

---

**FOLKLORISTS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC ART OF FOLKLORE**

**Abdullaeva Zaytuna Shamilevna**  
Teacher, Termez State university

---

**ANNOTATION**

Folklore studies, also known as folkloristics, and occasionally tradition studies or folk life studies in the United Kingdom,<sup>[1]</sup> is the branch of anthropology devoted to the study of folklore. This term, along with its synonyms,<sup>[1]</sup> gained currency in the 1950s to distinguish the academic study of traditional culture from the folklore artifacts themselves. It became established as a field across both Europe and North America, coordinating with *Volkskunde* (German), *folkeminner* (Norwegian), and *folkminnen* (Swedish), among others.

**Key words:** *folklore, national, music, coordinate, term*

The importance of folklore and folklore studies was recognized globally in 1982 in the UNESCO document "Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore".<sup>[3]</sup> UNESCO again in 2003 published a Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Parallel to these global statements, the American Folklife Preservation Act (P.L. 94-201),<sup>[4]</sup> passed by the United States Congress in conjunction with the Bicentennial Celebration in 1976, included a definition of folklore, also called folklife:

"...[Folklife] means the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in the United States: familial, ethnic, occupational, religious, regional; expressive culture includes a wide range of creative and symbolic forms such as custom, belief, technical skill, language, literature, art, architecture, music, play, dance, drama, ritual, pageantry, handicraft; these expressions are mainly learned orally, by imitation, or in performance, and are generally maintained without benefit of formal instruction or institutional direction."

This law was added to the panoply of other legislation designed to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the United States. It gives voice to a growing understanding that the cultural diversity of the United States is a national strength and a resource worthy of protection.<sup>[5]</sup>

To fully understand the term *folklore studies*, it is necessary to clarify its component parts: the terms **folk** and **lore**. Originally the word *folk* applied only to rural, frequently poor, frequently illiterate peasants. A more contemporary definition of *folk* is a social group which includes two or more persons with common traits, who express their shared identity through distinctive traditions. "Folk is a flexible concept which can refer to a nation as in American folklore or to a single family."<sup>[6]</sup> This expanded social definition of *folk* supports a wider view of the material considered to be *folklore artifacts*. These now include "things people make with words (verbal lore), things they make with their hands (material lore), and things they make with their actions (customary lore)".<sup>[7]</sup> The folklorist studies the traditional artifacts of a group. They study the groups, within which these customs, traditions and beliefs are transmitted.

**Transmission** of these artifacts is a vital part of the folklore process. Without communicating these beliefs and customs within the group over space and time, they would become cultural shards relegated to cultural archaeologists. These folk artifacts continue to be passed along informally within the group, as a rule anonymously and always in multiple variants. For the folk group is not individualistic, it is community-based and nurtures its lore in community. This is in direct contrast to high culture, where any single work of a named artist is protected by copyright law.

The folklorist strives to understand the **significance** of these beliefs, customs and objects for the group. For "folklore *means* something – to the tale teller, to the song singer, to the fiddler, and to the audience or addressees".<sup>[8]</sup> These cultural units<sup>[9]</sup> would not be passed along unless they had some continued relevance within the group. That meaning can however shift and morph.

With an increasingly theoretical sophistication of the social sciences, it has become evident that folklore is a naturally occurring and necessary component of any social group, it is indeed all around us.<sup>[10]</sup> It does not have to be old or antiquated. It continues to be created, transmitted and in any group can be used to differentiate between "us" and "them". All cultures have their own unique folklore, and each culture has to develop and refine the techniques and methods of folklore studies most effective in identifying and researching their own. As an academic discipline, folklore studies straddles the space between the Social Sciences and the Humanities.<sup>[11]</sup> This was not always the case. The study of folklore originated in Europe in the first half of the 19th century with a focus on the oral folklore of the rural peasant populations. The "Kinder- und Hausmärchen" of the Brothers Grimm (first published 1812) is the best known but by no means only collection of verbal folklore of the European peasantry. This interest in stories, sayings and songs, i.e. verbal lore, continued throughout the 19th century and aligned the fledgling discipline of folklore studies with Literature and Mythology. By the turn into the 20th century, European folklorists remained focused on the oral folklore of the homogeneous peasant populations in their regions, while the American folklorists, led by Franz Boas, chose to consider Native American cultures in their research, and included the totality of their customs and beliefs as folklore. This distinction aligned American folklore studies with cultural anthropology and ethnology, using the same techniques of data collection in their field research. This divided alliance of folklore studies between the humanities and the social sciences offers a wealth of theoretical vantage points and research tools to the field of folklore studies as a whole, even as it continues to be a point of discussion within the field itself.<sup>[12]</sup>

