JUST FOLKLORE: ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, CRITIQUES

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Introduction

Basic Point: The word *folklore* and the concept it stands for have consistently been dismissed by both scholars and laypersons. The term has come to be associated with all that is mistaken, backward, vulgar, quaint, or marginal. There are historical reasons for these associations, but this does not suggest that folklore and its study should be dismissed as insignificant. Folklore is never "just" folklore.

Background: Students may need a definition and some illustrations of the concept of survival. The definition of *survival* can be found in Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* Volume 1, Chapter 1, with some brief examples. Chapters 3 and 4 extend both examples and discussion. The study of folklore is defined as the study of survivals by Sir James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough,* by Andrew Lang in *Custom and Myth,* and by other Victorian scholars.

Discussion: Talk about the shift from diachronic to synchronic approaches in the study of culture—particularly in sociology, psychology, and linguistics. The replacement of survivalist, evolutionary, and diffusionist studies by functionalist and structuralist explanations illustrate this move in anthropology and folklore studies.

Assignments: Students should interview three people (one student who is not enrolled in their folklore class and two non-students) and ask them what is meant by the word *folklore,* what constitute examples of folklore, and where such kinds of materials (geographically, socially) would most likely be found. Ask them also to interview one professor (preferably in the humanities or social sciences) and inquire about their awareness of a field of folklore studies, their knowledge of degrees offered in folklore, and what their impressions are of the status of the field. Can they identify universities with a program in folklore? With what disciplines do they feel folklore studies is most closely allied? Can they identify scholarly journals in folklore? Can they cite one scholarly book or article in folklore? Collate the collected information in class in an attempt to construct a sense of how folklore and folklore studies are perceived by these different populations.

Questions: Is there a difference in the response to the word *folklore* inside and outside the academy? Are the word *folklore*, the concept of folklore, and the field of folklore studies problematic?

Chapter 1: The Arts, Artifacts, and Artifices of Identity

Basic Point: Despite the variety of definitions of the word *folklore*, the various methods for collecting and analyzing it, and the range of theories applied to interpret and understand it, the study of folklore has always been concerned with the question of *identity;* with the attempt to use folklore to conceptualize individuals and groups and where they are positioned—and where they see themselves positioned—in the world.

Background: Students may need some sense of the history of folklore scholarship, although the essay itself will provide some of that history. Immediately useful would be a definition and some illustrations of the concept of *survival*. (The definition of *survival* can be found in Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* Volume 1, Chapter 1, with some brief examples. Chapters 3 and 4 extend both examples and discussion. The study of folklore is defined as the study of survivals by Sir James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough,* by Andrew Lang in *Custom and Myth,* and by other Victorian scholars. A definition and illustration of Carl von Sydow's *oicotype* would also be useful.)

Some sense of the historic-geographic approach should be provided. A useful example without the formalities of the methodology is W. Norman Brown, "The Silence Wager Stories: Their Origin and Their Diffusion," *American Journal of Philology* 43(1922):289-317. An example of the more technical approach is Stith Thompson, "The Star Husband Tale," *Studia Septentrionalia* 4(1953):93-163. (Reprinted in Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore,* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965], pp. 414-474).

The shift from the definition of *folklore* as tradition to art can be found in the works of William Bascom, "Verbal Art," *Journal of American Folklore* 68(1955):245-252; "Folklore, Verbal Art, and Culture," *Journal of American Folklore* 86(1973):374-381; and Dan Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," *Journal of American Folklore* 84(1971):3-15. Recall the earliest interest in folklore—folk poetry—as an attempt to revitalize artistic production. (William A. Wilson, "Herder, Folklore, and Romantic Nationalism," *Journal of Popular Culture* 6(1973):818-835. (Reprinted in Elliott Oring, *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: A Reader* [Logan: Utah States University Press, 1989], pp. 21-37.) Some background should be provided on the ballad collectors and their pursuit of the relics of an ancient poetry and the change in orientation when ballad scholars began to see the process of tradition as the means of making folk song not merely a relic of the past but a creative expression of the present.

