No Laughing Matter: An Analysis of Sexual Humor* apply the psychoanalytic approach, respectively, to the jokes of children and of adult males. Alan Dundes and Roger Abrahams have drawn on Freudian analysis to theorize racial and sexual displacement and aggression in the American elephant joke cycle that was popular in the 1960s. And in a reflexive turn, Elliott Oring’s *Jokes of Sigmund Freud: A Study in Humor and Jewish Identity* examines Jewish identity through an analysis of Freud’s favorite jokes.

Although Freudian analysis has been productively applied to male joking patterns, other theories, women argue, need to be explored in order to address female joking. One possibility is suggested by a turn to Jacques Lacan and the French feminists (Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva) influenced by Lacan’s description of Western discourse as “phallogocentric” (centered and organized through the symbolic phallus). Phallogocentrism, Lacan argues, manifests itself in Western discourse in terms of vocabulary and syntax, rules of logic, inclination toward fixed classifications and oppositions, and paradigms equating validity and objectivity. In order to counter phallogocentrism, French feminists urge women to turn to their own bodies and, like their American counterparts, to their own experiences in order to define and redefine female realities. This is, Regina Barreca argues, exactly what women do when they tell jokes. Thus, as Cathy Preston, discussing a bawdy Cinderella joke, has noted, “just as our bodies may be said to laugh at our attempts to control and thereby erase them, so, when we tell the joke, we laugh at cultural attempts to control and thereby erase us.”

To joke is to perform as trickster, a figure in Native American and African tales who is described by Lincoln and others as “a mythic, binary *bricoleur* at the crossroads of cultures-in-process: mediatively vital, bisociatively multiplex, liminally alert, comically ubiquitous, normatively and often inversely funny.” Jokes map culture as a site of constant conflict between self-representation and others’ misrepresentations of us, but, as Vine Deloria Jr. philosophically speculates,

“when a people can laugh at themselves and laugh at others and hold all aspects of life together without letting anybody drive them to extremes, then it seems to me that people can survive.”

Cathy Lynn Preston

See also Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Fool; Riddle Joke; Trickster; Verbal Duel.

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JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY

The psychological approach, known also as *analytical psychology*, envisaged by Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), a Swiss psychiatrist and early proponent of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories. The Jungian system adopted a broader perspective than that of Freud by including spiritual and futuristic factors; it also interpreted disruptive emotional processes in the individual as a search for wholeness, termed *individuation*.

Jung, the son of a Protestant cleric, showed from childhood an inclination toward solitude, daydreaming, and imaginative thinking; he also admired archaeology and hoped to make it his career (but ended up studying medicine and related sciences). These early tendencies greatly influenced his adult work.

After graduating in medicine in 1902, Jung developed a diagnostic system

in which patients were asked to respond to stimulus words; this technique of “word association” revealed the presence of what Jung called “complexes.” This novel approach became widely adopted and led to a close collaboration with Freud, whose book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) Jung had read. Subsequently, Jung became one of Freud’s disciples and protégés; Freud referred to him as the “crown prince.”

However, a divergence of views began to grow between the two after a fairly short period of formal association. Perhaps the most basic points of disagreement between Freud and Jung focused on the nature of libido (psychic energy or instinctual manifestations that tend toward life) and the structure of the psyche (mind or personality). Their differences became pronounced with the publication of Jung’s *Psychology of the Unconscious*, in which he de-emphasized the role of sex and expressed a different view of the biological force Freud had labeled the libido. Jung continued on this independent path, and his break with Freud, whom he still admired, became total in 1914.



Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology. Jung’s approach to psychology was more inclusive and holistic than that of his contemporary, Sigmund Freud.

During the next 47 years, Jung cultivated his own theories, drawing on a wide knowledge of religion, mythology, history, and non-European cultures; he observed native cultures in Asia (India), North America (New Mexico), and Africa (Kenya) and found his own dreams and the fantasies of his childhood to be quite relevant to the cultures he was observing. In 1921, he published *Psychological Types*, in which he dealt with the relationship between the conscious and unconscious and proposed the “extrovert” and the “introvert” personality types.

Whereas Freud saw the libido in predominantly sexual and “savage” terms, Jung perceived the libido to be generalized life energy, with biological-sexual drives constituting only one of its parts. Jung saw this energy as expressing itself in growth and reproduction, as well as in other kinds of human activities depending on the social and cultural milieu. Thus, according to Jung, libidinal energy in the presexual phase (3 to 5 years of age) is basically asexual; it serves the functions of nutrition and growth—not the Oedipal complex, as Freud postulated. Conflict and rivalries develop among siblings dependent on a mother for the satisfaction of such basic needs as food and safety. As the child

matures, these essentially nonsexual needs become overlaid with sexual functions. Libidinal energy takes a heterosexual form only after puberty.

With reference to the structure of personality, Jung saw the psyche, or mind, as consisting of three levels: the personal conscious, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. Like a small island in the ocean, the tip visible above the water corresponds to the personal conscious, the submerged portion that can be seen corresponds to the personal unconscious, and the invisible foundation that connects the island to the earth's crust corresponds to the collective unconscious. This paradigm reflects the influence of archaeological stratigraphy on Jung's worldview.

Jung's approach to therapy may be seen as holistic; it rests on a rationale of showing the close parallels between ancient myths and psychotic fantasies and explaining human motivation in terms of a larger creative energy. He aimed at reconciling the diverse states of personality, which he saw as being divided into the introvert-extrovert polarity mentioned earlier, as well as into the four functions of sensing, intuiting, feeling, and thinking. And by understanding how the personal unconscious is unified with the collective unconscious, a patient can achieve a state of individuation, or wholeness of self.

Hasan El-Shamy

See also Archetype; Psychological Approach.

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L

LAMENT

An improvised folksong or poem following a traditional pattern in metaphorical language to express sorrow and other strong feelings and states of mind. Functionally, laments can be classified into wedding laments, death laments, going-to-war laments, autobiographical laments, and recompensive laments.

Laments are nearly always chanted by women and often by professional mourners at funerals, for example. In Europe, the tradition of lamentation has been preserved at its best within the Russian Orthodox Church. Lament chants are encountered, for the most part, east of a line drawn from Greece to Finland, but in earlier periods, they were not uncommon in western Europe as well. Laments are associated with funerals, weddings, and the departure of soldiers to military service or battlefields. Above all, they are the ritual poetry of parting and separation. Laments belong to the sacred language of a rite. They make it possible to ensure that social relations and values of a delicate nature are handled correctly and with due respect. Although laments are primarily performed in rites of passage, they can also be improvised to be used on particular occasions—for example, when friends meet or part, as thanks for hospitality, as a means to break the monotony of a long and boring job, or just to provide an outlet for a mood of depression. At its best, the performance of a lament is a channel to ecstatic anarchy, helping to penetrate deeply into the spirit of the occasion and normally accompanied by tears, with the chanting interrupted at intervals by sobbing.

Laments originated as a form of ritual poetic keening that comments on social relations. When lamenting, the chanter regularly brings into focus either the subject or the object of the lament. Laments reveal clearly the social position and interaction of participants. Lamenting is regularly practiced during wedding ceremonies and rites for the dead, thus referring to the most important transition periods in social relations. Wedding laments and death laments represent ritual poetry and are a form of sacred communication within these critical moments of transition. By means of these performances, the lamenters and the community seek to pass safely through these delicate periods of transition.

Juha Pentikäinen

See also Rites of Passage.

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L LANGUAGE, PLAY

Artfully constructed and playfully manipulated oral tradition. Constant delight in the manipulation of language is a hallmark of human behavior. It becomes apparent at the earliest age in children, who rarely fail to respond with pleasure to the games adults use to distract them while at the same time instructing them. Poking, tickling with accompanying jingles and rhymes, rhymes that teach the infant the names of facial features, and chants accompanying knee- and foot-bouncing games all contribute in important ways to the baby's development and, in particular, to its early familiarization with the possibilities of language.

As the child grows older and is more susceptible to reason, while also becoming more self-consciously assertive, he or she discovers the frustration of put-offs, evasive answers, and other forms of adult teasing; the child gradually grasps the potential of such language use and employs it to his or her own ends with other children. This particular skill is developed and honed in grade school, as children discover the humor inherent in the jeers and taunts they level at one another (a trait that carries over into adult life, though normally with greater sophistication). The calls, cheers, chants, and yells associated with interclass and interschool rivalries all promote an awareness of the power of language; the well-documented richness of school-age lore—with verses mocking school, teachers, and subjects, with rhymes meant to upset, to shock, or to tease, with parodies of hymns, carols, and other songs, with backwards and nonsense verses—illustrates the linguistic inventiveness (and the conservatism) of teenagers. It is perhaps between the ages of 5 and 15 that children most enjoy traditional forms of verbal play, when insults, retorts, tongue twisters, put-offs, catches, and wisecrack answers are part and parcel of everyday language use. Less consciously, perhaps, the pleasures of simple poetry are appreciated in the innumerable rhymes and songs that accompany ball-bouncing and rope-skipping games and similar activities.

As children gradually enter adulthood, the same pleasures remain, though in a more developed form. Rhymes poking fun at people from neighboring communities or regions—*blasons populaires*—often demonstrate not only skill with language but also a degree of intellectual creativity spiced with honest malice; the same trait is evident in the attribution of nicknames.

Proverbs and proverbial sayings, especially those made with humorous intent, suggest appropriate courses of action and do so in a way more acceptable to the targets of such verbal forms. Similes, exaggerations, metaphors, adult retorts, and Wellerisms all add color and texture to the basic requirement of communication.

The vast array, universally attested, of riddles and related traditions demonstrates the pleasure humans always have found in the clever use of language and its ability to express realities in unusual and striking ways. Particularly appealing to young adults may be the pretended obscene riddle (which suggests an off-color answer while having a bland solution in reality), but the most commonly appealing form of riddle is undoubtedly that based on a pun. Indeed, puns and punning, which clearly attest to a conscious awareness of the play potential of speech, permeate jokes, riddling questions, and, indeed, ordinary conversation.

Gerald Thomas

See also Children's Folklore; Games, Folk.

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L LANGUAGE, SECRET

Language that allows its speakers to communicate with each other without being understood by noninitiates, that is, by people with whom its speakers come into contact on a more or less regular basis but from whom certain kinds of information must be withheld.

The earliest forms of secret language are found in magical formulas, the esoteric languages of primitive initiation rites, and passwords in secret societies—in other words, where the language functions as a barrier between insiders and outsiders. This function has been nowhere better documented than in the language of the criminal underworld. Indeed, the word *jargon*, now used to refer to the technical language of a trade or profession, was originally used to refer to the secret language of twelfth-century French criminals.

There is, however, a crucial difference between the jargon of doctors, nurses, hospital workers, airline pilots, military personnel, and members of other such legitimate occupations and the language of the criminal underworld. The

former terminology arises out of the technical complexities of everyday life but is not usually used with the intent of deliberately deceiving or misleading the general public; the latter, by contrast, has been used both as a class badge and as a means of masking the true meaning of its discourse to potential victims. This intent has long been documented by the police of numerous countries, and those who use such languages have given them precise names. Thus, the terms *Rotwelsch* (in Germany), *argot* (in France), *furbesco* (in Italy), *germania* (in Spain), and *cant* (in England) have all been used at different times to designate the language of the criminal classes. Likewise, in Germany, France, Spain, and England, *Latin* has also been used for the same purpose, an echo of which is to be found in the term *pig latin* often used by children in English-speaking countries to refer to their own brands of secret talk.

Two chief principles govern the formation of secret languages. The first involves the change of meanings for words that exist in the standard language, often by reliance on metaphorical processes, as when “automobile” is referred to as one’s “wheels” or “to kill” is rendered as “to chill.” The second principle is that of a change in the form of words, usually by means of a code. This is the principle behind the creation of pig latin, documented with a variety of codes and a variety of names. A version recorded in South Wales in the 1950s and used by a group of 10-year-old boys, *Eguage*, required the addition of the syllable -eg before audible vowel sounds; in France in the 1960s, teenagers made use of *Javanais*, involving the addition of the syllable -av before vowel sounds.

Such secret languages tend to be restricted to youthful peer groups, however, and the sheer joy of mastering and using the code, especially in front of teachers or parents, is certainly more important than any criminal design. This was true for the short-lived Californian language *Boontling*, which flourished between 1880 and 1920 and was created by young boys. It relied chiefly on the abbreviation and deformation of words rather than on the addition of syllables.

Gerald Thomas

See also Argot; Children’s Folklore; Esoteric/Exoteric Factor.

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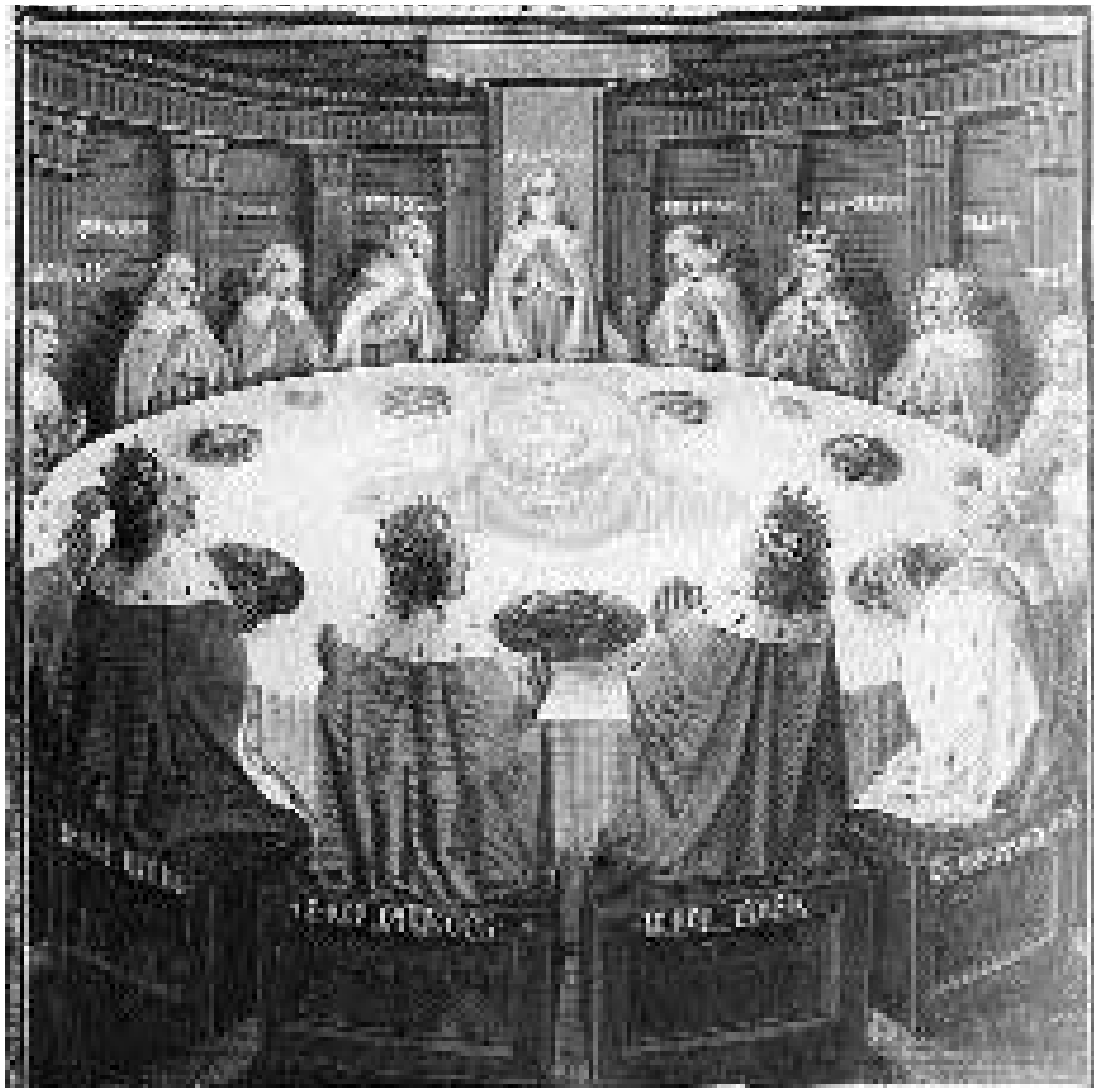
LEGEND

Short, oral prose narrative based in the reality of performers and audiences. The term *legend* is derived from the Latin word *legere* (to read); thus, the term originally labeled a piece of reading, referring to a book containing accounts of the lives of the saints arranged in the order of the Christian calendar and read on the saints' feast days at divine office. The *Christian* or *hagiographic legend* (*legende religieuse*) as a genre of literature and history can be traced to the times of the apostles. By the eighth century A.D., however, numerous stories about the miracles of saints had become increasingly apocryphal and, therefore, were omitted from the official canon of the Christian church. After the division of the one and only Christian church into a multitude of denominations, religious legends proliferated, and they have continued their spread both as the authoritative voice of religious education and as its antagonist, the voice of the folk, to this day.

It is no wonder that by the end of the Middle Ages, the word *legend* had come to mean "inauthentic information" or an improbable story. During the Reformation, it became understood as a lie or fiction (Martin Luther made the pun *legende—lügende* [legend-lie]), indicating the recognition of the controversial nature of the legend applied in religious debate. Today, in common parlance, a legend is still regarded as an untrue story believed by the gullible.

Encompassing a broad category of works, the *heroic legend* (*legende héroïque—legende épique*) is identified as a long epic poem composed of traditional motifs and performed orally in song, accompanied by a musical instrument. Heroic legend tells about a known or fictional historical hero or heroine (from the Greek *herós*). Because of their miraculous origins and supernatural associations, these protagonists are endowed with supernatural powers and knowledge. Their adventures, on earth and beyond, consist of struggles against evil mortals and demons. Heroic legend of some kind is known around the world; it combines historical facts with myth and folktale elements in diverse ways, adjusting to given cultural environments. Its contents are not always easy to distinguish from parallel myths and tales.

The *folk legend*, sharing traditional elements with the religious and the heroic legend, has been defined by folklorists as one of the folklore genres. As a short, oral prose narrative, created by the people and transmitted orally from generation to generation, it has been characterized as a story that treats its unusual, extranormal, metaphysical, or supernatural topics from the vantage point of the real world of its tellers and audiences. Bearers of legend tradition identify the legend in their native terminology as "a true story," "an account," "what is being told," "something passed around," "a saying," "a chronicle," or "a history." In scholarly practice, Germans and Scandinavians have opted for "a saying" or "what has been spoken" (*Sage, sagn, sägen*), and various forms of the



King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table receive a vision of the Holy Grail. The tales associated with this mythohistorical English monarch exemplify heroic legend.

Latin word *legenda* are adopted as the technical terms used by Anglo-American and Romance language authors—*legend* (in English), *legende* (in French), *leggenda* (in Italian), *leyenda* (in Spanish), and so on.

Definition of the legend began with the founders of folkloristics, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. They pointed out its main characteristic by contrasting it to the *tale* in the introduction of the collection *Deutsche Sagen* (1816). They saw the two genres as people's guides and true companions through life:

The Märchen is more poetic [and] the legend is more historical; the former exists securely almost in and of itself in its innate blossoming and consummation. The legend, by contrast, is characterized by a lesser variety of colors, yet it represents something special in that it adheres always to that which we all are conscious of and know well, such as a locale and a name that has been secured through history. Because of this local confinement, it follows that the legend cannot, like the tale, find its home anywhere. Instead the legend demands certain conditions without which it either cannot exist at all, or can only exist in less perfect form. There is scarcely a spot in all of Germany where one cannot hear elaborate tales, locales on which legends are usually sown only quite sparsely. This apparent inadequacy and insignificance is conceded, but in compensation we find legends far more intimately representative. They are like the dialects of language, in which time and again one encounters the strangest words and images that have survived from ancient times; while the tales, by contrast, transport a complete piece of ancient poetry to us from the past in a single breath (translation by Donald Ward).

Generations of folklorists elaborated on the Grimms' suggestion and specified further the differences between tale and legend, the two basic forms of narration related to each other by a shared body of motifs and episodes but standing in opposition to one another. As Max Lüthi saw it, everything the tale is, the legend is not. While scholars industriously collected prose narratives, sorted out their materials according to narrative contents and actors, and placed the texts into archives, they also prepared separate classification systems for the tale and the legend on the basis of rigorous content and style analysis. They concluded that the two genres express opposing views of the world: The *Märchen* is fiction, a fantastic reflection of reality as individual narrators consciously forge it, whereas the legend, as the presentation of the fantastic reality, aspires to feature real events of personal experience. Thus, the *Märchen* is pure fantasy, which people expect as entertainment and delight; the legend is information, answering important, existential questions. The *Märchen* is a well-tailored objective poetry that holds its audience spellbound, but when it is over, it has no aftereffect. The legend is a subjective, hesitant account that appeals to the personal concerns of average people and reports things that are breathtaking, baffling, horrendous, uncanny, shocking, bizarre, grotesque, or even funny but that could happen to anyone while doing everyday chores. The *Märchen* is the career story of a symbolic central heroic figure, but the legend has no hero or heroine—it concerns *us*. The purpose of telling a legend is to report, inform, explain, teach, advise, warn, help, or enlighten. The legend answers unuttered questions of common concern: What is it? Why is it so? Can this be true? How

can such a thing happen? What can be done about it? How can it be avoided or made to happen? And since the legend seeks an answer, its message need not be encased in an artistically constructed and stabilized or conventionalized talelike frame. The ambiguity of feelings, the uncertainty, the hope, and the despair surrounding the message create a specific narrational form and style for the legend and keep the narrated text eternally unfinished, amplifiable, and fragmentary. Consequently, the researcher has to assemble numerous variants of the same story to get an idea of the extent of a type.

The form of the text is shaped by the conditions surrounding its telling. The oral legend may be performed by persons in all walks of life, among all layers of society—rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. It might crop up any place where people gather for work or leisure—at village firesides; on the road to work; while walking, riding a train, or driving; or at family dinners, church socials, banquets, and professional get-togethers. In short, legends may be exchanged informally at any time, without requiring a prepared telling session.

Consequently, the teller of a legend does not have to be a recognized artist but rather someone who is interested in legendry and who has experienced at least one legendary event that attracts the attention of others. Thus, when this person proposes a story, the audience knows what to expect. Culturally, the teller and the audience share a common knowledge of legendry, and the story brought up is based on a shared frame of reference whereby the telling becomes conversational. The proponent who starts a story will be joined by copponents who add their information to the telling as the story unfolds. Those present contribute to a communal version, adding their information, making corrections, and expressing their opinions concerning the veracity of the event. Because the legend by its very nature provokes debate, questioning the nature of human destiny, its telling is not limited to the story proper.

The construction of a narrative begins informally, in conversation when someone brings up a peculiar experience of common interest. Then, the best-informed member of the group begins by setting the frame. The event is described by presenting evidence: Those involved are named; eyewitnesses are mentioned; and the place, the time, and the environmental conditions are—often meticulously—stated. After amplifications, the teller comes to the point and presents the story that happened to him or her or to someone else—a reliable, respected person, an acquaintance of a trustworthy person, or someone more distant, such as “a friend of a friend.” The core narrative is accompanied by comments expressing the ambiguous feelings of the participants about its veracity: for example, “I am not sure if this is true or not, but . . .”; “I’ve seen it with my own eyes”; “This is all baloney, but some people would swear . . .”; or “My grandfather is an honest man, and he never told a lie.” At the conclusion of the performance, as at the beginning, the question is raised again: Could this be true or not? Throughout the narrative process, the legend manifests conflict-

ing opinions expressed in contradictions, additions, approvals, and disapprovals. As a conversation about the truth of the presented case, the legend is a discussion between believers, doubters, skeptics, and nonbelievers. It is this discussion of the feasibility of the narrated legend that is essential, not its resolution or the settling of the dispute. It is also inconsequential whether the tellers are believers or nonbelievers; what counts is that they are attracted to the universal questions of the world and human life entertained by the legend and that they like to express their attitudes toward it. The text of the legend is generated by the power of its inherent dialectics.

The legend is not limited to oral existence in face-to-face communication within small groups. Throughout the history of Western civilization, legends have abounded in written sources. Chronicles, annals, local and national histories, tractates (medical, natural historical, legal, and ecclesiastical), travelogues, diaries, and literary works inform us of the wealth of an essentially homogeneous body of legendry that has persisted in both oral and literary tradition to the present time. For example, the late-fifteenth-century witch-hunt manual *Malleus Maleficarum* (The witch hammer), written by two Dominican priests, contains the same witch and devil legends that are commonly known today, as does *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, written about a century later by Reginald Scot in Elizabethan England. Legend transmission from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries by Swiss legend collectors who were also writers and retellers of their texts is well documented in the collection of Rudolf Schenda.

The Industrial Revolution multiplied the communication channels that accommodated legend transmission, among other cultural messages. It sped up the circulation of legends while reaching out far beyond the small group, creating a global village that unified and homogenized mass society. The multivocal mass media today have a more potent influence on legend dissemination than does ongoing oral tradition in isolated small groups. Now, individuals communicate their legends through the telephone, tape recorder, videotape, E-mail, fax, or photocopier. On a broader scale, beyond the unofficial confines, legend events are further relayed to society at large by professional mediators who, like oral narrators, modify and re-create their versions to fit their purposes. Emergent legends are immediately reported in the daily news and the popular press, radio, and television; they are topics of talk shows, docudramas, and motion pictures; and they appear in popular science and literary works. The media also reconstruct and update old legends attached to current social concerns, keeping the public attracted and simultaneously confused about what to believe or what to doubt. On the wings of mass media, the proliferation of the legend is unprecedented; it has become the most viable among the genres of folklore and the most characteristic expression of human concerns in the industrial world.

Originally, following Grimmian principles, three kinds of folk legends were identified: *historical*, those related to an event or a personality of historical significance; *mythological* (demonological), those concerning human encounters with

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the supernatural world and endowment with supernatural power and knowledge; and *etiological* (explanatory), about the nature and origins of animate and inanimate things. In practice, this classification proved to be too limited because legends may be as much historical as mythological and explanatory at the same time, but when the system was developed, it satisfied needs for indexing archival materials, particularly the detailed scheme elaborated by the Legend-Commission of the International Society for Folk-Narrative Research in 1963. C. W. von Sydow, however, proposed a formal developmental distinction between a simpler form of legend, the *memorate* (telling one's own personal experience), and the more polished *fabulate* (based on personal experience but transformed by the creative process of oral transmission). Another common distinction of legends is made on the basis of their dissemination: The *local legend* is attached to a certain locus (a historical, geographical environment), whereas the *migratory legend* is a more crystallized, widespread, and fictionalized form. Many subcategories of the legend have been proposed over time on the basis of diverse classificatory principles, but because of the structural inconsistency of the legend, a formal model or prototype has never been established. The same story can be indicated, cited, or explicitly told in any form, from a sentence to a long elaborate story, depending on the skill of the teller and the degree of information held by the bearers. Legends can also be "told" without speaking—signaled by body language, gesture, sound and pictorial imitation, mumming, and ostension, that is, actually doing events described in legend. Any particle of a legend may be regarded as a legend because the part stands for the whole as it is received by its audience. In minimal speech utterance, legend can be hinted at or alluded to, or it can appear as the report of a fact, a belief, an opinion, or a vision claimed as the teller's experience by using the first-person singular voice. Legend may appear as rumor, repeated in chain transmission and expanded into a more or less detailed, multi-episodic story or, indeed, into a whole cycle of connected stories, finding its proper conduit.

The core of the legend is actually a belief that is interpreted positively or negatively during the legend-telling process but that need not be stated or explained because its underlying idea is shared by the support community. (Only the visiting fieldworker needs to hear unspecific statements of the obvious, such as: "Witches steal the milk of cows by drawing a bedsheet over the pasture on the eve of Saint George.") If harm does occur, the belief will manifest in two forms: (1) in a magical act of healing and retaliation, and (2) in telling about it. To act means to perform a custom or a ritual; telling is the formulation of the legend about the act. The proportion of the two (the description of the physical procedures and the narration of the story about it) varies greatly in diverse kinds of legends.

Legends accompany people through life. In a continuum, each life stage develops its own legendry: Natural and permanent groups (based on kinship, age, gender, or ethnicity) and voluntary and occasional groups (social, religious, occu-

pational, or recreational) constitute a network of social interactions in which legends are communicated. Legend ingredients are rooted in the earliest experiences of childhood. Building on images of fear, introduced in the course of normal mental development, adults gradually expose children to both supernatural and real horrors. Parents and other influential adults, older siblings, and the mass media furnish scary stories generally believed to be entertaining and educational. The stories for children between ages 2 and 14 are about ghosts, witches, monsters, devils, werewolves, mad murderers, and cataclysmic disasters—rich in images and characters but weak in narrative construction. These images include all manner of slimy, pukey, bloody, putrefied, rotten, and disgusting horrors.

Adolescents and young adults are the largest consumers of “horror art,” or legends provided by movies, comics, Halloween spook houses, and daring initiation rituals into adulthood for both sexes. These legends are complex events combining ritual and narration. Young people (the legend-telling group) visit scary places (haunted by the dead who perished there, prowled by disfigured and crazy killers, or consecrated as human sacrifice sites by devil worshipers, for example) and expose themselves to danger. They simulate reenactment of the event and retell a legend of their participant involvement—a narrow escape. These quest stories are all localized supernatural and extranormal horrors showing great variability, informed by the popular press’s sensationalized national and international coverage of occult, lunatic, and criminal acts.

The legends of adults are much more diffuse and varied. Basically, the stock contains family tradition: inherited legendry about locally famous and infamous people, haunts, violence, predictions that have come true, miraculous healings, and curses taking effect. As mentioned, the stock also contains childhood memories of youth legendry. The rest, the larger contingent, occupies the space between science and religion and is distributed according to free choice among the adults’ underlying systems of belief. Since the late nineteenth century, Western society has institutionalized its factions that try to explain unknown mysteries of life, death, and the hereafter both by rationalized interpretation of the irrational and by cultic-religious mystification, opening the way for a never-anticipated legend explosion. Legends emerged as charters of establishment in support of Spiritism and Fundamentalism, of charismatic, mystic sects, and of Christian and Eastern religions, as well as Satanism, Wicca, and Paganism, and the so-called occult sciences (parapsychology, astrology, study of extrasensory perception, psychic forces, clairvoyance, the study of unidentified flying objects [UFO] phenomena) and have contributed greatly to the scientification of folk belief and elements of legendry. Through the intervention of the ever-present mass media, this legendry has become common knowledge in modern technological society. Mass media also have become the source of a special type of horror legend that spreads as rumor related to emergent accusations, such as willful food contamination (by big companies or foreign restaurants), affliction of mortal diseases (AIDS, leprosy), ritual child abuse and cannibalism (blood

sucking for empowerment), and kidnapping of children (to harvest their organs as transplant merchandise), to name only a few of the themes.

In view of the unprecedented proliferation of legends in our time, folklore scholars have begun to raise questions concerning the increase of irrationality in technologically advanced Western society. In the late 1960s, American folklorists began to recognize some specific and previously unknown features of modern legends, and subsequently, British researchers joined the American team for collaborative work. Collecting and analyzing new materials resulted in new approaches and hypotheses. Efforts were made to identify and describe a new type of *urban* or *contemporary legend*, and questions were raised about whether it differed from the traditional folk legend known to scholars. By the end of the 1980s, the diagnosis of the widespread presence of an urban or contemporary body of new legendry also was verified by continental European folklorists from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, France, Croatia, Belgium, Holland, and Poland. The content of this legend type, emergent from the social problems of the urban folk, is more concerned with the rationally horrible than with the irrationally supernatural; its form is less cohesive and also ephemeral, like whispered-around gossip or rumor.

Although collectors have broadened the category of urban or contemporary legend by including all kinds of anecdotal and punlike messages that might become legends, they have tended to concede that urban legends cannot be separated from traditional legendry. Contextualization of traditional themes within the urban-industrial environment means only that legend messages keep their importance for modern people. The traditional scene—the barn, pasture, stable, woods, lonely trail—has given way to new familiar scenes—the parking lot, the shopping center, the day care center—but this does not change the essential meaning of the legend; rather, it reinforces it. The restless dead now send messages through TV screens and E-mail; divine apparitions float on apartment houses and office picture windows; witches, monsters, and maniacal killers endanger the safety of women or dating couples driving on the highway or parked in lovers' lanes, and fast food restaurants serve dangerous substances in the most popular dishes and drinks. To survive, legends must be relevant, dealing with contemporary problems, as they always have.

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See also Belief Tale; Conduit Theory/Multiconduit Theory; Legend, Contemporary; Legend, Urban.

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LEGEND, CONTEMPORARY

A short traditional narrative, or *digest* of a narrative, that has no definitive text, formulaic openings and closings, or artistically developed form; alternatively described as modern, urban, or belief legends, folktales, or myths. The preceding features of the contemporary legend often prevent its *traditional* nature from being immediately apparent. When communicated orally, contemporary legends exist primarily in an informal conversational form, although they also are embedded in other types of discourse (e.g., the joke, memorata, rumor, or personal experience narrative) and in diverse settings—ranging from news reports to after-dinner speeches. Frequently, they also are disseminated through the mass media, novels, and short stories or by E-mail, fax, and photocopier and therefore have a wide international circulation.

Contemporary legends are primarily nonsupernatural, secular narratives that are set in the real world. Told as if they happened recently, they focus on ordinary individuals in familiar places, and they portray situations that are perceived as important by the narrators and listeners alike—situations that the performers and their audiences may have experienced, are currently experiencing, or could possibly experience. As such, they describe plausible, ordinary situations and events, although often with an unusual twist. This *mundaneness* gives contemporary legends a unique quality that sets them apart from legends per se.

Contemporary legends emerge out of social contexts and interactions, and

they comment on culturally proscribed behavior. The list of topics covered includes such diverse themes as murder and violence, contaminated food, revenge, warnings, accidents, pleasant surprises, practical jokes, embarrassing situations, suppressed enterprise, cons, out-of-luck stories, devil worship, and mistrust of modern technology, such as microwaves and computers. Some contemporary legends suggest or even call for action on the part of the listeners—as in the case of the tale (existing in various forms) that asks people to send postcards to a dying child who wants to get into the *Guinness Book of Records*.

Although contemporary legends may have historical antecedents, either real or referential, they are not simply traditional legends in circulation today or updated narratives that describe contemporary characters or settings. Instead, their *contemporary* status is derived from the opportunity they provide for the narrator to introduce some *statement of belief* about a contemporary issue, out of which arises *dialogue* and *debate*.

Contemporary legends, in general, are told as describing true events, even when presented as lies, hoaxes, or jokes. Regardless, a contemporary legend may, in whole or part, be true—not necessarily *literally* true but containing a truth that comes from typifying life in the current century. These narratives emerge out of the existing beliefs of a given group and, as such, do not require that the narrators and listeners subscribe to any special belief(s).

Contemporary legends require no specialist performers, so no distinction exists between narrators and listeners. Usually, the narrators are unaware that they are telling traditional narratives that have previously been told by many others. And contemporary legends are normally offered in response to a preceding item of conversation, rather than to a request for “someone to tell a tale.”

Contemporary legends have no single meaning; indeed, they have different meanings for different individuals and in different contexts. There is also a wide variety of functions for both the telling of contemporary legends and their narrative contents. Any one narrative may be informative and/or entertaining and/or carrying other messages at the same time. They can be didactic or used to present a rational explanation of some issue or phenomenon that is ambiguous or beyond our control. They are used to fill gaps in our empirical knowledge with suppositions about the way the world works. They have been used to validate our thoughts, beliefs, and actions; to provide a forum for social control; to deliver moral messages; and to justify why we behave in particular ways in certain situations. As such, they allow us to express our fears, provide commentary and explanations of abnormal situations or strange behavior, or warn against involvement in particular types of situations. Contemporary legends also may function to reinforce nonestablishment values and to disseminate and reinforce existing attitudes—by stereotyping people, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus, we use contemporary legends as a way of maintaining the status quo within our social groups.

Research on this topic has been undertaken by scholars in such divergent

disciplines as anthropology, history, business management, sociology, psychology, communication studies, English language, English literature, and Native American studies. Therefore, the study of contemporary legend is not solely the territory of folklorists—despite a tendency for them to dominate the field.

In 1982, the first annual “Perspectives on Contemporary Legend International Seminar” was held at the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language at the University of Sheffield, England. This and subsequent seminars produced five volumes of conference proceedings. A growing interest in the topic led to the foundation in 1988 of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research, which publishes the newsletter *FOAFtale News* and the journal *Contemporary Legend*.

Paul Smith

See also Legend; Legend, Urban.

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LEGEND, URBAN

A popular term for a narrative concerning some aspect of modern life that is believed by its teller but is actually untrue. The concept has its origins in the debate over whether folklore was characteristic of rural cultures or if it extended to educated classes as well. French folklorists in the 1880s first showed interest in a distinctively “urban” legend parallel to the “traditional” (i.e., supernatural)



A UFO hovers over a Russian Orthodox church in Yaroslavl, Russia. UFO sightings and alien abductions are examples of current urban legends around the world.

legend. Under the leadership of Paul Sébillot, scholars published a large number of actively circulating rumors and narratives collected in Paris, Danzig, and other urban areas. Their lead, however, was not communicated to their counterparts in the Finnish-German and Anglo-American scholarly traditions, who continued to overemphasize legends that appeared to reflect survivals of “primitive” rural belief systems.

Interest in city-based legends appeared only sporadically in American publications until the 1950s, when Richard M. Dorson highlighted them as examples of “modern” folklore. He called attention to several common legends of this type, including “The Death Car,” in his influential 1959 textbook, *American Folklore*. Subsequently, a number of studies and collections of similar legends were published by his colleagues and students at Indiana University. Initially, Dorson called such narratives “city legends,” but he later used several different terms for them, including “urban belief tales,” “modern legends,” and (at least by 1968) “urban legends.”

The concept of the urban legend was given wide exposure in 1981 when Jan Harold Brunvand summed up folkloristic research on such narratives in *The Vanishing Hitchhiker*. Brunvand characterized urban legends as literally false—that is, they could not have happened in the precise way in which the

narrative stated. “A story too good to be true” later became his nutshell definition of the genre. But urban legends were, he added, metaphorically true, in that they revealed concerns about modern society and often contained explicit or symbolic criticisms of urban conditions. His book was widely read, and through its sequels and a weekly news column, Brunvand’s approach to such narratives became familiar to many nonfolklorists. *Urban legend*, like *myth*, soon became a synonym for *erroneous belief* among the general public and has been applied to a wide range of material, from nonnarrative beliefs (sadists put razor blades in apples) to “unbelievable” personal experience stories (satanic cult or UFO abduction accounts).

Brunvand’s approach has been criticized by some folklorists, who find that his stress on the fallacy of legends demean their performers. Others argue that his use of summary or media versions to extract broad cultural meanings was often impressionistic and superficial. Scattered but persistent records of analogs in traditional rural contexts also suggest that the “urban” context of modern variants may be an artifact of changes in fieldwork methodology: Supernatural legends may have been overcollected in the past. Further, popular use of the term *urban legend* to refer to any narrative that appears to reflect an “urban” or “modern” context often groups narratives of disparate content and reflects different modes of narration. Some, like “The Vanishing Hitchhiker,” seem close to folktale; others, like UFO abduction accounts, are closer to belief legends. Considering all these as “believed but untrue” stories ignores important differences in their form and dynamics. Hence, many folklorists prefer to use the term *contemporary legend*, a more neutral but equally vague and problematic concept.

Daniel R. Barnes, however, has argued that the term is accurate in referring to one subset of legends. These, like “The Vanishing Hitchhiker,” are formally similar in that they deliberately withhold an important clue from the audience (the girl’s death, in the case of “The Vanishing Hitchhiker”) until the “punch line” at the end of the narrative. Such a narrative device, he argues, is similar to those used in popular literature forms such as the detective story, whose growth in popularity parallels urbanization.

Interest in urban legend studies has created an international network of amateur and professional collectors, who have brought a diverse and challenging base of data to academics’ attention. Analysis of these data may well lead to a more precise definition of the legend and related concepts.

Bill Ellis

See also Legend; Legend, Contemporary.

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LIFE-CYCLE RITUAL

A complex of ritual patterns accompanying critical moments of the human life cycle, from pregnancy and childbirth to death. Life-cycle rituals accompany status transformations of a community, society, or other group of individuals. They constitute a part of the socialization process of an individual into the community. These rituals transform because they confirm or change the participants' status or position within a community. Each community shares a common view of the maturation and socialization processes of an individual, and life-cycle rituals mark these stages for the individual and the respective social group.

The patterns of traditional rituals are governed by the particular community's own values. Rituals respond to these values in that new situations change ritual contexts and interpretations. Changed circumstances, in fact, may lead the group to create new forms of ritual actions in relation to the human life cycle. Despite unique cultural structures, human life-cycle rituals appear to be almost universally patterned around the birth, puberty or marriage, and death of an individual.

Birth can be characterized as a transition that is significant from both the mother's and the newborn's points of view. And rituals connected with pregnancy, birth, and maternity mark the social relations of both the mother and the infant. Most important for the baby are the confirmation of its admission to membership in the community and the creation of its first status. For the mother, birth marks a transformation from the everyday role of a wife to the specific role of a mother. The ability of a human to reproduce on the individual level and the permitted social conditions for such reproduction are the central topics of a range of life-cycle rituals.

For instance, a wedding ceremony announces that a significant change of status occurs as the maiden assumes the role of wife and the young man becomes a husband. In most societies, a wedding is a complex of rites of passage in which many other complicated social relationships of the community are rearranged and made public. A wedding consists of numerous discrete events.

There are, however, only a few ritual movements that actually constitute the decisive act of transforming status. For example, requesting permission to marry makes public the statuses of the suitor and wooed girl, handshaking means engagement, official registration is needed to make the couple legally wife and husband, and the first child is needed for the formation of a new nuclear family.

Death rituals also are a complex of linked events. These may include such stages as the death watch and expiration, the washing and dressing of the body, the making of the coffin, and the digging of the grave—a chain of funeral rites at home and a complex of burial rites. Often, there are additional special rites for the postburial period associated with “remembering” the deceased.

Life-cycle rituals, therefore, accompany the crucial changes in social status. These rituals confirm the continuity and structure of social life for both the individual and the community.

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See also Festival; Initiation; Rites of Passage.

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LIFE HISTORY

A research method that focuses on the individual's life experiences, particularly significant events; also known as the life-historical approach. A great variety of terms pertain to this mode of study. The concept of *autobiography* refers to an account produced by the individual about his or her own life. A *biography*, in contrast, is an account produced by someone other than the person studied, sometimes without the active involvement of the individual under scrutiny (e.g., studies of the founders of religions, historical figures, or the deceased). The term *life history* is used to denote the study of an individual's life that results from the interaction between the informant and the researcher.

The *culture and personality* school within cultural anthropology specializes

in problems associated with the interaction between the personality of an individual and the individual's culture. The biographical or life history method springs from the same theoretical origins as the culture and personality school and is based on personal accounts or other reliable sources that shed light on the major events of the subject's life. This method investigates the relations of a community and its individual members through intensive study of one particular representative of the culture. The personality is considered not as a permanent entity but rather as an organism that goes through various changes in the course of different phases of a unique life history. This type of research is often referred to as a holistic in-depth study, which accounts for both the individual's experiences and the interpretation of these events. The chain of personal events and their interpretation as the structure of a life history illuminate the complex interplay between the individual, society, and culture. The life-historical approach is, by its very nature, a retrospective and very much an interpretative task for both the individual and the researcher when a living person is studied. Indeed, it is interactional to such an extent that the scholar becomes an integral part of the research.

Life-historical (repertoire) analysis sheds light on the way one experiences the environment in one's own niche and how one's own life experiences and worldview interact in someone's life history and folklore repertoire. It is also relevant to focus attention on the influence of the crucial turning points or situations of choice upon the individual's social, status, or role personality, which implies a micro study of problems significant on the macro level.

An interesting research problem in biographical studies either of an individual or of a small group is the relationship between an individual and the community in which the person is brought up. When studying the ethnic, social, and cultural identities of an individual on the basis of life-historical materials, it is meaningful to relate identity to the significant processes of social and individual changes that demand reorientation of both the self and the world. Because neither individuals nor social groups nor situations are static, this reconstruction is a continuous process.

In their life histories, people tell about themselves—that is, how they have experienced life, society, culture, and environment. At the same time, they transmit ideas and meanings that include elements of their worldviews. Thus, life histories and worldviews contain similar elements and often deal with the same basic unit of research, an idiosyncratic individual. Life history and worldview, as concepts of research, are not, however, overlapping, although the life-historical method and worldview analysis often coincide since both are in-depth studies requiring extensive fieldwork. In fact, there is no clear borderline between fieldwork and analysis in the course of an in-depth study. It is often necessary to change and modify the plan in the course of long-term fieldwork. Interviews and observations in the field have to do with interactional situations within which the individual who is revealing the personal life history is focus-

ing simultaneously on the current interaction, past experiences, and their significance to the present.

Such (auto)biographical genres as memorates, legends, and laments are of great value as sources of life-historical documents.

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See also Historical Analysis; Legend; Memorate; Personal Experience Narrative.

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LIMINALITY

A special state in a transition ritual. The term *liminality*, derived from the Latin *limen* (meaning threshold), identifies the condition opposing the normal, hierarchical, structured state or the fixed point in the social structure both on the individual and on the societal level, particularly when this state arises in the course of transformative rituals. This marginal period is an interstructural situation opposing a relatively fixed or stable condition.

Ritual subjects—individuals—can be termed “transitional beings” or “liminal personae” during the period of liminality. During the marginal period in the process of rites of passage, ritual subjects are in a somehow undefined, ambiguous status. This liminal phase exists between the act of separation from the participants’ old status and the neophytes’ induction into a new one. The three-fold model of the nature of rites of passage was put forward by Arnold van Gennep in his *Rites of Passage*, published in 1909.

Victor W. Turner has further developed van Gennep’s concept of liminal rites. Turner’s process-oriented method focuses on the structural analysis of rites and symbols. In his terminology, the concept of *structure* coincides with social structure as employed in British social anthropology. The concepts of *antistructure* and *communitas* are both used in the description of the liminal stage. In Turner’s opinion, during the liminal stage, *communitas* tends to characterize

LIMINALITY

relationships between those jointly undergoing ritual transformation. The bonds of *communitas* are antistructural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential, I-thou relationships. *Communitas* is spontaneous, immediate, concrete; it is not shaped by norms, not institutionalized, and not abstract.

Within the liminal stage, participants (for example, initiands) are beyond the boundaries of the normal social structure and its values, norms, and obligations. The marginal state that begins with rites of separation is an abnormal condition, beyond society and time. For that reason, it is possible for people to behave in ways that do not coincide with those of the “normal” social structure and its conditions. For instance, sexual freedom is a common characteristic of the marginal period in the initiation rites of many peoples. The marginal abnormal condition of anarchy is terminated by rites of aggregation, which make new status relationships public to the community.

The abnormal and antistructural liminal stage deviates from the norm to such an extent that, depending on the culture and religion, people at that phase are considered to be more susceptible to the influence of the supernatural than usual. For example, the frequency of supranormal experiences is quite high during or around liminal periods among people going through rites of passages. Thus, the presence of the supernatural is a common characteristic of the liminal phase. Supernatural experiences are even expected, and the manifestations of supranormal beings are believed to have a positive effect on the community. It is important from the point of view of any community for the liminal stage to be safely passed over and for life to return to normal.

Liminality also can become a continuous problem that disturbs the life of the community. An example of such turmoil arising from unresolved liminality can be found in religious beliefs dealing with the so-called dead without status. The problem of the dead without status (e.g., unbaptized babies) seems to be their eternal liminality. Such “betwixt and between” status is an exceptional, unsatisfactory condition primarily inflicted on those who are regarded as responsible for the supranormal manifestations.

Turner makes a distinction between the terms *liminal* and *liminoid*, emphasizing the need for a proper terminology to describe ritual life even in industrialized and highly developed cultures. Turner claims that in such societies, the liminoid is not only removed from the rite of passage context but also “individualized.” A solitary artist *creates* liminoid phenomena, a group *experiences* collective liminal symbols.

Studies on threshold experiences and the liminal stage also might lead to a better understanding of creativity. Individuals who are distinguished for their creativity seem to enjoy an anarchic way of life and put a great emphasis on marginal experiences, which seem to be a necessary catalyst for their creativity.

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See also Anthropology, Symbolic; Initiation; Rite of Passage.



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LINGUISTIC APPROACH

The transferal of methods from the study of language to the study of folklore. In many respects, folklore and language are similar, and their commonalities have led to productive exchanges between the disciplines created to account for them. In both folklore and linguistics, researchers examine complex creations that unite and at the same time distinguish their users. Both language and folklore convey meaning that, shared within a community, endures over time but that nonetheless always varies in response to performer, audience, and context. Both are shaped by the experiences and ways of life of their users, and in turn, they help shape their ambient cultures and communities.

Linguistics played an important role in the formation of folklore studies. Language was one of the central interests of romanticism, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century intellectual movement that gave rise to the field itself, and many of the leaders of folklore studies have maintained professional identities as linguists as well. Linguistic concepts and methods have been adapted to the myriad cultural forms that folklorists investigate, and they are reflected particularly in historical and geographic approaches, the study of worldview, the work of the Prague school and structuralists, the ethnography of communication, and ethnopoetics.

HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND ORIGINS

Nineteenth-century scholarship in both folklore and linguistics focused on the history, geographic spread, and ultimate origins of cultural phenomena. Early linguists (philologists) in Europe became engrossed in the reconstruction of prior forms of language through the careful comparison of existing forms. This comparative method eventually revealed the underlying genetic relations

between the majority of Europe's languages and represented a powerful methodology for the recovery of prehistory. Jacob Grimm extended the method to folklore, seeking to reconstruct ancient Germanic mythology from extant beliefs and words, and the Finnish scholars Julius and Kaarle Krohn applied the comparative framework to folksong and folk narrative. The historical-geographic ("Finnish") method adopted the concepts and terminology of comparative linguistics freely, coining the term *Ur-form* to parallel linguistic reconstructions such as *Ur-germanisch* (proto-Germanic).

A key common interest for both folklorists and linguists in Europe was folk speech, the nonstandard forms of language used outside of elite circles. In folk speech, both groups of scholars sought clues for the reconstruction of folk history. Folk speech was seen as a key to understanding the movements and relations that lay behind the settlement of particular regions or countries. This interest was transferred to the American context as well, where the study of dialect built upon a long-standing literary interest in folk speech. The study of temporal and spatial variation in speech patterns developed into the linguistic subdisciplines of dialectology and language geography but have continued to attract folkloristic attention as well. Important syntheses of work in this area include the *Dictionary of American Regional English* and the *European Atlas Linguarum Europae*. Both dictionaries examine the historical spread and distribution of lexical items and pronunciations across vast geographic areas. The line between language geography and folkloristics becomes very unclear, especially when considering folk terminology for traditional implements or concepts (the "*Wort und Sache*," or "word and thing," approach of European ethnology).

SALVAGE AND CLASSIFICATION

One of the greatest challenges facing folklorists and linguists alike in the early stages of their disciplines was the collection and classification of data. In both Europe and the United States, the specters of industrialization and modernity threatened to sweep away the ancient speech and pastimes of the peasantry before scholars could record or study them. In North America, this threat proved even more ominous as indigenous languages and traditions were pushed to oblivion by white expansion. The Bureau of American Ethnology (founded in 1879) and Franz Boas, editor of the *Journal of American Folklore* from 1908 to 1924, led the way in the recording of Native American language and narrative. And folklorist/linguists such as Boas, Alfred Kroeber, and Edward Sapir gained understandings during their fieldwork among Native American populations that profoundly shaped the field of folklore and continue to influence theoretical developments in the field today.

One of the most fundamental tenets in "ethnolinguistic fieldwork" among Native Americans was the verbatim transcription of speech. Earlier folklorists saw no need to leave collected narratives "unimproved" and often edited or reworked their informants' words, even when claiming to provide exact tran-

scriptions. Linguistic fieldworkers dealing with exotic languages, by contrast, demanded absolute fidelity to the text as performed: Only then could the transcription become useful in studying the grammar of the language in question. Boas and his students favored the collection of myth and other forms of traditional narrative as examples of connected discourse. In addition, such transcriptions could help researchers investigate the history, values, and aesthetics of a people. For Boas and the “anthropological folklorists,” both linguistics and folklore studies were essential subdisciplines of anthropology, the integrated study of humanity.

WORLDVIEW

Ethnolinguistic studies of Native American idioms expanded the range of notions concerning language and its form and helped dismantle the Eurocentric tenets of linguistic theory. Crucial to the development of folkloristics, however, was the concurrent realization of linguistic relativism. Writing in the first half of the twentieth century, linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf posited that language shapes and largely determines our understandings of the world. Rather than viewing language as an objective expression of reality, the “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis” portrays language as a subjective expression of an imagined reality, one that will vary from culture to culture. One’s very thoughts—or at least the forms of those thoughts—are shaped by one’s native language. Language thus becomes central to any investigation of culture and serves as the foundation for worldview. This realization remains productive in the fields of folklore, linguistics, and anthropology today, and it has enjoyed a resurgence through scholars’ interest in folk taxonomies, such as those studied by Gary Gossen in Chamula culture. By attending to the systems by which the world is classified within a given language, the scholar can make judgments about the worldview and values of the people studied. Perhaps no other area of folkloristic research seeks to make such minute and yet all-encompassing judgments about human thought as this branch of folkloric/linguistic inquiry.

THE PRAGUE SCHOOL

More than other linguists working in the Boasian tradition, Sapir advocated the study of language in natural contexts. Such work was eventually made possible by the development of recording technology and the shift from dictation to sound recording as a method of data collection. An innovative theoretical base for the study of language in the here and now was offered at the same time by the Prague school linguists of Europe. Researchers in this tradition shifted attention from the historical development of language to its synchronic aspects (i.e., how language is used at the moment of performance), emphasizing its functional, structural, contextual, and aesthetic features. The work of such Prague school linguists as Roman Jakobson and Petr Bogatyrev served as the basis for

the formation of the ethnography of communication approach years later, and Jakobson's explorations of poetics remain important in folkloristic studies of aesthetics and ethnopoetics (see the related discussion that follows).

SAUSSURE AND CHOMSKY

Another influential European linguist of the early twentieth century was Ferdinand de Saussure, who distinguished between the *parole* (the speech act in its natural context) and the *langue* (the abstract system of rules underlying natural speech). Saussure's work spurred new interest in language structure and its relation to meaning, an interest that developed into the independent field of semiotics (the structural study of signs). Folklorists, too, joined in this expanded descriptive enterprise, applying structuralist and semiotic approaches to genres such as *Märchen*, riddle, and proverb. Figures such as Elli Kögäs-Maranda and Thomas Sebeok brought folklore genres into the center of linguistic and semiotic inquiry. Later developments, especially in speech-act theory, further extended this logic-based descriptive tradition. The works of John McDowell, W. J. Pepicello, and Thomas A. Green illustrate the ways in which this expanded framework can be applied to folklore (specifically, the riddle).

In certain ways, the Saussurean paradigm, especially as adapted by Noam Chomsky in the 1960s and 1970s, led to a retreat from the earlier focuses of linguistics—namely, historical and ethnographic research. Information on the actual performance of language in context became trivialized as expendable data. Descriptive endeavors were oriented toward discovering the system of rules underlying natural language rather than the analysis of language in use. Nonetheless, even Chomskian linguistics proved an important model for folklorists, particularly in the study of material culture, where Henry Glassie's adaptation of generative grammar theory to vernacular architecture touched off a major research trend.

LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT

In the 1960s and 1970s, the interests of a number of folklorists and linguists again converged, contributing to the inception of the performance school of folklore studies and the further development of sociolinguistics. Researchers such as Dell Hymes, Richard Bauman, John Gumperz, Joel Sherzer, and others focused attention on language function in context, particularly with reference to the speech community. Indeed, the speech community—the union of persons sharing a given form of speech in a given place at a given moment—became a key means of defining one's ethnographic object. Language becomes one of the resources available to the community for the accomplishment of communication. Speech acts can be analyzed to discover the ways of speaking that are permissible in a given community and the intricacies of discourse as it occurs naturally. Just as a speaker in Chomskian linguistics could be assumed to

possess a basic competence in the abstract *langue*, so a speaker in this performance-oriented linguistics could be assumed to possess “communicative competence,” that is, the ability to use or interpret language appropriately in its everyday *paroles*. Careful description of speech function in interaction became known as discourse analysis, and the performative and ethnographic aspects of speech communities were studied under the cluster of rubrics “ethnography of speaking,” “ethnography of communication,” and “ways of speaking.”

This shift of attention from the study of language in the abstract or on the level of a society as a whole toward the study of language in interaction and in specific “speech communities” altered both folklore studies and linguistics. It allowed for an emergence of the individual performer in accounts of language behavior, and it provided a theoretical basis for the interplay of performer and audience in natural contexts. Though sociolinguists have focused on minute linguistic events—tag questions, lexical choice, pronunciation, and so forth—folklorists have tended to examine larger moments—such as banter between friends, narratives within conversation, and storytelling events. In both cases, scholars reveal the complexities of everyday communication and its emergent discourse-based meanings through close analysis of performances.

The shift from language to speech community also allowed for the investigation of communities that possess or deal with more than one language. In fact, bilingualism and plurilingualism have become prime areas of research for linguists today. The intricacies of code switching and the expressive uses of one language over another in a given speech situation reflect not only the workings of human language but also the workings of human behavior in general. The notion of code switching between different cultural resources or between items in a heterogeneous cultural repertoire has become a key focus in folkloristics, particularly in the study of ethnicity.

The approach that deals with ways of speaking focuses ethnographic attention on the uses of speech in natural contexts; ethnopoetics, by contrast, focuses on the aesthetic features of the speech itself. Important figures in this branch of folklore/linguistics include Dennis Tedlock and Dell Hymes. Hymes’ synthesis of performance school interests and structuralist linguistics represents an important contribution to contemporary folkloristic research and has helped reinvigorate the folkloristic study of Native American narrative.

Folkloristics owes many of its most effective methods and greatest achievements to the work of linguists and linguistically minded folklorists. Linguists, too, have gained much from folkloristics, particularly its interest in individuals and their relations to communities. Where the two fields intersect, the disciplinary distinction becomes merely one of emphasis. Where the two fields diverge, they offer each other new perspectives and challenges.

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See also Discourse Analysis; Ethnopoetics; Philological Approach; Semiotics; Structuralism.



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LITERARY APPROACH

A folkloristic methodology that (1) emphasizes the idealized folk as the carrier of artistic tradition and limits the scope of research to traditional forms regarded as carrying artistic elements, or (2) views folkloristics from a humanistic, anthropological, or psychoanalytic perspective. Although the latter is now considered obsolete, scholars working from the humanistic perspective gener-

ally regarded oral tradition as a sort of inner world of thought or as an unwritten literature, those working from the anthropological perspective used the hypotheses of social science, and scholars in the psychoanalytic school worked within a psychological frame of reference. This entry focuses on the use of folklore materials in creating literary works and on one classical literary method in folkloristics—*textual criticism*.

No specific literary method has been employed in folklore scholarship during the last few decades of the twentieth century. However, some folkloristic approaches have been influenced by literary theories and have literary-based points of departure. Among the diverse literary theories and theorists that have influenced the study of folklore are: the structuralistic poetics of the Prague school (Roman Jakobson, Petr Bogatyrev); the Tartu semiotic school (Juri Lotman, Eleazar Meletinskij); the French school of structuralists (Claude Lévi-Strauss, Algirdas Julien Greimas, Roland Barthes); the poststructuralists and deconstructionists (Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan); the French and Anglo-American schools of discourse analysis; and the diverse branches of research on narrating or “narratology.”

From the historical point of view, it is necessary to consider the processes involved in publishing and editing folklore collections, as well as diverse literary products created on the basis of such collections. This is not a literary method in folkloristics but a literary (and usually also an ideological) orientation to the process of using folklore in cultural life. In various parts of the world, folklore collections have been published in modified or reconstructed form according to prevailing literary fashions or political and didactic aims. This holds true of the European collections of tales by Giambattista Basile (1634–1636), Charles Perrault (1697), and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (1812–1814), as well as countless collections of epic poetry, ballads, lyric songs, proverbs, or riddles.

The creation of national epics is one facet of this phenomenon. In Finland, Elias Lönnrot collected versions of oral poetry—epics, lyrics, and incantations—and on the basis of this material, compiled the *Kalevala* in 1849. The example of Homer was important for Lönnrot but not solely as a literary model refashioned by the romantic tendencies of his time. Lönnrot also was influenced by the European research tradition of literary epics and especially by Friedrich Wolf, who, in his “Prolegomena ad Homerum” (1795), had maintained that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed orally in the form of short songs and edited later to obtain the unity they ultimately embodied. In the literary theories and the romantic nationalistic currents of his time, Lönnrot found a theoretical and ideological justification for his work. Thus, he believed that he knew the method—that is, how the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were created and how an epos comes into being.

Several national epics were created in nineteenth-century Europe, and

each of them was formed through similar processes but with a different textual and ideological framework and background. Thus, for example, the Latvian national epos *Lācplēšis* (The bear slayer) was put to verse by Andrejs Pumpurs on the basis of various excerpts of Latvian folklore, including magic and etiological tales, legends, and folksongs. In some passages, however, the diction of the author strays very far from the folklore materials, being more “literary” than “folk” in such parts.

Every collection and publication created on a folkloric base involves various processes of ideologizing and dramatizing—and at the same time, conventionalizing. One example is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha* (1855). Using a meter similar to that of the *Kalevala*, Longfellow grouped separate Native American prose legends and mythical tales around a number of central figures in order to provide a unity and a morality that the tales did not originally possess. The works of H. R. Schoolcraft were the main source of the folklore material used in *Hiawatha*, and Schoolcraft had gotten the material from English translations of Native American sources. There are, in fact, a number of similar cases throughout the world. The Russian poet Semën Lipkin, for example, has declared himself the definitive translator of *Geser, the Heroic Epos of the Buryats*, published in Russian in 1973. The text is based on Namdzil Baldano’s collation in Buryat language, and this version is at least partly founded on original epic poems. A selected portion of the text has been translated into Russian. Folklorist Aleksei Ulanov made a word-for-word translation, stating that, in the process, the traditional content, style, and poetic devices had been observed, and only side episodes hampering the integrity of the plot were removed. Lipkin finally compounded a poetic translation using regular rhyme and other poetic features unknown not only in Buryat but also in Russian epic poetry.

The practice of refashioning folklore materials for literary and ideological purposes is not a uniquely European phenomenon. In China, the term used for folklore is *mín jiān wén xué*, or “folk literature,” and one method of using folklore materials in Chinese cultural life is called *collation*: Folklore is used to propagandize when it is “collated” into normal social activities. The collation process consists of several stages of editing and compilation aimed at the publication of an artistically and ideologically suitable version. In China, the history of publishing folklore materials reaches as far back as 2,500 years, although the practice of collation in our times is not, of course, exactly the same as it was in ancient China. It is instructive to take into consideration that there are cultures in which the mutual influence of oral and literary forms has continued not for centuries but for thousands of years.

Although collections, collations, or creations fashioned by literary or ideological trends are significant as national symbols and as objects of extensive use in cultural life, they nevertheless may not qualify as primary material of folkloristic research. The same is true of the national epics, based on folklore collec-

tions. It is, however, necessary to emphasize that the use of refashioned folklore material reveals and expresses fundamental cultural, ideological, and political processes. The research of the second life of folklore (or, as some authors call it, contextualization and textualization processes) is essential in the research of texts as a means of creating identity, power relations, and cultural authority.

Just as genuine or supposed folklore materials have provided frameworks for literary creations, literary methods have provided tools for analyzing and authenticating texts. One of the classical literary methods applied to folklore materials was *textual criticism*. This method, aimed at establishing primary and authentic texts and sources, included a careful recension and examination of different manuscripts and variants (or readings) of texts, as well as subsequent emendation and conjecture if the available evidence was inadequate. In its earliest form, this kind of procedure was applied to Homeric texts, for example, by Aristarkhos (207–145 B.C.), the librarian of the Alexandrian Library; a number of scholars, especially in the nineteenth century, also applied it to biblical texts. In folkloristics, textual criticism was used mainly by adherents of the Finnish geographical-historical (or historic-geographic) school, but it also was employed by literary scholars and folklorists trying to disentangle the prehistory of such classical epic texts as the Iranian epics *Shāhnāma* in attempts to identify Ferdousi's sources (as done by Theodore Nöldeke) or the different readings of the German *Nibelungenlied* (as done by Andreas Heusler). The text-critical histories of the classical Indian epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* reveal the enormity of different languages and scripts dating from different times. It took a team of Indian scholars thirty-five years to prepare the nineteen-volume "critical edition" of *Mahābhārata*. The work detected an astonishing number of interpolations, contaminations, and emendations, and in the end, the editors concluded that the compound text could not be adequately dated since the manuscripts formed a huge mosaic of old and new material—truly an intertextual network that contained elements of countless heterogeneous parts of varying ages.

In Finnish folkloristics, textual criticism was connected to an evolutionary framework in the diachronic comparative studies and to the laws of geographic distribution that emerged as the historical-geographic school during the transition to the twentieth century. On the basis of the collected texts, the adherents of this approach hoped to reconstruct the prototypes or archetypes of the texts, segregate the original and secondary features, and extrapolate the hypothetical primary form or content of the research object, deducing the place and origin of the phenomenon in question whenever possible.

Later, toward the middle of the twentieth century, the guiding principle of the "Finnish method" became the practice of arranging the text variants by typological variant groups called redactions, rather than primarily by area. According to subscribers to this procedure (e.g., Walter Anderson and Matti Kuusi), the hypothetical primary form was supposed to have generated initial

redactions and subsequently a great number of redactions and subredactions, which directly or indirectly descended from the initial forms. Ultimately, it became clear that the initial forms could hardly be revealed or reconstructed on the basis of the collected texts or variants, and the researchers had to content themselves with making more or less probable hypotheses, selecting the one that offered the most reliable answers for the moment.

During the history of applying this method to various folklore texts, one literary-based idea has been repeatedly emphasized—namely, the ideal *poeta anonymus*, the anonymous composer looming behind each epic poem or folk-tale. One of the tasks of the Finnish School was to uncover as much as possible from the earlier developmental phases of a particular traditional text. The Finnish scholars also sought to draw conclusions as to the time and place of the text's creation, as well as the social position, order, sex, age, and even worldview of the supposed original rune singer or muse. The paragon for this kind of procedure is seen in literary analyses aimed at revealing the authorship of ancient texts.

The question is, to what extent is this literary analog valid when dealing with folklore texts? One answer might be that after a critical examination of accessible historical sources and folklore materials, the researcher is dealing not with a literary analog but with fundamental problems of the history of the phenomenon in question. One advantage inherent in this approach is that it may serve as the basis for a hermeneutic analysis of historical perspectives, something that would not be possible (or relevant) using purely empirical methods.

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See also Bard; Deconstruction; Discourse Analysis; Historic-Geographic Method; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Postmodernism; Semiotics; Structuralism.

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LOCALIZATION

The process by which folklore develops to conform to the preferred patterns of folk cultural regions; alternatively, the products of such a process. Folk cultural regions are self-conscious, multileveled assemblies of folk as specific as “Arizona White River Apache” and as broad as “the Southwest,” but members of all regions share a traditional aesthetic sense that regulates folklore. Localization reshapes lore to fit these varied senses of form.

Literary folklorists analyzed texts as products of localization and found that characters’ names and the settings of oral folklore were frequently localized. One of the most notable Anglo-American ballad localizations, for example, is the substitution of familiar names for unfamiliar ones, so that names acceptable to audience and performers replace characters of long ago or far away in localized versions.

The settings of folk narrative are also frequently localized in response to the traditions of folk cultural regions. Most Anglo-American urban legends, for example, are introduced as having happened recently and nearby, but they lack exact settings.

Field-based folklorists and anthropologists concentrated upon the localization of folklore performance and upon the process by which localization took place. Field researchers investigating localization focused on the unconscious process of selection and adaptation by which folk cultural regions create their lore. Localization, in both the literary and field research senses of the term, is an important concept in cultural studies, explaining one of the major ways in which folklore develops and examining the results of this process.

Keith Cunningham

See also Oikotype/Oicotype; Variant.

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LUCK

The belief that human activities are determined by chance. Luck is a significant idea in folklore studies, not just in the obvious area of folk belief but also in other genres such as legends, proverbs, and children’s games. Luck and chance are reflected in folk expressions because of human concerns with fate, with uncertainties in life, and with control of those uncertainties. Attitudes toward

LULLABY

luck will vary depending on different cultural contexts, specific social situations, and individual concerns.

The proverb “Work hard and you shall be rewarded” suggests a straightforward value of achievement, but the existence of other proverbs in the same culture such as “Who knows what tomorrow will bring?” indicates a qualification of the first value and a tension in cultural worldview. Luck and chance modify the value of the work ethic: “Work hard and you *may not* be rewarded.” Buried treasure legends seem to express what Alan Dundes has called the folk idea of unlimited good since the stories usually end with the treasure not being found; it is still waiting for someone willing to work hard and find it. However, treasure tales often emphasize luck rather than hard work as the reason for a treasure being found, so there is a qualification of the work ethic. Children’s treasure hunts reflect some of these same concerns.

Because of the chance element in human endeavors, folk traditions provide means to control one’s luck—folk beliefs, rituals, and charms—especially in areas of life where there is more uncertainty. Gambling is a good example: Racetrack bettors, poker players, and lottery players are notorious for being superstitious—trying to control their luck by wearing charms, cutting the cards in a certain way, arriving at the track at a certain time, playing numbers that they dream about, and so forth.

Scientific and technological advances probably have given humans a greater sense of control of their lives, but as long as there is some uncertainty in existence, the folklore of luck will be found.

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See also Belief, Folk; Charm.

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LULLABY

A type of song used to soothe a baby to sleep; also known as a cradle song. It is a widespread oral genre, found to a lesser extent in written and recorded forms. The large number of lullaby examples from diverse societies suggests that lulla-

bies are nearly as universal as childbirth and children. Like laments and wedding songs, the lullaby is a special occasion genre usually tied to its function, in this case, to reassure and calm a child to hasten slumber.

Lullabic lyrics commonly are built around short, repetitious phrases or stanzas that engage a range of linguistic modes, from adult language to “baby-talk” vocables or combinations thereof. The semantic content that marks a song unambiguously as a lullaby contains phrases of endearment for the child and makes reference to going to sleep. Examples with less overt lyrics also are found on any number of topics, used, it has been suggested, because their rhythmic structure is suitable to the song’s function. Bess Lomax Hawes’ own family, for instance, favored the Protestant hymn “I Am Bound for the Promised Land.”

Although there has been less research on music than on lyrics, lullabies generally are melodically repetitious—monotony, for lullabies, appears to be functional—with rhythmic and metric characteristics that correspond to the culturally defined kinetic motions of rocking a child. Some lullabies, however, lack one or both of these components; certain Hopi examples, for instance, contain no metric pulse and show no coordination between kinetic and musical rhythm. Lullabies employed within literate or concert traditions may be elaborated with contrasting musical structures, as with those of Brahms and Berg.

In common performance, lullabies underscore the close relationship between parent (usually the mother) and child. The intimate context suggests that lullabies are not invariably derived from precomposed (lullabic) sources, oral-based or otherwise. Though most societies cherish established lullabies, many performances are undoubtedly simply personal musical/textual expressions of the parent’s feeling for the child.

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See also Folk Music; Folksong, Lyric.

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M

MAGIC

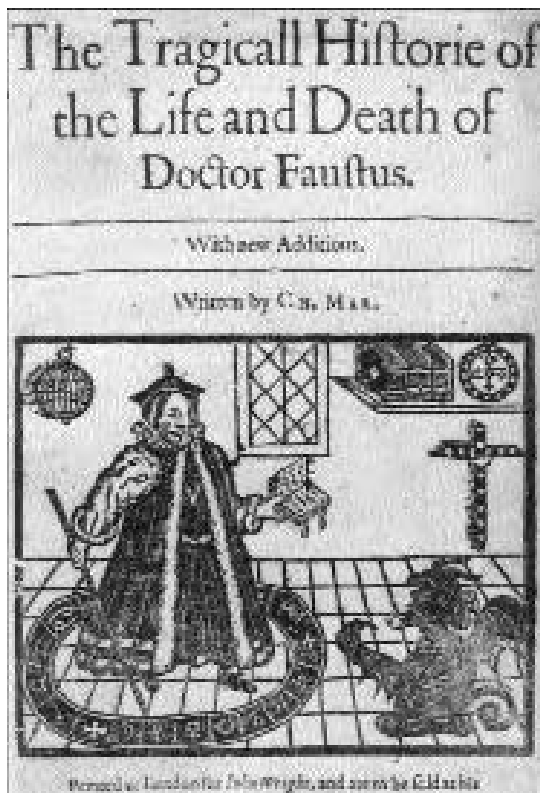
Self-change, communal metamorphosis, and cosmic transformation by ritual and material means, drawing upon the powers of nature and the supernatural. Magic, as it is diversely represented in the cultures of the world, relies upon belief in a universal “sympathy” between all existent things, natural and supernatural, creating a web of meaningful association linking magical knowledge with magical acts. Tapping into the unity of all things, the magical believer gains access to the inherent power or essence of material and spiritual forms and transforms both them and her- or himself. Under James Frazer’s classic rubric of *sympathetic magic*, there are two main subcategories that express modes of magical efficacy: (1) *homeopathic magic*, that is, magic that operates through the indirect action of similarity, like engendering like, and (2) *contagious magic*, that is, magic that operates through the direct action of contact influencing a desired outcome. Magical action can express both these modes of efficacy simultaneously since they are complementary rather than exclusive in operation. For example, a love charm can employ homeopathic substances (herbs, stones, textiles, etc., which are symbolically or medicinally associated with love and increasing desire) as well as substances that will act by contagion (a lock of hair or a small item worn or touched by the person whom the charm is designed to attract).

An important theoretical question that is part of recent scholarly discussion on magic asks whether the term is itself a proper or useful “translation” in the ethnographic and larger cultural sense of the diversity of historical and contemporary beliefs and practices within discontinuous linguistic, religious, ethnic, and regional communities. In recent theoretical discourse on magic, anthropologist Stanley Tambiah has identified the problems of the “translation” of cultures and the problem of “commensurability” of terms between cultures. In many respects, the anthropologist and the historian are in much the same quandary when it comes to the “translation of magical cultures.” However, the historian has no living informant she or he can turn to and query, “Is what you are doing the same as what we mean when we say ‘magic’?” and, if so, “What does your word ‘magic’ mean?” “What does it mean in this context, as opposed to this other?” and “What relationship does your description of what you are doing have to what you are actually performing?” Even with living informants, the anthropologist often has to rely on the social and material context of the magical behavior or speech rather than explicit explanation or description of techniques and verbalizations, just as the historian turns to the texts around the text to provide meaningful context. Instead of turning to an individual and saying, “What does this mean?” the historian can only turn to another text and

compare the form and environment of expression trying to establish its semantic field.

The semantic field for magic across the world includes verbal and gestural magic, ritual and ceremonial magic, healing and protective magic, and divination and the mantic arts, as well as magic practiced for ambivalent or openly negative social aims. Verbal magic and gestural magic are the use of mental projection and influence, often called “fascination” or “enchantment,” through casting spells, performing incantations, and spellbinding accompanied by gestures such as knot tying to accomplish or prevent an outcome. Ritual magic and ceremonial magic establish sacred time and space in individual and collective terms. Through seasonal and festival ritual cycles, the turning of the solar, lunar, or agricultural year is marked and celebrated. Human ceremonial magic is devoted to ritual cycles

that mark the major life passages as well as rites of personal and professional initiation. Rituals of place create and hallow sacred space and effect spatial purification and cleansing. Healing and protective magical tools, material, and techniques are united in ritual actions that include diagnosis of affliction, spiritual and material prescription, and ritual preparation and administration of prevention or cure. The products of healing magic are religious artifacts such as magical *charms*, *amulets*, and *talismans*, which sometimes have been pejoratively categorized as fetishism. Divination and the mantic arts cover a diversity of intuitive and precognitive techniques and systems of knowledge, including but not limited to oracular and visionary experience; guided dreaming and dream interpretation; the magical use of numbers and numerical calculations, as in numerology and astrology; divination by lots or chance; animal divination, or augury, by sign and omen; elemental divination, by means of water (hydromancy), by means of earth (geomancy), by means of fire (pyromancy), and by means of air (aeromancy); divining by pictographic symbol systems such as tarot and other types of cards; and reading the body (physiognomy and palmistry)



Dr. Faustus enacting magic ritual to evoke the British devil Mephistopheles. Ceremonial magic is one of the many forms of magic practice that humans perform to acquire knowledge, heal sickness, and control their environment.

and other natural substances (tea leaves, coffee grounds, crystals, and gemstones). Finally, magic is also identified by terms that traditionally carry a negative semantic charge, such as *sorcery*, *demonology*, *necromancy*, and *witchcraft*. These terms often are used for magical and, therefore, potentially dangerous interactions between the human and spirit worlds, as in the theurgic invocation of spirits of nature, gods, or the dead; spirit projection, possession, and mediumship; and the “laying” (to rest) of ghosts and exorcism of evil or troublesome spirits. The range of traditional cursing and malefic magic is often designated as “black” witchcraft, as opposed to healing magic or “white” witchcraft. It is also important to understand that all these activities and categories of magic are not only verbal, physical, and material but also and at the same time mental, emotional, and intentional in method and operation.

Magic has often been associated, in scholarship and in popular awareness, with the supernatural and identified as the *occult*. Magic and the occult share certain qualities and associations. They both rely upon a concept of truth encoded in hidden, secret, inner knowledge and practice that is available only to the initiate, giving the believer extraordinary access to the mysteries of the divinely created and existent universe. The term *occult science* refers to an esoteric, veiled, and transcendent reality, mediated by intuitive inspiration, understanding, and knowledge and interpreted by methods of study, experimental investigation, and disciplinary practice. The “occult sciences,” also known as *Hermeticism* or the Hermetic sciences, traditionally have included such diverse systems of magical belief and practice as alchemy, astrology, numerology, magical herbalism, talismanry, and amuletry, as well as systems of divining and dream interpretation, theurgy, and so forth. The occult sciences exist within a mode of knowledge and practice that accepts and even insists upon the parallelism of the natural and supernatural, a chain of causality based on empirical and nonempirical factors, and a system of explanation and instruction that contends that some of the truth (maybe the most important and central part) may not be fully disclosed but must be kept hidden. The mysteries can be interiorly apprehended as “gnosis” and even outwardly experienced in practice, but they cannot be definitively expressed and are thus “occult” or divine secrets. The first term in the expression *occult science* is more about knowledge, the second is more about action. But both share aspects of knowledge and action. There is a need to balance the treatment of the magical, or occult, disciplines as manifestations of “folk” or “primitive” tradition divorced from the theoretical and intellectual strata of communities, cultures, and religious systems by concentrating attention on the links in magic between learned and common belief and practice.

One result of the detailed and mold-breaking ethnographic work in the latter half of the twentieth century is that it has become more difficult, if not impossible, for scholars in anthropology, sociology, the history of religion, and folk religion to speak of magic or the magical arts and occult sciences as *survivals*

of earlier unsophisticated, primitive, irrational, or illogical beliefs and practices. To categorize magic and occult phenomena as cultural survivals is to call upon a dichotomous model of cultural development. The concept of survivals belongs to a methodological orientation toward religion and magic that continues to oppose an orthodoxy, embodying the normative values and institutions of official religion, to various heterodoxies, such as folk religious belief and practice. In general, when the beliefs and practices of actual believers diverge from a notion of prescribed institutional norms, they have been judged both heterodox and marginal, whether through the ascription of heterodoxy to sectarian communities or the marginalization of magical practice and occult knowledge.

The history of the scholarly literature on magic may be summarized, in great part, by reviewing the main features of the scholarly debate regarding the definition and relationship of magic, science, and religion; this debate began in the nineteenth century, principally among anthropologists and the pioneers of sociology, and continued through most of the twentieth century. This scholarly debate has revealed a rationalist bias against magic. Magic, like religion, has been predominantly characterized as not real according to the utilitarian approach of functionalist and empiricist scholarship. And the psychologizing of believers' magical worldviews and practices often has been accompanied by an unfortunate stigmatization of magic as individual and/or social illusion, confusion, ignorance, or fraud, justified by a scholarly assumption of an irrational or pathological psychology.

By the same token, the debate regarding the relationship of magic to science has been perhaps most lively in the analysis of the late antique and medieval Hermetic or occult sciences (alchemy, astrology, talismanry, divining, and so forth). In scholarly representation, the relationship of magic to science has often been constrained by the historical "success" of the Western definitions of rationality and empirical method. Science in the Western mode is credited (by early anthropologists such as Edward B. Tylor and James G. Frazer, as well as historians of science) as the empirically based, technically proficient, and experimentally sound realization of its earlier and evolutionary precursor, magic. In this perspective, magic becomes demoted to a pseudo-science. The medieval-based systems of knowledge and experimentation that may be called magical are labeled, therefore, pseudo-science, which is another way of saying "bad science" or "no science." From the perspective of contemporary history of science, the magico-scientific traditions of classical and medieval civilizations for which we have extensive textual records (Hindu, Chinese, Greco-Roman, Islamic, and Christian), for example, become interesting anachronisms, failed cultural and intellectual paradigms, and flawed experimental models based on insufficient empirical evidence and incorrect interpretation of the evidence available.

