

PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

(NAAC 'A++' Grade with CGPA 3.61 (Cycle - 3))

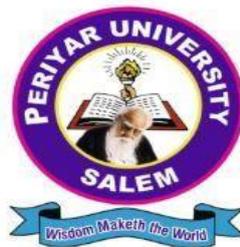
State University - NIRF Rank 56 - State Public University Rank 25)

SALEM - 636 011

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

(CDOE)

**M.A ENGLISH
SEMESTER - II**



ELECTIVE III: FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE

(Candidates admitted from 2024 onwards)

Prepared by

Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE),

Periyar University, Salem – 636 011.

LIST OF CONTENTS

UNIT	CONTENTS	PAGE
	Syllabus	4-7
1	Fundamentals of Folklore Studies I Definitions of folklore - a historical overview - What is a folk group? - How folk groups form - Tradition - Ritual - Performance - Aesthetics	8-56
2	Fundamentals of Folklore Studies II Alan Dundes - Who Are the Folk? Vladimir Propp - The Methods and Material	57-89
3	Folktales from India I The Clay Mother-in-Law (Tamil) Shall I Show You My Real Face? (Tamil) A Friend in Need (Malayalam) The Shepherd's Ghost (Telugu) In the Kingdom of Fools (Kannada)	90-133
4	Folktales from India II Why Audiences Laugh or Cry (Punjabi) Other Lives (Kashmiri) The Kite's Daughter (Assamese) A Parrot Called Hiranman (Bengali) Winning a Princess (Tulu)	134-158
5	Folktales from outside India The Fairy Serpent (Chinese) The Tea-Kettle (Japanese) How We Got the Name 'Spider Tales' (West African) Why White Ants Always Harm Man's Property (West African) The Serpent-Wife (Ukrainian)	159-199

SYLLABUS

ELECTIVE III

FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE

Course Objectives:

- To give an idea of early cultural formations and their expressions.
- To look at different forms of folklore with specific reference to its culture in which they are determined.
- To inculcate the habit of reading and writing traditional art forms.

Course Outcomes:

On successful completion of the course, the students will be able to

- CO1 - gather and identify different types of folklore and discuss them in the context of the cultures that inform them and are informed by them in turn - K1 and K2
- CO2 - will understand the nature and form of folklore and its significance in the cultural formations of people - K3 and K4
- CO3 - look at folklore as a living tradition with contemporary relevance - K5
- CO4 - acquire knowledge to analyse and study them in connection with the past and present cultural standards - K6
- CO5 - enable the students to distinguish different folktales - K5 and K6

Unit I Fundamentals of Folklore Studies I

Definitions of folklore - a historical overview - What is a folk group? - How folk groups form - Tradition - Ritual - Performance - Aesthetics

Unit II Fundamentals of Folklore Studies II

Alan Dundes - Who Are the Folk?

Vladimir Propp - The Methods and Material

Unit III Folktales from India I

The Clay Mother-in-Law (Tamil)

Shall I Show You My Real Face? (Tamil)

A Friend in Need (Malayalam)

The Shepherd's Ghost (Telugu)

In the Kingdom of Fools (Kannada)

Unit IV Folktales from India II

Why Audiences Laugh or Cry (Punjabi)

Other Lives (Kashmiri)

The Kite's Daughter (Assamese)

A Parrot Called Hiranman (Bengali)

Winning a Princess (Tulu)

Unit V Folktales from outside India

The Fairy Serpent (Chinese)

The Tea-Kettle (Japanese)

How We Got the Name 'Spider Tales' (West African)

Why White Ants Always Harm Man's Property (West African)

The Serpent-Wife (Ukrainian)

Books Prescribed:

1. Bain, Nisbet. R, translator. *Cossack Fairy Tales and Folk Tales*. George G.Harrap,1910.
2. Barker, W.H. and Cecilia Sinclair. *West African Folk-Stories*. Yesterday's Classics,1920.
3. Bendix, Regina F., and Galit Hasan-Rokem, editors. *Companion to Folklore*, Blackwell, 2012.

4. Dundes, Alan. *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 78, no. 308, Apr.-Jun. 1965, pp.136 – 142.
5. Fielde, M. Adele. *Chinese Fairy Tales: Forty Stories Told by Almond-Eyed Folk*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912.
6. Handoo, Jawaharlal. *Folklore: An Introduction*. CIEFL, 1989.
7. James, Grace. *Green Willow and Other Japanese Fairy Tales*. Macmillan and Co, 1912.
8. Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Translated by Laurence Scott, Martino Fine Books, 2015.
9. Ramanujan, A.K. *Selections from Folktales from India*. Penguin, 2009.
10. Sim, Martha C. and Martine Stephans. *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Tradition*, Utah State University Press, 2011.

References:

1. Bendix, Regina F., and Galit Hasan-Rokem, editors. *Companion to Folklore*, Blackwell, 2012.
2. Dorairaj, Joseph. *Myth and Literature*. FRRC, 2011.
3. Dorson, Richard M., editor. *Folklore and Folk Life: An Introduction*. The University of Chicago Press, 1972.
4. Dundes, A., editor. *The Study of Folklore*. Prentice-Hall, 1965.
5. Bendix, Regina. *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies*. U of Wisconsin P, 1997.
6. Dundes, Alan. *Interpreting Folklore*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980.
7. Bronner, Simon J. *Explaining Traditions: Folk Behavior in Modern Culture*. The UP of Kentucky, 2011.
8. ---. *Folklore: The Basics*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2016.
9. ---. editor. *The Oxford Handbook of American Folklore and Folklife Studies*. UP, 2019.
10. Ramanujan, A.K., editor. *Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-Two Languages*. Penguin Modern Classics, 2023.

Web Sources:

- <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/jfr>
- <https://www.jstor.org/journal/jfolkrese>
- <https://iupress.org/journals/jfr/>
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rfol20/current>
- <https://muse.jhu.edu/journal/223>
- <https://lizmontague.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/fl-whoarethefolk.pdf>
- <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199766567/obo-9780199766567-0131.xml>
- <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/folk-beliefs-and-rituals>
- <https://iupress.org/9780253072740/emerging-perspectives-in-the-study-of-folklore-and-performance/>
- <https://www.surlalunefairytales.com/books/africa/barker/howwegotspidertales.html>
- <https://www.surlalunefairytales.com/books/africa/barker/whywhiteants.html>
- https://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Ukrainian_folktale_7.html#gsc.tab=0

Unit I

Fundamentals of folklore Studies I

Unit I

Fundamentals of Folklore Studies I

Unit Objectives

- Learners will explore how folklore and literature reflect the cultural heritage of various societies, offering insights into their beliefs, values, customs, and traditions.
- They will examine the narrative structures, motifs, and themes found in folktales, myths, legends, and literary works.
- The unit emphasizes the appreciation of the diversity of folklore and literature across different cultures and regions.
- It involves studying stories and literary works from a range of ethnic, national, and regional backgrounds to develop a comprehensive understanding of human experiences and perspectives.

1.1 Introduction

The term "folk" carries a broad range of meanings, from "natural" and "native" to "traditional" and "rural," and sometimes even "from the heart." The heartfelt expressions of the native or traditional people eventually evolve into folklore.

Folklore is all about oral traditions—stories, beliefs, and knowledge passed down through generations, especially in cultures without a written language. Think of it like the original storytelling, shared by word of mouth. Just like written literature, folklore includes everything from prose and verse to myths, dramas, and rituals. Every culture has its own rich tapestry of folklore.

Now, when we talk about literature, we traditionally mean anything that's written down. So, while folklore lives through spoken words, literature usually comes to life on the page. Two different worlds, but both filled with stories!

"Folklore comprises traditional creations of the people both primitive and civilized. These are achieved by using sounds and words in metric form and prose, and also include folk beliefs or superstitions, customs and performances, dances and plays. Moreover, folklore is not a science about a folk, but the traditional folk-science and folk

poetry.” – Jonas Balys. Folklore is a conversation between two or more people, discussing familiar topics that have been passed down from previous generations. They do not speak of new things, but rather about widely known traditions and stories from the past.

All folklore is rooted in oral traditions, encompassing the traditional knowledge and beliefs of cultures that often lack a written language. These traditions are typically passed down orally. Like written literature, folklore includes both prose and verse, as well as myths, dramas, rituals, and more. Every culture has its own unique folklore. In contrast, literature is traditionally understood as any written work.