The postmodern move to deny authenticity to the past and to see everything as a construction of the present (the sense of "artifice" in the essay).

Possible lectures: The history of folklore theory; the notion of group or community; social and individual identity; sociological markers of identity.

Assignments: Provide students with a single piece of folklore writing. It would probably be a good idea to remove the name of the author, the date, and the title of the publication to avoid

giving extra-textual clues. Direct the student, in a written homework assignment, to decide whether the author considers folklore to be an art, artifact, or artifice (or something else) and whether there seems to be some indication that the authors tie folklore to matters of identity (and how). They should be asked to justify their arguments by referencing specific subject matter in the texts they have read.

Some suggestions of writings to assign (best to copy them, remove cues, and distribute them):

- W. J. Thoms, **"Tregeagle of Trevordor."** In Richard M. Dorson, *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths,* 2 Vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 60-62.

- Max Muller, **"The rich imagination…had long been forgotten."** In Richard M. Dorson, *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths,* 2 Vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 84.

- Andrew Lang, **"The Science of Folklore …will show the identity of peasant and savage humour."** In Richard M. Dorson, *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths,* 2 Vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 220-221.

- Andrew Lang, **"The question may be asked…'in the morning of Time.'"** In Richard M. Dorson, *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths,* 2 Vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 228-229.

- R. R.Marrett, "**How, then, is psychology…as rejection and selection."** In Richard M. Dorson, *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths,* 2 Vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 563-563..

- Gordon Hall Gerould, **"To put the case another way…much less attractive as narratives and as songs than later ones became."** In *The Ballad of Tradition,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1960 [1932], pp. 211-215.

- Lowry C. Wimberly, **"The blood is among the chief corporeal vehicles….*As the first day he brought them hame.*"** In *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads,* New York: Dover, 1965[1928], pp. 72-75.

- Barre Toelken, **"The performance context is the live situation…performed at the dinner table."** In *Morning Dew and Roses: Nuance, Metaphor, and Meaning in Folksongs*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995, pp. 52-54.

- Américo Paredes, **"All six of the stories do have in common…and change it for something else."** "Folk Medicine and the Intercultural Jest," in *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: A Reader,* ed. Elliott Oring, Logan: Utah State University Press, 1989, pp. 65-66.

- Simon J. Bronner, **"Major changes were to come…provides continuity, and therefore importance."** In *Chain Carvers: Old Men Crafting Meaning*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985, pp. 36-39.

- Michael Owen Jones, **"Of one thing I am certain…he could produce any kind of chair."** In *Craftsman of the Cumberlands: Tradition & Creativity,* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989, pp. 191-192.

- Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linniken, **"Another focus of Hawaiian nationalism…with the legend 'Hawaiian village.'"** "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious,"** *Journal of American Folklore* 97(1984): 283-285.

- Maria Herrera-Sobek, "**The final stage of the process...'win some, lose some' predominates."** In *Creative Ethnicity: Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life,* ed. Stephen Stern and John Alan Cicala, Logan: Utah State University Press, 1991, pp. 98-102.

- Richard Bauman**, "Still it remains clear…whether or not the public is present."** In *Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 104.105.

- Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, **"Tourist Art."** In *Folklore, Performance, and Popular Entertainments,* ed. Richard Bauman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 304-306.

- Trevor J. Blank, **"In the pre-Internet age….Our insight is needed."** In *Folklore and the Internet: Vernacular Expression in a Digital World,* ed. Trevor J. Blank, Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009, pp. 9-11.

Chapter 2: Whaling Songs and the Context of Fantasy

Basic Point: An examination of the songs that whalers sang about their occupation seem to be rooted in realistic description with an absence of fantastic wishes or idealistic elements. This does not mean that the songs fulfilled no function for the whalers; fantasy is contextual. The accurate representations of the whaling scene suggest that there was a wish for a successful hunt, a full ship, and the opportunity to return home.