Magic has also been defined in its most absolute negative—that is, as not religion—in the scholarly debate. It is always something other, usually something less, and it is often assigned the dismissive synonym *superstition*. In turn,

magical belief and practice often have been devalued and characterized as primitive, vulgar, crude, material, mechanical, irrational, and nonsensical or, in other words, the opposite of religion, which is characterized as civilized, cultured, pure, spiritual, noninstrumental, rational, and meaningful. A related tendency in the debate has been to see magic as a purely antisocial response by psychologically and socially maladjusted individuals—the repository of the resentment and ill will (if not actual evil) of a society. The classic remedy is countermagic, as in the typical relationship between malicious witchcraft and witch-doctoring of tribal societies, according to germinal anthropological studies and historical studies of witchcraft in early modern peasant societies. The intellectual history of this prejudicial opposition of magic and religion has been described by a number of historians and anthropologists (e.g., Keith Thomas, Frances Yates, Carlo Ginzburg, Jon Butler, and Valerie Flint). They clearly state that the cultural bias against magic in the academic study of religion and magic (in both the humanities and the social sciences) is an inherited one, stemming originally from Christianity's complex and increasingly hostile relationship to magic from the late antique era through the early modern era.

A corrective response to the functionalist and empiricist negation of magic that explains it away as addressing purely human social and psychological needs is the awareness among contemporary scholars that magic (whether defined within a religious system or constituting in itself a religious system) was and is considered real and effective by its community of belief and practice, above and beyond its social and psychological dynamics. The question of effectiveness and its emic criteria has received variable treatment from scholars of magic over time. Earlier anthropological and historical opinion on the efficacy of magical action emphasized the irrationality and illogic of magic, based upon Eurocentric empirical standards of the day. Later and current interdisciplinary opinion has acknowledged that magical belief and practice have a solid empirical basis in physical observation and experience. Magical practice is aimed at ordering and making meaningful human experience and individual and social control or mediation through symbolic representation. Scholarly views that are not grounded in the actuality of magic, as a system of change on the natural and cosmic as well as personal and social levels, are not really engaged with its concerns; they cannot begin to represent what magic practitioners have believed and continue to believe they are doing and what they understand as the results of their practices.

Similarly, in response to the history of science approach to magical systems, there is no reason, based upon the ethnographic evidence available, to continue to dismiss or deny the technological competence, intellectual sophistication, and experimental/observational vigor of the diversity of historical and contemporary magical arts and occult sciences by the standards of the Western sciences. That these magical systems are not conceived to achieve the same results or establish the same paradigms as the modern Western physical sciences does not

invalidate or diminish their activities. The history of science approach to them, however, does tend to distort and even block scholarly perception of the meaningful interactions of magical, scientific, and religious systems. To cite a historical example of magical science, medieval Christian and Islamic alchemy utilized the laws of physical causality for both physical and nonphysical goals considered to be outside the purview of modern Western science; thus, it is not surprising that their results should diverge. Viewed from the vantage point of Western results, the actual results achieved become invisible and incomprehensible. The "operation" or "art," as alchemy termed itself, showed not only a philosophical orientation toward nature but simultaneously a material and processual response to nature. Alchemy as a theoretical as well as a practical expression of magic represented the union of nature and artifice.

Historical and contemporary cultures of magical belief and practice have been witnessed by extensive interpenetrating magical traditions of both learned texts (in manuscript and print) and popular/folk texts (in print and manuscript). For example, learned theoretical texts on alchemical talismanry interact with popular chapbooks of talisman and charm recipes, and theoretical texts of philosophical cosmology and astrology are matched by popular manuals of horoscope casting and astrological interpretation, as well as astrological folk almanacs. Although many cultures possess rich traditions of literate magic, all world cultures possess vast treasures of oral and ritual magical devotions expressed by ordinary believers and practitioners, as well as by magico-religious "professionals." In the study of folk religion and folk magic, folklore and folklife scholars have compiled extensive field reports of contemporary magical belief and practice that are, in many cases, the oral observations and testimony of the living remnants of older historical traditions. Oral traditional links of this type (such as that detailed by the scholarship on oral traditional literatures) can potentially assist in the ethnographic reconstruction of magical and other kinds of folklife from earlier historical periods and also enlighten contemporary understanding.

The folkloristic study of magic has focused attention primarily upon collecting ethnographic information on folk healing systems and, in particular, on the interaction of *spell magic* and the material magical techniques and rituals of folk religious healing. Collection and classification of the oral components and contents of these two overlapping categories of folk magic have produced a number of ethnographic studies of the magical practices of individual small communities worldwide and many comparative typologies of magical healing lore by region; the variations of their material and ritual contexts are detailed, but only vestiges of a theoretical approach to magic and a small amount of systematic or rigorous contextualization of magical belief are articulated. Folklore has largely transmitted the inherited theoretical constructs of earlier (and in many cases, now outmoded) anthropological theories on magic, with

comparatively little development of its own unique theoretical perspective on the subject. Folklore's strength in the study of magic, however, has been its consistent and detailed attention to the oral and material culture of magic and its delineation of the unique culture of magic expressed by the ordinary believing person and small community.

Folkloristic interest in spell magic is an obvious outgrowth and a parallel development to folkloristics' strong emphasis on traditional oral poetry and the artistry of traditional and received oral forms. Folklore scholarship on the oral epic and other genres of verse and song testifies to the numinous transformative power inherent in the performance of contemporary oral art in the works of Albert Bates Lord and Milman Parry, John Miles Foley, Robin Horton, Ruth Finnegan, and others. These oral traditional arts are reminiscent of and, in many cases, directly descended from rich multicultural historical traditions of the sacred and magical power of cadenced speech; examples include the jinn-inspired gnomic utterance of poetesses and poets of pre-Islamic Arabic, the guided speech of ancient Greek poesy and late Greek oracle possessed and transfigured by an indwelling spirit, and the fiery exhortatory poetry of the ancient Israelite prophets and judges compelled by divine mission. These historical and contemporary conjunctions of the sacred in oral art are strongly akin to the magical use of orality in spell magic, ritual chant, and incantational songs often produced and performed during states of expanded consciousness (trance, conscious dreaming, vision questing, and others) by magico-religious officiants, whether priestesses and priests, medicine workers and shamans, or witches and magicians. The deeply empowered contents, performance, and genres of oral traditional art (particularly epic and other forms of poetic oral art) have substantive and historical affinities with the sacred contents, ritual performance, and verbal genres of folk religion and magic (chant, mantra, spell, and incantation). Word magic is thus embodied for folklore in the universal genres of verbal art: oral poetry, folksong, rhyme, riddle, proverb, folk narrative or story, and memorate.

There is a representative body of folklore material, more often than not labeled *superstition*, relating to the oral lore on magical belief and practice within diverse "folk" or "little" communities, principally in Europe and central Asia, south Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In the United States, the folklorist Wayland Hand's systematization of superstitions, for example, has numerous categories and subheadings that are distilled into the cycles of human life, the supernatural, cosmology and the natural world, and "other." Folkloristic conception of and attention to folk magic, exemplified by Hand, most frequently associates magic with the supernatural and beliefs in luck or chance. Oral-literate folk healing systems devoted to oral magic are handled in the contexts of specific small communities, such as the oral healing spells or charms of Serbian women of the Balkans or the dissemination of charm books to use in oral recita-

tion and the performance of cures among the powwowers of the Pennsylvania Germans, based upon earlier European textual precedent.

The material culture of magic is the other major focus of folkloristic interest and study. Within the parameters of a single family or village, individual examples of magical lore have been collected and aggregated to form a network containing the beliefs and practices of an entire region or ethnic group composed of many such small communities. The diverse materials and ritual techniques of magical healing have been cataloged in both sympathetic (symbolic) and contagious (physical) forms of magical efficacy. The concept of transference of disease in American folk medicine, for example, has numerous material and ritual expressions and sites, such as the symbolic or indirect transference involved in the "selling" of warts or the direct transference by contagion involved in rubbing the wart with a piece of potato and throwing it away (when the potato rots, the wart will disappear). Healing also can be effected by transferring disease into material objects or the living bodies of animals or trees by tagging or plugging; in addition, healing can be accomplished by transferring disease into the body of another human by making an image in effigy (symbolic transference) with hair or nail pairings (transference by contagion). Attention to the physicality and instrumentality of magical healing systems has led some medical folklorists into discussions of empirical causality and efficacy, which replicate the larger debate on the relation of magic and science in the modern ethnographic context of the relationship of magical folk healing systems to modern allopathic medicine. More work needs to be done in the interpretation of this material and in the collection and analysis of new living examples of the verbal and material cultures of magic worldwide in order to elicit fully the context of magical practice and to explore issues of magical belief. To expand folklore's attention to contexts of practice and issues of belief, a greater commitment must be made to exploring theoretical concerns such as the redefinition of folklore's understanding of the relationship of magic and religion and magic and science from a truly folkloristic perspective.

For the purposes of a future redefinition of magic within folklore scholarship and within the humanities as a whole, magic may be most profitably viewed as a part of religion or a specific type of religious experience; it may not be understood properly without that relationship being the basis of the definition. This relationship may be stated as follows: Magic is always religious, but religion is not always or only magical. Therefore, magic can be best understood as a subset of religion, and it requires renewed examination as a unique category within the study of religion. As a corollary of this rudimentary definition of the relationship, it may be said that (1) there is a great deal of religious magic (that is, individual beliefs, rituals, and institutions within religions not otherwise dominantly magical in belief or practice, such as systems of belief in and ritual interaction with sacred objects, the magical use of such objects as vehicles of blessing, magical healing systems, and so forth), and (2) there are many magi-

cal religions (that is, religious systems that are predominantly magical in belief or practice). Some recent scholars in anthropology, history, and religious studies have addressed the kinship of magic and/or the occult with religion in positive ways, performing a kind of revisionist history on the original revisionist history, which separated magic from religion in the Western perspective in the first place. The need to create scholarly space for magic to be discussed as a legitimate and vital form of religious experience and expression is pressing. The resuscitation of the term *magic* is necessary because it conveys crucial affective qualities (emotional intensity and excitement) embodied by certain types of religious experience and certain religious and cultural systems as a whole, which Valerie Flint, Tom Driver, and others have recently described in the context of magical belief and practice, particularly in ritual forms. When scholarship strips religious culture and particularly religious folk culture of these affective components by erasing magic or attempting to devalue it by categorizing magical beliefs and practices as not “real religion,” our view of that religious culture becomes distorted and diminished. The relatively recent decision among various scholarly disciplines regarding the term *magic*—that it has become too compromised by historical association with Christian and general cultural pejorative to use—has resulted in the substitution of a variety of terms, such as *ritual*, and a recasting of what was called “magic” into new conceptual and descriptive outlines consonant with that very different term. Although there is much subsumed under the term *magic* that is ritual (verbal and material activity, expressive drama, transformation of self and cosmos) and much that magic and ritual share (they are richly affective, powerful, and energetic), the term *ritual* cannot be applied to the mental and emotional features of intentionality, visualization, and interior verbalization that characterize the breadth of magical cultures worldwide.

The redefinition of magic as a part of religion and further ongoing positive attention to the subject of magic will help to clarify the theoretical relationship of magic and science to religion both within particular believing communities and between disparate communities of belief. Further, magic’s kinship with science when redefined as a part of religion will highlight the nature of various sciences (whether medieval-based sciences such as alchemy, astrology, and talismanry or modern sciences such as biology, chemistry, and medicine) as systems of belief interacting with parallel, complementary, or competing religious systems of belief. Finally, redefinition of magic as a part of religion by folklorists and other scholars also will highlight the complex and subtle interrelationship between institutional forms of religion and the beliefs and practices of actual believers that often become most visible on the threshold of magic.

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See also Assault, Supernatural; Belief, Folk; Charm; Divination; Evil Eye; Exorcism; Familiar; Medicine, Folk; Omen/Portent; Religion, Folk; Ritual; Witchcraft.



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MAGIC TALE

A lengthy folktale containing elements of fantasy, such as animals endowed with speech, magical objects, monsters and witches, or marvelous helpers and partners. Despite the abundance of fantasy, however, the main character of the tale is a human figure. Magic tales usually have functioned as entertainment. Stories such as “Cinderella,” “The Princess on the Glass Mountain,” and “Hansel and Gretel” are examples of well-known European magic tales. In Antti Aarne’s and Stith Thompson’s international tale type index, the magic tales fall under the type numbers 300 to 750.

The term *magic tale* (Aarne’s *Zaubermärchen*) corresponds to the term *fairy tale*. Certain folklorists and literary critics have suggested the use of the term *magic tale* in order to distinguish oral folktales from literary tales of fantasy. Because oral and literary traditions have intermingled repeatedly in European tales during the past few centuries, favoring the term *magic tale* over the more widely known *fairy tale* is simply a matter of taste.

A number of hypotheses have been raised about the age of the magic tale genre. The suggested time of origin has ranged from the neolithic Stone Age to the seventeenth century. Contemporary scholars, however, consider the majority of the known European magic tales to have been composed relatively late, in medieval times at the earliest. Nevertheless, magic tales may include elements (images, concepts) much older than the entire plots familiar to us today.

The most famous early anthologies of European fairy tales are Giovan Francesco Straparola’s *I piacevoli notti* (1550–1553), Giambattista Basile’s *Il pentamerone* (1634), and Charles Perrault’s *Contes de ma mere l’oye* (1697). Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children’s and household folktales) in several editions from 1812 to 1858.

Magic tales fall into a number of subcategories. The Russian formalist A. I. Ntikiforov introduced the distinction between “masculine” and “feminine” magic tales in 1928. The former deal with the feats of male heroes, and the latter concern the vicissitudes of young women’s lives. A prototypical example of a masculine tale is the “Dragon Slayer”; feminine tales include “Sleeping Beauty” and “Snow White.” Some popular magic tales, however, such as “Strong John” and “Tom Thumb,” are founded on hyperbolic, carnivalistic fantasy.

Because of the breadth of the magic tale’s plot spectrum, one need not force the tales into the straitjacket of only one plot scheme, as the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp attempted to do. According to him, all oral fairy tales can be morphologically deduced from the tales about the kidnapping of a princess by a dragon; the hero of these stories travels to the Otherworld, overcomes the monster with his magic object, rescues the girl, and marries her at the happy end. Propp’s “mytho-heroic” scheme covers masculine magic tales well; the scheme is, however, less suitable in describing the plots of feminine and carnivalesque tales.

The main protagonists of magic tales are type characters: penniless boys or girls, nameless princes and princesses. The fantasy figures appear as animals, goblins, trolls, witches, spirits, dead people, devils, or human actors endowed with marvelous and incredible abilities. Although Christian or ethnic belief figures may appear in magic tales, the basic attitude or mode found in most oral magic tales is amoral and nonreligious.

Even though the magic tale is a prose narrative, it may include poetic lines or songs. Openings and closings are often formulaic: "Once upon a time" and "Then they lived happily ever after" transport the storyteller and audience in and out of the fictitious world. A familiar feature of this type of folktale's style and structure is repetition: the presentation of the same element in two or three versions.

Although we usually regard the magic tale solely as a source of amusement, some are didactic and moralistic. Because magic tales were entertainment for all age groups in preindustrial communities, narrators would alter tales to accommodate their audiences. A survey of European folklore collections and archives reveals powerfully erotic, humorous, and satirical magic tales that could hardly pass as entertainment intended for children.

Satu Apo

See also Folktale; Motif; Tale Type; Variant.

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MANISM

Belief in the deification of deceased ancestors or the hypothesis that ancestor worship is a primary source of religion. The term *manism* is derived from the Latin *manes*, meaning “departed spirits, ghosts, souls of the deceased.” The concept implies both the practice of worshipping deceased ancestors and the theoretical orientation that suggested this worship was the origin of religion. According to this hypothesis, ghosts developed into gods, with remote and important deceased ancestors becoming divinities and their offering places developing into the shrines for ritual propitiation.

As a belief in a continual relationship between the spirits of the deceased and the community of the living, manism was thought, during the nineteenth century, to have characterized the primal forms of religion, the religion still to be found among “the primitives.” According to the British philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), manism offered a sort of rational explanation for otherwise mysterious or inexplicable events and phenomena. The unilineal scheme of evolution had become a dominant theory by Spencer’s time, a time of increasing interest in the comparative study of mankind and its religions. His theory of religion was both psychological and evolutionary in its style. Spencer, who was the first to advocate the theory of manism, claimed that ancestor worship was the root of every religion, and he hoped that knowing the origin of religion would reveal the later developments in its unilineal evolution. He further believed that the idea that worship of ancestors or ghosts gradually developed into the belief in gods clarified the general direction of cultural evolution. However, as an explanation for the origins of religion, manism never enjoyed great popularity, not even during Spencer’s lifetime.

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See also Evolutionary Theory.

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MARXIST APPROACH

Various methodological approaches to the study of folklore that are based on the writings of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895). There is no unified Marxist approach in the study of folklore, nor is there any Marxist school allied with the study of folklore. Instead, scholars have incorporated various aspects of Marxist philosophies either in their interpretive methodology or in the selection of the folklore that they study. A great number of the Marxist theories and Marxist-informed studies in folklore are closely related to the interpretation of Marxism in the study of anthropology.

Marxism, which is generally considered to be a critique of capitalism, views capitalism as historically bounded and not a natural, universal system. Marxist theories engage several key concepts important to the study of culture and cultural expressions. Perhaps the most important among these concepts is that of *dialectal historical materialism*. Marxism is based on a dialectical model—one that accepts the often contradictory nature of phenomena. Materialism, usually contrasted with idealism, posits the primacy of matter. Thus, in Marxist dialectical historical materialism, the consciousness of humanity stems from the relationships with material existence. By incorporating the concept of dialectics—a theory of contradiction—with materialism, Marx and Engels provided a basis for the evaluation of history based in materialism. Nature, in this view, is not considered static; furthermore, the often contradictory phenomena of rapid change compared to slow development can be accounted for in this theory. Dialectical historical materialism thus forms the foundation for the critique of the development of capitalism and the concomitant effects of this development on cultural expressions.

Capital, in Marxism, is not a “thing” but rather both a process and a social relationship. Capital is based on the commodity. All commodities have use value and exchange value. The use value of a commodity stems from its ability to satisfy human needs, and the exchange value stems from its fixed-sum distribution. The concept of surplus value, the difference between the worker’s wages and the exchange value added to the commodity, allows for the accumulation of capital. *Mode of production* and *social and economic formation* also are essential terms in the Marxist social critique and are used to describe stages in the development of capitalism, a system that suggests both the existence of alienable labor and global exchange networks. The term *mode of production* incorporates both the technical, physical processes of commodity production and the social relationships that underlie production in a society. This level of relationships is referred to as the *infrastructure*. The term *social and economic formation* refers to the interrelatedness of several coexisting modes of production in a given society. This level of relationships is referred to as the *superstructure*. Given this intense focus on processes and relationships, Marxism can be viewed as primar-

ily concerned with the analysis of social relationships and how they are articulated. Thus, in Marxism, there is an intense scrutiny of class, ethnicity, family organization, and the division of labor along gender lines.

Neither Marx nor Engels wrote specifically on folklore or its study, although they were aware of problems associated with the study of folklore. Perhaps the two works that come closest to folklore studies in these original Marxist writings are Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx* and Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. The former work engaged the concept of *primitive society* and precapitalist modes of production, and in the latter, Engels provided a critique of the development of the division of labor between men and women in the preindustrial household. The household, for Engels, was the original economic unit of organization, one in which all of the work was done for the benefit of the entire household. Although Marxist anthropologists have been actively engaged in the study of the development of modes of production and social and economic formation throughout history, Marxist folklorists have generally been interested in how these developments are expressed in or articulated as folklore.

One can make several major divisions to describe the practice of Marxist theories in folklore. The first major division is that between Western Marxism and Soviet-bloc Marxism. Although there has been a generally consistent development in Western Marxism and its application to the study of folklore, the development of Soviet folkloristics has been somewhat fragmented. Therefore, it may be useful to view the study of folklore in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc countries in several periods: immediately following the Russian Revolution, the years under Stalin, and the years after Stalin. Given the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, there will undoubtedly be a significant change in the study of folklore in the years ahead, particularly in regard to the Marxist analysis of folklore. In recent years, two major trends in the study of folklore have emerged that are closely linked to Marxist-informed approaches. The first of these trends is the documentation and analysis of "workers' folklore." The second of these trends is the increased interest in Third World folklore, particularly expressions associated with colonialism, imperialism and state-sponsored oppression.

Western Marxism is reflected in the works of a number of scholars, most notably those influenced by Antonio Gramsci, Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukacs, and the Frankfurt school. Primary among those who reflect this influence are Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin—none of whom lived or worked in Soviet-controlled countries. Thus, these scholars were able to develop Marxist theories that did not necessarily need to reflect the beliefs or views of the Soviet Communist Party. Although they did not engage the study of folklore except in passing, they were generally aware of the potentially subversive orientation of folklore as a collective expression inherently opposed to state capitalism. Although Western Marxism is, at times, evaluated as a reac-

tion to Stalinism—an attempt to rescue Marxian thought from unfortunate associations with Stalinist brutality—it also engages the historical dialectic of post–World War I Europe and the United States, namely, the inability of the workers there to develop a revolution as occurred in Russia. Since the early years of the Institute of Social Research, Western Marxism has become a well-developed approach to cultural criticism, which includes the analysis of folklore at least to some degree. In the United States, José Limón and Jack Zipes are the scholars most engaged in the application of Western Marxist thought to the analysis of folklore. In his analysis of German fairy tales, a study influenced by the writings of Bloch, Zipes relied on Marxist theories to reveal social contradictions in Western culture that, in turn, find expression in the fairy tales. He suggested that “the commodification of Western culture creates a magic spell over society . . . so that, enchanted and blinded by commodity fetishism, we act against our own humane interests.” Limón also suggested that the Western Marxist interpretation of folklore is particularly allied with a performance-centered approach to folklore, noting that “in the very aesthetic act of performance may be found an inherent oppositional quality of all folklore. . . . All such performances may be displays of the possibility of hanging on to the *use* and value of things . . . in face of those who would turn all of life into acts of consumption.”

The study of folklore in Soviet Russia and other Soviet-bloc countries does not reflect a consistent development. Prior to the Russian Revolution in 1917, the subject and methodologies of folklore were similar to those in the West, with a significant focus on the study of the *byliny* (epic). Immediately following the revolution, there was little focus on the study of folklore. It was not until the 1920s that it was once more engaged, and at that time, there was a flowering of formalist studies, Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* being among the most notable works in folklore from that period. Nevertheless, ideology did not comprise a major aspect of these works. Formalism quickly fell out of favor, however, and, along with Western methodologies such as those of the Finnish School, it was abandoned on ideological grounds. In the late 1920s, Maxim Gorki’s formulation of the classical Marxist view that folklore reflected the collective spirit of the working classes and therefore was a valuable achievement gained acceptance and influenced the direction of Soviet folkloristics.

In the 1930s, folklore studies moved toward an examination of both ideology and social problems as expressed by the workers in their songs and stories. The study of individual narrators and the interplay between ideology and individual creativity became a major area of study, as evidenced by B. M. Sokolov’s study of *byliny* singers. The prior view of the aristocratic origins of the *byliny* was rejected and replaced by the new interpretation of the genre as a creation of the people. Another area in which Soviet folklorists began to work was the collection and analysis of previously ignored folk genres, such as satires on religious figures and aristocrats, *skazy* (or personal experience narratives), the folklore

associated with the revolution, and the folklore of workers. Folklore also was used as a source for and an object of propaganda. Not only was there an interest in the folklore of the workers and the revolutionary spirit expressed in traditional genres, there were also new ideological songs and stories composed in folkloristic style.

With the advent of Stalinism, the study of folklore in the Soviet Union became somewhat constricted, and folklorists were forced to abandon all forms of comparative studies and focus instead on the uniquely Soviet aspects of revolutionary cultural expression. After de-Stalinization in 1956, Soviet folklorists were once again allowed to make reference to Western works in their scholarship. Also, folklorists attacked the manifestly nonfolkloric forms of *byliny* that detailed the exploits of heroes of the revolution and Soviet leaders. Soviet folklorists also began to study the folklore of ethnic minorities living in the Soviet Union. The ideological slant of these studies was closely linked to the dialectical historical materialism of classical Marxism. By studying the folklore of the minority populations, their cultural expressions could be included by folklorists in the analysis of the historical development of societies. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is unclear what the future holds for Marxist approaches to both the analysis and collection of folklore in these previously Marxist-informed societies.

The study of workers' folklore also has become a significant object of study outside of Soviet-influenced countries. In Scandinavia, numerous scholars have been involved in both the collection and analysis of workers' lore, and throughout the 1980s, several conferences were held specifically concerned with workers' culture inside and outside of Scandinavia. In the United States, the study of workers' folklore is often considered under the rubric of "occupational folklore." Studying the folklore of workers contrasts with the romantic project of studying the folklore of peasants, dominant in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century folklore studies.

The fastest-growing field of study in Marxist folkloristics involves the Third World countries and their development. The transition from precapitalist to capitalist modes of production is a significant historical change. Michael Taussig, in his study of Latin American plantation and mining communities, examined how precapitalist symbols, particularly the devil, are used to negotiate the fearful transition to capitalism. In his study, he linked the devil as manifest in the folklore of the workers to commodity fetishism. According to Marxist theory, abstractions and social relations tend to become regarded as things—they are objectified. In the extreme case, the objectified becomes reified and appears to take on its own agency—it becomes fetishized. In the Marxist critique of capitalism, commodities are seen as becoming fetishized, and this fetishism, in turn, finds expression in folklore, according to Taussig. Precapitalist symbols, such as the devil, are then used to express phenomena of the emergent capitalism. Studies based on Taussig's evaluation of the use of precapitalist symbols to

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explain emergent capitalist phenomena could include the examination of economic exchange in peasant societies as expressed in their oral narratives.

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See also Cultural Studies; Historical Analysis.

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MASK

Any sort of facial transformation or adornment and the costume and behavior that necessarily accompany it. In this sense, masks can range from the application of makeup to the use of elaborate head coverings. As the basic sites of communicative expression and identity, the head and face are subject to extremely diverse forms of masking in cultures throughout the world. Masks and masking techniques can be viewed as arts and crafts, but their cultural function of altering the faces of individuals in everyday life, drama, ritual, and celebration also must be considered. The concept of “face” implies more than anatomical features. It includes all of the social and symbolic meanings members of a society associate with specific physical appearances. The considerable social

significance of the face accounts for stereotyping based on facial features, such as eye shape, nose size, and skin color, and for the human propensity to distort these features through masking. By simultaneously releasing individuals from their accustomed face and burdening them with expectations associated with another, masking reveals individual and cultural explorations of personality.

The production of masks consists of several stages: collection of raw materials, preparation of the materials, crafting the mask from them, and application of the mask. Materials for mask making include wood, shells, grasses, feathers and other natural products, papier-mâché, ceramic, treated animal skins, plastic, rubber, and metal. The raw materials may be carved, shaped, combined, painted, or otherwise manipulated. In some contexts, any member of the given society may perform each of these preparatory tasks; in others, the tasks may be restricted to professionals and those in other specialized roles. For example, although many participants in European carnivals purchase their masks from professional craftspeople who use materials procured commercially, their New World counterparts more readily construct their own, original masks from materials at hand. Application and use of certain masks may likewise be restricted to specific individuals, groups, or occasions, such as shamans in some rituals. Some masks may be reserved for use by one gender.

The functions, meanings, and significations of masks must be determined in relation to the specific cultures and events of which they are a part. A surgical mask means something very different in an operating room than on the street at Halloween. Many Native American masks have religious significance restricted to specific rituals and dances, including healing and puberty ceremonies. Some masks have the power to transform the person wearing them into the figures they represent.

Traditional occasions for masking generally cluster at points of transition in the annual cycle and the life cycle, such as changes in seasons, birth, and death. Most European scholars formerly took this as an indication that all masking events originated in a primitive, pre-Christian mentality geared toward spirits of nature that govern fertility and renewal or spirits of the dead that can affect the living. From a different perspective, transitional points can be seen as pauses in the productive cycles. The increased leisure time during these phases allows for eased structures of social engagement. In this context, masking occasions, like other forms of play and fantasy, provide a possibility for the exploration of alternative identities. This exploratory operation often focuses on inversions, opposites, and exaggerations. Some of the most common masking strategies involve the conflation of incompatible binaries: male/female in cross-dressing and androgynous masks; human/beast in the many animal masks found globally, in wild man figures, and in the Kwakiutl man within a raven within a bull; plant/animal in vegetation demons made of agricultural waste or excessive local natural products, such as bog moss creatures; insider/outsider in the frequent, stereotyped depiction of ethnic groups, such as Jews, Gypsies, and Moors in

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In many cultures, the mask is believed to actually embody the spirit it represents, causing a subsequent transformation in the wearer. This demon mask is worn during the ritual drama of the Hindu epic Ramayana.

Europe, Indians and Africans in North America, and white anthropologists in Africa; and human/supernatural in masked depiction of deities.

Exaggeration takes the form of extended and exploded features. Bulbous noses, puffy cheeks, and monstrous mouths appear on masks in many societies. Giant figures walking on stilts or carried in processions also utilize this trope, as do “big-heads” with their oversized heads dwarfing the bodies on which they sit. Jewelry, implants, and means of extending features offer other techniques for facial distortion. Rarely does a mask attempt an accurate representation of a human face. Seemingly human masks often involve subtle caricature or reduction of distinctive features. Some masks, such as stockings or plastic Halloween faces, take the reduction of facial features to an extreme, creating eerie effects.

Although the disguise afforded by masks frees wearers from their conventional personalities, it does not allow unrestricted exploration of alternative roles. Cultural expectations, explicit or perceived, also impose restrictions on the sounds, gestures, and movements made when wearing certain masks. In the carnival of Elzach, Germany, masked *Schuttig* figures must speak in a falsetto or emit gruff growls. In ritual and drama, maskers often have precisely choreographed roles. A child dressed for Halloween is likely to behave in a manner associated with the figure represented by the mask, just as the performer of a Navajo bear has specific duties and roles. However, the behavior of these maskers may tend toward caricature and exaggeration, much like the facial features presented in their masks.

Outside of their culture contexts, masks often retain elements of their power and fascination. The booming market for masks as art pieces, the popularity of plastic surgery, even the effect of dismembered heads displayed in various ways all reaffirm the significance of the face in human communication and thought.

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See also Carnival; Costume, Folk; Drama, Folk; Festival; Mummung.

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MATERIAL CULTURE

A mode of cultural expression in which technological means are used either to produce artifacts or to modify segments of the natural landscape. Frequently described as including food, shelter, and clothing and therefore as essential for the maintenance of human life, material culture also includes objects that may be classed as amenities, such as varieties of household implements, and luxuries, such as paintings or items of jewelry. Since human beings are constantly making or using things, a person's entire biography from birth to death can effectively be monitored by following the flow of objects throughout his or her life. Larger social themes can be investigated as well by making similar observations across the experience of an entire community. Thus, students of material culture, though they are expected to pay close attention to the description and evaluation of artifacts, are even more concerned with how people use objects and assign meanings to them. The thought and behavior associated with material items is, in the end, considered more important than their physical attributes.

Within the phrase *material culture*, *culture* is ultimately the more significant term, for no matter how intriguing or emotionally satisfying an object's form, color, or texture, its deepest significance will not differ in any fundamental way from the prime messages of music, oral literature, dance, or any other expressive form. Material culture specialists should be seen, then, as students of a segment of human conduct. They even may play the lead role in the study of particular locales where things and property are deemed crucially important or where artisans are highly esteemed. In materialistic places where the production, accumulation, and display of goods are central to social definition, it would seem most prudent to concentrate the greater share of scholarly inquiry on aspects of material culture. And where there is little in the way of firsthand data about a group, particularly for those vanished historical communities that have left little or no legacy in written or documentary form, material culture provides the most secure means for retrieving salient features of everyday life. This is because an object, unlike a story or a song, does not require the presence of a living performer; an artifact can be said to "perform" its biography by the simple fact of its presence. Although the mission of material culture study may complement a wide array of disciplines, including art history, the decorative arts, architectural history, geography, and social history, the greatest similarities are found with the objectives of anthropology, particularly with its subfield archeology. Indeed, material culture research is, because of its utility as a means of historical recovery, often referred to as "aboveground archaeology."

The study of any object proceeds via the analysis of its components or attributes. Although these may be prioritized in different ways, all objects, it is agreed, have a physical form, a method of manufacture or construction, and a pattern of use. Of these features, form is usually the first to be considered since



Even everyday functional items such as this basket woven from pine needles and grass can tell a tremendous amount about the culture and the individual who made and used the item.

it provides the most trustworthy basis for developing a typology and then for making assessments about definitive characteristics and relevant comparisons. Through formal analysis, one develops a three-dimensional description of an object, and once a particular object—a chair, for example—is compared with other objects of a similar class—the chairs produced in a given region—one can determine, with reasonable confidence, if the particular object is representative of local practice, an extraordinary masterwork, or only a quirky aberration. All of an object's features bear cultural meaning, but features of form connect most directly

to the process of design and thus to the idea of form rather than to physical appearance or social usage. This is so because traditional forms derive from deeply coded notions of order and propriety. These ideals are less likely to be revealed by secondary attributes, such as color, finish, or materials. In looking at form, one engages the cultural rules that govern the way an artifact is conceived in the mind of its creator.

How an object is constructed involves not only the tools and techniques employed but also the selection and procurement of materials. In studying a potter, for example, one would first determine what type of clay is used, how it was obtained, and how it was prepared for use. Usually, it would be mined, transported to the workshop, mixed with water, weighed out into units known by experience to produce vessels of a conventional size, and kneaded into solid lumps. The investigator would then follow the sequence of steps required to transform the raw clay into a vessel, noting how the lump of clay is pinched and pulled while being turned on the potter's wheel. Next follows the drying and glazing process (sometimes repeated twice), and finally, the brittle pot would be loaded into the kiln and fired to rocklike hardness. If one had an expert knowledge of ceramics, many of these steps could actually be inferred from the examination of a finished pot. However, it is best to observe the processes of construction or manufacture firsthand, for there are always procedures that leave no telltale marks, and more important, an individual artisan's personality is likely to be manifested more clearly in the production rather than the design stage. Although a traditional potter might make a particular type of churn according to the dictates of local custom, the curvature of its sides, its height, the position of handle attachments, its color, and many other attributes are mainly the result of personal taste and habit. In studying production techniques,

one encounters numerous opportunities for innovation, however modest. Some of these opportunities will show up as features in the finished artifact, and others only in the skilled use of tools, as the so-called tricks of the trade.

How an object is used is most likely to reveal more about its destination and consumer than its circumstances of creation. An artisan may have intended that an object be used in a particular way and thus may have designed it with special attributes. Some potters, for example, place an extra handle near the bottom of their storage crocks so that their contents can be more easily poured out. However, if this same crock is purchased by a contemporary urbanite, it might end up as an umbrella stand or serve as a base for a lamp, so that the extra handle is rendered functionless. Once an object leaves its creator's hand, it can serve purposes or acquire associations that he or she never imagined. Thus, compiling the "social life" of an artifact is a distinct task of material culture research that may take one well beyond an object's apparent function.

A quilted bedcover, for example, is generally understood as an item of sleeping equipment meant to protect and comfort a sleeping person through a cold night. Yet a quilt does so much more than that. The design of its top side, often colorful and geometrically complex, warms the spirit as much as the body. Intriguing to look at, it may even affect the overall look of the space in which it is used, simply by being the largest item in the room. Further, since quilts are usually produced by women, their decorative impact brings a woman's signature to a building that was likely constructed by men. A quilt may then constitute a crucial feminizing component in the effort to transform a house into a nurturing home. Since the materials used in quilts frequently were scavenged from other sewing projects, various bits of cloth will serve as mnemonic devices that awaken recollection of poignant moments in the family's history. A quilt may then enhance solidarity by encouraging the telling of important narratives. Because any artifact will simultaneously serve several purposes, there is an obligation in material culture research to portray something of the daily life of objects. Consequently, one is inevitably led beyond discussions of expected pragmatic functions to considerations of such aspects as aesthetics, ethical responsibilities, gendered social roles, or the preservation of memory. This is because in studying how artifacts are used, one is soon drawn into the social contexts that surround objects. In considerations of form and construction, the artifact is the center of attention, but in discussions of use, the artifact may only serve as a means of entry into other social concerns. In this sort of inquiry, the artifact even may seem to fade into the background as other matters are highlighted.

The study of the social contexts surrounding artifacts provides the most common meeting ground for the various disciplines with proclaimed interests in material culture. But if the commentary about material culture is not grounded in things—in the concrete experience of the artifact—objects are reduced to mere illustrations, to pictures that serve only to adorn the pages of a scholar's text. It is a fundamental assumption in material culture research that

artifacts *are* texts, albeit in tangible form. Thus, they have to be treated as vital, firsthand evidence and not as ornaments that will enhance accounts generated primarily from written records. That the reputation of the artifact still lags well behind the document as the datum of choice is due to a long-standing bias in scholarly tradition that favors words over things. There is, consequently, a general lack of what might be termed “artifactual literacy” among scholars who, though they can read documents, do not know how to look beneficially at material evidence. Until the ability to “read” objects is more widespread, the study of material culture will continue to be snubbed as “pots and pans history.”

Since material culture is so pervasive in human history, it makes little sense to ignore the ever-present, ever-constant messages that it provides. Folklorist Henry Glassie argues that via the artifact, scholars might recover truly scientific procedures for their enterprise, avoid the biases of elitism, and develop more convincing explanations—all of which should lead to what he calls a “more human history.” Such a laudatory project, however, is not easily achieved. Artifacts are complex texts layered with subtleties and the seeming contradictions of simultaneous functions. Although all objects convey cultural meaning, some convey that meaning more effectively and with greater impact. Therefore, in selecting an object or class of objects to study, it is important to choose well. One should select things that are complex and thus invested by their makers with considerable effort in design and manufacture: The investment of time, resources, and energy provides assurance of significance. The most preferable object also should be tied to a place, that is, rooted to a locale in the case of building or intimately connected to a family in the case of a cherished keepsake. In either instance, the object is less likely to be removed from its original context and will more readily allow access to the circumstances of its creation and use and therefore to its social meanings. Finally (and this is perhaps obvious for historically motivated projects), one should select artifacts that are durable and enduring. Things that have survived the assaults of time have the capacity to take us back directly to the periods when these items were first made. They thus are quite useful in developing an accurate historical baseline. Things that continue to be made according to the dictates of traditional authority and in large numbers illuminate well the satisfactions of custom and the dynamics of social identity. Used together with very old items, they facilitate confident analysis both of origins and subsequent developments, involving a complex balance of continuity and change over time.

Material culture research is, among American folklorists, a relatively young enterprise. Even though a number of the founding members of the American Folklore Society in the late nineteenth century were associated with museums and were thus students of artifacts, it was not until the 1960s that material culture began to be more fully accepted. However, studies of folk architecture, art, craft, foodways, costume, and agriculture published since then have effectively demonstrated the value of this specialization. Indeed, material culture

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courses have become regular offerings in university curricula, and papers on tangible aspects of traditional culture are now a staple of academic conferences. One suspects that in the future, it will be normal practice for folkloric ethnographies to incorporate and blend together evidence of oral, musical, and material traditions.

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See also Architecture, Folk; Art, Folk; Artifact; Costume, Folk; Craft, Folk.

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MEDICINE, FOLK

“Unofficial” health practices and beliefs found in all societies. These are both religious (e.g., the use of prayers for healing or the belief that sin is a cause of disease) and material (e.g., the belief that eating a hot breakfast will prevent winter colds or the use of jewel weed to treat poison ivy). These beliefs and practices exist as complex systems related to the other beliefs, values, and attitudes of those who hold them. Folk medicine is not considered “false belief,” and conventional medicine has, in fact, adopted many items from folk tradition.

The oldest modern conception of folk medicine placed it within a system of layers, lying between official, scientific medicine (the top layer) and primitive medicine (the bottom layer). This scheme reflected the nineteenth-century



A Native American cure for a respiratory ailment. Herbs and plant medicines are often a key element in traditional folk healing.

view of cultural evolution in which medicine, like the rest of culture, was seen as having developed from its crudest, most primitive form into its modern, Western, highly sophisticated state. All that was most effective in medicine was retained during this evolutionary ascent, while discarded and obsolete ideas

drifted downward and were preserved in the lower layers. This notion is summed up in the German term *gesunkenes Kulturgut* (sunken cultural materials). Although this model remains influential in popular thought, the evolutionary view of culture on which it was based has now been discarded or extensively revised by most scholars.

Current definitions of folk medicine show two main influences. Folklorists interested in health beliefs and practices in modern, technologically advanced societies have focused primarily on those found in specific cultural and subcultural groups and transmitted, in large part, by oral tradition. Examples would be the *brauche*, or “powwow,” tradition among Pennsylvania Germans, *curanderismo* among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, and the herbalism traditions found in Appalachia. Anthropologists usually have studied folk medicine in developing countries. This setting has led them to emphasize the culture-exchange relationship of folk medical systems both with local, indigenous traditions and with the official medical system of the politically dominant national culture. The latter is often modern, Western medicine. From the fieldwork of these two disciplines, a general definition of *folk medicine* has evolved, encompassing health traditions that exist alongside but at variance with whatever other medical system is recognized as “official” in the local context. As a result, the concept of folk medicine has broadened.

If folk medicine is unofficial health beliefs and practices, it must be recognized that *officialness* is a relative term, rooted in context. Something is official if it is authorized in a formal way. Scientific medicine is the official medicine of the United States through authorization by a host of government sources (e.g., the office of the surgeon general), the bodies that accredit medical schools, and so forth. Folk health traditions are not given official standing by such agencies, and many lack formal authority structures of their own. There is no office or agency among folk herbalists in a region that can specify standard procedure or regulate practice. Oral tradition has processes that support standards and constrain practice, but they do not speak with one voice. They also do not command the resources and power that more formal institutions do. Therefore, folk medicine tends to rely heavily on oral tradition, and this is one reason why it tends to develop locally distinct forms, whereas official medicine shows much greater consistency across large distances.

FOLK MEDICINE TRADITIONS AS HEALTH SYSTEMS: CONSENSUAL AND INDIVIDUAL

Systematic organization is one feature of folk medicine traditions that tends to produce stability, and this is a characteristic that is shared with other kinds of belief traditions. In the old concept of folk medicine as obsolete notions from “high culture,” there was a tendency to view beliefs and practices as individual pieces. However, recent students of folk medicine have recognized that these

diverse elements actually operate within an orderly set of relationships, forming a “health system.” Health systems may be viewed in either of two ways: as the consensus among a number of people or as an individual’s collection of health-related information and attitudes. For example, scientific medicine, Pennsylvania German powwow, and classical Chinese acupuncture are consensual health systems; the beliefs and practices of a particular doctor, powwow, or acupuncturist are individual health systems.

It is the relationships among the elements of a system that tend to give it stability and coherence. Many herbalists, for instance, believe that the special virtue of plant medicines lies in their “naturalness,” which is considered desirable because nature is inherently reasonable; that is, things are as they are in nature for functional reasons. Some attribute this inherent reasonableness to the goodness of the divine plan, and others cite the operation of evolution. Many see the two as indistinguishable. However this natural order is understood, it is coupled with the belief that when humans attempt to increase productivity or comfort or to speed up and amplify natural effects without an appreciation of the real reasons for that order, the order becomes deranged, with unhealthy consequences. Heart disease is believed to result, in part, from the increase of refined foods in the diet—a change that is convenient (longer shelf life, easier preparation) but unhealthy. Similarly, although the treatment of heart disease by synthetic digitoxin is faster and more profitable than treatment using the leaf of *Digitalis purpurea*, the herbalist believes that the leaf is safer and has a broader effect. So an herbalist health system may embody an entire set of attitudes, values, and beliefs that constitute a philosophy of life, not merely a batch of remedies. This systematic view even extends explicitly to the moral questions of disease and healing, with laziness and greed being considered important contributors to sickness.

The more complex and the more integrated such a health system is—that is, the greater the number of orderly relationships among its parts—the more stable it will be. One very important element that adds complexity is the tendency of folk medicine traditions to combine both natural elements, such as herbs, massage, and dietary rules, with supernatural elements, such as divine sanction for the natural approach, the efficacy of prayer, the idea of supernaturally caused disease, witchcraft, or the evil eye. The division of folk medicine into “natural” and “magico-religious” domains, common through much of twentieth-century scholarship, misses the powerfully integrative tendency of most traditions. This integration of material and spiritual elements is one of the great attractions of folk medicine to many of its users.

No matter how complete and exclusive a consensual health system may appear, the individual systems of those who comprise it will be somewhat eclectic. The individual systems of most folk healers and their patients will include ideas not only from their folk tradition but also from modern medicine, from religion, and so forth. By the same token, most medical doctors hold some folk

beliefs along with their scientific beliefs and values. This individual diversity encourages the constant flow of influences among the health systems within a society because each person actually constitutes a bridge connecting two or more traditions.

THE DYNAMIC INTERACTION OF FOLK MEDICINE TRADITIONS

Folk medical systems are vigorous in the modern world, and they are in a constant state of dynamic interaction with each other and with official cultural institutions. As a result, they contribute elements directly to official medicine, and some develop their own official structures.

Given the definitions of folk medicine discussed earlier, all religious healing is folk medicine within the context of most modern societies because religious beliefs and practices are very different from the beliefs and practices of official medicine. However, certain religious healing beliefs do achieve varying levels of official religious, as opposed to medical, status. Thus, for example, a belief in miraculous, divine healing is simultaneously a *folk medical* belief and an *official religious* belief within several major Christian denominations. This simply reflects the complex and context-bound nature of the folk-official distinction. Further, specific kinds of beliefs in religious healing vary along the folk-official continuum within particular religious traditions and over time. For instance, since the 1960s, the charismatic movement has risen to widespread popularity among Christians around the world, and a central feature of the movement is a strong belief in miraculous healing through prayer. Although it began as a grassroots movement, its broad appeal eventually produced accommodation and change within the established denominations, including a reemphasis of the healing mission of religion. In this process, prayer healing, which has always been a major feature of folk medicine, was returned to at least semiofficial status within many Christian denominations.

Herbal healing traditions have existed in most regions of the world. The most widespread healing system currently serving as a vehicle for herbal healing in North America is the health food movement. Until the counterculture revolution of the 1960s, health food stores remained predominantly Seventh Day Adventist enterprises, a carryover from the health reform movements of the turn of the century, and their clientele was primarily an older and rather conservative group. With the development of the ecology and back-to-the-land movements, this picture changed radically, and by the 1970s, the character of the natural food stores, with their young clientele, had a major impact on the health food industry. Today, one can find herbs coming from traditions all over the world in U.S. health food stores. These stores are not only commercial concerns; they also serve as important links in folk medical oral networks. Like the religious healing revival before it, the natural healing complex burst its orig-

inal cultural bounds and became an influential force in American health belief. And now, the American Botanical Council has been established to serve a variety of political, commercial, and scientific purposes, representing herbalists from a great variety of traditions. The council also publishes a peer-reviewed journal called *HerbalGram*. Many herbalists do not even know the council exists, and the *official* power of the council is relatively small compared to such structures in conventional medicine. Nonetheless, herbalism is clearly becoming more formally organized, and this change further enhances its influence.

In 1992, the National Institutes of Health established, under congressional mandate, the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) to fund studies of the efficacy of all sorts of popular treatments. Many of the practices that the OAM is seriously investigating are among those that have been traditionally considered folk medicine, ranging from herbal treatments to laying on of hands and distant prayer for healing. Internationally, the World Health Organization has recognized the importance of folk medicine and has developed programs intended to help folk healers and medical doctors to work together in delivering health care in underserved areas of the world. Clearly, *official* approbation and the development of internal official structures does not mark a sharp boundary that separates folk medicine from all other health beliefs and practices in the modern world. The category of folk medicine constitutes a range within which traditions differ from one another and change over time with regard to their “officialness,” and folk, commercial, and official institutions influence each other constantly.

Although oral tradition is relatively important, especially in less formally organized traditions, it cannot be used as a definitional requirement of folk medicine. Most of the traditions studied as folk medicine use print to some extent. For example, in the Pennsylvania German powwow tradition, *Der lang verborgene Freund*, a book of charms and recipes compiled and published in 1820 by a German immigrant named John George Hohman, has remained in print and in use to the present day in both German and two English translations. This book and others, including manuscript charm collections by individual practitioners, have not only helped preserve the tradition but also implemented its spread, especially since Hohman’s book was sold through the Sears Roebuck catalog around the end of the nineteenth century. Although oral tradition remains an important aspect of folk medicine, the use of magazines, books, and even television by traditional health systems today is a mark of their vigor and adaptability.

THE PERSISTENCE AND PREVALENCE OF FOLK MEDICINE

The modern picture of who uses folk medicine also has undergone radical changes. It was long assumed that folk medicine persisted in places where modern, scientific medicine was not available or as a survival among early generations of immigrants from traditional societies. It was assumed that higher

education and familiarity with scientific medicine would result in sole reliance on medical doctors and hospitals. It is no doubt the case that isolation and lack of acculturation tend to reduce the rate at which any cultural institution changes, but change and adaptation are the natural state of tradition. It is now evident that the changes in folk medicine brought about by modern communication, geographic mobility, and other forces that reduce cultural isolation have not led to the demise of folk medicine—quite the contrary. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1993 found that 34 percent of Americans had used what the investigators called “unconventional interventions” within the preceding 12 months. Among those practices mentioned in the survey were several forms of folk medicine, including herbs and spiritual healing. This high rate of use came in spite of the exclusion from the survey of basic prayer for healing, probably the most widely used variety of folk healing. The survey also found, as have other studies in the United States and Europe, that use of these traditions was positively associated with *higher* education.

This finding comes as no surprise to scholars who do fieldwork in contemporary folk medicine. Although the children and grandchildren of some immigrant groups have rejected traditions including folk medicine as impediments to “Americanization” and their social aspirations, others in the community have shown great interest in folk medicines with which they did not grow up. The Caribbean traditions of spiritism, *espiritismo* (Puerto Rican) and *santeria* (Cuban), both with strong healing elements, now attract supplicants and members from the Anglo community in the northeastern United States. In Puerto Rico and the northeastern United States, there have even been projects to bring spiritists and mental health professionals into a collaborative, collegial relationship to work together in community mental health. Like acupuncture (which it accompanied to the United States), classical Chinese herbalism is sought out by patients from all kinds of ethnic groups and social classes. Psychotherapists and psychoneuroimmunology researchers are turning to the techniques of shamans to treat both psychological illnesses and physical diseases such as cancer. There is, in fact, a “neoshamanic movement” whose members seek to use drumming and other shamanic techniques to attain trance states both for self-fulfillment *and* for the treatment of others.

In the 1960s, cross-traditional influence and the adoption of beliefs and practices by people not raised with them would have been seen as “contaminating” tradition. The result, especially when it began to be transmitted in books and magazines, might have been called “fakelore.” But it is clear that this view is outmoded today, particularly concerning folk medicine. Folk medicine always has exchanged materials and ideas with official medicine, and it always has been an important competitor with official medicine. In the nineteenth century, it was, in fact, almost impossible to tell which tradition was the official and dominant one. At present, a variety of factors, including the increasing costs of high-tech medicine, a widely expressed desire for a philosophy of heal-

ing that is more “holistic,” and ready access to many cultural traditions due to modern communication and migration patterns, have led to an efflorescence of folk medicine traditions.

THE EFFICACY OF FOLK MEDICINE

Folk medicine persists because people believe that it helps them. Conventional physicians often reject or even seek to eradicate folk medicine because they believe that it is useless at best and dangerous at worst. The issue of efficacy is an inevitable aspect of inquiry into folk medicine. Understandably, this question is often asked in the terms of scientific medicine: How does a particular treatment compare with no treatment (a placebo control) in a controlled trial? Although such trials have been rare in the study of folk medicine per se, some have, in fact, been conducted, and there have been other sources of scientific evidence that bear on this question. In 1785, the British physician William Withering published *An Account of Foxglove with Its Medical Uses*. This marked the entry of digitalis into the pharmacopoeia of medicine, and Withering had made his discovery through the observation of an herbalist's successful treatment of a patient with “dropsy,” using an herbal tea. Furthermore, numerous scientific studies have shown that various herbal traditions contain plant medicines that have real effects against some forms of cancer.

Dietary advice with a long history in folk medicine recently has attained medical acceptance. An excellent example of this is the new medical consensus concerning the importance of fiber in the diet. This development is credited largely to Denis P. Burkitt, the surgeon whose work in Africa included definitive research on the disease that bears his name: Burkitt's lymphoma. His observations of the high-fiber diet of certain West African tribes, the decreased transit time of food in their intestines, and the low rates of certain diseases among them led him to urge an increase of fiber in the modern Western diet. This proposition now has received substantial medical endorsement, particularly for the reduction of risk for gastrointestinal cancers. However, rarely, if ever, has any medical reference acknowledged that this has been a major folk medical belief in the United States at least since the nineteenth century. As recently as the 1970s, this belief was derided in medical circles, and it is cited in many descriptions of folk medicine along with such other unconventional notions as “bad blood.” More recently, in 1994, Jerry Avorn, M.D., published a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* documenting the usefulness of cranberry juice to prevent bladder infections, a long-standing folk practice. Such observations are numerous and add greatly to the credibility of natural healing beliefs and the popular idea that they are “forgotten knowledge” rather than obsolete medical beliefs or ignorant superstition.

Perhaps most surprising from the medical view, several medical journals have published randomized, double-blind studies of the efficacy of intercessory

prayer, carried out at a distance. In 1988, cardiologist Randolph Byrd, M.D., published a study in the *Southern Medical Journal* reporting a consistent and statistically significant advantage among seriously ill cardiac patients in a “prayed for” group as compared to a control group. The fact that such studies are being carried out and published by medical doctors is perhaps as significant as their results.

But a consideration of folk medical efficacy cannot be restricted to medical definitions. Several researchers have reported that even when the clients of folk healers show no objective improvement in their symptoms, they often say they feel better and may say that they have been healed. Such observations indicate that folk medicine does more than address physical malfunctions. That broader effect is indicated by *healing*, a central concept in many folk medicine systems. *Healing* is one in a series of English words that have developed from the single, ancient, Indo-European root word *kailo*, meaning “whole, uninjured, or of good omen.” The linguistic descendants of *kailo* include the following: *hale* (as in “hale and hearty”), *health*, *whole*, and *holy*. The ancient connections of health with wholeness and holiness give some indication of why the connotations of *healing* have always been larger than those of *curing* or *treating*, to choose words more readily associated with medicine. One may or may not be made whole by being cured of a particular condition, but no cure or remedy is likely to be said to have rendered the patient more holy. Many forms of folk medicine deal directly with the metaphysical issues raised by illness and the social disruption that it often brings. So even when physical disease remains, the peace and satisfaction of having one’s spiritual welfare and one’s continuing place in the community affirmed may constitute the most personally important form of healing.

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See also Midwifery; Religion, Folk.



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MEMORATE

An experiential narrative, a description of a supranormal experience undergone by the narrator or a person close to him or her. The term *memorate* was introduced by Carl W. von Sydow in 1934 but was later redefined for analytical purposes. As firsthand accounts, memorates provide reliable data for the scholar studying the affective experiential aspects of religion as they reveal the situations in which the religious tradition was actualized and began effecting behavioral patterns. They also give information on the social contexts of beliefs, on religious experiences, on interpretation and transmission processes, and on the society that preserves the religious traditions in question.

Memorates are regarded as having no fixed formal characteristics. One way of recognizing a memorate is through its perception of psychological authenticity: By taking into account perception and social-psychological factors, one can judge how authentically the memorate under study describes the supranormal experience.

Another useful aid to comprehending the genre is offered by content analysis. Memorates containing many unique features that are "unnecessary" and

secondary from the point of view of the narration and plot are primarily “fresh” and authentic and likely to give a most reliable picture of local folk belief.

The third means concerns a detailed study of the transmission process. On the basis of in-depth research concerning memorate materials, it seems to be expedient to show the links in the chain from the experiencer to the narrator. Most memorates are either firsthand (personal) or secondhand narratives, which implies that the actual religious tradition described must be continually renewed. It also is clear that in memorates, the details describing the supernatural experience (but unnecessary from the point of view of the plot) are more sparse when there are more links in the chain and when one gets further from the place and moment of experience. Memorates can be grouped into three categories: individual (based on the narrator’s personal experience), group (family or age-group), and collective (stereotyped narratives that have been subjected to the social control of a society). The memorate describing an encounter with an unidentified supernatural being (*numen*) is called a *numen memorate*.

The part played by the tradition learned from previous generations (vertical tradition) and that learned from other members of the group (horizontal tradition) is of great importance at every stage of the transmission of a traditional message. One cannot experience or interpret an event as religious if one is not already acquainted with the religious experience and explanatory models of a tradition. A religious experience is always a question of the actualization of a belief within some supernatural frame of reference. The patterns of content, style, structure, and language, already familiar from the learned tradition, regulate oral communications in a chain of transmissions. It is through these patterns that the tradition is preserved and gradually assumes its stereotyped form. In studying religious events, there is an important problem of the processes of interpretation; these may be individual or social events controlled or regulated by individuals who exercise some kind of authoritative power in their social groups. In this way, a uniquely experienced event is partly absorbed into the traditions of the society. Studies of the preliterate stage of religious traditions presuppose that the chain through which the experience or event has been communicated is examined in detail. Each informant in the chain plays an important part, but of particular significance are the eyewitness to the event and the last informant, that is, the person who actually relates the oral message or converts it into a written form. It is at this point that the oral stage begins. The analysis of the written stage, however, is just as interesting a task as that of studying the oral process of transmission.

It is worth noting that different genres seem to transmit information about various aspects of a religion in different ways. Thus, myths, folk beliefs, and legends deal chiefly with the cognitive aspects of religion. At the same time, the cognitive level manifests itself, above all, in rites and the ritualistic descriptions of such rituals as sacrifices, prayers, or charms.

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See also Anecdote; Belief Tale; Legend.



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MENTIFACT

A constituent of culture that exists primarily in the minds of the adherents of that culture. As a classificatory concept, the term *mentifact* overlaps with *covert culture*, or aspects of culture that are not directly observable, and *nonmaterial culture*, or aspects of culture that are not expressed via solid matter (e.g., stone, wood, ink). The term *mentifact* has been loosely applied to designate mentalistic, intellectual facts (e.g., sheer knowledge), as well as affective experiences involving feeling (e.g., biologically determined emotions, as well as learned sentiments).

The term emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century as part of the debate over the nature of culture in relation to humanity, and the introduction of the idea of culture as *superorganic*. Culture was perceived as referring to both the process of learning, or human self-cultivation (enculturation), and the resultant product of that process. Human beings, it was argued, cultivate not only their own natural potentialities but also the physical objects of the natural environment in which they live. Consequently, individuals invent instruments for the better satisfaction of their needs; these constitute a second class of cultural products, namely, artifacts. Since these objects or artifacts exist independently of their human inventors, all such culture products were designated, in Herbert Spencer's term, *superorganic*.

Two additional categories of superorganic products of the cultural process were identified: *mentifacts* and *socifacts*. The first word was introduced to label conceptual symbols comprising such products of culture as language, morals, aesthetics, religious ideals, intellectual aspects of scientific research, and similar mental phenomena. The second word labels aspects of social interaction within a community, such as social norms and organizations that serve to regulate the conduct of individuals within society, as well as the conduct of society as a whole in relation to other societies.

The sum total of the artifacts, socifacts, and mentifacts that comprise superorganic culture, it has been argued, constitutes the surplus resulting from

cultural life. This total is commonly referred to as a given society's "social heritage" or "cultural capital."

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See also Superorganic Theories; Worldview.



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METACOMMUNICATION

Communication that refers to or comments on relationships among aspects of the communication process. These aspects include: speaker, addressee (i.e., the person spoken to), topic and message, contact, and code. For instance, some metacommunication refers to the *speaker's* attitude toward what he or she is talking about (e.g., "I'm serious!") or comments on the speaker's act of speaking itself (e.g., "I've just come from the dentist and am having trouble talking"). In folklore study, Richard Bauman has pointed to tall-tale-teller Ed Bell's use of a metacommunicative aside to bridge the gap between Bell's "real world" identity—the "I" as a narrator of events (in the quote that follows, events centering on a tree filled with honey)—and Bell's fictional identity—the "I" as a character within the story being told: "That's what I always think of, get some honey, you know, or get whatever's there to be gotten." Other metacommunication may refer, for instance, to the nature or timing of the *addressee's* response relative to the speaker's utterances—for example: "Repeat after me . . ." or "Don't interrupt!" Storyteller Bell used metacommunication specifically addressed to his audience (as in the phrases "you've heard" and "you know") to suggest an explanatory link between the huge tree of his story and his audience's knowledge of large trees in the "real world": "*You've heard o' those big ol', uh, trees in California, you know, bein' so big*" (italics added). Metacommunication focusing on *topic* or *message* can deal, for example, with the contextual appropriateness of topic (e.g., "Johnny, we don't talk about such things in public") or with the repetition of message for the purpose of clarification or emphasis (e.g., "I said, 'Pass the butter'"). For his part, storyteller Bell used a metacommunicative aside to comment humorously on his own ability to provide a convincing story, on the problem of whether his audience was convinced, and on the believability of the story (i.e., the message) itself: "And I don't blame y'all if you don't believe me about this tree, because I wouldn't believe it either if I hadn'ta seen it with my own eyes. I don't know whether I can tell ya how you could believe it or not, but that was a big tree."

Metacommunication dealing with communicational *contact* between the participants can announce the opening of a communication channel (e.g., saying “Hello” after picking up a telephone receiver), or it can check whether the channel is indeed open (e.g., “Can you hear me?”). In folklore performance, a blues singer’s line, “Hear me singing to you,” refers to the singer, the audience, and the communication channel (oral channel, or singing), as well as offering a request for communicational contact (“Hear me”). Metacommunication treating *code* (i.e., a system of information) might refer to whether the participants share a particular cultural code. For example, the mother’s utterance in the following exchange comments metacommunicatively on an ambiguous message and thus on a lack of cultural sharing: Adolescent son: “That’s bitchin’ [a term of approbation], Mom!” Disconcerted mother: “What do you mean?”

Metalinguistic utterances focus on aspects of the linguistic code (e.g., grammar, lexicon, orthography). For instance, they may refer to words *as words* (e.g., “I can’t find *macabre* in the dictionary”) or to the spelling of words (as in the spelling riddle “How do you spell *enemy* in three letters?—N M E”). *Metageneric* utterances refer to conventions associated with a particular generic code. In the following catch riddle, for example, the riddler “catches” the addressee in the conventional assumption that riddlers already know the answer to the questions they pose: A: “What’s red, purple, green, yellow, gray, sky-blue, and green?” B: “I don’t know.” A: “I don’t know either, that’s why I’m asking you.”

Metanarration is metacommunication that refers to or comments on aspects of a narrative or on aspects of a storytelling event. Excerpts given earlier from storyteller Ed Bell illustrate some metanarrational functions. In addition, Barbara Babcock has distinguished two types of metanarration. *Explicit metanarration* calls attention deliberately to the narrative and/or to the storytelling event. For instance, narrative beginning and ending formulas (e.g., “Once upon a time” and “they lived happily ever after”) establish and conclude, respectively, a metanarrational frame in terms of which the contained utterances are to be understood (i.e., as a fairy tale). Explicit metanarrative-framing utterances also include stories that contain within themselves reports of the telling of other stories, as illustrated in the narrative set of *1001 Nights*. *Implicit metanarration* operates both as part of the story (e.g., it may advance the story’s plot) and as metacommunication that calls attention to the story as a story (i.e., as constructed artifice). Examples include the use of syntactic and thematic parallelism.

Alan Dundes has called for folklorists to record and study *oral literary criticism*—that is, folk performers’ and audience members’ own interpretations of and commentaries on the meanings and uses of folklore. Such criticism would include, among other things, a storyteller’s metanarrational asides offered during storytelling as well as participants’ comments solicited apart from the storytelling act itself. For example, narrator Ed Bell has commented on his rhetorical purpose in drawing out his storytelling at folk festivals. He has said that such drawing out keeps the audience in suspense a bit longer and thus makes the listening experience better.

MIDWIFERY

By commenting on aspects of the communication process, metacommunication facilitates participants' understanding of communicational structure, focus, and content and gives participants the means to talk about their communicative relationships to each other and to the ongoing discourse.

Danielle M. Roemer

See also Frame.

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MIDWIFERY

The knowledge and practices associated with the experience of pregnancy and childbirth. Ritual birth practitioners exist in all cultures. Since birth is a complex cultural and biological process, midwifery encompasses belief systems about healing as well as medical treatment. In some societies, midwives function as an occupational group, often in conjunction with other medical personnel in the public sphere. Traditional midwives, in contrast, aid the birth process in the private realm as unpaid work or for a nominal or in-kind fee. In all cases, midwifery involves prenatal and antenatal care as well as aid with the birth process. Prenatal practices include massage, the use of steambaths, and nutritional advice regarding proper foods and/or medicinal herbs. Assistance with birth often requires emotional as well as physical support, “catching” the baby, cutting the cord, and treatment of the afterbirth, which has sacred significance in many cultures. In caring for the mother and infant, midwives may stay with a woman for a week or more. Traditional midwives perform a wide variety of other social functions, which may include circumcision, preparation of the dead for burial, and quasi-legal services such as establishing claims of virginity or alleged rape. Despite tremendous cultural variation, midwifery practices underscore birth as a universal and often highly structured ritual in modern industrial cultures as well as in traditional societies.

Early folk medicine scholarship in the United States and Europe incorporated midwifery under studies of superstition and folk belief. At the turn of the twentieth century, a number of articles appeared in the *Journal of American Folklore* on myths, rituals, and beliefs surrounding childbirth. Early collections offer a compendium of beliefs about the evil eye, breech births, being born with a “caul,” foods to eat to avoid miscarriage, and similar topics.

Recent analysis of midwifery reflects the shift in folkloristics from collection of static phenomena and classificatory schemes to the study of dynamic processes and context. Often structural and comparative in nature, many studies contrast ethnomedical and biomedical worlds or compare midwifery as folk healing with popular and academic medicine.

Early research concentrated on folk practitioners in rural settings and among specific ethnic groups, such as African-American midwives, Native American practitioners, and Hispanic women who practice midwifery as part of *curanderismo* (folk healing). Comparative studies have expanded to include the practice of nurse-midwives, who exist between the folk and biomedical worlds. A number of scholars have moved beyond particular ethnic groups to examine birth as a widespread rite of passage in technological societies.

Complementing and sometimes replacing comparative views, hermeneutic/interpretive approaches focus on the meaning of midwifery practice. In the convergence of studies of folk healing and systems of meaning, gender is pivotal. Although early studies assumed gender, it was not an analytic focus. More recent work problematizes gender, seeing midwives as *women* healers whose practice exists in a web of gender/power relations. Focus shifts to the midwife as social actor, recruitment to her role, and her place in the larger social order. Gender-focused studies also look at informal healing roles in order to include a broader range of women's experiences and pose new questions about gender and healing. In some studies, midwives are marginal figures, mediating between public and domestic worlds and nature and culture; in others, midwives' knowledge is central but "coded" by their subordinate position in male-dominated social worlds and medical structures.

Other recent works examine myths, other narratives, and broader cosmologies related to creation and procreation. These offer a movement beyond nature/culture divisions that contrast the female realm of procreation as "merely physical" with the creative realms of art and ritual that constitute culture.

Joanne Mulcahy

See also *Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gender; Medicine, Folk.*

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MNEMONIC

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MNEMONIC

Aid for memory. Many professions and academic specialties use mnemonics for teaching and remembering, and educators endorse them for classroom and other formal educational contexts. Some mnemonics, especially those in oral circulation, have currency as folklore. They may assume several forms that encourage the memorization of facts or procedures that are otherwise difficult to retain.

Mnemonics often assume the form of rhyming verse. The rhyme that begins “Thirty days hath September,” for example, helps to recall the number of days in each month. A rhyme that assists in spelling certain English words reminds us that it is “i before e except after c.” Those faced with emergency situations can remember the proper treatment for accident victims by recalling, “If the face is red, raise the head. If the face is pale, raise the other end” (alternatively, “raise the tail”).

Memorization of some facts may receive assistance from songs. Children often learn the alphabet by singing “The Alphabet Song,” for example. Setting the multiplication table to the tune of “Yankee Doodle” once facilitated arithmetic instruction in New England classrooms. Matching geographical facts to familiar tunes was once a favorite mnemonic device, and some traditional songs—such as “The Brazos River,” which lists the principal rivers of Texas—aided the memory of such information.

Less complex mnemonic devices include acronyms. The name “ROY G. BIV,” for example, enables one to remember the colors of the light spectrum. “HOMES” is a mnemonic acronym for the names of the Great Lakes. The initial letters of the words comprising certain traditional sentences may form an acrostic that recalls difficult facts: “George eat old gray rat at pa’s house yesterday” reminds one how to spell *geography*. The names of the lines on the musical scale in the treble clef correspond to the beginning letters in “every good boy does fine.” The initial letters of “my very educated mother just served us nine pickles” represent the names of the planets in order, moving away from the sun.

In addition to identifying traditional mnemonic devices of the types just described, folklore studies concerns itself with memory aids that assist the performance of verbal art. Among nonliterate groups—for example, certain

Native American peoples—items such as wampum belts, carved sticks, and pictographs have assisted storytellers in recalling incidents for their narration. Singers, especially those with extensive repertoires, often maintain manuscript collections of songs to stimulate their memories. Perhaps the most thorough studies associated with mnemonics and folklore performance involve the oral-formulaic theory, which suggests that performers of long, rhythmic folklore forms such as epics or chanted sermons rely upon verbal formulas. Other approaches to the mnemonics of oral performance focus on the ways in which memory differs in oral and literate societies.

Folklore research into mnemonic devices has seldom gone beyond simply reporting them and possibly noting how their form and style help in the process of memorization. Studies of a “folk art of memory,” analogous to the techniques for memorization developed by the Greeks (which flourished as a rhetorical study through the Renaissance), provide a rich, largely unexplored research topic.

William M. Clements

See also Oral-Formulaic Theory; Performance.

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M

ONOGENESIS/POLYGENESIS

Origin from a single source (*mono*) or from multiple sources (*poly*), or the theory that an item has a point of beginning or origin (its *genesis*) and that the beginning may have been from one single source (*monogenesis*) or from two or more sources (*polygenesis*). Drawn from the sciences and social sciences, the theories of monogenesis and polygenesis are used to explain the origin of such diverse phenomena as species, government, ethnicities, and aesthetics. In folkloristics, the theories are used to explain the origins of specific items of folklore and their variants.

Monogenesis, or *monogenetic transformation*, holds that for any given artifact, there is one and only one point of origin. For example, most religions hold that mankind came about as the creation of a supernatural power. From that original creation came all of the members of the group and all of the others who inhabit the earth. In the sciences, monogenesis has been used to support theories of species evolution from one common ancestor to the forms now known. In folklore, the Finnish, or historic-geographic, method of narrative research relies on the theory of monogenesis. In this method, the Ur-form, the archetype for a narrative, is the result of a conscious act of creation at a specific time and location. From this Ur-form came all known variants. For example, some scholars hold that the similarities in the creation stories of various religions point to a common point of ancestry from which all people and their religions spring. In like manner, languages are thought to have one point of origin. The group of languages classified as Indo-European is sometimes used as evidence for monogenesis of language. A few scholars hold that, given enough time and data, they can find a proto-Indo-European language from which all known languages of this stock emerged.

In 1524, Paracelsus argued for the theory of polygenesis. Using the available scholarly evidence, he posited that all the known varieties of mankind could not have evolved solely from the union of Adam and Eve. Proponents of the theory of polygenesis, or *polygenetic transformation*, and the allied parallel evolution hold that similar needs and development can create similar cultural artifacts in different, independent groups. Under the theory of polygenesis, the similarities in language groups or creation stories are just that, similarities. Antidiffusionist folklore scholars argue that linguistic barriers are too hard for an item of oral folklore to overcome. Instead, they believe that similar items arose in divergent language areas independently. The Swedish folklorist Carl von Sydow held that the unique qualities of history and culture in various regions pushed the creation of similar types of tales, or regional *oikotypes*, each with its own unique history. Similar creation stories, under the theory of polygenesis, arose out of similar needs to explain the universe rather than out of a single point of origin.

The use of monogenesis and polygenesis as analytical tools has its merits and limitations. Certain items of folklore may be traced to an original source and support the theory of monogenesis. Other items, though similar among diverse groups and locations, are the result of similar needs and multiple creations and thus support the theory of polygenesis.

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See also Historic-Geographic Method; Oikotype/Oicotype.

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MOTIF

A unit of content found in prose narratives or in poems. According to the American folklorist Stith Thompson, motifs were “those details out of which full-fledged narratives are composed.” The term *motif* came into use in comparative textual studies at the turn of the twentieth century. For the practitioners of the historic-geographic method, narrative plots (tale types) were made up of episodes and motifs.

Thompson expanded the motif’s range of meaning. He argued that some motifs, such as “Creation of the sun,” can be a narrative’s highly abstract subject or the main theme. The term *motif* also can refer to the narrative plot; the myth “Sun and moon from belly of a fish,” for example, is unit A 713.1 in Thompson’s motif-index.

Motif also can refer to a smaller narrative unit such as an episode, a sequence of several events, or a single event or action. Some of these “action motifs” can be linked to a variety of plots. An example of this kind of motif is “The obstacle flight,” whereby the fleeing protagonist throws back a brush, a stone, and a bottle of water; the objects miraculously turn into a dense wood, a mountain, and a lake in order to ensure an escape from the pursuer.

The term *motif* also has been used in reference to the descriptions of the narrative world and its inhabitants. For example, Thompson’s motif “Abode of the dead” and its realization “Land of dead across river” describe the supernatural setting of the narrative. The motif “Mermaid has white skin” refers to the physical attributes of a supernatural actor.

Thompson’s motif-index is a six-volume reference work of themes and other elements of content that appear mainly in the folklore and early literature of Eurasia. The index also includes some information on Oceanic, indigenous North and South American, and African myths and other narratives.

Thompson’s index is hierarchical: Abstract themes and broad categories (“Cosmogony and Cosmology,” “Animals”) are divided into subcategories (“The Heavens,” “The Earth”; “Mythical Animals,” “Magic Animals”). The last volume of the index contains over 10,000 main terms.

Thompson’s motif-index prevails as an effective reference book, especially for scholars of European folklore and folk belief. His way of defining the term *motif*, however, has been strongly and justifiably criticized. Thompson’s *motif* is both vague and ambiguous; it variously refers to theme, plot (tale type), actor,



The changeling appears as a supernatural character motif in the folklore of many cultures.

item (object), or descriptive element. A precise application of the term requires that it refers to only one kind of unit.

As folkloristic textual analysis developed alongside narratology (i.e., the structural study of narratives and narrative techniques) in the 1960s, scholars saw that the hierarchical set of terms *theme*, *tale type*, *episode*, and *motif* was inadequate for describing a story's essential structures. New solutions and concepts were first created in the morphological and structural analyses of folktales and later in the linguistic study of narrative discourse in the 1970s and 1980s.

Satu Apo

See also Folktales; Historic-Geographic Method; Motifeme; Structuralism; Tale Type.

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MOTIFEME

The highly abstract unit of a narrative plot. In the structural analyses of folk tales by Alan Dundes, the abstract units of actions or states are designated *motifemes* and their manifestations are *motifs*. The different realizations of a given motifeme are called *allomotifs*. The motifeme “Lack”, for example, is realized in the North American tales as the motifs “Once there was no earth,” “Water was where earth is now,” and “A long time ago there was no sun.” Allomotifs—also abstractions—would be, for example, “Earth is missing” and “Sun is missing”.

In Dundes’ model, the relationships between an invariant unit and its variants are the same as the relationships between phoneme, phone, and allophone or morpheme, morph, and allomorph in linguistic analysis.

Dundes abstracted several motifemes from North American tales. The units appear interconnected, as pairs and “patterns.” One of these patterns is Lack (L) + Lack liquidated (LL); the lack of earth is liquidated in Indian myths, for example, by bringing up mud from the bottom of the primordial sea. Because a lack is sometimes fulfilled through the act of cheating, the motifemes Deceit + Deception can be added to the basic pattern L + LL. Another common scheme consists of the motifemes Interdiction + Violation + Consequence + Attempted Escape. Motifeme sequences may combine to form more complex plots.

Satu Apo

See also Linguistic Approach; Motif; Structuralism.

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MUMMING

Seasonal custom in which one or more disguised figures intrude into private households with the purpose of engaging in traditional, convivial interaction with the residents. Observance is invariably associated with the season of winter revels, encompassing (in Christian communities) Christmas, New Year's, and Twelfth Night. Interaction takes the form of various pastimes, many of which might figure in the revelry of a festive gathering independently of the intrusion by the visitors—for example, singing and dancing. In late medieval and Renaissance Europe, interaction usually took the form of gambling with dice; in recent Newfoundland tradition, the pastime comprises the attempts of the hosts to guess the identity of the visitors.

Since it involves the intrusion of disguised visitors into the private space of a domestic household, the custom has particularly powerful social perspectives, with the transgressing of significant social and psychological (as well as physical) thresholds. The nature of this transgression will vary according to the ambient social conventions, as the mummers challenge whatever is normal during the rest of the year. In the comparatively homogeneous communities of Newfoundland, where neighbors normally enter a house without ceremony, the Christmas mummers (those same neighbors in disguise) draw attention to their otherness by knocking at the door as if they were strangers. In the hierarchical and comparatively anonymous society of Tudor London, in contrast, it was the prospect of strangers (by implication, individuals of lower rank) penetrating the private homes of gentleness that provoked legislation against mumming in disguise.

Whatever the etymology (currently disputed) of the English term *mumming* and its cognates in other languages, the terms' connotations imply, in one direction, the refusal to communicate in normal speech. Medieval mummers were silent; the Newfoundland mummers speak by breathing inward; and elsewhere, mummers are recorded as making humming noises (i.e., murmuring). In another direction, the word *mumming* implies disguise or at least a masking of the face, and in scholarship, *mumming* is sometimes used to describe customs involving disguise but within other frameworks than the house visit—a procession, for example, as in the Philadelphia mummers' parade.

On a different axis, the term can, with varying legitimacy, be extended to house-visit customs during other seasons or in which the interaction between disguised visitors and hosts involves something other than or more than a convivial pastime. Some visits seem to be designed as a courtesy to the householder, involving the expression of greetings and goodwill or even the proffering of gifts (the most extravagant and literary manifestation of this trend being the Elizabethan and Stuart court masque). In others, the visitors' motivation may focus on receiving refreshment and/or financial largesse, making their visits effectively begging visits or (in the conventional euphemism) *quêtes*. In either

of these cases, the visitors are likely to entertain their hosts with a show, comprising a display of disguised figures (a fool, a grotesque female, animals), dance, song, speeches, or even a short but essentially dramatic interlude, qualifying the custom concerned as a *mummers' play*.

Thomas Pettit

See also Drama, Folk; Festival; Mask.



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MUSEUM, FOLK

A museum devoted to the study, collection, and interpretation of materials pertaining to local or regional culture. Generally, folk museums consist of two parts: an outdoor gathering of reconstructed buildings placed in an authentic natural contextual setting and a building that houses static exhibits of folk material culture. In some countries, the term *folk museum* refers to those museums also known as “open-air” or “living-history” museums.

The rise of folk museums coincided with several trends in the middle to late nineteenth century in both northern Europe and the United States. Perhaps the most important was the growing interest in ethnography, folklore, and the study of objects within those fields of inquiry. Victorian scholars dedicated to the study of the customs of traditional groups began to examine the “objective culture” or the material world, along with their studies of more intangible features of these groups. Among the scholars who turned their attention to the study of the material aspects of local culture and played prominent roles in the development of significant museum collections were Stewart Culin, Henry Mercer, and Fletcher Bassett in the United States and Artur Hazelius and Bernard Olson in Scandinavia.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, exhibitions of arts and industries were extremely popular on both continents. From the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago to trade fairs in small towns, many of these exhibitions were devoted to the display of new industrial and agricultural goods. However, spurred on by widespread national romanticism, organizers also presented static displays of materials that reflected keen interests in “bygone

days” or the contributions of local culture. In northern Europe, these displays often featured artifacts of the peasants or farmers. In the United States, they frequently highlighted the contributions of the immigrants to the new nation through “homeland exhibits.”