Folklore goes beyond simply expressing the heartfelt musings of natives about their environment. It serves as a vessel for culture, social norms, customs, and behaviours encapsulating the essence of a society, or even life itself, in concise form. Folklore conveys ancient wisdom and profound metaphysical truths, often presented in subtle, narrative forms that are accessible to everyday people.

Written literature plays a crucial role in preserving folklore and oral traditions. Without it, much of the world's folk knowledge might have been lost. Books serve as records of folklore, ensuring that the wisdom of the past is passed down to future generations with minimal change, unlike oral traditions, which are often altered over time. Literature also highlights the relevance of these stories for the present.

FOLKLORE

DEFINITION

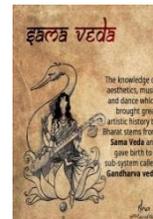
Folklore refers to the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community that are passed down orally from one generation to another. It encompasses a wide range of cultural expressions, such as folktales, myths, proverbs, dances, and songs, which reflect the collective memory and experiences of a people over time.

EXAMPLES

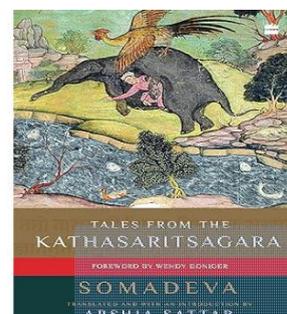
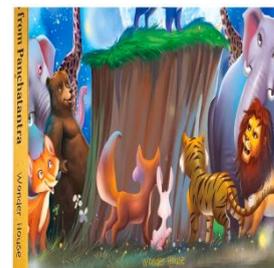
- **King Arthur** is a legendary British leader. He's renowned for his mythical Knights of the Round Table and his fights against Saxon invaders.
- **Hansel and Gretel** are siblings. They escape from a wicked witch after being lost in a forest, marking a tale of resilience and resourcefulness.

HELPFULPROFESSOR.COM

Indian literature, more than any other in the world, has played a pivotal role in preserving and spreading oral traditions and folklore. The ancient people of India mastered various art forms, including folk traditions. The *Sama Veda*, for example, is one of the oldest forms of folk music that has survived to this day. Though considered a rustic folk music, the *Sama Veda* remains one of the finest and oldest musical traditions in the world.



From the Indian epics like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to Buddhist *Jataka* tales, from the *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesha* to medieval texts like *Kathasaritsagara*, and from the mystic songs of the Bauls of Bengal to countless works in India's major languages, scholars, saints, and writers have preserved oral traditions and folklore by recording many of these tales in written form. A unique aspect of India's efforts to preserve folklore over the centuries is the significant role women have played. Figures like Gargi and Maitreyi from ancient times, Andal from Tamil Nadu in the early medieval period, Lalleswari from Kashmir, Molla from Nellore in Andhra Pradesh, Akka Mahadevi from Karnataka, and Sahajo Bai have made remarkable contributions.



Akka Mahadevi

India is one of the richest sources of folktales globally, embracing not only stories but also a variety of oral traditions like proverbs, aphorisms, anecdotes, rumours, songs, and impromptu folk street performances. These traditions reflect the culture and values of the land and have helped unite diverse customs and traditions, even within a single region. In India, even the speech of the most humble farmer is infused with lofty thoughts and metaphors. By preserving countless tales, songs, and plays rich in proverbs and aphorisms, Indian literature has played an immense role in subtly uniting diverse cultures across the country. Its contribution to fostering cultural unity and identity in such a vast and diverse land cannot be underestimated.



Indian folk literature offers an important message to other parts of the world, where such art forms have rapidly disappeared due to industrialization and globalization. Folk literature and art are not just carriers of culture or philosophical ideas; they are expressions of deep self-reflection and insight. These traditions emphasize a simple life, moral reflection, and a path of righteousness. Folk traditions are not mere platforms for moralizing—they are relevant to the present day. Folk plays like *ChaakiyarKoothu* and *VeethiNaatakam* are still performed as satirical commentaries on current social and political issues, and many folk songs from India's literary tradition serve a similar function.



When recorded and disseminated in print, folk literature can reach a broader audience, whereas oral traditions are often confined to smaller communities. From medieval Indian literature to the 20th century, Indian literature has continued to support oral traditions, in contrast to European cultures, where folklore has largely disappeared. A recent example of this preservation effort is the work of the renowned Rajasthani folklorist Vijay Dan Detha.

In modern democratic India, folk literature is studied both within and outside academia, unlike in many other cultures. Institutions like the Sahitya Akademi play a crucial role in preserving and promoting Indian folk literature.

The Sahitya Akademi, India's leading literary institution, is dedicated to preserving and promoting Indian literature in all 24 recognized languages. Its core mission includes translating works between Indian languages, including lesser-known languages and dialects, to promote cultural unity and regional cooperation in India's diverse linguistic and cultural landscape. The Sahitya Akademi actively promotes folk literature by offering awards, hosting conventions, recognizing works in minor languages and tribal dialects, and publishing folk stories in journals. It also runs centres dedicated to the preservation and promotion of oral traditions across India.

Check your progress -1

Answer the following in a sentence or two

1. What do you understand by the term folklore?

2. What is the nature of folkore?

3. How is folklore typically transmitted?

1.1.1 Definition of Folklore



Folklore refers to a culture's traditional beliefs, stories and customs that are passed down orally from generation to generation. Some examples of folklore include Fairy tales, legends, proverbs, folkregion, foodways etc. This shared information reflects the values and ideas of a particular group. The term "folklore" is generally attributed to British antiquarian William Thoms, who coined it in 1846. 'Folk' refers to a social group consisting of two or more people who share common characteristics and express their collective identity through unique traditions. 'Lore' originates from Old English, meaning 'instruction,' and refers to the knowledge and traditions of a specific group, often transmitted orally. Folklore develops wherever people live, and understanding both household and public culture requires an understanding of the folk idiom. All forms of Indian cultural performance, including modern films, theatre, and political speech, have their roots in oral traditions and folklore. A person's aesthetics, ethos, and worldview are

formed throughout infancy and early life and are then reinforced by these spoken and unspoken surroundings.

The expressive corpus of culture that a certain group of people shares is called folklore. It includes all of the customs shared by that group, subculture, or culture. Oral tradition such as like jokes, proverbs, and stories. They consist of artifacts from traditional to modern construction style to the group's attractive toys. Knowledge, acting on cultural beliefs, and the customs and forms of holidays like Christmas and folk dances, marriages, and initiation ceremonies. All of them, individually or collectively is regarded as a folklore artifact.

Folklore, as Elliott Oring suggests, is the part of culture that endures, or "lives happily ever after." It is a tradition rooted in "any expressive behaviour that unites a group, establishes convention, and embeds it in cultural memory" (Harring 1). Passed down from generation to generation, folklore often shapes our understanding of village life. We preserve much of our life experiences in folklore. It is something we come upon every day. As demonstrated by jokes and riddles, as well as by our games, dancing, and singing, it is inevitable when we communicate. In every area of human life research, including literature, linguistics, history, and ethnography, folklore is too significant to be disregarded.

Carl Wilhelm von Sydow observed that folklore varies by region, reflecting the ways in which communities adapt to their unique cultural environments. Most of our life experiences are encapsulated in folklore. We encounter it on a daily basis. It is unavoidable in speaking, as seen in jokes and riddles, as well as in our games, dancing, and singing. Folklore is too important to ignore in any field of study on human existence, including literature, linguistics, history, and ethnography.

According to Klintberg, it stands for, "traditional cultural forms that are communicated between individuals through words and actions and tend to exist in variation." Folk, however, are made up of every member of society. For a considerable time now, academics have held the belief that folklore is passed down orally through informal channels. Additionally, they think that because folklore is mostly verbal, it might vary significantly depending on the context of each exchange.

Folk concepts are commonly communicated via literary and visual media. Well-known artists have also expressed their ideas through paintings, dances, and theatre productions. In his play *Hayavadana*, for instance, the well-known dramatist Girish Karnad delves into folk themes.

Folklore might be private or public, national or international, worldwide or local. Tales from the Rajasthan area, such as Dhola maru, are local in origin, yet folktales about a hero saving a princess from the clutches of evil are universal. Folklore, like art and folk crafts, is closely associated with aesthetics and the sense of beauty. Folklorists define this in terms of aesthetics and craftsmanship. Jokes, riddles, and common art items like textiles and clay pots are not seen as innovative or aesthetically pleasing by many academics. Nonetheless, creative patterns of communication may be found in everyday idioms, art objects, speech patterns, and vocal utterances.