Background: This essay is informed by perspectives that stem from psychoanalysis: the human mind operates with ideas and motives that are hidden from consciousness. Psychoanalysis informed the perspectives—although only slightly—of Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict and had significant influence in anthropology in the 1930-1950s. A short sketch of Freud's theories of the mind—especially as they relate to dream, symptom, and folklore—might be in order. Also see chapter 14 in *Just Folklore* which closely examines the notion of symbolism in the works of Victor Turner and Sigmund Freud.

Potential lectures: Occupational folklore, symbolism, ballad and folksong, the functions of folklore.

Discussion: Talk about the different kinds of songs that make up the whalers' repertoire: ballad, lyric, catalogue song (be aware that the songs that whalers sang were considerably more varied than those presented in the chapter which deal exclusively with whaling). The song that is quoted in part on p. 30 of this chapter about what to store in a sea chest is a catalogue song. (See Roger Renwick, "Catalogue Songs," *Recentering Anglo/American Folksong: Sea Crabs and Wicked Youths*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001, pp. 59-91.) For other songs the whalers sang see Huntington (1964) cited throughout the chapter.

Audio Visual Resources: Examples of whaling songs and scenes of traditional whaling occupation on records, CDs, and DVDs.

Sailing and Whaling Songs of the 19th Century by Paul Clayton (2005). CD.
Whaling and Sailing Songs by Paul Clayton (1997). CD.
Whaler Out of New Bedford and Other Songs of the Whaling Era: Music film score. CD.
Thar She Blows: Whaling Ballads and Songs by A. L. Lloyd and Ewan MacColl . Vinyl LP.

Moby Dick. DVD
American Experience: Into the Deep: America, Whaling, and the World. DVD.

Assignments: Assign song collections to students that focus on particular occupations—sailing, lumbering, mining, cattle herding, farming, railroading, fishing. How is the work and work life portrayed? How do the descriptions in the songs compare with more ethnographically- and historically- based descriptions of the work?

Chapter 3: Totemism and the A. E. F. Revisited

Basic point: There have been a number of instances of identification between military units and animals or natural phenomena in recent times. These animals and natural phenomena become symbols of the group and resemble the totemism that had been described as a characteristic religious behavior in "primitive" societies. Claude Lévi-Strauss's argued that totemism was not an institution, as was presumed by earlier anthropologists, but rather an operation of the mind whereby elements of the social world are mapped onto the natural world. Lévi-Strauss's approach provides a perspective on the development of beliefs and practices in two different military units in Vietnam.

Background concepts: totemism.

Potential lectures: Occupational folklore, occupational folk belief; theories of magic, superstition, and religious belief.

Resources: Bronislaw Malinowki's and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown's theories of magical belief. (A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Taboo" in *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses,* [New York: Free Press, 1952], pp. 133-152; Bronislaw Malinowski, "Magic, Science, and Religion," in *Magic, Science, and Religion and Other Essays* [Garden City NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1954], pp. 17-36. Also see, John J. Poggie, Jr. and Carl Gersuny, "Risk and Ritual: An Interpretation of Fisherman's Folklore in a New England Community," *Journal of American Folklore* 85 [1972]:66-72 [reprinted in Elliott Oring, *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: A Reader* [Logan: Utah State University Press, 1989], pp. 137-145; Gustav Jahoda, *The Psychology of Superstition* [London: Allen Lane, 1969]).

Assignments: Document one of your own "superstitions." What is it, when did it arise, when does it operate, and how do you explain it?

There is an expression that, "There are no atheists in the foxholes." Interview combat veterans (WWII, Korean War, Vietnam, Iraq, or Afghanistan) about beliefs and practices before, during, and after situations of combat.

Chapter 4: The Structure of a Joke Repertoire

Basic Point: A structural analysis of the chizbat repertoire provides an insight into the basic cognitive categories of the Palmach and allows for an interpretation of the repertoire as a whole in terms of the conflict over their identity as *sabras,* new kinds of individuals born in a new environment, or as *galut* (exile) Jews, that is, Jews with the same essential character as those who were born, raised, and conditioned in countries of Europe and the Middle East.