Artur Hazelius, the man credited with developing the concept of the folk museum, initially mounted an exhibition of Swedish folk arts at the 1878 World’s Fair in Paris. He sought to present a more authentic representation of Swedish culture by basing his displays on artifacts collected through extensive fieldwork and by incorporating figures “arranged in a highly emotional tableaux similar to the way it is done at a waxworks.” Upon seeing the way in which Hazelius had constructed the room settings, Bernard Olson, founder of the Danish Folk Museum, exclaimed that the exhibit “clearly sets itself apart from the rest of the exhibition with its amassed industrial wonders and trifles, manufactured for the occasion and worthless afterwards. Here was something new—the emergence of a fresh museum concept associated with a class, the life and activities of which had heretofore been disregarded by the traditional and official view of what was significant to scholarship and culture.”

Hazelius founded two museums in Stockholm—the *Nordiska* and the *Skansen* (literally, open-air)—that became the models for national, regional, and local folk museums around the world. At the *Nordiska*, Hazelius used his vast collections of folk materials in room settings or in displays arranged systematically according to type of material, historical period, function, and geographical region. Today, the *Nordiska* is home to a folklife research institute operated in conjunction with the University of Stockholm, and it hosts temporary exhibitions that interpret materials from a variety of perspectives. At *Skansen*, Hazelius brought together entire farmsteads removed from their original locations and reinstalled in one outdoor location in central Stockholm. The variety of structures represented each of Sweden’s regions, classes, and major historical periods and were placed in settings that included native plants and animals of the regions and periods. By adding traditional musicians, craftspeople, and farmers to perform and demonstrate their skills, Hazelius created the first “living museum.” There, he was able to portray regional variations in Sweden’s built environment through a variety of historical periods.

So popular was this new form of museum that major national open-air museums were quickly established in Norway (*Norsk Folkemuseum*, 1894), Denmark (*Frilandmuseet*, 1887), and the Netherlands (*Nederlands Openluchtmuseum*, 1912), and regional museums sprang up all over northern Europe. In 1974, Adelhart Zippelius was commissioned by the Association of European Open-Air Museums to compile a guide to 314 open-air museums in 21 European countries, and the model has now been adopted by nations around the world.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, interest in the collection and display of folk material culture was rising in the United States also. In 1876, Hazelius sent six of his folklife tableaux to the United States Centennial

Exposition. Subsequently, the Newark Museum in New Jersey organized a series of “homeland exhibits,” and by 1893, Stewart Culin had developed a series of exhibits on folk objects for the Columbian World’s Exposition held that year in Chicago.

By the early twentieth century, Hazelius’ model for folk museums was used to guide the development of such museums as Old Sturbridge Village and Plimouth Plantation in Massachusetts; the Farmer’s Museum in Cooperstown, New York; Mystic Seaport in Connecticut; Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia; the vast Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Michigan; and numerous smaller complexes across the country. All of these institutions shared the primary features of *Skansen*: the development of collections reflecting a preindustrial society, the assemblage of buildings in a re-created natural setting, and the use of costumed interpreters and craft demonstrations to selectively simulate the lives of ordinary people. In all, the pedagogical intent is clear—to give visitors an idea of life as it was lived in the past.

It is this conception of the past, however, that has proved to be one of the most difficult flaws in the formation and operation of folk museums. Folk museums have a tendency to depict generalized rather than specific experiences, to represent agricultural rather than urban life, and to deal with a historical past and not an ethnographic present. In reality, the collecting and interpretation activities of folk museums represent only very small slices of any national or regional cultural history. Folk museums generally rely on the reconstruction of a building to reconstruct and communicate information about life in a particular place in a moment in time. Yet, even undergirded with the most comprehensive of historical and folklife research, this reconstruction process will ultimately result in an interpreted re-creation or simulation of that life. The degree of authenticity achieved by a folk museum relies on both solid research and an interpretation or education staff that seeks to clearly communicate information. The best of the folk museums are those that focus on narrowly defined periods and regions, have research programs that support continued investigation on those defined periods and regions, and have well-developed educational programs.

Marsha MacDowell

See also Folklife; Material Culture.

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MUSICAL INSTRUMENT, FOLK

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MUSICAL INSTRUMENT, FOLK

In their most basic denotation, traditional objects used to produce and control musical sound. Folk musical instruments are tools or technological extensions to the sound-producing capabilities and kinetic expressions of the human body. Although instruments often are viewed as distinct from the human body and voice (manifest in culture-based distinctions between instrumental and vocal musics), they effectively intensify and complement communicative facets of speech and song and the rhythmical features of movement and dance.

Comparable to distinctions between music and nonmusic, the precise factors that differentiate any sound-producing object from a musical instrument result from the beliefs and practices of individual cultures. Whatever their design—from common objects to those of elaborate construction—musical instruments generally exhibit characteristic timbres appropriate to music performance, as well as some degree of pitch and loudness variation, and they allow for the control of sound over an interval of time. Widely distributed conch-shell trumpets, the hourglass-shaped *kotsuzumi* drum of the Japanese *noh* orchestra, the African plucked lamella instrument *sanza* or *mbira*, the lute of East Asia and North Africa known as the 'ud, and the mechanically bowed hurdy-gurdy from medieval Europe all illustrate distinctive sound colors and allow control of pitch, loudness, and rhythm. Such acoustical properties neither limit a musical instrument to one use nor require that music performance be the instrument's primary purpose. Music performance may employ ritual articles, cooking utensils, agricultural tools, or any number of other objects, temporarily or otherwise. Moreover, depending upon its cultural context, distinctions between a musical use and any other use of an object need not be demarcated clearly. Although long a debated issue, African musical bows resemble hunting bows in form and suggest another purpose, as does the *ghatam* (literally, waterpot), a clay-pot percussion instrument of the Indian subcontinent.

With historical depth extending from prehistory to the present and a geographic scope encompassing six continents and nearly all societies, musical instruments challenge holistic considerations. Several cultures have developed instrument classifications to account for their instruments and performance ensembles, most notably China, which uses eight divisions based on the material that produces the sound or contains the vibrating air, and India, which has four instrument divisions organized by the sounding element. However, like the European classification with its divisions of winds, strings, and percussion (still applied to the Western orchestra), they all fail to adequately explain basics of design or to clarify relationships for the large number of instruments known today. Museum curators, instrument collectors, and scholars have sought more systematic and comprehensive means to describe and categorize the vast array of musical instruments; the standard that has emerged comes from a system developed by Erich M. von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs.

To distinguish and organize musical instruments, most systems of classification take as a fundamental principle the importance of the vibrating, or sounding, material. Drawing examples from historically and geographically disparate cultures, the Hornbostel and Sachs classification system, published in 1914 as the “Systematik der Musikinstrumente: Ein Versuch,” follows this principle to divide instruments into four groups, based on their physical characteristics of sound production; further subdivisions are based on the form of the instrument. With some modifications and extensions, the Hornbostel and Sachs classification remains the most influential today. Its four large categories are *aerophones*, wind instruments or instruments with a vibrating column of air such as trumpets and flutes; *chordophones*, or string instruments; *idiophones*, instruments of self-sounding materials such as scrapers or bells; and *membranophones*, drums with stretched skin or other membranes.

Aerophones are subdivided into types according to the manner of producing vibration. The first group, free aerophones, consists of whirling instruments such as the bullroarer in which the vibrating air is not confined. An instrument found in ancient Greece, among aboriginal Australians, and among Native Americans, the bullroarer’s thin blade of wood rotates at the end of a swung chord that excites the air to produce its characteristic roaring sound. The second group of aerophones contains those in which the air is constrained by a tube or vessel, with the vibration created by the breath or wind. This is a much larger group of instruments, with three further subdivisions. First, flutes consist of instruments in which the air is blown against an edge of the tube, such as with the Andean notched flute of cane, the *kena*. The next are reeds, such as the Western clarinet or oboe, in which the airstream is excited by a beating reed or reeds. The *khaen*, from Southeast Asia, is an example of a reed aerophone. Similar to the Chinese *sheng* and Japanese *sho*, the *khaen* is a mouth organ made of up to 16 bamboo pipes arranged into 2 rows, each with a brass reed. Finally, there are trumpets, such as the aforementioned conch-shell trumpet or the

large, wooden Swiss alphorns, in which the airstream is blown through a player's vibrating lips.

The term *chordophone* refers to instruments with one or more strings stretched between supporting structures or across a resonating body or soundbox. Common examples include the guitar and Appalachian dulcimer. Although chordophones are sometimes grouped by how the strings are set in motion (either struck, plucked, or bowed), they first subdivide by the shape of the soundbox and neck, if the instrument has one. The simplest chordophone is the musical bow, a string stretched between two ends of a flexible stick. Some musical bows have attached resonators, such as the Brazilian *berimbau* and its small gourd that amplifies the sound of the single, struck string. Harps are plucked instruments with strings stretching between a soundbox and a straight or curved neck. The small Celtic harp, for instance, has a triangular frame, one side of which is a soundbox, the other a pillar, and the third a curved neck. Strings of graduated lengths connect the soundbox to the neck. Zithers, such as the Appalachian dulcimer, have strings attached parallel to the soundbox. The Hindustani *bîn*, also a zither, has seven strings (three of which sound sympathetically as drones) stretched above a fretted, bamboo tube, with two large gourd resonators attached below and near the tube's ends. Lutes and fiddles have one or more strings across a soundbox and a straight neck, as with the ancient Chinese *pipa*, a strummed, pear-shaped lute. The *pipa* has four strings that run from a bridge on the flat-topped soundbox to tuning pegs at the head of the neck. One fiddle from Iran, more precisely a spike-fiddle, is the *kamanche*. Across this instrument's neck stretch three strings played with a bow; the neck pierces a round wooden resonator, forming a spike at the end of the instrument.

Drums with stretched skins or membranes are membranophones. Various criteria distinguish the subdivisions of membranophones: whether the instrument is a percussion drum or a friction drum, the number of vibrating heads, the shape of the drum frame, the material of its construction, the manner in which the membrane is attached to the frame, and so forth. Examples of percussion drums—those struck with the hand, sticks, or something else—include *kalangu* and *kendang* drums. The *kalangu* of the Hausa of Nigeria is a kind of talking drum, a double-headed, hourglass-shaped drum laced so that, when squeezed, its pitch changes. Another example, this one from Indonesia, is the *kendang*. This is the laced, double-headed, barrel-shaped drum of the Gamelan orchestra. The *kendang* derives from the South Indian *mrdanga*. The *cuíca* is a friction drum from Brazil played with a stick attached to the membrane and rubbed with wetted hands or a damp cloth to create its sound.

Idiophones are instruments that produce sound by the material of their construction, without the addition of strings or membranes. Structural features of idiophones do not distinguish subcategories, as with the other divisions. Instrument shape has little significance for the subdivisions of idiophones; rather, playing techniques subdivide the group: by concussion, striking, stamp-

ing, shaking, scraping, friction, or plucking. The number of instruments that fall within these various subdivisions is immense. A few illustrative examples include: the solid-body concussion sticks, or *claves*, of Latin America; the struck, fixed-keyed xylophones, such as the *balo* of West Africa and the *marimba* of Guatemala; the *ganbo* stamping tubes of Haiti; the *angklung* rattle of Java and Bali (played by shaking its sliding bamboo tubes); the scraped African-American washboard; the tortoise-shell *áyotl*, a friction idiophone of the Maya-Quiche of Central America; and the plucked lamellaphones or *mbiras* of South Africa and *sanzas* of Cameroon, which consist of sets of graduated metal tongues on boards or soundboxes.

The large-scale classification of musical instruments attests to the wide range of instrument designs while giving insight into commonalities of acoustical/physical features. Musical instruments, however, exhibit more properties than classification alone suggests. Isolated, classification does little to show the historical and cultural import of an instrument, its musical function within performance, or its social functions.

At an intersection of artifact, behavior, and belief, a musical instrument carries significance and meaning beyond its physical characteristics. Garnered from a society's material and ideological resources, musical instruments are often viewed as technical achievements, celebrated for their beauty of workmanship and renowned for their quality of sound. More significantly, musical instruments exist as complex cultural phenomena that resonate with a society's history and beliefs and its perceptions of music and music making. The ways instruments connect and merge with a society are myriad. John Baily, for example, relates how changes in a musical instrument of Afghanistan, the Herati *dutâr*, reflects pressures to include music from outside its traditional repertoire. These changes—most fundamentally seen in the addition of more strings to this long-necked lute—correlate to changing political alliances within and outside Afghanistan and a shift, for musicians and audiences alike, from lives focused on rural activities to more urban ones. From the Solomon Islands, Hugh Zemp explains that the basis of `Are` are music theory—the notion of melodic interval—derives from the different lengths of tubes within bamboo panpipes and panpipe ensembles. In another example, Thomas Turino demonstrates how the performance of the *charango*, a small lute with a soundbox often made from an armadillo shell, carries an essential role within courtship in the Peruvian province of Canas. Drawing upon the power, beauty, and music of the mythological *la sirena* (the mermaid), young males use the *charango* in courtship to signal intent, make contact, and ultimately woo young women. And as a final example, the performance of a Javanese *gamelan*, an ensemble of mostly sets of tuned gongs, corresponds to the interlocking cycles that delineate the lives of the Javanese. Briefly, *gamelan* music is organized around a recurring melodic/rhythmic cycle built in successive layers of sound from low to high, from larger gongs to smaller ones, with the melodic/rhythmic complexity liter-

ally doubled at each layer of sound. According to Judith Becker, these gong cycles from the *gamelan* orchestra show an isomorphic relationship to the way in which time is represented in Java, as overlapping simultaneous cycles in which smaller cycles move within larger ones. Such examples affirm that, more than just integral to music and musical behavior, musical instruments exist as a fundamental part of the human condition.

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See also Ethnomusicology.

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MYTH

Narrative of cultural or religious beginnings. Myths refer to beginnings, in a sacred sense, and their definitions and analyses have plagued and fascinated folklorists and other scholars for centuries.

The brothers Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, best known for their collections of *Märchen*, or fairy tales, were scholars who wanted to demonstrate that (German) national character was embodied in the folklore of a people. They distinguished among myth, folktale, and legend, as have many other scholars in several parts of the world.

The eminent Austrian psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung, who worked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, proposed that myth arises from the collective unconscious—that portion of the unconscious mind common to all human beings. In his formulations, myth shares common archetypes (or deeply and mentally embedded recognizable patterns) with dreams and other workings of the unconscious. Archetypes are to psychological processes as instincts (such as sucking) are to physiological ones. It is the archetypes, Jung advocated, that account for commonalities in mythic stories and events that are seen across cultures and time periods.

Others, such as Max Müller (who worked in Great Britain in the middle and latter parts of the nineteenth century), have believed myths to be metaphors for processes of nature. For example, Müller, a Sanskrit scholar and comparative philologist, believed that the folklore and especially the mythology of his day in England were the survivals of a presumed Aryan past, which he thought retrievable through careful comparisons of languages, beginning with Sanskrit. He noted similarities among the metaphorical names of the ancient gods of ancient civilizations from India to Greece to Rome. Through what he termed the “disease of language,” processes of forgetfulness, and improper translations, myths were coded metaphoric mnemonics not only for the gods and their actions but also for the natural processes of the world, especially the movements of the sun. He believed that myths arose when people were capable of reasoning but not capable of very abstract thinking. Both a number of words and a particular god, he suggested, could symbolize one natural process: the movement of the sun through the day and year. Thus, for Müller and others who reasoned in a similar vein, myths were metaphors that, through time, lost their original meanings and became entities that seemed to stand for themselves. Only scholarly, comparative linguistic work could unravel the mysteries of which gods stood for which natural phenomena.

Franz Boas, credited with establishing the study of anthropology and mythology in the United States, saw all folklore as mirroring culture, both in what is allowed and what is prohibited. He specifically stated, in 1916, that the thought processes leading so-called primitive man to concoct myths were the same processes that modern man used. (It was the fashion of that day to speak

in terms of “man” and “men” to mean “people.”) He prefigured arguments Claude Lévi-Strauss would make thirty years later.

In 1965, William Bascom published a proposed solution to the definitional problem. His definition has both formed the basis for acceptance of a narrative as myth and served as the beginning point to argue against classifications of myth. It was his intention to provide analytic constructs—for myth, legend, and folktale—that had cross-cultural validity.

Bascom considered myth to be a form of prose narrative, believed to be true by the members of the society whose culture holds the myth. Bascom further noted that myths deal with events of the remote past from a world that is different from or earlier than the one in which the myth is related; myths have a sacred component (if they are not considered to be totally sacred), and they have mostly nonhumans as principal characters. He also maintained that, though there are many fewer myths present in any given culture than there are folktales or legends, the myths are held to have importance exceeding their numbers in that they are sacred and provide the rationale for existence and ways of doing things within the culture. Finally, he said that myths have explanatory and etiological functions.

In Bascom’s cataloging of societies and cultures from around the world, he noted that it was often difficult to use an ethnographer’s or folklorist’s work on myth or narrative in general because the researcher had not included sufficient information on belief in the generating group. Therefore, it seems that the issue of belief was key for Bascom. He did note that the categories of myth, legend, and folktale were often collapsed in some cultures but added that, since his definition was part of an analytic scheme imposed from outside the culture, the people’s own categories were not important for purposes of analysis and comparisons by outsiders to the culture.

Recently, Claire Farrer proposed a term—the *mythic present*—in an effort to characterize to Euroamerican students and scholars the attitudes most Native Americans have toward the time element in myth. Although some of Bascom’s criteria for myth hold true for Native Americans and their mythology, there is a collapse of time in Native American society that does not conform to Euroamerican understandings of the various phenomena of time. Specifically, that which is known to have occurred in the long-ago past (often expressed as “when the world was in the process of being made”) is conflated with that which is occurring now, at this moment, in our own time-space: This is the mythic present.

Some other researchers, particularly those who work with Native Americans, have found difficulties with Bascom’s categories because myths are not always prose narratives and because the issue of time is not so clear-cut as Bascom proposed. Oftentimes, myths are in poetic language and follow the canons of poetics for the culture in which the myths are present. Both Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock are credited with forcing folklorists to recognize the poetic structure not only of myths but also of other forms of narrative through

their insistence that rendering the narratives of other cultures in prose, rather than seeking to present them in the manner in which they are spoken, robs those narratives of their poetic structure and power. Their work demands careful typesetting and reading in order to assist a reader in appreciating the quality of the spoken, in contrast to the written, word.

A cross-culturally sound and minimal definition of the term *myth*, as distinct from other forms of narrative, is that it is sacred narrative that is most often believed to be true. Because myth is of such a sacred nature, many people object to the very word *myth* when it is attached to their own sacred narratives. For those in whose culture the myth is embedded, the truth of the myth may be



Myths are sacred narratives of cultural or religious beginnings. Here is a pictorial representation of the creation myth of the Tewa people.

MYTH

literal or figurative. Literalists believe fully in the absolute truth of myth, whereas figurativists believe in myth as metaphor.

For example, believing Jews, Christians, and Moslems who consider themselves to be fundamentalists assert that the biblical Genesis is literal truth: Yehweh/God/Allah created the world and universe in which we live in 6 of our experienced days (24 hours, more or less) and rested on the next, the seventh day.

By contrast, believing Jews, Christians, and Moslems who consider themselves to be less doctrinaire assert that the biblical Genesis is to be understood as a metaphor: Yehweh/God/Allah created the world and universe in which we live in 6 episodes called “days” that do not correspond to our experience of days; further, the creator (whatever name is given in the particular culture) inaugurated a pattern of alternating work (creation and creative effort) and rest.

This latter view of Genesis as metaphor allows for accommodation between religion and science in that the biblical Genesis of separation of light and dark, water and firmament, with the further differentiation of species culminating in human beings, follows evolutionary theory precepts as well.

For some people, the very words of myth are in themselves sacred. Even to utter such words is to call into presence, if not being, the referent. For example, recitations of the “beginningtime” by Mescalero Apache religious specialists are done in vernacular Apache or in English on most occasions; only during important ceremonials is the ritual language used, for that language had its own genesis in the “beginningtime” and, therefore, is intrinsically powerful. When speaking in the ritual language, religious specialists are extremely cautious, obeying many injunctions, speaking only in allusion and metaphor, and explaining to the powers that be that they are welcome among their people once again, for the speaking of them in the ritual language—the language of myth—calls them and demands their presence. It is also this power of word in sacred context that gives rise to the mythic present, the re-creation of mythic past in contemporary time and experience. By such a process of speaking/calling into being, myth is accorded an importance not only in the long-ago past but also in the here and now.

The power of the word was used very effectively by a mesmerizing speaker, the late Joseph Campbell. During the 1980s, no one was more closely associated with myth in the popular mind than Campbell. Not only a captivating speaker, he was also a fine storyteller, whether in lectures or on television. In general, Campbell’s approach to myths and mythology (the study of myths) was a universalist one. He maintained, much as had the psychologist Jung before him, that myths embody the same stories for disparate cultures and that they were retellings of each other; his data were garnered from pieces of myths taken out of context from many narrative traditions. Because of his selective comparisons, he is usually not granted much scholarly credence. His lack of analysis of complete myths in their appropriate contexts has lessened his credibility, especially among folklorists and anthropologists.

Yet there is a certain appeal to a universalist explanation of myths. The

French scholar Claude Lévi-Strauss is perhaps the best-known scholarly student of the world's mythology; although, if the truth be told, most of his data are from Native American sources in all the Americas. Lévi-Strauss has reached his audience primarily through the written word rather than through visual media. But, like Campbell, he has been roundly criticized for taking material out of context and comparing what may roughly be termed apples and bricks. However, in Lévi-Strauss' rationale, the lack of contextualization is permissible since he avers that all myths, wherever they are found, share a common structure that he has reduced to an algebraic formula. He also maintains that myths are binary structures, setting up and resolving contrasts and contradictions within the culture and society. For Lévi-Strauss, the universalist position is an acceptable one since all people in the world share common brain structure—structure that he sees replicated in myths. Therefore, myths become both good to think and a reflection of the thought process itself. His is a complex argument, and it often seems that no one can utilize the Lévi-Strauss analytic technique quite as well as can Lévi-Strauss.

Alan Dundes, a contemporary folklorist, also has devoted considerable effort to the analysis and explanation of myth. Rather than a universalist approach, however, he utilizes a neo-Freudian schema for analysis, finding that myths (products of adult minds, he avers) are one of the adult projective systems. As such, they are universal, in that all adults around the world use projective techniques that often are expressed in myths. Whereas followers of Jung maintain that archetypes are the same throughout the world, followers of the Freudian analysis of myth maintain that the symbols found in myth will be culturally relative but nonetheless a projection of infantile and child socialization systems. Many non-Freudian-oriented scholars marvel at the number of times neo-Freudians, such as Dundes, find that the myth under analysis has a sexual component somehow related to toilet training and Oedipus or Electra complexes.

The links among symbols and myths, myths and rituals, and heroes and myths also have been explored. Similarly, the syntagmatic (ordering) and paradigmatic (substituting) aspects of myth have been of interest to scholars. In the latter part of his career, the late Edmund R. Leach, a British social anthropologist, turned to a consideration of Christian and Jewish myths. Utilizing biblical myths, he demonstrated the redundancy in myth, maintaining that the episodes within myths make the same essential point or points over and over again as a means of reinforcing the importance of the message. His work has been said by some to be both a distillation and an extension of that of Lévi-Strauss, although Leach did not make claims to the universality of myth messages in general. But it was his earlier work that had a greater impact on those who study myth, for he demonstrated how myth is fluid, rather than being fixed for all time, in his discussion of the manipulation of myth and genealogy to reinforce land claims or settle other political issues.

Indeed, the permeability of myth is one of its essential characteristics. If

myth, once constructed, were immutable, it would soon lose its value for people since it would not be able to accommodate changes in culture or the society's knowledge base. Myth lends itself to reinterpretation, but myth also adjusts to incorporate the new as well as celebrate the old—at least in the societies where myth is alive in verbal tellings and not subject to the orthodoxy that accompanies the fixing of myth in writing. In the 1960s, LaVerne Harrell Clark provided examples of myth's permeability through a study of how horses, a late postcontact phenomenon, were thoroughly incorporated into Navajo and Apache narrative.

Most folklorists and anthropologists continue to consider myth in its cultural context rather than simply as literature or philosophy. Sometimes, it has been the fashion for myth to be termed a mirror of culture, and at other times, it has been fashionable to subject myth to computer analyses. At still other times, myth has been pointed to as the philosophy of the unlettered, completely ignoring that the lettered also have and believe in their own myths. What is enduring is myth itself. It does not vanish with increased complexity of social life. Worldwide trade and politics do not cause it to wither and die from lack of use. It can stand—indeed, it has stood—scrutiny as metaphor, as literal truth as well as a synonym for untruth, as lessons for life, as components in an algebraic system, as manifestations of psychological processes, as exemplar of properness and simultaneously as warning of the consequences of impropriety, as philosophy of the Other, as engaging literature, as being universal as well as being particular to a group of people at a specific time. Whatever else it may be, myth authorizes the present in terms of the past. Myth, quite simply, is.

Claire R. Farrer

See also Anthropology, Symbolic; Comparative Mythology; Cosmology; Culture Hero; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Myth-Ritual Theory; Ritual; Romantic Nationalism; Structuralism; Trickster.

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MYTH-RITUAL THEORY

Primarily, a critical approach to literature that was influential in the English-speaking world during the first half of the twentieth century and that sought to uncover prehistoric ritual forms or patterns underlying literary works. Its germ is to be found in the work of the Scottish historian of religion William Robertson Smith (1846–1894), who, in *Religion of the Semites* (1890), asserted that what mattered most to the ancient worshipping community was action rather than belief, the correct performance of ritual rather than intellectual acceptance of creedal myth. This insight was developed at length by a group of British classical scholars at the turn of the century who were seeking the formal origins of Greek tragedy. This group, usually called the “Cambridge Ritualists” because all but one (Murray) were Cambridge dons, was comprised of Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928), Gilbert Murray (1866–1957), Francis Macdonald Cornford (1874–1943), and Arthur Bernard Cook (1868–1952). The well-known historian of religion James George Frazer (1854–1941), influenced by his mentor Robertson Smith, was sympathetic to myth-ritualism early in his career and definitely influenced the Cambridge Ritualists’ work, but he soon disavowed the theory and its partisans and returned to a rationalism that he found more congenial. By 1921, his antipathy had grown so great that in the preface to his translation of the ancient mythographer Apollodorus’ collection of myths called *The Library*, the normally unpolemical Frazer went out of his way to attack myth-ritualism.

Myth-ritualism is a collectivist and irrationalist explanation of the origin, development, and meaning of myth and ritual, and as such, it represents a devi-

ation from the main line of British theorizing, which has always emphasized the individualist and intellectualist aspects of religion. From the moment of its enunciation, myth-ritualism has been controversial, and even in its heyday, it never appealed to more than a small number of scholars and literary critics. The main reason for this antipathy among classicists, historians, and folklorists always has been the quality of the evidence that its advocates have been able to marshal. Because (the theory goes) the forms that have come down to us in ancient literary texts derive from prehistoric rituals, which by definition are inaccessible, most of the data illustrating the argument have been (and have had to be) inferential and comparative, drawn from the behavior and beliefs of so-called primitive peoples who became known to Europeans during the imperialist expansion of the nineteenth century and who, it was claimed, stood at the same stage of mental evolution as did the peoples of classical antiquity. Generally speaking, scholars in disciplines with historical methodologies have regarded such evidence as excessively speculative and have refused to make the intellectual leaps that are often called for by myth-ritualists.

From the point of view of the history of ideas, myth-ritualism was part of the wave of irrationalist thought that crested throughout Europe just before World War I. The movement passed through two phases. The founding generation, the aforementioned Cambridge Ritualists (1890–1914), analyzed Greek drama (both tragedy and comedy) and found its “deep structure” to consist of a ritual pattern of death and rebirth based ultimately on the reconstructed stages of the Dionysian mysteries. In a series of publications leading up to Harrison’s *Themis* (1912)—a volume that included chapters by Murray and Cornford—the group, led by Harrison and basing itself on the anthropology of J. G. Frazer, the vitalism of Henri Bergson, and the sociology of Émile Durkheim, turned away from the traditional image of the bright, shining Greeks and instead presented them and their religious belief and behavior as essentially “primitive.” By the late 1920s, most classicists had, in turn, dismissed the Cambridge Ritualists’ general theory of Greek religion and their specific analysis of the historical and formal origins of drama. By then, however, the theory had already been picked up elsewhere in the intellectual world, most notably by biblical critics (among whom it had a vogue in Scandinavia from the late 1920s through the 1940s) and especially by English-speaking literary critics.

Although a few scholars (such as the Marxist classicist George Thomson) continued to embrace myth-ritualism, the second phase of myth-ritualism (1930–1965) was essentially literary-critical. During those years, a number of critics rejected the classicists’ rejection, simply assumed the correctness of the Cambridge Ritualists’ method, and proceeded to apply it to postclassical texts, mostly dramatic but also including medieval poems, folk ballads, and novels. As time passed, myth-ritualism, when used at all, was increasingly encountered as only one element in a complex critical approach. The most notable critics associated with the second phase were the Americans Kenneth Burke, Francis

Fergusson, and Stanley Edgar Hyman and the Canadian Northrop Frye. When the members of this second generation died or became inactive, no successors emerged. Perhaps because it was essentially a formalist method, myth-ritualism seems to have died unnoticed and unmourned in the mid-1970s, as the energy and attention of literary criticism in North America turned toward politics, in the forms of poststructuralism and especially deconstruction.

Robert Ackerman

See also Evolutionary Theory.

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N

NECK RIDDLE

A genre integrating traditional enigma and narrative. The neck riddle is usually thought of as a riddle told by the hero of a tale, either to win the hand of a princess (AT 851, “The Princess Who Cannot Solve the Riddle”) or to save his neck from a sentence of death (AT 927, “Out-Riddling the Judge”). The riddle also contains a narrative. Its solution lies in the recent experience of the hero. Since the experience is private and always of a bizarre character, the princess or the executioner is unable to solve the riddle, and the hero triumphs. For example, the hero (like the biblical Samson) has seen a bird’s nest or beehive in the carcass of an animal:

Ten tongues in one head,
Nine living and one dead;
One flew forth to fetch some bread
To feed the living in the dead.

Other neck riddles have to do with inversion—a man walking under gravel and on top of leaves, a daughter suckling her father—or more explicitly with incest, as in the Greek romance of Apollonius of Tyre, the source for Shakespeare’s *Pericles*. Still other grotesque solutions relate to posthumous birth, dismembered bodies, or poisoned meat.

Many commentators have remarked upon the relationships of neck riddle themes to the imagery of carnival as described by Mikhail Bakhtin. Unlike the true riddle, which describes ordinary things in unexpected language, the neck riddle uses simple language to speak of the most shocking fusions of incompatibles: parent and child, life and death. Its challenging of culturally decreed separations reinforces the action of the frame narrative, in which a structurally weak challenger gains power over the powerful by the use of wit.

Recent scholarship has addressed the generic status of the neck riddle. John Dorst proposes that the neck riddle is not a stable genre but “an arena of intergeneric conflict” in which narrative and riddle struggle to impose their respective orientations on reality. Thus, the atemporal compression of the riddle reduces the narrative solution to a static tableau, but the narrative’s unfolding in time opens up the riddle to the instabilities of experience. As Dorst notes, the same material emerges as narrative and as riddle in the West Indies. Seizing the West Indian examples, Roger D. Abrahams points out that there, as in other creole cultures, the neck riddle’s generic flexibility is more the norm than the

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exception. Perhaps the neck riddle, and not tightly framed European genres such as the “true riddle,” should be our model and point of departure in examining the history of folklore forms.

Dorothy Noyes

See also Enigma, Folk.

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NIGHT HAG

A phenomenon during which an individual senses the presence of a malevolent agent, is unable to move, is consciously aware of the surroundings, experiences a sense of fear or dread, and often feels a pressing or strangling sensation. In addition to these core elements, auditory and visual hallucinations and respiratory difficulty are common. The attack terminates when the victim is finally able to move. Traditionally, the word *nightmare* is used to describe this phenomenon. *Nightmare* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *neaht* or *nicht* (night) and *mara* (incubus or succubus). *Mara* is the agent form of the verb *merran* and literally means “a crusher.” Because *nightmare* is commonly used to refer to a “bad dream,” folklorists employ more restrictive terms, such as *night hag* or the terms used by the group under study, to refer to the syndrome.

The night hag has been documented throughout history and in a variety of cultures, suggesting a universal distribution. Victims of classic hag attacks wake to find themselves paralyzed, with a malevolent form astride their chests attempting to strangle them. Many cultures have an established interpretation that categorizes the classic form in particular. Representative examples are *augumangia* and *ukomiarik* (Eskimo), spirit possession that occurs while the soul wanders during sleep; *dab tsog* (Hmong), nocturnal pressing spirit; *cauchemar* (African-American French-Catholics in Louisiana), a spirit that “rides” the victim; witch riding (Europe, Colonial America), oppression by a witch “riding” the victim to the witches’ sabbath; and *kokma* (St. Lucia), the spirit of a dead, unbaptized infant who attempts to strangle the victims while sitting on their chest. Many traditions maintain that a night-hag attack can result in the



The Hag Stole His Dreams. The night hag is a malevolent spirit in folk beliefs that paralyzes and smothers one during sleep.

victim's death if the attack is not terminated soon enough. In communities where attacks are attributed to witchcraft, a protective cutting instrument (e.g., razor, knife, shears, scythe) placed under the pillow or bed of the victim is believed to injure or kill the attacker, thus revealing the perpetrator's identity.

Individuals in groups that lack a folk taxonomy for the attack must rely on worldview, personal beliefs, and personal experience for interpretation. This results in idiosyncratic explanations. For example, many Americans familiar with the stories and images of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) and extraterrestrial beings prevalent in popular culture have interpreted hag attacks as abduction by creatures from outer space.

The Greek physician Galen (A.D. 130?–200?) diagnosed the night hag as a symptom of gastric disturbance, providing one of the earliest recorded medical references to the syndrome. This explanation persists today in the popular belief that attributes bad dreams and nightmares to “something I ate.” Physiologically, the night hag occurs when symptoms of the rapid eye movement (REM) stage of sleep, specifically the suppression of muscular activity and characteristic brain activity, intrude upon either the hypnagogic (falling asleep) or the hypnopom-

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pic (waking) phase of sleep. Recent research indicates that the night hag may play a role in the sudden unexpected nocturnal death syndrome (SUNDS) afflicting Hmong refugees in the United States.

Leah Carson Powell

See also Assault, Supernatural.

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O

OBSCEINITY

An act or expression that transgresses a culture's ordinary norms of social decorum. Obscenity may take the form of a word (e.g., *fuck*), a gesture (e.g., "flipping the bird"), an artifact (e.g., a tattoo, graffiti), a concept not normally mentioned in polite conversation (e.g., impotence), or a behavior (e.g., oral sex). Although by definition transgressive, obscenity is often shaped by tradition; in fact, most cultures include recognized means and occasions for the performance of obscene behaviors. Since identification of obscenity is based on prevailing social sentiment and judgment at any given time, precise definitions vary from group to group within a culture and may show marked alteration over time as well.

Within the folklore of Europe and America, obscene humor plays an important, if sometimes obscured, part, especially in certain genres, such as the folksong (particularly the ballad), folktale, and riddle. In these cases, obscenity often consists of scatological humor, sexual innuendo, and references to castration, impotence, sexual appetite, bestiality, and stamina or capacity. Many genres, such as riddles, possess both obscure and innocent answers, allowing the performer to suggest obscene topics while claiming innocence. For instance, a Finnish riddle asks what swells when held in the hand. The innocent answer—a ball of yarn—elicits laughter and embarrassment when compared to the implied but unspoken answer—a penis. Other genres, such as folksongs, sometimes substitute sound-alike alternatives for expected obscene words, creating a similar tongue-in-cheek humor that suggests but does not fully employ obscene material. In other cases, however, such as some folksongs, folk tales, graffiti, jokes, and toasts, the item of folklore may prove openly bawdy, describing normally taboo subjects in great detail and with great gusto. Good examples are ballads such as "Our Goodman" (Child 274), which details the singer's discovery of his wife's infidelity, and folktales such as AT 850—variants of which contain a suitor test involving the identification of the color of the princess' pubic hair. Obscene toasts and verbal dueling have also been studied, particularly within African-American folklore.

Traditional performers generally made a strong distinction between single-sex and mixed-company contexts, avoiding at least some sorts of obscene folklore when in the presence of children, clergy, disapproving collectors, or the opposite sex. By contrast, some folklore items that might be considered obscene by contemporary standards in the United States today were openly performed in mixed company in the past. Examples are *Märchen* and legends containing descriptions of the dismembering or torture of women. Customs such as *bundling*—a courtship pastime in which a couple slept together in the same bed,

although clothed—were considered innocent in many agrarian communities in the past but are regarded as illicit in similar communities today.

In many cultures the world over, obscenity—particularly lewd behavior—correlates with sacredness. Deities are represented as lascivious, and calendar customs marking the agricultural or ritual year may include days of obscene license (e.g., *carnival*). Such moments may include lewd dancing, cross-gender behaviors, nudity, and sexually explicit masks or costumes. Initiations to college fraternities often contain similar occasions. Obscene folklore was an important part of Irish wakes as well. In all of these cases, obscenity plays a part in the ritual inversion of everyday life; after the completion of the ritual or outside of the celestial pantheon, such behaviors may again be strongly censured by the community at large.

Folklorists often have faced difficult decisions when collecting and presenting obscene lore. In the past, many collectors rejected such items at the time of performance or conveyed to the performers beforehand an unwillingness to record such materials. Other collectors recorded obscene items but decided against publishing them, presumably out of deference to the sensibilities of the reading audience or the reputation of the editor or performers. Still others devised methods of obscuring or diluting the force of the items, bowdlerizing explicit passages, translating key words into Latin, or replacing letters of obscene words with dashes (e.g., *c--t* for *cunt*). Early collectors, such as the British Sabine Baring-Gould, even occasionally supplied entirely new texts for folksongs they collected. Folklorists involved in the systematization of folklore often avoided classification of obscene materials altogether; Stith Thompson includes a section for obscene erotic materials in his *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (X700–799, “Humor Concerning Sex”) but refrains from further detailing of elements that might belong under the rubric.

During the nineteenth century, folklorists occasionally circulated obscene materials in “gentlemen’s editions,” with limited subscriptions, plain covers, and little or no advertisement. Robert Burns’ *Merry Wives of Caledonia*—a collection of bawdy folksongs from Scotland—is a particularly noteworthy private edition that appeared posthumously. The great Russian folktale collector Alexander Afanas`ev grouped his informants’ bawdy tales together into a single final volume of his extensive anthology, labeling the material “secret tales” and marketing the volume to a limited circle of scholars. Limited-circulation scholarly series, such as the French and Italian *Kryptadia*, sought to present examples of the entire world’s erotic folklore for the benefit of interested scholars. The American journal *Maledicta* seeks to accomplish a similar goal in a more open manner and for a broader audience today and includes treatments of erotica, verbal obscenities, insult, and off-color humor.

Although folklorists today may smile at the seeming prudishness or reserve of previous collectors, many of the same questions remain difficult for fieldworkers in contemporary contexts. Considerable public debate and legal

dispute, for instance, has centered on the appropriateness of publishing or marketing obscene lines in contemporary rap music. Various forms of pornography remain illegal to publish or sell, limiting the editorial decisions of even the most liberal-minded collector. Questions of interracial or interdenominational slurs often pose problems to editors concerned with presenting lore that conveys a positive image of the informants and their community. Is it right or fair to the informant to publish remarks that may have seemed appropriate in the locker room or around the campfire but that may brand the informant as racist, sexist, or coarse when appearing in print? Are there genres of behavior that have become traditional—for example, sadism or the making of obscene phone calls—that do not merit inclusion in general anthologies of folklore? Should one anthologize a case of “mooning” (showing the buttocks) by fax or a case of “flaming” (writing a litany of coarse insults) by E-mail? Some newer technologically mediated obscenities pose problems for editors today equivalent to those facing nineteenth-century collectors of folktale and ballad. The transgressive nature of obscenity itself makes such questioning inevitable; when an item ceases to arouse a reader’s surprise (if not consternation), its significance as true obscenity has probably come to an end. Folklorists, as members of cultures, participate in the same processes of definition and decision as their informants and readers, even if they would sometimes prefer to stand outside or above such debates. Thus, the decision to publish obscene materials may change their reception within the source community, altering, for better or worse, the culture under examination.

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See also Carnival; Erotic Folklore; Scatology; Verbal Duel.

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OCCUPATIONAL FOLKLIFE/FOLKLORE

Expressive aspects of the workplace with special emphasis upon informally learned narrative, skill, and ritual passed from one generation of workers to the next. In Europe, the study of occupational folklife is concerned with both work culture and labor ideology, but parallel work in the United States has concentrated more on cultural expressions (stories, songs, skills, and customs) in the workplace with less emphasis upon the social and political contexts within which these expressions are formed and used.

The Industrial Revolution drew into sharp contrast industrial urbanism and the agrarian divisions of labor and social order that had characterized Europe and the English-speaking world since the early medieval period. In the nineteenth century throughout western Europe and the British Isles, this contrast suggested to many intellectuals the importance of documenting and preserving these earlier ways of life or modes of economic production and their unique social and spiritual responses before the “dark Satanic mills” wiped them from the face of the earth. It was out of this impulse that Victorian intellectuals and aristocrats on the continent and in England began to conceive of “folklore” as a body of traditional materials that could be collected, documented, and preserved. Ironically, the very industrial trades and occupations that were emerging from this historical epoch (and that, to a great extent, defined the market and industrial era) were themselves unexamined since, in effect, they were seen as antithetical to the very customs, beliefs, songs, and narratives that interested these early scholars. Looking primarily at the theoretical development of American folklore but with an occasional glimpse at research efforts in Europe and Britain, a more comprehensive view of the development of occupational folklife—verbal and material aspects of work—can be drawn.

In both Europe and the United States, early students of occupational and industrial folklore were drawn toward resource-based trades that established regional and national identities linked to the need for raw materials. Mining, fishing, building construction, farming, ranching, and timber harvesting became the foci of the first occupational researchers. In Europe, particularly Scandinavia and Germany, this early research focused on preindustrial technologies and occupational structures linked to traditional village economies. The emphasis in much of this research was on craft and traditional forms of technology that were viewed in an evolutionary context, from the earliest periods of settlement to

more contemporary, nineteenth-century occupational complexes. This focus on craft as a part of community and family life created a holism in European folklife studies that continues today. Occupational folklife—the entire range of verbal and nonverbal traditional expression—continues to shape this approach. Early occupational folklorists in Denmark, Sweden, England, and the Soviet Union drew direct connections between craft and guild solidarity and the “aristocracy of labor.” More elaborate forms of political resistance and class formation during the industrialization period created a linkage of worker and labor consciousness that continues to shape much research in this field throughout the world.

In the United States, this historical response to emergent forces of work in a new physical environment resulted in a more nationalistic and romantic view of work culture. John Lomax and N. Jack Thorp, collected and reinterpreted the songs, stories, and verbal arts of the American buckaroo (cowboy) as an embodiment of a frontier, democratic ideal. These early American folklorists paid little attention to the economic or structural responses of buckaroo employment, with its nomadic uncertainty and state capitalist support of the railroads. Ironically, the occupational folklore of this group continues to contain much material expressing workers’ opposition to these various forms of exploitation. Lomax and Thorp focused instead on popular concepts of the trade, paying particular attention to the way in which the western landscape and the expansive hardships of frontier life in America created new and unique forms of traditional expression or provided opportunities for the adaptation of Anglo or European traditional forms to the American context. The ballad, tall tale, and etiological legend forms of Europe were transformed to depict the heroic exploits of cowboy lore. Lomax, Thorp, and later Frank Dobie relegated the craft, techniques, and structural concerns of this trade to virtual invisibility in order to foreground a popular mythology of primitive romanticism that more closely reflected their externally derived concepts of class and culture. In contrast to European folklore collections of this period, however, there was some diversity and internal ethnic confrontation within these early collections. Whereas the European scholars focused more on work craft and traditional technology in homogeneous communities as an embodiment of national or regional character, the Americans devoted some of their energies to collecting verbal forms that depicted women, African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Native Americans in a more diverse, but often ethnocentric manner. In general, occupational folklorists in Europe evinced a more sophisticated view of the ideological aspects of work culture; the development of occupational folklore in the United States was less politically sophisticated and more closely linked to a more culturally diverse yet stereotypical concept of workers.

During the post–World War I period, regional folklorists in continental Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States greatly expanded their respective collections of occupational folklife. In Europe, these documentary efforts often were conducted as part of nationally supported programs designed to preserve disappearing material and architectural heritage. In England and

throughout the British Isles, researchers set about developing more systematic strategies of collecting and archiving a wide array of cultural materials, and the technical concerns of work were simply viewed as a segment of these wider collecting efforts. In the United States, regional folklore societies collected primarily verbal material, with linguistic and etymological interests leading some researchers into urban and industrial trades. The jargon, or *argot*, of the prostitute, grifter, and pickpocket that appeared in linguistic and sociological journals soon led regional collections into the listing of other work languages, from that of firemen and policemen to that of painters and actors.

In the 1930s, the depression and the ensuing economic collapse throughout the West resulted in a refocusing of occupational folklife. The industrial worker had, up to this point, been considered either a contemporary embodiment of a craftsmanship continuum as in Europe or the urban carrier of surviving verbal traditions in the United States, but massive urban migration and the collapse of previous conceptualizations of work culture forced a reformulation of these perspectives. In Europe, this transition resulted in an immersion of occupational folklife studies within ideological and political frames of reference, affecting larger concepts of class formation and labor history. In the United States, this transition laid the groundwork for more comprehensive documentation of occupational culture through which work culture was represented multivocally by individual workers, songwriters, fiction and nonfiction writers, and filmmakers. American folklorists paralleled European and British folklorists in their interest in agency and class formation, but they lacked acceptance within the labor movement itself as allies in trade union ideology. This distrust on the part of organized labor in the United States has continued to fractionalize occupational folklife studies within and outside the academy. In Europe and Britain, the inclusion of occupational folklife as a part of wider structural and ideological frames of reference within the labor movement and the academy has resulted in the establishment of archives, museums, and labor studies centers that subsume occupational folklife studies under various local, regional, and national jurisdictions. In his international review of occupational folklore studies, Flemming Hemmersam noted that early occupational folklorists in the Soviet Union used early collections of workers' folklore as means of "folklorism," the use of folk material for political purposes. In Germany, according to Hemmersam, Robert Michels and Will-Erick Peuckert paralleled the politically motivated work in the Soviet Union, but the historical and comparative methods of German linguistic and etymological research drew these earlier studies into more academic and less politically oriented collections. The contemporary research of Lutz Rohrich and Herman Bausinger reflects these influences. British and Italian interests in workers' songs, stories, and popular media led occupational folklorists into more careful examinations of the relationship between mass media and local work cultures, and Scandinavian scholars, drawing on regional and nationalist frameworks for the identification and collection of agricultural and resource occupations, developed a systematic method for

documenting both the material and the verbal aspects of work culture that continues to inform occupational folklore researches in those countries.

Turning to developments in the United States, one of the earliest American folklorists interested in industrial folklore, George Korson, was drawn to collecting miner's lore and personal experiences through his journalistic focus on regional lore in Pennsylvania. As Archie Green stated in his two overviews of occupational folklore, unlike many of his colleagues before and since, Korson was able to work with the United Mine Workers, publishing collected songs and stories in its journal and relying on contacts and union support to make contact with individual miners. In his many books and articles, Korson walked a fine line between describing actual work experiences (dangers of the work, songs, and customs of above- and underground experience, customs, and work traditions) and making various political characterizations of the mine workers' resistance to capitalist exploitation. Korson recorded protest songs, strike ballads, and laments for workers killed in disasters and labor struggles, yet he never overtly aligned himself or his work ideologically with the causes expressed in these materials. In bringing miners and their occupational folklore to the attention of a national audience, Korson led the way toward state-supported programs designed to document occupational folklore as a means of articulating emergent and resilient forms of national character. At the same time, his populist and progressive political motivations remained largely implicit in his writings and public presentations.

In the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration provided an opportunity for writers and intellectuals in the United States to develop an array of public projects aimed at restoring a sense of national pride in the everyday experiences of American citizens. As a part of this movement, folklorist Ben Botkin and writers Nelson Algren and Jack Conroy began to collect and present aspects of worker stories and perspectives that they termed "occupational folklore." These collections paralleled the approach of Korson in their attention to the words and stories of industrialized, urban workers, but they did not have the sophistication and holistic sweep of Korson's work. Wayland D. Hand, a folklorist from Utah, extended his interest in the folklore of hardrock miners into an international, comparativist study of occupational folklore—primarily verbal arts and legends—that linked American research to European antecedents and parallels. Unfortunately, this comparativist approach remains one of the few international studies of occupational folklore written by an American scholar, and Hand's call for more cross-cultural research in this area largely has gone unanswered.

In the 1960s, a former shipwright in the United States and a historian in England reformulated the field of occupational folklore. With a background in both an industrial trade and organized labor, Archie Green's research into labor and occupational folklore reflected a division between the political and ideological culture of the labor movement itself. What is most important in Green's work, particularly his early descriptions of labor and occupational folklore and his investigation of the relationship between popular and local working-class

culture in the production of popular/folk music, is his ability to bring together academic interests in occupational traditional culture with an appreciation within the labor movement for cultural expression and ideology through folklore. Green's innovations in occupational research led to the first collaboration between the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) and occupational folklorists at the Smithsonian Institution's 1976 Festival of American Folklife; in addition, he also drafted and lobbied for the passage of the American Folklife Act that established a permanent American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. This foray into public support of occupational folklife parallels museum and archival networks already well established in Europe and Great Britain.

In England, E. P. Thompson's view of class formation within British society shifted historical and cultural studies away from the somewhat mechanical forms of Marxist interpretation, which had characterized earlier exploitations of work culture for socialist ends, and toward a more processural, humanist social history of work culture. Raphael Samuel, Thompson, and a whole generation of working-class intellectuals sought to identify and describe the contexts within which cultural resistance to capitalism on a local, regional, and international scale took place. Folklorists within this emergent social and critical reshaping of the intellectual relationship between academics and the world of work emerged from the workplace itself, with miners, industrial laborers, and building trades workers becoming the collectors and interpreters of working-class culture within these various trades.

In the United States, Archie Green's ability to bridge the academic-labor-public contexts, within which occupational folklore and the more inclusive folklife have developed, has brought us to the current generation of occupational folklorists in Europe and the United States. Hemmersam, in his summary of European and American research in workers' folklore, stated that there are basically four divergent approaches to the field. Interestingly, he divided these approaches into their respective ideological strategies, that is, with regard to the "system of attitudes, concepts and ideas behind the researcher's concern with workers' culture." The four ideological approaches are (1) the classic folkloristic and ethnological approach, (2) bourgeois research of workers' culture, (3) a socialist/communist-oriented school, and (4) empirical research on workers' culture.

Viewed from this perspective, the classic folkloristic approach maintains the antiquarian's ideological commitment to a peasant model of work. Here, the researcher adopts a historical, regional, and often nationalistic theoretical position, through which surviving work traditions of the past are maintained and/or represented through material culture into the present. Flemming Hemmersam cited the work of Europeans Vesa Kurkela and Matz Rehnberg. In the United States, the work of Bruce Nickerson and Michael Owen Jones fell into this category.

This is contrasted with a more contextualized, ethnographic approach to

work culture that maintains some of the elements of folkloristic research in its emphasis upon specific expressive forms within broader social and political contexts. In Europe, this approach is exemplified in the work of Birgitta S. Frykman in England and Hemmersam in Sweden. In the United States, it is evident in the work of Robert McCarl, Jack Santino, and Paula Johnson.

Bourgeois research of workers' culture maintains the position that mass media, public schooling, and the uniform experiences of urban life have penetrated working-class culture to the point that there are virtually no unique or oppositional forms remaining. Hemmersam cited the work of German scholar Herman Bausinger as a proponent of this approach, and in the United States, the works of Richard Dorson, Hennig Cohen, and Tristram Coffin fall into this category.

Socialist/communist approaches to workers' culture see a culture that has been created exclusively in opposition to capitalism and capitalist modes of production. In Europe, this approach has a rich and deep history, and Hemmersam cited Anders Björklun and Gösta Arvastson as the two main proponents of this approach. In the United States, the approach has not been as actively expressed, although certainly more Marxist views of work culture, from the work of Harry Braverman and Archie Green to the folkloristic writings of José Limón and Manuel Peña, have been informed by a more oppositional view of cultural formation in working-class communities.

Finally, the empirical approach has produced large collections of the cultural materials of work with little attention to social or ideological context. Hemmersam noted the work of Simo Laaksovirta and Ulla-Maija Peltonen as providing a useful description of how this approach is employed in Europe. In the United States, this type of research has been conducted primarily by Wayland Hand and Horace Beck.

It is difficult to summarize all of the approaches to occupational folklore to date, but beyond discussing Hemmersam's useful divisions, it might be helpful to suggest how these various forms of research are related. In this era, Marxism has virtually disappeared as a viable political structure, yet the theoretical tools of Marxist analysis provide a useful perspective from which to critically evaluate the development of occupational folklore in the West, and Renato Rosaldo has provided a theoretical framework that might pull these disparate elements together. In brief, Marx stated that the mode of production—the technology and practices of producing food and energy—to a great extent determine or influence all other forms of social life. Human reproduction, social organization, economic life, and belief or “superstructural” aspects of a culture are based on these structural constraints. The following characterization simplifies this culturally materialist approach to an examination of structure—the received circumstances of a particular historical response to economic and physical conditions that result in forms of social, political, and demographic response within a particular work organization. Beyond simply a labor market, the inherited structure of a particular type of work generates a mode of production that

elicits a specific, concrete historical response. This response is made up of two elements, the relational and the practical. A worker responds to and becomes a part of the forces of production (the tools, techniques, hierarchies, and economic constraints of a particular type of work); at the same time, he or she creatively and informally participates in an informal world of human relations that, to a great extent, responds to and resists the very forces of production in which the work is conducted. A welder in the Portland shipyards in World War II, for example, acquiesced to the speedup and shortcuts of a wartime economy and its concomitant demands on production, while at the same time, the subculture of welders within the shipyard work culture determined the limits and boundaries of their complicity in this process. Work culture and its resulting occupational folklore is shaped by the forces of production, but it is born and given life by the informal relations of production that put a human face to work experiences and provide the technical means of opposition.

In addition to structure, it also is important to investigate *agency*—the informally held value system that is born at the point where the primary work group defines its independence from and opposition to all other hierarchies and groups within the workplace. Agency is the collective expression of specific individual choices that are made by workers as they form a class response to the constraints imposed by supervisors, union representatives, other workers, and even family and community members. Agency is defined by the primary work group, that face-to-face ensemble of individuals who respond to the occupational constraints of structure, and it defines the informal boundaries of cultural experience within that structure. A firefighter, for example, must respond to the physical realities of a high-rise building fire using the technical (structural) techniques of his or her trade. At the same time, however, he or she does so using knowledge and ideologies (*agency*) engendered by fellow workers, who inform and evaluate the performance.

Finally, there are border zones and boundaries that are constantly shifting in the world of work and are irreducible to a particular category or characterization as aspects of work structure or agency. Underemployed workers, the arrival of various ethnic, generational, or sexual preference groups, radical shifts in labor markets that export entire industries and relegate an entire generation of skilled tradespeople to obsolescence, as well as the depictions of workers in the media and in the representations created by folklorists—these are transition points or boundaries within the global economy that create the dynamic fluidity of work in the contemporary world. Increasingly, the worker today has no security but exists in a liminal context of tension between his or her historical preparation for a particular work structure, a set of personal values and ethos born of informally generated responses (*agency*) that reflect the primary work group's ability to accept or reject, assimilate, or alter the internal and external assaults on its collective will. New workers, loss of a labor market, or de-skilling force all workers into a daily reappraisal of how the unavoidable evolution of structure will affect our ability to survive. For their part, women, people of color,

and a new generation of workers with new values experience internal boundaries caused by a denial of communication across the ever-increasing number of challenges to the status quo. Hemmersam noted the general shift in studies of occupational folklore worldwide from studies of lore to studies of the workers themselves, from externally conceived attempts to document occupational folklore for any of the various theoretical or ideological reasons mentioned earlier to a more internally generated concern for and articulation of the workers' own point of view. Stating this within the framework previously outlined, the concentration upon structural concerns in the study of work culture (survival of skills and materials from previous modes of production or a concentration on the historical evolution of a particular work process, for example) has given way to greater attention to various forms of agency (resistance to particular labor markets, the formation of oppositional forms directed at a further de-skilling or rationalization of work). This movement has created, in turn, an international context within which newer, oppositional forms from cultures outside of the workplace are creating new boundaries. Taken together, the structure, agency, and boundaries within any occupation create a cultural framework that is central to our understanding of contemporary life but irreducible to an individual representation of that life.

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See also Organizational Folklore.

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OIKOTYPE/OICOTYPE

The local form of a text-type (known as either oikotype or oicotype). C. W. von Sydow, who introduced the concept into folklore studies, borrowed it from biology, where *ecotype* means a variety of a species that possess inherited characteristics that enable them to thrive in a particular habitat. Usually applied to longer folklore forms such as folktales and ballads, oikotypification occurs when regular changes occur in a text-type's content, style, or structure as it adapts to the preferred patterns of a particular locality or culture group. Von Sydow's concern was the manner in which folktale performers who moved across regional and national boundaries told their stories in ways that conformed with the storytelling norms of their new cultural milieus. If a story caught the imagination of storytellers native to the new environment, it gradually would change from its original form while assuming characteristics suitable for its adopted locale.

An oikotype may be thought of as a special kind of subtype, one that is tied

explicitly to a particular cultural setting. The process of oikotypification resembles localization, but the latter phenomenon usually refers to relatively superficial adaptations of a text-type to a locality, such as changes in place- or personal names. Oikotypification suggests changes that affect the text-type's narrative core. For example, the repetition by threes that characterizes most traditional narratives from Indo-European traditions may become repetition by fours when a tale is taken up by narrators from Native American cultures such as the Navajo, whose pattern number is four. Von Sydow's borrowing from biology was refined in the work of Roger Abrahams. Working with the narrative folklore of urban African-Americans, Abrahams sought an approach to identifying what was culturally characteristic of the material these people performed. Many of their jokes, for example, were versions of international tale types, but Abrahams believed that an examination of their folklore would reveal particular ways of narrating that the African-American performers found especially attractive. These tropisms might involve the content that had been von Sydow's principal interest but could also include structural properties, diction, framing devices, imagery, and symbols. Once the oikotypal pattern for a particular locality or group had been isolated, Abrahams noted, examination of a single piece of lore might reveal whether it came from that group.

Versions of the British ballads anthologized by Francis James Child that have been encountered among American traditional singers often reflect the process of oikotypification. For example, the texts may be shorter than their British counterparts, often pared down to what has been called the "emotional core." Moreover, supernatural elements may become rationalized, and topics of high seriousness may be treated with earthy matter-of-factness. Moral preachments may be added to those ballad narratives that lend themselves to such homiletics.

Although von Sydow's approach to folklore studies was exclusively textual, the concept of oikotype may have applications for performance-oriented folklorists. The geographically distinct styles of singing identified by Alan Lomax's cantometrics project, for instance, may amount to an identification of oikotypes of approaches to song performance.

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See also Localization.

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O MEN/PORTENT

Folk beliefs that are signs of future events. Some of these can be controlled and some cannot. Weather signs, such as a halo around the moon predicting rain, are indicators of weather changes that cannot be controlled by humans; by contrast, spilling salt is an omen of bad luck that can be altered by the conversion ritual of throwing the salt over one's shoulder.

Omens and portents have been widely employed as devices in literature, from Shakespeare's soothsayer warning "Beware the ides of March" in *Julius Caesar* to Mark Twain's Huck Finn accidentally flipping a spider into a flame in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Huck used a conversion ritual, turning around three times and crossing his breast each time, to ward off the bad luck, but he still feared the evil consequences. Shakespeare and Twain had the ethnographer's sense of how omens influence human behavior and the artist's sense of how they work for dramatic purposes.

Some omens come about of their own accord, and others are believed to appear at the behest of a witch, medicine man, or prophet attempting to divine the future. Divination can be as formal as a shaman reading the entrails of a dead animal for omens of the future or as informal as a young lover plucking the petals of a daisy, "She loves me, she loves me not." Popular manifestations of



A detail from the Bayeux Tapestry depicting Halley's Comet. Comets have been regarded as important omens by most cultures throughout human history.

consulting omens include palm reading, tea-leaf reading, and astrological reading of the stars.

Everyday folk beliefs are full of omens that, depending on degree of belief, can affect people's behavior. Dropping a dishcloth is a sign that a visitor is coming; an itchy palm means that you will receive money; an aching joint can mean that a storm is coming. Other omens predict death or disaster: a bat flying into a room, a meteor falling, a certain bird or animal calling after dark. Omens range in consequence from the everyday to the cosmological and are found across the spectrum of expressive culture, from shamans to Shakespeare.

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See also Belief, Folk; Divination.

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OONOMASTICS

From the Greek word *onoma*, meaning “a name,” the term *onomastics* (or *onomatology*, as it is sometimes called) means the study of names. Onomastics has two chief subdivisions, *toponymy* (the study of place-names) and *anthroponymy* (the study of personal names). Each of these categories can be further subdivided, and the relationship of these divisions to folklore may vary considerably.

Historically, the scholarly study of names was begun by European linguists toward the end of the nineteenth century, and it acquired a solid scientific basis in the early years of the twentieth century. The first meeting of the International Congress of Onomastic Sciences was held in Paris in 1938, but it was not until 1987 that the eminent folklorist and onomastician W.F.H. Nicolaisen proposed, at the sixteenth congress, held at Laval University in Quebec, that onomastics be treated as a distinct discipline with its own philosophy and its own theories, rather than as a subspecialty of linguists, philosophers, folklorists, sociologists, psychologists, geographers, historians, and students of literature and aesthetics. Nicolaisen outlined a framework in which like-minded scholars could pursue this goal.

The study of place-names certainly became an important adjunct to nineteenth-century language studies. At the end of the eighteenth century, it was discovered that Sanskrit, the sacred language of ancient India, was, in fact, related to Greek and Latin. This discovery initiated a period of intense research into European languages, resulting in the development of a comparative approach to language—it was soon realized that modern European languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian, for example, could all be traced back to earlier forms of Latin. By the end of the nineteenth century, a very refined methodology existed that enabled scholars to pinpoint sound changes as they occurred in time and the concomitant changes to the shape and meaning of words. Theories could be tested because there was a substantial body of data attesting to the nature of Latin during the centuries of Roman domination of Europe and the Mediterranean world. Modern French and Spanish words, for example, could be traced back by applying the laws that seemed to have governed their evolution, with known Latin forms acting as a control.

As comparative methodology was refined, a second important discovery was made—that not only were many modern European languages sister languages descended from Latin but also that other, seemingly unrelated language families were also related to Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. Thus, the many Germanic languages, including modern English, Dutch, German, and Scandinavian languages, were seen to be connected, with the Romance tongues, to Celtic languages such as Welsh, Irish, Cornish, and Breton and the great family of Slavic languages, including Russian, Polish, Serbo-Croat, and Bulgarian, for example. All these languages and others not mentioned here were, in turn, related to Iranian and languages of India—hence the term *Indo-European* used to indicate the geographical spread of these distant but related languages. Awareness of this Indo-European family of languages was to influence the study of the folktale in the latter half of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth.

The reason linguists turned more and more to the study of toponymy is not hard to find. It soon became apparent that contemporary place-names often incorporated elements whose meaning was now opaque, the careful study of which, however, suggested the influence of languages now dead or no longer spoken in a given geographical region.

Building a hypothetical picture of primitive or proto-Indo-European languages by careful comparison of root words common to all, scholars began hypothesizing about the spread of these languages, finding in place-names the earliest evidence of language movement. Indeed, the existence of non-Indo-European roots in certain place-names was the first clue about even earlier human settlement in some countries. As a result, the use of comparative linguistic methodology was seen as central to the study of place-names, the more so because careful analysis revealed considerable layering of languages. Thus, in France, for example, it was possible to isolate place-name roots predating the arrival of Celtic-speaking peoples, who, in turn, adapted earlier forms to their

language, only to have their own forms adapted and modified by subsequent external influences—of Latin with the colonizing Romans and later by Germanic speakers. Much of Europe shows this kind of depth and richness with its toponyms, be they towns and cities, rivers, lakes, mountains, or hills. This explains why so much onomastic research in Europe has been focused on unraveling the etymologies or history and meaning of place-names and so dominated by linguists. That historians have been so intimately connected with European place-name study is also logical since they were the scholars whose study of ancient documents produced the earliest known or attested forms of place-names.

This same preoccupation with the history of place-names led to a growing interest in personal names. All personal names seem to have meant something when they were first applied, but few contemporary names drawn from European languages have transparent meanings. Nowadays, people give names to their children that may come from any European language, regardless of the language spoken by the namer. Yet people often want to know what their names mean. Using the same principles applied to tracing the history of place-names, scholars are usually able to suggest the original meaning of personal names; the diversity of popular books available to facilitate the choice of names for new babies suggests that many people attach great importance to the names they choose, believing perhaps that names have power and that the name's original meaning somehow imprints itself on its bearer.

Underlying this desire to know the origin and meaning of names, be they place-names or personal names, is the fundamental need felt by humans to identify the physical world around them and to identify other humans. The naming and identifying of individuals creates a sense of social order and establishes sets of relationships; the naming of places helps make the unknown and potentially threatening known and familiar. Naming thus allows humans to domesticate the world about them, to acquire a sense of control, however illusory in reality that control might be. The fact remains that all human societies name themselves and name features of the world around them, as they perceive the world to be. As such, naming is therefore a very ancient and a very traditional preoccupation. And since tradition remains a central concern of the folklorist, the folklorist is interested in names and the process of naming. However, since tradition is not immutable but instead subject to the forces of change, the folklorist is also interested in the patterns that develop and emerge in space and time, though focusing more on the informal process than, for example, on the institutionalized processes established by governmental bureaus and boards of names and naming that are in charge of official naming (though even formally constituted naming institutions are subject to the vagaries of fashion).

It is not easy to establish how very ancient place-names were first given or, indeed, how very ancient personal names were first attributed, though one may find ample clues in the naming processes still functioning among many non-European peoples (the 1990 movie *Dances with Wolves* owes its title to just such

a process). European place-names and personal names were very much in their present form, however, when, at the end of the fifteenth century, Europeans first came to the New World, as they quickly named the Americas.

European exploration and subsequent settlement drew on contemporary European patterns of naming in the wake of post-Renaissance voyages around the world. Wherever Europeans passed and wherever they settled, the place-names they created tended to follow recognizable trends. Prominent features, at first observed from the sea, were named to reflect their appearance, the date on which they were encountered (and were often named after that day's saint in the Catholic calendar), after royal patrons, or after some fortuitous circumstance. Settlements were named in a similar fashion or, with increasing frequency, to recall the home town or city of prominent early settlers. As settlements grew in number, whole regions were named in memory of the home country, and subdivisions likewise often reflected European administrative units such as counties.

Relationships with native peoples were both good and bad, though in many parts, more bad than good—as is attested by native names existing only in corrupt forms, the originals of which can only be established by comparison with native languages that were not wiped out by war or disease.

Indeed, the number of Native American toponyms is sparse throughout most areas of North America, remaining only in the names of some states, rivers, and occasional settlements. They are most numerous in areas that remained unsettled until comparatively recent times, although recent official policy in Canada, for example, has seen a trend toward the reestablishment of native names or the substitution with native names of European forms; this is especially true in the Arctic regions.

The most striking feature of North American place-names is the linguistic diversity of toponyms of European origin. Early European explorers included the French, the British, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the Basques, all of whom have left a greater or lesser imprint on contemporary maps. Changing patterns of domination, however, have muddied the toponymic waters. Newfoundland, one of the earliest regions of the continent to be influenced by Europeans, has place-names of French, British, Spanish, Portuguese, and Basque origins, though not infrequently, the oldest forms have undergone considerable transformation. Place-names of apparent French origin are, in fact, Basque names that were given French forms; seemingly English names are anglicized versions of earlier French or Portuguese names. Names of native origin are often the most recent, given by nineteenth-century explorers of the Newfoundland interior accompanied by Micmac guides.

This pattern is reflected across the continent. French explorers were often the first Europeans to set foot in many parts of North America, and there are few states and no Canadian provinces where the French did not leave their mark. The Spanish influence in Florida and the Southwest has been well documented. To these earlier settlements' names were later added names given by

eighteenth- and especially nineteenth-century immigrants. In the same period, new patterns in the naming of settlements began to appear, one notable example being the application of names drawn from classical antiquity, reflecting the then new interest in the classical age. Similarly, religiously inspired settlement names stud the maps with biblical terms, and other names reflect the revolutionary period in Europe and North America. Some mapping of settlement patterns based on linguistic toponyms is very instructive not only about ethnic movement but also about regional and dialectal European influences and philosophical views popular at a given period.

Because of the relatively recent settlement in the New World that has given rise to place-names whose earliest forms are readily identifiable if one has sufficient knowledge of post-Columbian history, place-name studies have, with the exception perhaps of names of Native American origin, been a good deal less etymologically oriented in North America than in Europe. Interest has tended to focus more on social and historical factors in the patterns of naming, rather than on the original meaning of names. To this end, though it is still necessary to make the best use of all available documents in order to identify the earliest and subsequent forms of names, contemporary onomastic studies recognize that names are far more than the meaning of the words that become names and that central to the study of names today should be the namer, the name, the naming process, and name usage. Such an approach requires familiarity with a wide variety of humanistic disciplines, not simply with the history of languages or of colonization.

It was noted earlier that folkloristic interest in naming is fundamental but that not all subdivisions of onomastics are necessarily of equal interest to the folklorist. What follows is an outline of most of the main and some of the minor areas of naming that may concern the folklorist, beginning with the broad subfield of toponymy.

Among the oldest features named by humans must stand elevations, be they mountains, hills, ridges, or crests, since elevations have always been convenient reference points. The technical term for the study of elevations is *oronymy*; it includes not only the names of heights but also the terms used to name kinds of geographical elevations. These reflect settlement patterns, insofar as early settlers would have used their native, dialectal terms. It is possible to use a knowledge of, for example, regional English terminology as a clue to the peopling of the regions of North America. The folklorist will be particularly interested in the etymologies offered by locals to explain or justify the use of such-and-such a name, as when the name seems to refer to a historical event or when its meaning is not immediately evident and a story is created to provide an apparently satisfactory meaning.

Alongside the naming of elevations stands the naming of bodies or courses of water, or *hydronymy*. Folklorists are particularly interested in microhydronymy, the names given to small bodies of water or water courses not usually large enough to figure on maps but to which some significance is attached by

the local population. These may range in size from duck ponds and swimming holes to alleged bottomless lakes or holes, about which there frequently is a body of anecdotes of legendary nature.

An area of naming that seems to have attracted little scholarly attention until recently is what one might term *hydronymy*, or naming used to designate the contiguity of land and water features. This is of particular significance to people whose work places them on water, be it sea, lake, or river, for whom a waterborne perspective is important. Thus, sandbanks in rivers, reefs, or shallows in lake or sea, inlets, bays, landings, and landmarks will all be given names. But the most important aspect of land-sea features is perhaps those features that are not visible to either a land- or sea-based observer: undersea features that are significant to fishers, for example, the careful location of which enables them to know when a vessel is poised over a fruitful fishing ground. Today, of course, with modern technology, it is possible to pinpoint such locations with incredible accuracy, for satellites and miniature computers allow the most precise location finding in the thickest of fogs. But before the advent of such technology, fishers had to rely on traditional forms of location finding, often using a system of triangulation based on landmarks seen from the sea or lake.

So far, the focus has been on natural features of land and water; geopolitical names and naming bring toponymic concerns into the lap of the everyday. But though the folklorist may have only limited interest in the naming of countries or continents, states, provinces, and other official subdivisions established by governments, interest grows when one considers the local, regional subdivisions. Thus, patterns useful to understanding local context emerge in an examination of school districts and the naming of schools, for example, all of which will give some insight into prevailing local perspectives. It is, however, when one comes to the level of community, be it city, town, village, hamlet, or whatever term is used locally to designate types of community, that tradition is most clearly at play.

Thus, any reasonably large agglomeration will be divided into informal but no less real (to their inhabitants) neighborhoods; the boundaries of such neighborhoods are marked by streets (whether they are called avenues or boulevards, lanes or alleys, or any of the myriad such terms available); the study of *odonymy* casts much insight into historical development, fashions of naming, and, indeed, contemporary thinking in urban planning. Of no less importance are the patterns in the naming of all public buildings, from schools to hospitals, churches to malls, cinemas to sports fields.

Here, the formal overlaps with the informal. In some communities, people favor naming their homes instead of or in addition to using a sanctioned street number, and patterns reflecting prevailing fashions are nowhere more visible than in the names given to shops and stores. The importance to the individual's cognitive map of local but unofficial features is often only accessible to the careful folklorist who seeks information on the names of fields, street corners, and other unofficial sites.

Such place-name features not only draw the formal into the informal, they also draw the inanimate of the toponym to the animate of the anthroponym or personal name. Personal names are given to inanimate objects such as boats, cars, trucks, spaceships, and ocean-going vessels; the process is clearly both personal and important since people also name stuffed toys, plants, and even “pet stones.” Insofar as insight can be gained both on an ancient and traditional practice and on very personal processes, such study is clearly of interest to the folklorist.

The second major element of onomastics, anthroponymy, also deals with a wide range of naming practices. Although contemporary surnames are generally inherited and of interest chiefly for historical reasons, first names are of interest for very immediate reasons. Depending on a community’s history and its openness to innovation, different patterns of naming can be observed. In some families, for example, there is a very strict adherence to tradition, with the eldest son taking his father’s or grandfather’s name; male and female children may be named according to a strictly observed hierarchy. The folklorist will attempt to uncover such patterning, in addition to noting changes in the pattern. In the last few generations, there has been, in some segments of society, considerable innovation based on the influence of the cinema, television, and popular music (although there is nothing new about naming children after famous, powerful, or otherwise influential people).

More interesting perhaps to the folklorist is the field of nicknaming. Nicknames, often attributed at an early age by one’s peers, are not infrequently pejorative, brutally reflecting a perceived flaw of character, appearance, or behavior. All manner of anecdotes are told explaining the origin of such names. However, various systems exist in small communities to identify individuals who may share their name with one or more people in the same area; three women with the same first name and the same surname may be identified with reference to men in their families or to the places where they live; the same process is, of course, found with males sharing the same names. Identification may make use of this system in conjunction with personal nicknames. As an extension, relational designations are sometimes used, calling male elders “Uncle” or female elders “Aunt” as terms of respect; at times, hypocoristic terms, or terms of endearment, may acquire the value of a first name or nickname.

An extension of nicknaming is encompassed in the French phrase *blason populaire*, used to refer to nicknames applied not to individuals but to whole communities. Nicknames and the related anecdotes usually poke fun at the bearers of the *blason*, often going from the purely local rivalry between neighboring communities to the regional and, indeed, the national level.

Given the traditional importance of animals in people’s lives, it is hardly surprising to find patterns in the naming of domestic animals. A distinction can be drawn between farm or working animals, on the one hand, and pets, on the other. The former may still maintain traditional patterns; in recent years,

however, pet names have been as subject to the influences of education and the media as have the names of their owners. As a corollary to pet names, patterns of naming in pedigree animals also should be examined.

To conclude with humans, however, a final area of interest concerns names given to groups. These may include the ephemeral, such as pop music groups, to the more durable, such as sports teams, and the less well known, such as military units. In all cases, names are given in order to promote a specific image. Of interest to the student of contemporary society are the names found in literature and the media. Pen names, comic book characters, and names of characters in cartoons, movies, and videogames can all, in their own way, inform the scholar about change in society and about the enduring significance of names as a reflection of evolving cultural preoccupations.

Gerald Thomas

See also *Blason Populaire*.

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O

RAL-FORMULAIC THEORY

The approach to the study of oral tradition and works with roots in oral tradition that prescribes a specialized language or idiom as the basis of composition in performance. Also known as the Parry-Lord theory, after its founders, this approach puts a premium on the utility of patterned phraseology (*formulas*), typical narrative scenes (*themes*), and large-scale organization (*story-patterns*) in providing ready solutions to the performer's ongoing challenge of maintaining fluent, intelligible composition. In addition to applying the theory to living traditions, chiefly poetry, scholars have retrospectively analyzed ancient and medieval works to determine the extent of their dependence on such paradigms and, in some cases, their "oral" or "literary" character. With typical structures demonstrated in more than 130 separate language areas, the most pressing question has become how to interpret works composed in this specialized idiom.

The oral-formulaic theory began with Milman Parry's pioneering studies of the Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which reveal systematic patterning behind the recurrence of particular phrases, especially noun-epithet expressions such as "swift-footed Achilles" and "goddess bright-eyed Athena." Instead of explaining the great epics as either conglomerate editions of smaller poems (according to the analyst school) or the personal and individual achievements of a single genius (the unitarian school), Parry argued that a poetic diction as systematized as the language of the Homeric poems must be the legacy of generations of bards, who perfected the idiom over centuries. His fundamental insight was thus that the language of Homer was traditional.

The core of Parry's theoretical proposal was the formula, which was defined as "an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea." Parry eventually enlarged this definition beyond the noun-epithet phrase to include any metrically determined unit of Homeric diction. Thus, for example, recurrent expressions for speech-introduction (e.g., "As so he/she spoke") were shown to combine with recurrent names for mortals or gods to produce predictable—and in terms of oral-formulaic theory, useful—hexameter lines.

For Parry, utility in formulaic diction derived from the participation of individual phrases in larger, generative *formulaic systems*, groups of items fitting the same metrical slot that also are related by common semantic and syntactic features. Although this aspect of the poetic idiom furnished the composing poet a flexibility in line-to-line construction, the simplicity of the diction was attributed to an overall *thrift*—"the degree to which [a formulaic system] is free of phrases which, having the same metrical value and expressing the same idea, could replace one another." Formulaic language, therefore, was understood as serving the poet's needs not only in providing ready solutions but also in productively limiting compositional options.

This approach began as an analytical procedure to prove the traditional nature of ancient Greek texts. But Parry, under the influence of his mentor Antoine Meillet and of Matija Murko, a Slovenian academic familiar with south Slavic epic poetry from his own fieldwork, soon added the criterion of *orality* as a necessary implication of the traditional character of verse making. In order to confirm his hypothesis of an oral tradition from which the Homeric poems stemmed, Parry and his assistant, Albert Lord, conducted a large-scale fieldwork expedition to the former Yugoslavia from 1933 to 1935 (continued by Lord from 1950 to 1951 and later) to study firsthand the living phenomenon of south Slavic oral traditional epic. They recorded acoustically or by dictation more than half a million lines of epic from preliterate *guslari* ("bards; those who play the *gusle* [a single-stringed lute]"), now deposited in the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature at Harvard University; Lord and David Bynum have published selective contents in the series *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs* (SCHS, 1953–).

Aside from writing a few shorter papers, Parry did not carry out the comparative analyses of Homer and south Slavic epic that he had envisioned. After Parry's death in 1935, Lord assumed responsibility for that planned enterprise and, in fact, moved well beyond the original analogy to make the oral-formulaic theory a truly multidisciplinary undertaking.

The most influential of Lord's writings, in many respects the touchstone for the entire field, is *The Singer of Tales*, completed as his dissertation in 1949 and published in 1960. This book uses the *guslar* in performance as a model for Homer and also for Anglo-Saxon, Old French, and Byzantine Greek narrative poets. In addition to illustrating formulaic composition in the south Slavic songs, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, *Song of Roland*, *Beowulf*, and *Digenis Akritas*, he also described narrative units called *themes*, or "groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song." These included, for example, such typical actions as arming a hero, readying a horse, summoning guests to a wedding or battle, and so on. He also identified *story-patterns* that were coextensive with the work as a whole, the most familiar example being the Return song, essentially the story of the *Odyssey*, that also appears in Turkish, Bulgarian, Albanian, Russian, medieval English, and other traditions. At every level, the key concept is multiformity, the mutability of phraseological or narrative patterns within limits, as an aid to composition in performance.

Of Lord's later contributions, volumes 3 and 4 (1974) of *SCHS* and *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* stand out as exemplary. The first of these consisted of his translation and Bynum's edition of *The Wedding of Smailagić Meho*, a 12,311-line oral epic performed for Parry and Lord in 1935 by the preliterate singer Avdo Medjević of Bijelo Polje in Herzegovina. The latter volume is a collection of some of his most wide-ranging and important essays, treating Homer, south Slavic, Finnish, Old English, Bulgarian, and central Asiatic epic.

In the wake of the publication of *The Singer of Tales*, the Parry-Lord theory underwent vigorous translation and application to Old English, Middle English, Old French, Hispanic, American folk preaching, biblical studies, and scores of other areas; it also continued to expand in ancient Greek studies. A history of the comparative methodology is available in John Miles Foley's *Theory of Oral Composition*; an annotated bibliography appears in his *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research*, with updates in *Oral Tradition*.