Moreover, folklore is still incredibly credible and authentic. High culture, on the other hand, places a premium on individual authenticity, which also defines uniqueness. Authorship in folklore, however, is nameless. On the other hand, folklore's validity is demonstrated by the persistence of tradition.

The social process and its operation are closely linked to folklore, as previously established. It needs the support of society and the community to function; it cannot survive in isolation. In light of this, other factors that matter in every community include family life, the political system, education, economic structure, and aesthetic and cultural values. An important part of the social, cultural, political, and economic framework is how individuals connect with one other.

The elite are typically perceived as being sophisticated, urban, or elevated, whereas folk life is constantly portrayed in opposition to them. Some people think folk culture is exclusive to a tiny, technologically illiterate subset. Urban environments may also exhibit the wider scope of folk culture, as exemplified by the tiny shop owners in metro areas and the migrant labourers in India's major cities. Therefore, a folk group is made up of individuals who share certain characteristics that promote cohesiveness.

Folk culture cannot be distinguished only by literary or geographical criteria. People who have the same racial background, gender, religion, or profession may own it. It can have close human-to-human contact and transcend geographic barriers. Modern

civilization and technology might also have an impact on it. For instance, internet users everywhere may have a unique folk culture that sets them apart from one another. Folk usually suggests a collective as it's a shared experience that involves several individuals. A folk culture cannot become one until it is shared and collaborative, even though it was established by one person. Not every member of the folk community has to be acquainted with the others. They can be far away and have no connection at all.

The term 'folklore' has been successfully defined to a large part by renowned American folklorist A. Taylor. Although it falls short in many ways and does not address all the arguments, Mazharul Islam claims that his definition is the only one that makes the most sense out of all of them. He defines "Folklore is the material that is handed on by tradition, either by word of mouth or by custom and practice. It may Be folk, songs, folk tales, riddles, proverbs or other materials preserved in words, it may Be traditional tools and physical objects like fences or knots, hot cross Buns, or 'Easter eggs; traditional ornamentation like the walls of troy; or traditional symbols like the Swastika. It may be traditional procedures like throwing salt over one's shoulder or knocking on wood. It may be traditional Beliefs like the notion that elder is good for the ailments of the eye. All of these are folklore."

Mac. Edwad Leech sees folklore as "the accumulated knowledge of homogenous, unsophisticated people." E.S. Martland defines it as "anthropology dealing with the psychological phenomenon of uncivilized." G.W. Boswell defines folklore, "as the un written history of ancient societies preserved in the minds of the people and handed down through ages by the medium of language or practice." In the International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, the term folklore has been defined as under: "Folklore means folk learning, it comprehends all knowledge that is transmitted by word of mouth and all crafts and techniques that are learned by imitation of example as well as products of these crafts."

1.2.1 Historical Overview of Folklore



In the nineteenth century, folklore became a new area of study when philologists in Germany and antiquarians in England started to study the customs of the lower classes in greater detail. The German brothers Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm began publishing significant collections of folktales and interpretations of Germanic mythology in 1812. *Volkskunde* was the term they used to refer to this subject. Then, on August 22, 1846, an English antiquarian named William John Thomas wrote to the *Athenaeum*, a publication for the erudite, proposing that the awkward term ‘popular antiquities’ be replaced with the new term ‘folklore.’ The phrase gained popularity and demonstrated its usefulness in describing a novel field of study, but it has also generated misunderstanding and contention.

Before the term ‘folklore’ was created, there was a notion of folklore and an interest in the expressive traditions from which the notion is derived. Writers have drawn attention to what they saw as unusual traditions and fascinating stories from the dawn of recorded history. The Greeks were among the first people to write down popular historicizing folklore stories, or myths, and to turn them into topics for debate and discussion. Before the word ‘folklore’ was formed, it was known as the wonderful stories about anything; this indicates that incredible stories and strange practices were being passed down to one another long before the name was coined. The first people to discuss or argue about mythology, or folklore, were the ancient Greeks. From 551 BC to 479 BC, the Chinese anthology known as the *Chi-Cheng* was created. In his work *Germania* (AD 98), the Roman historian discusses the habits and traditions of the German tribes. Japanese historical texts *Kojiki* (AD 712; English edition 1882) and *Nihongi* (AD 720; English edition 1896) discussed myths, legends, and folksongs for the

chronological narratives. These texts later developed as folkloristic studies following the fall of the ancient civilization.

Early chroniclers William of Malmesbury and Venerable Bede talked about the lives of Christian saints and the well-known legends of the miracles performed by the Virgin Mary. The medieval priests employed a variety of brief moral collections as the basis for sermons that they would then impart to their people. The Sanskrit texts from the *Panchatantra* and *Kathasaritsagara* were a major source of inspiration for European writers as well. As a result, the stories that were frequently mentioned in these writings became widely known among the populace and encouraged them to carry the conversation into a variety of settings, such as homes, courts, markets, and bars.

From the middle of the 18th century to the first part of the 19th century, numerous writers, including the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (AD 1342-1400) and the Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio (AD 1313-1375), used folklore as a basis for their writing. During the Renaissance, a lot of funny stories were told for amusement. These stories ultimately became well-known tales that were passed down through the centuries. Narratives include the foolish who chopped down the tree limb he was sitting on in AD 1240 and the burning of houses to exterminate insects and mice in AD 1282.

1.2.2 Folktales and its importance



A folktale is a story or legend that originates from an oral tradition. Typically passed down through generations, folktales often adopt the traits of the time and place in which they are told. They address universal and timeless themes, offering people a way to understand their lives and navigate the world around them. A.K. Ramanujam in his *Folktales from India* says "Folktales is a poetic text that carries some of its cultural

contexts within it; it is also a travelling metaphor that finds a new meaning with each new telling. The folktales are all translated by different people at different times and times.”

A folktale is defined by its socio-cultural role within a society. Similarly, a folk expression functions in alignment with other folk traditions, cultural practices, and social dynamics. The social context in which these folk expressions are practiced serves as the foundation for any analysis. This broad narrative encompasses all aspects of a society, including both oral and written traditions, as well as major and minor cultural practices.

These tales- who tells them? Tellers can be classified as professional or nonprofessional. I have, for the most part, selected stories from informal home narrators. For example, singers and storytellers travel throughout South India, receiving commissions from families or groups. These storytellers mostly told tales of gods from the Puranas (Hindu mythology encyclopaedias), or epic tales from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. There are bardic troupes in villages that play epics about the local gods and saints, or caste heroes. The bard will incorporate shorter stories, anecdotes, poetry, and songs into his recitation, which may be done hourly over many nights. He may also make allusions to contemporary political issues. Epics and old stories are therefore given modern significance.

Children are told stories similar to those in this book by domestic tellers. Rather than bedtime stories, they were meals in households like mine. If the family was joint, an aunt or grandmother would gather all the kids and serve them all at once in a circle, mixing the food on a big dish and giving each kid a little portion as they went. Stories were presented to the kids to sustain their interest and encourage them to eat more. The chefs in the home, who were mostly widows making a living in a caste- and language-related household, have also told me stories.

Stories from other classes' servants would likewise introduce us to members of different castes and classes. In some households, the storytellers were grandfathers and other elderly men; they would gather audiences of youngsters from nearby households outside of their kitchen where they told stories. We don't know much about how the stories were chosen differently or whether the details and conclusions of the identical story recounted by a grandma and a grandfather would change. I'll go into greater detail

about what I refer to as women-centered stories and how they're different from male-centered stories, even if they're both told by women.

A skilled individual's collection of stories would likely comprise no more than twenty or thirty tales, and the majority would be ones they were told as children instead of later in life. I have personally collected a maximum of twenty-three from a single teller. Even skilled storytellers knew far fewer stories than the majority. I've based my parts on a variety of stories from them, including ones involving animals, jesters, men, women, foolish people, wise men, members of other castes, and professions like shepherds and weavers in addition to Brahmans. My storytellers used associative storytelling, just as in this book, so if a dream was discussed in one story, it may lead to another.

Folktales aren't just taught to kids to get them to eat more or go to sleep. When farmers get together to monitor crops all night or graze cows or sheep all day, or when workers slice areca nuts (which must be processed quickly after harvest) or roll bidis (cheap local smokes) at a factory, they are sometimes urged to keep adults awake. Similar to labour songs, these stories captivate the imagination and help break up the monotony of prolonged effort. They also have hidden, frequently subversive connotations while doing so.