Background: World War I and the end of the Ottoman Empire; the British and French creation of the countries of the modern Middle East; the British Mandate over Palestine.

Potential Lectures: Theories of humor: Superiority Theory (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, [London: Routledge, 1907 (1651)], p. 33; Psychoanalytic Theory (Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1960], pp. 100-115); Appropriate Incongruity (Elliott Oring, *Jokes and Their Relations* [Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992], pp. 1-15; *Engaging Humor* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003], pp. 1-12.)

Structuralism: the syntagmatic structuralism of Vladimir Propp presented in *The Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968) and also Alan Dundes, "Structural Typology in North American Indian Folktales," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 19(1963):121-130 (reprinted in Aland Dundes, ed., *The Study of Folklore* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965], pp. 206-215), and the paradigmatic structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss in "The Structural Study of Myth," *Journal of American Folklore* 68(1955):428-444. See Butler Waugh, "Structural Analysis in Literature and Folklore," *Western Folklore* 25(1966):153-164.

Resources: Hundreds of chizbat texts and additional discussion can be found in Elliott Oring, *Israeli Humor: The Content and Structure of the Chizbat of the Palmah* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981).

Assignments: Assign students to analyze one or more jokes in terms of appropriate incongruity. These jokes might be drawn from the repertoire of a particular group or about a particular topic so that the individual analyses might contribute to some understanding of the repertoire as a whole.

Chapter 5: Forest Lawn and the Iconography of American Death

Basic Point: Much criticism has been directed at Forest Lawn because of the way it portrays death: the emphasis on the preservation of the body, the nude statuary, the sentimentalized images of the family and the child, patriotic expression and historical relics. Forest Lawn, however, is not the whole-cloth creation of its founder Hubert Eaton. It represents the culmination of a tradition first begun in the early nineteenth century: the rural cemetery movement.

Potential Lectures: Material Culture; more specifically, the evolution of Puritan gravestone iconography in the seventeenth century. See Simon Bronner, "Material Culture" in *Folklore Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction*, ed. Elliott Oring. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1986, pp. 202-204; M. Ruth Little, *Sticks & Stones. Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers*, and James Deetz, "Remember Me As You Pass By," in *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor, 1996), pp. 89-124. This evolution is developed more fully in Allan I. Ludwig, *Graven Images: New England Stone Carving and Its Symbols* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1966).

Assignments: Send students to an older, local cemetery. Students should survey fifty grave sites of different historical periods as determined by date of death. Ask them to note similarities and differences in gravestone materials and forms, inscriptions, and iconography. What hypotheses can be generated about the significance of the changes in inscriptions and iconography in terms of the ideology and world view of the periods in question?

Chapter 6: Dyadic Traditions

Basic Point: The family is not the smallest possible group with traditions; the dyad is, although the traditions are passed back and forth rather than handed down. These traditions seem to relate to symbolize uniqueness of the dyad and intimate relations between the parties.

Potential Lectures: Family folklore; the nature of tradition.

Assignments: Students should report on their own dyadic traditions or interview a couple about their own traditions. To what extent do these traditions conform to those described in the essay? Are there traditions that require a different kind of explanation?

To what extent do dyadic traditions appear in films or works of literature? What role do these traditions play in defining characters and characterizing relationships, and what do they contribute to the understanding of the work of art as a whole?

Chapter 7: Legend, Truth, and News

Basic Point: Legend is a category that is created by the skepticism of the folklorist. Once one dispenses with the notion that news is true and legend is false, there is no easy basis for distinguishing between legend and news.

Potential Lectures: The history of the legend as a folklore genre; a survey of legend types, topics, and functions.