Public folklore is a relatively new offshoot of folklore studies; it started after the Second World War and modeled itself on the seminal work of Alan Lomax and Ben Botkin in the 1930s which emphasized applied folklore. Public sector folklorists work to document, preserve and present the beliefs and customs of diverse cultural groups in their region. These positions are often affiliated with museums, libraries, arts organizations, public schools, historical societies, etc. The most renowned of these is the American Folklife Center at the Smithsonian, together with its Smithsonian Folklife Festival held every summer in Washington, DC. Public folklore differentiates itself from the academic folklore supported by universities, in which collection, research and analysis are primary goals.<sup>[13]</sup>

The terms **folklore studies** and **folklore** belong to a large and confusing word family. We have already used the synonym pairs **Folkloristics** / **Folklife Studies** and **folklore** / **folklife**, all of them in current usage within the field. *Folklore* was the original term used in this discipline. Its synonym, *folklife*, came into circulation in the second half of the 20th century, at a time when some researchers felt that the term *folklore* was too closely tied exclusively to oral lore. The new term *folklife*, along with its synonym *folk culture*, is meant to categorically include all aspects of a culture, not just the oral traditions. Folk process is used to describe the refinement and creative change of artifacts by community members within the folk tradition that defines the folk process.<sup>[14]</sup> Professionals within this field, regardless of the other words they use, consider themselves to be **folklorists**.

Other terms which might be confused with folklore are popular culture and Vernacular culture, both of which vary from folklore in distinctive ways. **Pop culture** tends to be in demand for a limited time; it is generally mass-produced and communicated using mass media. Individually, these tend to be labeled fads, and disappear as quickly as they appear. The term **vernacular culture** differs from folklore in its overriding emphasis on a specific locality or region. For example, vernacular architecture denotes the standard building form of a region, using the materials available and designed to address functional needs of the local economy. *Folk architecture* is a subset of this, in which the construction is not done by a professional architect or builder, but by an individual putting up a needed structure in the local style. In a broader sense, all folklore is vernacular, i.e. tied to a region, whereas not everything vernacular is necessarily folklore.<sup>[15]</sup>

There are also further cognates used in connection with folklore studies. **Folklorism** refers to "material or stylistic elements of folklore [presented] in a context which is foreign to the original tradition." This definition, offered by the folklorist Hermann Bausinger, does not discount the validity of meaning expressed in these "second hand" traditions.<sup>[16]</sup> Many Walt Disney films and products belong in this category of folklorism; the fairy tales, originally told around a winter fire, have become animated film characters, stuffed animals and bed linens. Their meaning, however far removed from the original story telling tradition, does not detract from the importance and meaning they have for their young audience. **Fakelore** refers to artifacts which might be termed *pseudo-folklore*; these are manufactured items claiming to be traditional. The folklorist Richard Dorson coined this word, clarifying it in his book "Folklore and Fakelore".<sup>[17]</sup> Current thinking within the discipline is that this term places undue emphasis on the origination of the artifact as a sign of authenticity of the tradition. The adjective **folkloric** is used to designate materials having the character of folklore or tradition, at the same time making no claim to authenticity.

## **LITERATURE**

1. Widdowson, J. D. A. (2016). "England, National Folklore Survey". *Folklore*. **127** (3): 257-269. doi:10.1080/0015587X.2016.1198178. S2CID 151463190.
2. (Brunvald 1996, p. 286)
3. "UNESCO Recommendation 1989".
4. "Public Law 94-201 (The Creation of the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress)".