Like proverbs, tales are used to draw attention to a point, to establish precedent, and to establish authority in discourses related to politics, religion, and the law. At a *pancayat*, or village council meeting, a man from the Meo community, for example, related the story of *A Feast in a Dream*. A Meo outwits two Muslims in the narrative itself. Relationships between the narrator and others in the actual community were metaphorically represented by the relationships inside the narrative. Storytelling is, thus, a metaphor seeking a setting in which to be conveyed and given fresh meaning.

Certain ritual stories, called *vratakathas*, are recited during calendrical rituals and have ritual effectiveness when done so. It is thought that stories like "A Story in Search of an Audience" and "Brother's Day," which illustrate the advantages to both tellers and listeners, have this effect. Frequently, a common story may become extraordinary when presented in this way.

Check your progress 2

Answer in a line or two

1. Who is the founder of folktales?

2. Who founded the folklore society?

3. What was the primary focus of early folklore collectors and researchers?

Genres of Folklore

Folklore encompasses a wide range of cultural expressions that are passed down orally, through practice, or by other informal means. The important genres of folklore are typically divided into the following categories:

1. Verbal Folklore (Oral Tradition)

This category includes all folklore that is spoken or sung, often passed down through generations by word of mouth:

Folktales: Traditional stories, including fairy tales, legends, and myths.

Myths: Sacred stories that explain the origins of the world, deities, or cultural beliefs.

Legends: Semi-historical stories often grounded in fact but embellished over time

Fables: Short stories with moral lessons, often involving animals as characters

Jokes: Humor and wit that reflect cultural concerns or social issues.

Proverbs: Short, common sayings that offer wisdom or life lessons.

Riddles: Puzzles posed in verbal form that require creative solutions.

2. Material Culture

Folklore can also be expressed through physical objects created by hand, often passed down through generations:

Folk Art: Traditional arts and crafts, including painting, weaving, and pottery.

Architecture: Vernacular building styles that reflect local culture and practical knowledge.

Costumes: Traditional dress associated with specific regions, holidays, or ceremonies.

Tools and Implements: Handmade tools used in traditional crafts, farming, or daily life.

Foodways: Traditional recipes, food preparation, and communal dining customs.

3. Customary Folklore (Rituals and Traditions)

Customary folklore includes actions, behaviors, and rituals that are passed down through community traditions:

Rituals and Ceremonies: Traditional practices related to life events (weddings, funerals, etc.), holidays, or religious observances.

Festivals: Public celebrations that often involve music, dance, food, and traditional customs.

Superstitions: Beliefs and practices related to luck, fate, or the supernatural.

Games and Sports: Traditional games or activities, including those played by children.

Folk Dances: Dances performed as part of cultural traditions, often tied to specific regions or events.

4. Music and Dance

This genre includes traditional music and dance that are integral to cultural identity:

Folk Songs: Songs passed down orally, often reflecting the values, stories, or struggles of a community.

Ballads: Narrative songs that tell stories, often of historical events or personal tales.

Folk Dances: Traditional dances performed in specific cultural contexts, such as square dancing or polka.

5. Folk Beliefs

This genre covers beliefs about the supernatural, health, or luck that form part of a culture's worldview:

Folk Medicine: Traditional remedies and healing practices.

Witchcraft and Magic: Beliefs in supernatural powers, spells, and charms.

Ghost Stories: Tales of spirits, hauntings, and other supernatural phenomena.

6. Folk Speech (Dialect and Language)

Dialect and Slang: Regional or community-specific variations of language, including slang and idiomatic expressions.

Nicknames: Special names given to people, places, or objects that reflect local or cultural nuances.

These genres highlight the diverse ways in which folklore is embedded in everyday life and how it reflects a community's values, history, and cultural identity.

1.3 Folk Group



The realm of folk groups and communities brought together by common customs, values, beliefs, and worldviews is explored while discussing folklore and folklife. These divisions may be made on the basis of a wide range of factors, including nationality, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, and occupation. It is important to remember that everyone is a member of several folk groups, and these groups don't have to be especially big. Folklore does, in fact, frequently flourish in tiny, tightly linked groups. Emphasizing that folklore is a shared activity among a group rather than something one person conducts alone is also crucial.

A folk group is made up of two or more people who have at least one significant cultural trait in common. These commonalities are frequently customs that help the community develop a collective identity and endure throughout time. Every individual belongs to many folk groups, from inclusive and wide-ranging ones (like all Americans or all students at a single school) to extremely restricted and exclusive ones (like two best

friends). A folk group is more likely to share traditions if they share more cultural aspects in common.

1.3.1 Definitions of the Folk Group

Alan Dundes emphasizes that our classification of a folk group is based on our perspective, which is why he simplifies the description. Essentially, he says that any group of two or more people who have anything in common are called "folk". This explanation highlights that "the folk" are not described as quaint, antiquated people who congregate around a wooden barrel to tell stories from the past. Nor do they live in remote, far-off, or archaic settlements. All of us are members of folk collectives.

Folklore, according to Dundes, is what makes a folk group unique. The word "lore" reintroduces the idea. In essence, the idea is that a group is considered to be folk if its members participate in and are present at folklore events. Moreover, it makes the case that studying a community's folklore helps us comprehend how that group forms its identity on a deeper level.

Dundes and Barre Toelken offer comparable definitions of folk groups, however Barre Toelken emphasizes more the unofficial relationships that individuals have. Exchanges based on expression and culture are built upon these ties. He describes the "dynamics" that allow a group to remain cohesive in the face of change through common traditions that evolve and adapt. The common dynamics, defined as continuous and changing relationships between people, support the creation of an all-encompassing "expressive communications" system. These messages are given to kids or newcomers as a way of integrating them into the group and maintaining the cohesiveness of the group.

Like Dundes, Toelken claims that a folk group can have at least two members who have a close, ongoing relationship. He calls this type of pair a dyad. People who have been friends for a long time, life partners, and others who show their relationship more strongly with each other than with anybody else through words, phrases, gestures, insults, and facial expressions are examples of dyads.

Richard Bauman challenged the accepted conceptions of the topic in his 1971 paper "Differential Identity and the Social Basis of Folklore." The idea we are examining

here is based on Bauman's study of identification, which broadens the definition of a group to include the idea that folklore is both a source of information and, in some cases, knowledge itself. The goal of Bauman is to present the social structure of traditional groups in a more direct way. By incorporating performance theory into the concept, Bauman shows how a group's mythology acts as a clear channel for actively sharing and conveying its identity, allowing group members to understand and participate in it. He argues that the practical integration of people with traditional knowledge can only be achieved by placing a strong emphasis on the performance of folklore.

By analysing its significance in social interactions and communication, this aims to comprehend the social basis of folklore. A deeper comprehension of the term "group" and all of its social, political, and theoretical ramifications was made possible by Bauman's research. His focus on performance allowed folklorists to investigate the relationships that exist between various groups as well as between audiences and performers, leading to a better understanding of how we construct the idea of a folk group.

Hence, even after lengthy times and large geographic distances, the simple mention to an individual's childhood nickname has the capacity to conjure the fundamental tie between individuals and serve as a reminder of our sense of self in respect to that specific individual.

1.4 How Folk Groups Form



Folk groups form as a result of people's proximity to one another, their shared needs, obligations, or circumstances, as well as their regular interactions and shared skills or hobbies. These groupings have a large number of commonalities. For example, people could first meet because of certain circumstances and then find that they have interests in common or develop rituals that strengthen their relationship even beyond the

original circumstances. We shall look at the main factors that contribute to the establishment of folk groups below.

These groups are usually brought to our attention by the differences in their holiday customs from our own, or by their unusual dress and noticeable intake of non-traditional foods. In the context of our conversation, these will be referred to as clusters that were created based on proximity. Even though it is rare for every member of a given ethnic group to live near another, the geographic boundaries of their ancestry are known. Within ethnic groups, the physical characteristics and climate of their home country may have an impact on the customs, attire, traditions, and material culture, which includes food. Scottish shepherders have included heavily woven, thick, and heavy wool sweaters into their traditional knitting method as a means of protecting themselves from moisture, given their labour in cold and rainy weather.

Understanding how groups form based on physical proximity becomes even more complex when one considers the ability of groups in digitally-oriented societies to exchange and form customs. Online environments create a virtual intimacy that allows people to interact from different backgrounds and distant locations.

The virtual world makes it possible for people to interact virtually, even if they are not physically close to one another as long as they have access to a digital device that can connect to the internet.

Dispersed groups of friends and family can meet frequently using online platforms, which preserves cultural norms, builds a feeling of community, and strengthens relationships between them. Organizations, especially those that are geographically divided, may strengthen their principles and build comradery through online connection. According to Robert Glenn Howard (2009), certain religious groups use their online community platforms to bolster their beliefs, especially in situations where they are unable to meet in person at traditional places of worship.