Assignments: Have students identify the *kinds* of stories that appear in newspapers or on television. What kinds of stories seem to be similar to those that folklorists consider to be

legends? What is the basis of their similarity? Take one story that seems most similar to legend and compare it with a legend that deals with the same or similar topic. What can be said about each in terms of its reputed source, form, treatment of characters and events, and style?

Chapter 8: Legendry and the Rhetoric of Truth

Basic Point: Legends are not so much true stories as stories that depend upon a rhetoric of truth. This rhetoric offers the legend as something whose truth must be entertained. The tropes of this rhetoric are outlined and organized in accordance with Aristotle's distinctions between ethos, logos, and pathos. Ultimately, the legend may not be considered a narrative that is true as much as it is a narrative whose truth is performed with the tropes of this rhetoric.

Background: The memorate, the migratory legend.

Potential Lectures: The historical and the modern or urban legend, legend tripping, the interrelationships between legends and film.

Resources: Numerous other horror films that are based on urban legends. See, for example, Larry Danielson, "Folklore and Film: Some Thoughts on Baughman Z500-599," *Western Folklore* 38(1979):209-219. *The Blair Witch Project* DVD seems particularly good because of its cinematic techniques.

Assignments: Download the attached legend interview "Messages from the Dead" which is discussed in the chapter, and analyze its rhetoric of truth.

Chapter 9: On the Traditional and Mathematics of Counting-Out

Basic Point: Although children may consider counting-out a fair and random way to choose, it is not random or fair. The outcome is determined but is generally unknown. For a sufficiently large group, the determination of the last one remaining is difficult, and it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that any kind of method was proposed to address the problem. The problem is known to mathematics as the "Josephus Problem" after a scene described in *The Jewish War* by Flavius Josephus. The notion of counting-out in folklore has been associated with counting-out for death or sacrifice, but in fact, there is a much older tradition of mathematical puzzles going back a thousand years that associates counting-out with choosing victims; a tradition that may have affected the understanding of counting-out among Victorian folklorists.

Potential Lectures: Folk games; the ages at which children adopt and abandon of particular folk games. On mathematics and folklore; what kinds of folklore might be amenable to mathematical analysis. See the analysis of the game "rock, paper, scissors" in J. D. Williams, *The Compleat Strategyst* (New York: Dover, 1986), pp. 98-100; also the mathematical

evaluation of the suitors' choices of the three caskets for the hand of Portia in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, pp. 201-203.

Chapter 10: Definition and Devolution

Basic Point: Alan Dundes argued that *devolution* was a bias in folklore theorizing and folklorists saw folklore as degenerating through time. Dundes's concept of devolution, however, depends, upon how devolution is defined, what criteria are employed for assessing it, and what is considered to be devolving. Because multiple criteria are employed for each of these, the devolution that Dundes identifies is really an illusion.

Potential Lectures: Definition: What is a definition, and what is it supposed to accomplish? What is an adequate definition? How does definition impact theory?

The concept of evolution in folklore and culture. (e.g., E. B. Tylor, Herbert Spencer, Leslie White, V. Gordon Childe, Julian Steward). The reaction against evolutionary theory in folklore and anthropology. What is the status of evolution in the hard sciences?

Assignments: Prepare a short report on problems in the definition of other terms in this book, or in folklore studies more generally—terms like *folklore, art, tradition, legend, news, degeneration, ballad, folktale, proverb, riddle, joke.*

Consider problems in the definitions of basic terms offered in introductory texts in other academic fields: *business, culture, economy, human, life, literature, language, mathematics, matter, politics, psyche (mind), society.*

Chapter 11: Transmission and Degeneration

Basic Point: Experiments in the serial transmission of folklore repeated show it degenerating—losing structure, content matter, and sense. Since folklore has been held to survive in oral channels over long periods of time, these experiments have been criticized for not adequately modeling natural folklore transmission. The criticisms of older experiments can easily be rectified, and it is possible to create experimental situations in which folklore does not necessarily degenerate, although it is necessary to recognize that folklore often does degenerate in natural oral transmission channels as well.

