How do folklore and popular culture converge in visuals, music, literature, television, and texts of all kinds? Given instant transmission through the internet and social media, folklorists’ early concerns with place and date of origin are less meaningful (and almost impossible to trace). How to approach multiple interweavings—and why—have become the focus of much more recent studies. The editors of this volume make clear that popular culture and folklore cannot be neatly categorized, but rather offer the concept of “the folkloresque” as a means of thinking about this blurring.

The volume is divided into three sections, “Integration,” “Portrayal,” and “Parody,” each briefly introduced by Tolbert. The eleven essays differ considerably and demonstrate a multitude of definitions for the “folkloresque.” If popular culture is fixed and commodified, but folklore is strongly based in ever-changing tradition, how do the two interconnect? Are the characters in films and literature who seem to be traditional, heroes who might be traced back to folk narratives, or are they wholly new creations based on their similarity to folklore that, in turn, cause them to resonate with us? As Foster explains, if plot lines, characters, objects, and actions (three wishes, for example) appear in popular culture as folklore when no source can be found, perhaps the first idea that might come to readers’ minds is Richard Dorson’s use of the term “fakelore.” But the cultural significance of what people think is folklore would surely be worthy of study if looked at as the folloquesque.

The first section, “Integration,” a clear and explanatory piece that sets up the volume well, looks at what appears to be folklore informing popular culture so that audiences accept what they are hearing, seeing, or reading as folklore. Foster looks at fragments of folklore that create a new narrative, as in Miyazaki Hayao’s film *Spirited Away*, Disney’s reworking of
an anime film that audiences accepted as Japanese mythology. Despite no actual folklore, the film gave what Foster calls the “fuzzy allusion” of it.

The second essay, by Tim Evans, exemplifies further the idea of integration by examining popular writer Neil Gaiman’s use of folklore and intertextuality. Folklore appears in much of Gaiman’s work, ranging from poetry to graphic novels to comics and films, and from such disparate genres as detective stories and fairy tales. His characters, most notably *The Sandman* and the gods of *American Gods*, draw upon figures from mythology, some actual and some invented. As Evans states, “Gaiman’s goal…is the pursuit of human universals through intertextuality” (67). Gaiman obviously knows of Richard Dorson’s work and that of B. A. Botkin and other scholars. If one did not know otherwise, one would assume that Gaiman went to graduate school in folklore.

Paul Manning’s article examines how pixies became part of fairy lore writing popular in the eighteenth-century, while Superman emerges as a heroic folk-like hero in Daniel Peretti’s chapter on “Comics as Folklore.” Although comic characters and plots are not folklore *per se*, integration of folk ideas is prominent and folklore informs the comics’ content and structure.

That folklorists themselves often appear in popular culture is the focus of the next section, “Portrayal.” What are the popular conceptions of folklore, and where do folklorists fit within popular imagination? As Tolbert notes, the folkloreresque echoes what Dundes named metafolklore, or folklore commenting upon itself. Tolbert’s consideration of how folklore operates within the video game world, especially with the so-called occult, is a significant contribution to an immensely popular form that is often understudied. An initial folklorist’s study of the convergence in video games is Sherman’s analyses of Super Mario (1993, 1997). For *Fatal Frame*, a series of video games, supposed folklore provides clues in the form of scholarly texts, films, audiotapes, newspaper clippings, and notebooks left behind to let the player know that these items are essential to eventually solve the game. Characters in the game are identified as folklorists who initially came to study the lore of the “backward” folk but have disturbed the villages
they study. Often killed and returning as ghosts, they become the subjects of their own research.

In a chapter on “newly-minted,” Grimm-like tales, Carla Holl-Jensen and Jeffrey Tolbert demonstrate how *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* are portrayed in the last Harry Potter book by J. K. Rowling. Harry must unlock secrets from the tales for the novel to be successful. Other popular folklore-like tales and beliefs are exhibited in the television series “Supernatural,” “Grimm,” and “Once Upon a Time,” which play with folklore elements, presenting the results as if they were actual folklore. This intertextuality of folklore and popular culture creates forms that audiences believe are folklore. Discussing works such as these will open our discipline up to others and begin new conversations about folklore.

The third section, “Parody,” draws on specific examples for the audience to “get” jokes and media such as “The Fractured Fairy Tales” within *The Bullwinkle Show*, popular on television from 1959 to 1964 and endless re-runs. Two of the chapters discuss jokes. The first, by Trevor Blank, discusses the cycle of jokes that arose in the wake of the Penn State scandal of Jerry Sandusky and coach Joe Paterno regarding pedophilia and its cover-up. A kind of “fill-in-the blank” joke, not unlike those following major disasters, quickly surfaced. For the chapter on metahumor, Greg Kelley analyses jokes about jokes, while that by Bill Ellis points out the metacommentary presented within a Japanese anime. The final chapter on mythology and popular science suggests that each parodies the other as Gregg Schrempp deftly compares the reciprocal relationship between the two.

This book will be important to those who study folklore and those studying the underpinnings and creations of popular culture. The research is thorough and includes extensive notes and references. A missing early reference is that of folklorist Juwen Zhang who coined the term “filmic folklore” in his discussion of the “Fifth generation” of Chinese filmmakers (2005), who invented or changed the use of folkloric objects from cultural practices to suit their needs in their fictional films. Zhang notes that viewers see these ideas as folklore which may then become part of folk culture.
The editors have taken great care in covering the scholarship, and draw attention to an important issue. Expanding the discipline to include the folkloresque is a positive move within the contemporary and rapidly expanding technological framework in which folklore now is recurrently manifested.

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WORKS CITED


Salvation Mountain, a painted hill near Salton Sea in a sparsely-populated area of the Southern California desert, emblazoned with colorful decorations and religious messages, belongs in the pantheon of outsider art. Along with its creator, Leonard Knight, this spectacular splash of color in the vast beige-brown landscape appears in nearly every compendium of noteworthy works by