With formulas, themes, and story-patterns identified in traditions worldwide, new questions began to arise about the implications of oral-formulaic theory for interpretation, especially in relation to texts with extensive prior critical histories, such as the Homeric poems. One of the central tenets of the approach as originally stated held that a certain percentage of formulas and formulaic systems constituted proof of the ultimately oral provenance of a given text, independent of any supporting testimony for that claim. The reasoning proceeded from the criterion of utility: If a poet had regular recourse to ready-made diction and narrative patterns, then he or she was composing tradition-

ally and thus orally. Quantitative measurement of this sort did not take into account the inevitable differences among languages, traditions, or genres, nor did it consider the persistence of the formulaic idiom after the introduction of writing.

Indeed, as the oral-formulaic theory has expanded to more and more traditions, many of them still living, it has become increasingly apparent that an absolute dichotomy of oral versus written does not fit the evidence. Manuscript works that presumably represent free-standing compositions by individual authors still show extensive use of the formulaic language, and different rules govern the structure and texture of formulas and themes from one language to another or even from one genre to another. Additionally, the issue of performance and all that it entails has come to the fore: Oral tradition presents many channels for communication (linguistic, paralinguistic, and nonlinguistic), only a limited number of which are reflected in what we conventionally reduce to a transcribed text.

Another area in which the theory has been modified is in response to the charge of mechanism, that is, the perception that formulas and themes imprison a verbal artist, restricting originality and diluting expressivity. Although based primarily on literary criteria, not all of them applicable to oral tradition, this objection has stimulated a reexamination of what is meant by the “essential ideas” of formulas and the “typical” content of themes. One proposed answer to the quandary consists of understanding the oral-formulaic idiom as a highly focused species of communication, one that encodes complex information in simple forms within the enabling event of performance and by institutionalized reference to the immanent tradition. By employing this special register of language, in other words, performer and audience (and later, writer and reader, if properly prepared) communicate with greatly enhanced economy. Of course, the traditional language cannot accomplish all of the quotidian tasks normally assigned to a much more generalized register, but as long as audience and reader are fluent in the traditional tongue, its dedicated function promotes a unique economy of expression and reception.

John Miles Foley

See also Bard; Theme.

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O ORGANIZATIONAL FOLKLORE

Forms and examples of folklore as instances of organizing, folklore about organizations, and folklore originating in the organizational workplace. An organization comes into being when two or more people communicate and contribute action to accomplish a common purpose. Many instances of games and play, festive events and celebrations, and picketing with slogans and singing exemplify spontaneous organization. Increasingly, folklorists document and analyze the organizational processes in religious activities, ethnic display events, and customs or rituals involving food, especially in “temporary communities.” One study of the Passover Seder considers how foodways and ritual can determine *communitas* and define who in a family exercises control, who the guests really are, and ultimately, who is and is not “family.” Another describes behavior of people on soup night, a contemporary small-group festive gathering, suggesting implications for better understanding the tension and balance between individual and shared power as well as the process by which a sense of community and group identity is generated. A third focuses on an annual family clambake, exploring how celebrations often serve as instruments for community, fellowship, and intimacy achieved, in part, through leadership, teamwork, joking behavior, and the sharing of knowledge about the tradition.

The overwhelming presence and impact of formal institutions in people’s lives—schools, utilities companies, law enforcement, government at all levels, the entertainment industry, the workplace, and purveyors of consumer goods—have produced a spate of stories, rumors, jokes, sayings, and even terms (“Ma Bell,” “Mickey Mouse” products). Many narratives revolve around the quality of service, including the difficulties posed by the absence of sales personnel in large discount stores, the slowness of the postal system, and the problems of communicating with computers (such as the bill for \$0.00 for which the customer is dunned until he or she finally sends a check in that amount). Stories describing the flood of “gobbledygook,” foul-ups in paper shuffling, obscure offices (and

people) with no present function, and glutted warehouses indict government or other institutions with inefficiency, wastefulness, or ineptitude.

Numerous legends and rumors concern big business or particular corporations. Historically, attitudes toward the businessperson in American folklore ranged from resentment or hostility toward merchants and bankers to viewing the traveling peddler with an admixture of condescension and sympathy and according respect toward the petty capitalist masterworker employer (the individual entrepreneur working alongside his or her employees). The portrait of business organizations today is ambiguous, and peoples' feelings about these institutions are ambivalent. Some accounts depict a careless organization, as in stories describing bottles of Coca-Cola or other brands of soft drink contaminated with decomposed mice, cigarette butts, or putrid peanuts. Others portray a dangerous or deceptive organization, for example, alleging that Kool-Aid is carcinogenic, that Pop Rocks explode, that Corona Beer has been urinated in by Mexican workers, that the garments made in the Third World and sold in discount stores are infested with snakes, and so on. Another image is the evil organization as presented in accounts about religious cults kidnapping prospective members and allegations that certain corporations are linked with extremist groups (Arm & Hammer, Proctor & Gamble, and Exxon with satanists; Adolph Coors Company with the American Nazi Party; and Uncle Ben's Rice and Church's Fried Chicken with the Ku Klux Klan). A fourth sketches the beneficent organization, particularly in redemption rumors claiming that a certain company will purchase expensive medical equipment (a dialysis machine, an iron lung) for a needy child if customers send discarded items such as cigarette packages, the pulltabs from aluminum cans, or the tags from tea bags.

Folklorists have documented and analyzed such stories, hypothesizing that some reflect major structural changes in society as communities move from self-sufficiency to dependency on large, impersonal organizations, which generate anxieties or fears expressed symbolically (for example, legends about "Kentucky Fried Rat" in which a patron of a fast-food franchise discovers a crispy coated rodent in the bucket of chicken because of unsanitary conditions or a prank by a disgruntled employee). Other accounts may convey concern over an invasion of foreign goods and threats to a country's economy by competitors abroad (allegations of contaminated, defective, or dangerous products from Third World countries). Some likely involve transference (the redemption rumors can assuage feelings of guilt over unhealthy habits). Whether or not accounts are based on actual experience, they are significant in their pervasiveness.

Folklore also pervades the organizational workplace. Much of photocopier lore focuses on points of strain inherent in formal organizations, occasioned by institutional controls, supervision, and structure at the expense of individual freedom and personal power. The familiar drawing of a person with an enormous screw through the midriff and the caption "Work hard and you shall be rewarded" communicates the feelings that organizational life can produce much too easily. Fake memos, usually ascribed to the personnel office, set forth

changes in policies. For example, one describes a new restroom trip policy limiting use of facilities to twice a day and warning of a 30-second buzzer that will sound before the roll of paper automatically retracts, the toilet flushes, and the stall door opens. Another informs employees of a forced early retirement plan called RAPE (Retire Aged Personnel Early). A third presents a new sick-leave policy stating that a physician's statement will no longer be accepted as proof ("if you are able to go to the doctor, you are able to come to work") and that death will not be accepted as an excuse for absence unless it is the employee's own (in which case, "we would like a two-week notice as we feel it is your duty to train someone else for your job"). Sometimes, photocopier lore evincing criticism circulates *sub rosa*; on other occasions, members of an organization openly display it (feeling, perhaps, that it refers to the larger organization but not their department or to other institutions but, thankfully, not their own).

Many people decorate their work area with mementos, posters, postcards, cartoons, photocopier lore, or other items. Placement may be as important as content in regard to function (whether something expressing criticism is hidden or in public view, where items that one looks at for diversion or reverie are located, and so on). The nature and extent of personalization reveals a great deal about the individual, management attitudes, and organizational climate.

In addition, much talk (illustrated with numerous stories) about beating the system, engaging in prohibited behavior, and so forth suggests worker dissatisfaction. The presence of celebratory events, festive occasions (such as birthday parties), joking, and food sharing signal cordial relations, cooperativeness, and ready communication. Recounting oft-told tales about a worker insulting an impudent customer, getting back at a supervisor, or violating chaffing rules and regulations expresses frustrations and serves as means of coping with stress. Stories about critical incidents in the organization's history can reveal beliefs about the institution and its environment as well as the organization's preparedness for and responsiveness to change. Traditional expressions and metaphors often encapsulate values and influence perceptions, decisions, and actions; consider, for example, cowboy management metaphors ("earning his spurs," "gunning for the opposition," "a Smith & Wesson beats four aces") that justify extreme behavior, in contrast to what is conveyed by frequent reference to "family," "teams," or "nurturing." In sum, stories, ceremonies, rituals, rites of passage, festive events, play, metaphorical language, and other examples of folklore in organizational settings may instruct, persuade, entertain, express the ambiance of the workplace, help an individual cope, protect personal integrity, stimulate a sense of community, guide decision making and action, reinforce factionalism, and help or hinder organizational effectiveness. Folklore can serve the researcher as a source of information, a diagnostic tool to uncover problems and their causes, and a means of improving organizational functioning and the conditions under which people labor.

Michael Owen Jones

See also Occupational Folklife/Folklore.



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P

P ARADE

Traditionally defined as a public procession, usually of a festive nature and accompanied by music. Historically, the parade was often a military affair, a public display of militia marching off to war or reenacting past victories.

The difference between a parade and a procession is not merely semantic, for the two types of public linear display are distinct and separate entities. A procession is typified by its formal nature, usually with the participants moving in an orderly succession. Processions are often expressions of the prevailing religious or political ideology of the community.

The modern-day parade, however, is made up of several components that distinguish it from other public ceremonies. The parade has a secular ritual component that expresses community values and sentiments. It is also a spirited and malleable form of festival. In this capacity, the parade functions as a public spectacle, providing the vehicle for positive group interaction between both participants and observers, thus promoting social cohesion and reinforcing group identity within the community. This is accomplished through certain traditional devices. These devices sometimes include myth or parody that subliminally conveys the political message of the parade's participants. Thus, the parade symbolizes the social and normative structures of the participating groups.

Since the Middle Ages, two types of parades have emerged side by side, expressing a tension between the established order and more marginal groups: the institutionalized parade and the alternative parade.

The *institutionalized parade* is often characterized by conservative and socially acceptable themes, and it relies more on the use of conventional symbols, particularly metonyms. This type of parade reaffirms civic pride and notions of order and respectability.

The *alternative parade*, by contrast, is influenced by the inverse world of carnival. This type of parade is often characterized by parody, fantasy, and sometimes licentiousness. The carnivalesque nature of the alternative parade allows the participants to hide their true identities behind fictive ones through the use of mask and costume, thus creating an atmosphere of ambiguity. The movement of the alternative parade is also less rigid than that of the institutionalized parade, for the participants may exceed the boundaries of the street to intrude on more private areas, whereas in the institutionalized parade, the boundaries of the street are strictly observed.

The parade is thus both a presentational and a representational event that empowers its participants and reinforces group identity within the community. The parade is also adaptable to the changing needs, values, and beliefs of the



A Chinese-theme float sponsored by Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream participates in the Rose Parade, held annually in Pasadena, CA. Originally, parades were most often military in nature, but they have developed as a malleable form of festival for many occasions.

group or community over time. As Igor Stravinsky implied in his symphonic suite *Parade*, the parade is truly an expression of renewal and is symbolic of life as it marches on.

Georgia Fox

See also Carnival; Festival.



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P PARADIGMATIC/SYNTAGMATIC

Distinctive dimensions of linguistic structure applicable to phonology, grammar, and other aspects of language, including folklore forms. As defined by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the syntagmatic relationship between elements in language refers to their occurrence in a linear sequence. An element's meaning depends upon its place in the sequence. The syntagmatic relationship (sometimes referred to as *diachronic*) may be represented by a series of words strung out along a horizontal axis. The paradigmatic relationship (sometimes called *synchronic*) refers to the association between all elements that could fill a particular place in a sequence—for example, words with the same grammatical function or the same or similar denotation. Words stacked up and down a vertical axis may represent paradigmatic relationships.

Syntagmatic and paradigmatic distinctions help to differentiate two approaches to the structuralist study of folklore, especially narratives. The perspective associated principally with Russian formalism—manifested in Vladimir Propp's morphological analysis of the folktale—treats structure from a syntagmatic perspective. Propp identified a sequence of 31 actions that constitute the Russian wonder tale. These actions always occur in the same order, even if some are omitted. Each action, no matter what character in the narrative performs it, takes its meaning from its sequential position. Propp's syntagmatic approach to Russian folktale structure contributed to Alan Dundes' identification of recurrent syntagmatic patterns in Native American folktales. Dundes and others have also analyzed nonnarrative genres, including proverbs and riddles, from a structuralist approach influenced by Propp.

The paradigmatic approach to folk narrative structure has found its fullest expression in the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who identified a paradigmatic pattern of mediated binary oppositions underlying the linear structures of myths from North and South America. This paradigm may accommodate a variety of elements. The Zuni creation myth, which attempts to mediate between the oppositions life and death, for example, may do so by substituting other oppositions (such as horticulture and war), which may then be mediated by a single concept, the hunt. Lévi-Strauss' work had less immediate impact on folklore studies than the syntagmatic approach, but examples of other structural analyses of folklore from a paradigmatic perspective include Edmund Leach's treatments of Old Testament narratives and a theory of genres developed by Elli Köngäs-Maranda and Pierre Maranda. The concept of paradigmatic structure also has influenced work in ethnopoetics by Dell Hymes and others, who have applied it to texts of Native American verbal art. Using an approach he called "verse analysis," Hymes, for example, discovered repeated patterns in narratives from Native American people along the northwest coast that provide the molds by which storytellers shape their specific performances.

PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION METHOD

The oral-formulaic theory of Milman Parry and Albert Lord exemplifies the combination of paradigmatic and syntagmatic approaches. On one hand, Parry and Lord argued, epic singers work from syntagmatic outlines of the epics they spontaneously compose. On the other hand, they plug into the outlines various formulas, many of them interchangeable paradigms, that fit the poems' metrical and narrative needs.

William M. Clements

See also Diachronic/Synchronic; Ethnopoetics; Folktale; Linguistic Approach; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Structuralism.

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PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION METHOD

The method typically employed in conducting field research. This method, as it has been applied by folklorists, traces its origins to anthropology, which developed the technique in an effort to conduct thorough and reliable ethnographic research in the field by requiring fieldworkers to be both participants in a target community and objective observers who translated their participant experience into a formalized summary. The method's goal is to account for the subject's point of view within a general theoretical framework.

The participant-observation method necessitates a long-term approach, for it usually takes fieldworkers an extended period of time in order to become func-

tioning members of the target community. Until the researcher achieves this status, the data obtained by using the method will reflect an abnormal routine since the target community is likely to change its routines when outsiders impose on or cross its boundaries. These anomalies will appear for a number of reasons, including the suspicion of the field researcher and strangers in general, the attempt to hide secrets from the outsider, the fear of being mocked because of so-called primitive ways, and the desire to remain insulated from the forces of change. However, once the fieldworker becomes accepted by the target community and is allowed to participate in its daily affairs, he or she is able to accumulate data from which an accurate ethnography can be written or a particular problem can be studied.

Although the researcher must become accepted by the target community for this method to be productive, complete acceptance is rare. Furthermore, it is useful for the researcher to maintain some distance from the target group so that the second dimension of the method, the observation, can be undertaken with as much integrity and objectivity as possible. A nonobjective observation results in data that cannot be verified; therefore, they are useless except as commentary on the field researcher's experience itself.

Proponents of the participant-observation method have recognized the need to reconsider some of the basic premises surrounding the approach. Primary among the assumptions that must be questioned is the idea that field researchers can be objective, for fieldworkers themselves are born into situations that imbue them with particular ways of perceiving, with particular agendas, and with particular biases. Many fieldworkers, in response to this situation, make their reflexivity, the revelation of themselves, a strength of the research by providing their audience with data that aids in interpreting their work. Additionally, these fieldworkers are acknowledging the voice of the Other as a significant factor in the participant-observation method. This voice—which is not only the voice of the subjects being studied but the fieldworker's voice as well—is made manifest in the presentation of the field research, and it acknowledges that the fieldworker's objective observation is always incomplete. This incompleteness implies that understanding and interpretation emerge from participation in the experience itself, and accurate representation will result only from the fieldworker's acknowledgment that participation is nonrepresentational in any objective sense.

Charlie McCormick

See also Fieldwork; Informant.

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PERFORMANCE

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P PERFORMANCE

In folklore, a mode of presentation in which a party or parties utilize conventional artistic techniques to stage actions for others. In theory and in method, the concept of performance builds upon the range of meanings the term has in common use. These emphasize actualization versus potentiality, demonstration versus knowledge, ritual versus belief, observable behavior in prescribed circumstances, and, in particular, artistic display in words, music, dance, and drama. In its initial use in folklore scholarship, the term *performance* evoked the gap that exists between presentation and its documentation. William J. Entwistle, for example, associates mime, music, and dance with performed ballads. For him, they project authenticity and antiquity that are inevitably lost in the printed text or the affectation of drawing-room singing. Performance connotes the vigor of delivery that is knowable through experience only. Methodologically, Kenneth S. Goldstein defines *performance* as the occurrence of folklore in its “normal social context” prior to being collected.

The technology of recording and the emerging theories in the humanities and social sciences have contributed to a renewed inquiry into the dynamics of folklore performance. This quest builds upon the concept of orality that has dominated folklore research from its inception and recognizes the primacy of any performed act over any form of its abstracted documentation. It also has recovered the meanings of performed speech associated with such terms as *epic* and *myth* that connote discourse as distinguished from action, colored by its context.

The study of performance has shifted the claims folklore has had on national traditions and histories, on cultural cosmologies, and on social ethos. The notion has been rethought in terms of searching for a dynamic, interactive force in society that is an agent of communication subject to the wills of its performers and to the contingent interpretations of its audiences. From this perspective, folklore no longer studies tradition as a superstructure or as an expression or mirror of national culture but as a set of artistic acts that are an integral part of the fabric of social life and religious and political rituals. The application of the concept of performance to folklore, hence, has transformed its subject from being a cultural metanarrative to becoming acts of narrating, singing, and speaking.

There are two basic assumptions that guide the different approaches to

performance analysis. First is the idea that a society has a set of systemic conventions and rules that regulate and generate folklore acts. Second is the notion that while speakers are in performance mode, their verbal behavior has an acceptable range of deviance from the common use of language in society. Native speakers, whether performers or listeners, adhere to the rules of performance and to its socially accepted margin of variance. Methodologically, in the presence of an outsider, speakers may heighten the principles of performance or seek to present certain aspects of their culture through the selection of themes, genres, and modes of folkloric display they deem as markers of their ethnic identity.

ETHNOGRAPHY OF PERFORMANCE

The fundamentals of any performance analysis require an adequate ethnographic description of speech acts in a given society, accounting for the reasons and purposes of speaking, the participants and performers in the occasion, and the speech genres they employ. All these aspects of performance are interdependent, and there is a degree of correlation between them that a description must make explicit. Therefore, the description of performance focuses on the relations within the occasion as much as on the nature and meaning of each of its components. Performances vary in society in terms of the social, religious, and political reasons that generate them and the purposes toward which their performers and participants strive. The qualifications of performers also depend on the needs of each occasion. For example, though a highly structured ritual or a lengthy poetic text requires rigorously trained performers, casual verbal exchanges are accessible to any native speakers with no more than a mild inclination for verbal play. The exploration of the relations within a performance event involves an exposition of the observable characteristics of the performers and the participants, such as gender and age, as well as those features that require specific inquiry or knowledge. These involve the training of the performer, his or her position in the society (and in any sect or cult organization), and the existence or absence of any patronage system. Also correlated with any performance are the locations and times that a society designates for performance, as well as the genres, themes, and speech modes that are appropriate for each occasion.

PERFORMANCE AS QUALITY

To a degree, the ethnography of performance adheres to the theoretical and methodological principles of the "ethnography of speaking," which considers speech as an activity in its own right. Yet the former has a narrower focus in concentrating upon a particular mode of communication. The elucidation of the qualitative nature of performance is central to the understanding of folklore in society. William Hugh Jansen proposes that "performance does not exist until the 'doer,' the speaker, or the reciter of the bit of folklore steps outside himself

as an individual and assumes a pose toward his audience, however small, that differs from his everyday, every-hour-in-the-day relationship to the same audience." Theatricality, however minute and fleeting, has become a key quality in the folklore performance. The quality can manifest itself when an individual adopts the role of performer by engaging in conventional behaviors dictated by tradition (e.g., introducing a proverb by "you know what they always say . . ."). Most instances of folklore performance fall between these two minimal and maximal acts, when speakers take upon themselves, for a limited time and on a specific occasion, the role of singers, narrators, and riddlers. In those roles, they assume responsibility for presentation to an audience, as Dell Hymes has said, or they display communicative competence, as Richard Bauman asserts. These two conceptions of performance share the principle of display and involve a transformation of the performing self and a transition from an everyday mode of communication to an exhibitory one.

PERFORMANCE AND KNOWLEDGE

The formal and social qualities of performance have been the primary features for its description, so much so that they have obscured the question of its substance. Partially because of the broad thematic range of folklore, as well as its diversity and multifariousness, there is a purposeful vagueness in the discussion of the contents of performances.

To compound matters, the influential terminological use in linguistics that contrasts *performance* with *competence*, setting the terms as two paradigms representing the vagaries of language in speech against its ideal rule-generating symbolic cognitive system, diverted the discussion into a rebuttal of generative linguistics. Hymes and Charles L. Briggs argue that competence involves mastery of communication that extends beyond the utterance of sentences into the social and cultural rules that generate performance.

Coping with similar issues, albeit not within the discourse of linguistics, Roger D. Abrahams proposes considering performance and enactment as the heightened performance of cultural experiences in rituals and festivals, and John Miles Foley suggests regarding performance as immanent art, displaying the images of the mind. These and other solutions point to a synthesis that encompasses cultural knowledge and experience—as they are available to members of the community in verbal, visual, musical, and mimetic symbolic forms—as the substance of performance. The knowledge accumulated in the collective memory becomes the subject of performance in society. Both the substance and the rules for its communication are essential knowledge for socially responsible performances.

In practice, it is possible to paraphrase or report such cultural knowledge, squeezing out its performative quality, but such an account becomes a secondary representation of the knowledge that is culturally available for performance.

THE LANGUAGES OF PERFORMANCE

Speakers, narrators, and singers heighten the poetic function of language. On the phonetic level, alliteration, rhyme, and measured speech attain a more prominent position in performance than they would have in common conversation. In fact, one or all of these features could function to highlight a proverb when it occurs in daily conversation.

Parallelism, paired words, and formulas are also used in the language of performance. They could function mnemonically, as Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord have suggested regarding the formula in epic, but their occurrence in a broad range of genres is indicative that they are intrinsic to performance, distinguishing them from everyday discourse. The marking of performance language from everyday discourse has a scale of deviation in which prose narration is most similar to speech and the language of magical formulas is most removed from it, often jumbling sounds into utterances whose meaning is known only to the speaker. On the semantic level, there is an increased use of metaphors, allusions, and quotations that construct the themes in performance into interwoven domains and images that are connected to other principles of “interperformance,” to use Lee Haring’s term. They constitute the narrated, the sung, and the recited cultural experiences and imagined worlds.

THE PRESENTATION OF PERFORMANCE

More than any other approach to folklore, the focus on performance has highlighted the gap between experience and its representation. No matter how comprehensive the documentation of performance might be, it cannot replace performance as experience. Any representation of folklore performance implies a selective abstraction of the event as a process. Even the use of audiovisual documentation of performance does not replace the experience itself. Furthermore, observation alone is often insufficient for the comprehension of performance, and inquiry into the meaning of its symbols must follow. Therefore, although all available means to present the experience of performance are welcome, an interpretive analytical narrative that relates its component parts is essential for adequate presentation.

UNIVERSALS OF PERFORMANCE

The study of folklore performances is grounded in the ethnographic descriptive tradition, yet because such performances occur in societies all over the world, the search for universals is inevitable. Although the definition of a human characteristic as universal logically implies that it has a biological basis, it is possible to describe a behavior as universal without defining its biological foundation in the case of cultural performance.

Victor Turner proposes that performances are universally playful, framed,

symbolic, and in the “subjunctive mood”—that is, they assume an “as if” position toward their substance. The applicability of these four features is most appropriate to ritual and drama, yet the features are relevant to verbal genres as well. Narratives require verbal frames that open and conclude them as specific social discourse, and so do songs. In fact, the frames have the capacity of being cultural identity markers for specific genres, indicating to speakers and listeners the attitudes they could assume toward a narration or a song. The performance of other speech genres, such as proverbs, requires at least an introductory formula that serves as a framing device, distinguishing it from the preceding discourse. The illusionary quality of performance, universal as it is, does not detract, however, from its affective psychological and political power, which can potentially have real rather than fictional consequences. Further studies may identify other universals of performance, but on the basis of currently available knowledge, it is possible to conclude that performance itself is universal. It is a fundamental mode of communication that may have a variety of cultural manifestations, but in each society, performance defines and generates folklore.

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See also Ethnopoetics; Frame; Linguistic Approach; Metacommunication; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Verbal Art.

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PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVE

Prose narrative account of the performer’s personal experience. This consciously constructed narrative not only recounts the experiences of the narrator but also follows accepted norms for traditional performance, such as form, function, or style. The personal experience narrative also has been labeled *personal experience story* or *personal legend*.

The interest in and study of this narrative type has gained in popularity

since the 1970s. Few other forms of narrative expression can provide the same depth of revelation of the social life of a community as can the personal experience narratives of its members. As a narrative form, the stories arise out of the experiences of their individual performers—and out of a felt need to relate those experiences. Performers develop their own repertoire of narratives, and individual personal experience narratives are readily identifiable by group members as to their “owners.” Like other narrative genres, their form and structure—though it is always relatively loose, especially when compared to genres such as the *Märchen*—may become more polished over time with retelling. Conversely, they arise within conversational contexts, may be communally constructed within such settings, and may be so closely tied to a given interaction that their texts almost disintegrate outside the original setting.

As a separate genre, personal experience narratives do not necessarily fit neatly within the traditional canons of folklore. By their nature as personal accounts, they may not be correlated to a stock of identifiable narratives, and these accounts are necessarily idiosyncratic. Folklorist Sandra K.D. Stahl counters, though, that these narratives do fit within the context of folklore. Personal experience narratives have long been a part of the oral tradition but as a genre have been ignored in favor of more established areas of narrative research. Stahl asserts that this general type of folklore (the new label for the type notwithstanding) has long been of interest, as evidenced by research into first-person anecdotes, tall tales, and jokes, for example.

Moreover, personal experience narratives do manifest characteristics of many of the recognized oral narrative genres. Like legends, they recount an experience of a particular person or group; they follow accepted structural and performance patterns; and they rely on a set of understandings common to the group in their transmission of meaning. Personal experience narratives, like other smaller narrative categories such as family stories or anecdotes, have a limited circulation and, in certain instances, a limited lifespan. The standardization in form of the personal experience narratives has prompted some researchers, such as Juha Pentikäinen and Linda Dégh, to suggest that it is nearly impossible to distinguish between early forms of legends and those having roots as personal experience narratives or as narrative accounts told in the first person.

As a genre for scholarly research, personal experience narratives provide an opportunity to learn about the functional norms of a group on a micro level. As performances, these narratives reflect what is important to the group in terms of performance style, narrative content, and social concerns and norms of the group. These narratives also reflect how individual performers interpret these performative and social standards in order to present the narratives for group approval. Yet, unlike other types of narrative performance, personal experience narratives place fewer demands on the performer. Whereas many narrative types require performers who have a polished repertoire to draw upon for perfor-

mance and are thus recognized for their skills, personal experience narratives can be performed by any group member. Personal experience narratives also may reveal more of the day-to-day realities of group standards than other traditional narrative forms in that they are drawn from (or at least are alleged to be drawn from) the real experiences of their performers in the present, rather than from the near or distant past life of the group or its legendary figures.

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See also Anecdote; Family Folklore; Legend; Memorate.

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P HENOMENOLOGY

One of several traditions of philosophical discourse coming out of nineteenth-century Hegelian thought. Without discountenancing the claims of idealism—witness Hegel's own work, *The Phenomenology of Mind*—phenomenology begins its investigations in phenomena, the material substances of the world, rather than in mental processes, the ethereal forms of thought. It thus shifts the footing of European metaphysical philosophy from idealism to materialism. Philosophies apart from phenomenology that are heir to this shift include existentialism, structuralism, structural linguistics, semiology, Marxism, feminism, ethnomethodology, and sociolinguistics.

The world adumbrates itself around the embodied person as its centrality. “My body,” writes the American phenomenologist Maurice Natanson, “is the unique instrument through which I experience my insertion in the world.” This characteristic use of the phenomenological “I” acknowledges the locus of perception in the body of the perceiver. The usage does not refer to any particular individual but to an incarnated self. From that perspective, the world is not only differentiated in substance but differential in significance: Where I look from is tied up with how I see. It is the centrality of embodied experience in phenomenology that has given the term *phenomenological* its narrow interpretation in folklore and the social sciences as “subjective.”

But to distribute the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity over a contrast between the body and things, phenomenologists contend, would be a misunderstanding. Things are entangled with the body. I enter as a material object a world rendered intelligible by virtue of my presence in it. The French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, writes, "We grasp external space through our bodily situation. A 'corporeal or postural schema' gives us at every moment a global, practical, implicit notion of the relation between our body and things, of our hold in them. A system of possible movements, or 'motor projects,' radiates from us to our environment. Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space."

The body is a central term in the old philosophical dispute between materialism and idealism. It partakes of the nature of both things and thoughts. To keep the mind/body problem unsolved by coming down neither on the side of materialism, which grants objects priority, nor on the side of idealism, which privileges consciousness, is one of the tricks of phenomenology. The haunting body and the incarnated mind are modes of being in a world in which subjects materialize in the flesh. Bodylore is one of the areas of inquiry in contemporary folklore that investigates the symbolic properties of the body and the corporeal properties of thought.

The world holds me bodily as consciously I hold it, "consciousness, understood as a directional force sustaining the entire range of perceptual experience," as Natanson puts it. Consciousness is not a mental event secreted in the cranium but a constitutive act, the invention of a world. I am, Natanson continues, a "self constructing for itself the world it then finds and acts in." The constructedness of my world becomes explicit in narrative and ritual genres that describe or fabricate a reality. This constitutive gesture is what phenomenologists call *intentionality* or the *intentionality of consciousness*. Over the course of its recent history, folklore, like other humanistic disciplines, has become more inclined to take meaning out of the artifact and reinsert it in the intentionality of its perceiver or producer.

The world I intend becomes fixed or typified so that the phenomena I retrieve from it take on the quality of objects. In this undertaking, the American phenomenologist Alfred Schutz notes, "the constituting process itself is entirely ignored, while the objectivity constituted by it is taken for granted." Typifications of persons become culturally visible as stereotypes; typifications of objects become visible as material culture; typifications of acts become visible as customs; typifications of talk become visible as genres; and arguably, typifications of groups become visible as ethnicities or national traits. Such typifications form what the ethnomethodologist Harold Garfinkel calls the "background expectancies" of everyday life. Part of the enterprise of folklore is to excavate such typifications from the matrix of the ordinary. As a consequence, new genres continue to appear in the field.

Typifications are among the "metaphysical constants" Schutz takes to constitute the world. Natanson writes, "The world I inhabit is from the outset

an intersubjective one. The language I possess was taught to me by others; the manners I have I did not invent; whatever abilities, techniques, or talents I can claim were nourished by a social inheritance; even my dreams are rooted in a world I never created and can never completely possess." Metaphysical constants can be said to take the folkloristic form of traditions, customs, practices, and ways of thinking, moving, and speaking that are culturally informed. Schultz calls the taken-for-granted world thus constituted the primary "realm of experience" or "paramount reality."

A shift of attention transfers the perceiver to another realm, a different universe of discourse, an alternate reality that Schutz, following the American philosopher William James, calls a "subuniverse" or "finite province of meaning." Thus, he writes, "all these worlds—the world of dreams, of imageries and phantasms, especially the world of art, the world of religious experience, the world of scientific contemplation, the play world of the child, and the world of the insane—are finite provinces of meaning." Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who have translated phenomenology for the social sciences, write:

Different objects present themselves to consciousness as constituents of different spheres of reality. I recognize the fellow-men I must deal with in the course of everyday life as pertaining to a reality quite different from the disembodied figures that appear in my dreams. . . . Put differently, I am conscious of the world as consisting of multiple realities. As I move from one reality to another, I experience the transition as a kind of shock. This shock is to be understood as caused by the shift in attentiveness that the transition entails. Waking up from a dream illustrates this shift most simply.

Some genres elaborate and so inscribe the realm of the ordinary as gestures; for instance, elaborate body movement and costumes expand the expressive capacity of skin, architecture reconstitutes the world as a bony carapace around the body, or foodways inflect ingestion. All of these genres carry the imprint of the body on the world, most articulately in the form of tools or weapons, one end of which fits the body and the other the world. Speech forms, as it were, use the voice to lift thought out of the body and convey it to our social others. Thus, greetings and farewells acknowledge the boundaries of social encounters. Some genres close themselves off from the realm of the ordinary as separate realities, as when gesture is formalized as dance, sound transpires as music, or tools produce crafts. Folklorist Susan Stewart, perhaps following the title of Merleau-Ponty's book, calls genres that catch ordinary phenomena and uproot them from their ordinary ground *nonsense*.

Representational genres invoke and fabricate other realms. Not only narrative genres such as myths, epics, legends, folktales, anecdotes, and jokes but also folk painting, folk costume, folk theater, and such cross-genres as folk poetry and

folksong conjure up alternate realities. Some representational genres invoke two realities at once: Fables, proverbs, puns, riddles, and folk metaphors offer their own fictive worlds and also direct attention to the realm of the ordinary. Other genres reframe reality. Genres from cosmologies to confidence tricks re-present reality under a different description, a particular set of assumptions about the nature of the given, the apparent, the real. Some of these reframings of the realm of the ordinary themselves become inhabitable worlds. Rituals and religious ceremonies, feasts, festivals and carnivals, and games and play are experienced as realities, at least temporarily. Mary Hufford, for instance, reconstitutes the domain of hunting over the topography of the ordinary. Sometimes, fragments of alternate realities appear to be embedded in the realm of the ordinary as what Schutz calls “enclaves” of a different ontological status. Thus, superstitions, charms and amulets, curses, blessings, and oaths, along with such entities as gods, ghosts, angels, devils, or witches, trail through the fabric of the real, ephemera of a different domain. So Erving Goffman, heir to the phenomenological tradition in the social sciences, writes, “Realms of being are the proper objects here for study; and here the everyday is not a special domain to be placed in contrast to the others, but merely another realm.”

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See also Frame.

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PHILOLOGICAL APPROACH

Conceptual models and research practices applied to the analysis of folksongs, ballads, proverbs, folktales, epics, and other oral narratives from historical linguistics, literary history, and classical scholarship.

Part of so-called literary folkloristics or the European orientation, the philological approaches in folklore studies focus on the folklore text, contextualizing its semantic and linguistic texture to other, similar texts. The main focus of philological approaches lies in the comparison of folklore texts for their various textual-linguistic elements in order to: (1) classify the texts according to genres, types, variants, and motifs, (2) determine their origin, genealogy, historical development, and geographical distribution, or, more recently, (3) study on the textual level the nature of their oral composition.

Drawing analogy from the study of classical and medieval literature as well as language history, the philological research tradition provided, in the early modern Europe of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century, the first scientific systematization of oral traditions and a model for their conceptualization as artifacts of unwritten literature.

Most philological research in folklore has been conducted within the framework of the historic-geographic method. This approach is also known as the Finnish method, named after the country in which the method was codified. As implied by its name, the method is concerned with the historical development and geographic dissemination of folklore. It is diachronic in nature, using the comparison of folklore texts as a means to elucidate and reconstruct textual histories.

The methodological basis of the historic-geographic method lies in philological text criticism, a branch of literary research that goes back some 2,000 years to the comparisons between different Homeric texts. Since the Renaissance, this method has been much employed in the study of biblical and medieval manuscripts.

The application of text criticism to materials recorded from oral tradition, especially folktales, myths, and ballads, was popular among nineteenth-century philologists. Even earlier, the method had been employed on, for example, Finnish folk poetry by Henrik Gabriel Porthan. Some of the best-known nineteenth-century scholars in this field were Elias Lönnrot in Finland, the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in Germany, Svend Grundtvig in Denmark, and Francis James Child in the United States.

In text criticism, the scholar aims at establishing a relationship between two or more manuscript versions of the same text, studying whether manuscript A is the source of manuscript B or vice versa or whether they are both derived from a common source. Analogically, the text-critical folklorist makes comparisons between a number of versions of a given folklore item in order to determine their relationship of descent. The underlying postulate here is that the

paradigmatic variation of similar traits in different versions indicates a linear process of change.

Since the manuscript is the cognitive and conceptual model for the explanation of variants in oral tradition, a folklore item in text-critical logics is a text that is a copy of another text. As is often the case with manuscripts, copies contain errors made by the copyist, and analogically, difference in folklore variants is regarded as due to errors, flaws, and other alterations made in their replication. In error analysis, the text-critical scholar uses errors as clues pointing to the relationship between different copies and establishes their chronological order. The perceived gaps and errors in one version are then eliminated with material taken from another version, by replacing, say, a flawed line with one that is considered more correct. The scientific aim is to reconstruct a text that could be considered complete and original and that would then give information about the customs and beliefs of earlier generations. To meet the other scientific requirements, a publication of such a study must contain a critical apparatus that lists the alternative folklore sources and their variant readings.

Text criticism was developed and codified into the historic-geographic folklore method by Julius and Kaarle Krohn, father and son, in the 1870s and 1880s in Finland. Although originally designed for the study of Finnish *Kalevala*-metric oral poetry, the new method became internationally known as a tool mainly to be used in folktale scholarship, primarily because Kaarle Krohn applied it first to animal tales in his influential dissertation of 1889 and his pupil Antti Aarne wrote the method's guidelines (1913) with a focus on the comparative study of folktales. With these and other publications, especially those published in the Helsinki-based series entitled *Folklore Fellows Communications*, they set a new course for the already well-established line of comparative-philological research into folktales, whose best-known nineteenth-century representatives had been Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and the Indologist-linguist Theodor Benfey.

Influenced by Herderian romanticism, the Grimm brothers believed that folktales—or fairy tales, as they have also been called—are not mere products of imagination but aesthetically structured historical documents about the ways in which people in ancient (especially medieval) times thought. As anonymous products of a collective national spirit and as survivals of forgotten myths, folktales, as well as other oral poetry, are subjected to both historical-mythological research and artistic-philological reconstructions. The brothers' famous collections of tales, especially *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and household tales) (1812, 1815), became evergreens as children's literature and, as such, models for many later publications in the literary fairy tale genre. In addition to following their own artistic intuition in order to make the tales, as it were, speak the "voice of the folk," the brothers employed text-critical principles to combine different versions of the same tale and reconstruct them in their alleged "essential" and authentic form.

The comparative emphasis in European folktale study had received a

dramatic impetus from the discovery of the relationship of Sanskrit to Greek, Latin, and many other major European languages. By analogy, the Indo-European linguistic connection was soon extended, as suggested by the Grimm brothers, to fables, folktales, and other oral narratives whose origins, it was thought, were to be looked for in India. While Max Müller, a student of Vedic texts and Aryan mythology, theorized on the relationship between language and myth and on the origin of religion, Theodor Benfey compared Greek fables, traditionally credited to Aesop, with Indic texts and came up with a diffusionistic theory according to which India was the source of most folktales in the world. Much of this diffusion took place, according to Benfey, as early as the Middle Ages, through the many oral and literary readaptations and translations of the *Panchatantra* collection of tales, which he himself translated into German in 1859.

As far as the migration of folklore is concerned, one of the main issues for the Krohns and other historic-geographers in the Finnish context was the politically charged question of whether the *Kalevala*-metric runes originated in western or eastern Finland—in other words, whether they had been composed under medieval Scandinavian or Russian influence. Although migration of folklore on a general level concerns intercultural and international relations and contacts, it is, at the same time, directly related to the issue of land control and its symbolism. Indeed, the Finnish concern had many precedents in the royal collections of antiquities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as in the textual collections of *naturpoesie* by Johann Gottfried von Herder and the Grimms in the early nineteenth century, which all purported to create a natural link between the land, the past, and a particular nation or social group. Thus, the significance of the new method for the international study of folktale lay, on the one hand, in the Finnish scholars' explicit interest in the continuation and consolidation of the basic folkloristic ideology and, on the other hand, in its methodological reformism as the historic-geographers questioned India as the common source of folktales and insisted that origins and migratory routes had to be established for each tale type separately, with the help of a detailed scientific analysis.

In accordance with the then popular theories of monogenesis and diffusionism, all folklore texts were regarded in historic-geographic assumptions as having an original form, an *Ur-form*, composed at a specific historical moment in a specific historical place. This then migrated from one locality to another, transforming in such a way that one version developed from another in a geographic order. As in the so-called age-area theory in anthropology, the versions recorded in the opposite ends of such a chain of development were, in terms of both their content and their locality, furthest apart from another—and as a result of this logic, they were also judged to be the oldest variants of a particular tale type. For this reason, according to Kaarle Krohn, it is possible to follow the historical and geographic chain in a reversed order and, in the same manner as in the study of sound changes in historical linguistics, to deduce the birthplace of a folklore item and reconstruct its original form.

In addition to the historic-geographic method's role in creating and consolidating disciplinary identity for the study of folklore, one of the main factors in the significance of the method was its systematic approach—or rather, what seemed to be systematic according to the contemporary standards of scholarship—to philological comparisons and folklore migrations. In contrast to earlier text-critical research, historic-geographic methodology emphasized the source-critical argument that scholars had to assemble a full collection of versions before an adequate comparative analysis could be done. In addition to extensive recordings of oral materials, this would include the sources available in print and in manuscripts. The materials would then be arranged both chronologically and by region, and the texts would be broken down into a series of episodes and other narrative components and then tabulated and compared within the whole body of versions.

Such methodology created a need not only for extensive collections of texts—and big folklore archives—but also for a uniform system of reference for the making of comparisons between materials from different geographic and cultural areas. Already in text-critical folklore scholarship, materials were organized into types and subtypes and published with type numbers. Now it became the trademark of the historic-geographic comparative approach to compile and publish national and international indexes and registers. In addition to the canon of English and Scottish popular ballads, compiled by Francis James Child in the late nineteenth century, some of the most famous of these are *The Types of the Folktale*, first compiled by Antti Aarne in 1911 and later revised by the American folklorist Stith Thompson, and Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*.

The interest that the historic-geographic folklorists showed in origins and historical developments was a reaction to the romantic notion of a collective national ethos as the creator of folklore. The method's premises also followed the Darwinist arguments concerning cultural evolution. Although cultures were seen to be progressing, most of folklore was regarded as survivals from earlier cultural stages, subjected to a process of degeneration as more variants emerged and cultures modernized.

In accordance with the then dominant positivistic premises, the method also drew on natural sciences for models of explanation and scientific language. The interest in folklore classification and taxonomies followed a model taken from botany, and the conceptualization of the relationship between different versions as “genetic” came from biology. The tendency to view social processes in biological terms was also evident in the scholars' habit of speaking of transformations in folklore as either following rules comparable to “natural laws” or as being “mutations.”

Some of the method's major theoretical ingredients were criticized and refuted early on, by both the so-called typological school of post-Krohn Finnish folklorists and scholars in many other countries. One of the early objects of criticism was the automigration theory, according to which folklore travels like

rings on the surface of water or like a stream. This was regarded by the Estonian German Walter Anderson, among others, as both mechanistic and invalid, and instead, more emphasis was put on human factors in the diffusion process, including ethnic, political, national, linguistic, and religious boundaries. The distinction between active and passive tradition-bearers, stressed by the Swede Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, became an important modification, as did his emphasis on *oicotypes*, or regionally adapted forms. The reconstruction of the *Ur-form* was rejected either as a methodological impossibility or on the grounds that the archetype never existed. Instead, folklorists were to strive for what could be considered the original thematic contents and construct normal forms that would, for technical purposes, serve as standardized abstractions.

None of this criticism, however, questioned the textualist tradition itself or the objectivist or natural scientific premises of philological folklore research. The historic-geographic approach continued to be the dominant paradigm in folkloristics worldwide until new influences from anthropology, sociology, and comparative religion in the 1960s moved folklore studies away from philology and toward psychological and social scientific research problems. In the United States, as folklore became an independent university subject, philology-based, item-centered, and comparative literary folkloristics at least partially blended with anthropological folkloristics.

Despite this development, philological and postphilological approaches continue their influence to this day. In Finland, the role of text criticism in folklore methodology was promoted and further developed by Matti Kuusi as recently as in the 1970s and 1980s. In many parts of the world, even though the question of when and where a folklore item was first invented and how it migrated no longer interested folklorists, monographs on textual histories were still being written and published in the 1990s; in addition, large amounts of material are still collected for archival and comparative purposes, and typologies and indexes are compiled. For many, literature still forms the conceptual framework for oral traditions, and literary folklorists still tend to regard themselves as the only “real” folklorists.

Yet literary folkloristics is bound to change as both philology and literary research change. For example, after being the center of philological folklore study in the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century, Harvard University became the birthplace of a new type of philology as Milman Parry and later his pupil Albert Lord developed a synchronic and ethnographic approach to textual comparativism. Convinced that the Homeric epics were products of oral tradition—a theory that, in the nineteenth century, had caused Lönnrot and his followers in Finland to take up text-critical reconstructions and epic compilations—Parry and Lord set out to study textual elements that would indicate how the Homeric epics had been orally composed. Their major finding was the formulaic structure of oral epic language.

With the help of fieldwork among contemporary epic singers in Yugoslavia, Parry and Lord formulated the oral-formulaic theory, according to which epics

are produced in performance by means of compositional textual elements, such as memorized traditional formulas, around which thematic units are weaved. Instead of regarding a folklore text as a copy of another text, the oral-formulaic theory treats it as a product of active oral composition created in interaction between the performer and the audience.

In some oral-formulaic studies, the performance aspect has been surpassed by the theory's philological foundation, as scholars have focused on elucidating formulas and other compositional elements through textual comparisons instead of actual performances and performer-audience interactions. For the most part, however, the theory is emphatically directed toward the study of composition in performance, as occurs in textual-linguistically oriented performance studies, such as ethnopoetics. In fact, the oral-formulaic theory functions as both a historical and a methodological link between performance-oriented folkloristics, present-day research into oral literature in anthropology and classical studies, and the philological folkloristics proper—that is, text-critical and historic-geographic studies.

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See also Diachronic/Synchronic; Folktale; Historic-Geographic Method; Linguistic Approach; Literary Approach; Monogenesis/Polygenesis; Oikotype/Oicotype; Romantic Nationalism; Text; Tradition-Bearer; Ur-Form.

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PILGRIMAGE

The journey of individuals in homage to highly esteemed places, individuals, or artifacts with the aim of deriving some benefit therefrom. Pilgrimage operates at the juncture of the spiritual and material worlds as both a mapping of a sacred landscape onto physical space and as the amelioration of bodily illness and injury through arduous physical exertion with a spiritual focus.

Although the term *pilgrimage* may be used in a secular sense to denote a sojourn or personal odyssey and is often invoked in discussions of tourist experiences, the word most often describes an act of piety, penitence, or thanksgiving—an ascetic journey of religious obligation to obtain healing and purification. *Pilgrimage* is also used to describe the interiorized journey of the religious mystic.

Pilgrimage, at the nexus of official and local religious systems, often generates vehement ecclesiastical responses. Though strongly rooted in popular tradition, pilgrimage is a displacement of individuals from their local communities and may be in tension with the usual hierarchies of religious organization and administration.

Pilgrimage has been described by Victor Turner and Edith Turner as a tripartite rite-of-passage experience: *the journeying to* (separation), *the experience of the destination* (liminality), and *the returning home* (reaggregation).

The pilgrim's departure may be marked by special preparations, consecrations, and celebrations. Arduous means of travel (e.g., procession) and/or bodily posture (e.g., walking on the knees) may often be prescribed (although technological advances in transportation have transformed the pilgrimage route). Pilgrims may be sick and travel with the assistance of others, or a proxy may make the pilgrimage on behalf of an ill person. The temporary exile of the pilgrim and the difficulties and dangers of the pilgrimage route are endured in exchange for the ultimate rewards of the journey.

The travel route is highly marked, often dotted with signs, sacred precincts, and facilities to provide for the traveler's corporeal and spiritual needs. The jour-

ney out is often characterized as an ascent, a time for exploration and greater freedom than subsequent phases of pilgrimage. As the destination is neared, rituals of preparation may be intensified: Special interdictions, ablutions, and prayers may commence, and special vestments may be donned. The destination of pilgrimage may be surrounded by a sacred precinct, often a set of lesser shrines that direct visitors toward their ultimate goal.

The pilgrim's destination may be a site where something extraordinary occurred, such as a miracle or an apparition, or a place where a revered individual was born, lived (or lives), or died. The material representation of such an individual might take the form of relics. A shrine may be seen as a specially energized place. The spiritual efficacy of a shrine as an auspicious place for communication between humans and deities is seen to be enhanced by the visits of successive waves of pilgrims. The visitor will typically leave some form of offering as witness to the pilgrimage: a consecrated object brought from home or a representation of self such as a snippet of hair or clothing, money, or food.

Returning home, the pilgrim brings something of the experience back, possibly in the form of a tangible souvenir, token, or relic. The returning pilgrim may experience an enhanced status in his or her community of origin.

The force of pilgrimage is often described as centripetal: The individual travels from a peripheral location to a highly significant religious center. This convergence on a shared cosmic center is the reverse of diaspora, reuniting coreligionists from diverse ethnic, linguistic, political, and social backgrounds. The communitarian elements of pilgrimage may include simplicity in dress and diet, common endurance of a physical ordeal, and general meditation on the common faith. Yet there has been much recent debate over describing pilgrimage as *communitas*, a leveling process characterized by a spirit of fellowship, bonding, and temporary release from mundane social differences.

Some current writers suggest that, rather than dissolving social boundaries, pilgrimage actually maintains and reinforces them. Pilgrimages exist on a variety of scales and cover a range of distances. Although the collective nature of pilgrimage assures the existence of a range of interpretations and practices, the authoritarian discourse of shrine controllers and patrons may, in some instances, mediate the behavior of devotees visiting the shrine.

Pilgrimage routes map a sacred topography upon secular space and have profound historical consequences affecting artistic, commercial, and religious interchanges on both the global and local scales. Often occurring during certain seasons and accompanied by festivals, fairs, or specialized markets, pilgrimage may be a religious tourist attraction. The relation of the sacred and secular market systems have profound effects on the local community at the pilgrimage destination.

Central pilgrimage destinations in world religion include Jerusalem (Jewish, Christian, Moslem) and Meron (Jewish). Popular Catholic destinations include Rome, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela (Spain), and the Basilica of Guadalupe (Mexico City). *Hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia

(including shrines at Medina and Arafat), is a religious duty to be completed, if possible, by all adult Moslems. Hindu pilgrims visit the purifying waters of the Ganges in Varanasi (Benares), India, and Mount Kailas, Tibet (China). Bodh Gaya and Sarnath in India and Saikoku, Japan, are destinations for Buddhists, and Ise, Japan, is visited by Shintos. Countless other pilgrimage traditions exist in every corner of the globe. Pilgrimage is also an important theme in literary allegories, such as *Pilgrims' Progress* (Bunyan), *Divine Comedy* (Dante), and *The Canterbury Tales* (Chaucer).

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See also Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk; Rites of Passage.

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POPULAR CULTURE

Materials and activities widely disseminated in a society. Like *folklore*, the term *popular culture* is also used as the name of a scholarly discipline. Popular culture studies involves the scholarly investigation of expressive forms widely disseminated in society. These materials include but are not restricted to products of the mass media—television, film, print, and recording. Thus, popular culture studies may focus on media genres such as situation comedies, film noir, best-selling novels, or rap music. Other, nonmediated aspects of popular culture would include such things as clothing styles, fads, holidays and celebrations,

amusement parks, and both amateur and professional sports. Ideally, the study of these or any other popular materials should be done holistically, viewing them both aesthetically and also within the social and cultural contexts in which the materials are created, disseminated, interpreted, and used. In this way, the study of popular culture, like the study of folklore, involves the use of methodologies from both the humanities and the social sciences in the effort to interpret expressive cultural forms, specifically those that are widely disseminated (that is, popular) in a group as part of dynamic social intercourse.

Many definitions of folklore have tended to be enumerative, naming genres such as beliefs, customs, ballads, and proverbs as examples of folklore, thus assuming a self-evident, inherent similarity among them. Some scholars have suggested that folklore is that portion of a culture or society that is passed on orally or by imitation. In 1972, Dan Ben-Amos defined the term *folklore* as artistic communication in small groups. In this formulation, the concept of the small group replaces the “folk” determination, and the “lore” becomes identified as artistic communication. This communication need not necessarily be verbal, but it will be stylized and expressive, thus calling attention to itself. The “small groups” referred to requires that the genre be performed in company small enough in number and in close enough proximity to be able to affect the performance and to contribute to it.

Popular culture, by contrast, has often been equated with the mass media: products of film, television, recordings, and print that are widely disseminated in society or at least created with widespread dissemination in mind. Thus, when a friend tells us a joke, this is, by the preceding definition, a folk event. When we watch a comedian on television tell the same joke, we have entered the realm of popular culture. We can have only indirect influence on the products of mass media, but we can have direct effects on small-scale, interpersonal communications. American scholars often distinguish folklore, or folk culture, from popular culture along many lines, including the communicative nature of the materials themselves: Are they mediated or unmediated? That is, do we hear the story, or listen to the music, or see the dance directly? Can we join in, or are we watching a film, listening to a recording, or looking at a videotape?

Many of those who consider folklore as unmediated, small-group, face-to-face expressive culture and popular culture as large-scale, mass-mediated forms view the two as antithetical. That is, simply put, folklore thrives where the mass media have not taken hold. Conversely, by this formulation, popular culture kills folklore: Where once people entertained each other with storytelling, instead they now watch television. Many see a moral dimension here: Storytelling (or whatever genre of folklore we are talking about) is seen as active and creative, whereas consuming mass-mediated forms is described as passive and numbing. Thus, the former is said to be superior to the latter. Other scholars might view the folk genres pejoratively, describing them as unsophisticated, primitive, or naive.

However, some scholars use the terms *folklore* and *popular culture* more or

less interchangeably. Social historians, for instance, who have researched everyday life in medieval, late medieval, and early modern societies (frequently reconstructing popular rituals, festivals, and celebrations), generally prefer the term *popular culture* to *folk culture*, possibly owing to romantic or pejorative associations of the concept of folk. In these cases, culture and society are more likely to be viewed in dichotomous terms, with allowances for overlap between the courtly culture of the socially elite and the popular culture of the masses. Some popular culturalists accept this view, maintaining that only after the Industrial Revolution and its attendant urbanization and the development of a middle class does it make sense to speak of a tripartite model of culture that includes folk, popular, and elite. In this formulation, the folk represent peasant society: a semiautonomous group that depends on a nation-state for at least part of its subsistence.

The point here is not to argue for a specific definition but to indicate some of the ranges of thought that accompany the terminologies employed herein. To a large extent, definitions indicate methodologies: The definitions one works with influence both what is studied and how it is studied. In recent years, many scholars, folklorists included, have begun to look at popular culture not simply as the mass media but also as the popular use of the mass media. Janice Radway's study of a group of women who read romance novels is an example of the application of social science and ethnographic techniques to an area that had been dominated by humanities approaches. In the past, popular genre fiction such as romances would be studied as texts only and found lacking in aesthetic merit as defined by western European high art critics. Radway (and other cultural studies scholars) expanded the area of study to transcend the written text and to include ethnographic considerations, such as who exactly was reading the novels, when, for what purposes, and what meanings and values they derived from them. In order to determine such things, the readers were interviewed to ascertain their own perspectives on and understandings of the materials. Instead of condemning a genre in which millions of people find something of value, Radway attempted to understand what aesthetic principles were at work and how readers of popular romances themselves understand the texts.

Radway's work and that of others has shown that people are not as passive as was once thought in their interactions with mass or popular forms. In addition, there are a great many areas of overlap between folk and popular culture. As concepts that refer to social dynamics rather than things, the two feed off each other. The examples in this regard are too numerous to attempt to quantify, but two brief illustrations will suffice. Children's jump-rope rhymes, a folk genre, commonly use well-known celebrities, popular songs, and commercial jingles for their subject matter, and the converse is also true: Many popular songs and commercial jingles are derived from the poetry and song of the streets. Another example would be the relationship of the so-called slasher or stalker films, such as *Nightmare on Elm Street*, to the modern legends in oral circulation that tell of similar horrific killings.

Celebrations of contemporary holidays, life passages, and other special occasions are an area in which many of the various aspects of culture are coterminous. The use of yellow ribbons publicly displayed during wartime is one such example. Holidays such as Halloween are good examples of contemporary phenomena that combine customary behaviors and traditions carried out on the personal level (e.g., trick-or-treating, learning to carve a jack-o'-lantern) with the tremendous commercialization having to do with the marketing of cards, candies, and costumes; media products such as episodes of television programs with Halloween themes or specials such as *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*; mass behavior; and even church-sponsored events and, in certain cases, condemnations.

Both folklorists and popular culture scholars study created, expressive, and artistic materials as their primary data, much as literary scholars take the novel or the sonnet as their primary data. In this way, they are both within the tradition of the humanities. However, the disciplines of folklore studies and popular culture studies differ from traditional humanities studies in that they recognize the existence of alternative systems of aesthetics that guide the creation of popular materials and the evaluation of those materials by an audience. Albert Lord, in his important work *The Singer of Tales* (1960), identified the ways singers of epics in eastern Europe learn their art orally and how they compose as they perform. He suggested that these performances and the poems themselves be judged according to the specific goals of the artists and the audiences and according to an understanding of the problems unique to an oral poet. In other words, oral poetry is a different genre than written poetry. Each has its own aesthetic standards, and it is misguided to judge one by the standards of the other. Popular culture scholars recognize this principle and extend it to the popular arts, such as television programs, popular films, popular music, best-selling novels, genre fiction (mysteries or romances, for example), and so on.

Each medium or genre has an audience that can and does make evaluations according to aesthetic criteria. These criteria are usually unarticulated, but they are no less real because of it. People regularly make choices as to which book to read or movie to see and just as regularly evaluate the experience: This was a good thriller, this is a great party song. Because these aesthetic criteria are generally unarticulated, it is the task of the researcher to identify them through ethnographic methods such as interviews and participant observation, as well as humanities techniques such as textual analysis. The term *ethnography* refers to the cultural description of any event or artifact, usually as expressed and perceived by those people who are participants in the event, by producers, consumers, or users of the artifact, or by members of the cultural group in question. After these insider (or native) perceptions and categories are documented, the researcher may undertake the scholarly analysis of the materials as components of a dynamic social and cultural field of behavior. These methods enable the scholar to situate the discussion of any aspect of folklore or popular culture within the larger context of the meanings and values of the society within

which it exists—to determine, as Clifford Geertz has suggested, what we need to know in order to make sense of something. Social science methodologies enable the popular culture scholar to root an expressive form in its social context and to uncover the aesthetic system upon which it is judged. Humanities approaches provide models for the appreciation of aesthetic forms and enable the scholar to apply theories of genre and make comparative analytical statements. As social science and humanities methodologies are combined in the study of artistic forms of expression that are broadly based in society, scholars can begin both to provide an understanding of the social and cultural significance of these artistic forms and to determine the aesthetic, social, commercial, and technological considerations that underlie their creation, distribution, and reception. Rather than attempting to determine ultimate worth or meaning according to an imposed value system, scholars have begun investigating the ways in which meaning is created and creativity evaluated. This requires ethnographic research, and it is in the ethnographic study of the everyday uses of mass cultural forms that folklore and popular culture merge.

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See also Folk Culture; Legend, Contemporary; Legend, Urban.

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P

POSSESSION

The taking over of a person by an outside spirit. The possessed person may undergo hysterical fits, show drastic changes in physiognomy, go into a catatonic state, show no reaction to pain, or speak in an altered voice that is taken for the voice of the possessing spirit. Often, the subject professes total ignorance of what has taken place during the fit, although the possessing spirit is usually aware of the existence of the subject. The transition into and out of possession is often abrupt.

Possession can occur because, in the traditional view, the human spirit has



Woman possessed by an Ethiopian Bouda. In most cultures, the possession of a person by an outside spirit is accompanied by extraordinary behavior, such as hysterical fits, immunity to pain, and speaking in an altered voice.

only a tenuous connection to the body, so that it may be dislodged and replaced by another spirit. This spirit may be seen as a demon, as a spirit of disease, or as a spirit of the dead, sometimes an ancestor of the possessed, that may be either inimical or helpful. Such a spirit is not necessarily exorcised: It may be tamed and domesticated. Also, spirits of disease do not necessarily displace the spirit of the patient; they may simply dwell in part of his or her body and cause pain.

I. M. Lewis argues that, where religions have become established and ritualistic, possession is generally most common among people with low status and little power, who may use possession to protest their situation safely since they

are presumed to be under the control of another entity. In such religions, an amoral spirit, rather than a representative of the deity, generally takes over the victim. The latter form of possession is discouraged by the episcopal authorities, perhaps because it could alter the revelation on which the religion is based. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake largely for claiming that she was responsible only to God, who communicated with her through the voices of saints and not to the church.

In Western tradition, marks of possession have typically included the ability to speak and understand languages foreign to the patient; a knowledge of things unknowable by natural means; bodily strength exceeding the normal capacity of the possessed; and a revulsion for sacred things, such as relics, the host, and holy water. Such objects may not only prove the possession but also cure it. Typically, however, involuntary possession is ended via the exorcism of the spirit by a shaman or priest. In some cultures, the exorcism may itself be a form of possession: The shaman enters a trance and is taken over by a spirit that causes the offending spirit in the patient to depart.

In Christian history, there were occasional cases of fraudulent possession. A sixteenth-century woman, for example, went into convulsions on hearing a bishop intoning the first line of the *Aeneid* while pretending to read from a book of exorcisms. It also was recognized, as early as the sixteenth century, that illness might account for the symptoms of possession. Epilepsy was considered a common cause, and many historical cases of possession look very much like what psychologists now call "multiple personality syndrome."

Attempts to view possession strictly as a nervous disorder founder on the fact that possession is sometimes not peripheral, as in Christianity, but actually central to a religious movement, being viewed as a religious experience open to all participants. In Haiti, the *loa*, or god, may take up residence in any participant in a ceremony. Thus, one would have to view entire populations as quite mad in order to uphold the thesis that possession is merely mental illness. Indeed, its principle element, worldwide, seems to be an altered state of consciousness either deliberately or incidentally induced in the subject. Many of the phenomena associated with deliberate possessions (e.g., rhythmical dance and drumming, sleep deprivation, the use of psychedelic drugs) are known to bring about a state of consciousness characterized by dissociation, subjective feelings of timelessness, an alteration of body image, an increased sense of meaningfulness, and greater suggestibility. These experiences, however, are given their particular form and meaning by the individual's culture.

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See also Divination; Exorcism; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk; Shamanism.

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POSTMODERNISM

Various aesthetic and cultural trends that arise in the context of advanced consumer culture and that stand in contrast to modernism. The rapid spread of the term *postmodernism* in academic and increasingly in popular discourse suggests that it has all the attractions and defects of a superficial fashion but also perhaps that it is a response in language to a legitimate perception that our current historical moment has distinctive qualities for which we need a new name. This latter possibility makes a consideration of postmodernism worthwhile in general and of some relevance to folklore studies in particular.

Amid the welter of its applications, one can distinguish three broad uses of the term *postmodernism* that folklorists might want to keep in mind. The most recent and most problematic is its use as an umbrella term for all of the new theoretical and methodological strands that now crisscross the academic terrain of the human sciences. These strands, first woven firmly together in the 1970s (though many of them were spun earlier), are associated particularly with the triumvirate of French theorists Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault. Their work forms the foundation of *poststructuralism*, so called not because these scholars reject and abandon the structuralist project but rather because they carry it to some of the logical conclusions that high structuralism did not pursue. In doing so, the poststructuralists have called into questions many of the stabilities upon which previous cultural analysis depended—stabilities of language, of empirical inquiry, and even of the human subject itself. These largely philosophical insights have had a profound effect on the intellectual practice of many disciplines, not to mention on the very nature of disciplinarity itself. Most prominently in literary studies—but for folklorists perhaps more importantly in historical and ethnographic studies—this wholesale reorientation stands at the heart of much current intellectual debate. It is worth noting that whereas structuralism significantly influenced folklore studies, poststructuralist trends have had only marginal impact on the field, though there

are indications this may be changing. Of course, the readiness of folklorists to entertain structuralist ideas reflects the fact that structuralism concerned itself early on with folkloric genres such as myth and folktale. Poststructuralism has operated largely in the rarified atmosphere of philosophical discourse.

One thing the term *postmodernism* has come to designate, then, is the whole shake-up in academic theory and practice, at the core of which are such concepts as the ultimate undecidability of meaning, the insistence on the “textual” nature of all reality, and the characterization of the human subject not as a vessel to be filled but as an unstable effect of the play of signifiers. In the least appropriate application of the term, *postmodernism* is sometimes used as an equivalent to *poststructuralism*, which refers to a much narrower theoretical phenomenon.

If *postmodernism* has most recently come to refer to the general post-1960s “turn toward theory,” its oldest application was in the arena of aesthetics. Dating back as far as the mid-1930s, the term has designated, sometimes positively, sometimes negatively, certain trends in elite culture running counter to the reigning modernism. By the mid-1960s, there began to coalesce an aesthetic stance, if not a single coherent movement, that rejected some of the more austere aspects of modernism in the arts. This new aesthetic privileged fragments rather than wholes, glossy surfaces rather than depth, vulgar ornamentation and bizarre juxtapositions rather than minimalist purity. It also actively blurred the line between elite and mass cultural forms. So-called pop art, best exemplified by the early work of Andy Warhol, was perhaps the clearest expression of what has come to be called Postmodernism in the arts, with the upper case appropriate to its usage as an art historical designation. Although all the standard artistic media—literature, film, theater, music—have generated Postmodern movements analogous to those in the plastic arts, architecture is the medium in which this aesthetic has been most fully developed, to the point that one can legitimately speak of various “traditions” within Postmodern architecture.

In this second application of the term, then, *postmodernism* designates a set of aesthetic inclinations, if not formal principles, manifest in stylistic features that stand in marked contrast to what came before and constitute, at least implicitly, a critique of modernism. Although certainly legitimate in its limited sphere, this usage names only one among many phenomena, including the developments in theory discussed earlier, that are all related as enactments of a whole sociohistorical order. It is as a name for the culture of this embracing historical moment that “the postmodern” seems most interesting for folklorists.

In this regard, a useful distinction can be made between the terms *postmodernism* and *Postmodernity*, the former appropriate to specific trends in current culture such as the movements in academic theory and fashions in aesthetic style mentioned earlier, the latter a designation for the whole cultural regime of the late twentieth century. The multiple and various *postmodernisms* are to be understood, then, as local expressions or stagings of a single and pervasive *Postmodernity*.

The classic statement about postmodernity as a distinct moment in socio-cultural history is Frederic Jameson's 1984 essay, "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." Working out of a Marxist tradition, he uses *postmodern* to designate the cultural formations that are inextricably bound up with the most recent phase of the capitalist mode of production. The central institutions and mechanisms of this phase include advanced consumer social relations (the penetration of the commodity form into virtually all spheres of life), a global economic order dominated by massive corporate entities whose power transcends national polities, and a rapidly evolving technology, best characterized by the tele-electronic media, which have made instantaneous information exchange a reality.

The definitive characteristic of postmodernity, an equivalent term for which might be *advanced consumer culture*, is a new and subtly pervasive "depthlessness." Jameson traces this quality in the most fundamental categories of cultural experience: space, time, and human subjectivity. He finds spatial dislocation and intense, "schizophrenic" focus on surface images, an equally intense focus on the present moment and a proliferation of flattened, "historicist" images of past periods, and a new, blankly ironic and unlocalized emotional register to be hallmarks of postmodernity. These and related qualities coalesced as an identifiable cultural formation in the 1960s, though one might argue that the conditions necessary for such a formation were already in place in the 1950s.

Until quite recently, folklore studies had not been significantly affected by the debates over postmodernity, in part, no doubt, because postmodern theorists have focused their attention on elite and mass cultural forms and ignored vernacular expression. This separation may be coming to an end, as folklorists confront the impact of advanced consumer culture on their traditional objects of study. Theorists of postmodernity, by contrast, have been slow to recognize that folklore studies have something to offer their project.

There seem to be two general responses that are the most obvious for folklorists wishing to take *postmodernity* seriously as a name for the cultural environment of advanced consumer capitalism. One is the liberal extension of folklore studies to accommodate the postmodern; the other is a recognition that postmodernity implies a radical shift in thinking about the very status of folklore as a cultural and analytical category. If one accepts that *postmodernity* names an actual cultural phenomenon emergent by the 1950s and now firmly in place in advanced consumer society, then by the liberal principle that folklore adapts to and emerges in all cultural formations, one should be able to speak of a *postmodern folklore*. One might expect, for example, to find new folkloric genres that are made possible by these new postmodern cultural conditions. Mass-communications technologies are the most obvious arena of such emergent forms. Computer networks that allow interactive personal exchanges have shown themselves to be particularly fertile as a new kind of folkloric space.

Another version of this liberal view is a recognition that postmodernity implies new social roles, new classes, and a new political economy that collectively allow for the reframing of traditional folklore forms in the new space of

advanced consumer culture. The “folklorized festival” and the various therapeutic movements that draw on the imagery of traditional ritual and other folk practices might be considered examples of this postmodern(ized) folklore, at the heart of which is the commodification of folk images.

Standing somewhat apart from these liberal conceptions of a postmodern folklore that awaits inventory and analysis is the more radical recognition that postmodernity also might imply a condition of culture that discomfits the whole idea of an identifiably separate domain of folklore. The point here is not, as in the old mass culture argument, that folklore is disappearing under the onslaught of homogenized, highly mediated cultural productions but rather that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the distinctly vernacular sphere one normally associates with folk culture from everything else. Jean-François Lyotard’s classic statement about the “postmodern condition” associates postmodernity most basically with the discrediting of the “grand narratives,” both cultural and scientific, that heretofore served to represent modern society’s collective experience. In their wake, we are left with the fragmentary and circumscribed expressions that are responses to more immediate and localized circumstances. In this view, culture looks increasingly like a collection of pieces—a *pastiche*, to use a favorite term of postmodernists—rather than a comprehensible whole.

Following this line of thinking, one might consider a central feature of postmodernity to be, depending on one’s political inclinations, either the thorough colonization of everyday and vernacular experience by the commodity relations of a fragmented but pervasive advanced consumer order or a thorough “vernacularization” of consumer experience in which cultural life becomes increasingly local, personalized, and immediate. In either case, the lines between cultural domains—folk, popular, mass, elite—become blurred more thoroughly than ever before. And whether one accepts these scenarios of postmodernity—indeed, whether one accepts postmodernity as a distinct cultural formation at all—it does seem that local cultures and vernacular experience are coming to occupy a new and more prominent place both in contemporary cultural life as lived and in the academic arena of cultural analysis. Folklorists have some stake in these developments since their training equips them particularly well to deal with such cultural phenomena.

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See also Computer-Mediated Folklore; Deconstruction; Tradition.

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PROCESSION

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P ROCESSION

The act of moving along in an orderly fashion or in a ceremonious or formal manner. The procession dates back to ancient times and serves as an official part of a ceremony during ritualistic activities or festivities. As a form of ritual, the procession can represent a public display of an established social institution. As a structural component of festival, the procession often provides the opportunity for positive group interaction in the community.

The procession is characterized by a display of individuals and institutions who, in the act of moving along in succession, reaffirm their place within the given social structure of a community. In this manner, dominant community values are expressed as a formal event in which the order of the procession is prescribed. Common examples include the processional in a wedding and the *procession générale* in eighteenth-century Montpellier, France, which, as Robert Darnton observed, symbolized the corporate order of urban society. That procession, composed of municipal officials, members of the clergy, and leading officials of the town, was a public statement taken to the streets, whereby the city represented itself to itself, to inspire both power and awe in its observers.

Processions differ from parades in their form and content. The Day of the Dead procession held throughout Mexico every October–November is a religious expression of the temporary merging of the living and spirit worlds to pay tribute to deceased family and friends.

In contrast, the parade is a more flexible and loose form of public display that often conveys sentiments opposed to those in power. Robert DaMatta demonstrated this difference by distinguishing between the ritualistic expressions of Brazil's Independence Day and the world of carnival. Independence Day is associated with the armed forces and national authorities, but carnival is associated with the common people. The procession of authoritarian figures on Independence Day represents the social mechanism of reinforcement that acts to strengthen social roles through the separation of elements, categories, or rules. In contrast, carnival employs the mechanism of inversion that works to unite normally separate social roles and relationships that are rigidly segregated in daily life.

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See also Festival; Ritual.



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P ROVERB

A concise traditional statement expressing an apparent truth with currency among the folk. Defined more inclusively, *proverbs* are short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and that are handed down orally from generation to generation. Numerous scholars have tried to formulate the proverb definition, ranging from abstract mathematical formulas based on symbolic logic to Archer Taylor's almost proverbial claim that "an incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not." Two major aspects of what amounts to proverbiality should be part of any proverb definition, but they cannot be ascertained from the proverb texts themselves. The elements of traditionality and currency always must be established before a particular short sentence can indeed be called a proverb. This situation is especially vexing when the question arises whether such modern formulaic statements as "Different strokes for different folks" or "Garbage in, garbage out" have reached a proverbial status.

There are, of course, some clear "markers" that help to establish that certain short utterances of wisdom or common sense are, in fact, proverbs. Such markers also assure the memorability and recognizability of the texts as traditional wisdom. In addition to their fixed (and usually oppositional) structure, their relative shortness, and their common use of metaphors, proverbs usually contain some if not all of the following poetic or stylistic features: alliteration—"Many a little makes a mickle"; parallelism—"First come, first served"; rhyme—"No pains, no gains"; ellipsis—"Once bitten, twice shy"; personification—"Love laughs at locksmiths"; hyperbole—"It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God"; and paradox—"Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

In addition to proverbs that, as complete thoughts, can stand by them-

selves, there are such subgenres as proverbial expressions (“To hit the nail on the head”), proverbial comparisons (“As drunk as a skunk”), proverbial exaggerations (“He is so tight, his eyelids squeak when he winks”), and twin (binary) formulas (“Safe and sound”). Such proverbial phrases (or phraseological units, as linguists call them) are but fragmentary metaphorical utterances that do not contain any complete thought or wisdom. Although they add color and expressiveness to oral and written communication, they cannot stand alone, as proverbs and Wellerisms do. The latter is yet another proverb subgenre, which is based on the triadic structure of (1) a statement (often a proverb), (2) an identification of the speaker, and (3) a phrase that puts the utterance into an unexpected situation, resulting in a humorous, ironic, or satirical comment. Wellerisms delight in wordplay and puns, and an example such as “Everyone to their own taste,’ as the cow said when she rolled in the pig pen” illustrates how folk humor overcomes the seemingly sacrosanct wisdom of traditional proverbs.

Proverbs in actual use are verbal strategies for dealing with social situations. As speech acts, they must be viewed as part of the entire communicative performance. This is true not only for proverbs employed in oral speech but also for proverbs that frequently appear in literary works, the mass media, advertising, popular songs, cartoons, and comic strips. Only the analysis of the use and function of proverbs within particular contexts will determine their specific meanings. In fact, proverbs in collections without contexts and annotations are almost meaningless or “dead,” but they become quite significant and alive once they are used as a strategic statement that carries the weight and authority of traditional wisdom. Proverbs clearly include various semantic possibilities due to their different functions in varying situations. It is precisely this intangible nature of proverbs that results in their continued and effective use in all modes of human communication.

Proverbs have often been grouped according to their content, some major groups being legal proverbs, medical proverbs, and weather proverbs (of which many are mere superstitions couched in proverbial language). Other groups would be proverbs dealing with such topics as the body, health, marriage, and work. Groupings are often rather arbitrary and ignore the multisemanticity of proverbs. Based on structural and semiotic considerations, scholars have begun to group proverbs more systematically, according to linguistic and logical types. This methodology permits scholars to group together proverbs of the same structure (i.e., “Like X, like Y”) or of the same logical thought pattern (i.e., texts based on such oppositions as one:two or short:long). Although they might have completely different metaphors and realia, such proverbial signs express fundamental human thought patterns. Grigorii L'vovich Permiakov in Russia, Matti Kuusi in Finland, Peter Grzybek in Austria, and Alan Dundes in the United States have been particularly interested in fitting thousands of proverbs into a limited number of universal proverb types. This structural and semiotic research

will facilitate the work of scholars interested in comparative and international paremiology (study of proverbs) and paremiography (collection of proverbs).

It is difficult to know which came first—the study or the collection of proverbs—but clearly, these two major branches of proverb scholarship are closely linked. The earliest proverb collections are found on Sumerian cuneiform tablets from the third millennium B.C. Since then, literally thousands of proverb collections of various sizes and different values have been published. Otto Moll's international *Sprichwörterbibliographie* lists over 9,000 collections and is certainly not comprehensive. The annual bibliography of “New and Reprinted Proverb Collections” in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* adds about 60 collections each year that have been published throughout the world. Among those are small popular collections that are produced with the mass and tourist markets in mind. But there are also excellent regional collections that assemble dialect proverbs and provide detailed etymological and cultural notes. Major collections also have been assembled for virtually all languages, from tribal languages in Africa to world languages such as English.

The significant collections differ widely in their lexicographical setups and their materials. Anthropologists, in particular, have collected proverbs from oral tradition, and they usually provide invaluable ethnological annotations without paying much attention to the origin or history of their texts. These collections often are thought of as indicators of cultural values and worldview, and the best among them even present the relatively small number of proverbs in their actual speech acts. This is, however, hardly possible when folklorists, lexicographers, and phraseologists try to amass the entire national corpus of proverbs from different countries. How was Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander, for example, to include contextual materials with his 250,000 German proverbs in his massive, 5-volume *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon*? But like other historically interested paremiographers, Wander does include references to all major German proverb collections from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, and he also presents dialect variants and parallels from numerous foreign languages.

The U.S. paremiographer Bartlett Jere Whiting has developed a lexicographical methodology for diachronic proverb collections that is now considered as *the* model for any national language collection. In his classic collection *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly before 1500*, he has arranged the proverbs alphabetically according to their key words (usually the subject noun or a verb). Each entry starts with a lemma that lists the proverbial text in its standard form and is preceded by the first letter of the key word and a consecutive number (e.g., F194 “No fire without some smoke”). The many references that Whiting has located in various early English publications follow in chronological order, and at the end, the author adds cross-references to other scholarly proverb collections. Whiting also uses this system in his invaluable *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*, which records

the proverbial language used in American writings from the first decades of the seventeenth century to about 1820. Other scholars have followed Whiting's lead, and a number of excellent national proverb collections based on historical principles now exist for French, Polish, and other languages.

There is yet another type of proverb collection that deserves to be considered. People in general and scholars in particular often have wondered about the similarities and differences among proverbs of different languages. Those proverbs that go back to Greek or Roman antiquity or to biblical traditions for the most part have been loan translated into many languages, and they usually exist as identical texts from one language to another (loan translation is the direct translation of a foreign proverb into the "borrower" language). The same is true for many medieval European proverbs that became current as loan translations due to social and commercial intercourse. The tradition of serious comparative and polyglot proverb collections goes back to the late Middle Ages. Today, scholars have assembled impressive collections for the Germanic, Romance, and Slavic languages, for example. A particularly valuable collection of this type is Matti Kuusi's *Proverbia Septentrionalia: 900 Balto-Finnic Proverb Types with Russian, Baltic and German Scandinavian Parallels*. This collection represents a major step toward identifying those universal proverb types that have an international and perhaps global distribution. Proverbs such as "One hand washes the other" and "Big fish eat little fish" are examples of widely disseminated proverbs. But much work remains to be done by comparative paremiographers. A similar collection for the proverbs of the African continent is sorely needed, and there are also no polyglot collections of this value for the Oriental languages.

Although all of this paremiographical work is of great importance, it does, for the most part, ignore the social, cultural, and psycholinguistic significance of contextualized proverbs. Paremiologists and, with them, scholars from such varied disciplines as anthropology, art history, ethnology, folklore, history, linguistics, literature, philology, psychology, religion, and sociology have all looked at proverbs from their particular vantage points. Clearly, paremiologists make it their particular business to study proverbs from as broad a perspective as possible, but the interdisciplinary, international, and global involvement by other scholars is gaining momentum and has resulted in valuable advances in this field of study. Proverbs are basically used by everyone; everyone is confronted by them, and they are verbal nuggets deserving everyone's attention.

As a paremiologically interested folklorist, literary historian, and philologist, Archer Taylor clearly brought his bias to the writing of his undisputed classic work, *The Proverb*. The four major parts of this book deal with questions of origin (classical literature, the Bible, folk narratives, fables, literary works), content (customs and superstitions, history, law, weather, medicine, national stereotype), style (form, poetics, proverb types), and subgenres (proverbial phrases, proverbial comparisons, Wellerisms). The value of this compact

volume lies in the fact that Taylor approaches the proverb with an international and cross-cultural perspective and that the work reviews the most important proverb scholarship prior to its publication. It is thus a broad survey of proverbs that, to this day, serves as the best introduction to the fascinating and complex world of these traditional verbal expressions. Similar volumes have been published in Finnish, French, German, Russian, Spanish, and other languages, but those usually concentrate on the paremiological and paremiographical state of research for that particular national language.