Background: Diffusion studies, the historic-geographic method, Walter Anderson and the Law of Self-Correction.

Resources: See F. C. Bartlett, "Some Experiments on the Reproduction of Folk Stories," Folklore 31(1920):30-47. (Reprinted in Alan Dundes, ed., *The Study of* Folklore [Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965], pp. 243-258.) A summary of the kinds of changes that take place

in the course of folksong transmission can be found in Thomas A. Burns, "A Model of Textual Variation in Folksong," *Folklore Forum* 3(1970):49-56. (Reprinted in Elliott Oring, ed., *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: A Reader* [Logan: Utah State University Press, 1989], pp. 245-253.)

Assignments: Analyze the kinds of changes took place in the transmissions of the joke in the experiments reported in chapter 11 (appendices at the end of the chapter). Create a classroom experiment in which material is transmitted serially from one student to another. One useful way is to remove a group of students from the classroom. Call one in at a time to hear the telling of a piece of folklore. The telling should be recorded. Then that student should be called upon to retell the folklore to the next student (and the rest of the students sitting in class) that is called in—once again being recorded—until the entire chain of students has been recorded repeating the text in question. Review the tape and note the kinds of changes that take place in the course of transmission. The experiment can be done using different kinds of lore—jokes, tales, proverbs, riddles, rhymes—to see how genre affects transmission. Comparison of the changes can be made with those recorded in the appendices in chapter 11. Experiments in repeated reproduction can also be performed (these are rare in the folklore literature) although they cannot involve as many participants as serial transmission experiments.

Chapter 12: Thinking through Tradition

Basic Point: Although *tradition* is a keyword in the folklorist's vocabulary, and although folklorists often claim to be students of tradition, tradition does not seem to pay much part in folklorists' thinking. Tradition is often thought of as a product rather than a process. Folklorists tend to study traditions—as folksongs, quilts, folktales, remedies. Tradition needs to be regarded as a process—a process of cultural reproduction. As cultural reproduction, tradition can be a concept which folklorists can interrogate and with which they can truly think.

Background: Explain the terms *emic* and *etic* and give examples.

Potential Lectures: The history of the use of *tradition* in folklore studies. Where in folkloristic writing has the term designated a process and what is the character of the process that it has designated? Which books and essays in folklore have problematized the notion of tradition?

What is a traditional society? The criteria of Robert Redfield in "The Folk Society," *American Journal of Sociology* 52(1947):293-308. What kinds of societies have these characteristics? Also see *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953). What problems are associated with this concept?

Assignments: Show a film about a group or individual and analyze how traditional that individual's or group's behavior is. Look at tradition from both an etic and emic point of view.. For example: *The Amish: A People of Preservation*, *Crawdad Slip, Finnish-American Lives, Quilts in Women's Lives* (see www.folkstreams.net for a list of potential films).

Explore some idiosyncratic behavior or belief in an environment you inhabit (home, work, church, etc.) that is maintained year after year. Describe this behavior in some detail, and try to identify the ideas, forces, and actions that keep this belief or behavior alive year after year. Or describe a belief or behavior that has been repeated in your home environment for many years and identify the ideas, forces, or actions that led to its elimination.

Look for discussions of *tradition* in the newspaper. What kinds of controversies have arisen over a tradition and the traditional in modern times—possible examples, stories on team mascots, hazing, hunting, bootlegging.

Chapter 13: Generating Lives: The Life History of a Life History

Basic Point: Ethnography is not a transparent representation of what is out there in the world. It is a construction that involves folklorists as much as it does the subjects of their research. A life history is not simply an unmediated account of the course of a life but a collaborative creation of the researcher and the subject. Much of what transpires in the course of the creation of an ethnographic document is not always within the awareness of the participants as it is being created.