The Internet has become a powerful tool that connects people who have similar interests in complex ways, strengthening the feeling of community among members of a group. It is evident that frequent interpersonal connection occurs in virtual spaces, even if direct physical encounter is not necessary for the transmission of tradition online (McNeill 2009). People who have particular hobbies, for example, can use the internet to find

other people who share their interests. By interacting with these people online, they can build relationships with members of tiny online communities as well as the larger hobbyist community. In addition, people can get together with nearby local hobby organizations.

An enthusiast for yo-yos, for instance, may use the Internet to research new yo-yo tricks or read evaluations of new items. In the process, they could decide to sign up for an online forum or community where they might interact with people who share their interest in a certain yo-yo or performance style.

The yo-yoers' relationships would become more complex and focused as they participated in online exchanges. It's conceivable that forum users may develop shared traditions, such as inside jokes, slang, social mores, or rules about the order in which comments should be made on a certain topic. To connect with people who share their interests and to keep up frequent conversation, they could create Facebook profiles. In addition, group members may plan to meet at forthcoming conventions or performances by exchanging information, fortifying their virtual group ties and extending them into real-world groups outside of the internet. This provides chances for complex, bidirectional connections between members of the group, such as exchanges between smaller local groups and larger online communities, or between the virtual and physical worlds.

Another classification based on skills is an occupational group, albeit not all occupational groups have a set of required abilities. Occasionally, certain occupational groups may be first grouped based on proximity. A job in retail or fast food, for instance, can be obtained without needing any particular skill set. However, occupations that demand specific skills, like car mechanics, computer programmers, cooks, and firemen, might come together based on their common knowledge and create their own customs and tales, often centred around those skills.

Employees in loud industrial environments, such as factories, wear earplugs to lessen the effects of loud noise. As a result, they are unable to converse with their coworkers vocally and must instead use hand signals to communicate. It is necessary to teach new hires this informal workplace sign language. In the course of learning, more seasoned employees might trick the novice by trading visual jokes about them, taking advantage of their incapacity to accurately understand hand signals.

1.4.1 Self-Identification and Group Membership

Understanding how people identify with groups is important when defining or creating folk groups. Choosing to be part of a group means more than just sharing interests or skills; it involves actively showing that you align with the group's values, customs, and beliefs. This is about claiming a specific identity rather than just participating in activities.

For instance, consider a small group of fifth-grade girls who created a "Weird Club." To join, the girls had to openly declare themselves as "eccentric" and apply to the founding members. New members had to go through an initiation involving playful and silly activities, like wearing mismatched shoes to school or climbing a tree while singing. They received a "certificate of eccentricity" and were ranked based on their level of "weirdness," as judged by other members. The group was a way for these girls, who were friends or became friends through the group, to express and celebrate their unique behaviors according to their own idea of "eccentricity."

Folk groups come together based on various factors, including personal connections, needs, obligations, situations, regular interactions, and shared interests or skills. There's often a lot of overlap between these groups. For example, people might first meet due to specific circumstances and later discover common interests or create traditions that bond them beyond their initial connection.

1. Ethnic Background and Proximity: Ethnic background is a major factor that defines many folk groups. Differences in holiday celebrations, traditional attire, and food preferences often highlight these groups. For example, ethnic groups might be geographically concentrated, though not all members live close to each other. Traditions and cultural practices often reflect the geographical and environmental conditions of their place of origin. For instance, Scottish shepherders wear thick wool sweaters to stay warm in cold, wet conditions. In the southern U.S., people might eat black-eyed peas or tamales due to regional culinary traditions influenced by their neighbors, even if they don't have direct ethnic ties to these foods.

2. Necessity, Obligation, or Circumstance: From birth, people are part of a family that shapes their beliefs, values, and customs. Family is often the first social group we belong to, and family traditions influence how we communicate and express our

beliefs. Beyond family, we join peer groups based on shared circumstances, such as school or neighborhood. These groups help us adopt habits and values from our peers, influencing our personal identity and social interactions.

3. Regular Interaction: As we grow and develop our own identities, we often form new groups based on where we live and who we regularly interact with. These groups start from physical closeness but are strengthened through frequent communication. For example, work groups often form naturally, and within these, smaller subgroups might develop, like coworkers who regularly have lunch together. Similarly, online groups can form around common interests, with members creating inside jokes, specialized language, and social norms. They might even set up Facebook pages to stay connected and coordinate real-world meetups.

4. Common Interests or Skills: Groups often start with shared interests or skills. They might begin in schools or workplaces and then expand. People may come together to share their skills or interests and build a group around these common traits. These groups can be flexible, with members joining or leaving as they wish. Over time, as these groups develop more ways to communicate and interact, they become established folk groups.

In summary, folk groups form through a mix of personal connections, shared circumstances, regular interaction, and common interests or skills. These factors combine to create bonds and traditions that define the group.

1.4.2 Family Group

A key element of family life is the sharing of stories, which helps strengthen our memories and relationships as members of the same family. Family stories can evolve over time, initially carrying one meaning and later adopting a different interpretation as they are retold. These narratives often convey a unique family identity by recounting stories about relatives and shared experiences. They emphasize the family's history, values, and beliefs, effectively passing them down through the storytelling tradition.

Narratives recount past events, but their messages can vary depending on who is telling the story, how it is told, and the context in which it is shared. For example, during a

holiday meal, family members may tell a story about a past family dinner that has become a part of their shared history.

In this previous dinner, a young girl knew she wouldn't get dessert unless she finished all her food. She cleared her plate in front of everyone, but they initially missed that she hadn't eaten everything. After leaving the table, she quickly ran to the garden and spit out the peas she had hidden in her cheek. This story can have various interpretations within the family context.

Family members might point out a specific trait of Laura, such as her cleverness or ingenuity. A different narrator or how often the story is told could change its message. Someone outside the family may not understand the reference, but family members will recognize its meaning and appreciate it as part of their unique family language.

This family uses a simple phrase to express their satisfaction after meals. It also highlights their sense of humor, playful use of language, and the bond among them. Additionally, it honors the father, who was central to the story and ate the pancakes. As a highly respected family member, it makes sense that a phrase he coined would become an important part of the family's personal language. This phrase also illustrates the evolving nature of family folklore, which changes over time and adapts within the family. Eventually, the story became a family saying that captures the essence of the longer tale. The expression is still used frequently, symbolizing the closeness of those who share it. When new people marry into or join the family, they are taught the phrase and can show their connection by using it, signifying their level of comfort and belonging.

1.4.3 School Groups

Throughout elementary and high school, students become part of various groups. Whether these groups are informal social circles or formally organized extracurricular activities established by the school, they provide valuable opportunities to learn social skills through interaction and relationships.

In elementary school, groupings are often determined by geographic proximity rather than personal choice, as students are still learning how to navigate the school environment and interact socially. By middle and high school, groups tend to form based

on shared interests, allowing for the exchange of diverse and specialized knowledge or traditions.

Elementary school is a period of meeting new people, encountering unfamiliar ideas, and experiencing fresh situations, aligning with a phase when the human brain is most receptive to language acquisition. This heightened receptivity to language explains why children's folklore often features linguistic play during this time.

Nicknames are a central part of children's folklore. A simple and effective way to create a nickname is by shortening a longer name, such as turning "Bouchel" into "Boo." Alternatively, the seemingly meaningless word "Boo" might be embraced as the core of a nickname. As children experiment with language, they create more complex nicknames, often using rhyme or alliteration to tease or mock other children, whether they are friends or not.

Some particularly creative children incorporate insults about a peer's physical or emotional characteristics into nicknames. Another method of nickname creation involves referencing popular culture. This process not only reflects the expansion of children's language skills but also highlights their growing awareness of the world around them, influenced more by the culture of school life than formal education.

For instance, a talented high school basketball player might be given the nickname "M.J." by teammates, acknowledging his skill by comparing him to the legendary Michael Jordan. On the other hand, if the player acts overly confident, they may sarcastically call him "Mr. Jordan."

Extracurricular activities play a key role in fostering communities among students. While these groups are formally established, such as sports teams or musical ensembles, which are organized according to guidelines set by schools, coaches, and administrators, informal social groups often form within these structures as well.