The breadth and depth of proverb scholarship is immediately evident from the 4,599 annotated bibliographical entries in Wolfgang Mieder's comprehensive, 3-volume *International Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography*. His annual supplementary bibliographies of "International Proverb Scholarship" in *Proverbium* list, on the average, 200 new entries, an overwhelming indication of the interest in proverbs by scholars from multiple disciplines and countries. Although proverbs can and must be studied regionally and nationally, there is no doubt that comparative international research will lead to additional and more comprehensive insights, as it does in the study of folklore in general. Some proverbs are indigenous to a particular region or country, but there are also hundreds of generally known proverbs that cross national boundaries in their geographical distribution. Classical and biblical proverbs gained such wide currency throughout most of the world, and the process of internationalizing certain proverbs can still be observed today. In fact, twentieth-century American proverbs such as "A picture is worth a thousand words," "It takes two to tango," and "Garbage in, garbage out" have been accepted in English or as loan translations in numerous foreign cultures through the powerful influence of the mass media.

Although anthropologists continue to study the use and function of proverbs among so-called primitive peoples (i.e., those in remote areas of the world where literacy has not yet replaced the reliance on oral communication), scholars have also become interested in the manipulative power of proverbial language in political discourse (debates, speeches, interviews, etc.). Much work remains to be done by anthropologists, especially as regards the apparent dearth of proverbs among the Native Americans, but it is of equal interest to understand how world leaders of the democratic or dictatorial persuasion, such as Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Vladimir Ilich Lenin, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, have used proverbial speech as an effective political tool. The authority of tradition and the inherent claim of expressing truth and wisdom give proverbs in political argumentation a rhetorical power that can make them into manipulative and aggressive weapons. This is particularly the case when proverbs expressing national stereotypes are employed as slurs against certain ethnic or religious minorities, as was done with despicable results against the Jewish people in Nazi Germany.

Scholars studying popular culture and mass media also have begun to

include the analysis of proverbs. Quite a number of investigations exist concerning the use and function of proverbs in popular songs (folk, country-and-western, rock-and-roll), in advertising (as traditional or innovative slogans), in journalism (especially as newspaper and magazine headlines), and in various illustrations (caricatures, cartoons, and comic strips). Varied proverbs also appear as so-called antiproverbs on lavatory walls as graffiti expressing new wisdom, and they certainly have become very popular as humorous messages on greeting cards and T-shirts. The applicability and adaptability of proverbs seem to be without limit. The moment that a traditional proverb does not appear to be appropriate, its wording is consciously changed, though the underlying proverbial structure is maintained. Quite often, popular proverbs are simply reduced to their basic structures, as, for example “Where there is X, there is Y,” and this formula can then serve for an advertising slogan by replacing the variables with the product name. There is thus a steady interplay of tradition and innovation at work here, as Wolfgang Mieder has shown in various chapters of his book *Proverbs Are Never Out of Season: Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*.

Exciting work also is being done by literary scholars, linguists, and psychologists. Formerly, literary proverb investigators were satisfied with publishing mere lists of proverbs found in the works of a particular author, but now they ask far more detailed questions regarding the function, meaning, and communicative relevance of proverbial language in poems, dramas, and novels. Impressive studies exist on such world-renowned authors as Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Geoffrey Chaucer, Agatha Christie, Charles Dickens, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, François Rabelais, William Shakespeare, and Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy, but work also is being done on non-European authors such as African playwright Chinua Achebe. Linguists and psychologists join forces in psycholinguistic studies using “proverbs tests” as tools for detecting schizophrenia, measuring intelligence, and establishing employment aptitudes. The whole question of metaphor comprehension and cognition is being addressed through proverbs, as can be seen from Neal R. Norrick’s valuable study *How Proverbs Mean: Semantic Studies in English Proverbs*. Paremiology finds itself at the intersection of poetics, linguistics, and psychology, and the resulting studies are significant steps toward a better understanding of human thought processes.

Finally, mention must be made of what Grigorii L'vovich Permiakov has called the “paremiological minimum.” This concept describes those proverbs that have the highest frequency in a particular language group. Such minima have already been established through questionnaires for the Russian and German languages, and they consist of about 300 proverbs and proverbial expressions that every native speaker knows well. These findings have, of course, important ramifications for the question of cultural literacy. Clearly, these proverbs belong to the store of knowledge of a culturally literate person, and it behooves language instructors (both native and foreign) to teach them so that citizens as well as immigrants and foreign visitors can communicate

effectively. Lexicographers and phraseologists also need to find better ways of including this proverbial language in various types of language dictionaries. With English being *the* world language, its paremiological minimum is indeed of major importance to anybody making use of it. With this issue, the pragmatics of paremiology attempt to find universal proverb types, and perhaps some day scholars even will speak of a global paremiological minimum, that is, a small set of proverbs that everybody knows.

Wolfgang Mieder

See also Proverbial Phrases and Proverbial Comparisons; Wellerism.

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PROVERBIAL PHRASES AND PROVERBIAL COMPARISONS

Stock conversational phrases that, like proverbs per se, have conventionalized forms but that, unlike proverbs, are not complete statements in themselves. Common English examples are “to kick the bucket” (meaning to die) and “to cross that bridge when we come to it” (meaning to be concerned about some problem or issue when it is actually encountered and not before). Whereas proverbs show little variation, proverbial phrases necessarily change to fit larger grammatical structures used in conjunction with the phrase (“He/She/It kicked/might kick/will kick the bucket”). Closely related proverbial comparisons are phrases that consist of conventionalized comparisons, such as “mad as a hatter” (meaning very mad, i.e., insane) and “dead as a doornail” (meaning definitively dead).

Proverbial phrases and comparisons facilitate spoken communication by providing a kind of “shorthand,” that is, by providing speakers with ready-made phrases that identify or “name” recurring situations. Proverbial comparisons always involve metaphor, and proverbial phrases almost always do so also. Thus, a speaker uses a readily understood metaphor to make a point, comparing, for example, not being concerned with crossing a bridge not yet arrived at to some real-life situation in which a problem has not yet been actually encountered. Proverbial phrases may sometimes be used like proverbs to teach a lesson or win an argument or press a course of future action, but they are more likely to be used simply to observe or comment or characterize succinctly. Proverbial comparisons in particular are used primarily to intensify meaning, by introducing into a discourse an expanded frame of reference involving some similitude.

Frank de Caro

See also Proverb.

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PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF FOLKLORE

Technique based upon psychoanalysis, a scientific discipline begun by Sigmund Freud in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Psychoanalytic analysis proposes that (1) events in mental lives are not random, being determined by preceding events, and (2) unconscious mental processes are of great frequency and significance in normal and abnormal mental functioning. According to

Freud, consciousness is only a part of mental life, developed out of the unconscious during the early life of the individual and in the evolution of the human species. The approach posits that dreams, neurotic symptoms, myth, legend, fairy tales, jokes, and daily behavior are symbolic substitutes for what we unconsciously desire. To Freudian psychoanalysts, the roots of folklore are to be found in repressed conflicts pertaining to an individual's life experiences. According to the psychoanalytic model, the existence of a universal human psychic unity allows dreams and fantasies of an individual to become incorporated into the folklore of the group.

Freud's work is steeped in anthropological interests as an attempt to show how psychoanalysis could help to explain the origins and functioning of cultural institutions. In the Freudian view, culture is to society as neurosis is to the individual. Freud's followers Ernest Jones and Erich Fromm were practicing psychoanalysts who took an interest in cultural matters. Géza Róheim, George Devereux, and Erik Erikson, trained as psychoanalysts, carried out ethnographic fieldwork. Various studies of folklore have shown that oral, artistic, religious, and gestural expressions of tradition hold clues for the understanding of social structure, socialization processes, and aspects of the mental functioning of groups.

Freud's analysis of the Oedipus myth is perhaps the best-known example of psychoanalytic involvement in folklore. This analysis, presented in *Totem and Taboo*, has influenced attitudes toward applied psychoanalysis. Its principal thesis linked totemism with exogamy and incest with taboo.

Early criticism of the psychoanalytic approach was strong, and it was subsequently dismissed as unrealistic. One of the difficulties in applying classical psychoanalytic theory to folklore is the assumption that the theory is universally applicable. More recent modifications include consideration of cultural context, including expressive culture (e.g., folklore). Folklorist Alan Dundes is among those who believe that important psychological studies of American folklore are made by psychologists and psychiatrists conducting studies among peoples within the context of their own cultures. Thus, Dundes has employed psychoanalytic theory to study folklore as well as popular culture.

According to folklorist Elliott Oring, Freud explained the suffering of one's past, how suffering was engendered, and how the past was divested. The psychoanalytic approach has contributed to the study of folklore in a number of areas. Psychoanalytic models of narrative have yielded understanding not only of performers but also of aspects of socialization and social structure. Fairy tales are recognized in the content of dreams. Myth is deemed a special form of shared fantasy that, constituting a type of adaptation to reality, serves to bring the individual into relationship with members of the culture group on the basis of common psychological needs. Myths and related phenomena are recognized as culturally shared images that serve as screening devices in the defensive and adaptive functions of the ego, reinforcing the suppression and repression of individual fantasies and personal myths. Shared daydreams, when they emerge as expressive culture, are instruments of socialization that lead to a sense of mutual

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identification on the basis of common needs. From psychoanalytic perspectives, folklore, art, and religion are institutionalized instruments that bolster the social adaptation ordinarily made possible by the dream.

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See also Freudian Psychology; Jungian Psychology; Psychological Approach.

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P PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

The systematic application of concepts derived from psychology—such as human cognition, learning, motivation, affect, behavior, unconsciousness, defense mechanisms, and image making—to the study of folklore. Although there are numerous approaches in the discipline of psychology, we may speak of three different types of psychological theories, each adopting an essentially different model of man. These three models are the *Homo volens*, which views man as a creature of striving motivated by unconscious inner urges, the *Homo mechanicus*, which views man as a machine that can be programmed to produce certain responses to specific stimuli, and the *Homo sapiens*, which views man as a rational cognitive creature capable of guiding his own behavior. These models represent psychoanalytic, behavioristic (in the connectionist mode), and cognitive (including “cognitive behaviorism”) psychologies, respectively.

Interest in psychological explanations for folklore (particularly in its striking stability) began early in the twentieth century. Psychological speculations by folklorists Antti Aarne, Walter Anderson, and Albert Wesselski and subsequent experimentation on the nature of learning folkloric materials undertaken by psychologist F. C. Bartlett and folklorists such as Anderson and Wesselski did not have much impact on folklore scholarship as a whole. Of the various types

of psychological approaches, the psychoanalytic and its derivatives have dominated scholarship in folklore and related fields. This dominance continues to the present, in spite of the often stinging criticisms directed against these approaches. The first systematic challenge to the dominance of the psychoanalytic school in folklore came in 1967 with suggestions for viewing folklore as “behavior” and offering alternate explanations and research processes and methods.

The work of Sigmund Freud, C. G. Jung, Franz Boas, Otto Rank, and other psychologists and anthropologists during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries set the stage for more recent approaches to the psychological study of folklore. These pioneering figures viewed folklore and folklife as products of inner psychodynamic processes, such as unconscious imagery and repressed feelings, that function as catalysts for folkloric expressions as well as for personal and culturewide psychological dynamics. During this period, for instance, Freud and his disciples used folklore for much of their analytic work with dreams, fairy tales, jokes, and slips of the tongue. Freud observed the ambivalent reactions of modern people to “something familiar and old-established in the mind which has been estranged only by the process of repression.” For him, the distant past, hidden in the unconscious and reflected in folkloric symbols, was particularly evident in folklife and childhood and was regarded as the key to understanding present repressed feelings and urges. This general view of the ties between childhood, the past, and folklore was reflected in the thinking of early American folklorists such as Alexander Chamberlain (1865–1914), editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*, who emphasized this perspective in *The Child and Childhood in Folk-Thought*.

The psychoanalytic approach to folklore around the turn of the twentieth century borrowed the concept of “survivals” from evolutionary theory and psychoanalysis. Although existing in altered form and generally beyond conscious awareness, the traditions of the hidden past were seen to survive for the individual as dreamlike images reflecting a developmental sequence and amenable to mythic interpretation by an analyst. Likewise, folklorists saw a unified cultural past reflecting a series of human developmental stages, or “the varieties of man.” Even after this notion had waned in folklore studies, the related idea of a personal past lived on.

In the work of the Swiss psychologist C. G. Jung, for example, notions of a personal and cultural past took on a central position. Delving into folklore and the past represented a significant human activity by which individuals could derive inner symbols and imagery for use in the process of psychospiritual integration, or *individuation*. Jung’s influence on folklore studies is still being felt.

The impact of Charles Darwin can be seen in the psychological approaches of folklorists during this period as well, in frequent references to folklore’s links with the “history and psychology of man,” and the “psychic unity of man” maintaining the natural evolution of culture. At the time, psychological views of

folklore conceived of psychology as developmental, addressing the discontent, alienation, and anxieties of modern industrial society.

During subsequent decades, these approaches were countervailed in anthropology and, by extension, folklore studies by behavioristic analyses involving the learned or acquired aspects of cultural and folklore expressions as responses to a given environment. For example, in 1944, Bronislaw Malinowski, in *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, established the “functional analysis” of culture within the framework of a broadly based behavioristic approach. Concerning the scientific perspective of the fieldworker operating under a behavioral model, he wrote, “We understand the behavior of another person when we can account for his motives, his drives, his customs, that is, his total reaction to the conditions in which he finds himself.” And two decades later, Melville Herskovits stated that, in psychological terms, culture could be defined as “the learned portion of human behavior.”

Concern for the behavioral or acquired aspects of folkloric expressions involved questioning of the individual’s role in the postwar Western world. In the impersonal mass culture that arose during the 1950s and 1960s, individuals came to be known less for their backgrounds than for their social behaviors, which could involve multiple identities and roles, and the ability to “put on a front” became a valuable skill in social and cultural relations.

In this context, a greater degree of authenticity seemed to exist in subcultures and traditional folk behavior, which were seen to possess a level of intimacy and value that was missing in mass society. Thus, behavior became an increasingly important object of study for folklorists during the 1960s, a period that witnessed rapid social action and change. Many researchers made forays into the area of day-to-day behavior that was not bound by class considerations. In folklore studies, research methods moved toward the objectivity of behaviorism and away from theory. In such work, researchers drew conclusions from behavioral observation and analysis, which they hoped would lead to a greater understanding of the psychology of folkloric expressions.

Seeking to shift the emphasis in folklore theory from the product to the process, Hasan El-Shamy called on folklorists to “initially concern themselves with folkloric responses (narrating, believing, singing, applying a proverb, or dancing) and relevant social and cultural factors before proceeding to the study of the folklore items themselves (narratives, beliefs, songs, proverbs, or dances).” To achieve the goal, he introduced the concept of “folkloric behavior,” noting direct links between behavioristic learning principles such as motivation, context (cues), rewards, and punishments on the performance of established folk traditions (for example, customs, lifestyle, and verbal lore such as lyric songs, ballads, and proverbs) of an ethnic community in the United States (Egyptian immigrants in Brooklyn, New York). By applying these learning principles, the study established observable and quantifiable relationships between the stability and subsequent continuity of certain folklore items or their disintegration and ensuing disappearance. The learning and retention of folkloric expressions also are

affected by factors such as repetition, recency, structure, and ego involvement (or self-reference); this latter factor calls into play individuals' attitudes toward themselves and their possessions, social groups, values, and institutions.

El-Shamy's analysis of Egyptian storytellers revealed that certain folkloric items are ego-involving for particular individuals who view them as their own property and thus are more likely to be learned and remembered. Similarly, entire social, religious, vocational, and ethnic groups or even entire communities or nations may be ego-involved with particular folk items, which they see as reflecting their own identity. The genres or subclasses of responses that are subject to such communal ego involvement include beliefs, myths, legends, memorates, and proverbs. Moreover, El-Shamy showed that the learning and memorization of folktales is a function of the behavioral "law of effect," in which rewards have a "stamping in" effect on an individual's memory and punishments have an opposite, "stamping-out" effect. Similarly, the "law of exercise" operates in folkloric behavior in that learning and retention of folklore items are functions of repetition and recency as well as of the meaning inherent in the structural qualities of the learned material. These latter principles are, in turn, functions of ego involvement, in which folkloric materials offer greater behavioral rewards and thus are more meaningful to the individual.

In another cognitive behavioristic study, El-Shamy applied concepts such as stimulus and response (S-R) theory in discussing the analysis of folk texts. He argued that in using the S-R approach in folklore studies, two aspects of a folkloric response need to be differentiated: (1) the initial response per se such as narrating, singing, dancing, or performing (i.e., the initial action), and (2) the style, "texture," form, and content of that response, which involves examination of the folklore item itself as a whole, or what may be called its *measurement*. In terms of the folktale, this notion may be stated as follows: what makes (stimulus and cues) a person (organism) tell (response) a tale (the measurement of the response), under which conditions (cues), and with what results (effect). This approach holds true for other forms of lore as well, such as folk art and dance.

Around the same time, El-Shamy combined cognitive behaviorism with the psychology of perception and cognitive systems in a study of "the brother-sister syndrome" as embodied in the folktales of traditional Middle Eastern groups. In this work, narratives related to brother-sister interactions and their related cognitive and affective states were shown to reveal a pattern of brother-sister love and affection, husband-wife hostility, sister-brother's wife rivalry, and niece/nephew-maternal uncle affection. El-Shamy used concepts from behavioral and cognitive psychology to show how the narrative components of tale telling in Arab folk groups—that is, the gender and age of the narrator and audience, the direction and routes for communicating a story, the narrative's structure and content, the semantics involved in expressing its various aspects, and the symbols contained in it—all relate to the tale's affective content, as well as to the expression of sentiments within the traditional Arab family.

Taken separately, each of these factors by itself may not have sufficient

power to determine the motivating force for telling a tale, but together, they reflect the general nature of that force. In other words, the folk narrative is viewed as a response to specific stimuli or an integrated behavioral event in which motivation (stimuli, wants, or goals) and intermediary stimuli (cues, or the context in which narration occurs), as perceived by the narrator, invoke the tale. Thus, the folktale as a whole may be seen as the measurement of that response and an instrument for accomplishing the narrator's goals. Moreover, both the affective and cognitive elements of the narrative are seen to parallel other cognitive systems, schemata, or worldviews typical of the narrator and his or her cultural group.

The motivating force that determines the sequencing of events in traditional Arab tales reflecting the brother-sister syndrome is that the brother and sister desire to be together. The narrator perceives this force and behaves within its framework. With the fulfillment of the brother's and sister's wishes at the end of the tale, the underlying motivation diminishes in power, and the story reaches a conclusion that is emotionally satisfying to both narrator and listeners.

El-Shamy supported his views on the brother-sister syndrome in Arab folktales through numerous examples from the Middle East and North Africa, all of which reflect the international folktale type, AT 872: "Brother and Sister." His study aimed to establish the extent to which this tale type is "an integrated cognitive system," in which the various parts of the tale are interconnected and congruent with each other and the tale operates as functional social behavior that helps to realize the narrator's goals. Thus, El-Shamy combined concepts from cognitive psychology (e.g., "integrated cognitive system") and behaviorism (e.g., the narrator's goals) to show that AT 872 represents an interpersonal behavioral event and is "an integrated instrumental (goal-oriented) social act."

In recent decades, directly cognitive approaches to folk expressions and symbols have emerged in folklore studies as well. Henry Glassie, for example, examined the trend toward symmetry and enclosure in folk housing in colonial Virginia as a cognitive-affective need for order in the midst of perceived chaos during the American Revolution. Similarly, Michael Owen Jones has analyzed the transformations in the cognitive schemata of a folk artisan, a maker of handmade furniture. Jones noted that when this craftsman worked near crowded urban areas, his cognitive schemata and work reflected a sense of enclosure. But when "drawn back into the countryside, his chairs opened up," which Jones interpreted as a change in cognitive-affective states.

Another area of inquiry derived from cognitive psychology that has been addressed recently in folklore scholarship is memory storage and retrieval, specifically, memory for stories. Robert A. Georges examined the complementarity and conflict between folklorists' and psychologists' views on memory, challenging the long-standing notion that individual folklore items are simply stored in "inventorylike fashion" for subsequent retrieval on command. In contrast to this view, Georges stated that many folklorists and psychologists are adopting a more dynamic, generative, context-specific model of memory,

supported by data from neuroscience. And yet others favor neither the static storage-and-retrieval model nor the dynamic and generative view. Instead, these researchers posit that memory may be both stable and variable, depending on the situation. Implicit in such a view are the assumptions that what is most readily remembered in a given item of folklore is its “basic plot or central theme, while what is likely to be forgotten and perhaps replaced are specifics and details.” This approach is widespread in folklore studies, with those parts of stories or songs that are best remembered being identified variously as a “normalforms,” “kernel stories,” “emotional cores,” or “ideational cores.” Georges pointed out that, whatever the model or approach a folklorist adopts, memory is a central concept in folklore studies and deserves to be examined and discussed more vigorously in future research and theory in the field. He stated that folklorists have the experience and skills needed to test hypotheses and assess generalizations made by nonfolklorists, as well as the responsibility to reveal to nonfolklorists theories about memory that have guided and emerged from their own inquiries.

Other psychological concepts that have influenced folklore studies in recent years have come from the area of social psychology. For instance, the concept of “conduit” proposed by Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, in their influential “The Hypothesis of Multi-Conduit Transmission in Folklore,” is essentially the social psychological technique of “sociogram.” Robert A. Georges discussed “communicative role and social identity in storytelling,” noting that since the 1970s, folk narratives have begun to be studied as social behaviors, such as “communication,” “interaction,” “performance,” and “art.” And folktales have been seen as “situated in” and “emergent from” cultural or social contexts, with narrators being described as “performers,” “artists,” and “followers or transformers of rules.” Georges saw such trends as a move toward a new model of folklore studies emphasizing the social behavior of participants in storytelling, as opposed to the older text-transmitting-and-receiving model. He felt that the conceptualizing and identifying of tale narration or storytelling as a panhuman, role-based communication mode, with participants’ behaviors being determined by manifestations of their communicative roles and identities, “provide part of the intellectual foundation for an alternative model for folk narrative research.” Such a psychologically based approach counters the culture-based construct that has dominated folklore studies for many decades, which assumes that folk narrators and other performers identify themselves exclusively in cultural terms.

The emotional aspects of folk narrative also have been discussed in the psychological approaches of numerous folklorists, who have used ideas and principles derived mainly from psychoanalysis and neopsychoanalytic schools. Such efforts generally have focused on the panhuman, hereditary, or archetypal bases for the origin and continuity of “emotional” patterns in folktales. Other work has employed vaguely defined concepts, such as feelings, attitudes, love, hate, and affect.

However, two general aspects of the emotional experience are of special importance in folklore research and may be defined and used precisely: *emotions* and *sentiments*. These terms have been used in the folklore literature interchangeably, but recent psychological research differentiates them from each other. Emotions may be defined as complex arousals that stem from an organism's attempts to cope with a given environment. They emerge through disturbance or sudden success in activities basic to biological survival and well-being, being acute, intense, and often disruptive in nature. By contrast, sentiments are affective experiences with a cognitive basis, such as patriotic, religious, ethical, aesthetic, or intellectual ideas, and they are based on past life experiences and education. They are usually enduring and should be distinguished from transient cognitive experiences, such as the memorization of facts for academic purposes. Given these definitions, behavior in folk narratives that depicts sudden, intense, disruptive affective experiences largely connected with basic biological needs may be seen as describing emotions. Examples of this group include AT 1119 ("The Ogre Kills His Own Children") and AT 931 ("Oedipus"). Another application of the psychological approach to folklore is the recent adoption of key principles from cognitive psychological literature as classificatory devices, especially as motifs recurrent in "folk literature" and other facets of traditional community life. The assumption here is that if a psychological theory is "correct," with reproducible results, it must be applicable to instances of actual living experiences as portrayed in the cultural sphere that emphasizes the stable reproducibility of traditions (i.e., folklore). Although Stith Thompson had expressed some doubts in this regard (probably with reference to the psychoanalytic approach), there are indications that such psychological (and sociological) concepts do recur in folk expressions as a matter of empirical observation by folk groups and that they can be of significant classificatory (indexing) usefulness. Examples of these newly devised motifs are the following:

- A1241.5.1§, "Physical and personality attributes (temperament) are determined by characteristics of the earth from which the first man was created"
- J10.1§, "Persistence of first (primary) impressions"
- J10.1.1§, "Unforgettable first experience"
- J19§, "Knowledge acquired from experiencing the suffering of others"
- J20§, "Conditioning: effects associated with past experience cause man (animal) to respond accordingly (conditioned response)"
- J20.1§, "Memory of painful experience causes animal to flee (feel pain)"
- J148§, "Teaching (learning) through repetition"
- P798§, "Characteristics of social interaction within triads"
- P798.1§, "Unbalanced (unstable) triads"
- P798.1.0.1§, "Triads revolving around father and mother as unbalanced (Oedipus)"

- P798.1.0.5§, “Triads revolving around brother and sister as unbalanced (Sethian syndrome)”
- P798.1.1§, “Conflict within a triad: one party is removed so as to restore stability (balance)”
- P750.0.1§, “Basis for social differentiation and stratification”

The application of these psychologically oriented motifs (and related tale types) to bodies of cross-cultural primary data should help bridge the gap between the data used in theory building in folklore scholarship, on the one hand, and the contents of lore itself, on the other.

Besides the realm of research and theory in psychology, the applied areas of the field also have had an impact on folklore studies over the decades. For instance, Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian analytic practice, as noted earlier, have had a noticeable influence on folklorists.

Also, the general topic of mental health and illness in traditional cultures has been examined by numerous researchers and theorists. Preventive and therapeutic folk practices, including the beliefs, values, and techniques of shamans and faith healers as well as the contrast between ideas and methods used in scientific psychiatry and folk treatments in traditional settings and the successes and failures of folk healing all have been addressed.

Another area of applied psychological theory is the use of folklore in curriculum development in elementary and high school education. It is hoped that the ego-involving aspects of lore will induce students to learn more and faster.

Clearly, folklorists need not seek explanation in a single type of psychological theory adopting only one of the three models of humans cited earlier and excluding the other two. As psychology has matured as an intellectual discipline, there is recognition that humans are a synthesis of all three models: *Homo volens*, *Homo mechanicus*, and *Homo sapiens*.

Hasan El-Shamy

See also Freudian Psychology; Jungian Psychology; Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Folklore; Worldview.

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PUBLIC SECTOR FOLKLORE

The presentation and interpretation of folklore outside its original context. The term *public sector folklore*, in use since approximately 1980, can be taken in either a narrow or a broad sense, according to Archie Green. The narrow sense emphasizes certain types of activities carried out by folklorists to present folklore to “the public,” together with the host institutions that house and support such activities. In this sense, public sector folklore includes distinctive research and presentation activities (including the production of festivals or live performances, media programming, exhibitions, publications, and other educational programs) that have flourished in large part since the early 1970s but that have important earlier roots; these activities are carried on by folklorists working primarily outside academic life, in arts councils, museums, historical societies, and other public or quasi-public institutions.

Robert Baron and Nicholas Spitzer’s *Public Folklore* gives a concise statement of a broader view of the term: “Public folklore is the representation and application of folk traditions in new contours and contexts within and beyond the communities in which they originated, often through the collaborative efforts of tradition bearers and folklorists or other cultural specialists.”

In this instance (though these authors use a slightly different term), public sector folklore includes *all* activities, since the beginning of the discipline over a century ago, that have represented or applied folk traditions in some new way or to some new audience. In this light, any or all of the following contemporary phenomena can be understood as public sector folklore:

- an audio-illustrated class lecture on polka music
- a demonstration of a Cajun-style *boucherie* (traditional hog butchering) by south Louisianans to a busload of northern tourists

- a book-length study published by a university press about folk traditions in women's domestic work
- a collaboration among traditional sweetgrass basketmakers, folklorists, and natural resource specialists to ensure that those artists' access to necessary materials, threatened by urban development, is ensured
- a community-sponsored project to find and document the work of local quilters and other needle artists for exhibition at the local library or historical society

Though the following comments concentrate on public sector folklore work in the United States, it is important to remember that there is a long history of such work abroad, often stressing what European scholars call *folklife*: the material and customary culture of (increasingly marginal) rural groups. Since the early years of this century, European governments in particular have supported intensive, systematic folklore research and the maintenance of national archives of documentary materials drawn from that research. What is more, they also have developed living folk museums representing historical periods in material and cultural life through reconstruction and reenactment. And, especially during the Iron Curtain era in the former Eastern bloc nations, they have trained and toured performing ensembles, presenting nationalized amalgams of regional music and dance styles as governmentally sanctioned evidence of a proud peasant past undergirding the socialist present and future.

In the United States perhaps even more than abroad, the history of public sector folklore is coextensive with the history of the entire field of folklore. For its first 50 years, the field was broadly public in its orientation, though the term *public sector folklore* was not used to describe any folklore work until around 1980. During its earliest years of development (circa 1880 to 1900), the discipline of folklore in the United States was shaped as much by folklorists working in public institutions (for example, the Smithsonian Institution, the Bureau of American Ethnology, and the American Museum of Natural History) and by talented, thorough, and articulate amateurs as it was by university faculty or by private scholars. During the depression years, several branches of the Works Progress Administration's arts projects—most notably, the Federal Writers' Project, the folklore activities of which were coordinated by Benjamin Botkin in the late 1930s—devoted attention to collecting and disseminating American folk expression.

However, between the late 1940s and the late 1960s, public sector folklore generally fell out of favor within the larger field. During these years, many university scholars involved in focused, dedicated efforts to establish folklore as a significant university discipline argued that public sector folklore's "popularization" of folk expression weakened not only the material of folklore but also the discipline's own chances for academic respectability—and the departmental territory, research grants, and other professional benefits that respectability could bring. In

effect, the increasing power of the field of folklore as an academic discipline was purchased at the cost of the wholeness of that part of the discipline and of its connection with a broader public. At the same time, however, the products of the “popularizers” of folklore—including Botkin’s various *Treasuries* volumes, Sarah Gertrude Knott’s annual National Folk Festivals (which began in 1934 and continue in changed form today), and local folk dance participation activities throughout the country—were indeed popular, then and now. To this day, Americans’ ideas about folklore have been shaped and reinforced far more by such popular work than by the academic activities of folklorists.

A movement toward *applied folklore*, the use of folklorists’ skills and knowledge for projects of social reform in the communities they study, took place within the American Folklore Society in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Based in leftist movements of the 1960s joining intellectual and political life, such work went beyond the presentational activities of public sector folklore. But once again, voices idealizing “detached, objective” scholarship held sway, and the applied folklore movement effectively ceased to be, not to be resurrected until the “cultural conservation” movements of the middle 1980s.

Even viewed in the context of this long history, the 1970s saw an unprecedented explosion of work in the public sector, most of it funded by federal and state governments. In 1967, the Smithsonian Institution began presenting an annual Festival of American Folklife, directed by Ralph Rinzler, on the National Mall—the nation’s ceremonial axis—in Washington, D.C. Initially a weekend’s performance of traditional music, it soon grew to a 2-week exploration of various forms of folk performing, material, narrative, and customary traditions from throughout the United States and the world. In the nation’s bicentennial year of 1976, in fact, the festival ran for 12 weeks and featured the folk traditions of scores of cultural groups from all the states and territories and dozens of other countries. Moreover and equally important for the history of public sector folklore, the festival (particularly the enormous 1976 undertaking) has served as the annual training ground for young public sector folklorists.

Their mid-1970s Smithsonian experience enabled these young folklorists to occupy the dozens of “state folklorist” posts and other more local public sector folklore positions that were created between 1975 and 1990. Most of these positions are located in state arts councils (and a minority in state humanities councils, historical societies, departments of culture, or other similar agencies), and, like state arts councils themselves, they were a direct result of the initiative of the Folk Arts Program (now renamed the Folk and Traditional Arts Program) of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Folk and Traditional Arts Program began in 1974 and, over the next several years, grew from within the NEA’s special projects office to take on independent status. It was headed until 1976 by Alan Jabbour, folk music scholar and former head of the Library of Congress’s folk music archive, and from 1977 to 1992 by Bess Lomax Hawes, who joined the NEA following an

extensive career in folklore as a collector, performer, teacher, and writer. Longtime deputy Dan Sheehy took over direction of the program after Hawes' departure.

Early in the program's history, the staff set several objectives, including that of firmly establishing folklore in the landscape of public support for culture and the arts. In part, they went about achieving that objective by offering grants to state arts councils to establish folk arts programs, staffed by professional folklorists, to serve artists and art forms not served by state councils' more typical music and visual arts programs. In this way, the Folk and Traditional Arts Program has attempted to do in the world of government what academic folklorists had attempted to do in the world of universities: establish institutional territory but, in this case, without needing to disparage other aspects of folklore work.

For reasons ranging from a belief in the necessity of support for folk expression to a desire for federal funds, many state arts councils and other agencies took advantage of this NEA support. Among the first states to begin folk arts programs were Alabama, Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Utah. These programs' early activities—more often than not, statewide folk festivals or folk arts exhibitions, both based on field research and documentation—were intentionally chosen to establish visibility and territory for folk arts, folk artists, and folklorists. Since both were considered comparable in impact, the choice between them, in fact, was often determined by the interests of the new state folklorist or by the preferences of state arts council directors or boards.

Each of these presentational modes has its advantages and disadvantages. Folk festivals tend to be large and therefore highly visible, and as celebratory media, they are associated in the public mind with fairs, outdoor concerts, and other visually and programmatically similar events. To be sure, exposure and celebration are powerful cultural tools, especially when festival artists and audiences come from different cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, festival producers' educational aims are often frustrated by audience perceptions of these events as primarily for entertainment—again, as are state fairs and other celebratory events. Festivals' presentational settings and techniques have concentrated on (and the wandering behavior of festival audiences favors) performing artists as opposed to craftspeople and large-scale events as opposed to intimate ones. Finally, festivals tend to be quite expensive and can be short-lived and ephemeral unless plans are made to build more lasting community programs on the foundation of festival celebrations or to extend the lifespans of festivals by tours, residencies, and other movable or smaller-scale presentational activities.

Exhibitions, by contrast, favor the presentation of material culture. They can be broader and more flexible in approach, devoting attention to dimensions of medium, theme, cultural and social context and the development of a tradition over time that are often difficult to convey effectively in live events.

Exhibitions can travel to several sites and thus reach more diverse and larger audiences, and exhibition catalogs, when carefully prepared, become valuable, permanent educational products. Without creative conception and design, however, exhibitions can become only static inventories of objects that do not convey the vitality and depth of their home traditions and communities.

Since the mid-1970s, state folk arts programs have built on this heritage to design and produce their own locally appropriate repertoire of activities. These include conducting and documenting field research; providing advice and assistance to folk artists; producing festivals, exhibitions, media programs, publications, educational residencies, and other public presentations; and giving grants to artists and community-based organizations. Committees of public sector folklorists have conducted surveys of these state programs' funding and activities in 1983, 1984, 1989, and 1994 for the Folk and Traditional Arts Program and the Public Programs Section of the American Folklore Society (the society's interest group for public sector folklorists).

At present, 48 of the 56 states and territories have such programs. Their increasing establishment and maturity—and funding—also has supported the growth, especially since the mid-1980s, of a significant number of public folk cultural programs in cities and counties that concentrate on local artists and traditions. Finally, several of the regional consortia of state arts councils, which foster cooperative activities among the states (the Mid-Atlantic Arts Federation, the New England Foundation for the Arts, the Southern Arts Federation, and the Western States Arts Foundation), now include folk arts among their presentations and folklorists on their staffs.

Since the mid-1970s, the NEA Folk and Traditional Arts Program has shaped the public sector folklore landscape in other ways. The program gives grants throughout the country to community-based nonprofit organizations for the presentation and media documentation of traditional arts and artists, as well as for various services to the field. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the program supported regular meetings of state folklorists in Washington, D.C., and more recently has convened meetings and designed projects on support for crafts and craftspeople, on folk arts in education, and other special topics. The program pioneered the awarding of small grants to support apprenticeships in the folk arts, and it has passed on to many states the responsibility and the funding to continue such programs. In 1982, the program began honoring the nation's finest and most respected practitioners of tradition through an annual set of a dozen or more National Heritage Fellowships, thereby also giving larger visibility to folk tradition and the field of folklore.

During this same period, other federal programs were created or expanded. An intensive lobbying effort, spearheaded by Archie Green, for a federal institution specifically devoted to folklore led to the passage of the American Folklife Preservation Act in 1976, which established an American Folklife Center to be housed in the Library of Congress to “preserve and present

American folklife,” in the language of the act. In 1978, the center incorporated the Library’s Archive of Folk Culture, created in 1928 as the Archive of Folksong and directed, over the years, by several of the most significant “popularizers” of American folk culture: John Lomax, Alan Lomax, Benjamin Botkin, and Duncan Emrich. The center, directed by Alan Jabbour since its establishment, carries out its own program of team field research projects, archival organization and preservation, reference services, conferences, educational programs and publications, and services to the field.

Since the publication in 1983 of its study *Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States*, the center also has devoted effort to working out the implications of the concept of “cultural conservation.” This concept is both an end—the expression of an ideal, in thinking and planning, of concern for the processes and products of everyday culture—and a means—a way of saying “folklore” to professionals and policymakers in other fields in a manner they are more likely to understand.

The National Endowment for the Humanities, since it is not internally organized according to humanities disciplines, has no folklore program or staff positions per se. However, NEH has had folklorists on its staff for some years who serve as important advisers to and conduits from the field.

The Festival of American Folklife, originally produced by the Smithsonian’s Division of Performing Arts, became a production of the newly created Office of Folklife Programs in 1976. In 1987, the office acquired the enormous recorded holdings of Moses Asch’s Folkways Records after Asch’s death. It now both distributes existing Folkways recordings and vigorously issues new recordings under its Smithsonian Folkways label.

In line with the recent development of interdisciplinary university programs and scholarly journals in “cultural studies,” the office was renamed the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies in 1992. In addition to the annual festival and ongoing recording activities, the center produces documentary publications and films and works closely with the cultural groups featured in the festival to plan continuing folk cultural programs in their home communities. Among its other activities is an annual workshop, coinciding with the festival, to bring folklorists together with “community scholars” (those many skilled and devoted nonprofessionals with a long history of commitment to documenting, presenting, and supporting local folk traditions) to exchange the useful philosophies and practices developed by both groups.

This same 20-year period has seen the development of energetic private, nonprofit organizations engaged in local, state, or national folklore research and programming. The oldest of these—actually founded well before this period—is the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) in Silver Spring, Maryland. Founded by Sarah Gertrude Knott in 1934 as the National Folk Festival Association to produce the event of the same name, the organization was essentially devoted only to that project until recently. Since beginning in the early

1970s, NCTA (under the direction of Joe Wilson) has designed and tested many new models for the presentation of (mostly performing) folk arts. Most notable among these is the “inreach” tour, which presents respected local performers to other communities around the country or world that share the performers’ culture (as opposed to “outreach” tours, much more common in the mainstream arts world, that present performances to culturally unfamiliar audiences).

Several private, nonprofit organizations, headed by former state folklorists, carry on work once done by public sector programs in their state’s government, as well as newer, unique programs. These include the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, Texas Folklife Resources, the Vermont Folklife Center, and the Western Folklife Center in Elko, Nevada. Similar organizations focused at the community level include City Lore and the Ethnic Folk Arts Center in New York City, Cityfolk in Dayton, and the Philadelphia Folklore Project. In addition, many other arts, cultural, and educational institutions support their own public sector folklore and folk arts programs, from the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco to the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio and the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Finally, several folk museums and historical archaeology sites—among them the Conner Prairie Pioneer Settlement outside Indianapolis, the Jensen Living Historical Farm in Logan, Utah, the Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton, Virginia, and Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts—carry on in the European tradition by presenting reconstructions and reenactments of rural folklife.

This network of public sector folklorists and institutions keeps written track of itself through the twice-yearly issues of the *Public Programs Newsletter*, the periodical of the American Folklore Society’s Public Programs Section. A typical example of the *Newsletter*, the first issue of 1993, ran to 87 double-column pages and contained discussions of cultural conservation matters and other professional issues, news of public sector activities throughout the country, and a directory of 177 entries for public sector folklore programs and independent folklorists. By contrast, the American Folklore Society’s *Journal of American Folklore (JAF)*, as well as other significant American folklore serials (*Western Folklore*, *Southern Folklore*) have devoted relatively little attention to public sector folklore, at least until recently. *JAF*, for instance, now prints reviews of some public sector presentations—exhibitions, festivals, and the like—and has included several articles on issues of authenticity and representation that draw on public sector experience.

The society’s annual meeting in late October, however, is the largest gathering of public sector folklorists in the country. Since the late 1980s, about 1 in every 8 sessions at the meeting has been explicitly “about” public sector folklore. (At the 1993 meeting, for example, 14 sessions of 115 total, at least 1 during every time slot in the program, fit this description.) Many others are informed by current work in this area but have been given some other title.

Other regional meetings offer more focused gatherings: Public sector folklorists from the Western states have met in parallel with Utah State University's annual Fife Folklore Conference since around 1980, and the Southern Arts Federation sponsors biannual retreats for folklorists from the Southeast.

Thus, there are many indications that the entire field of folklore and related fields of cultural study are again positively incorporating public sector work and are again incorporating as central those issues that have been at the heart of the public sector enterprise from the start. These include issues of *representation* (how are folk traditions, artists, and communities depicted through the work of folklorists and others?), *authority* (by whom are folk traditions, artists, and communities depicted and in whose terms?), *responsibility* (for informed, sensitive, and accurate representation), and *collaboration* (among tradition-bearers, other community members, and folklorists or other outside workers to achieve the most appropriate representation).

Responding to these sorts of issues requires integrative education: extensive fieldwork experience; a solid grounding in the materials, history, theories, and techniques of the entire discipline of folklore (including the discipline's always-present public aspects); and direct experience in public sector folklore work, from teaching to presentation planning and community service, along with reflection on that work. For the most part, graduate programs in folklore and folklife do not provide public sector experience or reflection as a formal part of their curricula, though this is changing, especially at younger programs. The effective collaboration of community members and folklorists that is a goal of contemporary public sector folklore work also requires shared and integrative learning, based in carefully planned projects that serve communities well.

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See also Archives and Archiving; Folklife; Folklore; Museum, Folk

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PUPPETRY

The manipulation of material images by human hands in dramatic or narrative performances. The world's peoples have devised a broad range of puppetry traditions over the centuries, some quite familiar and others virtually unknown outside of their originating communities. A number of well-known examples fit the definition precisely, ranging from the European glove puppets of the Punch-and-Judy type to the multistringed marionettes of Burma or Thailand, from the snake puppets of Hopi ritual dramas to the shadow puppets of the Malayo-Indonesian world, from the rod puppets of western Africa to the Japanese *bunraku*. But there are other performing traditions that challenge the boundaries of the definition, such as elaborate, larger-than-life-size masquerades common throughout Africa or the processional giants of western Europe, icons and other images used in sacred rituals that may not be conceived by their practitioners as “performances,” the use by storytellers of scroll paintings or pictures to illustrate their narratives, or traditions of “flesh-and-blood” puppetry in which performers—often small children—imitate the stiff and conventionalized movements of puppets. Despite its global ubiquity, puppetry remains a relatively unstudied performance tradition (with some few exceptions), perhaps because it is often considered as a trivial genre of greatest interest to children. Increasingly in recent years, folklorists and other scholars have moved from simple historical accounts tracing the evolution of genres and characters to studies of actual performances and their dynamics.

Although puppetry traditions can be classified functionally (e.g., sacred versus secular forms, serious versus humorous ones) or according to features of their performance (e.g., mute versus speaking puppets, those with music or those without, improvised versus scripted content), they are most often considered comparatively in terms of their formal-structural elements and means of animation. Marionettes are operated by means of strings or rods hanging from above (for instance, the *kathputli* puppets of Rajasthan or the *pupi* of Sicily, both



A shadow puppet of the cannibal demon Rangada, a character in a popular Balinese performance. Puppetry's subject matter has a wide range, from slapstick to sacred ritual.

of which enact historical legends). In glove puppets (or hand puppets), the puppeteer's hand fits inside the puppet's head, as for instance the French Polichinelle or Russian Petrushka (two cousins of the Punch-and-Judy family that also includes the German Hanswurst, Italian Pulcinella, and Egyptian Aragouz). Shadow puppets include opaque or translucent images, usually two-dimensional, that are displayed behind or in front of a screen, casting a shadow or being illuminated in relief; this form has been highly elaborated in China, India, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Rod puppets are distinguished from marionettes because the rods that are used to animate the puppets are operated from below rather than above; among the more familiar forms are the Japanese *bunraku*, the Indonesian *wayang golek*, and the Thai *khun lakhon lek*.

Cutting across these formal-structural categories are certain characteristics of puppetry performance traditions. Within each tradition, puppeteers have evolved various ways of giving voice to the puppet characters. Typically, the puppeteer provides distinct voices for each of the puppet characters, who engage in dramatic dialogue with one another. The voices may be distinguished by speaking style, vocabulary, voice quality, or the use of distinct dialects or languages. The Indonesian *dalang* (puppeteer) makes use of different levels or styles of language (from colloquial to royal, informal to elegant) as well as different vocal qualities (smooth and gentle for refined characters and rough and abrupt for ruffians or clowns). Similarly, the chivalric marionettes of Liège or Palermo are endowed by their operators with identifiable voices and appropriate vocabularies and speaking styles. In other cases, the puppeteer is assisted by actors who provide the voices for each of the characters, as one or more manipulator operates the puppets. In many traditions (especially those of the Punch-and-Judy family), the puppeteer makes use of an instrument in his or her mouth that distorts the natural voice and produces a seminonsensical squeaking or buzzing voice. The puppeteer will then carry on a dialogue between the distorted voice and a natural one, often assisted by an interlocutor or musician who takes one of the parts in the dialogue. In other traditions, the spoken element of the performance takes the form of a narrative rather than a dialogue, and there is no effort to make it appear that the puppets are carrying on conversations among themselves.

The subject matter of puppetry performances may range from slapstick, topical humor, and ribaldry to highly serious sacred rituals. Often, puppets are used to enact semihistorical legends, such as the chivalric epics of Roland or Orlando or the Indic *Ramayana* epic. Such extended works may be presented serially, with each performance featuring a single episode, or in performances that last all night or several days. The *dramatis personae* may be numerous or relatively few. The Punch-Pulcinella-Petrushka tradition of glove puppets typically includes a handful of characters who engage the hero in dyadic encounters. These forms also typically feature a substantial degree of involvement by one or more members of the audience, and they often make humorous reference to the events of the day or the attributes of the spectators or their context. In

repressive sociopolitical settings, puppets are a favorite voice for the downtrodden or rebellious since they may be granted a degree of license to make critical remarks that would be punished if uttered by human actors. And because they are not human, puppets can easily be beheaded or otherwise victimized. Folk puppetry traditions often have been taken up by elite artists and writers, who find them a flexible medium through which to engage in theatrical experimentation or innovation.

Frank Proschan

See also Mask.

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R

REBUS

A term used to signify the representation of language “by means of things.” It is important to distinguish between the rebus principle, what I. J. Gelb calls the “principle of phonetization,” by which words or syllables are represented by drawings of homonyms, and the enigmatic representation of a name or phrase—or even whole texts—which employ the same, or similar, principles. The former was a stage in the development of writing systems, and the ancient Sumerians, out of practical necessity, represented their word *ti* (life) by a drawing of an arrow, which was also *ti* in Sumerian. The enigmatic representation of written language, a test of a reader’s ability at mental gymnastics, clearly differs from a practical system of writing, which requires speed and accuracy.

Because Western societies have become increasingly linear in their conception of language since the invention of print—a phenomenon intensified not only by the Reformation, with its insistence upon the “Word,” but also by the relatively recent emergence of computer technology, with its assumption of strings of alphanumeric—mention must be made of what is called *pattern poetry*, the combination of the visual and the linguistic or literary. Like the term *shaped poetry*, *pattern poetry* was coined in the nineteenth century in an attempt to signify the variety of similar attempts at cojoining the visual and the verbal in different cultures and in different eras. *Hieroglyphic poetry* is yet another term for the same phenomenon. The overall shape of these texts either suggests or reinforces their meanings, as, most literally, in George Herbert’s well-known poem, “Easter Wings.”

Rebuses may be seen to be hieroglyphic poems in style but with a larger proportion of enigma involved. Rather than reinforcing meaning, rebuses seem more often to distract from it because they are literal puns. A drawing of an eye followed by a drawing of a saw does not necessarily suggest “I saw.” That example, of course, conforms to Gelb’s notion of the principle of phonetization, with one word or syllable represented by a drawing of a more concrete homonym. In more modern societies, however, words are sufficiently stable that they have become things, and as a result, a nonpictorial rebus (i.e., a literal rebus) is the following: HAbirdND = BUtwoSH (“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”), with the only clue to its resolution being the change in type. A different kind of rebus, WORL signifies “world without end.” It is of no little significance that the word processor used to write this entry makes it impractical to represent less linear rebuses, such as those that signify “back-up lights” and “John Underwood, Andover, Mass.” Such rebuses, playing as they do upon our left-to-right linear concept of language representation, violate assumptions about language that underlie our word-processing software. Thus, the worka-

day-world practicality of computer technology reinforces the “enigmatic” quality of rebuses. Rebuses today are generally considered humor for children or, at best, “language arts” exercises in elementary schools; illustrative examples are David A. Adler’s *Happy Thanksgiving Rebus* and Lisa Rojany’s *Story of Hanukkah: A Lift-the-Flap Rebus Book*. In the late eighteenth century, however, a number of “hieroglyphic epistles” were printed on broadsides for adult readers. One of these was printed by W. Allen, Dame Street, Dublin, in 1779. It begins as follows (an interpretation is enclosed in brackets following each word that involves rebuses of the various kinds):

Ewer [Your] H-eye-ness’s [Highness’s] E-pistol [Epistle]
 Came Safe toe [to] hand [hand], eye [I] Have S-hoe-n [Shown]
 it toe [to] awl [all] m-eye [my] friends on ear-th [earth], w-hoe
 [who] r [are] glad toe [to] hare [hear] t-hat [that] T-hare [there]
 Is so good an Under-stand-ing [understanding] bee-tween
 [between] us, and t-hat [that] eye [I] am lick-ly [likely] toe [to]
 bee [be] ass [as] grate [great] a favor-ite [favorite] bee-low [below]
 ass [as] eye [I] am hare [here].

Printed in Ireland and on a topic that concerns England, this hieroglyphic epistle lends itself to a prorevolution reading through its many uses of “pistol” and even “hoe,” weapons of the Irish peasantry that were not included in the printing of a variant of this broadside in Scotland. Thus, such rebus writing may contain a higher level of meaning than the literal, but on the literal level, this item illustrates a range of practices that contradict Gelb’s idea of one syllable or word for one image. Here, there is a mixture of ways of representing spoken syllables and words (Under-stand-ing) and their spelling (t-hat). Indeed, this text plays off of the various ways we read and speak. If we consider its possibly revolutionary intent, we should not consider its arbitrary mix of rebus applications out of line. In its complexity, it contrasts strikingly with the various “hieroglyphic” Bibles and love letters of the period.

Rebus writing has a long history, and the play with those principles has a shorter history. That certain words, word fragments, and syllables were represented in conventional ways within a given culture should surprise no one because the fit between the available visual images and the current state of language is ever-shifting. That a subversive representation should have developed in a country as repressed as Ireland also should surprise no one.

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See also Enigma, Folk.

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RECITATION

Orally performed and rhetorically mannered spoken delivery of verse or prose text, usually prepared and often memorized. Cross-culturally, recitation is ancient in practice, transglobal, and considerably varied in secular and sacred performance evidence. Presumably, the historically distant roots of recitation reside in face-to-face encounters dependent largely, if not exclusively, upon spoken rather than inscribed dissemination of public oratory, collective oral history, oral-formulaic verse, entertaining and edifying passages, and the like. Oral recitation is not restricted by gender or age, and it pertains to many genres of verbalized folk and popular culture literature. As performed rhetoric, recitation lends itself to a range of oratorical style options based on a combination of text content, conventional norms, and individual predispositions. The term *recitation* is widely employed in reference to rhythmic chanting, metered declamation, and “theatrically” stylized oral performance of texts, though straightforward and understated renditions occur as well. Often, recitation offers opportunities for showcasing self as performer, while accompanying vocal inflections and body gestures inform and encourage within audience members the reciter’s interpretation of and emotive response to the text.

Pluralized, the term *recitations* refers to folk verse, rhymed popular poetry, and prose either specifically intended in composition for recitation delivery or subsequently lending itself to it. A closely related term, *monologues*, refers more narrowly to narrative prose or narrative poetic selections rendered as recitation. In usage, the latter term appears primarily identified with late-Victorian and early-twentieth-century British Isles popular culture, notably in England, where allusion to “monologues” appears in the titles of numerous printed elocutionary manuals, anthologies, and folios. Intended for mass-audience appeal and dissemination, these sources feature recitation texts often identified with renowned and professionalized public entertainers (for example, Billy Bennett and Stanley

Holloway) affiliated with music halls, burlesque, vaudeville, and early commercial sound recordings. To some extent, as in Newfoundland, Canada, and elsewhere in anglophonic tradition, the inclusive terminology *recitations and monologues* exists in popular culture and scholarly currency as an accepted alternative to recitations per se (hence, analogous to the usage “folksongs and ballads”). However, many performers and most folklorists opt for the latter term, *monologue*, when referring to both the materials and the performance of recitations.

Considered internationally, recitation among adults includes oral epics and sagas; accolades and memorial tributes; formulaic incantations and sayings; mock-serious and parodic speeches; rhymed verse such as toasts and limericks; and innumerable dramatic, descriptive, sentimental, and homiletic poems and prose passages in whole or part attributable to anonymous or known authorship. Humorous, erotic, bawdy, and obscene recitation texts exist as well, sometimes coincident with the aforementioned examples. Adult recitation is also found as an alternative to the singing of lyrical, descriptive, or narrative song texts: For western Europe, Scandinavia, Great Britain, and North America, evidence includes recited folk ballads. Elsewhere and documented during the twentieth century, adult recitation traditions in North America include folk verse circulated among occupational workers and within rural communities; urban street vendors’ “spiels”; prison inmate verse; and chanted oral sermons found in various white and African-American Protestant religious service observances. In the British Isles, recitations are presented (as in, “I’ll give you a humorous poem”) at social drinking pubs, folk clubs, and staged heritage festivals. In the British West Indies, Afro-Caribbean declaimed speeches occur at “tea meeting” social gatherings; in Australia, there are “bush recitations” (“bush verse,” “bush ballads”) at social drinking pubs; and in Canada, dialect poems and monologues are recited at house parties and community entertainment events (“times”). The preceding examples single out reports from the English language; a more comprehensive and indicative survey would include a vast compilation of evidence from additional world culture areas, countries, linguistic traditions, and folk groups. This observation holds as well for documented recitation evidence among children.

Numerous collections and accompanying commentary have dealt with childlore recitation. In its western European, British Isles, and North American manifestations, examples include childhood recitations of traditional verse accompanying folk games; recited parodies of well-known, adult literary passages and revered songs; “tangle-talk” mock speeches and nonsense verse; chanted boasts and taunts; and, primarily among urban adolescents and young adults affiliated with street gangs, reciting of miniepic rhymed folk verse that boasts of real or fantasized contest and conquest.

Since the 1970s, a number of folklorists in Great Britain, Australia, and the United States—together with recitation performers—have singled out, for greater attention, late-Victorian, Edwardian, and twentieth-century English-

language popular poetry as a primary source for reciters dually influenced by anglophonic folk tradition and popular culture antecedents. Whether labeled *popular poetry*, *vernacular popular poetry*, or *poetry of the people*, such rhymed verse compositions are distinguishable from *elite poetry* by their commonplace diction and tendency to present subject matter dealing with real or fictional adventure, faraway dramatic encounter, community happenstance, or rural domestic experience. Narrative and humorous popular poetry recitation texts, often authored and performed by men, appear to outnumber others; women's authored and performed texts, at least in anglophonic tradition, are frequently lyrical, sentimental, and homiletic. Many widely circulated popular poetry compositions are attributable to regionally, nationally, and internationally known authors: in England, notably Rudyard Kipling and George R. Sims; in Canada, Robert W. Service and William Henry Drummond; in Australia, A. B. Paterson and Henry Lawson; in the United States, Eugene Field and Will Carleton. In the western United States, rhymed popular poetry suited to oral recitation has flourished among cowboys and ranchers since the late 1800s, and there are numerous renowned and lesser known self-identified "bunkhouse folk poets" within their ranks. In the late twentieth century, American "cowboy poetry" in four-line or longer stanzas vies with Australian "bush verse" as ongoing, freshly creative, and commercially evolving oral recitation within conventions and precedents found worldwide. Representative and widely heralded twentieth-century American cowboy and rancher poet-reciters include Curley Fletcher, Baxter Black, and Waddie Mitchell; Australian counterparts include C. J. Dennis and others who have foregrounded their continent's history, popular culture, and western Queensland bush.

In all, oral recitation endures from ancient times into the present in diversified textual evidence and situated occasioning. Increasingly, inquiries into the phenomenon among adults need to contend with expanding global public access to printed publications, audio recordings, radio and television, videotape, emerging electronic and computer media, and commercial popular culture generally. Tourism-related displays and events that serve nostalgia sometimes introduce new and wider audiences to reciters and the recitation format. Emergent commercial outlets also may bring established recitation tradition to mass-public familiarity, as happened with the rhymed "rap" recitations found in American popular music since the late 1970s, which derived from African-American "street poetry" current a generation earlier. Scholars might also consider the indebtedness, interconnections, or departure of childlore recitation texts and performances from those of culture-sharing adults. Whatever and wherever the evidence, recitation continues as one of the major oral performance varieties in global consideration.

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See also Oral-Formulaic Theory; Performance; Popular Culture.

REGIONAL APPROACH



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R REGIONAL APPROACH

An approach that considers distinctive constellations of traditional expressive forms performed in a specific area, with a particular emphasis on those that exist in a mutually responsive relationship with the area. Although *all* of the folklore of a particular place is important and can reveal much about its inhabitants, contemporary folklorists distinguish between *the folklore of regions* and *regional folklore*. Regional folklore, unlike traditions that appear and function widely, exists in what Archie Green calls a “reflexive” relationship with a spatially defined group, rather than one conceptualized on the basis of such other factors as age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, avocation, or lifestyle. Truly regional folklore expresses and articulates a place’s worldview, while at the same time shaping and informing it. In other words, as Green puts it, “Lore delineates region and region delimits lore. In either direction each turns back, or is bent, to the other.” This reflexivity is not operative insofar as the folklore of regions is concerned. For example, catastrophe jokes, the proverb “Haste makes waste,” the ballad “Barbara Allen,” and the belief that a copper bracelet cures arthritis are part of the traditional inventories of many regions, but *corridos* (Mexican-American folk ballads), stories about the Brown Mountain lights, sneakboxes (small boats made and used by duck hunters in southern New Jersey), sang hoes

(three-pronged hoes for extracting ginseng), and the ballad “Talt Hall” are most certainly not. Moreover, these latter forms are inextricably connected to the specific geographic contexts in which they appear, both expressing regionality and informing it. As Barre Toelken puts it: “We learn our culture by hearing its expressions, and we in turn express our culture whenever we engage in performing any of its vernacular genres.” Indeed, regional analysis provides excellent insights into the relationships between people, their place, and their lore. Understanding spatially defined groups enhances our understanding of their folklore, and the regionally-bound folklore facilitates our understanding of the group: To know Appalachian folklore, we must know Appalachia; to know Appalachia, we must know its folklore. Whether concerned with the folklore of regions or regional folklore, however, most folklorists would agree with Howard Odum and Harry Moore, who write in *American Regionalism* that the “geographic factor” is the “mudsill” of the concept of regionalism and that “social phenomena may best be understood when considered in relation to the area in which they occur as a cultural frame of reference.”

During the first few decades of American folklore scholarship, many folklorists were interested in the “geographic factor,” framing the traditions they collected in spatial terms. These studies focused on the folklore of regions, paying little attention to regional theory or analysis, but they nevertheless afforded valuable texts and indicated that scholars were at least thinking about the connections between land and lore. Perhaps the first regional folklore collection in the United States was the 1867 book *Slave Songs of the United States*, in which the authors, William Francis Allen, Charles P. Ware, and Lucy M. Garrison, arranged 136 songs according to a geographical scheme, presenting them as belonging to either the “South-Eastern Slave States,” the “Northern Seaboard Slave States,” or the “Inland Slave States.” A few years later, the folklore of such regions as New England, the Southwest, and Appalachia began appearing in the *Journal of American Folklore*. Many of these articles provided excellent texts but very little else, sorely frustrating modern folklorists. For example, in 1925, Isabel Gordon Carter published several Jack tales (*Märchen* that had been “regionalized”) in the *Journal of American Folklore*. After an introductory paragraph, she included only four more short paragraphs of contextual data, pointing out only that her informant, Jane Gentry, learned the stories from her grandfather, who had learned them from his mother. Was Gentry referring to “Old Counce” Harmon, her mother’s father, or to her *paternal* grandfather, who was a Hicks? And what relationship was there between the stories and the title of Carter’s article, “Mountain White Folk-Lore: Tales from the Southern Blue Ridge”? The texts in the article are unquestionably important; they are perhaps the purest Jack tales we have from the rich Hicks-Harmon family repertoire. But fuller contextual information and some discussion of the connections between the stories and the Appalachian experience would have made Carter’s study even more valuable.

Among other early collections of the folklore of regions were those of Alcée Fortier in Louisiana (1895), E. C. Perrow in the South (1912), E. M. Fogel in the Pennsylvania Dutch country (1915), and Aurelio M. Espinosa in the Southwest (1915). Important regional work in the 1920s include studies by Fanny Hardy Eckstorm and Mary Winslow Smyth in Maine, Josiah H. Combs in Appalachia, and Newbell N. Puckett and John H. Cox in the South.

No doubt motivated by widespread dissatisfaction with collective American society, scholars produced an explosion of regional studies during the 1930s, with the "Twelve Southerners" setting the charge in their 1930 document "A Statement of Principles," which proclaimed that the South was indeed a distinctive section, defined primarily by its agrarianness, and that it deserved the right to determine itself and to resist "joining up behind" the American industrial way of life. Writers, historians, geographers, economists, and the federal government all embraced the concept of regionalism. Leading the way for folklorists was Benjamin A. Botkin, editor from 1929 to 1932 of *Folk-Say: A Regional Miscellany*, who became folklore editor for the Federal Writers' Project, a New Deal effort to celebrate the culture of ordinary Americans. Botkin coordinated intense collecting activities, later publishing the materials in several regional "treasuries": New England (1947), the South (1949), the West (1951), and the Mississippi River (1955). A golden age of folklore collecting within regions, the 1930s produced numerous works grounded in spatial dimensions. Collectors and their respective regions include Harry M. Hyatt in Adams County, Illinois; Phillips Barry in Maine; Frank C. Brown and Ralph Steele Boggs in North Carolina; Thomas Brendle in southeastern Pennsylvania; J. Frank Dobie and Mody Boatright in Texas; Hans Kurath in New England; Louise Pound in Nebraska; George Pullen Jackson in the upland South; and Richard Chase, John Jacob Niles, and Cecil Sharp in Appalachia. The best of these collections was Emelyn E. Gardner's *Folklore from the Schoharie Hills, New York*, published in 1937. In addition to providing some excellent texts, Gardner included brief impressions of the region's people, gave a geographical description of the area, discussed local history, and distinguished between folklore "collected elsewhere in the United States" (e.g., "Pretty Polly") and "Schoharie localizations," such as place-name legends, tall tales relating to a local hero, legends concerning area resistance to rent collectors, and four "crude" ballads about local characters. Gardner's work was a firm step in the direction toward the maturation of regional folkloristics.

Collecting organized according to state boundaries continued into the 1940s—John Lomax in Texas, Henry M. Belden in Missouri—but, like Gardner, some folklorists concentrated on cultural and physiographic regions: George Korson in the mining districts of Pennsylvania, Austin E. and Alta S. Fife and Levette J. Davidson in Mormon Utah, Vance Randolph in the Ozarks, and Lelah Allison and Grace Partridge Smith in the 25-county area in southern Illinois known as "Egypt."

But in these studies, there was no consistency in the use of the term *region*,

collecting was generally haphazard rather than systematic, scant attention was given to contextual data, and there was very little reflexive (or any other kind of) analysis. Surveying these collections in 1947, Herbert Halpert, who had himself advanced the status of the field in his dissertation on the New Jersey Pine Barrens a few years earlier, reported that most of them were little more than lists of texts with inbred notes and that the collectors failed to provide adequate descriptions of the cultures with which they were concerned. Halpert went on to call for more sophisticated regional studies.

Halpert's call was answered in 1952 with Richard M. Dorson's *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers*, a study of Michigan's Upper Peninsula region. Basing her comments largely on Dorson's "analysis of the place and the people who live there," reviewer Thelma James referred to the book as "the pattern for regional collections and studies in American folklore." Dorson indeed discussed the regional context in the book, and he devoted over a third of it to "The Native Tradition," exploring at length local beliefs, customs, legends, and anecdotes. Barbara Allen, in commenting on the importance of the book in *Sense of Place*, pointed out that its implicit message "is that the folklore of the Upper Peninsula is truly a regional product, a response to residents' experiences there." Though perhaps not as paradigmatic as *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers*, regional collections continued to appear in the 1950s, including those of Harold E. Briggs (Egypt), Horace P. Beck (Maine), Don Yoder (Pennsylvania), J. Mason Brewer (Texas), Ray B. Browne (Alabama), Harry Oster (Louisiana), and Leonard Roberts (eastern Kentucky). The jewel in the crown of regional folklore scholarship in the 1950s, however, was Américo Paredes' "*With His Pistol in His Hand*": *A Border Ballad and Its Hero*. "It was a peculiar set of conditions," wrote Paredes, "that produced the Lower Border *corrido*," a ballad form typical of the Lower Rio Grande Valley region, half in Mexico, half in the United States. Devoting the entire book to the ballad about the outlaw Gregorio Cortez, Paredes provided detailed discussions of the history, geography, and culture of the region, explaining how the song dramatized cultural conflict along "the Border." As Allen observed, the book was "pivotal"; it moved regional folkloristics even further from the folklore of regions to a study of truly regional folklore.

Paredes' book had not appeared, however, when, in 1957, Richard Dorson delivered to an impressive symposium of scholars his "theory of American folklore," in which he complained that most of the regional collections still remained "on the level of text-hunting motivated chiefly by convenience and emotional identification with a locality." Dorson, like Halpert ten years earlier, urged that American regional collecting "be tied to theoretical questions," insisting that "a series of planned and coordinated field trips is necessary in place of the casual and haphazard collecting that is now the practice." Two years later, in the "Regional Folk Cultures" chapter of *American Folklore*, Dorson offered as a model the results of his own fieldwork in two communities in Maine, along with what others had collected in German Pennsylvania, the Ozarks, Spanish New Mexico, and the Utah Mormon region. By the end of the 1950s, regional

folklore studies had established a secure position in American folklore scholarship.

This position was strengthened in 1964 with Dorson's *Buying the Wind: Regional Folklore in the United States*, a book-length expansion of his regional folklore chapter in *American Folklore*. One reviewer called this work "the first scholarly anthology of regional American folklore." Omitting the Ozarks, perhaps because Vance Randolph had published five books on the subject, Dorson added units on Egypt, Appalachia, and the Louisiana Bayou. The subtitle notwithstanding, the book focused as much on ethnicity as it did on geography, but at the time, it was nevertheless the most responsible collection of American folklore considered on the basis of "place," and it provided an excellent bibliography of regional folklore studies. Dorson mulled over the idea of regional folklore for the next several years, eventually persuading two of his graduate students to pursue the topic.

Regional collections continued to appear throughout the 1960s—S. J. Sackett and William E. Koch's *Kansas Folklore* and Ruth Ann Musick's book on West Virginia ghost tales, for example—but the decade is best characterized by the integration of folkloric and geographic approaches. Geographers had been interested in the concept of regionalism since the publication in 1789 of Jedidiah Morse's *American Geography*, in which the author attempted to make explicit implied assumptions about major American "sections," but oddly, substantial geographically oriented folklore studies did not appear until 1968. That year saw the publication of the cultural geographer E. Joan Wilson Miller's "Ozark Culture Region as Revealed by Traditional Materials," in which Miller argued that "regionalized" folklore (specifically, narratives collected by Vance Randolph) could contribute to "an understanding of forms and processes of settlement" within a cultural region. Miller later suggested that superstitions, too, could facilitate the discovery of a region's "resource base," which supplies the physical and spiritual needs of a folk group. Also in 1968, Alan Lomax published *Folk Song Style and Culture*, a collection of essays supporting his thesis that singing styles defined large, worldwide musical regions. And 1968 was the year that Henry Glassie, following Fred Kniffen's groundbreaking work on the diffusion of folk house types, published his influential *Pattern in the Material Culture of the Eastern United States*. Like Lomax, Glassie identified regions on the basis of folk cultural expressions, in this case, architecture and artifacts. The book represents the high watermark of geographical folklore scholarship.

This geographically oriented folklore approach carried over into the 1970s, especially in the work of W.F.H. Nicolaisen, who became involved with the Society for the North American Cultural Survey, a consortium of geographers, folklorists, anthropologists, and historians that has as its mission the production of an atlas of North American cultures. Nicolaisen's interest in "the reciprocal ways in which folklore creates region while at the same time being shaped by it" mirrored exactly Archie Green's thinking outlined in "Reflexive Regionalism," which appeared in 1978. Regional theory also was advanced by Suzi Jones in

her 1976 article “Regionalization: A Rhetorical Strategy,” in which she, like Miller, emphasized the importance of transformations of folk materials based on a response to a specific place. Other important regional studies in the 1970s were those of Henry Glassie on folk housing in Middle Virginia, Roger Welsch’s work on tall tales in the northern plains, and George Carey’s study on the folklore of both Maryland and the Eastern Shore. Moreover, Richard Dorson, perhaps thinking about his upcoming handbook on American folklore, encouraged two of his graduate students, Howard Marshall and William E. Lightfoot, to undertake regional projects for their dissertations at Indiana University. Marshall, in “The Concept of Folk Region in Missouri: The Case of Little Dixie” (1976), analyzed both verbal and nonverbal traditions, especially those that tended to reveal “regional personality,” concluding that architecture most clearly expressed Little Dixie’s identification “as an island of Southern folk culture in the lower Midwest.” (Marshall’s study was published in 1981 as *Folk Architecture in Little Dixie: A Regional Culture in Missouri*.) Lightfoot concentrated on “Folklore of the Big Sandy Valley of Eastern Kentucky” (1976), also focusing on traditions that displayed regional integrity. Two studies emerging from this work were “The Ballad ‘Talt Hall’ in Regional Context” (1978) and “Regional Folkloristics” (which appeared in Dorson’s 1983 *Handbook of American Folklore*); in this piece, Lightfoot proposed a methodology for regional folklore scholarship that he applied to an analysis of the Big Sandy local ballad “Sam Adams.” Dorson was keen on having regional folklore represented in the *Handbook*, and he included several more essays on the subject.

The essays in the *Handbook* were grounded deeply in the notion of *reflexivity* and were indeed analyses of regional folklore rather than the folklore of regions. Marta Weigle, for example, pointed out that traditional materials of the Southwest both *affect* and *effect* southwesterners’ expressions of themselves and their region’s distinctiveness. Jan Harold Brunvand discussed the esoteric-exotic dimensions of folk speech in Utah and the mountain West, and Edward D. Ives explored the nature of locally composed songs that share “a special provenience,” Maine and the Maritime Provinces of Canada. José E. Limón analyzed “the special regional experience” that generated an extensive body of folklore concerning social conflict along the U.S.-Mexico border, and Robert B. Klymasz examined the generally friendly folklore of the Canadian-American border. In his introduction to the unit, Dorson referred to such concepts as *identity* and *consciousness*, terms that were then becoming characteristic of regional folklore scholarship. Mention should also be made of Dorson’s *Land of the Millrats* (1981), a coordinated team effort to record and analyze the folklore of an urban region—northern Indiana’s Calumet complex. Another major source of work in regional folklore in the 1980s was the Library of Congress–based American Folklife Center, part of whose mission is the preservation of regional cultures. The center has sponsored intensive folklife projects in such regions as “Wiregrass” Georgia, northern Nevada, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the New Jersey Pinelands.

Regional folkloristics was advanced further in 1990 with the publication of *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*. Framed with essays by its editors, Barbara Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth, the book's 10 studies all focused on the reciprocal interaction between place and folk, showing how folklore is both a product of and stimulant to regional group consciousness and how it simultaneously reflects and reinforces regional identity. Roughly half of the essays were concerned with verbal traditions. Barre Toelken, for example, explained how vernacular expressions—jokes, tall tales, legends, and anecdotes—“grow out of, and give voice to” the collective value system of the American West. Larry Danielson discussed the ways in which beliefs, sayings, and stories “crystallize” profound concerns about weather in the Great Plains “breadbasket” area, expressing “a distinctive identification with one’s regional home.” Local historical legends were found by Polly Stewart to be vehicles for the expression of strong “us-versus-them” attitudes among residents of Maryland’s Eastern Shore, and Barbara Allen showed how folk speech in a Kentucky community reflects southerners’ intense sense of place, perhaps the “hallmark” of their regional identity. Illustrating his thesis with both verbal and nonverbal examples, John Michael Coggeshall explained how speech, legends, religious rituals, foodways, and material culture establish bases for regional identity in southern Illinois’ “Egypt.” Three of the essays focused on material culture exclusively. Mary Hufford, for example, described the Barnegat Bay sneakbox, a small skiff used for duck hunting in coastal New Jersey, as a boat comprising “a distinctive response to distinctively regional conditions, a tool whereby local men distinguish themselves as inhabitants of a singular region.” Richard E. Meyer explored the ways in which both visual and verbal images on gravemarkers form a significant part of collective regional self-image not only of people in Oregon’s Willamette Valley but also of Pacific Northwesterners in general. Charles E. Martin analyzed the power of a collective Appalachian regional aesthetic that prohibits individual self-expression, forcing artists to conceal personal expressivity within utilitarian productions. Another study of how regions define form was that of William E. Lightfoot, who described the concatenation of historical, demographic, and physiographic forces in a two-county area in western Kentucky that produced the distinctive regional guitar-playing style known as “Travis-picking,” which became a prominent instrumental element of commercial country music. Finally, Erika Brady suggested that the traditional skill of fur trapping represents the nexus of many aspects of regional identity among residents of the southern Missouri Ozarks. In characterizing these studies, editor Barbara Allen once again evoked the idea of “reflexivity,” writing that the subjects of the essays were “regional cultures and the regional consciousness that both shapes and is shaped by them.” The reflexive process is indeed the very heart of regional folkloristics.

The essays in *Sense of Place* had a profound impact on the thinking of the American studies scholar Kent C. Ryden, whose 1993 book *Mapping the Invisible*

Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place explored the ways in which narratives—both oral and written—create and communicate what he called a regional insider’s “invisible landscape,” a term that he suggested is identical to “regional consciousness.” Believing that folklore “vivifies” geography, Ryden analyzed field-collected narratives in order to better understand the culture of northern Idaho’s Coeur d’Alene mining district.

Another important regional study by a nonfolklorist that nevertheless relied heavily on traditional materials was the 1989 book *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America*, by the historian David Hackett Fischer. Indeed, it was Fischer’s thesis that four sets of British folkways—from East Anglia, southern England, the northern Midlands, and the Borderlands—became the basis of the four original regional cultures in America: the Massachusetts Puritans, the Virginia Cavaliers, the Delaware Valley Quakers, and the Backcountry borderers, respectively. Fischer illustrated this thesis by extensive analyses of the folklore of the four regions.

Although regional folklore studies have matured considerably and have proven useful to scholars in several other disciplines, there is still very little consistency in regional folklore theory. The concept of “region” is so ambiguous and imprecise as to virtually undo itself. For example, the “regions” mentioned here range from the 5,500-mile Canadian-American border to large groups of states (the South) to smaller groups of states (the Southwest) to areas that include parts of states (Appalachia) to single states to clusters of several counties (Egypt) to small groups of counties (Big Sandy) to single counties (Adams County, Illinois). Regions are defined willy-nilly on the bases of physical characteristics, states of mind, political maneuverings, uniformity of cultural traits, distinctiveness, collective personality, consciousness, and single-trait variables. In 41 definitions of region listed by Odum and Moore, 25 were based on notions of “uniformity,” with eight emphasizing “distinctiveness,” four combined the two ideas. “Consciousness” and “identity” would appear frequently if such a list were compiled in 1994. But “uniformity” or “homogeneity” would certainly not characterize Egypt or Appalachia, both of which contain several ethnic groups and social classes within their boundaries. It is doubtful that Glassie’s upland South region, which extends from southern Pennsylvania to Birmingham, Alabama, and includes portions of 14 states, has a distinct personality or consciousness. The practice of snake handling helps to define Appalachia, but it is not exclusive to that region, and even if the ritual were performed there, it would not define Salina, Kansas. Most people in Central City, Kentucky, are probably unaware that they belong to the “Shultz-Travis” region. Although theoretical concepts may be fuzzy, the notion of “place” and folk responses to place remain central to regional folklore scholarship.

William E. Lightfoot

See also Localization; Oikotype/Oicotype



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R RELIGION, COMPARATIVE

An academic discipline devoted to the general study of religions on a comparative basis. The approach is characterized by nondenominational and interdisciplinary research into the phenomena classified as religions, worldviews, and similar systems of thought. Other labels for the discipline are *comparative study of religions*, *the academic study of religions*, *history of religions*, *religious studies*, or *Allgemeine* or *Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft* in German. As an independent academic discipline and an approach to the study of humanity in relation to mind, society, and culture, the approach dates back to the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. Although such materials for the study of human religiosity as, for instance, rock paintings, archaeological findings, and historical reports of travelers, explorers, and missionaries were available prior to the nineteenth century, the intellectual atmosphere did not support the independent general study of religions as an expression of human concerns over the uncertainty and mysteries of life and limitations of human existence.

The comparative study of religion emerged in western Europe, and for that reason, it has a very close link with ideological and social developments in the Western world. In fact, the concept of religion in its present use stems from the Age of Enlightenment, when it was first used in the present Western sense as a discrete sphere of activity. The intellectual atmosphere, however, was not congenial to the fostering of comparative and nondogmatic study of other religions until the nineteenth century.

An ambitious effort to study religious phenomena from a comparative perspective was impossible before the realization of the existence of non-Judeo-Christian religions. The acceptance of non-Western sources of interpretation of the social and physical universe coincided with the discovery of the vast new territories and enabled the realization of the great variety of human religious experiences and beliefs in, particularly, Asia and Africa. The idea of regarding Christianity as merely one of the religions, with no need to label other beliefs as heretical or pagan, preceded and enabled the development of the comparative study of religions. The whole appearance of the concept of religion as a plural phenomenon required a shift from the monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church into a plural interpretation of Christianity itself in Europe. It is also important to realize that comparative religion is not an atheistic discipline but includes atheism as an object of study as well. It should be added that comparative religion, maintaining the goal of a greater understanding of both religions and secularization processes, does not advocate any single faith or ideology.

Comparative religion originated in two different fields of inquiry: philology and anthropology. German scholar F. Max Müller is credited with establishing the philological strand of comparative religion in the 1860s. He was a specialist in Indian classical languages and the “science of religion.” The philological study of that period relied mainly on the textual sources of such great Asian religions as Hinduism and Buddhism. The anthropological approach to the study of religion was developed by British scholars E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) and James G. Frazer (1854–1941). This orientation was based on the theory of unilinear cultural evolution, and the research material consisted of reports produced by people other than the scholars themselves and centered on the problems of the origin of religion and so-called primitive religion.

The term *study of religion* is usually qualified as *general* or *comparative*. In German-speaking countries, for example, the field is referred to either as *Allgemeine* or *Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft*; in the anglophonic world the terms *comparative religion* or (*academic*) *study of religions* are predominant. In the Scandinavian languages, *religionshistoria* has gained an established position, denoting the study of religion in general even though *history of religion* is usually defined as only one of the five main branches of the study of religion, along with the phenomenology of religion, the sociology of religion, the psychology of religion, and the anthropology of religion. The term *comparative religion* is thus a kind of an umbrella for many different approaches to and methods of dealing with religion as a historical, cultural, and individual phenomenon considered in space and time. This list of subjects reveals how varied the viewpoints and problems encountered in the study of religion are. The methods used in different branches of religious study often are not profoundly different from those applied in the corresponding general disciplines.