Potential Lectures: Examine a piece of ethnography and try to assess what is present in the text and what remains hidden or undisclosed. What are kinds of activities would the ethnographer have had to engage in to create the descriptions that are presented? What kinds of techniques would have had to have been employed (formal and informal interview, observation, sound and video recording, photography) to create the text in question? To what extent does the ethnographer reveals the means by which the ethnographic description was created? To what extent does the ethnographer appear in the text that was created?

Compare a modern ethnography with one created 50 years ago. What has changed? What has been gained and what has been lost?

Assignments: Document some behavior in your home environment. Why did you choose the behavior that you documented? Describe the ways you went about getting the information and creating this ethnographic document. In what ways were people aware of your effort to document the behavior, what was their reaction to your documentary practices, and what did you assume about the behavior in question that you did not directly observe or elicit through questioning? What aspects of the behavior did you ignore? How did your interests and position affect the creation of your account?

If you were writing a history of your own life, what ideas, events, activities, and relationships would you probably seek to include? What ideas, events, activities, and relationships would you leave out?

Chapter 14: Victor Turner, Sigmund Freud, and the Return of the Repressed

Basic Point: Victor Turner outlined a new approach to understanding the meaning of symbols in traditional society. He stated that his approach owed something to the style of Sigmund's Freud's thinking about symbolism. Victor Turner's and Sigmund Freud's thinking about symbolism is analyzed to show the strong analogy between the two interpretative methods, and to explain why Turner felt there was a significant difference between their approaches.

Potential Lectures: The psychoanalytic interpretation of folklore: Sigmund Freud, Ernest Jones, Alan Dundes, C. G. Jung, Joseph Campbell.

Assignments: Assign students a good description of a belief, custom, or behavior and ask them to interpret that of folklore symbolically in either psychological or sociological terms.

Chapter 15: Missing Theory

Basic point: There has been a turn away from the analysis and interpretation of folklore towards a critique of folklore methods and practices. There is a claim that folklore research cannot be objective as it is, at root, a means of legitimating social inequality in the world. Scholarship is not at root a political enterprise. This chapter challenges a number of the assertions attached to this position and suggests that folklore studies would benefit by getting back to a theory that was scientific in nature and which was concerned more with the stuff of folklore and less with folkloristic practices.

Potential Lectures: What theory is—scientific method; induction and deduction; falsifiability; empiricism; scientific versus critical theory. Shifts in folklore theory: Américo Paredes and Richard Bauman, *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore* in *Journal of American Folklore* 84 [331], (1971); Charles Briggs and Amy Shuman, *Theorizing Folklore: Toward New Perspectives on the Politics of Culture* in *Western Folklore* 52 [2-4] (1993).

Assignments: Ask students to design an experiment in folklore. What are they trying to discover, what is the design of the experiment, what kinds of data will they need, what population of subjects will they use, how will they be chosen, how will the experiment be run? What kinds of results would they have to obtain in order to determine that their suppositions have been confirmed or falsified? They do not have to run the experiment but closely consider a scientific approach to a study of folklore materials.

Chapter 16: Folk or Lore? The Stake in Dichotomies

Basic Point: It has been suggested that academic and public-sector folklorists could overcome their differences once they understood where they were coming from in political and economic

terms. This essay argues that there are serious differences between academic and public-sector folklore. Public-sector folklore is service-oriented and proceeds from a desire to solve problems, improve conditions, and seek social justice. Academic folklore proceeds from questions about history, art, culture, communication, and mind; questions that need to be answered prior to engaging in social action. There is no point in trying to bridge the gap between the two folklore spheres. It is better to mind the gap. It will help keep both traditions of activity clear and their practitioners honest.

Potential Lectures: The public folklore tradition: e.g., Alan Lomax, Benjamin Botkin, Archie Green, etc.