1.4.4 Occupational Groups

One common type of group that people often belong to at some point in their lives is an occupational group. Like social circles or organizations, participation in occupational groups can be temporary, part-time, or short-term. However, some individuals may strongly identify with their occupational group throughout their entire

lives. These groups can be formally or informally structured, and while not everyone may join a formal occupational folk group, it is likely that most people will experience belonging to one. You're likely familiar with professional organizations such as Engineers' Unions, Actors' Guilds, Pipefitters, and other labor unions. These organizations have formal rules and membership criteria decided by their members, but within them, informal folk groups also emerge. Membership in these folk groups isn't determined by dues or membership cards but rather by the informal communication used by members to express their feelings about their work and positions.

Occupational folklore isn't limited to high-risk or life-saving professions; it can be found in all kinds of jobs, each with its own history and culture. Some occupational groups share stories as a way of expressing membership, defining hierarchy, and establishing status within the group. For example, retail and food service industries are full of verbal folklore, where employees frequently share stories about customers—whether individual patrons or entire customer groups. If you've worked in retail or food service, you've probably encountered this behavior, even if you didn't realize it was considered folklore.

Anime and Manga Fan Communities, Including Cosplay

Similar to fans of certain music genres, enthusiasts of other popular forms of entertainment often seek out spaces to connect and express their interests. While music fans might still visit record stores, they typically rely on the internet for discovering and learning about music and artists. Similarly, many fan communities, especially anime and manga enthusiasts, primarily interact and grow through online platforms, with in-person gatherings being less frequent, though they still occur. A well-known example of this is the "otaku" community, a group of anime and manga fans who actively participate in online forums but also have a strong presence in real-world events.

One key ritual that unites anime fan groups is participation in conventions, where specific traditions and behaviors are common. While waiting in line for events, fans may "call out" to others who share similar interests, such as shouting the name of a popular character and receiving cheers from fellow fans, reinforcing their bond. Crossover events also occur, such as spontaneous performances of the "Time Warp" dance from *The*

Rocky Horror Picture Show at conventions, connecting fans from different fandoms who might not otherwise interact.

Fans often extend the convention experience beyond the venue by venturing out in their costumes to nearby restaurants, drawing attention, amusement, or even confusion from those unfamiliar with anime. For cosplayers, these encounters are opportunities to express an important part of their identity in public spaces, rather than just online. They may even exaggerate their personas to elicit reactions from outsiders, using these moments to reinforce their own sense of belonging and individuality.

After conventions, fans return to online communities, building on the connections and traditions experienced in person. Those who couldn't attend or don't participate in cosplay still engage by reading personal stories and viewing images shared by attendees. These platforms allow fans to comment on costumes, rate events, and share opinions about the speakers and activities. This constant exchange of stories, rituals, and resources strengthens the collective identity of anime and manga fan groups. Without these online platforms, it would be much harder for these communities to communicate and sustain their shared traditions as effectively as they do today.

1.4.5 Groups and Belief

Belief is a widespread form of cultural knowledge that is often shared within communities. It can take many forms and is likely to exist in almost every ethnic group, even if we don't always recognize these groups as having distinct belief systems. For example, religion is widely recognized as involving belief, so it makes sense that studying religious communities would reveal many texts tied to belief. However, religious groups are not the only ones that practice belief-related behaviors or outwardly express their ideas in visible ways.

Another common expression of belief is what we commonly call superstition. Folklorists tend to avoid this term because it carries an external judgment. For instance, why do people avoid walking under a ladder? Is it because you're concerned the ladder might fall, or are you trying to avoid potential bad luck? Even if you don't believe in the superstition that walking under a ladder brings misfortune, you might still follow the

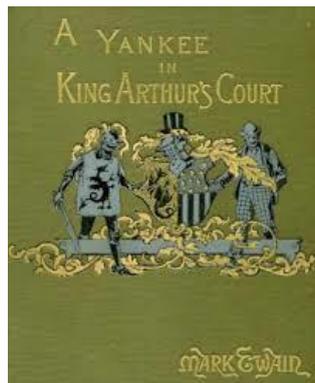
practice. Regardless of your reasoning, what matters to folklorists is that you're participating in a belief-based action shared by others in your community.

The concept of belief includes both what we believe in and the mental process of holding those beliefs. Beliefs cover a wide range of practices and actions aimed at achieving specific outcomes, such as practical advice or home remedies. They also include fundamental ideas, which may have religious or supernatural associations, that are passed down through stories like myths (e.g., the belief that the earth is supported by a giant turtle) or through firsthand experiences and social interaction within our communities. Another type of belief reflects our general outlook on life and our understanding of important values. These ideas are not always categorized as beliefs but rather as things we hold faith in. For instance, we may believe in providing equal opportunities for all, supporting friends during tough times, or using time-outs to discipline children rather than physical punishment.

These beliefs can be expressed through verbal traditions such as proverbs or personal stories, as well as through actions and symbols. For example, placing a pineapple motif above the entrance of a home or on a gate signifies a warm welcome and reflects a belief in hospitality. These ideas are rooted in our values, which are core principles that shape and guide our views and assumptions about the world and others. Beliefs can differ from one group or individual to another and are influenced by factors like history, geography, gender, politics, ethnicity, and other aspects of our group memberships and personal experiences.

The matter of belief, which involves having or showing faith in something, plays a significant role in various forms of folklore. Performers or creators of texts can express their beliefs with varying levels of conviction. They may show absolute certainty in the truth of their material, express some doubts, or even reject the information entirely. These emotions can exist even if they aren't explicitly stated. Listeners, as well as scholars like anthropologists and folklorists, may hold different degrees of belief in what they observe or engage with. It is not appropriate for an outsider to make judgments or assumptions about the inherent truth or moral value of another group's ideas. For folklorists, the accuracy of a text is not the main concern.

Example: Belief and Contemporary Legends



According to Gary Alan Fine, a contemporary legend is a story about an event in which neither the storyteller nor anyone they know was directly involved. It is presented as something that could have happened and is often told as though it did, even though it may not be fully believed by either the speaker or the audience. Similarly, Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith argue that contemporary legends are often viewed as false narratives, yet they are accepted by the communities that share them because these stories reflect their life experiences and address social or moral concerns. While it is not the folklorist's job to confirm the truth of the events in an urban legend, it is their role to examine how the belief held by both the storyteller and the audience influences the spread of the narrative. The importance of believing in the events of a modern legend can vary across different communities, depending on their real-life experiences and circumstances.

In the late 1970s, one of us observed the spread of urban legends in a small town in southwestern Pennsylvania during a time when several young women were being murdered. The first victim was found in the trunk of a car in the parking lot of a local shopping center. High school students, mainly girls, frequently shared these modern legends. One such story involved a male killer who disguised himself as a frail elderly woman to trick a young woman into offering him a ride, only to then attempt to kill her.

In this community, people strongly believed in the events described in these stories, sharing them as important warnings to protect one another from harm. Those who told these stories placed great trust in them, believing that the warnings contained within could potentially save their lives. The credibility of these tales was heightened by the real-life context of the murders, which gave added weight to the warnings they conveyed.

1.4.6 Tradition

The study of tradition has dominated folklore for the past 150 years. Compared to the common understanding of tradition, folklorists see the concept of tradition within a more expansive conceptual framework. Traditional definitions conjure up the picture of an enduring custom that is passed down from one generation to the next, with each elder transferring it to a younger person who subsequently grows older and repeats the cycle. Certainly, this is one way that a great deal of folklore is passed along.

Folklorists, on the other hand, define tradition as a cultural understanding of a practice or written work that is passed down through the community, perhaps over several generations, but primarily among current members of a folk group. A group might purposefully construct traditions in order to convey its views to other groups or to other members of the group. The main emphasis of folklore studies is the idea of tradition and how our understanding of it has evolved throughout time. The term serves as a guiding concept for comprehending how folklore expresses and reinforces group identity throughout this work. Let's begin by defining tradition as the process of passing along culturally relevant aspects from one member of a group to another in order to give a basic comprehension. In the sections that follow, we'll look at the theoretical underpinnings of tradition and discuss its meaning, history, and importance to the communities that preserve it.

1.4.7 What is Tradition?

Tradition is often the first thing that comes to mind when people try to define folklore. Many consider long-standing customs to be folklore. Because tradition is a notion that most people are acquainted with, people often wonder if folklorists' interpretations are in line with a more comprehensive understanding of the term. These questions show an interest in the passing down of customs and a clear connection to the idea of learning and preserving information within a particular group. Compared to popular opinion, folklorists often have a distinct view on tradition. We will look at a number of themes one by one in this conversation, using them as a springboard to understand the present state of the art in the study of tradition. Tradition is seen by folklorists as a conglomeration of behaviours and knowledge that support the

establishment and affirmation of a shared identity. Traditions are defined by the community as a whole.