The *history of religion* focuses on the central problems of the origins of religions and their historical development. Thorough source criticism of the

obtained material in order to prove its historical and religious value is a fundamental part of such study, and the methods used depend on the nature and quality of the material. It is common practice to divide religions into two categories, depending on whether their sources are principally in written documents or oral traditions. In the former case—in the so-called historical, or literate, religions—the study is based primarily on the historical analysis of texts and documents. In the case of cultures not based on written materials, known as primitive or illiterate (nonliterate) religions, conclusions concerning their history have to be arrived at on the basis of oral tradition.

The *phenomenology of religion* is principally a comparative discipline. Its task is to seek out regularly occurring patterns, repeatedly encountered phenomena, and recurring structures and functions in the religious field. The phenomena studied need not necessarily be interdependent from the point of view of their genetic history. The phenomenology of religion is more interested in the phenomena than in the historical relationships among them. The material is usually arranged not chronologically but systematically. The task of religious phenomenology is to classify various forms, structures, and functions of religions. The approach corresponds, to a large extent, to the study of structures and substructures in cultural anthropology. Methods of typological comparison have been very important for this kind of study. As in cultural anthropology, cross-cultural research occupies a prominent position, offering more exact methods for measuring differences between cultural mechanisms and finding common denominators. In contemporary practice, the phenomenology of religion aims to ensure that neither the social nor the cultural context of those phenomena is neglected. To draw up a workable religio-phenomenological model, in general, presupposes historical, ecological, and sociological analysis within a relatively homogenous cultural area. Regional phenomenology of religion as practiced by Scandinavian and Finnish scholars has incorporated the methods of folkloristics into religious studies.

Sociology of religion is a branch of the study of religion that occupies a rather independent position; its methods and problems are much the same as those in general sociology. From the sociological viewpoint, religion is principally a group phenomenon that has been adopted by a limited, cohesive group. Sociologists examine religion as a social system that maintains certain ideas about what is sacred and what is not, as well as the norms and roles associated with sacred and secular phenomena and beings, together with regular patterns of behavior that recur at fixed intervals.

Psychology of religion, on the one hand, forms a sector of the wide field covered by modern psychology; on the other hand, it is a branch of the study of religion. Most of the methods employed today in the psychology of religion have been developed in other branches of psychology. Examples of these methods are questionnaires together with accompanying interviews, laboratory experiments, psychoanalysis, and tests. A new trend is exemplified by ques-

tionnaires about people's attitudes and the use of autobiographical interviews. With a greater emphasis on empirical research methods, scholars within the psychological and sociological trends in the study of religion have labeled their discipline as the *scientific study of religion*.

Anthropology of religion is focused broadly on humankind in its problematic scope: Religion is viewed within the terms of the concepts and behavior of individuals and societies. This method is anthropological in the sense that it attempts to portray religion holistically, either as a part the cultural totality to which it belongs or as a part of the learned social tradition of man. The central problem concerns religious communication, that is, the transmission of religious tradition, the crucial object of the study being interactions between the individuals and societies. The religio-anthropological approach is also ecological, as it concerns itself with the interdependence between religions and the environments in which they exist. Such studies strive to eliminate changes resulting from contacts with other factors (acculturation) in order to arrive at an explanation of whether, for example, membership in a group engaged in a particular trade or occupation influences the way in which religion, religious tradition, and religious behavior are molded into a certain shape and, in the final analysis, the way in which a religious person's character is formed in a particular culture. Religio-anthropological study is based primarily on the materials collected in intensive fieldwork. The problems of the holistic study of culture, religious interaction systems, religious communication, and ecological questions make such great demands as regards the material under study that collecting in-depth in any field is central to religio-anthropological research.

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See also Religion, Folk.

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R RELIGION, FOLK

Religion as it is believed, practiced, and experienced in everyday life. Many humanistic and social scientific disciplines have examined the kinds of religious belief and practice found among the common people and categorized them as *folk religion*. The discipline of folklore has employed this term to describe a variety of rural, urban, historical, and contemporary religious phenomena that are directly influenced by, develop alongside, and exist within “official,” institutional religious contexts and forms.

Folklorists continue to prefer *folk religion* as a term of choice to describe the religion of small, homogeneous communities of believers in place of *popular religion*, the religious expressions of the masses or religion transmitted by means of mass communication. Many other designations share a conceptual kinship with folk religion. Some of these expressions in English are: *popular religion*, *people's religion*, *practical religion*, *local religion*, *common religion*, *the religious life of the laity*, *domestic religion*, *extra-ecclesiastical religion*, *pragmatic religion*, *subterranean theologies and superstitions*, *nonofficial religion*, *lived religion*, and *actual religion*. Terms specifically used by folklore/folklife scholars are *superstition*, *unofficial religion*, *religious folklife*, *religious folklore*, *religious folk tradition*, *the folk church*, and *oral, traditional religion*.

Whatever confusion there is navigating the plethora of terms folklorists have used in their study of religion, they share one essential idea: that a concern for religion as it is manifested in everyday life is essential for a complete apprehension of human religiosity. This point is crucial because of the overemphasis of scholarly interest in the institutional dimensions of religious history, structure, laws, polity, community, education, texts, and architecture. Folk religion scholarship has examined, instead, religion expressed in individual and community systems of belief; speech, story, and song; private devotions and practices; public ritual activities; and the material culture of clothing, food, domestic space, religious objects, and the life of the body.

When folklorists study religion, they tend to see it as involving explicit references for people to conceptions of deities or the supernatural. Their eclectic study of religion has centered on complex societies and mainly emphasized Christian contexts. Conceptualizations of folklore and religion have been divided between the study of lore, that is, the oral (and sometimes behavioral and material) expressions concerning or emanating from a particular religious tradition, and the study of the folk (a group of religious people). This can be called “religious folklore.” Folk religion also has represented for folklorists a specific group of religious people, such as “the folk church,” which stands independent of a culture’s normative religious communities or organizations. Finally, “folk religion” has been conceived as the entire body of interpreted and negotiated religious beliefs and practices of individuals and communities fluidly interacting with organized religious traditions. The diverse subjects examined have

included the collection and analysis of Christian saints' legends; supernatural narratives from Mormon Utah; American regional spirituals; witch tales from eastern Pennsylvania counties; popular beliefs concerning the cycles of human life, luck, magic, and the supernatural given the pejorative designation "superstitions"; and the cultural continuities categorized as survivals of distinct ethnic and linguistic regions and peoples, such as the ancient Celts, Germans, Mediterranean, eastern Europeans, Middle Eastern and Far Eastern communities, Africans, and Native Americans. The breadth of folkloristic interests in religion is shown in the range of other historical and contemporary work, such as the study of Bavarian pilgrimage devotionism and its associated material culture of medals and badges; French, French-Canadian, and German holy cards and other religious prints; Holy Week processions of southern Italians; Swedish Lutheran peasants' use of the Bible; devotion in Newfoundland to particular Roman Catholic saints; healing narratives associated with a European or American saint's shrine; the use of talismans in Greek-American culture; New England tombstone designs; oral expression of Pentecostal women in Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri; speech, chant, and song in an Appalachian Independent Baptist congregation; voodoo and other African-Caribbean syncretized forms of belief; urban and rural Italian and Italian-American home altars and street and lawn shrines; apparitions of holy persons in Europe and the Americas; contemporary Wicca and goddess religion in England and the United States; and the negotiated beliefs of gay and lesbian urban Roman Catholics.

Folklorists have studied religion and religious material in a number of ways. The earliest research into folk religion was accomplished by German folklife scholars, and it was the Lutheran minister Paul Drews who coined the term *religiöse Volkskunde* in 1901 to prepare young seminary graduates for the radically different religious ideas of their rural congregants. Throughout the twentieth century, German, Austrian, Swiss, and Swedish folklife scholars (Georg Schreiber, Wolfgang Brückner, Richard Weiss, and Hilding Pleijel among them) studied the religious customs of Roman Catholic and Protestant peasant and rural (and gradually urban) populations continuing Drews' dichotomous conception of folk religion as the religious elaborations of the faithful juxtaposed to the religion of self-designated official institutions and their functionaries. Other European regional ethnologists, such as southern Italian scholars influenced by Antonio Gramsci (for example, Ernesto De Martino and Luigi Lombardi-Satriani) became especially interested in the autonomous devotions of the dominated classes, which they interpreted as a means of cultural and political resistance. Gradually throughout the century, archives and museums were established in Europe for the preservation, study, and display of the oral, literary, and material evidence of the people's traditional religious beliefs.

The American folklife scholar Don Yoder adapted the European approach to the study of the religion of folk cultures in the context of North America. His influential 1974 definition conceptualized folk religion as unorganized religion

that is both related to and in tension with the organized religious systems in a complex society. It was, for him, the totality of people's religious views and practices existing apart from and alongside normative religious theological and liturgical forms. Yoder, therefore, conceived of folk religion primarily as unofficial religion. In this regard, his definition remains closely aligned to the official church-centered orientation of European scholarship. Yoder's two-tiered dichotomization of unofficial folk religion and official institutional religion pervades the scholarly description, conceptualization, and analysis of religion by American folklorists who emphasize folk religion's dependent, residual qualities in relation to formal cultural institutions.

When folklorists such as Yoder discuss folk religion or religious folklore appearing in the context of a religious folk group, the implication is that religion somewhere exists as a pure element that is in some way transformed, even contaminated, by its exposure to human communities. This tendency is emblematic of how folklorists consistently have devalued folk religion by assigning it unofficial religious status. Religious belief should be viewed as the integrated ideas and practices of individuals living in human society. It is this elemental aspect of the interface of individual religiosity and folklore that can never be categorized into a genre or identified primarily because of group affiliation or regional association. Indeed, though this would seem to be a major concern of the scholar of religion and folklore, it, in fact, has been the least examined element.

Yoder's approach to studying folk religion as religion instead of as oral genres or lore of religious people represented an attempt to break the practice of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century folklorists who were more interested in collecting and cataloging religious, magical, occult, fantastic, medical, or fatalistic beliefs as examples of "superstitions." Such beliefs were not studied and analyzed with an eye to their cultural context or their place within the fabric of community or individual lives but were bracketed as cultural aberrations. Folk religion is an item-centered, as opposed to context-centered, orientation more interested in the transmission and variation of oral forms than in the constitution or influence of systems of belief. Folklorist Wayland D. Hand was the chief American exponent of this approach throughout much of the twentieth century. His insight was to collect, preserve, geographically classify, and annotate such material, but these "popular beliefs" were given little ethnographic contextualization. Some contemporary folklorists studying religion still depend on a religious folklore approach to center their study of religion, and even ethnographically based studies of religious communities emphasize the oral components of religious culture (testimony, preaching style, song, life story) as a foundation for analysis.

It was Yoder's student David J. Hufford, who, in reaction to such sources as the work on memorates by the Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko, expanded the folkloristic approach to narratives concerning supernatural experience by studying the relationship of such experiences to belief. Employing what he has

termed the *experience-centered approach*, Hufford worked to establish the integrity of the connection between beliefs and lived experiences. At first emphasizing health belief contexts and then expanding into work on the epistemology of the supernatural, Hufford noted the importance of systems of belief as the foundation both for the variety of expressions of belief and the subsequent variety of healing contexts that individuals consider valid. In the context of folk medicine, Hufford focused on the systematic, dynamic, logical, and coherent qualities of folk medical traditions and individual health beliefs. Such systems are in a constant state of tension and negotiation with other culturally related health systems, such as allopathic Western medicine. He suggested an approach for understanding such beliefs that centers on the believers themselves, the variety of their life experiences, and the general capacity for variation as individual systems of belief incorporate and integrate other systems. In the case of religion or, more specifically, religious healing, Hufford recognized the same dynamism and the same tensions as he saw in other health systems. His conceptions of folk religion and folk medicine share such similar qualities as a reliance on oral tradition, regional variation, group identification, and the unofficial status of particular systems or beliefs in relationship to an official, normative tradition.

Influenced by the work of Hufford, the more specific study of folk religion within contemporary folkloristics should now be classified under the rubric of *belief studies*, which also includes such categories as medical and political belief. Belief itself can be defined as the confidence of individuals and communities of individuals in the truth or existence of something not immediately susceptible to rigorous empirical proof. A belief system is the combination of thoughts, opinions, or convictions held by an individual or group of individuals about a particular topic or topics. Individuals hold belief systems and express them in personal and communal manifestations. Furthermore, several systems of medical, political, religious, and other types of belief can coexist within the same individual, with individuals often mixing such systems. It is within this context of studying systems of religious belief that folklore and folklife today encounter the innumerable and wondrous variations of human religiosity.

Folklorists have left a considerable amount of potential religiosity out of consideration if all religion need be traditional, inherited, group-oriented, deliberate, and involved in performative verbal art to be considered folk religion. Surely, in an effort to study such religion in the context of holistic systems, folkloristic attention needs to be focused not only on the products of religious lives but also on their processes. It is, of course, well within the domain of folklore and folklife scholars to be concerned with the creative products of religious lives, and, indeed, this is a major contribution of the discipline to the study of religious culture. Manifestations of religious ideas and practices should not only be studied as products (e.g., narratives with a religious theme or about a religious context) and performance genres (e.g., the study of the verbal art of conversion testimonies).

The notion of folklore as expressive culture is a concept often espoused by folklorists but not explicitly defined within the discipline's literature. Folklorists usually study belief as expressive culture, through its contextual manifestations (oral, material, aural, ritual, kinesic, or proxemic). The entirety of expressive culture, however, is not to be found merely in its manifestations or outward phenomena but also in the holistic study of these products of communication as dynamic processes within their attendant conscious, unconscious, aesthetic, and affective contexts. The actual human activity of believing something is itself a form of expression and self-communication before it is manifested into particular products. Thus, belief and the action of personally believing also should be considered as expressive culture, not immediately to be genrified and studied as products. Through exhibiting a sensitivity to the integrity of the very act of believing by the individual, the term *expressive culture* can identify for scholars the internal processes as well as products of human religiosity, a notion that folklorists have pursued in the later half of the twentieth century under the rubric of performance theory.

A potentially useful new term that focuses upon the process of belief and the believing individual is *vernacular religion*, which may serve as a methodological tool for studying the conjunction of religious, folklore, and folklife studies. Vernacular religion is, by definition, religion as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret, and practice it. Since religion inherently involves interpretation, it is impossible for the religion of an individual not to be vernacular. Vernacular religious theory involves an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the religious lives of individuals, with special attention to the complex process of acquisition and formation of beliefs that is always accomplished by the conscious and unconscious negotiations of and between believers; to the verbal, behavioral, and material expressions of religious belief; and to the ultimate object of religious belief.

It is relatively easy for the folklorist to understand the vernacular nature of the religion of the common people. It is less easy for folklorists, as well as other scholars of religion, to grasp the vernacular nature of the institutionalized elements of organized religion: their clerical functionaries, their oral and written statements, and their ritualized or sacramental occasions and observances. A vernacular religious viewpoint shows that designations of institutionalized religion as official are inaccurate. What scholars have referred to as official religion does not, in fact, exist. The use of the term *official religion* as a pedagogical tool has helped explain scholarly perspectives to the uninitiated, but it remains an inadequate explanation for the nature of religion. Although it may be possible to refer to various components within a religious body as emically official, meaning authoritative when used by empowered members within that religious tradition, such a designation when used by scholars is limited by the assumption that religion is synonymous with institutional or hierarchical authority.

"Official religion" as a Western scholarly concept has been sustained partly out of deference to the historical and cultural hegemony of Christianity, which

has set the dominant tone for Western culture. Through a process of reification, “institution” has become equated for both believers and scholars, whether lay or clerical, with Church/church, with valid, and with official. Religion as institution has been mistakenly identified as the religious reality itself and not as an ideal type. We must be aware that this process of reification has taken place when we consider the concretization of the human religious impulse. There are bodies and agencies of normative, prescriptive religion, but there is no objective existence of practice that expresses official religion. No one—no special religious elite or member of an institutional hierarchy, not even the pope in Rome—lives an “officially” religious life in a pure, unadulterated form. The members of such hierarchies themselves are believing and practicing vernacularly, even while representing the most institutionally normative aspects of their religious traditions. There is always some passive accommodation, some intriguing survival, some active creation, some dissenting impulse, or some reflection on lived experience that influences how these individuals direct their religious lives.

Scholars have studied and continue to study institutional religion as official religion, maintaining it as the standard against which the varieties of people’s religious impulses are measured. To continue to compare the vernacular religious ideas of people of any culture to the construct “official religion” is to perpetuate the value judgment that people’s ideas and practices, because they do not represent the refined statements of a religious institution, are indeed unofficial and fringe. This attitude is particularly faulty because it is believers’ ideas that inspire the formation of institutional religion in the first place. Vernacular religion takes into consideration the individual convictions of official religious membership among common believers, as well as the vernacular religious ideas at the root of the institution itself. In such a situation, the concept of vernacular religion can highlight the creative interpretations present in even the most ardent, devout, and accepting religious life, while also being sensitive to the context of power that makes the validity of “official” religion so convincing. The possible evolution of the folkloristic study of religion would be the adoption of this new terminology in lieu of the term *folk religion* and the dichotomous conceptualizations that it has carried with it.

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See also Belief, Folk; Belief Tale; Divination; Magic; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Comparative; Supernatural/Supernormal; Witchcraft.

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REPERTOIRE

In general, the stock of skills a person or persons are prepared to execute; with specific relevance to folklore, the complex sets of interrelated skills, knowledge, and achievements that highlight a person or group's unique abilities in a particular genre (or genres) of traditional performance.

A performer's repertoire is generally used to denote an individual's particular skill, achievement, or knowledge. The term *repertoire* also applies to the same areas on a group level. An example of the former would be the narrative repertoire of a particular raconteur who is recognized for a knowledge of trickster tales or, in the latter case, the craft repertoire of a group known for particular skill at producing specific types of pottery in a style in which the designs and techniques are common to the entire group.

Though generally seen as a discrete set of forms, a person or group's repertoire is built upon a complex of interrelated items that both shape and are shaped by the particular skill being focused upon. For example, the narrative repertoire of the storyteller known for trickster tales not only reflects a learned set of traditional tales but also calls forth a variety of questions about the performer's social and artistic backgrounds. From whom were the narratives learned and how? Were they passed orally from a particular relative, or were they acquired from a number of sources? What were the circumstances surrounding the performance of each particular tale? Was there an associated task or event that precipitated the performance, such as weaving a rug, quieting a child, or entertaining and educating the group? What other skills and activities reinforce or detract from the performer's narrative skills? What is the performer's individual and family status in the community? These are among the variables that affect individual repertoires.

The study of a person's or a group's repertoire requires a multifaceted approach that accounts for as many of the variables involved as possible. The study also requires a recognition of the multiple genres involved in a repertoire. Folklorist Barre Toelken describes repertoire in terms of multiple repertoires. That is, a person's or group's repertoire is a collection of interrelated genres of folklore that reflect and are shaped by the aesthetics of the performers' folk group. On occasion, a specific genre may be the main focus of the performance, but the rendering of each individual item is shaped by the full range of identifiable folklore genres that a particular individual or group possesses, and these are

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shaped by the aesthetics of the group with which the performers identify. This ideational context thus informs us what the genres of a particular performance are, as well as the realities of the aesthetics and traditions of the group in which the performers live. In addition, it is necessary to be aware of the roles of not only active bearers of tradition (i.e., performers) but also inactive bearers (i.e., those who know but do not actively perform folklore). Both sorts of tradition-bearers are vital to the development and perpetuation of repertoires. Thus, the term *repertoire* refers to the full range of knowledge and abilities of the performers as shaped by the relationship among the folk genres in their repertoire and to the traditional aesthetics of the group to which the performers belong.

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See also Performance; Tradition; Tradition-Bearer.

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REVENANT

A home-wanderer, a deceased person believed to appear to the people of his or her own community after death. People usually express their encounters with revenants in memorates and legends. The existence of the belief in revenants is closely linked to the understanding of the notions of life and death in a community. Different systems of beliefs and their messages concerning death clearly establish grounds for human ethical expectations and the appropriate behavior and social roles of community members. In this perspective, the existence of revenants is interpretable as the result of an unfulfilled duty on the part of either the deceased or the community of the living: Either the deceased behaved in an unacceptable way during his or her life or the community of the living neglected or improperly conducted the necessary rites for the dead person, either during life or after death.

Ideas about death and the afterlife vary greatly, according to culture and area, as do the ceremonies associated with the dead. There are communities, for instance, whose religious behavior is characterized by the belief in reincarnation, when one's birth means a rebirth in a new body. Some religio-philosophical doctrines, however, regard reincarnation as a punishment, and attempts are made to avoid any afterlife. In many cultures, the cult of the dead is a central

religious institution. The bonds between the family and its dead are not broken by death and burial; their collective interaction is believed to continue.

On the basis of Finnish and Scandinavian materials, revenants can be divided into two main groups: the guilty and the innocent. The former includes those dead people whose lingering is understood to be the punishment imposed on them for an offense committed during their lifetimes. By tradition, the necessity for such a punishment is stressed at the time of death or when the body is carried to the grave. Among the innocent dead, by contrast, we may count all those whose lingering is not explained as being a punishment for offenses committed during their lives. Among them, the following three groups are distinguished: (1) the solicitous, such as a mother who died in childbirth; a jealous or protective husband; a betrothed man or woman; a person who comes to look after his or her relations, children, or property; a person who hid his or her money; or someone who left behind a task undone or a promise unfulfilled; (2) the avengers, for instance, people who were maltreated, bewitched, or murdered; slaughtered children; aborted fetuses; or unaccepted potential children; and (3) those dissatisfied with the manner of their burial, burial place, or the behavior of the mourners, for example, those negligently or wrongly shrouded, unburied, or buried in unconsecrated ground; those not buried as they wished; those mourned for excessively or not mourned at all; and those buried with incomplete body or belongings. Members of the third group also might be termed the “unprovided.” Ancestor worship has always been a central cult in the societies that hold beliefs in figures such as home-wanderers and revenants. The dead are conceived as guardians of morals, arbiters of behavior, and supporters of an organized society. The dead who reveal themselves to the living people fulfill their obligations to proper norms.

Deceased children of Nordic tradition provide an illustrative example of revenants who interfere in the life of their community. This category of revenant—a wandering, placeless soul lacking a position or status in the twin community of the living and the dead—is in a permanent transition phase. The basic problem concerning the majority of the Nordic deceased children is that they have no status either among the living or the dead. These “supernormal dead children” may be divided into many categories, such as those murdered or abandoned, those who died before being baptized or given a name, those who were stillborn, those prematurely born, and so on. What is common to all of them is that they all died before the completion of the rites necessary for establishing their first status in the society. Their position is problematic, as they did not have time to join any living social group. A common means of signaling membership is naming. In fact, the name was the most important symbol of status long before the advent of Christianity, with its emphasis on the Christian baptismal rite as the entrance of a newborn child into legitimate status. So vital was the name that Icelandic sagas and Old Nordic provincial laws of the missionary period state that abandoning a child with a name was considered

REVERSAL

murder. If a child had not belonged to the community of the living, he or she could not be incorporated among the dead. Burial rites were either not performed at all or performed in a special way.

Juha Pentikäinen

See also Manism; Vampire.

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REVERSAL

The common view that the spirit world is an opposite version of the phenomenal world, in both form and function. In the spirit world of the Hopi, “everything is the other way around, just the opposite.” According to Mircea Eliade, “The peoples of North Asia conceive the otherworld as an inverted image of this world. Everything takes place as it does here, but in reverse. When it is day on earth, it is night in the beyond (this is why festivals of the dead are held after sunset; that is when they wake and begin their day); the summer of the living corresponds to winter in the land of the dead; a scarcity of game or fish on earth means that it is plentiful in the otherworld.” The dead may be buried face down (a reversal of the sleeping position of the living), so as to ensure their passage to the other world, or their clothing may be put on (or, in ancient Egypt, be put into the tomb) inside out. Clothing also may be reversed to undo the effects of the evil eye. Since the spirit world is frequently consulted by means of reflecting surfaces—mirrors, water, oil, crystal balls—it is likely that the phenomenon of mirror image brings this conception into being.

The reversed quality of the spirit world reveals itself not only in actions but also in the distinction between left and right. Perhaps because most people are right-handed (but their reflection is left-handed), the left is taken to be the side of the spirits, and left-handed people are often viewed with suspicion. In Henri Boguet’s sixteenth-century account, the werewolf was said to eat only from the left side of the children it killed. In paleolithic impressions of the human hand, according to G. Rachel Levy, “the negative impressions, produced by painting or blowing colour on to the rock surface round the flattened member, are generally of the left hand; the positive records of the paint-covered palm and fingers are chiefly of the right.” The plastic *mani cornute*, or horned hands, which are

worn to ward off the evil eye, always represent the left hand. It is easy to see why the left is associated with awkwardness, as is suggested by such words as the French (and English) *gauche*, German *linkisch*, and Norwegian *keitet*: Most people are right-handed and less “adroit” with their left. But because of its association with the spirit world, the left also has a spooky quality, as is suggested by the Latin word for “left” that has given us *sinister* in English. Latin *scaevus* means “left, awkward, unlucky,” as does Greek *skaiós*. In Hungarian, the word for “left” is *bal*. *Balfogás* is “blunder” or “mistake,” but *baljóslatú* is “ill-omened” or “ominous.”

The distinction between right and left shows up in a great deal of folklore. Traditionally in Europe, people were enjoined to get out of the right side of the bed in the morning, rather than the left. But the word *right*, since it is associated with the human world rather than the world of the spirits, has come to have the meaning of “correct,” so that it is opposed not just to *left* but also to *wrong*, and nowadays one hears the remark, when someone shows ill temper, that he or she must have “gotten out of the wrong side of the bed.”

Relics of this sort of reversal are still common, as when one wishes an actor well by telling him or her to break a leg. In *Popular Beliefs and Superstitions*, an informant from Ohio says, “You should always say, ‘I hope you break a leg.’ If you wish them good luck, it means bad luck for them.” That is, the spirits may respond with a reversal of the outcome that is appealed for. Thus, there is a common belief that it is unwise to praise anything good or valuable, as such praise is apt to spoil it. Such a custom as *cowade* (in which a father-to-be may dress in women’s clothing and feign birthing) is probably to be understood in terms of this reversal of the spirit world, and this may be true also of the transvestitism sometimes practiced by shamans.

Paul Barber

See also Belief, Folk; Evil Eye; Shamanism.

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REVITALIZATION

A deliberate attempt by some members of a society to construct a more satisfactory culture by the rapid acceptance of a pattern of multiple innovations. Sociologically, individuals and groups withdraw to escape when primary ties of culture, social relationships, and activities are broken and force is imposed. But when value systems get out of step with existing reality, a condition of cultural crisis is likely to build up, which may breed some form of reactive movement. A drastic solution is attempted when a group's anxiety and frustration have become so intense that the only way to reduce the stress is to overturn the entire social system and replace it with a new one. Not all suppressed, conquered, or colonized people eventually rebel against established authority, although when they do, resistance may take one of several forms, which are varieties of revitalization movements.

A culture may seek to speed up the acculturation process in order to share more fully in the supposed benefits of the dominant cultures. Melanesian cargo cults of the post-World War II era have generally been of this sort, although earlier ones stressed a revival of traditional ways. Movements that try to reconstitute a destroyed but not forgotten way of life are known as nativistic or revivalistic movements. In such cases, it is commonly expressive culture (i.e., folklore) that is revived most easily to represent traditional lifeways, and narratives such as myth and folk history are commonly used as the means of characterizing and advocating the "golden age" that is to be revived. The Native American Ghost Dance religion of the Paiute prophet Wovoka demonstrates these principles.

A movement that attempts to resurrect a suppressed pariah group, which has long suffered in an inferior social standing and which has its own special subcultural ideology, is referred to as "millenarian"; perhaps the most familiar examples are prophetic Judaism and early Christianity.

If the aim of the movement is directed primarily at the ideological system and the attendant social structure of a cultural system from within, it is called revolutionary. As an example, revitalization movements have been common in the history of the United States whenever significant segments of the population have found their conditions in life to be at odds with the values of the "American Dream."

The revitalization sequence follows a predictable pattern. First, there is the normal stage of society, in which stress is not too great and there are sufficient cultural means of satisfying needs. Second, under domination by a more powerful group or under severe economic depression, stress and frustration will be steadily amplified to create a period of increased individual stress. Third, if there are no significant adaptive changes, a period of cultural distortion follows, in which stress becomes so chronic that socially approved methods of releasing tension begin to break down. Fourth and finally, the steady deterioration is

checked by a period of revitalization, during which a dynamic cult or religious movement grips a sizable proportion of the population. Characteristically, the movement will be so out of touch with reality that it is doomed to failure from the beginning. Rarely, a movement may tap long-dormant adaptive forces underlying a culture, and a long-lasting religion may result, for example, Mormonism, Christianity, Islam, or Judaism.

Margaret Bruchez

See also Religion, Folk; Revivals.

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REVIVALS

The conscious use of folklore as folklore to express or represent ideas about identity and/or art. The term *revivals* has been used most frequently to describe practitioners of folk music, storytellers, and craftspersons. Although sometimes it is a straightforward descriptive term for certain kinds of social movement, it frequently implies a judgment about authenticity.

An early appearance of *revival* in connection with folklore came in the writings of Cecil Sharp, who, in 1907, called for a revival of English folk music. Following his lead, the English Folk Dance and Song Society became the center of the social movement called “the first British folksong revival”—although the eighteenth-century English interest in the ballad also has been characterized retrospectively as a revival—and led indirectly to later twentieth-century folksong revivals in Britain and elsewhere. Sharp used *revival* metaphorically (its oldest sense) to describe the refurbishment of a repertoire or genre, as when we speak of the revival of a Shakespeare play or some other historical work of art. *Revival* also has been used as a metaphor for the awakening of religious spirit since at least the time of Cotton Mather. Folklorists are interested in religious revivalism as a social phenomenon with folkloric aspects, but they have viewed this area of inquiry as essentially different from that of secular revivalism and have generally treated it as an aspect of the folk-organized religion continuum.

By the 1960s, when folklore emerged as a professionalized discipline, folklorists read *revival* literally rather than metaphorically, and, having shifted their focus outward from cultural products to include cultural producers and contexts, they saw the word as referring to the resuscitation of “living” traditions in these new terms. Consequently, they employed it to describe the uses of insiders’ cultural products by outsiders—individuals from “other” cultural contexts. This perspective coincided with the apogee of the commercial folk music boom of the 1960s. *Revival* thus became a pejorative or judgmental term for folklorists, referring to the contextually inauthentic or spurious, and it was used, characteristically, to describe situations in which individuals or groups perform texts, enact customs, or create objects that are based on traditions from outside their own personal historical and/or cultural experience.

The concept of revival, whether literal or metaphorical, has been problematic to folklorists for another reason as well. Although folklorists typically have defined their materials as emerging from a matrix of “unselfconscious” cultural production or enactment, attempts to revive such materials imply some degree of “non-unselfconsciousness.” Those most interested in the revival of folklore tend to have, like Sharp, conscious (and articulated) political, artistic, or cultural agendas that extend far beyond the original contexts of production. Ironically, then—given their pejorative use of the term—folklorists have been among the principal folklore revivalists.

Folklorists, analyzing situations where differing degrees of awareness about such matters occur, create categories of classification that differentiate on the basis of awareness and agendas. Ellen Stekert speaks of four groups in the urban folksong movement: imitators (or emulators), utilizers, new aesthetic singers, and traditional singers, or those who “have learned their songs and their style of presentation from oral tradition as they grew up.” Joe Wilson and Lee Udall, addressing folk festival organizers and managers, present similar though more detailed categories. Separating performers into two categories, they distinguish those “reared in the culture from which the performed materials are drawn” from those “who adopt elements of style and materials from cultures into which they were not reared.” This allows them to split Stekert’s category of traditional singer three ways: traditional folk performer, aware traditional performer, and evolved traditional performer. These subdivisions allow for the idea that traditional performers might lose the unselfconscious quality in their performance. Wilson and Udall split their second category, nonreared, into subdivisions resembling Stekert’s other three.

Such categorization admits the possibility of non-unselfconsciousness, but it overlooks the frequent collaboration among the reared and the nonreared for conscious revival. Examples abound within the domain of music: Since the 1960s, for example, the growth of old-time fiddle music associations has been characterized by the participation of individuals who grew up hearing and performing fiddle music together with those who did not. They share a perception of this music culture as being threatened by outside forces and collaborate

to protect and promote the tradition. In a more general way, collaboration between insiders and outsiders occurs whenever folklorists conduct research into a tradition.

Today, folklorists recognize the necessity and ethical imperative for dialogue with their informants in the process of research and publication. As scholars become aware and evolved in their attitudes about the traditions they study, so too do the tradition-bearers. Consequently, the possibility of revival always exists whenever anyone identifies something as folklore.

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See also Authenticity; Fakelore; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Revitalization.

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RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

In its most general terms, the study of the relations between language and intention, especially the function of discourse in communicating ideas and shaping knowledge. Rhetoricians since Plato have placed emphasis on the speaker, the audience, the nature of the message, and the constitution of persuasive form. Each historical period has created its own configuration of primary rhetorical issues, such as the relation of rhetorical principles to pedagogy, treatment of the rhetorical processes of composition (that is, canons of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery), and attention to either performance or text. Since the classical period, rhetoricians have remained committed to the following assumptions: (1) The rhetorician must have a command of conventional discourse forms and a complementary understanding of the contextual variables that define and constrain performance occasions; (2) although they recognize the conventional nature of language, rhetoricians have typically assumed that human nature could be defined in universal terms, thus allowing the rhetorician to predict how to create certain persuasive effects; (3) rhetoricians have promoted the study of rhetorical theory and practice as a pursuit that is fundamental to the development of intellectual skills and moral character; and (4) rhetoricians in every era have associated an education in rhetorical skills with the development of a literate citizenry.

Rhetorical analysis had its greatest impact on folklore scholarship of the second half of the twentieth century when Dell Hymes, Roger Abrahams, and others, adapting rhetorical principles of situations and strategies as outlined by Kenneth Burke, reconceptualized folklore as a study of performance. Abrahams saw Burke's concept of persuasion and performance as a means to integrate diverse approaches to the study of art. The introduction of the concept of performance provided an alternative to the text-centered perspective scholars had previously utilized; now, scholars considered questions of form and the relation between components as part of a larger performance context involving the relations between performer, text or object, and audience. With the influence of Burke's rhetorical approach to art as persuasive communication, folklore studies was able to integrate literary, text-centered, historic-geographic studies with ethnographic, culturally contexted studies.

Interestingly, two of the most provocative Burkean concepts, *consubstantiation* and *terministic screen*, have not been incorporated into folklore's rhetorical approach to performance. In *Grammar of Motives*, Burke described consubstantiality as a state in which persons feel themselves to be "substantially one." Burke argued that it is the aim of rhetoric to create this state through language acts in which the addressee identifies substantially with the speaker. In *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke defined the very nature of language as a "screen" that defines reality as much through what is filtered out as what is filtered in. Language acts or rhetoric performs this function at the level of discourse. Folklorists have utilized similar concepts under the general heading of context without realizing the theoretical rapprochement between folklore performance theory and these other Burkean rhetorical principles.

Rhetoric and folklore are joined most meaningfully in performance studies in which communication is viewed in a cultural context. However, though rhetorical principles, especially principles of arrangement and style, are well suited to the close analysis of cultural performances, the field of rhetoric itself has more often made universal rather than culturally specific claims. Further, even though rhetoricians long have recognized communication to be a crafted, artistic construction rather than a decontextualized truth, the principles of construction have been assumed to be universal rather than locally situated and contested. Thus, one consequence of the appropriation of rhetorical principles in performance studies has been a challenge to the universalist claims made by rhetoricians.

Between the late 1960s and late 1980s, the performance model became established as a dominant paradigm of folklore research. During that period, the role of rhetorical studies lost some emphasis as folklore models turned increasingly to anthropological, structural, and sociolinguistic models of communicative performance. In the 1990s, as performance studies turned toward addressing the politics of culture and larger performance stages rather than face-to-face interaction in small groups, rhetoric and the politics of persuasion again became

integral to folklore research. By this time, rhetorical studies too had also been influenced by poststructural and, to a lesser extent, ethnographic cultural approaches of the past decades. These influences have resulted in the articulation of the social constructionist approach to rhetoric, a position that argues that communities define the nature of rhetorical practices and also argues that interpretation replaces truth. However, the social constructionist approach to rhetoric maintains that the communal nature of rhetoric is knowable; therefore, codes of practice can still be defined and taught. One of the attractions of the social constructionist approach to rhetoric for folklore studies is that this position attempts to dismantle the rhetoric's historical allegiance to the promulgation of dominant discourses.

In addition to the value of traditional rhetorical principles such as speaker, message, and context to folklore performance analysis, the social constructionist approach to rhetoric holds particular promise for another point of intersection between rhetoric and folklore because this position recognizes the politics of culture. Whereas the historical bias toward high culture on the part of rhetoricians and the bias toward a limited concept of the folk as low culture on the part of folklorists separated the two fields for most of the twentieth century, both fields are currently investigating the substance of those biases and are similarly committed to an ongoing exploration of the dynamics of language in use.

Nan Johnson and Amy Shuman

See also Linguistic Approach; Performance.

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RIDDLE

The best-known and best-studied form of traditional enigma. The riddle is generally agreed to consist of a description and its referent—the first posed by the riddler, the second guessed by the respondent. The enigma comes from the incorporation of a “block element” in the description: an ambiguity that prevents the description from being obvious. The ambiguity may occur at any level of the linguistic code from the phonological to the semantic, and it is often presented as an opposition or paradox within the description (“What has eyes but cannot see?—A potato”).

The “true riddle,” as it is often called, relies on concrete, familiar objects in the culture, and it equates two things through the use of a metaphor. The implications of favorite metaphors are elaborated through numerous riddles in a given tradition. In Finnish riddles, for example, women are commonly compared to trees:

Rowan tree on a sacred hill, sacred leaves in the rowan tree.
(*Bride*)

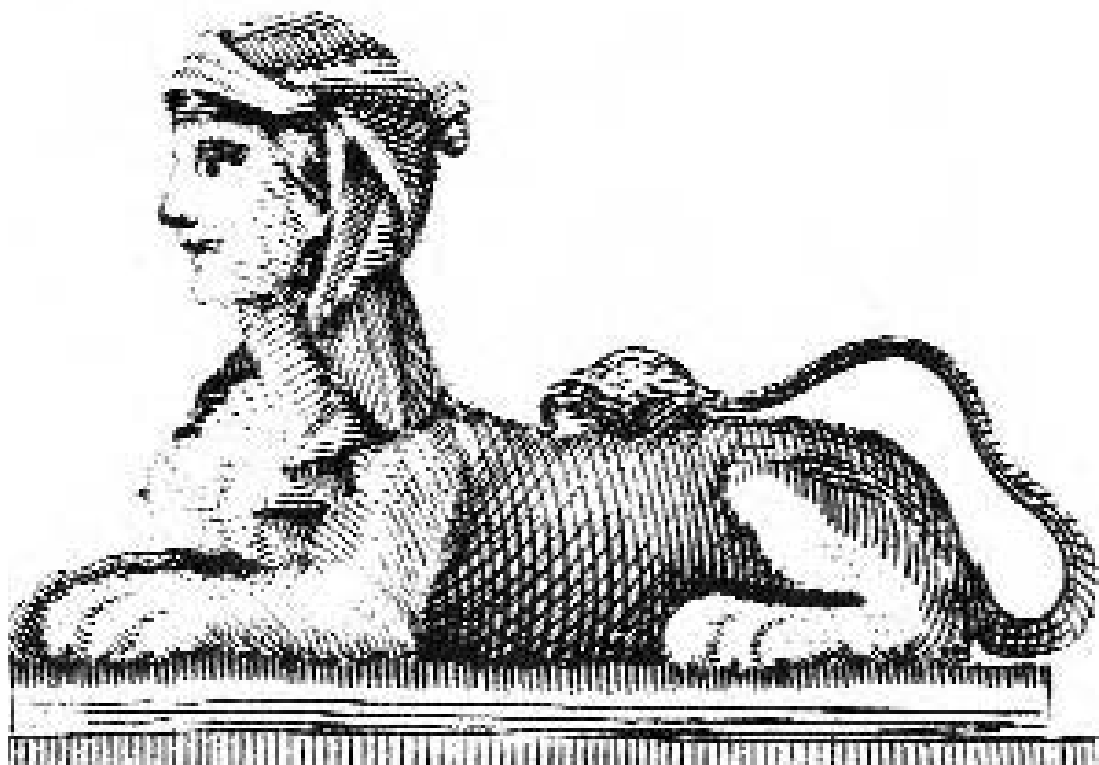
A sacred rowan tree, on the edge of a sacred field, a sacred berry in the rowan tree.
(*Pregnant woman*)

A widow in the fall, a widow in the winter, a new bride in summer.
(*Deciduous tree*)

A thousand-year-old woman has a child every year.
(*Pine tree with cones*)

The recurrence of metaphors makes it possible for riddles to be guessed by persons familiar with a given tradition, thus making the riddling session a true contest of wits. It also lets riddling make larger cultural assertions. The tree metaphor, for example, suggests that the focus of women’s lives around marriage and child bearing is as natural and inevitable as the life cycle of a tree. Other Finnish riddling metaphors further reinforce traditional gender roles by matching women to kitchen tools and men to farming tools.

Many scholars have claimed that the use of metaphor to bring different cultural domains together functions to establish higher-order similarities and thus to imply an overarching coherence and rightness to the culture. When correspondences are established between nature, humanity, and human-made objects, riddling can serve, as James Fernandez says, as a kind of “edification by



Riddles serve as vehicles for the transmission of cultural rules and the integration of those rules in a larger context. One of the most famous riddles is that of the Sphinx, solved by the Greek culture hero Oedipus.

puzzlement”—a way of leading members of a culture from the diversity of their experience to a sense of a higher integration. In certain traditions, this power of riddles is appropriated for religious purposes, and riddling becomes a means of initiation into cosmology.

However, riddles often seem to disturb the coherence of culture by pointing out anomalies in its categories—there are some eyes that cannot see. Thus, some riddles relativize rather than reinforce culture: Their messages have to do with the limits of any system attempting to impose order on experience. Respondents are led to question the cultural taxonomies they have so painstakingly acquired and to investigate situations empirically.

John McDowell has suggested that these two functions of the riddle are not mutually exclusive but that they seem to prevail in different types of society. The “true” or metaphorical riddle flourishes in “traditional,” relatively small-scale, and homogeneous societies, where the narrow range of material culture limits the universe of riddle referents and, more important, where a common system of beliefs and values can be taken for granted.

The riddles of paradox and anomaly belong to heterogeneous societies in which paradox and anomaly are likely to figure prominently in everyday expe-

RIDDLE JOKE

rience. Riddle anomalies tend to occur at the level of language rather than in the world referred to: They are problems in the code (“What room can no one enter?—A mushroom”). Indeed, as W. J. Pepicello and Thomas A. Green suggest, the real referent of contemporary riddles is the linguistic code itself. And the question of code is perhaps the real challenge of contemporary culture; before any debate on the nature of reality can take place, a common language has to be established. The presence of conflicting cultural codes may enter riddling directly. In one session, a Chicano child asked the Anglo folklorist John McDowell, “Why do you need a moustache?—So you won’t be a *bolillo* [white].”

Generalizing broadly, then, members of traditional societies use riddles to propound their culture’s rules and to integrate these rules into a larger synthesis. In complex societies, in which riddling is generally limited to children, riddling teaches the importance of message form and the particular context. The analytical skills and cognitive flexibility learned in riddling prepare children for the pitfalls inherent in reading contemporary messages.

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See also Enigma, Folk.

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RIDDLE JOKE

A joke in the form of a traditional enigma. Although the riddle joke is couched as a question, the respondent is not expected to arrive at a solution; rather, the poser follows up with the answer after a short pause.

Riddle jokes often circulate in cycles relating to a current event, such as the 1986 explosion of the U.S. space shuttle *Challenger*, the 1986 meltdown at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Ukraine, a political campaign, or a celebrity scandal. Other foci of cycles include stigmatized social groups (such as Polish immigrants in the United States); powerful public figures (such as the hated Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu); an action frame (screwing in a light

bulb); and such absurd or horrific *dramatis personae* as elephants and dead babies. The poser often tops one joke with another, and jokes build on the form of earlier jokes in a kind of dialogue. Such cycles circulate rapidly and enjoy wide popularity while the topic or the jokes themselves are current.

Riddle joke cycles address, whether openly or in symbolic disguise, matters that deeply trouble a society. Disasters and scandals undermine the claims of the established order to competence and integrity. Dominated populations, by their very existence and certainly by their movements to gain equal treatment, threaten the position of those already inside the structures of power. The anxieties of the privileged persist even when overt prejudice has been eschewed: Roger D. Abrahams and Alan Dundes, observing that the vogue of elephant jokes in the United States coincided with the rise of the civil rights movement, suggest that the images of elephant footprints in refrigerators or elephants in treetops expressed unconscious fear of African-Americans “forgetting their place.” Finally, unsettling social change emerges in such cycles as the dead-baby jokes of the 1970s, apparently linked to the new visibility of divorce, contraception, and abortion in North America.

Children’s riddle joke cycles are particularly apt to test the margins of the speakable, as in the well-known “gross jokes”. Their covert circulation in classrooms and schoolyards challenges the world of euphemism and normative conduct constructed in children’s textbooks. In the same way, the much-condemned brutality of the *Challenger* jokes (“What was the last thing that went through Christa McAuliffe’s head?—Her ass”) is seen by Elliott Oring as a critique of the media’s banalization of disaster. He notes the jarring effect of commercial interruptions upon images of catastrophe and how the jokes play upon this juxtaposition by frequent use of advertising slogans and brand names. “Sick” or obscene jokes, then, restore the horror of the world suppressed in official discourse. Unprintable, they resist co-optation into that discourse.

The performance of riddle jokes is often buffered by disclaimers on both ends. The joke is presented as something heard recently, thus not originating with the poser; the poser may add further distance by disparagement (“I heard an awful one yesterday”). The respondent mitigates his or her laughter by exclamations of disgust or by apology (“I shouldn’t laugh, but it’s such a bad pun”).

The form of the riddle joke may ease the broaching of these delicate matters in conversation. Its brevity and tight construction (rendering it impersonal and almost aphoristic) and its topicality (giving it the status of news) remove the burden of responsibility for its content from the poser. Moreover, the collaborative form of the riddle, which demands at least a ritual grunt of interest after the question is posed, implicates the respondent in the joke. Both parties have collaborated in allowing the unspeakable to be spoken.

The riddle joke is one of the most common joking forms today, and individual jokes are probably the most widely transmitted items of folklore in the contemporary United States. The same formal qualities that allow them to

speak of controversial matters make them memorable and conducive to rapid transmission. Moreover, the focus on topics made general throughout a national population by the mass media allows jokes to be passed between comparative strangers. Although community-specific riddle joke cycles do exist, local background knowledge is unnecessary for the appreciation of most riddle jokes. Thus, riddle jokes are widely used as social icebreakers. Dealing with general issues, they can serve as a basis for broad consensus and become a means of testing the waters in the establishment of provisional solidarities between new acquaintances. The respondent's appreciation or disapproval of a joke is a measure of social and political affiliations: It indicates the respondent's willingness to form an alliance with the poser in the face of a putative Other.

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See also *Blason Populaire*; Enigma, Folk; Ethnic Folklore; Joke; Popular Culture.

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Rites of Passage

A category of rituals or rites that accompany change of place, state, social status, and age. A human life cycle is marked by these passages from one social and physical position to another, in a pattern determined by the physiological and psychological maturation of an individual as well as the cultural socialization pattern and worldview of the community. Some of these transitions take place only once in an individual's life (e.g., birth, initiation, death), and some may occur repeatedly (transition from a profane role to the holy one as a specialist of the sacred).

This theory was set forth by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his influential book *The Rites of Passage*, published in 1909. Van Gennep was particularly interested in crossing territorial borders. According to him, all the rites of passage fall naturally into three phases: *rites of separation*, when the individual is removed from a previous status; *rites of transition*, when one is prepared to transfer to a new position; and *rites of incorporation*, when the individual takes on a new status role. In rites of passage, both the individual, as a ritual subject, and those present at the rites undergo a clear-cut change in their social rela-

tionships and, in this way, are afforded formal acceptance and recognition. The transfer does not take place suddenly but is a gradual process when the individual who is going through this stage takes on a temporary and intermediary role during the process of transition (e.g., the role of an initiate).

Van Gennep's basic model is structural. According to his definition, rites of passage accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age. In many traditional communities, these changes generally are made public, with their importance reinforced by specifically structured rites. First comes the stage of *separation* in which the individual is removed from a previous social position. This is followed by an interim period, *marge*, during which the individual is poised on the borderline between two positions (a previous status and a new one). The third and last phase is the full entry into the new status (*aggregation*).

The impact that van Gennep's theory has had on the study of ritual and religions is wide ranging, having influenced scholars in a variety of disciplines.

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See also Liminality.

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RITUAL

A repeated socioreligious behavior; a chain of actions, rites, or ritual movements following a standard protocol. The important symbols and values of the people are used, provoked, communicated, or expressed in ritual. A ritual is easily observed in a community and is a major expressive form of any religion. Anthropologists and other students of culture have focused their attention on the description and interpretation of rituals to such a degree that it can be argued



Ritual is characterized by predictable structure over time, often involving repetitive action. The ritual practice of this Muslim sect, the Whirling Dervishes, exemplifies this in the trance-inducing circular dance.

that many modern theories of religion are primarily theories of ritual. The meaning of a ritual entails more than merely the code of behavior it manifests. The predetermined set of events is well known to the participants of the ritual, and there are certain conventionalized expectations concerning their behavior. Although very important symbols and central values of a group are evoked, it would be false to assume any direct link between the outward expressions and inner states of the participants in a ritual. In order to find a satisfactory definition of the term *ritual*, the participants' attitudes concerning the ceremony, social custom, and religious doctrine should be taken into consideration.

Ritual as a category of action is characterized by predictable structure over time, a structuring that is commonly labeled repetitive. In distinguishing ritual from other behavior, it is imperative to establish the difference between compulsive actions, private repetitive idiosyncrasies, and ritual per se. Ritual is separable from individual compulsive behavior by reference to the social dimension of the former.

A ritual may be defined as a combination of the actions called rites (socioreligious ceremonies following specific traditional patterns), which, in their turn, may be divided into smaller ritual units in the structure of a ritual. In this definition, the conative (i.e., purposeful) level of religiosity comes to the fore. Rites commonly include both verbal and nonverbal communication. Religious concepts are displayed in the ceremony, and they are manifested not only in speech but also on through kinesic channels.

The analysis of rites demands the analysis of both verbalized meanings and nonverbal elements in ritual behavior. Nonverbal does not mean, of course,

noncognitive, although it may seem to be more difficult to get at the cognitive dimensions of the nonverbal acts of communication.

Rites commonly are divided into three categories: *crisis rites*, *calendrical rites*, and *rites of passage*. *Crisis rites* are understood to be occasional ritual acts, performed in order to remove some crisis phenomena, for example, a disease that torments the individual or community. These rites occur under unique circumstances and are attempts to organize the behavior of the community in such a manner that the crisis situation can be safely passed over and the normal order of life restored. Crisis rites include healing dramas. *Calendrical rites* are periodic, recurring, and form a clearly distinguishable group of their own. They include various ceremonies performed according to the time of the year or in conjunction with the shifts in seasonal employment, such as rites for sowing and harvesting grain and ceremonies for opening a new year. The third group consists of *rites of passage*, rituals that are associated with different phases of human life such as birth, childhood, puberty, initiation or entry into adult status, engagement, marriage, maternal confinement, fatherhood, transfer into another social status, and death. Lauri Honko defines rites of passage as traditional ceremonies organized by the community through which the individual is transferred from one social status to another.

The focus of each of the types differs not only in terms of occasion but also in terms of the subjects of the rites. Rites of passage focus tightly on changes in the social position of the individual, whereas calendrical rites or ceremonies concerning changes in seasonal employment generally affect the entire community or occupational group. Another significant distinction involves the cycles of recurrence of the ritual types. Calendrical rites recur regularly in the life of the community, but most rites of passage take place only once in the life of an individual.

There are at least two important points of view on the nature of a ritual. The first perceives ritual as an important constituent of religion; the second views ritual as psychologically interpretable irrational behavior distinct from pragmatically oriented behavior. The former perspective is popular with anthropologists and historians of religion. From the latter, primarily psychoanalytic viewpoint, ritual is contrasted to science as a nonpragmatic and irrational action.

Nonetheless, it is always possible to consider a ritual in terms of "latent" social goals or the explicit religious meaning of ritual symbolism, bearing in mind that ritual acts do endow culturally important cosmological conceptions. The balanced view of ritual must encompass two polarities—the explicit and the implicit meanings of ritual.

Like any human activity, ritual is experienced through the human body as well as through the intellect. Ritual symbolism often is closely linked to intense sensory experiences and primary forms of bodily awareness, such as sexual or metabolic processes.

Ritual is a repetitive action and can be participated in by generation after

generation because it follows a restricted model. Yet it seems quite obvious that ritual responds to the overall situation in which it is performed and is not confined by a static, exclusive procedure without any adaptive potential. An interesting issue regarding traditional communication in rituals focuses on this adaptive potential. The fact that the overall quality of a ritual remains the same but simultaneously undergoes changes leads to the very center of different views on ritual and requires special attention.

When considering the adaptive qualities of ritual, it is possible to classify them in functional descriptive terms or analyze them in structural terms. The functional approach emphasizes the empirical and precise observation of ritual action; the structural approach centers on the underlying nature of rituals. The functional-enumerative approach, for example, is more a detailed description than a serious attempt at classification. By comparison, a structuralist analysis may attempt a classification of confirmatory and transformatory rituals in order to understand the changes that any particular ritual imposes on the structure maintenance or transformation of a given community. In this approach, ritual is understood as a goal-oriented and reactive activity that, under specific circumstances, either confirms or transforms the relationships and boundaries that prevail between the individual, community, and cosmos.

Various other areas of ritual research remain viable. The historical approach is mainly centered on the role that ritual plays in the process of transmitting the cultural and religious knowledge and symbols and in the formation of the identity and invention of the past of the society, community, or group. Related to the historical approach is the problem of the relation of myth to ritual; there is no universal pattern or consistent theory on the priority of either myth or ritual. A final group of approaches compares ritual actions and means of performance to the means and modes of dramatic actions.

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See also Anthropology, Symbolic; Divination; Magic; Medicine, Folk; Myth-Ritual Theory; Religion, Folk.

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ROMANTIC NATIONALISM

A cultural movement combining the romantic focus on the primitive or the common man or woman and older literary forms with the advocacy of national and ethnic pride through the development of the literature, language, and traditions of the group. Romantic nationalism led to the collection and literary imitation of traditional art forms, and as a consequence, it gave impetus to the discipline of folklore during its formative stage.

Ideas of romanticism and romantic nationalism developed toward the end of the eighteenth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, this phenomenon already had become a large-scale movement that had deeply influenced ideas and ideals of individuality, creativity, and personal experience. Romantic trends also played a significant role in the development of nationalism and the concept of nation-state. The ideals of romantic nationalism inspired an interest in antiquity, ancient traditions, and folklore. The works of philosophers such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, A. W. and Friedrich von Schelling, Friedrich von Schlegel, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau formed part of the necessary ideological background of romanticism. Among a number of emerging nations arose a need for re-creating or reconstructing indigenous mythical pasts, poetic landscapes, and golden ages, often for the purpose of supporting a case for nation-state status. Idealistic initiatives inspired an interest in folklore, and thus awoke wide-scale activity for collecting folklore materials in nineteenth-century Europe.

By 1765, Thomas Percy already had published a collection entitled *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. This work provided great impetus for the publishing of subsequent collections in the eighteenth century. Another example of such publications is the pioneering collection of the folk poetry and literature of quite a range of peoples compiled by Johann Gottfried von Herder under the title *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (1778). Also, *The Poems of Ossian* (1765) by James Macpherson, purported to be translations of poems by the Gaelic poet Ossian, had an immense impact on the romantically inspired interests in folklore, despite the fact that the poems later appeared, for the most part, to have been composed by the author himself. Perhaps most significant to the discipline of folklore was Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's work of collecting and publishing folktales (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen* [Children's and household tales], 1812–1822), which served as an epoch-making impetus for the recording and publishing of folklore materials all over Europe. Their collection was a kind of blueprint, serving as one further model for other collections in the period of romantic nationalism and as a guide for selecting and editing such collections of literary-influenced fairy tales.

Interest in folklore has passed through similar stages among different nations regardless of the social system. The basic scheme of these stages could be simplified as follows: (1) idealistic initiative directed at interest in folklore,

(2) wide-scale activation of collection, (3) development of forms of high culture based on traditional culture, and (4) establishment of applied traditional culture as part of cultural life.

There are abundant examples of stage 2 in the large collections of folklore from the nineteenth century; the work of Krišjānis Barons, the compiler and publisher of close to 218,000 Latvian folksong texts in 6 volumes, *Latvju dainās* (1894–1915), is particularly worthy of note, as are Norwegian folktales by Peter Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe (1841) and collections of Russian *bylina* epics by P. N. Rybnikov (four volumes in 1861–1867) and A. F. Gil'ferding (1871). There are some 2 million lines of poetry in *Kalevala* (the Finnish national epic) meter in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society, collected mainly in the nineteenth century. About two-thirds have been published in the 33-volume *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (Ancient poems of the Finnish people) (1908–1948). In the years 1841, 1845, 1846, and 1862, a selection of Vuk Karadžić's collections, *Srpske narodne pjesme* (Serbian folksongs), were published as 4 volumes, comprising a total of 1,045 songs.

As a rule, only small selections of these and other important bodies of oral literature have been translated into other languages. These collections continue to have immense importance for folklore research—an importance that extends beyond the national level.

Romantic nationalism also provided inspiration for the creation of national epics. Romantic idealists held the epic as the very beginning of literature. Virgil's *Aeneid* had been the dominant epic model in the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance (serving as a model for *Paradise Lost* by John Milton). This was the case especially in western and southern Europe. German romanticism, however, took Homer's works as the primary pattern for the epos at the end of the eighteenth century. Examples following this model are the national epics of some Finnic and Baltic peoples. Elias Lönnrot compiled the Finnish national epic, *The Kalevala*, on the basis of folk poetry. The first edition appeared in 1835, the second and greatly enlarged edition in 1849. The Estonian counterpart of the Finnish *Kalevala* was the epic called *Kalevipoeg* (1857–1861), compiled by F. R. Kreutzwald. He used as building material local legends and tales of origin. Andrejs Pumpurs, the author of the Latvian national epos *Lāčplēsis* (Bear slayer) (1888), created his epic poem on the basis of Latvian etiological tales, folktales, local legends, wedding songs, and other items excerpted from folklore. *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, also follows a similar pattern of development.

In Germany, Wilhelm Jordan created the epic *Die Nibelunge* (The Nibelungs [a family name]), consisting of two parts: *Die Sigridsage* (The story of Sigrid) (1868) and *Hildebrands Heimkehr* (1874). In his *Epische Briefe* (Epic epistle), Jordan declared that he was in fact “the German Homer,” a kind of embodiment or incarnation of an epic poet, matured in the right stage of development of the people.

A similar phenomenon, though one based within a different ideological

framework, was characteristic of numerous ethnic minorities in the former Soviet Union. Romantic nationalism in its Soviet incarnation sprang originally from a statement emphasizing the creation of a high culture national in form, socialist in content, and international in spirit. Cultural life in many of the Soviet Union's socialist republics was, for the most part, based on traditional forms. Many of the peoples in these areas did not previously have arts based on so-called modern civilization. The culture witnessed a merging of old forms and new contents. Cultural clubs and circles began to form, especially during the mid 1930's. At its inception, the program consisted of pure folk performances. Gradually, texts propagating the new system began to be devised according to the traditional schemes, and new melodies greatly reminiscent of folksongs were composed.

During the Soviet period, a great number of epics were published. Those compositions created on the basis of diverse versions of the *Köroglu* (*Korogly*, *Gurguli*) epics known, among others, to the Azers, Uzbeks, Turkmens, and Tajiks serve as examples. There are also epics based on a version by a particular singer. The Uzbek epics *Alpamyš* and *Rustamhan*, published on the basis of versions performed by Fazil Çoldaş-oğli (F. Juldaševič), serve as examples. During the Soviet period, these and many other epics were subjected at times to censure and became the focus of ideological debate, but this is something that seems to be the fate of epics in general.

During the twentieth century, various manifestations of romantic and political nationalism have flourished in Asia, Africa, and South America. The role folklore has played in the cultural and social processes of these continents varies from preliminary efforts in collecting folklore items to diverse uses of folklore in cultural and national movements. Nationalism is unique to the specific contexts in which it develops, and the historical and political conditions under which it may arise are diverse. However, it may not be appropriate to use the term *nationalism* in an excessively wide range of contexts.

For numerous nations, folklore collections have been crucial for the creation of indigenous identity, cultural life, and fine arts; in some cases, collections have provided an impetus for the development of the written language. An interest in traditional culture characteristically has been stimulated by a romantic idealistic current represented by a nucleus group of cultural activists or some idealistic organization. The wide-scale collection and publication of folklore arising out of such stimuli has often been the last opportunity to record a nation's vanishing cultural heritage. Generally speaking, the wide-scale activation of interest in folklore has emerged from a desire to reinforce the nation's self-esteem and to arouse respect for the nation's own language and culture. Wide-scale collection has been the starting point for the creation of archives and collections and for publications of folk material. It also has acted as a source for a mainstream in which literary epics and other literary products based on folklore are born and for pictorial, musical, and dramatic art drawing on traditional themes and elements. Arguments that the collection does not displace

attention to the past but rather that the past is in service of the collection are contradicted by a broad knowledge of cultural history across national and historical contexts. In fact, folklore should be studied not only in “pristine” but also in applied forms.

According to some authors, the discipline of folklore arose partly from backward-looking or antimodern perspectives. It is possible that the feeling of “overcivilization” in the West during the modernization period was in the air in the Western regions of nineteenth-century Europe or the United States, but that was not the case in central, eastern, and northern regions of Europe.

The discipline of folklore arose in the period of romantic nationalism from an essentially modern perspective. It was the aspiration toward modernity in eastern and northern Europe that led intellectuals to promote broad interest in folklore, language, and heritage. Thus, toward the end of the nineteenth century, national awakening and social mobility—and, as a consequence, education in the native tongue—represented the road leading to modernity. Peoples without their history, language, and identity created national literature and literary language, discovered or re-created their roots in the past, and formed a compendium of (modern) national myths and symbols, including flags, anthems, and national festivities. Romantic nationalism has not only been able to resist the rational and secular force of modernity, it has also been part of the modernization process and complemented political, technical, and scientific development of the period. It was an inspiring force in the creation process of nations, especially among peoples struggling for independence in nineteenth-century Europe and also in countries striving for national unity.

It is true that, in many cases, nation-states are composed of more or less heterogeneous cultural, economic, linguistic, ethnic, or religious elements. Furthermore, it is necessary to keep in mind that the romantic movement developed and was manifested in many different ways, and nationalism has taken distinct phenotypes at different times and in diverse types of states. It is possible to make the distinction between *cultural nationalism*, aiming mainly at the creation of cultural identity through the use of folklore, art, music, literature, and *political nationalism*, striving for national identity through political movements and in times with uncompromising imperatives. In the nineteenth century, the most powerful ideological bases were the Herderian humanist cultural and national idealism and (especially toward the end of the century) the Hegelian doctrines of national spirit and its evolutionary power. The expansionist forms of political nationalism periodically rushed forward during the twentieth century with different applications, the results of which are well known. Such forms of political nationalism seem to show up regularly, despite the fact that some scholars have thought that the impulse was already past its peak.

In our times, the resurrection or actualization of romantic nationalism, often based on ancient mythic and heroic figures and symbols, is, in many cases, a response to the decline of the modernist identity. In its entirety, the situation is very complex, with traditionalist, religious, and ethnic variations. But as we

have witnessed, during this new era as well, national identity takes on many forms according to the political situation—from forms of peaceful rediscovery or creation of cultural identity to expansionist tendencies leading, in the worst cases, to situations wherein we can no longer speak about romantic but only about tragic nationalism. Romantic nationalism is not a homogeneous or unitary phenomenon, and all nationalistic uses of folklore materials are not necessarily romantic. The rhetoric of nationalism is based on diverse cultural, social, and political processes, and the role that folklore (and folklorists) plays in them is dependent on varying political aims and sociohistorical and socio-cultural contexts.

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See also Ethnic Folklore; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Literary Approach.

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RUMOR

Unsecured information. People have a strong desire to make sense of the ambiguities of their world; certainty is a human goal. In this way, rumor serves as the cornerstone of epistemology. People make an “effort after meaning” and strive to explain uncertain or unknown events. Rumors frequently emerge in the

aftermath of the breakdown of normal communication channels and become, in the words of sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani, “the cooperative improvisation of interpretations.”

Because of its centrality as a sense-making device, rumor has been examined from a wide spectrum of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, journalism, business, social work, law, and, of course, folklore. The classic definition of *rumor* proposed by Gordon Allport and Leo Postman is “a specific (or topical) proposition for belief, passed along from person to person, usually by word of mouth, without secure standards of evidence being present.” The key to the definition is the fact that the transmitter of rumors is not relying on secure standards of evidence, although what constitutes secure standards may be contested.

In the discipline of folklore, the study of rumor has been closely linked to that of contemporary legend, so much so that the lines between them are often blurred. In general, contemporary legends are traditional and have more complex narrative structures than rumor. A rumor is often a briefer and more evanescent communication than a contemporary legend. Yet there is considerable overlap between these two discursive genres.

The intensity of rumor has traditionally been expressed in the basic law of rumor, as proposed by Allport and Postman, which can be represented as follows: $R = i \times a$. That is, the amount of rumor in circulation varies with the importance of the subject matter multiplied by the ambiguity of the evidence. Despite the appeal of this equation, the data on the effects of ambiguity are generally stronger than the effects of importance per se. Some have argued that the critical ability of the listeners needs to be considered; those with lower critical ability are more likely to believe and spread rumor. As a result, rumor transmission may be linked to personality or emotional state.

Most rumors are brief, often no more than three related propositions. This is consistent with the processes of rumor memory and transmission: leveling, sharpening, and assimilation. In rumor transmission, most details of an original event are quickly forgotten (leveled). After most of the potential information has been lost, a rumor kernel remains, which is fairly stable. The second feature of rumor recall (sharpening) consists of the selective perception, retention, and reporting of a few details. Sharpening is the inverse of leveling: Sharpened details remain when others have been leveled. The extent of leveling and sharpening is a result of narrative content, the circumstances of transmission, and the abilities of the narrator. The final component of recall, assimilation, refers to how details become altered as a consequence of personal interest, emotion, or prejudice. Rumors assimilated to prejudice include those spread in times of ethnic or racial tension in which one group alleges that another has committed a heinous atrocity—a ritual castration or some claim of blood libel. A cynical viciousness may not motivate these reconstructions; rather, the story is “better” (makes more psychological sense), from the prejudiced person’s viewpoint, with the hated group seen as the attacker. Assimilation assumes that

memory operates through a process of “social constructiveness,” in which uncertain details are transformed into a compelling story.

One of the challenges for narrators who spread unverified information is to provide a textual frame by which the information can be interpreted without negative attributions made to the narrator. The fact that rumor often carries with it a moral attribution means that care needs to be taken so as not to be attacked for spreading false information. These opening frames can bolster the credibility of the remark (“I have it on good authority that . . .”), or, more often, can be used to distance oneself from the information (“I heard an interesting rumor that . . .”). Similarly, these framing markers can be placed in the middle of the report (“they say”) or at its conclusion (“What do you think about that?”). These markers cue the audience as to how they should treat the information to follow.

The discussion of rumor to this point assumes that there is common agreement on what constitutes unverified information. Actually, credibility is a social construction created by the parties to the rumor. How are narratives taken as true or false when they are presented as “truth claims”? The question that emerges centers around who has the authority to describe a claim as unsecured, unverified, and suspect. Although one might assert that there is “good” information and that there are “authoritative” voices, this only restates the problem. The choice of what constitutes an authoritative voice and good information is problematic and should not be taken for granted.

Obviously, characteristics of a source are important in our judgments of how to treat information. We judge narrators on remove, realm, and motive. Remove refers to how close the narrator is to the events being described or to trustworthy sources. In short, is the narrator in a “position to know,” or is he or she far removed from the events being described? Realm refers to the class of information being transmitted. Some realms of knowledge are considered legitimate, whereas other realms (extrasensory perception, unidentified flying objects [UFOs], and “miracles”) are considered by many to be suspect. Information in these zones of knowledge is barely considered, no matter the extent of the evidence. When considering motive, we ask if the narrator has some reason to shade information. The assumed motivation of a speaker influences how audiences will interpret the claims. The attribution of motivation will be a function of the narrator’s reputation as a credible source and of whether she or he has a clear interest in the topic and in our belief in the claims being put forward.

Truth is not handed to us; truth claims are. Our goal as an audience is to make reasonable judgments, while at the same time making the conversation flow as smoothly as possible. Rumor, being entertaining discourse, plays an important role in the free flow of communication.

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See also Gossip; Legend; Legend, Contemporary; Legend, Urban.

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S

SABBAT

The Jewish Sabbath, or day of rest, but since the fifteenth century, also the term used by Christian theologians to refer to the meetings of witches. In its learned form, the sabbat was the expression of a satanic cult. The meetings of the cult were presided over by the devil, who appeared in the form of a goat; the witches paid homage to him by kissing him under the tail. As a rule, there was a banquet (always without salt) at the meeting, but the food was rotten and the wine undrinkable. Afterward, there was dancing, but the music was cacophonous and the dance totally exhausting. The festivities closed with a sexual orgy, without distinction of sex or consanguinity, during which the devil raped all the new members.

When the sabbat was described in all its details around 1600, it appeared as an antichurch that worked to undermine the Christian communities. The sources of this literary construct were old heresy myths, confessions exacted under torture or through brainwashing, and, finally, popular notions theologically reinterpreted.



The legendary witches' sabbat was characterized by grotesque feasts, cacophonous music, and sexual frenzy. Here, a young sorcerer exchanges the Gospels for a book of black magic in this woodcut from medieval England.

Although the learned tradition was relatively stereotyped, the popular accounts of the sabbat, best known from recent legend, are characterized by a wealth of motifs. The tradition varies greatly from region to region, but common to the European witch legends is the fact that very little is said about what the witches do at the meetings beyond dancing, eating, and drinking. The devil plays a minor role and is sometimes not present at all.

Modern studies, such as that by the historian Carlo Ginzburg, suggest that the sabbat is related to shamanistic ideas. The Italian historian's attempt to document a development from shamanistic ecstasy to the sabbat experience, however, hardly stands up to close investigation; the phenomenon he reconstructs is, rather, a matter of a primitive "theology" created by Indo-European "shaman priests" as an explanation of their own ritual counterwitchcraft. Ginzburg's theory is more appropriate to "the White Sabbath," in which all the values of the witches' sabbat appear inverted. Such a complex of ideas is documented, for example, in the witchfree Sicily of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; there, accidents were attributed to the fairies, and "wise women" were believed to function as intermediaries between the fairy and human worlds by going, once a week, in a state of trance to a fairy sabbat, of which they afterward gave enthusiastic accounts.

Gustav Henningsen

See also *Witchcraft*.

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SACRED

An ineffable, universal sense of ultimacy, holiness, and truth apprehended through experience. The phenomenologist of religion Mircea Eliade has written that the sacred is an element in the structure of human consciousness and not a stage in the history and development of that consciousness. This statement identifies differences in scholarly evaluations of the sacred in the discussion of its validity as an essential category within human culture. Folklorists who approach subjects related to the sacred—such as saints' legends; narratives on healing miracles; beliefs about the protective power of verbal prayer or material objects such as Roman Catholic sacramentals, Jewish talismans, or the Bible; or the numinous quality of a natural environment or hallowed human habitation—do not wish to argue in support of the reality of the sacred as much as to present its existence as a widely considered possibility that invites rational discussion.

The sense of the sacred has, in the West, been strongly identified and associated with religion, either in religious institutions, in communities, or in the lives of believing individuals. The sacred has been used prominently in English as an adjective describing the unique status and distinctive power of an action, place, time, language, or aspect of material culture. The verbal, behavioral, and material systems of the sacred within religious belief encompass a variety of instruments and occasions of expressive culture that can be categorized under the rubric of visual or performed arts, public and private cultural performances, and individual acts.

As a theoretical subject area, the concept of the sacred has not been widely treated within folklore and folklife scholarship. However, ethnographic contexts and specific expressions of reverence for the sacred in traditional communities as well as in the individual lives of the common people have been of great interest to folklorists. Public display events and festivals, domestic and public architecture, foodways, costume, objects of devotion carried on the person or found in the home or place of work, and a multitude of individual and systematic beliefs and actions all manifest a relationship with the sacred that folklorists have studied at its cultural source.

The pioneering phenomenologist of religion Rudolf Otto, author of *Das Heilige* (1917, translated as *The Idea of the Holy*), possessed a keen folkloristic sense of the expression of the sacred/holy in daily life. Otto focused on the instinctive feelings and responses in humans toward the mysterious and

uncanny—terror and fear, fascination and attraction. These feelings are engendered, he contended, by the presence of the holy or sacred, the *numen*, or numinous objects and signs that participate with or represent the holy. He claimed that the experience of the holy or sacred by people is itself the source that generates folktale, myth, saga, legend, supernatural belief, and memorate, sometimes by direct experience and sometimes because of the stimulation of the numen as the mysterious, which he called the *mysterium tremendum*. Otto felt that language actually fails to provide an adequate medium through which to describe the numinous experience. Working from the heritage established by Otto, folklorist David J. Hufford has made similar claims in his experience-centered approach to supernatural assault traditions. Hufford has carefully examined the language of belief, whether it be testimony, memorate, or other narrative structure, noting the individual's tendency to rely on simile and metaphor in an effort to provide an adequate description of a particular phenomenon.

Lauri Honko, Leea Virtanen, Hufford, Christine A. Cartwright, Gillian Bennett, and Diane E. Goldstein have contributed to the debate about academic traditions of belief and disbelief. This debate assumes that belief traditions involving feelings of the mysterious or supernatural grounded in awareness of the sacred are either true or arise from certain kinds of error. These folklorists have been especially interested in the analysis of the reasoned use of evidence within believers' narratives, and their testing of alternatives falls within the context of narration regarding supernatural experience. Another area of special interest in contemporary folkloristics is fieldwork within communities of believers who actively engage with the sacred as a serious and important part of their lives. This situation is especially challenging for folklorists who are themselves believers or who, though not believers, are nonetheless impacted by the strength of such beliefs due to their empathy with their informants.

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See also Belief, Folk; Religion, Folk; Supernatural/Supranormal.

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SACRIFICE

Killing with a spiritual or religious motivation, usually but not exclusively accompanied by ritual and performed in a sacred place. Indeed, the term *sacrifice* is derived from a word meaning “to make sacred.” The practice of sacrifice follows no historical pattern in cultures: Levels of incidence can remain fairly constant for long periods, or the use of sacrifice may wax and wane over time. Accounts of sacrifices include seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century eyewitness reports by English officers in India, visitors to Africa, and Spanish chroniclers in Central America, as well as cryptic texts from the Mediterranean world and China.

The purposes of sacrifice include purification, renewal, atonement, and unification. According to Edward Westermarck, sacrifice may include burying the living with the dead to memorialize; burning or burying family members and slaves to accompany an individual in the afterlife; making offerings to ensure success in wars or to stave off epidemics of disease thought to be punishment from the gods, including the making of medicine from the bodies of sacrifice victims; and interring adults or children in the foundations of new buildings or under city gates and bridges as peace offerings and as a means of protection, springing from a fear of anything new or doing an act for the first time.

Sacrifice can involve one or many bodies or the body parts of both humans and animals. Human sacrifice, in its highest expression, is a voluntary act, undertaken as a pledge for the common good, and suffering is often a preparation for the death.

Animals substitute for humans and for other animals as sacrificial victims

regardless of the complexity of the civilization. Claude Lévi-Strauss insists that the choice of victim varies widely in accordance with what is available at the time. According to E. E. Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer religion, differences in substitutes are minimized. Romans, Greeks, Vikings, and Druids frequently offered humans and animals together on the same altar, to the same god, to obtain the same favors. And W. Robertson Smith has pointed out that human life is not viewed as more sacred than animal life in all contexts: For example, the eighteenth-century English would hang a man for stealing a sheep. Humans and beasts are leveled at the sacrificial altar when there is an unshakable belief in the blessings in store in the hereafter.

Sacrifice for purification purposes can be motivated by a fear of supernatural powers or by the desire to win favor or achieve a state of closer union with the god whose protection is sought. Or victim and sacrificer can join in seeking to bring about a better world as an act of hope. The rite can affect the sacrificer as much as the victim in the sense that the sacrificer is transformed as well and moved to a new sacred place.

Sacrifice for the purpose of renewal is inextricably linked to a belief that provisions will cease unless gods are propitiated. Fertility rites include sprinkling blood or burying pieces of human flesh in the fields before sowing to obtain a good harvest or ward off famine; making sacrifices to river gods for the necessary water; or sacrificing the firstborn, in the belief that if one child were given back to the gods, more would be provided.

The act in which one dies for the many is an act of atonement. In the hopes of saving their own lives, individuals may offer a human sacrifice as a method of life insurance—giving the one for the many, sacrificing an inferior individual to prevent the death of one more privileged, or offering one held personally responsible for a calamity.

H. Hubert and M. Mauss, French sociologists, contend that sacrifice is aimed at cementing the bonds between humans and gods in an act of communion through which the victim becomes an intermediary between the human and the divine. By means of the rite, the victim becomes part of the divine, and the sacrificer is brought into a state of union with the god.

Modern scholars accept varieties of these premises of purpose with a difference in emphasis or with a combined emphasis. According to René Girard, for instance, the main aim of sacrifice is to bring back social union and to restore the cosmic order. In the absence of a true judicial system to deal with violence, counterviolence is part of the divine order, in which case a scapegoat is found. Tension reduced, the crisis is resolved. Mircea Eliade proposes that blood sacrifices replay the original act of creation and restore equilibrium by reenacting the original deed of violence, catering to the specific needs created by the deed.

Margaret Bruchez

See also Myth-Ritual Theory.



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SAGA

A medieval narrative genre of northwest Europe. Although Mody Boatright extends the term to American frontier chronicles, most folklorists use *saga* to refer solely to texts from Scandinavia (principally Iceland) and Ireland. The medieval saga is a literary genre, but it drew on oral tradition and was performed aloud. Saga material sheds light on medieval life in Scandinavia and Ireland, helps clarify the development of other narrative genres in Europe (e.g., the romance, the *Märchen*, the ballad), and provides a fascinating case for researchers in orality and literacy.

IRISH SAGAS

The Irish saga tradition predated the Scandinavian. Latin biographies (*vitae*) concerning Irish saints appeared during the seventh century, and court poetry and prose writing began in the following century. As manuscripts deteriorated, scribes recopied them, often altering the narratives markedly. Since the earliest extant manuscripts date from the twelfth century, their textual history is a complex web of superimposed oral and literary influences.

The oldest prose material in the tradition, the mythological cycle, depicted Celtic mythology from an antiquarian perspective. Tales of the Tuatha Dé Danann, an otherworld people associated with ancient burial mounds, predominated.

The term *saga* generally refers to the subsequent Ulster cycle, narratives produced in the eighth and ninth centuries. These focused on heroes of the province of Ulster (the *Ulaidh*) and their battles with the people of Connacht. The Ulaidh were led by King Conchobhar mac Neasa and his champion Cú Chulainn. The textual cornerstone of the cycle was the *Táin Bó Cuailnge* (The cattle raid of Cooley), a prose epic made up of a variety of tales. Important

features of the cycle included its strong female characters, embedded poetry, and striking motifs.

The king cycle focused on the quasi-historical kings of Ireland, the last of whom was Cathal mac Finghuine (died 742). Narratives of this group differed in terms of hero, event, and villain, and journeys to the otherworld and encounters with the supernatural figured prominently. The Fionn (Fenian) cycle became popular in the twelfth century. Earlier texts depicted the hero as a powerful seer, but the twelfth-century *Agallamh na Seanórach* (Colloquy of the old men) showed Fionn mac Cumhaill in his familiar form as a brave outlaw, leading a band of trusted followers, the Fianna. The heroes made frequent visits to the otherworld, and Fionn's son Oisín played a central role.

Many of the Fenian tales were recognizable *Märchen* types, and Fenian ballads began appearing in the twelfth century as well. The popularity of the cycle is demonstrated by its persistence in twentieth-century oral tradition.

The sagas were performed in the evening, with a single saga sometimes lasting many nights. The basic narrative frame was often overshadowed by long descriptive asides, fanciful etymologies regarding place-names, and meticulous descriptions of warriors or retinues. Such “digressions” are often dismissed as professional pedantry, but they may equally have reflected different aesthetics with regard to narrative form and content.