Resources: Robert Baron and Nicolas R. Spitzer, ed. *Public Folklore* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992). Peggy Bulger, "Looking Back, Moving Forward: The Development of Folklore as a Public Profession," *Journal of American Folklore* 116(2003): 377-390; Jessica M. Payne, "Critical Historiography of the Present: A Response to 'Looking Back, Moving Forward' by Peggy Bulger," *Journal of American* Folklore 117(2004):337-343; Peggy Bulger, "Response to 'Critical Historiography of the Present,'" *Journal of American Folklore* 117 (2004):344; Carl Lindahl, "Thrills and Miracles: Legends of Lloyd Chandler," *Journal of Folklore research* 41(2004): 133-164; Carl Lindahl, "Afterword," *Journal of Folklore Research* 41(2004): 173-180; Elliott Oring, "Folklore and Advocacy," *Journal of Folklore Research* 41 (2004): 259-267; Carl Lindahl, "Legends of Hurricane Katrina: The Right to be Wrong, Survivor-to-Survivor Storytelling and Healing," *Journal of American Folklore*125 (2012):139-176.

Assignments: Using the above resources, organize an in-class debate about public folklore versus academic folklore. Are the aims of the two subfields similar? Are they compatible? Can one do both public and academic folklore? How can public-sector folklore contribute to an elucidation of the principles that govern folklore expressions and behavior, and how does folklore theorizing inform the work of public-sector folklorists?

Chapter 17: Anti Anti-*Folklore*

Basic Point: There are prominent folklorists who have called for the elimination of the term *folklore* to label both the subject matter and the field of study. Following a move in Germany to eliminate the term *Volkskunde*, they argue that the term *folklore* is problematic from a practical standpoint, a theoretical standpoint, and a moral standpoint. This essay responds to all the arguments directed against the continued use of the term *folklore*.

Potential Lectures: The philosophy and politics of naming. What are the consequences of name change? What happens when an individual, a social group, a corporation, a country change their names? Identify successes and failures of such name change?

Resources: Cherryl Armstrong and Sheryl I. Fontaine, "The Power of Naming: Names that Create and Define the Discipline" WPA: Writing Program Administration 13(1989):5-14.

On the identification with or repudiation of the name "France" in connection with the Vichy government during World War II, see "Vichy state's wartime role still divides France," *Los Angeles* Times 28 July 2012. http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/27/world/la-fg-france-vichy-20120728

Assignments: Hand out a slip of paper with the word *topiary* on it, and ask students to define the term. Then give them the meaning of the word, and then ask whether they can describe specific places in their home neighborhoods where topiary can be found. (This should all be done on the same piece of paper.) Note the difference in the quantity and quality of the responses between those who know the word and those who do not. Ask students again in a few days to recall the existence of topiary in their neighborhoods, and assess whether there has been an increase among those who were not previously familiar with the term..

Chapter 18: Theorizing Trivia: A Thought Experiment

Basic Point: Folklore constitutes a miscellany that is difficult to corral under a single principle. What if we accepted the idea that folklore was essentially a mass of trivia with no conceptual unity? Where would it lead? Ultimately the "interestingness" of folklore suggests that it consists of matter that challenges the taken-for-granted world. In that challenge to the taken-for-granted resides the importance of folklore in that it can be used to challenge everyday assumptions as well as theoretical paradigms. Folklore would constitute the critical counter-examples that challenge higher level theories that might produce conceptual revolutions in social and cultural fields of study. The origin of the word *trivia* belies its current sense of something unimportant and dismissible. Etymologically, *trivia* denotes the joining of three roads (tri + via). It designates a crossroad which traditionally was regarded as a locus of great spiritual power.

Potential Lectures: The history of disciplines: how the fields of the social sciences and humanities emerged.

Assignments: Make a list of five bits of what might be considered trivial information. Imagine a context in which this information were no longer trivial but important—even crucial.

What other fields of study seem to make serious use of a miscellany of information; indeed, that are defined in terms of a miscellany of information?

List the fields of study offered at your university. Attempt to rank the status of these fields within the schools in which they are found. Rank them again across the schools. Can the principles that inform these ranking be inferred? Do disciplines rank high or low based on their age, size of the faculty, economic potentials of their students, familiarity, practicality, abstractness, etc.