Tradition is both lore and process

Though the study of folklore and its area are fundamentally based on the idea of tradition, folklorists' interpretations of tradition have changed throughout time as the subject has developed. Traditions are no longer seen as just artifacts passed down through generations within a society. Folklorists no longer see their job as limited to gathering artifacts from illiterate or primitive communities in order to preserve such groups' cultural heritage, which is one explanation for this shift. On the other hand, we give priority to the facets of tradition that communities rely on to maintain their current sense of shared identity. Similar to folklore, tradition refers to a number of related ideas. It alludes to the folklore and traditional wisdom of many communities, as well as the means by which this information is passed down. The expression also refers to every component that goes into creating and upholding a tradition.

The relevance of a tale, the act of storytelling, and how stories and storytelling become significant within a community are all crucial factors to take into account when talking about tradition. This definition of tradition includes the idea of continuing customs and common components, such language usage, materials, and traditions that are preserved and passed down within certain communities. While acknowledging that traditions might come from sources other than past generations, the idea of continuity emphasizes the importance of time and repetition in their preservation. Since repetition keeps members of a group consistent, it is essential to the creation of continuity.

Anything must be repeated in order to be valued by the group. Something will not become a tradition if it is a meaningless activity or thought that is not repeated. Since customs are rarely followed exactly, continuity does not entail reproduction in exactly the same way. Rather, the underlying themes of importance and meaning that bind traditions to particular communities are referred to as continuity. Sharing is the process of learning customs one-on-one, usually with the help of a seasoned storyteller.

Furthermore, sharing helps us to comprehend how transmission takes place inside a group, among its members, and across groups. It proves that customs do not

necessarily follow a straight line from the past to the present or from one generation to the following. Tradition has temporal as well as geographical aspects. It involves the current transfer of traditions and practices within and across communities, as well as between other groups, people, and places.

How do people learn and share traditions

Henry Glassie (1995) asserts that osmosis is the most obscure way to learn a traditional art form. We may get the essential knowledge and understand the essence of the art form only by being in the company of an artistic mentor. "During the learning phase in one's youth, one absorbs the essence of experience.", is how Glassie, a potter he consulted in Turkey, described the process.

The breath moves through you, mingling with your own spirit. You breathe when you create, and the things you make have a unique aura that they inevitably have in common with other people's creations that also breathe in and out in the same space. This beautifully rendered illustration clarifies the basic premise of modern theories of tradition learning and transmission.

Understanding tradition as a dynamic object that is actively circulated and traded within a network and culture as a network helps us to understand that the past is only one part of a complex and highly adaptive phenomena. Tradition is fundamentally "the formation of the future from the past," as this idea acknowledges, but it also shows that the past is only one way that tradition is passed down and maintained. In fact, modern people and groups also contribute to our knowledge, in addition to historical organizations. To accommodate these groups' current interests and experiences, we actively create and alter traditions in the here and now.

A few examples will help to clarify this idea. A fundamental transmission of a piece of folklore can take place when a youngster in New Hampshire receives a jump-rope rhyme from her mother and teaches it to her closest pal. Her friend moves to Chicago shortly after that. She gathers a few girls for jump rope exercises and repeat the strange rhyme, which later finds its way into their neighborhood's rope-jumping traditions. Maybe there is another group of young girls that jump rope next to each other and they hear and see this new rhyme as they watch the group stated above perform.

Dynamic and Conservative Elements of tradition

According to Barre Toelken's conservative-dynamic continuum, no two performances or hand-crafted items are ever exactly the same. While performers aim to meet audience expectations, they navigate numerous shifting factors—such as different audiences or evolving social and political contexts. These variations may arise naturally as part of the process, or they can be intentional, with the performer or artisan deliberately pushing boundaries and adding creative flourishes. This balance between preserving tradition and introducing innovation creates tension between conserving the established form and allowing for change.

Toelken refers to this tension as the interplay of "dynamic" (changing) and "conservative" (static) elements that evolve through sharing, communication, and performance. As cultural contexts shift over time—with new leaders, technologies, values, and awareness—the artifacts of that culture must also adapt to remain meaningful. Jokes, for example, reflect this tension as new joke cycles emerge to address current issues. If an artifact no longer resonates with its cultural context, it loses relevance and fails to be transmitted, transitioning from folklore to mere historical relic.

We see occurrences of modifications and adaptations throughout nonverbal traditions when we look at their conservative and dynamic elements. High school and college marching bands, for instance, amass numerous layers of tradition. There are established traditions that many bands follow over long stretches of time and space. There are also unique customs that are unique to the band members of each school within a given generation. The bands do regular steps with different degrees of knee flexion as they march in exact formations. They disperse to create complex designs, pictures, and even words that are visible from the stands.

A fourth- or fifth-year sousaphone player at The Ohio State University's band usually dots the letter i in the complex word Ohio during the band's performance of "Script Ohio." This tradition dates back to the 1930s, and it has evolved over time in response to both group dynamics and audience input. As of right now, the sousaphone

player kicks, turns, and bows in the direction of the stands when they hit the letter "i." The sousaphone player used these gestures to cover up the timing fault when this technique was first offered as a remedy to a problem in music. The audience erupted in cheers, and ever since then, careful people have performed exact kicks, twists, and bows.

1.4.7 Ritual



Kerala folk ritual

Organizations frequently develop rituals or speeches that represent their core beliefs or ideals. These rituals help to bring our internal experiences of traditions to life and often reveal them to those inside the community as well as outside of it. Have you been a part of a group or club where you had to go through a formal, elaborate induction process? This is a ceremony that marks you as an officially acknowledged group member and lets the group and outsiders know how important membership is. It also sets you apart from non-members. If you have ever seen or taken part in a court trial, you have probably seen witnesses raise their right hand to swear an oath and place their left hand on a Bible.

This ceremony also highlights the fact that the US judicial system views truth as both a secular and spiritual notion. By participating in that ceremony, one acknowledges that truth is a cornerstone of the judicial system and pledges to preserve

it, regardless of one's personal or religious beliefs on the seriousness of the oath. The significance of this ceremony and the idea it stands for is such that a witness may lose their right to testify and may be punished if they choose not to participate or if their testimony is found to be false.

Some rituals are permanent elements of group behavior, however, like traditions, organizations can create rituals that represent important ideas. Rituals frequently mark or honor important life events and signify changes in status or condition. Rituals are associated with the occurrences of birth, adolescence, marriage, and death. They signify our entry or exit from specific life phases or social interactions. Rituals are ceremonial in nature, therefore they frequently involve attire, spectacle, and mystery.

1.4.7.1 What is Ritual?

Folklorists study rituals as a distinct category of folklore since they are particular types of tradition. Unlike traditions, which are only repeated actions, rituals are more purposeful and well-organized. They are used to denote or proclaim one's membership in a certain community. Various types of folklore are usually included into rituals: oral components such as songs, chants, or recitations; customary elements such as gestures, dances, or motions; and material aspects such as food, books, prizes, apparel, and costumes.

Rituals are usually performed in a repeated, systematic manner using symbolic movements and symbols. The existence of a framework that delineates the ritual's beginning and finish is a fundamental component of our comprehension of them. Rituals are ordered, precise, and significant behaviors that enable communities to identify, illustrate, and/or carry out customary ideas, values, and beliefs. A variety of occasions, including social gatherings with family and friends, religious and secular celebrations, and other organized performances, incorporate rituals. Rituals need a set of values and beliefs that are recognized, valued, and meant to be reinforced by the members of the organization.

By emphasizing and occasionally even acting out these concepts or beliefs, the ritual successfully communicates their significance. Like tradition as a whole, most rituals are both stable and dynamic, with recurrent and recognisable core components while permitting substantial variation depending on the particular community. Metaphors and symbols are frequently used in rituals to represent important concepts.

There are rituals in a variety of settings. Sometimes ceremonies take place in more formal settings, or the ceremony creates a unique atmosphere all by itself. People sometimes gather in a church at a certain time to witness and take part in baptismal ceremonies, for instance, in the baptism process that we shall talk about later. However, in certain communities, baptisms could happen incidentally at random times instead than only at regular intervals. For example, when several adolescent camp campers indicate interest in becoming church members, a priest at a religious retreat may impromptu conduct a baptism service at a lake. In this disorganized setting, rituals emerge when the necessary elements come together.