ICELANDIC SAGAS

The term *saga* derives from the Old Norse verb meaning “to say,” connoting a lengthy reported narrative. A number of subgenres were recognized, varying in focus, historicity, tone, and style. Some of this variation stemmed from historical changes in both the saga and Scandinavian culture from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries. Regional differences existed as well.

As in Ireland, the earliest Scandinavian sagas were written in Latin and focused on saints. Icelandic clerics soon opted for the vernacular, however. Closely related to the saints' lives were the sagas of kings (*konungasögur*), royal biographies set in various parts of Scandinavia. Composed primarily in the twelfth and early thirteen centuries, these sagas often had lay authors. *Heimskringla*, for instance, a compendious saga of the kings of Norway, was authored by Snorri Sturluson.

This biographic tendency carried over into the *Íslendingasögur* of the thirteenth century—sagas concerning famous Icelanders. The text often focused on heroes (*Njáls saga*), outlaws (*Grettis saga*), explorers (*Eiríks saga rauða*—the saga of Eirík the Red), districts (*Laxdoela saga*), or poets (*Egils saga*). Often termed *family sagas*, the narratives sometimes followed several generations within a family or district. In addition, they often included poetry, legendary material, and other items of folklore. In contrast to the kings' sagas, they were usually anonymous works.

As western Scandinavia came into greater contact with Europe, the sagas changed. On the one hand, authors turned to the legendary and mythological past of their people, writing sagas about ancient times (*fornaldursögur*). On the other hand, the European romance became a prime court entertainment, and derivative or translated sagas known as *riddarasögur*, or “knights’ sagas,” were produced both in Norway and in Iceland. *Märchen* elements figured prominently in these late works.

On saga performance and use, we know relatively little. Evidence from the thirteenth-century *Sturlunga saga* indicates that traditional storytellers recounted sagas orally; performers in the cosmopolitan court of Norway may have read aloud from manuscripts. Performance occurred in the evening, and a single narrative could stretch over days or weeks. Further, sagas could be commissioned or presented as gifts.

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See also Hero/Heroine, Folk.

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SCATOLOGY

Folklore concerning excrement, flatulence, urine, and bodily organs involved in the process of defecation. Although many would assume scatological folklore is uniformly obscene or jocular, the range of meanings associated with defecation spans a broad spectrum and varies cross-culturally. Within many traditional cultures, for example, excrement is carefully studied to determine aspects of an

individual's health and well-being, and in parts of agrarian Germany, the size of one's cow manure pile served as an index of social standing and wealth. Medieval European texts and church iconography indicate an association of defecation with brazen sinfulness or the devil. Navajo coyote tales often contain scatological humor, as do trickster tales from other Native American and African cultures.

Scatological terms function in many cultures as mild or extreme verbal obscenities. The study of scatological lore from culture to culture furnishes insights into the variety of human responses to even the most basic of physical experiences. Serious inquiry has been hampered at times, however, by folklorists' or editors' disinclination to publish scatological materials or broach the topic in detail.

Scatological folklore, even if left unpublished, has been collected in Europe and the United States for a long period. Folktale collectors such as the Russian A. N. Afanas'ev or the Norwegians Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe recorded numerous *Märchen* and anecdotes relating scatological themes. Afanas'ev eventually published his materials, although most nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century collectors refrained from doing so. Occasionally, erotic and scatological humor was published privately in small, limited editions intended for a small circle of scholars. Classic folklore indexes such as the *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* acknowledge the existence of such material in their numbering systems (e.g., X700–799, "Humor Concerning Sex") but avoid citing examples.

Within agrarian society, traditional folktales often possess both polite and bawdy versions, to be used in different contexts. The romantic tale type entitled "The Birthmarks of the Princess" (AT 850), for instance, frequently contains ribald scatological humor. In a Norwegian version of the tale, a peasant pig herder wins the right to see the princess naked and uses his knowledge of the color of her pubic hair to certain advantage. In a suitor contest later in the same narrative, the lad tricks his opponent into consuming human excrement, thereby rendering his breath so distasteful that the princess cannot countenance him during the night but must turn to face the lad instead.

Many folksongs contain scatological versions as well, as do riddles and jokes. Folktale and folksong collections that avoid such material run the risk of presenting an inaccurate picture of folk humor and entertainment.

Throughout agrarian Europe and North America, riddles often contain both an "innocent" answer and one based on erotic or scatological details. The scatological reference may be the first to spring to mind, creating humor when the riddle poser cites the innocent answer instead. A familiar example is provided by the following riddle: "What does a man do on two feet, a dog on three, and a woman sitting down?—Shake hands."

Native American myths and tales contain scatological motifs as well. The motif of magic birth from bodily secretions (T541.8), for instance, occurs among northwest coast tribes. In addition, trickster figures (e.g., Coyote, Raven)

often display their social ineptitude through improper defecation. Thus, in a Navajo myth, Coyote's improper urination pollutes his wife's home and drives away all her family, and Coyote's brothers-in-law climb higher and higher into the neighboring trees in order to find firewood unsoiled by the trickster. Mention of scatological errors were perceived as hilariously funny by native audiences, who were extremely decorous about the act of defecation.

Medieval texts from Europe allow us to examine changes in scatological concepts in one cultural area over a long period. In theological writing and art during both the medieval and the Reformation periods, fecal imagery served as an important metaphor for sin and sinfulness. Church paintings and manuscript marginalia often depicted sinners kissing the buttocks of the devil, and anti-clerical folklore of the period often used this same "brown-nosing" image. Illustrations of this sort sometimes represented sexual acts, but many references and illustrations depicted persons consuming or collecting feces. Martin Luther's sermons, too, made numerous references to the devil as an entity who feasts upon human excrement and hell as a place pervaded by the foul odor of defecation. These references may strike the modern reader as coarse or inappropriate, but they appear to have been normal, albeit vivid, metaphors in earlier eras.

Scatological humor from the medieval period apparently drew upon serious, theological uses of fecal imagery. Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale*, for instance, concerned an effort to divide a fart into twelve equal portions—a parodic reference to the Last Supper. Similarly, the medieval poem *Audigier* parodied high court romance texts through the substitution of a turd hero for the typical knight in armor. Scatology undoubtedly furnished more vivid metaphors in earlier times, when commodes, outhouses, and primitive sewer systems imprinted the smells and memories of defecation more clearly on people's minds. Latrine humor is still common in armies, where the construction and maintenance of toilet facilities during field maneuvers approaches the experiences of traditional societies.

Folk speech reflects popular attitudes toward scatological matters. In many cultures, terms for both excrement and the body parts responsible for defecation constitute rich sources of obscene expressions as well as euphemisms. In North American English, for instance, polite or clinical terms (e.g., *penis*, *vulva*, *anus*, *feces*, *urine*) covary with a host of obscene or off-color terms (e.g., *dick*, *cunt*, *ass*, *shit*, *piss*), which in turn vary with respect to gravity and usage. Terms differ both in the degree to which they are permitted in normal conversation and in the extent to which they evoke their original referents. The terms *shit*, *crap*, and *turd* ostensibly denote the same referent (i.e., feces) but have different connotations and customary uses. Scatological terms may be used to comment metaphorically on a given situation (e.g., "What's all this shit around here?" in reference to a messy room) or may occur as simple expletives (e.g., "Shit!" in reference to a surprising turn of events). In either case, the decision to use such language helps speakers portray themselves in public, maintain community solidarity, or differentiate themselves or the moment from others.

In addition to such obscene terms, Americans—like others the world over—employ a host of euphemisms when referring to scatological phenomena. Expressions such as “visit the restroom,” “powder one’s nose,” or “pass wind” constantly come in and out of fashion, as speakers grapple with whether to sound coarse or prudish. Additional terms are used when discussing scatology with children (e.g., *kaka*, *poop*, *doo-doo*, *pee-pee*). Using euphemisms or child speech in unusual contexts leads to humor, as in the case of a police officer saying, “You’re in deep doo-doo” for the expected “You’re in deep shit” (i.e., “You’re in trouble”). Despite this pattern of historical shifts, however, certain terms (e.g., *fart*, *shit*) have existed in the language for millennia and will certainly remain part of North American culture in the future.

Children’s folklore offers some of the richest stores of scatological material. Feces and urine figure prominently in the narratives of young children, and scatological terms become important in insults and jokes throughout childhood and adolescence. The “hand-fart,” made with the hand under the armpit, or the “raspberry,” made with the lips, constitute potent comments and put-downs. Jokes and folk sayings about flatulence (e.g., “He who smelled it, dealt it”) offer young performers the opportunity to match situation with witticism. Telling scatological “dirty jokes” can build solidarity among children vis-à-vis their teachers or other adults, who usually disapprove of the subject or performance. Taunts averring misuse of excrement or problems in defecation abound as well. Folklore of this sort, once common to adult and preadult communities alike, has apparently grown more taboo among adults during the last several centuries throughout Europe and North America.

Scatological imagery pervades folk perceptions of other communities or cultures. Interethnic stereotypes often focus on the means of defecation as well as the sexual habits and diets of strangers. Unwelcome outsiders are said to use restrooms incorrectly or to dispose of excrement in foolish or dangerous ways. They are accused of attracting rodents and insects through their lack of hygiene and their ignorance of toilets. Interethnic scatological humor reflects deep misgivings about the nature of people of differing cultures and is widespread throughout the world.

Often, such stereotyped scatological lore becomes compared in jokes shared by two communities. In an English-French interethnic joke, for instance, an Englishman criticizes a Frenchman for France’s deplorable restrooms. The Frenchman’s reply uses scatology as a prime metaphor for cultural imperatives: “We eat well, you shit well. It’s all a question of priorities.” The joke encapsulates both English and French stereotypes about each others’ cuisines, toilets, and obsessions. Occasionally, groups will depict themselves as coarser than their counterparts in other cultures, as in Australian interethnic jokes in which the hypermasculine Australian hero displays sneering disregard for societal rules of hygiene and decorum, such as where to urinate and how to refer to excretions. Seemingly self-denigrating humor of this type often occurs in postcolonial situ-

ations, in which one culture (i.e., that of the colonized) has long been viewed as inferior to another (i.e., that of the colonizer). The Australian joke allows tellers to embrace their country's negative stereotype and transform it into a virtue, with a frankness superior to the supposedly overly refined and delicate manners of the English.

Scatological folklore is closely linked to sexual folklore and obscenity. All of these topics have posed difficulties to folklorists since they are traditionally taboo subjects in academic discourse. Many of the contributors to the journal *Maledicta*, for instance, use pseudonyms when publishing their studies. Folklorists run the risk of upsetting their informants as well when they transform remarks made in an intimate context into a scholarly text available for all to read. And newspaper journalists surveying the proceedings of academic conferences may ridicule the profession by citing scatological references as illustrations of the triviality or perversity of folklore studies. Despite these drawbacks, however, scatological folklore offers intriguing insights into the transformation of human physical experiences into cultural symbols and perceptions.

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See also Belief, Folk; Joke; Obscenity.

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SEMIOTICS

The study of signs used to communicate. Folklore studies and semiotics, both of which offer interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary perspectives on human communication, have mutually influenced each other as they have developed over the last century or so. Each, of course, has various schools and traditions, but there are important convergences between them, both in the history of the disciplines and in current practice. Within semiotics, we can usefully distinguish an Americanist tradition drawing its insights and methods from the polymath Charles Sanders Peirce, a French (and, more broadly, European) tradition inspired by the Geneva linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (often denominated by Saussure's preferred term, *semiology*), and a Slavic tradition—elaborated especially in Prague, Moscow, and Tartu—whose prominent practitioners include several with strong interests in folklore traditions. Common to all three schools of thought is a concern with the functioning of signs as the means for interpersonal communication, especially the highly elaborated sign systems that characterize artistic communication. Although each school conceives the sign in slightly different ways, all might agree to define the sign as something that stands for something else, to some person and in some respect. Signs may be typologized differently by each tradition (sign versus symbol, symbol versus icon versus index, arbitrary versus motivated sign, and so on), but semioticians share an interest in understanding how people and societies utilize signs to embody meanings and values and to communicate them to one another. Each intellectual tradition offers certain insights or approaches of potential use to folklorists, and each has been influenced to greater or lesser degree by their application to folklore materials.

Of the three trends, the Slavic tradition is most heavily indebted to the work of folklorists, who had a formative role in its evolution. Developing first in the Moscow Linguistic Circle and then in the Prague Linguistic Circle, Slavic semiotics numbered among its founders several individuals with strong interests in folklore texts and traditions. The most prominent figure, Roman Jakobson, later made contributions to linguistics, ethnology, cognitive science, philology, and literary studies, but he began his lifelong inquiries into the sign by studying Russian folklore texts, to which he returned periodically throughout his life. One of Jakobson's close colleagues was the folklorist Petr Bogatyrev, who remained focused on folk traditions throughout his career, from his early days studying folk theater and puppetry in cooperation with Jakobson to his later concern with folk costume, folk poetry, magic, and ritual laughter. The two men were founding members of both the Moscow and the Prague circles. Jakobson's folkloric concerns centered on the poetics of traditional Slavic verse, wherein he noticed a pervasive use of poetic parallelism—the repetition from line to line of a stable phrase with variable contents. In the folk poetry traditions he studied, Jakobson saw parallelism as a canonical feature defining the

construction of verse; this became the key to his broader explorations of parallelism in the artistic verse of various authors.

Bogatyrev's most important contributions to folklore theory grew out of his attention to the function of folklore materials and texts in social interactions. Reacting to the excessive ahistoricism and decontextualization of the emerging trend of formalist literary criticism, Bogatyrev insisted on the variable meanings that any sign may have when situated in concrete sociohistorical and social-interactional contexts or when moved from one to another. Drawing examples from folksong, folk costume, and especially folk theater and puppetry, Bogatyrev explored, with rich ethnographic detail, the interactions of structure and function in folklore. Studying the folk costumes of Moravian Slovakia, he showed how costumes indexed certain social statuses (single versus married, male versus female, for example) and how the costume system generated a larger sense of ethnic identity, of "our-ness." His works on folk theater genres contributed both to the emerging Prague Circle theories of theatrical semiotics and to the avant-garde experimentations of interwar Prague.

Two other important Russian thinkers of the same generation significantly contributed to the development of semiotics and folklore, although both took care to distance themselves in certain ways from formalism and semiotics. Vladimir Propp devised a method of morphological analysis and applied it to Russian magic tales; he found that, despite their quite different surface features of character and plot, the tales shared a single compositional framework or morphology. His book, once translated into English in 1958, had very wide influence on both literary theorists and folklorists as they sought to articulate structural analyses of both artistic and folkloric narratives. Mikhail Bakhtin never counted himself a folklorist but took advantage of the contemporary fascination with folk culture among Soviet cultural commissars to argue his theories of dialogism in language and life. He traced styles and elements of folk humor as they were incorporated historically into the emergent literary genres and offered a brilliant analysis of Rabelais that indeed constituted a richly detailed ethnography of the folklife of Europe in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Jakobson left the Soviet Union for exile in Prague and the United States; Bakhtin suffered many years of internal exile during which he had few opportunities to publish or teach. Bogatyrev returned from Prague to the Soviet Union, where he, like Propp, taught for decades but in relative obscurity; neither again achieved the kind of insights or influence they had had in their earlier days. The conjunction of folklore and semiotics was picked up again only in the 1960s, when a circle of scholars in Tartu and Moscow once more turned to folkloric texts, especially myths, as elements in constructing a semiotics of culture.

The Slavic semioticians were inspired by Saussure's crucial programmatic work suggesting a transdisciplinary semiology to be developed from the science of linguistics, although they soon found fault with Saussure and explored other conceptions of the sign. But Saussure had continued to have both direct and

indirect influence, especially among francophone scholars. One of the foundational figures of modern structuralism, Claude Lévi-Strauss, employed folkloric texts (especially myths) in his elaboration of a method of structural anthropology (drawing inspiration as well from Propp's morphological method but criticizing it as inadequate). His contemporary, Roland Barthes, employed folklore and, more often, popular culture in propagating a Saussurean semiology that profoundly influenced literary and cultural theory in the 1960s and later. Extending Lévi-Strauss' and Barthes' structural method—some would say to the point of *reductio ad absurdum*—A. J. Greimas continued to employ folkloric texts as the testing ground of a theory and a method that were briefly in vogue but now seem to be of little interest (especially to American scholars).

The giant of American semiotics, Charles S. Peirce, had virtually nothing to say about folklore in his massive oeuvre, which, in any case, remained little known until recent decades. But his systematic investigation of the sign in all its aspects and functions provided an analytical tool and perspective that crystallized the thinking of contemporary American semioticians in crucial ways. Two figures were pivotal here: again Jakobson, who discovered Peirce upon arriving in the United States during World War II, and Thomas A. Sebeok, who has been both an intellectual and an institutional father of modern semiotics. Jakobson did not incorporate Peirce's ideas into his own analyses of folkloric or literary texts to any great extent but instead celebrated Peirce and promoted interest in his writings.

Within a vast and complex schema of sign modes and functions, Peirce distinguished three ways in which a sign can relate to its object: An *icon* is related by similarity, an *index* is related by real connection, and a *symbol* is related by convention. Jakobson took up this triple distinction to refocus his long-standing concerns with the nature of signs in social and especially artistic communication. Revising Peirce's tripartite scheme, Jakobson took the two oppositions of actual versus imputed and similarity versus contiguity and elaborated a four-way distinction between *icon* (actual similarity), *index* (actual contiguity), *symbol* (imputed contiguity), and *artifice* (imputed similarity, which for Peirce would be subsumed under "symbol"). Whether we retain Peirce's triad or adopt Jakobson's revisions, the division of sign relations and Peirce's corollary divisions of sign functions, modes, and effects have been employed as powerful tools to organize analyses and discussions of complex folklore texts and events.

A scholar whose breadth of expertise parallels that of Peirce himself, Sebeok followed Jakobson's example of employing folkloric texts (especially oral poetry and other verbal art forms) as the material on which to hone semiotic methods of analysis. Equally influential as his own writings has been Sebeok's entrepreneurial work as the organizer of seminars and institutes (including the Folklore Institute at Indiana University) and as the publisher and editor of folkloric and semiotic works of all kinds. Sebeok edited, for instance, such key arti-

cles as Lévi-Strauss' "The Structural Study of Myth" (1955) and Jakobson's "Linguistics and Poetics" (1960) and served as editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*.

Although few contemporary folklorists self-identify as semioticians and few contemporary semioticians give as much attention to folklore as those just discussed, the influence—both direct and indirect—of semiotics on folklore theory in recent decades has been profound. The traces are varied: Though few folklorists today engage in structural analyses of folktales or myths, all are expected to know of the approaches of Propp and Lévi-Strauss. The concern with ethnopoetics and the methods used to carry out detailed analyses of the compositional strategies of oral poets and poetic traditions derive, in very large part, from Jakobson's example. Students of folk theater and puppetry must begin with the work of Bogatyrev and his Prague Circle colleagues. And Bakhtin's celebration of the culture of resistance of medieval and Renaissance peasants, the carnivalesque and transgressive, and his contribution to writing a "history of laughter" offer a reinvigorating inspiration to today's folklorists. Finally, the complex semiotic schema elaborated by Peirce can provide a very powerful apparatus around which to organize analyses of those complex, multivocal, multichannel, and multisensory experiences that constitute the folkloric arts.

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See also Linguistic Approach; Structuralism.

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SHAMANISM

The worldview system in northern cultures, particularly those in which a religious leader, a shaman, plays a central role as the mediator between this world and the upper and nether realms of the universe, the leader's main role being that of a healer, an officiant at sacrifices, or a divine prophet. The phenomenon of shamanism is extremely complex and multifaceted. The word *saman* is derived from a Tungus word meaning "a person with special supranormal skills" (the Tungus are an indigenous people of Siberia). When the concept of shamanism was introduced into international literature, its meaning was significantly broadened.

In the cultures where it is practiced, shamanism is not a religion in the narrow sense of compartmentalized Western thinking, which rigidly separates realms of experience; rather, it is a worldview system or a "grammar of mind" that is closely interrelated with ecology, economy, and social structure. Mythic knowledge in shamanic societies is partly collective knowledge shared by the clan and partly esoteric property owned solely by the shamans. This specific knowledge is particularly important to the status of the shaman and is transmitted from one shaman to another in an initiatory education process.

A special grammar of mind is typical of shamanism and designates a way of life and a culture in which the chosen leader, the shaman, occupies a central role. This grammar implies competence in a certain shamanic folklore repertoire, specific skills in performing ritual acts, and knowledge of the shamanic language and the rules of the generic and ritual grammar observed not only in the shamanic sessions but also in the behavior and everyday life of this kind of society. In order to understand shamanism as a religious, social, and cultural phenomenon, it should be analyzed as a whole, taking into consideration both the visible, manifest elements of shamanism and the invisible, latent meanings and messages in the depth structure motivating the behavior of the people who share a shamanic culture as a basis for their societies.

Recently, the concept of shamanism has been extended to an unwarranted degree in the popular press. The term *shamanism* has not only been used to characterize certain ecstatic and other traditional rituals of so-called primitive peoples but also to describe phenomena of Christianity and even the personae cultivated by popular rock musicians. Experts in shamanistic research regard this trend as a devaluation of the concept. Many criticize the overemphasis on ecstasy as a religious experience par excellence, as described, for example, by Mircea Eliade.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, attempts have been made to account for shamanism as a mental disorder (e.g., schizophrenia or epilepsy). In such hypotheses, however, the problem has been oversimplified. Although the aptitude for exceptional experiences is one of the criteria of "shamanhood" and



The shaman is a traveler through the upper and lower spiritual realms. The primary role of a shaman in tribal cultures, such as this Alaskan holy man, is as a healer or divine prophet who undertakes these journeys for the benefit of the community.

though periods of madness seem inherent in shamanic initiation, shamans usually are ordinary men and women who, often involuntarily, have to accept the painful vocation of shamanizing.

Phenomenologically, shamanism could be defined on the basis of a number of criteria. Ecstatic techniques are used to find a way into other worlds or dimensions of reality. There is a belief in more than one soul; therefore, a free soul is believed to leave the body in trance to make trips to the other world, where it assumes various shapes (e.g., animal shapes). There is a three-level model of the universe, and the role of the shaman is to mediate between these levels. There is also a belief in helping spirits who assist the shaman. In addition, the shaman achieves his or her ends by using ritual paraphernalia, which vary culturally: drum, dress, bag, mask, and so forth.

When using shamanic categories, it is important to make a distinction between such cultures as that of a number of Mandshu-Tungusian peoples who have the concept of *saman* as a linguistic entry in their native lexicon and those who know parallel phenomena but do not have a lexical entry for the concept (e.g., most Arctic peoples or the Ob-Ugric people of the Khanty). Furthermore, many cultures have neither the word nor the phenomenon. According to the proposed definition, African-American spirit possession cults, for example, are not shamanistic.

Generally speaking, the ideological aspect of shamanism has been underestimated in research into the phenomenon. The transmission of the traditional knowledge from one shaman to another is a major element of shamanistic initiation. One of the most important criteria in the choice of a new shaman is certainly the candidate's expertise in the ideological traditions of the culture.

Efforts toward a more holistic interpretation of shamanic folklore texts should determine their cosmological and astral mythical background and the way this relationship is revealed in rituals, expressed in mythic narratives, and interpreted and understood by the members of the culture.

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See also Divination; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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SPEECH, FOLK

The expressive language use of any group of people sharing a greater or lesser number of local cultural traits. In any living language, there is constant tension between forces promoting stability and uniformity and forces promoting fragmentation and diversity. This essentially dynamic situation is especially evident in languages that have many speakers occupying a large territory and engaged in a wide variety of occupations and activities. In such a context, public education systems and the media consciously or otherwise promote a standard form of speech or forms of speech thought to approach what is considered to be standard and desirable. One of the principal agents of linguistic diversity is the expressive speech of homogeneous groups of people whose geographic location, ethnic background, religion, and occupations, to name the most important features, allow them to be distinguished from other speakers of the same language.

It should be stressed that regional or local speech characteristics, however distinctive, rarely modify the underlying structure of the dominant language; even peculiarities of sound usage (or phonology), word shape (or morphology), and word order and sentence structure (or syntax) do not disguise the fact that a regional or local variety of language belongs to the acknowledged standard tongue. When such changes do operate over a long period of time, new languages come into existence. This is how Latin, once the common language of most of western Europe, evolved into such modern languages as French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Romanian, with their numerous regional varieties.

Although these questions of language evolution, regional varieties of language, and the mechanics of language are chiefly the domain of linguists and dialectologists, the folklorist has a nonetheless valid interest in them, too. Dialectologists map the distribution of words, both from the perspective of the varying meaning of a given word and from that of the different words used to identify a specific object or concept; folklorists may do much the same thing or make use of such linguistic mapping in order to cast light, for example, on the movements of peoples and the cultures they carry with them. Careful comparisons, taking into account other cultural and historical phenomena, enable the folklorist to understand the social pressures involved in producing cultural change or cultural conservatism.

Furthermore, some knowledge of regional forms of speech and the history

of a given language is useful, not to say essential, for the complete understanding of the texts of narratives and songs, rhymes, proverbs, riddles, and other forms of verbal expressive folklore in which nonstandard vocabulary and nonstandard usages are embedded. It is axiomatic that the fieldworker embarking on the study of the folklore of a particular group must make every effort necessary to master the local idiom. Without a thorough familiarity with the subtleties of local usage, the researcher will be deprived of the insights to be gained from such knowledge, and he or she may miss the significance of words and nuances of meanings in the very texts that are the subject of study. Without such knowledge, the student of a regional or local folklore will focus on what seem to be curious words or phrases (which may be a good deal less curious than the fieldworker thinks) and give them more emphasis than they merit.

An important corollary to the issue of nonstandard speech is the question of transcription. On the one hand, some scholars believe regional forms should be standardized when setting the spoken word into a written form, retaining peculiar local words and phrases for "local color." Such scholars maintain that the use of "eye dialect"—approximate renderings of nonstandard pronunciations based on the transcriber's own speech habits (e.g., writing "wuz" for "was")—unnecessarily portrays the original speaker in a demeaning fashion and, in any case, is rarely an accurate rendering of a phonological reality. On the other hand, some scholars, for theoretical reasons, prefer to attempt as accurate an approximation of the spoken word as is possible. The best of these approximations are usually based on a solid grounding in phonetics and the history of the language. It is certain that a standardized version of a text and a so-called folkloric transcription of the same text give two very different visions of the material. It is clearly important both to justify the approach one adopts on theoretical grounds and to provide a clear guide to the system of written conventions used to render the nonstandard forms. Of immediate interest to the fieldworker exploring the traditions of a social group is the specialized vocabulary related to the group's primary and other occupations. One cannot appreciate the creative artistry involved in the making of a loggers' song or a song about (and by) members of any other occupation without some familiarity with the technical terms and phrases that are part and parcel of that occupation. The folklorist will need to know the names of tools used by potential informants. For example, to the average person, a plane is a plane, but to a carpenter, it may be no more than a generic term for which the profession has 5 or 6 specialized names, each referring to a particular type; to most people, snow is snow, but to the Inuit of the high Arctic, there may be no single word for snow at all but 30 or 40 different words describing particular kinds of snow.

Similarly, it is important to list the folk names for animals, fish, insects, or plants (in addition to learning about the traditional uses to which these may be put); in other words, establishing the local names for things is a first step in defining local taxonomies and a preliminary to understanding the relationship of the social group to the world around it. And lest the impression be given that

there is too great a preoccupation with the rural or marginal in society, it should be stressed that scholars have long been preoccupied with creating vocabularies peculiar to urban groups—there are gay lexicons and lexicons of the underworld, of the church, of the military, of airline pilots, and the like. If in the beginning was the word, then the word—the vocabulary of a social group—is one of the first things to be studied.

Also of interest in this area is the field of naming. Nicknames, pet names, names given to domestic animals, the calls used to summon animals, and the vocabulary of animal husbandry all reflect sets of preoccupations. Local history is echoed in the place-names of an area, and not infrequently, local sayings allude to local references, be they to places or people. Thus, the form of the widespread proverbial comparison “as big a liar as . . .” may simply be concluded with the name of a local teller of tall tales. Or the comparison “as deep as Dead Man’s Pond” will allude to a local body of water believed to be bottomless, for example. There are many such reports of traditional genres, including proverbs and riddles, whose effectiveness depends on knowledge of local events or characters. Not infrequently, demands for explanations of the meanings of such local sayings will lead to a variety of anecdotes—some humorous, others serious—knowledge of which further adds to the investigator’s appreciation of the cultural texture of the community under examination.

Many characteristic forms of folk speech are embedded in rhymes. Children’s lore is replete with rhymes, beginning with the nursery rhymes and jingles used by adults or older children with small infants. Then, as children enter school, they learn the teases, the jeers, the taunts and reproofs, the retorts and parodies, the rhymes meant to shock and upset, the epithets and euphemisms, the insults, the tongue twisters, the catches, the wisecracks, and, sometimes, the secret languages shared by their peers, all of which may involve rhyme in part or in whole, not infrequently rhymes that are rhymes only because of the peculiarities of local pronunciation.

Rhyme often goes hand in hand with naming customs. This has long been attested in the area of *blasons populaires*, the nicknames attributed by the members of one community to the inhabitants of neighboring communities. *Blasons populaires* are not, of course, necessarily in rhyme, and folk speech will incorporate pejorative forms of epithet in all manner of colorful sayings. Indeed, an interesting though relatively little studied area of folk speech is that of oaths and swearing. More tastefully, folk speech also includes a variety of blessings and graces, prayers, and toasts, which may be both serious or humorous.

Two types of folk speech that have received attention from scholars are proverbs and proverbial speech and the riddle and riddling question. In the past, scholars tended simply to make lists of examples of proverbs, rarely providing the contextual data essential to understanding how the proverbs were used; yet such data are clearly essential since proverbs may make use both of local words and of allusions to local events or characters. One of the most distinctive features of folk speech, indeed, is the colorful imagery embedded in proverbial similes, exagger-

ations, metaphors, retorts, and Wellerisms, in which the “color” is an expression of the group’s relationship to its own world and its own worldview.

The same comment can be made about the language of riddles and related forms. The so-called true riddle—a riddle that asks a question in metaphorical terms but that the listener may take literally and that has an answer involving the same opposition between the literal and the metaphorical—frequently refers to local realities. A person unfamiliar with kerosene lamps, for instance, will be stumped when asked what it is that drinks its blood and eats its own guts. The outsider learns not only what is a familiar feature of a local environment but also the characteristic ways in which such features are expressed locally, that is, the nature of local imagery.

A final aspect of folk speech worthy of examination is the relationship between speech and communication. All speech attempts to communicate, but not all communication is necessarily in the form of speech. Much communication is made through gesture, and all cultures have an unwritten code of gestural communication. It is important to take note of the vocabulary of gesture in any community, not because the body of gestures that are locally meaningful may differ greatly or be in some way alien to the dominant culture (though they may be) but because without such a vocabulary, the researcher is denied complete access to local speech. Thus, although gestures signaling greeting or farewell, anger or insult, or directions may be common beyond the local context, some may have evolved specific to a given occupation or activity. Gestures made during card games may not, for example, be noticed by an outsider observing the play, or they may be misinterpreted; similarly, there may be formalized gestures with local significance embedded in traditional performance contexts such as storytelling or singing.

The idiom of any social group emerges in the many kinds of discourse characteristic of the communicative contexts proper to that group. Some of these contexts, in which well-established folkloric genres are embedded, have been well documented and carefully studied from a variety of perspectives. Others have been, until recently, somewhat neglected because of the apparent absence of easily recognizable genres in such discourse contexts. Yet most speech is conversational rather than performative, and it is in conversational speech that local idiom is given its most natural expression. In performative genres, it is not uncommon to find archaic words and expressions, as if frozen in time; folksong collectors frequently encounter words whose meanings are unclear not only to the collector but to the singer as well. A methodological lesson for the folklore fieldworker using a tape recorder is to let the tape recorder run, even when the informant or informants are not actually “performing,” and to have constantly at hand a notebook in which to jot down words and phrases that seem significant.

Gerald Thomas

See also *Argot*; *Blasons Populaires*; *Language, Play*; *Language, Secret*.

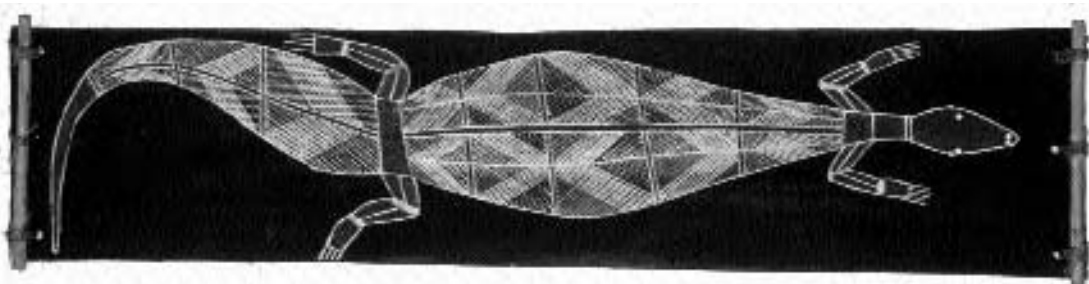
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SPIRIT

An insubstantial replica, usually invisible, of an object or person. The spirit is often thought to function as a kind of servo-mechanism of the body that it mimics and as a source of its will or other animating or vital principle, so that unconsciousness and sleep may be interpreted as the temporary loss of the spirit and death as its permanent absence. Often, as expressed in Plato, it is believed that there is a pool of spirits somewhere that, from time to time, become incorporated in new bodies. At birth (or during the rituals associated with the newborn), it is important that an appropriate spirit enters the new body and that inappropriate ones be warded off; at death, it is vital that the old spirit successfully makes its way out of the body.

Anything that creates images may be taken for a conduit into the separate, normally invisible world where spirits live. In other words, spirits may manifest themselves in dreams (as Patroclus' spirit appears to Achilles in the *Iliad*); in mirrors (such as the magic mirror in *Snow White*); in water (which has a reflecting surface and is commonly used in divination); or in the figures seen in tea leaves or coffee grounds, which can be interpreted by someone familiar with the



Australian Aboriginal depiction of the Spirit of the Lizard. Spirits are the insubstantial animating principles of material bodies. These vital forces often have an affinity for objects bearing their likeness, which is a key component in magically capturing them.

ways of spirits. Mental imagery, induced through a variety of methods—sensory deprivation, hallucinogenic drugs, fasting, meditation, repetitive sounds—is often taken for a manifestation of the spirit world.

In industrial societies, some of these methods have lived on in the belief system known as “spiritualism.” Spiritualism stresses one aspect of the traditional beliefs, namely, the idea that one can consult the spirits of specific dead people, which is done at séances. Such consultation is an ancient tradition and has often been done at burial places, as in the early Russian steppes, where figures known as “stone women” were erected on grave mounds; relatives would sleep at the graves and communicate with the dead through their dreams.

Such figures illustrate a common quality of spirits: They have an affinity for anything that has their shape. To capture a spirit, one may create an image in the shape of its corresponding body. Since spirits also have an affinity for reflecting surfaces, mirrors and vessels of water are often used to hold them in place. These may be placed in or above graves to prevent the spirit of the deceased from wandering about.

Perhaps because they may be manifested in reflections, spirits are taken to be exact opposites (that is, mirror images) of the phenomenal world. Therefore, the spirit world is typically appealed to and approached by means of reversals: The shaman may enter his or her hut backwards in preparing to make contact with the spirits. Traditional dream interpretation, as far back as Artemidorus’ *Interpretation of Dreams*, has assumed that the meaning of a dream is based on such reversal: To dream of sorrow means happiness and vice versa.

What is commonly called the “soul” differs from the traditional spirit. Whereas the spirit has a loose connection to the body and, when on temporary furlough from it, is capable of acting on its own, the soul is generally assumed to maintain its connection to the body until death. But like spirits, souls also may stay around after death, sometimes haunting the location where death occurred, and then, once disembodied, they are referred to as “ghosts.” Both the term *ghost* and the term *spirit* also are used to refer to the third member of the Trinity in Christianity: the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit).

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See also Assault, Supernatural; Divination; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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STRUCTURALISM

Various methods of analysis based on the reduction of phenomena into cognitive models referred to as *structures*. It is probably best to approach the term *structuralism* through an attempt to understand the concept of *structure* within this theoretical point of view. Traditionally, the major problem with the term *structure* has been its concreteness. The word typically refers to phenomena or entities (e.g., buildings) that are quite physical in their essence. Needless to say, structures in structuralism are neither concrete nor physical. Rather, such structures are mental models built after concrete reality. Furthermore, these models are not obvious but demand an understanding of hidden or deep aspects of the matter at hand. Following this approach, structuralism is an attempt to build models that can help understand or, as structuralists would put it, explicate the materials at hand.

The most difficult aspect of structuralism is that these structures are not based on concrete or physical phenomena as they are in biological or other sciences but on cultural realities, such as kinship organization or mythologies. These structures and their structuralist models exist only in human minds and not in nature as, for example, a Marxist would claim.

The ranks of the structuralists include Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. It is even possible to claim that some important social and/or psychological theoreticians and certain sciences are structuralist in character because they build models of psychological or social reality. This seems to be particularly true of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx. But a distinction is made between what may be called “surface structure” (consciousness, superstructure) and “deep structure” (unconscious, infrastructure). It is also worth noting that structuralists claim that to understand the surface structure, one has to understand the deep structure and the ways in which it influences the surface structure. Of all the structuralists, undoubtedly the best-known and most influential is Lévi-Strauss.

Structuralism, however, is not a unified school or methodology; Lévi-Strauss does not have a monopoly on structural studies in anthropology or other disciplines. Furthermore, the work done by structuralists is extensive, diverse, and difficult. However, because of Lévi-Strauss’ influence, his work may serve as an example of structuralist approaches in general. In anthropology, the use of the concept of structure is far older than Lévi-Strauss; A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, George Peter Murdock, and many others have used the term in different ways. But it is important to note that Lévi-Strauss’ work is multifaceted and that he was influenced not only by other anthropologists but also by linguists, geologists, and others. Lévi-Strauss brings into anthropology these and other influences that have shaped his thinking and anthropological thought through his work. The main aspects of Lévi-Strauss’ work can be summarized under three

headings: (1) alliance theory, (2) human mental processes, and (3) structural analysis of myth.

ALLIANCE THEORY

Alliance theory stresses the importance of marriage in society as opposed to the importance of descent. Its basic supposition is that the exchange of women between groups of related men results in greater social solidarity and that the product of this cohesion is a greater chance of survival for all members of the resultant kin group. Lévi-Strauss claims that the regulating of marriages through prescription and preference and the proscription of other types of marriage create an “exchange” of women in simple societies. This, accompanied by exchanges of gifts, ensures the cooperation of the members of these groups.

His analysis of the incest taboo is seminal. For Lévi-Strauss, the link between nature and culture in humankind comes from this universal proscription. In the incest taboo, nature transcends itself and creates culture as the controlling element of human behavior. Sex and other drives are regulated by culture; humankind has become a cultural entity.

HUMAN MENTAL PROCESSES

There is unity in the way the human mind functions. Lévi-Strauss claims that, although the manifestations may be very different, the human mental processes are the same in all cultures. The unity of the mental processes results from the biology and operations of the human brain. As a result of this unity, for example, the classification of the universe by “primitive man” has the same basis as classifications by any other groups—through models. The fact that resultant models of this classification may be different is irrelevant for him. The analysis of myth in Lévi-Strauss’ work also is based on the premise of the unity of the human mind.

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF MYTH

Lévi-Strauss’ work on myth parallels his interest in mental processes; he attempts to discover the unconscious regularities of the human mind. The use of the structuralist models of myth allows for the reduction of material studied to manageable levels. The dominant manner to accomplish this goal is based on the use of the following concepts: (1) surface and deep structure, (2) binary oppositions (culture/nature), and (3) mediation.

To discover the model/structure of a myth, one must explore the myth’s deep structure. The surface structure provides us with the narrative, but the deep structure gives us an explication of the myth. This is accomplished by discovering the major binary opposition(s) in the deep structure.

Binary oppositions occur in nature and, naturally, in the human mind. They are such things as night and day, left and right, or nature and culture. Nature and culture often function as a binary opposition in tales. However, depending on the tale or myth, the binary opposition changes. For example, the binary opposition life and death is useful in explicating *Sleeping Beauty*. Here, the deep structure of the story suggests that when the thirteenth fairy declares that Sleeping Beauty is to die at her fifteenth birthday, a life-versus-death binary opposition is posited. A mediation to solve the problem is now necessary.

A binary opposition can be mediated by finding a solution to the opposition created by the binary. The mediation to the culture/nature binary opposition is that culture transcends nature. In the case of *Sleeping Beauty*, the nature of the mediation is quite different but equally embedded within the subject matter. Here, the life-versus-death binary opposition is mediated by the twelve fairies' actions: Death is transformed into a hundred-year sleep.

In *Sleeping Beauty* or in any myth, the deep structure of the narrative is analyzed through the discovery of a binary opposition and the resultant mediation. This process may, in itself, create new binary oppositions in the story that need to be followed until one arrives at a final mediation for the narrative.

Structuralism is an intellectual movement that bases its analyses on the reduction of materials into models referred to as structures. These structures are not concrete manifestations of reality but cognitive models of reality. Lévi-Strauss stresses that all cultures (not just scholars) understand the universe around them through such models and that humankind comprehends the world on the basis of these mental structures.

Mark Glazer

See also Linguistic Approach; Semiotics.

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S

STYLE

Textual pattern or the exploitation of available patterns within given contexts. The concept of *style* and the scholarly pursuit devoted to its study, *stylistics*, are slippery intellectual commodities. A positive assessment of their characteristics might describe such patterns as multifaceted; in less optimistic terms, they might be called indefinable. With regard to the description and analysis of this complex phenomenon, folklorists might be wise to be guided by important developments in linguistic stylistics, although not all the concerns of value to the student of language in this respect are also of interest to the investigators of folk culture. For example, of the three types of style that Donald C. Freeman highlights—style as deviation from the norm, style as recurrence or convergence of textural pattern, and style as a particular exploitation of the grammar of possibilities—the first is clearly inapplicable in the absence of any normative element in folk culture, the second has limited applicability but cannot be discarded altogether, and the third would appear to be of special significance in the study of the variety and range of actualizations of the “grammar” of tradition. Or, as John Spencer puts it, “a writer’s style may be regarded as an individual and creative utilization of the resources of language which his period, his chosen dialect, his genre and his purpose within it offer him.” Substitute storyteller, singer, fiddle player, potter, house builder, or weaver for writer and tradition/folk culture for language, and this statement could easily have been made by a folklorist. Add the notion of *usage*, as the sum of individual or particular “utilizations,” and we find ourselves beneficially borrowing ideas from yet another area of language study—sociolinguistics—which has, as one of its focal interests, the study of variation or variants, which also goes to the heart of practically every manifestation of folklore ever investigated.

As has often been pointed out with justification, folklorists have, in the past, paid comparatively little attention to matters of style, except for students of folk narrative who have, in some measure, investigated the performance style of storytellers or the style of given texts. A notable exception is Max Lüthi who, in his overview of the form and nature of the European folktale, devotes a whole chapter to what he terms the “abstract style of the folktale,” which, for him, is a concept that goes far beyond mere linguistic considerations. It was not until 1980, however, that the question of “appropriateness” was added to the study of “usage” by W.F.H. Nicolaisen, opening the door for yet another sociolinguistic concept—that of *register*, which refers to the use of language appropriate to any given situation, especially with regard to the kind of people present on the occasion. This seems to be a useful concept to replace the older notion of “levels of culture”—elitist, normative, folk, primitive—with its hierarchical implications and lack of accommodation for dynamic cultural features. Going beyond the basic consideration of stylistic elements, the “folk cultural register” (in contrast

to other cultural registers) thus becomes the appropriate behavioral response, the right kind of action, under those circumstances in which a traditional tale might be told, a folksong sung, a fiddle tune played, or a rug woven, and it emerges as the register in which artists, creators, and virtuosi are allowed full realization of their creative powers within the bounds of tradition and within the shelter of the group. The concept of register acknowledges that most of us—one might be tempted to say all of us—operate in several different registers from time to time and from place to place, and there is not and never has been any place or niche in society that has been “folk” through and through.

W.F.H. Nicolaisen

See also Performance; Texture.

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SUPERNATURAL/SUPRANORMAL

The entities, beings, or other phenomena that form, control, and manifest humanity’s ultimate concerns, those that are believed to be beyond human control but that can be experienced in ritual encounters and within other supernatural spheres of activity or circumstances.

Many theories of religion point out that the belief in a supernatural order is a sign of religion rather than a criterion for it. Religions usually use a power or powers beyond this world as a reference point—that is, the fundamental questions regarding humanity and its place in the universe are answered by projecting them against a supernatural background. This supernatural realm is populated by a variety of beings whose existence is manifested by various means cross-culturally.

The affective level of religiosity is particularly manifested in man's experiences with the supernatural. The difference between the definitions given by an official religion and those derived from individual perceptions is crucial. Such a distinction is necessary because experiences and the reporting thereof are products not only of religious myths, dogmas, and values but also of the individual idiosyncrasies that influence perception and interpretation, as well as the social situations that condition perception, interpretation, and other relevant dimensions of behavior.

Supernatural experiences may be classified as casual or ritual encounters with supernatural beings. A casual encounter generally is unexpected and, thus, surprising in nature. The experiencer feels he or she is both at the mercy of a supernatural being and the focus of its actions. Often, fright ensues, along with the realization that the experience is somehow "abnormal." Usually, the person flees and, in distress, resorts to some incantation, prayer, or other protective rite.

The elements of surprise and fright are lacking from ritual encounters. Here, a *Homo religiosus*, a religious person, seeks contact with the supernatural by means of traditional ritual formulas. For example, the fisher may offer a part of the first spring catch to the water spirit, the herder may sacrifice a cow's first calf to the spirit of the cow shed, or the residents of a household in mourning may take offerings of food to the graveside of the deceased. In these cases, believers are the subject of the activity, not the object. They command the ritual techniques needed and know beforehand how to act and why. The appearance of the supernatural being or some other influence exerted by it is believed to be favorable and thus serves a positive social function.

Traditions concerning casual encounters are transmitted primarily through memorates, whereas more formal ritual descriptions and incantations provide sources of information about ritual encounters with supernatural beings.

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See also Assault, Supernatural; Belief, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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SUPERORGANIC THEORIES

Postulates that hold culture at a unique level above the individualistic and the social. The perceiving of culture as a superorganic entity presupposes that although culture is created by human beings, it functions at a level above and beyond the individualistic organic and social levels of human existence. However, arguments on behalf of continuity between the organic (psychological), the social, and the cultural have led to reinforcement of racist ideologies. Within European anthropological schools, especially British social anthropology, that continuity was taken to mean that clearly superior cultures or nations (with technologically advanced bases, as those of civilized colonial Western powers) would necessarily be products of superior societies and, consequently, superior psyches (minds or individuals); coupled with the evolutionary doctrine of the survival of the fittest, this was also taken as justification for imperial European policies toward colonized peoples at the stages of so-called savagery and barbarism. This ideology coincided with the independent introduction of the psychoanalytic approach to the study of culture and society, which, along with similar psychological notions, comprised an influential trend in the study of humankind at the beginning of the twentieth century. Among anthropologists in the United States, a reinterpretation of the superorganic concept took place, and the postulated continuities among the organic, the social, and the superorganic (i.e., cultural) were to be negated. American cultural anthropology developed in contradistinction to British social anthropology.

The psychoanalytic approach to the study of culture has been attacked on theoretical grounds. The problem is a philosophical one, considering the ontological aspects of culture regarding allied levels of human activities, such as the psychological, social, and cultural. In 1911, Franz Boas observed that the social or cultural phenomenon is "in its very essence" nonindividualistic. He argued further that the explanation of cultural phenomena in terms of innate biological differences leads to the assumption that the whole problem of the development of culture is reduced to the study of psychological and social conditions, among other factors such as the effects of the natural environment.

Boas' criticism of the psychological treatment of culture as reductionism was persuasively expressed by Alfred Kroeber, one of his disciples. Kroeber's theory of the superorganic explained cultural phenomena without reducing culture to the plane of purely psychic activities and products. In 1917, Kroeber argued that mentality relates to the individual and that the social or cultural is, in its very essence, nonindividualistic; consequently, heredity has nothing to do with civilization (or culture). Contrary to Herbert Spencer's views, Kroeber denied that the three levels of human existence—the individual, the social, and the cultural—were linked together and maintained the complete disparity of biological and cultural evolution. For Kroeber, "the dawn of the social is not a link in any chain, not a step in a path, but a leap to another plane."

Thus, Kroeber contended, psychology could not be used to investigate the phenomena or measure the dimensions of culture, which he regarded as “the superpsychic product of special mental process.” In other words, explaining such cultural phenomena as the mythology of a nation or the songs of an ethnic group in psychoanalytic terms of the ego and the subconscious would be as meaningless as measuring weights in feet and inches and distance in pounds and ounces. Culture is to be understood exclusively in terms of culture.

In folklore scholarship, efforts to account for the origin and stability of folklore—apart from the individual—seem to have grown without any contact with the concepts of European or American superorganicism. Among folklorists, awareness of the theoretical arguments concerning the superorganic is due to the influence of David Bidney, a passionate disciple of Kroeber, on his own students of folklore at Indiana University (e.g., Alan Dundes, Hasan El-Shamy, and Dan Ben-Amos, among others). Many arguments seemed to speak, wittingly or unwittingly, of folkloric processes in what may be characterized as superorganic terms.

One theory with a pronounced superorganic rationale is that of the “Epic Laws of Folk-Poetry,” proposed by the Danish folklorist Axel Olrik and presented in 1908. Olrik postulated stylistic and structural laws to determine the conditions and aspects of the *Sagenwelt* (a label he applied to a category of folklore, that is, the verbal and narrative). The basic unit in this “epic world” is the *Sage* (or folk story, which may belong to one of a variety of literary genres, ranging from the epic to the *Märchen* or fairy tale). Among Olrik’s “laws” are the following:

1. The “Law of Opening” and the “Law of Closing,” which result in moving from calm to excitement and from excitement to calm; consequently, the *Sage* does not begin with sudden action and does not end abruptly.
2. The “Law of Repetition,” which allows folk literature to compensate for the lack of techniques producing full-bodied detail through various sorts of repetition. By contrast, academic literature employs many means of producing “emphasis, means other than repetition.” Thus, in European folk literature, we encounter the “Law of Three,” whereas in Indic stories, it is “Law of Four.”
3. The “Law of Two to a Scene.”
4. The “Law of Contrast,” according to which the *Sage* is always polarized and opposites or different but complementary qualities exist side by side.
5. The “Law of the Importance of Initial and Final Positions,” which contributes to the “Unity of Plot.”
6. The “Law of Concentration on Leading Character,” which is, for Olrik, “the greatest law of folk traditions.”

According to these laws, the *Sagenwelt* is completely autonomous of psychological and social forces. Thus, the human bearer (or composer) is simply an instrument through which these narratives express themselves.

In recent anthropological theory, a similar view was expressed by Claude Lévi-Strauss along morphological lines of thought concerning myth. He asserted that “man does not think himself through myths, but myths think themselves through man.”

Another folkloristic postulate based on “superorganic” views is André Jolles’ *einfache Formen* (simple forms), presented in 1930. Jolles claimed autonomy of origin, function, form (structure), and existence for certain folklore genres through language. As Jolles saw it, “The entire work, which fulfills itself [via] peasants, hand-workers, and priests, fulfills itself once more in language.” Once this product of “peasants,” “hand-workers,” and “priests” enters a language, it is re-created by that language, language re-creating what life has produced.

For Jolles, the “simple forms” (religious legend, legend, myth, riddle, saying, *case/Kasus*, memorate, fairy tale, and joke) were formed not by human agents but by language, which extracts events from life and re-creates them as independent entities. Thus, folklore—through language—becomes an autonomous, abstract, cultural process *sui generis*, requiring no reference to social or psychological conditions for an explanation of its origin, development, or existence.

Clearly, superorganicism, on the one hand, and psychological, sociological, contextual, performance interpretation and analysis of materials, on the other, are mutually exclusive.

Whether the superorganicism in these and similar folklore theories is systemic or merely coincidental is not always overtly expressed. Human perception tends to be animistic; personification, or the speaking of inanimate objects and abstract concepts or forces as if human, is an outcome of such a perception. Academic arguments typically speak of how culture diffuses or migrates, how ideas meet, and so on. Actually, cultures do not diffuse or migrate, but human beings spread culture and carry cultural components from one place to another; also, cultures do not meet, but individuals who bear certain ideas get together and interact accordingly.

It is in this semantic vein of the predominantly animistic personification of culture and its products that certain folkloristic arguments may be judged as superorganic. Yet one significant folklore theory that is decidedly founded on nonsuperorganic factors has unjustifiably been judged superorganic because of its animistic title: “The Law of Self-Correction,” formulated by Walter Anderson.

Hasan El-Shamy

See also Audience; Epic Laws; Evolutionary Theory; Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Folklore.

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T ALE TYPE

A narrative plot identified by a name and a concise description of its contents. When defining a tale type, a folklorist presents an outline of the main events of a number of narrative texts resembling each other. For example, the stories depicting the imprisonment of two children in a witch's or devil's house and their clever escape represent the tale type "The Children and the Ogre"; its main sequences of action are "arrival at ogre's house," "the ogre deceived," and "escape."

Generally, the tale type is provided with a signifying label. The code number of "The Children and the Ogre" is AT 327 in Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's international folktale index.

The tale type is always an abstract construction. The scholar's generalization is based on several concrete text variants or versions of the plot. Variants that closely resemble each other can be categorized as subtypes. The practitioners of the historic-geographic method have called the subtypes *redactions*. If only known in a particular region or an ethnic group, a tale type or its subtype can be called an *oikotype*.

The notion of the tale type (compare ballad type, rune, or byliny type) appeared in folkloristic discourse as early as the nineteenth century. Faced with the tasks of organizing collections of manuscripts and publishing anthologies, scholars had to identify and list recurring narrative plots and their variants. Several plots proved to be international: For example, "The Children and the Ogre" was recorded not only in German (as "Hansel and Gretel") but also in Scandinavia and Finland.

The Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne analyzed a vast number of Finnish, Danish, and German folktale texts in the early twentieth century. On the basis of this corpus, he defined 540 European tale types and published them in 1910 in his *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* (Types of the folktale). The American scholar Stith Thompson enlarged Aarne's international index twice, in 1928 and 1961. In the latter revision, the number of folktale types exceeds 1,000. Aarne's and Thompson's tale-type index provides information about "the folktales of Europe, West Asia, and the lands settled by these peoples." The work covers the following narrative genres with their subgenres: animal tales, magic (fairy) tales, novelle (romantic tales), and jokes.

Tale-type indexes are highly valuable: Using the indexes, a scholar can examine a certain narrative from a cross-cultural perspective. Regional indexes also offer an ample overview of a given culture's narrative tradition and its key themes in a concise form. Examples of regional type indexes are *The Types of the Norwegian Folktale* (edited by Ornulf Hodne) and *A Type and Motif Index of*

Japanese Folk-Literature by Hiroko Ikeda. The concept of the tale type involves both empirical and theoretical problems. Foremost among the empirical problems is the issue of the universality of Aarne's and Thompson's "international" tale types. Because these types were defined on the basis of tales collected in Europe and neighboring regions, their applicability when describing non-European tales is often limited. Examples of type indexes in which Aarne's and Thompson's categorizations and plot definitions have been discarded are Lee Haring's *Malagasy Tale Index* and Patricia P. Waterman's *A Tale-Type Index of Australian Aboriginal Oral Narratives*.

As a theoretical reservation, it is useful to remember that the definition of tale types depends on the scholar's understanding of the semantics of the narratives and his or her interpretation of what kind of similarities (*homologies*) and differences appear in the texts. Thus, "scientific" or purely objective definitions and classifications of folktales are hard to attain.

The most articulate and insightful critics of the concept of the tale type were the Russian formalists Vladimir Propp and A. I. Nikiforov in the 1920s. According to Propp and Nikiforov, narrators do not rely on single, fixed plots to produce their tales. Instead, storytellers have a collection of episodes, sequences of events, and minor elements (motifs) at their disposal, and they use these components to fabricate their tales during narrative performances.

In later studies on storytellers and extensive text materials, scholars have reached a diplomatic solution concerning the problem of the stability of tale types by recognizing at least two ways of producing tales. The storyteller may use a well-known plot as the basic structure of his or her tale, or the narrator may create a new plot by combining traditional and individual elements.

Satu Apo

See also Magic Tale; Motif; Motifeme; Oikotype/Oicotype; Variant.

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TEXT

The basic “object” of folklore research. Folklore texts can be recorded (and preserved) by using a variety of writing implements, electromagnetic or visual facilities, and other media. It is hardly possible to offer a definition for the term *text* in the study of folklore that is not ambiguous. If, for instance, the target of the research is diachronic, the texts that seem to unveil something of the earlier history of the phenomenon under research would be regarded as relevant. From the synchronic perspective, the requirements would concern the usefulness of the texts for the analyses of folklore as incorporated into living human interaction. There is no doubt that a text written in shorthand from a singer in the nineteenth century and a text recorded in a performance situation by means of modern technology are both folklore texts. The problem is whether there is a point of departure, according to which we may judge some texts as objects of research that ought to be regarded as more (or less) valuable than others.

The variety of criteria established for folklore texts arises from diverse methodological frameworks, and very often, research practice is a result of following axioms based on the scientific practices or dominant paradigms currently in fashion. A range of problems surround the concept of text in folkloristics.

To fulfill the demands of proper research as construed during the dominant period of the geographical-historical (also historic-geographic) school, scholars were required to develop the complete body of text variants in their studies, taking into account the time and place of collection for each text and all available information on the tradition-carrier’s background. This was justified on the assumption that the geographic or typological distribution of the preserved texts would reveal the prehistory of the texts and that some texts might work as a “codex unicus,” a unique and most original version, having a key importance. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the adherents of the historical-geographical school strove to reconstruct *metatexts*, *archetypes*, or *invariants*. Thus, for example, the typology of folktales proposed by Antti Aarne and Stith

Thompson was originally based on the assumption that each type had a prehistory and an archetype. It is necessary, however, to note that variants assigned to the same typological category are not necessarily genetically dependent on one another. Furthermore, such a taxonomy cannot fully accommodate the constant variation of a living tradition. In practice, numerous codes are needed simultaneously for classifying the majority of folktale texts, and new types to which no existing codes apply are always being discovered.

In the structural analysis of folktales, or *morphology*, developed by the Russian formalist Vladimir Propp, the structure of the text consists of a syntagmatic order of narrative units called *functions*. For Propp, unlike many later structuralists or structurally oriented folklorists (e.g., Alan Dundes), the bias was diachronic, as the final purpose of the analysis was to reveal the archetype of folktales and the myth forming the original basis of this archetype. Propp's analysis of narrative was synchronic since he used a corpus consisting of 100 folktales and aimed at establishing the syntagmatic system of invariant functions of folktales on the basis of this corpus.

The French structuralists, by contrast, concentrated on deep structures of the narrative. In his analysis of myths, Claude Lévi-Strauss segmented the corpus into basic units called *mythemes* and attached these units into a paradigmatic matrix in order to extract the fundamental meanings of the myth. Algirdas Julien Greimas also strove to determine an abstract deep structure, which, according to him, might be exposed from beneath every narrative text.

Later, scholars who advocated the functionalistic paradigm rejected the value of texts dating from the nineteenth century or earlier, regarding them as dead artifacts; it was argued by folklorists such as Kenneth Goldstein and Linda Dégh that those texts were not collected in a natural social context (the proper context of functioning of the folklore in society) but in artificial situations. Folklore texts, according to Roger Abrahams, were regarded as folklore only if actually performed, and the folklore discipline was redefined (most notably by Dan Ben-Amos) as artistic communication in small groups. Suddenly, there was living folklore all around us: workplace lore, various contemporary tales, legends and anecdotes, rumors, gossip, graffiti, parodies on proverbs and riddles, the abundant children's tradition, jokes, tall tales and jests, and marketplace lore, for example. The springs of folklore texts certainly do not show any signs of running dry, despite the fact that scholars at the end of the nineteenth century felt everything of any importance already had been collected. The questions of where, when, and from whom the text originated were no longer regarded as sufficient. It was possible to discern active and passive tradition-bearers, the event of performance, and the communication process; the whole context became important. The problem of how to define the context and how to cope with the text/context dichotomy arose—a concern that continues even now.

Consequently, many of the synchronically oriented approaches to textual analysis in folkloristics have been influenced since the 1970s by text linguistics, by sociolinguistics, and subsequently, by discourse analysis. During the devel-

opment of text linguistics, the notions of context and the communicative function were emphasized as a counterbalance to the abstract models created by structuralists (such as Propp, Lévi-Strauss, and Greimas) or in opposition to the generative transformational theory developed by Noam Chomsky, based on the analysis of separate texts without context. The main bias of sociolinguistics is the use of language in social contexts as an empirical object of research. Text linguistics and sociolinguistics gave new impetus to folkloristics, and the birth of the performance (and contextual) school is, in many ways, connected with the development of modern linguistics and the sociologically oriented analysis of discourse. Through the approaches mentioned earlier, the social variation of texts becomes an important object of study. One of the key notions is communicative competence, the ability of the performer to produce texts (e.g., of a given genre) coherently and to relate them to the situation of performance, audience, and other elements of context.

Many other approaches have stressed the importance of the performance situation. Milman Parry and Albert Lord suggested that the performers of epic texts did not reproduce their poems as complete entities drawn from memory but used instead an internalized system of poetic devices of *oral-formulaic technique*, providing the basic tools (formulas, themes, and story patterns) for the production of folk poetry that varied from one performing situation to another (composition in performance). According to John Miles Foley, formulas and story patterns function not so much as compositional conventions but as cognitive immanent categories. One important branch influenced by oral tradition studies is the orality-literacy discussion and the theories of development (and coexistence) of orality, writing, and print.

The *ethnopoetic* approach has focused on revealing narrative patterns reaching from the level of stylistic features and other formal elements of surface structure up to the overall meaning structures or focused on transcription systems of recorded performances in order to visualize such “paralinguistic” meaningful features as pitch, quality of voice, loudness, or pause, for example.

One of the key issues in the debate concerning folklore texts is the notion of *genre*. The concept of genre and the practice of dividing folklore texts into a system of genres (e.g., for purposes of classification) have been among the fundamental functional tools used in the analysis of folklore. The majority of the genre terms used by folklorists are devised by researchers and refer to concepts aiming at universal use (e.g., in archives). From the point of view of the producer (performer) and the receiver (audience) of folklore, genres, however, are not, in themselves, important, and they are not recognized as systems. In analyzing folklore texts as genres, we are, in fact, analyzing the means of expression of different channels available to folk culture for describing, interpreting, or explaining life and the environment. Genre should not be an analytical fossil constructed by researchers and existing outside the realm of living folklore. If, for example, a commonly used archive classification does not seem to apply to the folklore of some ethnic minority or other special group,

researchers should take heed of classifications to be found in the culture in question.

The processes of creating, collecting, and recording folklore texts are taking place in constantly changing sociohistorical, cultural, and political settings. For this reason, the texts are not products of arranging symbolic objects in any stable content, order, or structure having fixed meanings; rather, they constitute a multidimensional and multilevel network of forms of manifestation and interdependences. The different types of discourse and genres and the pertinent elements of texture serve the purpose of making distinctions, enabling the suitable choice in the jumble of possible realizations in a given situation.

During the history of folkloristics, folklore texts have been exposed to a methodological cross fire. A productive synthesis is needed. Since the 1960s, the integration of various approaches has yielded promising results in the study of folklore texts: structuralism, oral-formulaic theory, ethnopoetics, cognitive sciences, computer analysis, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, the notions of folkloristic variation and intertextuality, and studies on gender and power.

The field is open to fruitful discussion, but the era of rigid axioms has not yet, it seems, come to an end. The biggest problem concerning future prospects for research on folklore texts appears to be how to prevent fruitless, authoritative discourse according to which only the approach presented by a given scholar or a dominant school or paradigm is the one leading to the "truth."

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See also Literary Approach.

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TEXTURE

A general term for the poetic devices of the surface level of texts, such as *alliteration*, *assonance*, *consonance*, *anaphora*, and *rhyme*. Sometimes, the term *texture* has been used to cover even broader concepts of diction and meter. According to some authors, *texture* is distinguished from *structure*. The former comprises the organization of prosodic and stylistic features and syntax, and the latter encompasses the large-scale elements such as organization of narration, plot, and story. Heda Jason, in her narrative structural model, separates texture from such categories as *wording*, *narration*, and *dramatization*.

According to some tenets of text linguistics, texture is imbued with cohesive relations. As M.A.K. Halliday and R. Hasan maintain, the text is distinguished from something that is not a text because the parts of a text form a coherent whole: A text has a texture.

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See also Literary Approach.

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THEME

Narrative “words”—recurrent actions or scenes—in oral-formulaic theory; defined by Albert Lord as “groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song.” First suggested by Milman Parry in his review of Walter Arend’s 1933 monograph on typical scenes in Homer, the theme has a heritage in earlier studies of repeated actions in various narrative works, just as the Parry-Lord formula can be traced to the earlier analysis of *Parallelstellen* (parallel passages) in ancient and medieval poetry. What distinguishes both formula and theme from this background is the insistence that they constitute a performance idiom, a special compositional language that was both traditional, in the sense of inherited and collective, and oral, in the sense of unwritten or pretextual. Examples of themes in various traditions include: assembly, arming for combat, boasting before battle, sea voyage, feasting, exile, and the “beasts of battle” (carrion animals).

Lord, to whom the concept of theme should largely be attributed, conceived of the unit as an idea-pattern together with a relatively stable core of verbal expression. As he demonstrated in Homer and in the south Slavic epic tradition, occurrences of themes in those traditions correspond in terms of the actual formulas employed, with predictable flexibility due to different singers or regional dialects. South Slavic bards also were shown to adapt their thematic patterns to individual songs or performances. Likewise, narrative inconsistencies—cases of Homer or his counterparts ignoring content and thereby allowing apparent contradictions within a given work—were explained in terms of themes that have lives of their own. A contradiction within a single performance fades in importance when weighed against the expressive impetus of a theme in the tradition as a whole. That is, the individual instance always draws its most fundamental meaning from the larger traditional context, which dwarfs any single performance.

As with other aspects of the oral-formulaic theory, studies of theme spread outward from ancient Greek and south Slavic traditions, especially to Old and Middle English, Old French, Biblical studies, Hispanic, central Asian epic, Irish, Welsh, and other traditions. With that growth, the original definition and concept shifted somewhat, coming to emphasize idea pattern over verbal correspondence among instances; eventually, efforts were mounted to understand the theme within its many different, tradition-dependent contexts. Questions of what mechanisms control aesthetics and whether thematic mechanisms persist when epics become transmitted by writing rather than orally can, as with the formula, be put to rest by viewing themes as metonymic of the tradition at large, with the concrete part standing for a much larger implied whole. One particular feast or battle, for example, is always echoic of other feasts or battles in the audience's experience of the tradition at large.

John Miles Foley

See also Oral-Formulaic Theory; Performance.

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TONGUE TWISTER

A linguistic sequence with difficult phonological combinations. Also called *tongue tangles*, *tongue teasers*, and *jaw busters*, tongue twisters require agility in articulating sequences of similar sounds at a rapid rate. Sound similarities usually involve long strings of alliteration (the repetition of initial consonant sounds, as in “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers”), assonance (the repetition of vowel sounds, as in “How now brown cow?”), consonance (the repetition of final consonant sounds, as in “He thrusts his fists against the posts / And still insists he sees the ghosts”), or a combination of these and other sound patterns. Sometimes, tongue twisters utilize elaborate sound inversions in complex juxtapositions—for example, “How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?” Homophones (words and syllables that sound the same) also often occur in tongue twisters (“I saw Esau sitting of a seesaw”). Frequently, tongue twisters rhyme, and most evince regular rhythmic qualities. Some are extremely short, amounting to only a phrase (“rubber baby buggy bumpers”), and others extend for several sentences.

Tongue twisters seem to flourish most among children, who delight in challenging one another to demonstrate their speaking ability. If the tongue twister is brief, the challenge may be to say it several times as quickly as possible. For longer tongue twisters, the challenge is simply to get through it rapidly without making a mistake. A competitive element figures in the performance of tongue twisters when one child recites a difficult text and then calls upon another to do likewise. Some tongue twisters assume the form of a question and answer, one child articulating a traditional alliterative question and expecting another to respond in kind. Often, children delight most when a pronunciation error occurs, especially if that error involves the utterance of a taboo word. For example, a slight juxtaposition of vowel sounds in “I’m not a fig plucker nor a fig plucker’s son, but I’ll pluck figs till the fig plucker comes” can allow a child to say with impunity a word that might otherwise be forbidden.

Though competitive in their own right, tongue twisters may figure into other games, particularly those requiring the payment of a “forfeit.” Drinking games, popular with high school and college students, often focus on the proper enunciation of a tongue twister to an increasingly accelerated rhythm. When someone makes an error, he or she must quickly consume a quantity of beer or other alcoholic drink, thus further impairing the ability to articulate. Some traditional songs incorporate tongue twisters. These verbal challenges may serve as informal, semiserious measures of one’s ability to speak a foreign language. Tongue twisters also have served as formal exercises in elocution, speech therapy, and foreign language instruction.

Though many studies of tongue twisters by folklorists simply provide lists, others have investigated the linguistic patterns and the geographical and generational distribution of the tongue twister. Among topics that merit further

attention are studies of similarities and differences in tongue twisters from different languages, the relationship between the popularity of particular texts and the demographics of the children who perform them, and the use of tongue twisters in informal educational contexts.

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See also Language, Play.

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T

TOY, FOLK

Play objects, often although not always rendered in miniature. Toys belong to the realm of fantasy, even though they are material objects. The object may have been created for one purpose, but we only know it is actually a “toy” if we see someone playing with it. Stones can be toys, but clearly not all stones are toys, and dolls certainly can be toys, yet we cannot assume that every small, doll-like human figure is actually a toy. The oldest of what we now recognize as toys—balls, tops, and human doll figures—may have been utilized for magical-religious or healing purposes in one context and then used either for reenactment or for parody when placed in the hands of a child. The separation of the category “folk toy” from “toy” is itself controversial, reflecting basic disagreements over definitions, players, and usage.

Toys as Culture, an elaborate, book-length essay by Brian Sutton-Smith, makes the point that although toys are often thought of as realistic miniatures, they vary from “those which perfectly resemble that which they signify . . . to those which are quite schematic and convey only those salient traits of those objects they signify . . . to those which distort or have little realistic signification whatsoever.” In the popular sense, the toy is considered, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “a thing of little or no value or importance; a foolish or senseless affair, a piece of nonsense, a material object for children or others to play with (often in imitation of some familiar object); a plaything; also something contrived for amusement rather than for practical use.” However, despite all their divergent views, scholars interested in folk toys would likely contend that the toy is anything but “senseless” or of “no value or importance.” Rather, they would suggest, it is precisely in the small things—such as songs, poems, gestures, and toys—that one sees the larger cultural patterns.

The small but varied literature on folk toys can be divided into three main groups, each giving a different meaning to the term *folk toy*: the historical study of folk toys as artifacts; the exhibition of specific toy collections primarily consisting of photographic displays, often of specific ethnic groups or regions; and the hidden literature on folk toys, embedded in larger ethnographies. In the first genre of folk toy literature, the historical study of toys as artifacts, the emphasis is on the description of the object and its basic historical context. We can only speculate whether children played with toys or whether the toys they utilized merely did not survive the years like their sturdier adult counterparts did. In the second genre, toys as ethnicity on display, folk toys are seen alongside ritual objects as items made in a specific locale, and the makers of the toys are emphasized. In this view, toys are considered reflective of a specific cultural style or people, and they may be objects for either children or adults. In the third genre of folk toy literature, toys as a part of ethnographic description, folk toys are typically seen as those objects made exclusively by children for children of a specific culture.

In the literature that treats folk toys as artifacts, folk toys are generally hand-made objects and are said to represent the daily life of specific peoples in history. The primary research tools in this literature are archaeological, and the texts are typically comparative. Some conjecture has been made evaluating which miniatures or instruments or dolls were used for recreational purposes and which were employed for religious or magical purposes.

Two classic texts examining toys through time, beginning with antiquity, are Antonia Fraser's *History of Toys* and Max von Boehn's *Dolls and Puppets*. Both Boehn and Fraser warn of confusing ancient dolls and ritual figures, and their pages are filled with photographs of ancient toys from a variety of world museums. Both texts mention the ancient throwballs, dolls, and animal figures found in Egyptian tombs, possibly for the entertainment of the dead, although these were not found in the tombs of children, only adults. Chapters on Greek and Roman toys consistently mention Roman dice, knucklebones, and other games of chance in archaeological finds, although these items also could have been used for divination. It seems that the first record of kite flying was made in China, in 206 B.C. when General Han-Sin used kites to measure the distance from his camp to the royal palace. We are left questioning whether these objects were tools or toys or both.

Boehn, because of his focus on a particular type of toy, is able to include prehistoric idols, ancestor images, fetishes, amulets, talismans, funeral images, and mannequins. He then examines the early European doll and dolls in literature and proceeds to the most mobile of dolls: the automata, movable images, and the early puppet shows. Unfortunately, although it is rich with detail, much of the book has an evolutionary tone as the author makes logical leaps about the supposed developmental connections between ancient dolls, "exotic dolls," and the dolls of western Europe. Fraser, too, links "ancient and primitive playthings"



Dolls are one of the most ancient forms of folk toy and are found in a variety of cultures throughout history. Here are some traditional Syrian and Spanish dolls.

in a manner unacceptable in modern anthropology and folklore; however, there is much attention to detail in her chapters entitled “Toys of the Greeks and Romans,” “Mediaeval Childhood,” “Toys in the Age of the Renaissance,” and “The Expanding Eighteenth Century World.” “Movable toys” and “optical toys and the juvenile theatre” are also examined, followed by a peek at the beginning of the toy-making industry in the West, with its modern machines.

Throughout the scholarly literature that perceives the toy as artifact, the term *folk toy* is synonymous with *old toy*. Yet ironically, as Antonia Fraser suggests, folk toys in general are transient objects, often constructed from left-over material and not necessarily made to last. Furthermore, the best-loved toys may be too well used to survive as artifacts, whether the toy is the African-American cornhusk doll, the Indian ceramic animal, the Japanese rice-paper kite, or the English adventure playground tree house. One could remark that the toys that survive may, in fact, be the ones played with the least, which suggests that we know even less about the history of actual toys than this small literature would indicate.

Folk toy books that represent the toys of one particular culture in pictorial

form can be categorized as ethnicity on display. Often, these are books with beautiful pictures and little information; many simply display one particular museum or individual collection. Datta Birendranath's *Folk Toys of Assam* presents the Indian folk toy in relation to its place of production by organizing the photos and drawings by material, that is, "clay toys," "pith toys," and "toys made of bamboo, wood and other materials." This volume emphasizes the production of the toy and the adult use of the toy for religious or healing rituals. Another fine example of this approach is Emanuel Hercik's *Folk Toys: Les Jouets Populaires*, which, although it includes many drawings of folk toys throughout Europe in general, emphasizes Czechoslovakian folk toys spanning several centuries. It, like the *Folk Toys of Assam*, is dedicated to the makers of the toys, the artisans as culture-bearers, and it leaves readers wondering about the objects' actual uses or connections to recreation as we know it.

Florence Pettit and Robert Pettit's *Mexican Folk Toys, Festival Decorations, and Ritual Objects* provides a sharp contrast to the Birendranath and Hercik volumes. *Mexican Folk Toys* places the toy in the larger world of celebratory material culture. The emphasis here is on the production and seasonal display of specific objects. The object as cultural reflection and production here includes Mexican wheeled pottery dating to the first or second century A.D. and "old traditional flutes" as toys, moving animal toys, jumping jacks made of wood and woven palm leaf rattles, animals, and figurines.

The Treasures of Childhood: Books, Toys, and Games from the Opie Collection represents another attempt to provide a context for toys—the world of English childhood. Unlike the other collections, its emphasis is on toys specifically used by children, and it goes beyond a focus on the toys' production. The volume presents childhood as its own subculture, and it leads to a consideration of questions of culturally based definition (i.e., what a toy is) and function (i.e., what a toy's role is in a specific culture).

There is a tension in many of these historical and regional compilations between the universality of the toys as archetypes—balls, tops, dolls, pull toys—and the uniqueness of toys in specific regions. Examples abound of regionalization by image (e.g., toy tigers in India, toy horses in New Mexico), regionalization by material used (e.g., carved ivory animals among the peoples of the far north, cotton and corn dolls among non-nomadic North American native tribes), or regionalization by storyline associated with the local hero toy (e.g., the soldier in England, the miner in Czechoslovakia). There is the implication that the "folkness" of a toy is to be found in its unique regionalization, and there is the further insinuation that it is possible to discern such a distinction between a toy and a folk toy, although these theses are not clearly stated.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in a text based upon an exhibition of world folk toys, attempted to fine-tune a definition of the toy and discover which aspects of toys were universal across cultures. In this picture-focused book, *Toys and Games of*

Children of the World, the toys and games are divided into four groupings: “representational” toys and games, toys and games with “skills and rules,” those with a “connection with tradition,” and “present day” toys and games. Although one could make a case for the division of fantasy play-oriented objects from rule-oriented game objects, all have their own “connection with tradition” and the “present day.” Ultimately, the games and toys can be said to be inseparable from their traditions and cultural contexts.

Ethnographies that have specifically examined the toy as part of a larger system are associated with ethnographies of child life or child cultures. These studies promulgate the view of the folk toy as a recreational object made by the children themselves—for developmental, functional purposes. Most significant among the authors writing in this vein is the neo-Freudian Erik Erikson, who, in his collection of essays entitled *Toys and Reasons*, argues that the body is the first toy and that toying and toys are involved with the child’s attempt to master the environment in miniature.

Helen Schwartzman’s *Transformations: The Anthropology of Children’s Play* is an excellent source guide and leads the reader through the culture and personality studies and through comparative classics such as the *Children of Six Cultures: A Psycho-Cultural Analysis*, compiled in 1975 by Beatrice and John Whiting; Cora Dubois’ 1944 Indonesian study called *The People of Alor*; T. Centner’s 1962 *L’Enfant Africain et ses jeux*; Wayne Dennis’ 1940 journal study *The Hopi Child*; and the early works of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. In all of these studies, the emphasis is on the understanding of the entire culture of the child in order to examine cross-culturally the relationship of culture to personality in the development of humans. The details about toys may be sparse in any individual work, but each offers insights about the use of such objects in children’s cultures—information not found in the first two categories of toy literature. Centner’s study of the Bantu-speaking groups includes much on dolls, dollhouses, cars, weaponry, and a seasonal creation of a children’s village. Schwartzman refers to Dubois’ description of “ingenious” child-made squirt guns made of bamboo, tops, cats’ cradles, marbles, and jacks. Dennis, too, has described “ingenious” child-made playhouses constructed of mud and sand, dolls made from found bones, and peach-seed sheep. In all of these examples, the “folk toys” have been made by the players themselves, with little or no guidance from the adults.

One modern American example of a work on folk toys as those made by the children themselves is Simon Bronner’s *American Children’s Folklore*. In an otherwise generalized text broadly collected across the United States with little ethnic or regional information, there is a wealth of information in a chapter entitled “We Made It Ourselves.” Chewing gum wrapper chains, string friendship bracelets, paper fortune-telling squares, and slingshots and tree forts are given as examples of children’s own folk toys and constructions, along with diagrams and photographs of the child as toy maker.

As with many other genres of traditional expression, perhaps we should

focus not on origin but on issues of use in context to arrive at conclusions regarding the nature of the folk toy. If the child-made ingenious invention travels and is made by adults elsewhere, is it no longer a folk toy? If a hero toy is made by machine from another country but labeled as a local hero, is it not also a folk toy? Fraser and Boehn suggest that machine production and large-scale distribution of toys led to the disappearance of the folk toy, reinforcing the notion that the term refers to the hand-made process distributed locally. But if the German top with Hebrew letters known as a dreidel is made in plastic and by machine in the United States, is it no longer a folk toy? Although some toys are indeed traditional in a certain locale and among a certain group of players, it is only the unused toy—unchallenged by any player and, therefore, divorced from both a performance context and ludic tradition—that may not become an actual folk toy.

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See also Children's Folklore; Games, Folk.

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TRADITION

Repeated pattern of behaviors, beliefs, or enactment passed down from one generation to the next. Traditions are culturally recognized and sustained; in general, folklorists have maintained a particular interest in those that are orally transmitted. Within the discipline of folklore, the historicity of tradition has

been subjected to a variety of interpretations—for example, a set of cultural ideals regarded as a coherent unit in which past ideals influence the present patterns of behavior in the group, a recognized set of present practices with origins in the past, or a set of practices created in the past that are purposefully maintained by the group in the present.

Thus, the definition of the term *tradition* elicits a variety of responses. One definition would deem tradition as something passed down from one generation to the next, generally by informal means, with little or no change in the transmission of that item or in the item that is transmitted. However, particularly in the latter decades of the twentieth century, many folklorists have asserted that tradition entails a complex set of relationships between the past and the present, in which the past sets precedent for the present and the present reflects the past in its adherence to a particular tradition. *Tradition* is often defined as an adjective in relation to specific genres, such as a “traditional ballad,” “traditional narrative,” or traditional belief,” or in terms of technical use, such as “traditional modes of transmission.” In these and like constructions, tradition is understood as a set of preexisting values and materials particular to a genre, which have been passed from one generation to the next. In the performance of a traditional genre, these preexisting values are of greater importance than the performers’ individual tastes, and judgment of the relative success or failure of the performance is based on these constructs. As folklorist Jan Brunvand asserts, there is a relative fixity of form that causes these art forms to be regarded as traditional.

For the bearers of a particular tradition or set of traditions, the performance establishes a connection between the present group and their predecessors. There is an understanding that a tradition is important with linking the past to the present as a form of identity making. This continuity over time venerates the tradition as something of central importance to the group. Distinct from a custom, for example, a tradition bears the patina of time and takes on something of a near-sacred role within the group’s worldview. A seemingly nonsensical activity can be elevated within a group if that activity is classified as a tradition. Markers such as “tradition dictates” or “it’s part of our tradition” set the activity described apart from the day-to-day realities of the group and ascribe a special status to it.

Traditions remain recognizable through successive performances, but certain variations within group standards may be allowed. Traditions represent both continuity through time and innovation within particular performances. The continuity (or sedimentation, as it is defined by Paul Ricoeur) manifests itself through the consistently identifiable features within the tradition and its repeated performances. Innovation is manifest in each particular performance, wherein certain deviations from the tradition are allowed and even expected within group normative standards. How long it takes for an item to become a tradition—for sedimentation to produce a consistently identifiable core to the

tradition—is subject to the dynamics of the group and the role that particular tradition fills. For a transient group such as college students, a particular cheer, hand gesture, or greeting may become a tradition relatively quickly. In these cases, the rapid turnover rate of group members dictates that the process of tradition creation be accelerated. For other groups, though, the development from simple repetition and handing down of a certain practice or belief into an accepted tradition may take several years, decades, or generations before it is understood and accepted to be a tradition.

Within the scholarly use, traditions represent a core set of traits handed down through succeeding generations, and they often identify and are identified with specific groups. The word *tradition* is used to define and to identify both methods of transmission and specific practices. As such, a definition of the term is based on two key elements. First, it is understood as something passed through succeeding generations in a relatively fixed form. There is an identifiable core within a specific tradition or mode of transmission that is identifiable through time and among various performances. Second, individual performances reflect a continuity in performance and an adherence to the central core of the tradition to a degree at which any given performance is recognized as fulfilling the dictums of that particular tradition. However, there may be certain variations on the core elements in the individual performances that are idiosyncratic to those performances. These variations, which are framed by group standards, may be expected or accepted in performances of a tradition, but the core elements of the tradition remain identifiable.

There is a more recent trend to define *tradition* in a performance sense—as an interpretive, symbolic connection between the past and the present. In this sense, traditions may give meaning to current institutions and practices, through invented traditions and customs based on past practices. In this instance, tradition becomes a more symbolic and purposefully constructed idea to link with the past, which contrasts with the more traditional, naturalistic definitions that treat tradition as a continuum of practices and beliefs from the past to the present. Common to all of these definitions, though, is the idea that traditions represent a core set of practices or beliefs based on a connection with past practices and beliefs and that these are accepted by the group and fulfill a specific role in group identity.

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See also Aesthetics; Invented Tradition; Transmission.

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TRADITION-BEARER

A person who preserves traditional materials in memory and transmits them to other people. Traditional transmission occurs through only certain individual members of a given community. These persons can be classified either as *active* or *passive* bearers of tradition.

Carl W. von Sydow, in contrast to the romantic nationalists, claims that tradition does not lie in the depths of the soul of all the people of a given community but rather that it has its custodians, who generally form a minority of the total population. Among the bearers of tradition, von Sydow distinguished two polar types: the active and the passive. The former keep the tradition alive and pass it on via performance. The latter are generally aware of the content of a given tradition and, when asked, can partly recall it, but they do nothing either to spread the tradition or to keep it alive. In folkloristics, this dichotomy is considered to be of classical significance despite the fact that it is one-sided, attending only to a single criterion for classification of tradition-bearers.

Another significant discovery made by von Sydow is that the boundary between an active (i.e., living) and passive (i.e., dormant) tradition is variable. An active tradition may, for various reasons, become passive. And every bearer can be active regarding several traditions but clearly passive in respect to others. Von Sydow notes the collective social nature of tradition when he stresses the importance of passive tradition-bearers as “the sounding board of tradition” and as the controllers of the stereotyped nature of tradition who establish the acceptable limits of variation in folk performance. Von Sydow’s basic thesis is that tradition does not spread by itself but is moved and transferred by human bearers. Thus, his work calls for a shift in focus from the superorganic transmission of folk traditions to the transmitters of these items.

Many studies of tradition-bearers seem to have been troubled by an error in perspective, inasmuch as bearers of tradition often have been narrowly examined as gifted, creative personalities with no connection to any community. Psychological research has clearly centered on the individual. Yet even the consideration of recall and recognition has been disregarded. When the

communication of oral tradition is analyzed as a pattern of social behavior, one should examine tradition-bearers not only as individual transmitters of tradition but also as members of social groups, who are expected by the community to regularly play specific social roles. In creating a typology for tradition-bearers in a community, their social roles and the role behavior actualized in the transmission of particular genres of folklore should especially be emphasized.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, the research on tradition-bearers has widened its scope to include the roles they play in the transmission and perpetuation of age-group traditions, pop culture, and mass lore.

Juha Pentikäinen

See also Transmission.

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TTRANSFORMATION

The changing between human and animal. It is widely believed that some human beings are able to transform themselves into animals at will. In European lore, the lycanthrope, or werewolf, is a common form of this transformation, but such figures are common around the world, and they are thought to occur for a variety of purposes. Often (as with the wolf in Europe, the jaguar in South America, and the lion and leopard in Africa), it is a large and dangerous predator whose shape is taken on by a human being. In China and Japan, the fox often functions as a were-animal. Such animals, unlike the were-animals of the movies, look just like other animals of their type; they are not half-man, half-animal creatures. As Johannes Wilbert points out, "Jaguars being alter egos of shamans, one can never be sure whether a jaguar is really an animal, or, rather, a man." Because the transformation involves a substitution of spirits and because the spirit world is a reversed form of the human world, it is not uncommon for the animal transformation to involve an efficacious reversal of some sort: The shaman may somersault one way to turn into a jaguar, then the other way to regain his human form.

A common form of the belief involves a sorcerer who changes periodically into another creature and does terrible damage in animal form. He or she is usually gaining revenge on someone who has given offense. This version of the

belief shows up in the following (typical) account: A woman is out in the woods with her husband, but he leaves her alone for a short time, whereupon a wolf attacks her. She defends herself, perhaps aided by another person, and injures the wolf, then sets out to find her husband. But when she finds him, she sees that he has a wound that corresponds to the one the wolf had suffered or has some of her clothing in his teeth. In Europe, the werewolf was believed to undergo transformation by means of a salve and a wolf skin or sometimes a girdle, and he or she might be condemned to live as a wolf for a specified period of time.

The crucial event in such transformations is a movement of the spirit from one body into another; the spirit is commonly viewed as a kind of interchangeable part. Therefore, a human spirit can enter a wolf, for instance, and operate its body, or the wolf's spirit can operate a human body (but in general, it is much more common for a human to turn into an animal). Because such exchanges of spirit occur also with other supernatural figures, it is not surprising that the were-animal belief is not strongly differentiated from some other beliefs that seem, at first glance, to be quite different. In some Slavic areas, werewolves may turn into vampires when they die. And though there are specific apotropaics for warding off werewolves (such as *A. lycotinum*, or wolfsbane), many of the apotropaics for werewolves are the same as those for other manifestations of the spirit world. Garlic and sharp objects, such as thorns and knives, ward off not just werewolves but also witches, vampires, and the evil eye.

Another common type of animal transformation is that of the shaman who deliberately lets himself or herself be possessed by the spirit of an animal (or causes his or her own spirit to take over the body of the animal) in order to use its superior speed, strength, or sensory capabilities to gain knowledge or effect the cure of a patient. Often, the shaman takes the form of a bird since birds may be seen as manifestations of spirits. (The Slavic *vila* or *rusalka*, a type of fertility spirit believed to be the soul of a girl who died childless, is represented as a bird with a woman's head.)

Some cultures use the concept of transformation to account for the presence of animals. An animal may be explained as a person who committed a particular sin and was transformed into an animal as punishment. Here, there is often a relationship between the form or habits of the animal and the quality of the sin; in Morocco, for instance, the stork is seen in popular belief as a judge who married and then committed a sin and whose bearing and color are reminiscent of his former condition. Such a transformation may be a routine event: As Morris Opler notes, "The Jicarilla associate neighboring tribes with various birds and animals and believe that the ghosts of those belonging to a particular group turn, at death, to the condign form. The Navaho are the Mountain Lion People, the Ute the Owl People, the Pueblo the Prairie Dog People, the Mescalero the Wolf People, the Mexicans the Burro People, and the Americans the Mule People." The Jicarilla themselves turn into coyotes, but not all coyotes are former Jicarilla Apaches; some are just coyotes, and again, one cannot tell

the difference between the real animal and the were-animal simply by appearance.

This process of transformation is just one form of the larger category of metempsychosis, or the passage of the spirit from one body to another. Some cultures take the view that a person's animating spirit—once it is ejected, at death, from its body—removes itself to a kind of spiritual holding tank, where it awaits incorporation into another body. If all goes well, it is incorporated into a child of its own clan, a process that is sometimes seen as an explanation for family resemblance. Through divination, the ancestor of the child may be determined, and the child may be named after this individual. Other cultures (and this is well known from Hindu tradition) take the view that the spirit, depending on its habits and character in this life, will be incorporated into a higher or lower form of life in the next. Animals, then, are seen as temporary repositories of the human spirit on its path toward perfection, and a human being who lives badly may be fated in the next life to take the form of an animal that shows the particular negative qualities (such as greed) that he or she showed during this existence.

Just as the spirits of human beings return to animate the bodies of later generations, the same is assumed to be true of the spirits of animals. It is important, therefore, to ensure that this process is not disturbed, so that culturally important animals are not depleted. Among the northern Eurasian peoples, the bones of animals that are used for food may be carefully kept together to allow another animal to come into existence. And since spirits have an affinity for anything that has their form, they may be encouraged to remain in the area by the use of images or drawings of the animal they represent, which hold them in place until they are reincorporated. Although we will surely never know much about the rationale behind the paleolithic cave drawings, parallels from ancient and modern cultures suggest that they may have been intended as a kind of spiritual template for the physical body, designed to ensure its maintenance or return.

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See also Assault, Supernatural; Magic; Werewolf.

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T

TRANSITION RITUAL

A category of ritual by which a symbolic threshold is crossed; a status-free period in which participants enter a betwixt and between state that is trespassed upon and left behind, and the status structure is set anew. Transition rituals are transformatory by nature. In the course of a transition ritual, the status of the participant is transformed to a new and ordered one. In that respect, a transition ritual might be viewed as a means of safeguarding culturally patterned structures and overcoming the difficulties of status changes and other periods of potential confusions. In the terminology suggested by Arnold van Gennep, transition rites are a subcategory of rites of passage. Crossing a threshold is a necessary minimal criterion for the definition of transition rites.

According to social anthropologist Victor W. Turner (1920–1983), a shift from a temporary liminal phase is accomplished by means of transition rituals. Using a symbolic approach, Turner attempts to identify the essential and primary attributes of a ritual as perceived by participants in that ritual. A transition rite can be conceived of as a process of transformation that, in Turner's opinion, could be compared to heating water to the boiling point or the change a pupa goes through to become a moth. Transitional rituals can take a variety of forms, including calendrical rites, consecration rituals and conversions, initiations (or confirmations), and funeral rites.

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See also Rites of Passage; Ritual.

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T TRANSMISSION

The process of passing on themes and symbols in language, music, design, movement, and action by which a society forms its tradition. The selection of subjects and forms for transmission is a conscious and unconscious social and individual creative act that ideology, cultural values, and personal emotions influence. The process empowers these subjects with the authority of the past. *Oral transmission*, in particular, is a key term in the conception and definition of folklore. Orality has become a central issue in most inquiries into the possibility of transmission as a natural process governed by natural laws.

Theoretically, in the formulation of Cecil J. Sharp, transmission is subject to three abstract principles: *continuity*, *variation*, and *selection*. Continuity operates through the cultural maintenance of narrative and poetic types and in the retentive memory of performing artists. Variation is a consequence of performance and its situational circumstances, inventive creativity, unconscious selection, taste, and memory and forgetfulness. Selection, following Charles Darwin's ideas of adaptation, is a function of conformity to community aesthetic and ethical values. Continuity and variations are dynamic forces within the society that culturally and historically operate at cross-purposes; selection becomes their synthesis.

Empirically, there have been two major concerns with oral transmission: its exclusiveness and its accuracy. In nonliterate societies, the exclusiveness of oral transmission is self-evident. However, when the subjects of transmission are sculptures and designs, their accompanied interpretation is verbal; there is an interdependence between oral and visual transmission even in the absence of literacy. In literate societies, such an interdependence intensifies.

It is possible to distinguish three forms of interdependence between oral and written transmission: diachronic, literary, and mnemonic. In diachronic interdependence, oral and written transmissions occur in successive periods. Oral transmission precedes literacy. With the advent of writing, scribes, printers, and learned members of the group select from their oral tradition themes and forms that serve their own purposes and commit them to writing. These texts, in turn, serve as a source upon which oral transmission could draw and to which it refers. The commitment of oral tradition to writing does not necessarily terminate its transmission in its own cultural channels; it continues to exist independently of or in mutual interaction with the written forms.

The motivations for writing down orally transmitted tales, songs, and other folklore forms can be religious, political, commercial, personal, commemorative, or scholarly. Religious functionaries select from oral tradition those themes that they deem most appropriate for their purposes to supplement their own texts. When their faith gains social and cultural acceptance, these texts, once transmitted orally, enjoy the status of a religious canon. Similarly, selectively written-down oral traditions affirm political orders. With the advent of print, local entrepreneurs circulated stories in chapbooks and ballads on broadsides.

These have become a major link in the transmission of texts. The oral reproduction of typographical errors attests to singers' and narrators' reliance on printed versions. In other cases, oral artists have written down narrative and poetic texts for their own use, and subsequently, these writings have become publicly available in manuscripts or in other forms of print. In modern times, the folkloristic intervention itself has become a factor in transmission. Tales that scholars recorded have gained popular distribution in society; parents, teachers, and revival storytellers have then disseminated their knowledge either by reading aloud or by oral performances in a literate society.

Literary interdependence involves writers who draw upon oral tradition for their own creative purposes. For example, Sophocles in classical Greece and Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Shakespeare in the Renaissance drew upon oral tradition, either directly or through mediating sources. Leading writers in many languages have resorted to similar practices, transferring themes from oral tradition and recasting them in literary genres and styles appropriate for literate, urbane audiences. Only when they have maintained or tried to imitate folklore forms have their works had some influence on oral transmission itself. Otherwise, the literary dependence on oral transmission remains one-sided, documenting the knowledge of a particular theme in a specific historical period.

Mnemonic interdependence between oral and written transmission occurs among storytellers, preachers, and singers who jot down phrases, plot outlines, and sometimes complete texts to aid them in their oral performance. Though literate to a degree, these folk artists have learned and then transmitted their narratives and songs orally.

Although the interdependence between oral and written transmission has contributed to the stability of texts, narrators and singers do pass on the forms of their folklore orally from generation to generation and from group to group. The significant factor in oral transmission is memory. Psychological experiments on memory suggest the significance of a knowledge of cultural symbols and genres, formulaic expressions, and idiomatic language in the retention and transmission of folklore. Divorced from these elements and the general cultural context, memory fails and transmission flounders.

As an explanation for the worldwide dissemination of themes in recognized tale types, Walter Anderson has proposed the "Law of Self Correction" ("*das Gesetz der Selbsberichtigung der Volkserzählung*"). At the basis of this law is the assumption that the averaging of narrative versions tends to draw them toward their standard forms. Each narrator learns stories from many sources, reconciling the differences between them in individual renditions. In turn, in many tellings, the audience's response and the performer's own sense of narrative logic help construct a tale that approximates its standard version.

In the absence of community support—when, for example, people migrate and folklore forms are uprooted—there is a qualitative decline in the transmitted texts. There are two kinds of folkloric devolution in transmission, generic and literary. Hypothetical in nature as it is, such an observation suggests that,

historically, themes shift from longer to shorter folklore forms, from epics to ballads, from tales to proverbs and jests, and from rituals to children's verses and games. English ballads that survived the Atlantic crossing, Tristram P. Coffin proposes, shed many of their narrative details, and their American singers retained only the "emotional core" of these ballads. However, once immigrants established their new communities, they developed their own folklore forms, and some of these suggest continuity with those that were transmitted from their countries of origin.

Transmission depends on agency. In every society, there are different cultural agents who transmit the society's respective forms of folklore. There is a broad range of folklore proficiency among these agents of folklore transmission, or "bearers of tradition," as Carl W. von Sydow calls them. They fulfill a variety of social roles. They are the mothers who sing lullabies and tell stories in the nursery, the social jokesters, the ballad singers, the village raconteurs, the market storytellers, and the trained epic singers. The higher their proficiency, the more likely they are to retain their repertoire throughout their lives. Otherwise, they may shift, expand, or narrow the traditional forms they perform depending on their stage in life and social circumstances. As Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi point out, adequate transmission occurs when there is a fit between agent and genre. A narrator of legends does not necessarily sing ballads well or tell jokes successfully.

The transmission of folklore forms across social and linguistic boundaries may appear to occur as "ripples in the pond" or concentric circles without human migration, but actually, the transmission requires contact between agents from the respective groups. They meet each other in border areas where bilingualism is common or in ports, markets, and other trading posts where travelers from different geographic parts congregate. Within a stratified society, the lower classes aspire to attain the living standards and values of the upper classes, and through imitation, they cause cultural goods to be transmitted downward. Hans Naumann called these goods the *gesunkenes Kulturgut* (filtered down cultural goods). Such a characterization is appropriate for some specific historical forms, but it would not be an acceptable description of the whole peasant culture and nonliterate society.

Agents of transmission often achieve thematic and, in the case of religious texts, even verbatim accuracy. However, factual accuracy in the oral transmission of historical information over long periods of time is a rare phenomenon. First, oral tradition is inadequate for preserving chronology. Second, it tends to collapse events, figures, and actions into established cultural patterns and structures of thought, eliminating the historical texture of events and personalities. Third, since historical information often provides legitimacy for present political leaders, such individuals tend to manipulate it. Therefore, the more naive a speaker is (in terms of being removed from political arenas), the greater the historical reliability is, and the shorter the genres are, the less room they provide for textual manipulation.

Finally, transmission can reach the end of the line. This can occur with the death of a language or the disintegration of a community; it can result from a lack of agents, such as narrators and singers; and it can occur when an audience loses interest and ultimately disappears, having become bored by or oversaturated with isolated traditions that, given the lack of contact with other communities, are never replenished or renewed.

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See also Performance; Tradition-Bearer.

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TRICKSTER

The central figure in one of the most characteristic worldwide myth cycles—a god, animal, and human all in one who is always duping others and is always duped in return and whose stories tell of experiences involving a lengthy series of dangerous, outrageous, and often obscene adventures and behaviors marked by trickery. The trickster as a character of myth—and the problems of interpreting the ambiguous nature of the figure presented—were noted and described at some length using comparative materials by Franz Boas in an introduction he wrote for a collection of Thompson River Indian stories, published in 1898. The best-known and most influential discussion of the trickster figure, however, is the 1956 book *The Trickster* written by Paul Radin, a later ethnographer much influenced by Boas. The book, actually a collaborative effort of Paul Radin, Karl Kerényi, and Carl Jung, contained the major Winnebago Native American trickster cycle, the secondary Winnebago Hare trickster cycle, and summaries of Assiniboine and Tlingit Native American trickster myth cycles extensively annotated by Radin. In addition, the book contained an article on the trickster in relation to Greek mythology by Kerényi, a well-known historian of religion of the time, and a psychological interpretation of worldwide trickster myths by Jung.

A special 1990 feature in the culture and folk wisdom section of *The World and I* contained seven articles on the trickster by scholars, offering a more recent discussion of the subject. Researchers from a number of disciplines also



The trickster appears as a worldwide, cross-cultural figure whose form varies widely. Clowns are one form the trickster takes in many cultures, such as these Native American Pueblo Kossa clowns.

published studies and interpretations of trickster figures in many cultures in the years between Radin and the special magazine section. Despite using different approaches, all the researchers agreed on the fact that the trickster figure is found in clearly recognizable form among all known tribal cultures and in the folklore of most nontribal cultures as well. The researchers noted a host of central figures in trickster cycles: the Native American figure known as Coyote in some groups and Hare, Mink, Blue Jay, or Raven in others; African figures including Spider, Tortoise, Hare, and Jackal; the Japanese Fox; the African-American Brer Rabbit and High John the Conqueror; and the Middle Eastern figures of Juha, Mullah Nasruddin, and Nasruddin Hoja.

The character and stories about the trickster show a good deal of variation from culture to culture in terms of the values they reflect, but they share a fine disregard for boundaries. In an Omaha tale noted by Roger Welsh, Rabbit saves members of the tribe from a hill that is destroying them and then sends his penis underwater to impregnate the women and humiliate the tribe.

Radin also noted that the trickster survived in the figure of the medieval jester and continues in Euroamerican culture in such forms as Punch and Judy and clowns, and more recent scholarship has shown the trickster's continuing

presence in American popular culture. Film tricksters include the central characters in the *Keystone Cops* series and the many *Police Academy* films, as well as Charlie Chaplin's "little tramp" character and Steve Martin's various comic creations. David Letterman and Johnny Carson, American television's most famous late-night hosts, are tricksters. American popular music stars Bob Dylan and Prince also fit the generally accepted definition of the trickster.

Research and interpretation concerning tricksters explain the appeal, persistence, and function of the figure either in terms of the culture from which a particular cycle of stories had been collected or in terms of all of humanity. The earliest explanations for the strange mix of the trickster figures who make the world safe for humans and ludicrously attempt the inappropriate were framed in terms of a universal history of religion or a universal human psychology, and many recent studies have followed the same path. David Brinton argued that the trickster figure came about as a degeneration of an older culture hero, whereas Boas claimed that the trickster was older than the serious culture heroes. Paul Radin agreed with Boas and initially attempted to find the meaning of the Winnebago trickster within Winnebago culture. Although he provided a careful set of notes that explained the stories in terms of ethnological detail, his final conclusions were psychological. Karl Kerényi noted the similarities between the Winnebago trickster and figures in Greek myth and explained the figure in Freudian terms. Jung himself explained the trickster figures in Native American narrative traditions in terms of his posited universal human psychology and especially in terms of his own theory of the etiology of the human mind and consciousness. Similarly, more recent interpretations of the trickster have explained the figure psychologically as a negative model of conduct, showing how not to behave while simultaneously affording a release through fantasy and humor from the strain of acting properly or as an example of how folklore serves human needs by creating a dream life.

Barbara Babcock examined the trickster as a worldwide, cross-cultural figure. Her article blended an interpretation of the trickster in terms of marginality with a close-reading, structural analysis of the Winnebago 49-tale trickster cycle collected by Radin. Her general conclusion was that the trickster is tolerated and welcomed because the narratives of the trickster figure have the power to transform perceptions of reality.

The other major approach to understanding the trickster figure in world folklore, following the example given by Radin's meticulous notes, has been to explore the figure and stories as they have meaning for the people who are the usual and natural audience and performers of the individual traditions. Ellen B. Basso, John Roberts, and Barre Toelken applied this approach to the trickster cycles of the Kalapalo of the Amazon, African-Americans, and Navajo coyote stories, respectively, and reached much the same conclusions. All three found the meaning of the trickster stories that they studied within the cultures in which the narratives existed, and Basso and Toelken were particularly alike in

their insistence upon approaching tricksters as enablers whose actions—good or bad, sublime or obscene—in narratives turn abstractions into realities that can then be contemplated and evaluated and in their efforts to firmly ground their discussions in the actual languages in which the stories are told.

Both research traditions present ample, solid, and convincing evidence in support of their respective points of view. The only general conclusion possible is that the trickster—at once subhuman and superhuman, bestial and divine, creator and destroyer, giver and negator, wise and foolish—is of the past and the present, of folk and popular culture, culturally bound and a part of the psychology of all peoples. And it is this destruction of boundaries, the greatest trick of all, that is the essential nature of the trickster and that should serve as the principle for further studies of the figure.

Keith Cunningham

See also Culture Hero.

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U

URBAN FOLKLORE

Folklore about cities and in cities; in recent scholarship, folklore generated by and about the modern urban experience. Even the most industrialized, urbanized, polluted, crime-infested city hosts countless examples of traditional folk creativity. Folklore, enhanced and expanded by the mass media and political or commercial interests, thrives in the urban context. The study of urban folklore alternates between the city as a location in which various forms of folklore may be discovered and the city itself as an object of study, illuminated by folklore: Attention shifts, according to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, from “city as locus to city as focus.”

The collecting of urban folklore began with the first oral and written descriptions of city life. For many centuries, travelers and chroniclers recounted legends about cities and their histories. Folklore enthusiasts of the past also documented the unique urban traditions they encountered in daily life: ballads sung and sold on cheaply printed broadsides, the street cries of vendors, folk speech of the lower classes, and street performances. Excellent collections of city children’s folklore appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century. Scholars of typically rural forms of folklore often recorded materials from country craftspeople, traders, and peasants visiting urban markets. All of these traditions belong to the constantly changing repertoire of folklore that is remembered, maintained, and created in the city.

Folklore scholars in the nineteenth century typically fled from the city and modernity. The European romantics were interested in the traditions of rural peasants, ancient history, and poetry that could be transformed into national culture. The British anthropologists collected reports of archaic customs and superstitions surviving among the “uncivilized” people of the world. City traditions and urban culture as a whole were usually not addressed by these folklorists.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the folklore of the urban working classes attracted the attention of socialist agitators, who saw in the narratives and songs of factory workers powerful symbols that could be used to mobilize mass labor movements. The resulting popular publications contain a rich variety of urban labor lore, but they should be consulted with care. Just as peasants and rural folklore were idealized in service of nationalist ideologies, so also was labor lore often romanticized, manipulated, or even invented by political activists. The same was true of the more recent publications in the Soviet Union, which selectively described the forms of workers’ culture and urban traditions that corresponded to government ideology and the official cultural and economic programs.

During the 1920s and 1930s in Germany, pioneering research was published about workers and their traditions. At the same time in the United States, sociologists were turning to the study of city populations and producing the first studies of ethnic groups, criminals, and various members of the urban lower classes. Their research is still a useful source of information about everyday traditions and folklore in the city.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, American folklorists moved away from a past-oriented study of culture in the rural periphery, grappling instead with the topic of American folk culture in the modern world. Richard Dorson and Linda Dégh rejected the ideological manipulation of folklore characteristic of works by Benjamin Botkin and other American romantics and attempted instead to develop the methods needed for accurate ethnographic description of folklore in the city. The 1968 symposium entitled "The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition" posed the question, "Is there a folk in the city?" and answered it with the observation that there was indeed a "folk" but that the materials of folklore had changed. When rural people moved to the city, older genres of folklore lost the traditional performance occasions of the village community and had to either adapt to the urban context or be functionally replaced by other forms. Intensive fieldwork in the steel-mill region around Gary, Indiana, inspired the revision of earlier folklore theories and the recognition of new categories of folklore, such as "personal revelation" and "folklore of crime."

Urban folklore research led to a change in the approaches to fieldwork and the people to be studied. Urban folk are knowledgeable about recording technology and the uses or misuses of the folklore they perform; they are literate and read the results of research about themselves; they are articulate and forceful in their criticism of people writing about them. No longer could fieldworkers collect and publish whatever they pleased. After the urbanization of folklore research, discussions emerged about accurate description, rapport, respect, and responsibility toward the people studied.

Interest in urban culture also grew outside the academic discipline of folklore. Urban anthropology, urban geography, sociology, and social history produced many ethnographies of city life. Municipal governments became aware of the commercial potential (tourism) and political uses (multiculturalism) of urban folklore and hired folklorists to study, stimulate, and celebrate the aesthetically pleasing urban traditions.

In Germany during the 1950s, folklorists rebelled against the rural, preindustrial orientation of earlier scholars. Taking leads from sociology, they refashioned folkloristics as an "empirical science" and set as their goal the study of people in the contemporary world. In 1961, Hermann Bausinger demonstrated that modernity had not destroyed folklore, as generally believed, but that folklore had changed to encompass modern technology and the mass media of communication. Traditional magic, for example, was replaced in its functions by machines and science. Not limited to the study of urban folklore, the

German theories nevertheless opened the city as the main setting in which folklore research continued.

The German shift to urban folklore settings culminated in a 1983 conference entitled "The Large City: Aspects of Empirical Cultural Research." Participants surveyed the history and goals of urban folklore research in nine European countries. The historical development of the modern city and its effect on everyday life, work, and leisure were recurrent themes. Like the earlier American discussions of urban folklore, conference papers described the survival, continuation, and transformation of preurban traditions. Others emphasized the city itself as a topic of study. Helge Gerndt, for example, called for the study of three aspects of the city: the city as a structure encompassing and bounding a specific world of everyday culture, the city as a mediator of culture or setting in which unique forms of everyday life are communicated, and the city as a cultural phenomenon with a specific meaning of its own.

The American and German conferences on urban folklore represent a turning point in Western folklore research, a point that has not been reached in many other parts of the world. East European critics observe that reality preceded theory in both cases. The traditional rural village communities and the gifted performers of archaic folklore could be found only with difficulty in modern Germany and the United States, and folklorists in these countries were forced to change their methods, theories, and object of research in order to survive in their professional careers. Whatever the case might be, the shift in approaches uncovered the rich world of urban folk culture and the unique traditions of gifted, creative individuals in urban communities. The urban setting remains a frontier in folklore research. The existing case studies of separate traditions and groups or even of entire cities have yet to be placed in a broad, internationally valid comparative theoretical framework.

Folklore emerges in the city in diverse contexts. Urban folklorists have favored the study of relatively small groups: families, ethnic or religious communities, associations based on occupation or leisure-time activities, and groups defined by geography—for example, the inhabitants of a building, a city block, a neighborhood, or a district. These enclaves provide a personal, mutually supportive environment based on face-to-face communication, in contrast to what is thought to be the anonymous, impersonal urban environment. Community events encourage the cohesion of these groups.

Communities in urban enclaves announce their presence in traditional actions charged with symbolism (processions, demonstrations, eating, dancing, music performance) and in tangible objects (clothes, flags, food, icons) representing the culture that both holds the group together and distinguishes it from the larger society. The urban context fosters conscious maintenance, revival, and traditionalization of folklore. Extra money and leisure time allow members of the middle classes to create new associations based on shared interests and to establish traditions that hold these groups together. Folklore, understood to be

a symbol of a simpler, better way of life in the preindustrial past, is revived as an escape from the perceived evils of modern urban society. Thus, traditions that are being replaced by mass culture in their original rural settings—crafts, costume, custom, music, dance, song—are given a second life in the city.

Ethnic identity acquires special significance when people of many backgrounds must live and work in close proximity. The folklore of ethnicity is displayed in public settings where cultures meet, clash, or confront mainstream traditions. Dense urban housing is another factor leading to the creation of communities: Informal social programs and anticrime (“neighborhood watch”) organizations, for example, set an area apart from the dangers of urban decay, welding coalitions of trust and familiarity among closely spaced but otherwise isolated households. In the city, events such as block parties, neighborhood picnics, or concerts and local outdoor markets (or sidewalk sales) are a few of the traditionalized occasions in which a sense of local community is constructed.

Material traditions mark off enclaves within the city. Municipal ordinances stipulate some degree of uniformity in house facades, but many more unofficial, traditional aesthetic norms produce, for example, similarities in house colors, exterior decorations, and front gardens. Residents learn which “weeds” should be removed and which vegetable- or fruit-bearing plants are appropriate for public view by observing other gardens in the community. Less visible communities such as American street gangs leave visible signs marking their territory (“turf”) in elaborate graffiti spray-painted on fences or walls.

The urban setting gives a double stimulus to folklore: On the one hand, folklore is used to strengthen small communities, and on the other hand, it provides traditional ways for individuals to personalize and humanize the mass-produced, industrial setting of the city. Communal traditions provide their performers with a means of artistic creativity and the possibility to express individual identity. Within certain limits, individual artistic expression is prized in the city, and street performers—musicians, actors, jugglers, speakers, artists—are given money by admiring passersby. It is not, however, the most original art that extracts the greatest resonance (and financial gain) from the fleeting audience; folklore and folklorized elite or popular culture flourish here.

The personal revelation, an expression of individual experience, philosophy, and worldview, gains importance in the egalitarian urban context. In everyday conversations, persons set themselves apart from the faceless, anonymous millions by telling autobiographical stories (personal narratives). Folklore characteristics of these seemingly nontraditional narratives appear in the commonly held themes, beliefs, and fears that they contain. Narratives about rapes, muggings, robbery, and theft, told by the victims or their acquaintances, express both the widespread fears of encountering urban crime and the relief of sharing such fears with reliable, trusted persons.

Many other forms of urban folklore have been described in detail. Problems of terminology emerge whenever a specific genre is placed under scrutiny. For example, two of the most popular forms of folklore that have become known as

“urban” are not exclusively urban. *Urban legend*, a term popularized during recent decades, denotes legends containing references to modern technology and circulating among urban populations. The term is misleading, for it refers to narratives that have been collected in urban, suburban, and rural areas alike and that contain both modern and archaic motifs. Moreover, other forms of folklore communicated by means of modern technology (via fax or “xerox”) are not found only in cities, as implied by the frequently used term *urban folklore*. These are primarily examples of folklore transmitted through the modern mass-media network, which is both urban and rural.

There are few qualitative differences between urban folklore and any other folklore touched by the modern world. All folklore found in cities is a part of modern urban culture, but it is usually not exclusively urban. Some forms of folklore, however, arise directly out of the urban experience.

Everyday life in cities follows many rhythms of work and leisure, acted out differently in various districts. Daytime and nighttime activities will follow identifiable schedules (clocked by factory whistles and the bells of churches and schools), and a calendrical cycle appears in the sequence of workdays and holidays. Business, shopping, and leisure habits are traditional, known by all but rarely prescribed by law. They give observable and recordable evidence about the urban dweller’s perceptions of time.

There are also traditional divisions of space as known by people in a city. The geographical landscape of a city is sometimes printed on maps for use by visitors or municipal governments, but many other maps exist in the minds of people going about their daily existence. Different landmarks reveal different ways of looking at the city: For children, a street is punctuated by stones, gutters, and tree stumps used as markers in games of stickball; for a homeless beggar, the daily circuits revolve around places where money, food, and drink may be obtained, followed by a place to sleep. Other lives are passed on a circle joining home, work, a food store, and a community gathering place. A tourist imagines the city as a cluster of skyscrapers, museums, and parks. Persons in the city have a mental image of the city and the various districts that lie beyond the familiar neighborhood, but this traditional sense of place rarely resembles commercially produced maps. Informal place-names and stories about the city reveal a traditionally formulated landscape of wealth and poverty, work and leisure, history, beauty, and progress and decay.

Images of the city and its everyday life as perceived by the urban dwellers reveal contrasts between, for instance, the cultures of the city and the countryside. Whereas the stereotypical city rigidly follows the clock and calendar, the life of a rural farmer is governed by the weather and the seasons, regardless of dates. Other everyday traditions indicate that a historical break has occurred between urban and rural folklore. In the twentieth century, cities have fostered the growth and expansion of the middle social classes; it is no surprise, then, that the typically middle-class values concerning time, cleanliness, work, and leisure often predominate in urban culture as a whole.

Everyday culture reveals subtle changes in the characteristics of cities over time. Festivals place these differences in open view, to be identified by urban folklorists. Historical studies show, for example, that public celebrations moved from outlying districts into central areas of the city with the rise of liberal democracy and populist movements; family customs such as weddings, by contrast, have been transformed from public events in rural villages to private affairs among the urban middle classes. Changes in perceptions of openness and privacy signal that larger changes are taking place in cultures.

Images of the city appear in crystallized form in public festivals held by municipal organizations: Parades and pageants address the many cultures of the city, giving every inhabitant occasion to identify with the local government and to recognize its place in the local hierarchy of power. Public political demonstrations are recognized both from above and from below as traditional instruments of social change; memorials construct the city's history, re-creating the past to validate or challenge the present. The mass media and the tourism industry diffuse concentrated images of the city (silhouettes of the skyline, pictures of value-charged sites such as the Brooklyn Bridge in New York), identifying these symbols with the given city and its inhabitants. When the mass-produced images find resonance and are accepted by portions of the urban population, they folklorize, becoming part of the city's informally transmitted culture. Distinctive urban identities form through images constructed in political and commercial processes. Sports, weather, and news broadcasts on television and the other mass media have made people very aware of the existence of their city among many other cities in their country and abroad, intensifying their sense of belonging to a specific place in the transurban context. Audiences struggle and suffer with the eleven football players representing their hometown; sports rivalries between cities run deep in the identities of fans, sometimes even leading them to violence.

The study of urban folklore provides the views of the average city dweller on the great social and cultural changes currently taking place in the world. As people of many backgrounds continue to migrate to ever-expanding cities, rural identities are transformed by the traditions of the city, which are in turn tightly intertwined with national and international culture. If solutions to the world's intercultural conflicts exist at all, then they are to be found in the city.

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See also Legend, Urban; Xeroxlore.

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UR-FORM

The original, archetypal form, or in folk narrative research, the first form of a narrative from which all known variants emerged; the archetype version that provides a model and pattern for all variants (alternatively, *Urform*). The term comes from the German *Urform* (plural, *Urformen*), meaning primitive form, original form, or archetype, and is derived from *Ur*, the mythological first city.

The search for the Ur-form of oral narratives is of particular importance in Finnish or historical-geographic methodology. In this approach, it is believed that an oral narrative originates in one geographic and temporal location and spreads from there. The variants of the Ur-form spread through a process called *wave diffusion*, wherein the kernel narrative, the Ur-form, travels in ever-widening geographic arcs from its locus of creation. This diffusion occurs via contact with other groups through group migration or through other avenues such as commerce, war, or assimilation by another group.

The Finnish or historical-geographic method holds that an oral narrative and its variants are the result of a single conscious act of creation at a specific time and location. The Ur-form of a given narrative can be deduced by deconstructing the known variants to get to the kernel form. What results from these studies is an exhaustive list of known variants of a particular narrative. From these lists, the researchers then attempt to peel away the successive layers of

time and geography to get to the Ur-form. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* and the Aarne-Thompson type index of folktales are good examples of the kind of collection work involved in this methodology. American folklorist Archer Taylor and others held that this method of folk narrative research was commonsensical and that it provided a scientific method for finding the Ur-form of any given narrative.

The concept of the Ur-form is based on the theory of *monogenesis*, or one point of origin. The early proponents rejected notions of *polygenesis*, the idea that there could have been several loci of creation for a given type of narrative, each independent of the others. They also rejected *antidiffusionist* arguments that narratives could not overcome linguistic barriers and thus insert themselves into the traditions of a group that was not linguistically related. The Swedish folklorist Carl von Sydow believed that rather than one Ur-form, there existed a multitude of Ur-forms, or *regional oikotypes*, which melded together to create one international Ur-form.

More recent criticism has focused on the literary versions of narratives. The argument posited by Albert Wesselski was that literature impacted the spread and form of narratives to such a great degree as to render the search for an Ur-form invalid. More recent criticism has focused on newer forms of mass communication, as well as on the concept that these narratives could and did arise through polygenesis. In this fashion, von Sydow's regional forms combined to make an international Ur-form become the concept of a *Normalformen*, an accepted base or kernel form for the narrative.

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See also Historic-Geographic Method; Tale Type.

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V

VAMPIRE

In European folklore, the spirit of a dead person that returns after death to haunt the living. This spirit (the body remains in the grave) attacks the relatives and friends of the deceased and is viewed as the party responsible for any number of disastrous and actual events, including bad weather, bad crops, sickness, and death. During epidemics, it was assumed that the first person who had died was a vampire, but otherwise, the suspects were commonly murder victims, suicides, alcoholics, and anyone who, during life, had fallen under suspicion of evildoing. In order to end the vampire's depredations, the living would exhume a suspect corpse and examine it for evidence that it was the guilty party. Because literate outsiders have occasionally attended such exhumations, we know what the vampire looked like as it reposed in its grave: The body had decomposed less than expected and was bloated; it was a darker color than it had been during life; the mouth was open and had blood in it; the skin and nails had peeled away, revealing fresh skin and nails; the hair and beard appeared to have grown after death; the blood had not coagulated; there was no evidence of rigor mortis; and the body had a strong smell. These accounts of the vampire in his or her grave, however startling they appear at first glance, have proven to be accurate descriptions of decomposing corpses in the grave, and they clear up some details of the folklore. For example, the belief that the vampire sucked blood appears to be an interpretation of the bloating and the blood at the lips of the corpse. As the corpse bloats from the gases given off by the microorganisms of decay, the pressure in the abdomen forces blood from the decomposing lungs out of the mouth and nose. This blood is taken to be the blood of the vampire's victims and the cause of the corpse's increased size. "Not without astonishment," says an eighteenth-century observer of the exhumation of a vampire, "I saw some fresh blood in his mouth, which, according to the common observation, he had sucked from the people killed by him."

If the corpse was found to be a vampire, it was "killed." Because its blood was thought to be dangerous, people commonly killed the vampire in ways that allowed them to keep their distance. If killed with a stake, the corpse might be covered with a hide or blanket to prevent its blood from spurting onto the people killing it. But staking was just one method of killing the vampire and perhaps not even the most common. In northern Europe, the corpse might be decapitated with a shovel—a tool that was already at hand and that kept some distance between the vampire and the person killing it. The vampire might also be cut into pieces, excoriated, cremated, or left out for scavengers. Often, several methods were used, the last of which was usually cremation, and the remains were then thrown into running water (water is believed to capture spirits, and



Actors Bela Lugosi and Helen Chandler in this most famous of vampire stories in pop culture, *Dracula*. Depending on their cultural context, vampires may travel without their bodies, and contrary to popular belief, they often do not drink the blood of the living.

running water carries them away). From one geographic area to the next, there are differences in the habits of the vampire, the interpretations of the body in the grave, and the methods of killing it. The Greek version of the vampire, for example, the *vrykolakas*, is not believed to suck blood.

The relationship of the vampire's spirit and corpse is also subject to great geographic variation. Often, the spirit is seen as an insubstantial version of the body, identical in appearance. It is commonly thought to function as a kind of servo-mechanism for the body, so that sleep, unconsciousness, and death are all taken for evidence of a separation of spirit from body. When someone dies properly and is given appropriate funeral and burial rites, his or her spirit makes its way to the afterworld. If death is violent or if the corpse does not undergo the usual rites, the spirit remains behind and returns to the body. Then, the body remains alive in some sense and functions as a dwelling place for the spirit during the day. At night, the spirit wanders about on its own and causes trouble. If the body is destroyed, the spirit has no dwelling place and departs for the afterworld. Alternately, one could destroy the vampire by capturing his or her

spirit. In some areas, sorcerers made a living by claiming to be able to see and capture these spirits, even during daylight, although most people saw the vampire's spirit only at night, during sleep. In the Balkans, there was a common belief that vampires could be seen by their sons or by people born on a Saturday, a day when vampires were obliged to remain in their graves.

Among the many apotropaics reported for warding off the vampire are sharp objects (thorns, sickles, hair needles, awls, knives) and anything with a strong smell (incense, cow dung, garlic). A knife might be placed under the pillow to keep vampires away during sleep, and sharp objects might be buried with the corpse to prevent it from being reanimated. (The common practice of burying sickles with corpses has a reflex in our traditional personification of death: a skeleton in a shroud bearing a sickle or scythe.) Another traditional apotropaic is the rose, presumably because of its thorns (at the end of *Faust*, the angels strew roses to disperse the devils). In Slavic areas, roses were commonly embroidered onto the cuffs and neck openings of shirts and blouses, not just as decoration but also to protect against the spirits of the dead.

The vampire of European folklore bears little resemblance to the vampire in popular films and literature, although it provided the inspiration for them. Suave counts in evening dress, castles, and even bats were donated to the traditional lore by nineteenth-century writers of fiction. (The bat made its way into the fiction after a Central American bat, which lives on blood, got its name from the vampire of folklore.) Vlad Dracul himself, a Romanian hero of the fifteenth century, had no connection at all with the history of the vampire except that he contributed his epithet (*dracul* is the Romanian word for devil plus the definite article) to Bram Stoker's fictional character Dracula.

Paul Barber

See also Assault, Supernatural; Revenant; Werewolf.

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VARIANT

The concrete realization of an abstract structural unit or an entity—for example, a tale, ballad, or proverb type. The famous tale about Cupid and Psyche presented in the novel *Metamorphoses* (The Golden Ass) by Apuleius (born circa 125 A.D.) is an early variant of the tale type “The Mysterious Being (Monster, Animal) as Bridegroom”; this tale type was defined by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson as the type number 425 A.

Some scholars consider *variant* and *version* synonymous. Others, however, recommend the use of the term *version* because *variant* is so strongly associated with the old typological and comparative text analysis—the historic-geographic method. If the terms are used together, *variant* may refer to those versions that differ appreciably from the most common, “typical” forms.

Variants can be compared and categorized; it is up to the scholar to decide whether those variants of a tale type closely resembling each other make up a subtype (or redaction or oikotype).

Satu Apo

See also Historic-Geographic Method; Tale Type.

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VERBAL ART

A branch of folklore encompassing all orally performed genres and ways of speaking. Verbal art has usually been defined according to its constituent varieties (e.g., myths, legends, *Märchen*, proverbs, riddles, song texts) and has been viewed in contrast with nonverbal folklore, on the one hand, and literary narrative genres, on the other. The inclusive sense of the term *verbal art* makes it of value to folklorists, especially those interested in broad, overarching aesthetic and performative features of oral culture. The study of verbal art draws on analytical methods such as ethnopoetics, discourse analysis, and linguistic approaches.

The term *verbal art* was proposed by William Bascom in 1955. Bascom’s

concern (still a problem in folklore research today) was that the term *folklore* does double duty, leading to confusion. On the one hand, *folklore* is used holistically to denote the entirety of the field, including verbal art, customs, material culture, and so on. On the other hand, many folklorists and anthropologists reserve the term *folklore* exclusively for the purely verbal genres. By using *verbal art*, Bascom argued, folklorists can avoid such confusion and further promote the use of the term *folklore* in its broadest sense.

In practice, the term *verbal art* has not spread as widely as Bascom might have hoped. It is used most extensively by folklorists with anthropological training, and it tends to be found in studies of African or Native American peoples. The fact that many of the most promising methods for verbal art analysis have come from studies of non-European communities may bode well for the term *verbal art* in the future.

Contemporary verbal art studies often focus on strategic and stylistic choices made during oral performance. For instance, a performer may express identity or attitude through code switching in a bilingual or diglossic community. Shifts in register and dialect may accomplish the same ends in monolingual communities. Many cultures also possess elaborate, specialized vocabulary or stylistic features for storytelling, poetry, speeches, or other forms of oral performance. These special ways of speaking constitute an important part of a culture's verbal art.

As a blanket term, *verbal art* allows folklorists to talk about all spoken or recited genres within a given culture. Recent folklore research demonstrates clearly that verbal art differs in substantive ways from written communication. At the same time, oral and written genres appear to borrow much more readily from each other in daily life than earlier folklorists assumed. Verbal art and written art fall along a continuum of expressive options and norms open to competent performers of a given culture.

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See also Aesthetics; Ethnoaesthetics; Ethnopoetics; Folklore; Genre; Performance.

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VERBAL DUEL

A bounded series of linked insults usually involving two combatants and performed before a wider audience of peers. The verbal duel genre is found most often among males and occurs in cultures throughout the world. It has been observed in various forms among indigenous peoples of the Americas, north Eurasia, and Africa, in agrarian European and Middle Eastern cultures, and in urban African-American and Puerto Rican social life, as well as in certain historical sources (e.g., the Viking age *flyting* [exchange of personal abuse in verse form] of Scandinavia). The contexts for dueling vary cross-culturally, ranging from impromptu sessions during conversation to elaborate formal competitions performed at assemblies or weddings. In any case, the performance is set apart from normal discourse by formal bounds, including the use of poetic vocabulary, stock images or topics, exaggeration, overt innuendo and double entendre, rhythm, rhyme, or melody. Key to the competition is the ability of combatants to match the insults of their opponents with equal or preferably more effective retorts until one player loses temper, concedes defeat, or is unable to come up with a reply. Invariably, the audience plays a central role in judging the success of the insults and retorts, approving of the combatants' wit and monitoring the players' reactions. Often, reports of particularly artful or fierce verbal duels pass into narrative tradition and are recounted by former witnesses as evidence of an individual's wit or prowess. Such reports of verbal duels constitute a secondary narrative genre of great importance in determining the form and frequency of future duels and in creating folk heroes or cycles.

In the folklore research of the performance school, boundedness refers to the existence of verbal, paralinguistic, or behavioral markers that signal to the cop performer or audience a shift from ordinary discourse to active performance. In the most widely studied forms of verbal dueling—African-American *dozens* and Turkish boys' rhymed insults—such signals include the use of metrically regular lines and rhyme as well as shifts in stance and voice quality. Similar features characterize the Chamula and Lebanese varieties of verbal dueling. In the north Eurasian cultural region, performance boundaries are created through adherence to musical conventions (e.g., melody, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm) and through the existence of clearly demarcated ritual contexts. The Faroese *drunnur* tradition, performed during weddings, as well as the wedding insult sessions of Karelian and Ingrian tradition rely on a broader ritual context for justification and performative bounds. The Inuit song dance, performed at a communal assembly after a long period of preparation and composition, constitutes one of the most clearly demarcated and formal varieties of the genre. Similarly, the Ewe people of Ghana perform insult songs as part of an annual festival and rely on the genre as an important means of social control and community maintenance.

Performative boundaries permit combatants to invoke and maintain what

the theorist Gregory Bateson terms a *play frame*, a marked departure from the rules of ordinary behavior during which all actions are interpreted as nonserious. Maintenance of the play frame allows opponents to broach topics otherwise taboo in ordinary conversation and to make accusations that would normally lead to serious conflict. Such topics include claims of sexual promiscuity on the part of the opponent or the opponent's family, accusations of homosexuality or incest, and assertions of culturally stigmatized characteristics (e.g., selfishness, conceitedness, physical deformity, impotence). As long as the accusations are made within the overt guise of play, the opponent must accept them as humorous or lose the game. Inevitably, the limits of decorum within such play are subject to negotiation and testing, and verbal duels may result in physical conflict in many cultures. Alternatively, remarks made in a verbal duel may permanently damage interpersonal relations, leading to long-standing grudges or even hatred. Success or failure in verbal duels may influence one's overall status in the community and determine one's success in future endeavors.

The topics covered in verbal duels vary cross-culturally but always indicate important concerns or taboos. Generally, the topics characteristic of the genre in any one culture are fairly restricted in number, consisting of three or four primary categories of frailty or transgression and usually closely tied to notions of face and status within the community. In African-American dozens, for instance, insults often focus on the sexual promiscuity of the opponent's female relatives, particularly the mother. In Turkish duels, the insults may focus on homosexual tendencies. In Inuit song duels, insults may aver the opponent's lasciviousness, incest, or greed. Faroese duels center on such topics as marital conduct, sexual appetite, and impotence.

The successful retort usually continues the initiated theme, elevating the stakes of the competition by making more extreme accusations in the same vein against the opponent. Switching topics—that is, failing to produce a linked insult—can be interpreted as a loss of the competition and is thus avoided. Linkage is further achieved through metrical reproduction of the prior utterance, use of rhyme to bind utterances together, metaphoric plays or double entendres based on key words from the prior utterance, and other verbal patternings. Because many verbal dueling traditions demand speedy replies, retorts may be memorized and drawn upon by performers at appropriate moments. Memory becomes as important an attribute of the expert player as wit in such traditions, although the truly remarkable retort is always one that combines elaborate formal linkage with novelty and aptness.

As with other forms of joke, the verbal duel has been interpreted generally along functionalist and psychoanalytical lines. When the genre occurs among male adolescents—as in the case of African-Americans, Turks, or Chamula—folklorists have viewed it as a testing ground for the development of adult oratory skills. When the genre exists among adult males bound together in ambiguous but important alliances—for example, in-law status in some African cultures or trading partnerships in Inuit communities—folklorists have viewed

the genre as a safety valve for alleviating attendant strains and hostilities. Verbal dueling within the wedding context or shamanic system has been seen as expressive of conflicts of values or interests inherent in certain social institutions.

When examining folklore genres from a cross-cultural perspective, it is important to distinguish between genres that display clear evidence of diffusion across linguistic and cultural lines (e.g., *Märchen*, legends) and genres that appear to occur more or less independently in various cultures. Verbal dueling belongs to the latter category, although the overall origins of the genre may indeed lie in a single ancient tradition. Apparent similarities between verbal duels from culture to culture may mask marked differences in the symbolic or functional implications of the genre. Thus, in African-American, Puerto Rican, Chamula, Lebanese, or Turkish cultures, community members may regard the genre as informal and inappropriate to more decorous occasions, whereas members of other cultures in northern Europe, Siberia, Africa, and North America may regard it as a central means of social control. Folklorists must balance outward performative similarities with careful observation of use and significance.

The seeming paucity of female participants or forms of verbal duel raises methodological questions. It may be that female varieties of verbal aggression have been excluded from the usual definition of the verbal duel due to a reliance on male data or phenomena. African-American women, for instance, often report knowledge of and even proficiency in verbal dueling, although their participation has not been ethnographically examined. Further, women may possess distinct forms of verbal aggression that display structural or functional similarities with male genres. The role of gender in verbal aggression in general and in folkloristic examinations of the topic deserves much more attention.

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See also Joke; Obscenity; Scatology.



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VOLKSKUNDE

The description of the entire lifestyle of the folk or the interpretation of folk groups as revealed through the study of their traditions, customs, stories, beliefs, dances, songs, and other forms of folk art. Literally meaning “folklore,” the word is derived from the German *Volk* (people or nation) and *Kunde* (information). Coined by Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim, *Volkskunde* as a concept achieved currency after Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm began using the term to discuss oral folk narratives and Germanic mythology in works such as their two-volume collection of German folk narrative, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812–1815).

Specifically, the early-nineteenth-century German scholars such as the Grimms applied the term to describe the study of the entirety of the life of rural peoples, who were removed from modern culture by virtue of their habitat. These antiquarians viewed the peasant class as a something of a pure, original group and looked upon their traditions as remainders of an earlier time. By collecting these remnants and studying them, the antiquarians hoped to piece together a picture of the origin of the groups’ traditions and lifeways. The emergence of romantic nationalism led its adherents to begin to focus on these remnants as a means of encapsulating national or ethnic identity. The term *folk* began to replace *peasant* as a preferred term, and the former term came to denote common unity rather than class distinctions.

Spurred on by the rise of romantic nationalism and an interest in antiquarian studies, the term *Volkskunde* was adopted by scholars outside of Germany as a cover term for folklore and folklore studies. In the early nineteenth century, the term *popular antiquities* was widely used among English-speaking scholars to denote the areas of study that the Grimms and others were undertaking. In a nod to the German term *Volkskunde* and the changing attitudes of the scholars, English antiquarian William John Thoms suggested in 1846 that the term *Folklore* be adopted as the preferred term for antiquarian studies among English-speaking scholars.

Volkskunde, like *folklore*, is still an appropriate cover term for the field of folklore studies. However, both terms have fallen under attack as being too

broad in meaning. As a result, in Germanic usage at least, terms denoting the specific areas of study are becoming more common and are often used in place of the overall term *Volkskunde*. Among these terms and areas are: *Volkerkunde* (ethnology), *Volkscharakter* (folk or national identity), *Volksleben* (folklife), *Volkslied* (folksong), *Volksmedizin* (folk medicine), *Volkssitte* (folk or national custom), *Volksprache* (folk or vernacular speech), and *Volkstracht* (folk or national costume).

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See also Folklife; *Gesunkenes Kulturgut*.

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W

WELLERISM

Traditional expression that includes both a quotation and a putative speaker of that quotation. Most commonly, some contrast, incongruity, or other relationship between speaker and spoken creates humor or irony in the Wellerism, as in such well-known examples as “‘I see,’ said the blind man, as he picked up his hammer and saw” and “‘Neat but not gaudy,’ as the monkey said when he painted his tail blue.” Wellerisms may also involve punning or other word play. Although the term *Wellerism* is derived from the name of a character who used such phrases in Charles Dickens’ *Pickwick Papers* (1836–1837), the genre itself is much older, examples being found in classical writings.

Wellerisms have been considered a type of proverb and have much in common with other types. However, little attention has been given to how Wellerisms may actually function in oral contexts, and their usage may differ in some respects from that of other proverbs. They may be used solely as witticisms, as their appearance in nineteenth-century newspapers along with other humorous filler material suggests (this also suggests that some Wellerisms may have subliterate rather than oral currency). However, like other proverbs, they can be used rhetorically or to comment on life situations. If proverbs in general distance a speaker from a situation commented on (by providing a traditional observation that gives a generalized rather than a personal statement), so may Wellerisms create even greater distancing by providing a fictional speaker. Such may certainly be the case when the quotation element is itself a traditional proverb, as in “‘All’s well that ends well,’ said the monkey when the lawnmower ran over his tail.”

Frank de Caro

See also Proverb.

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WEREWOLF

Literally, a “man-wolf” (from the Old English *wer*, or man, and *wulf*, or wolf); a human being transformed into a wolf by witchcraft or by the person’s own power. The belief in werewolves is international. The first information comes from Herodotus (fifth century B.C.) attributing lycanthropy (werewolfism) to the *Neuroi* (Proto-Slavs or Proto—Eastern Balts): “Scyths and Greeks who live in Scythia tell that every *Neuroi* is transformed once a year for some days to wolf, after which he resumes his former shape.” In the Ukraine and Belorussia, the belief in werewolves is especially strong. It is believed there that werewolves can change themselves further to dogs, cats, bushes, or tree stumps.

The bloodthirsty werewolves primarily hunt animals, infrequently human beings. They move at night and must assume the human form before daybreak. If they are wounded, the wound appears on the human body of the person who was transformed into the wolf. This belief is widespread. James Frazer gives examples from Livonia, the mountains of Auvergne, Padua, and the French district of Beauce. The same belief also is encountered in Estonia, Finland, and Russia.

To change into a werewolf, a human throws on a wolf skin or puts on a magic belt. In Estonia, one can crawl through openings, such as the bow formed by the trunk of a tree and its top when it grows back to the earth, and say a magic formula. In Lithuania, a human changes into a werewolf by somersaulting over a tree stump, crawling backward under the space between a pine tree root and the ground, turning two somersaults in the area between two stakes driven into the ground, passing under the bow formed by four poles driven into the ground, and so forth. The Belorussians and Ukrainians turn into werewolves by going into the woods to somersault over a tree stump into which a knife has been driven. Among the Balts and Slavs, transformation can also be accomplished by putting on a magical belt or a wolf skin.

The ritual donning of the wolf skin can be understood as causing a radical change in the person’s behavior, as the transformation from human to carnivore occurs. Crawling through a narrow opening can be explained as the imitation of rebirth, that is, the “sham birth,” of the person into a new being because of the similarity of the opening to the birth canal.

To regain human form, the tricks for becoming a werewolf are usually performed in reverse. The lasting effect is achieved by burning the wolf skin used by the person for transformation or giving food to the werewolf. In the Baltic countries, a legend is told that a man offered a wolf a piece of bread on the tip of a knife. The wolf grabbed the bread together with the knife and ran away. When the man recognized his knife at a merchant’s in Riga, he was amply rewarded by the merchant for the kindness he had shown to the werewolf. This legend reflects the popular belief that a supernatural being becomes human by eating human food.

Stories are told of wedding parties transformed into werewolves, who, as a

group, roamed and plundered in neighboring countries. According to Felix Oinas, werewolves were called *viron sudet*, “Estonian wolves” in southeast Finland since they were believed to have come from Estonia, where they had been changed by a witch, a Russian, or a Latvian. The transformed wedding parties also came to Finland from Russia and Lapland. Such transformations also were known in Belorussia. In general, the people are inclined to consider werewolves as belonging to another nation or as having been transformed by foreign sorcerers. This conclusion is in line with the so-called out-group attitude that attributes everything negative to foreigners, especially to neighboring nationalities.

The werewolf eats the meat of the animal raw. In the Baltic area (Estonia, Livonia, Latvia), if someone asks the werewolf about this or curses the creature, the werewolf hits the person’s face with the animal’s leg or with another piece of meat. The meat gets instantly roasted and burns the face of the person who was hit. This incident signifies the werewolf’s transition from the world of raw to the world of cooked, that is, from the supernatural world to the human world.

Among the south Slavs, werewolves have merged with vampires; the term for werewolf, *vukodlak*, *volkodlak* (literally, wolf’s hair), has become the name for the combined werewolf-vampire. In Yugoslavia, there are only a few traces of the *vukodlak*’s lycanthropy. Most often, however, the *vukodlak* appears as a vampire, which comes out of the grave at night to attack people at home.

In countries where there are no wolves, the place of the werewolf is taken by the fiercest wild animal in that region. Thus, there is the weretiger in India, Borneo, and western Asia; the tiger in China and Japan; the boar in Turkey and Greece; the hyena, leopard, and crocodile in Africa; and the jaguar in South America.

Lycanthropy, according to psychiatrists, is a kind of mental illness that causes the victim to feel like a carnivore, a predatory beast, and to act accordingly. Religio-phenomenologically, it is interpreted as being connected with the idea of the free or detachable soul that can leave the body, assume the shape of an animal, wander around, and return again to the body. This belief is attested in Serbia, Sweden, Livonia, and Estonia. It was reported from Livonia in the nineteenth century that when the soul of a werewolf was abroad on its particular business, its body was lying dead as a stick or stone. However, if during this time the body were moved to another place or even if the position were accidentally shifted, the soul could not find its way back and had to remain in the body of a wolf until death. Oskar Loorits reports that “the soul of an evil man or sorcerer wandered around as a wolf causing damage to other people, while the man himself slept.”

Occasionally, Latvian werewolves function as protectors of communities. At a witch trial in 1691, as Leopold Kretzenbacher reports, an old Latvian, Thies (Matiss), claimed to be a werewolf, a “dog of God” (*Dievs*), and to work with his companions against the sorcerers, who were allied with the devil (*velns*). The devil, through sorcerers, took fertility (blessing) away into hell, but the werewolves stole it back. The preceding year, the Russian werewolves had

arrived earlier at hell and had taken away the blessing of Latvian land. Therefore, there was a good crop in Russia, but the Latvians had a crop failure. This year, the Latvian werewolves had come sooner, and they expected Latvia to have a fertile flax year.

The tendency of people to believe in good werewolves who counteract the reign of evil through the powers of good can be compared with similar beliefs about vampires. Thus, according to Balkan belief, the classic vampire has an antagonist, a “good” vampire (“vampire’s son”), who is destined to detect and kill the bad vampires. Kretzenbacher reports that the Russian villages are said to have two kinds of vampires—one bad and the other good: “More frequently encountered was the belief that while a dead vampire destroyed people, a live one, on the contrary, defended them. Each village had its own vampire, as if it were a guard, protecting the inhabitants from his dead companions.”

Felix J. Oinas

See also Assault, Supernatural; Magic; Transformation; Vampire.

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WITCHCRAFT

A popular set of magical beliefs about a certain category of individuals supposed to destroy society from within. Witches are usually female but may occasionally be male. Strictly speaking, the term *witchcraft* is misleading since it is not a craft or a magical technique that may be learned but a personal power obtained by inheritance or by entering into a pact with a supernatural being. For that reason, the very touch, look, or the envy of a witch is believed to do harm. Sometimes, the harm is done unintentionally because the person in question may be igno-

rant of having an “evil hand,” a “wicked tongue,” or “the evil eye.” That witchcraft may work unconsciously is accepted in many cultures, though it is usually held to be practiced deliberately. From an anthropological point of view, however, witches must always be considered passive agents or at least agents at another level of reality. Unlike magicians, sorcerers, and shamans, the witches cannot really do any of the things they are supposed to do since their “craft” concerns actions that are physically impossible or at least extremely unlikely. Human beings cannot fly or turn themselves into animals, and it is not normal, in any culture, to kill one’s own children to eat their flesh at a banquet or to dig up corpses for the same purpose. Although magic is a category of ritual, witchcraft is better classified as a category of narrative. The motifs of this narrative tradition observe the inversion principle, such that the moral and religious norms of the community are reflected in inverted form in its witchcraft mythology.

FORM AND FUNCTION

Witchcraft involves various strands of tradition that together make up a belief system encompassing (1) narratives about who become witches and what they do at their meetings, as well as in everyday life; (2) belief in the existence of “witch characteristics”—for example, red eyes; (3) belief in a set of rules that impose limits on the power of the witches—for example, that they cannot cross water or that they cannot harm those who are not afraid of them; (4) apotropaic remedies against bewitchment—steel, rowan, or salt; (5) oracles for the identification of witches—indeed, European folklore is rife with instructions on how, at a given seasonal festivity, one can recognize all those in the church who are witches; and finally, (6) magic rituals to combat witchcraft—for example, one can boil the milk from a cow that has been bewitched, for this sends the spell back to the witch, scalding the entire body. This kind of counterwitchcraft is often practiced by professional witch finders, shamans, witch doctors, or “wise men and women,” as they are called in Europe.

Socially, belief in witchcraft may be said to have three basic functions. First is the cognitive function. According to the belief in witches, misfortune in life occurs not as a punishment for sins committed or breaches of taboo but as a result of underhand attacks from a particular kind of people—witches; however, witches are not invincible; they can be fought with counterwitchcraft, with which one directs an attack on the supernatural side of the witch’s nature, or by attacking the witch as a person and forcing her with threats of physical violence to withdraw her spells (compare the common belief that the witch loses her power if one beats her so she bleeds). Second, the belief in witchcraft functions as a safety valve for all the latent aggression that cannot otherwise be expressed because society forbids it. One is expected, in most cultures, to live in peace with one’s neighbors and relatives and to be generous to beggars—but if one can convince oneself and others that these people are witches, one is released from all obligations and can, for example, throw a mother-in-law out of the house



Witches appear in the folklore of many societies, often representing a threat to social stability. The European witch-hunts were responsible for an immense elaboration of witchcraft folklore, including detailed accounts of sabbat rites and methods of detecting a witch's presence.

and show a beggar the door. Third, the belief in witchcraft has a moral function. Since the witch is the epitome of all that is antisocial, all members of the community attempt to behave such that no one will call them witches. In Western societies, where witches were considered envious, this was done by assuring the community that one was devoid of this emotion, as expressed in a number of standard phrases that survive today as expressions of politeness (e.g., saying “bless you” in response to a sneeze).

AGE AND DIFFUSION

Belief in witches is full of animistic notions that suggest a high age. When the witch “eats” a human being, it is not the flesh but the “soul” of the flesh that is eaten; however, this is enough to make the person in question sicken and die. One does not find belief in witchcraft among hunters and gatherers or normally among nomads. The fact that it only occurs in settled agrarian communities

suggests that this complex of beliefs must have arisen in connection with the formation of villages in neolithic times. Another thing that points in the same direction is the fact that witches often operate at the borderline between civilization and wild nature. One suspects that the same complex of traditions was disseminated all over the Old World when one sees how much is common to European, Asiatic, and African witchcraft: for example, the idea of secret societies of witches who feast on their own relatives at nocturnal meetings or the notion of witchcraft as a personal ability to harm others, to transform oneself into animal shape, and to fly through the air. In fact, even as specific a motif as the counterfeit body that is left lying in bed as an alibi while the witch is at the sabbat is found in Asia, Europe, and Africa. There are also a significant number of parallels between European and Indian witch beliefs that, in both cases, can be traced back to antiquity. It is not known how old belief in witchcraft is in Africa. Judging from historical sources, the belief first arrived in North and South America with the Europeans.

As regards the diffusion of this belief system, it also must be emphasized that there are large areas where there is no belief in witchcraft at all, presumably because its function is performed by an alternative cosmology. This is true, for example, of southern Spain and southern Italy and the whole southern coast of the Mediterranean, where accidents and illness are attributed to spirits (*djims*), black magic, or "the evil eye," which occur there in complete isolation from the general witch belief complex.

WITCH PERSECUTION

Antiquity and the Middle Ages were almost free of witch persecution, and any belief in witches from these periods is very sparsely documented. In *The Golden Ass*, Apuleius (circa 175 A.D.) mentions the Thessalian witches, who rub their naked bodies with an ointment that turns them into owls before they go off on their nocturnal ride. The *Lex Salica* (the tribal law of the Salic Franks of the Lower Rhine, codified around 500 A.D.) says that if a witch (in Latin, *strix*) is proven to have eaten a human being, she must be sentenced to pay *wergeld* (blood money) for the murder. Charlemagne's law for the recently christened Saxons (circa 787 A.D.) prohibited the execution of men and women who, according to heathen beliefs, were man-eating witches (*striges*). In the future, the law prescribed, anyone who burned a witch according to the custom of the country would be subject to punishment. The church viewed belief in witchcraft as heathen superstition, and the *Canon episcopi* (an episcopal law of the tenth century, which was incorporated into Gratian's canon law in the twelfth century) urged priests to preach against those who were simpleminded enough to believe those women who claimed that, on certain nights, they were summoned to Diana's service and, together with a multitude of women, rode on certain beasts and traversed great spaces of earth under the heathen goddess's leadership. Time and time again, the church condemned popular witch lynchings, and of three

women who were burned near Munich in 1090 as poisoners and spoilers of human beings and cattle, a clerical chronicle actually says they died as martyrs.

In contrast to older views, modern scholars agree that the witch trials were a Renaissance phenomenon. Before 1400, only sorcery cases are known—that is, trials of people accused of practicing magic with wax dolls or of other forms of black magic. There seem to have been a few isolated witch trials in this period, but because of the scarcity of sources, it is often difficult to tell what they were about (e.g., in Croatia in 1360, 1369, and 1379). Better documented witch trials only appear in the fifteenth century (1420 in Rome, 1428 in Todi in northern Italy, and the same year in Valais, Switzerland). Throughout the Middle Ages, the witch trials were restricted, on the whole, to the areas around the Alps and Pyrenees. Pope Innocent VIII's famous "witch bull" of 1484 thus seems to have had only a local effect. The *Malleus maleficarum*, a handbook of witch trials issued in 1487 by the inquisitor Heinrich Kramer, apparently did not have as much influence as formerly assumed.

To a far greater extent, popular tradition seems to have been influenced by preachers against witchcraft and by the many pamphlets that were issued in large editions and spread the news of the shocking revelations of the witch trials. In areas exposed to massive propaganda, this could lead to chaos in the popular worldview, resulting in witch panic and mass persecution. But in the great majority of places, witch persecution took the form of individual trials and was concerned with concrete instances of harm inflicted by magical means, about which the accused were interrogated without being asked demonological questions and without any involvement of the popular witchcraft mythology. It also was typical of the attitude of the authorities that about half the cases ended in acquittals.

Only in the period 1575–1625 did European witch persecution reach its peak, and by 1660, the trials were on the decline in most places in western Europe. In Scandinavia and in eastern Europe, though, the persecution continued far into the eighteenth century. The last (legal) witch burning took place in Poland in 1793. It is estimated that the persecutions claimed a total of 50,000 human lives (mainly women), more than a third of these in Germany and extremely few in Orthodox Christian Europe.

The witch burnings stopped at the earliest date in southern Europe. This was due to the conservative attitude of the Inquisition, which maintained the medieval tradition of viewing witchcraft as superstition. In Spain, the witch burnings were discontinued as early as 1526. When they were resumed under French influence in 1610 by the Inquisition in northern Spain, a thorough survey was initiated. The inquisitor Alonso de Salazar Frías traveled all over the Basque country for eight months to find proof of the existence of witchcraft. He cross-examined members of various witch groups, posted observers at their meeting places, sent witch ointments for analysis by apothecaries, and had young witches who claimed to have fornicated with the devil examined by midwives—all with negative results. In his report, which could have been writ-

ten by a modern folklorist, Salazar stated that no proof had been found of a single act of witchcraft and that the sabbats were a dream epidemic, for “there were neither witches nor bewitched until they were talked and written about.” At that time, the witch burnings stopped definitively, but the campaign against “superstition” continued. From 1614 until its abolition in 1820, the Inquisition held about 5,000 witch and sorcery trials. For witch persecution in the New World, this meant that (though the Protestant courts in North America were sentencing dozens of witches to the stake) no one was burned for witchcraft in Latin America, in either the Spanish or the Portuguese colonies.

After the cessation of the trials, witch persecution continued at the popular level, with attacks, murders, and lynch justice. Such attacks still take place in certain economically backward areas of Europe, where the harsh philosophy of life that lies behind witch belief has persisted. Yet witch hunts are not peculiar to the Western world. China suffered a sort of witch craze in 1768, and in the twentieth century, Africa has seen one witch-finder movement after another.

THE MODERN WITCH CULT

The “neowitches” of the Western world have nothing to do with witchcraft in the traditional sense. They can be traced no further back than the 1930s. The modern movement was inspired by various schools of learned magic and by Margaret Murray’s theory (1921) that the witch trials represented a final showdown between “the old religion” and Christianity. Murray’s theory has long since been refuted, but the neowitches have paradoxically turned her ideas into reality by making the witches’ sabbat a fact for the first time in history.

Gustav Henningsen

See also Assault, Supernatural; Divination; Familiar; Magic; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk; Sabbat.

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WORKSONG

Songs used to pace work, not songs that happened to be sung while work was going on. Worksongs were used in most of the world for such varied activities as making tweed (in the Hebrides), stamping barley (in ancient Greece), mashing grain (on Georgia Sea Islands), rowing boats (in the Caribbean), and felling and cutting trees, hoeing ground, picking cotton, and cutting sugarcane (on plantations and in prisons in the southern United States). Political prisoners forced to crush rocks in South Africa prison quarries often sang worksongs. And in much of West Africa, songs were used for almost every kind of physical work.

Worksongs helped workers in communal tasks apply maximum power at appropriate moments in the work cycle (railroad gangs lining track, sailors turning winches and pulling lines, oarsmen rowing boats). They timed individual body movements in activities in which body position was critical for worker safety (roustabouts on the Mississippi River and Chesapeake Bay docks used songs to time their steps on swaying gangplanks to avoid being swung off into the water; African-American convicts in southern prisons used songs to avoid hitting one another with their axes while felling large trees). The songs also provided emotional outlets for workers in oppressive situations (African-American slaves and convicts could often sing things about their situation they could not say in ordinary speech).

Where worksongs survive, their aesthetics are keyed to participation rather than performance. In group songs with a leader, the ability to keep the beat going and to be heard matters more than a nice voice or wide tonal range. In southern prisons, for example, tenors were more valued as group leaders than singers in any other vocal range because their voices were more likely to be heard over a large work area. Worksongs are occasionally accompanied by musical instruments (on some boats, for example, drummers paced rowers), but instrumentation is most often provided by the work itself: by fieldworkers' axes or hoes, railroad workers' mauls, or stampers' feet.

Except for remote areas where group work is still done manually, the work-song is a disappearing genre. Ships are loaded by crane operators in rooms 200 feet from the sealed containers being moved, large trees are felled by individu-

als wielding chainsaws, hard ground is turned by diesel-powered diskers, and cotton is picked by machine. The last place in North America where worksongs survived as a viable tradition was in southern agricultural prisons because many of those institutions maintained, until the 1960s and 1970s, the racially segregated and physically brutal culture of the nineteenth-century plantation.

Bruce Jackson

See also Occupational Folklife/Folklore.

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WORLDVIEW

The way in which a person or group views the world; the complex interaction of culture, language, and mental constructs utilized to make sense of the world around us; alternately, *Weltanschauung*, or the view of life, philosophy of life, or ideology. Studies of worldview focus on how culture and language are utilized to interpret and mediate the experiences and sensory data from the world at large.

The concept of worldview is understood to be a complex idea that can vary greatly from group to group. Most research views worldview as a function of patterns of native language and group culture. The patterns are internalized within the members of a group by way of group interaction. These patterns are passed through each succeeding generation and become an integral part of the life of the group. Indeed, it is improbable that the people of any given culture can understand the world without these native patterns. The development of an individual's worldview begins in infancy and continues throughout life. Along with the complexities of linguistic development, the individual is subjected to a myriad of behavioral and perceptual norms. One group may develop fine distinctions between colors, another might focus on linear forms, and another might focus on temporal and spatial relations to each other and to other groups. Thus, each culture utilizes a different methodology for processing perceived reality; reality is processed through filters of language and culturally provided ideas. These learned patterns allow members of a group to orient themselves to the world around them in terms they understand. Euroamericans, for example, tend to orient themselves in terms of linear relations to people and

places, a concept they begin to internalize early on and that is reinforced through regular interaction with others from their group.

Linguist and anthropologist Edward Sapir developed a concept of culture as something internalized by the individuals who make up a given group to create a “world of meanings.” This world of meanings was something that the individual abstracted through language and interaction with other members of the group, and it conditioned the way in which these individuals as a group were able to build a worldview. From this and the later Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which holds that language affects the way in which worldviews are perceived, grew the more recent ideas on worldview.

One key to understanding the worldview of a group is through its folklore. If worldview can be understood to be the mediating filter through which an individual or group perceives the world, then traditional renderings of the group’s orderly principles (e.g., myth, belief systems) can be utilized as the key to apprehending its worldview. More recent research attends to the fact that observers, too, have their own worldviews and that these act on what the observers perceive. This informed perspective, sometimes called “new reflexivity,” builds the observer’s bias into any discussion of worldview. By recognizing this double mediation, a more accurate picture of worldview is believed to emerge.

Randal S. Allison

See also Acculturation; Linguistic Approach; Mentifact; Myth.

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X

XEROXLORE

Also known as *photocopylore*, signifies traditional items reproduced by xerographic or analogous means that subvert the primary intentions of those in ostensible control of such higher-level technologies. Examples of devices so employed include printing presses, photographic printing, mimeograph machines, photocopy machines, computer printers, computer networks, fax machines, and coin-minting presses. Any device that reproduces an item or transmits alphanumeric data may be employed in this folk practice, and most are known to have been so used.

Xeroxlore, because it is the product of the unofficial use of technology, reflects the customary practices of those who use it rather than the intentions of the institutions that own or control it. Xeroxlore is also affected by its host technology and often reflects folk attitudes to its institutional context. Thus, xeroxlore usually contains a visual component and often parodies the values of the host institution through fake memos or the values of dominant culture more generally through obscene Christmas cards and the like. An example of xeroxlore, reproduced by photocopy machines on paper, by coin-elongating machines on U.S. cents, and by private mints on one-ounce silver ingots, reads:

Big cats are dangerous,
[representation of a tiger]
but a little pussy never hurt anyone.

Although the technology often serves more seemingly innocuous ends, such as the circulation of favorite recipes, chain letters, and favorite published cartoons, even these are reproduced despite official restrictions on what may be copied and in violation of copyright laws; their circulation may also violate postal regulations. It is a small step from such unofficial uses of the technology to the photocopying of body parts.

Just as the technology is an extension of human faculties, so also is xeroxlore an extension of traditional oral joking practices and of the making of material culture, novelty items in particular. The folk make their own uses of technological innovations as they become available, just as they always have. The fragmentary record of the past includes typeset folk verse and World War II-era blueprints of female nudes with their body parts labeled as if they were airplanes. Present practice includes use of facsimile machines to transmit photocopied materials, with an increasing proportion of pictorial material that the technology permits and wholesale circulation of xeroxlore by means of the Internet.

Although xeroxlore is an international phenomenon, the product of whatever technology is available for its duplication and dissemination, all items of xeroxlore are not equally widespread. Xeroxlore is frequently adapted to different cultural contexts, but many items are of interest to specific groups of people only, be they employees of a particular corporation, the citizens of a particular country, or the speakers of a particular language. Xeroxlore represents age-old human practices carried out by means of and influenced by modern inventions, but despite the international availability of identical technologies, xeroxlore exhibits the same types and perhaps as much variation as any other traditional practice, based on race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, political ideology, and so forth.

Michael J. Preston

See also Urban Folklore.

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Thomas A. Green earned graduate degrees in English and anthropology at the University of Texas before joining the anthropology faculty of Texas A&M University. Coauthor of *Language and Riddles: New Perspectives*, Dr. Green has also served as film review editor and a special issue editor (folk drama) for the *Journal of American Folklore*. He has written many scholarly works in the areas of Native American studies, folk drama, legend, and folk history.

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