It has long been accepted wisdom that participation in a ritual requires participants to be there in person. But people are refuting this idea and coming up with creative ways to get together and perform rituals as a group by using technology in virtual spaces. For example, a pagan collective may create and share YouTube videos of ritual performances, allowing individual members to take part virtually from home, particularly when they are geographically separated from the group. When in-person reunions are not feasible, ritualistic online gatherings can be arranged for important occasions. As an example, during the summer solstice, pagans celebrate by connecting to online forums from all around the world.

To commemorate this holy occasion, they share motivational ideas and poetry while remaining up all night. Through a variety of communication channels, the virtual assembly replaces and embodies the activities that the group would partake in if all members could come together in person, such staying up late to celebrate the solstice.

Rituals can include a variety of unique components to represent extraordinary occasions, like dances, unique foods (which may require extensive preparation), dramatic lighting (like candlelight, dim light, or spotlights), and oral performances (like songs, dramatic readings, or recitations). In addition to requiring participants to wear ceremonial clothing that is different from everyday clothing, rituals usually include the leaders and members of the group using tangible objects. These tangible items heighten the ceremony's perceived authenticity and add to its significance. The ritual objects foster an environment in which members understand the importance of these specific occurrences and the underlying assumptions that shape the group's identity.

1.4.7.2 Low-Context and High-Context Rituals

Low-context rituals are unplanned, impromptu events that aren't overtly planned or structured. In the case that salt spills, for example, the conversion process of throwing salt over your shoulder is rather simple. It happens due to a specific reason in reaction to a particular situation (such as spilling salt), but it is not deliberate and does not include sophisticated, well-thought-out behaviors or verbal communication. There is no requirement for a particular setting; it can be done alone or in the company of others. However, most high-context rituals are heavily codified, occurring at set times for stated purposes that are made clear and visible to the public. These ceremonies, like marriages and christenings, are usually public.

High-context rituals are often carried out by a single person. The most seasoned people in the group possibly even specially selected individuals usually supervise the rite and make sure it is carried out correctly. Additionally, participants could be given tasks to do or mandated to recite certain phrases. The leader of a Girl Scout troop usually plans the ceremony and gives instructions to members on proper behaviour; sometimes, a rehearsal is held as well. Leaders can learn from other experienced leaders or from publications that the organization recommends.

Locally, the specific strategy may change based on the interests of the organization. For example, one group may perform vocally or stage a play, whereas another group might light candles. Still, the basic elements like crossing the bridge and passing sashes or pins are crucial, and the leader bears the burden of ensuring that these things happen correctly and without a hitch.

1.4.7.3 Types of Ritual

- 1. Seasonal Celebrations:** Festivals marking the change of seasons, such as harvest festivals or solstice events, often feature folk art through decorations, costumes, and performances.
- 2. Rites of Passage:** Life milestones like birth, coming-of-age, marriage, and death frequently incorporate folk art, including traditional songs, dances, and symbolic artworks.
- 3. Healing Rituals:** Folk art plays a role in healing practices through the use of talismans, amulets, or ceremonial objects believed to offer protection or healing.
- 4. Spiritual Ceremonies:** Religious or spiritual rituals commonly involve folk art, such

as sacred paintings, sculptures, masks, or textiles used to honor deities or ancestors.

5. Community Festivals: Folk art is often showcased at festivals and communal gatherings through music, dance, storytelling, and visual arts, fostering a sense of community and cultural identity.

6. Ancestral Worship: Honoring ancestors may involve creating portraits, offering food or art, or performing traditional dances and chants to connect with the spirit world.

7. Traditional Dance and Music: Many cultures have ritual dances and music, like fertility or rain dances, or songs performed during planting or harvesting seasons.

8. Ritualistic Craftsmanship: The process of creating folk art can be ritualistic, involving specific techniques, materials, and symbolism passed down through generations.

9. Protection and Blessing Rituals: Folk art is used in rituals to ward off evil spirits, bring good fortune, or bless homes, crops, and individuals.

10. Revival and Preservation Practices: Some rituals focus on reviving and preserving traditional folk art practices, ensuring their continuity for future generations.

1.4.8 Performance

As folklorists, our interpretations tend to be more detailed, using specific language to break down a performance and explain our analysis. Like many other forms of folklore, proverbs have multiple definitions. Most folklorists define a proverb as a short, common saying that offers a wise or thoughtful comment about a situation, life, or human nature in general.

Proverbs and sayings are usually shared in casual, everyday conversation, rather than being performed in front of an audience like a speech. In the example provided, the speaker playfully warned her friend by saying, "Be careful," then followed with a well-chosen proverb. Be careful what you wish for, lest it come true. The audience responded with laughter, showing they understood the message. The way the speaker delivered the proverb, with a teasing tone and the audience's reaction, showed that everyone involved understood the purpose and meaning of the proverb.

When analyzing the meaning of a proverb, we need to consider the text (its content), the context, cultural elements, and how effectively it communicates its message. Most proverbs aren't meant to be taken literally. For example, "Don't count your chickens before they hatch." Here, the chicken warning mentioned isn't really

about chickens—it is a reminder not to count on something before it happens. Even though many of us have never raised chickens, we still understand and use this proverb because it is so common.

Some proverbs come from well-known stories, and even without telling the full story, we still get the meaning. For instance, "crying wolf" is a short phrase that suggests the whole story behind it, even if we don't know every detail. Because we have heard proverbs so many times, we usually understand what they mean right away, which is why we say that proverbs have fixed wording. However, how we use and perform proverbs can change depending on the situation, making each use of a proverb feel new, even though the words stay the same.

1.4.8.1 The Study of Performance

In the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, folklorists focused more on the results or outcomes of a performance rather than the performance itself. Later, Bauman brought together ideas from linguistics, anthropology, literary studies, and folklore to help us better understand performance in verbal art. His main point is that spoken communication has an artistic or "esthetic" quality, which depends on the specific culture and context of the people involved.

Bauman describes performance as a way of speaking that connects different forms of verbal art like speech, storytelling, and myths into a unified concept. These forms of verbal art are performed in ways that vary across different cultures, and understanding them requires studying each culture individually. Performance stands out because it is meant to be judged based on how well it's done and the performer's skill. This artistic aspect makes it different from everyday speech or actions, and it can enhance the experience for both the performer and the audience.

Performing oral epics is all about connecting with the audience. Unlike Sanskrit epics, where the text is set in stone, performers of oral epics are deeply rooted in their communities and adapt the story to fit the crowd. They might skip certain details or add extra explanations, all depending on who they're performing for, as well as the time, place, and occasion. This makes oral epics incredibly flexible—details and content can shift with each new setting, audience, or performance.

What is interesting is that the performers of these epics are almost always men. In India, oral epic performances are largely a male domain, with very few exceptions. One

rare example is in the Rajasthani par tradition, where a husband and wife team up to perform. But it's very uncommon to see women performing alone or as part of a female group. Performers are usually from the lower social classes, often from untouchable communities, while middle-caste landowners act as their patrons. On the flip side, Sanskrit epics are generally controlled by the upper classes, with Brahmins taking charge of these classical performances.

There are two main types of Indian oral epic performances: song-recitation and dance-drama. Song-recitation is typically done by a small group of men, often with musical instruments, and sometimes accompanied by visuals like painted scrolls or shadow puppets. Dance-drama is more of a secondary form, often attached to the song-recitation. As Susan S. Wadley points out, especially in North Indian epics like *Dhola*, the way the performance unfolds, the choices performers make, and even the shifts in song style are all tied to the story's mood and content. These performances are deeply influenced by the local culture rather than just the narrative itself, making them a reflection of the community as much as the story.

Texts exist, but they don't stand alone as they are part of the larger collections. People tell stories, sing songs, and make jokes, and these things are real because they contain words, phrases, and sounds. However, the specific content of these pieces changes based on the performer, setting, region, and the group they are shared with. Folklorists often collect similar texts to compare how different cultures create and share similar material. A good example is how jokes vary across regions. In some northern U.S. states, people make offensive jokes about "hillbillies" from rural areas, while in southern states, the same jokes might target "Yankees" or city-dwellers. By studying performances, folklorists can explore how and why groups express their traditions in certain ways.

Though folklorists often apply performance analysis to nonverbal art forms, rituals, or foodways, we usually think of it in terms of stories, songs, and other vocal expressions. Performance analysis, as used by folklorists, looks at verbal traditions but also includes material and visual arts, as well as practices. These might be everyday, practical items like food, clothing, and buildings, or traditional folk artifacts such as quilts, baskets, or friendship bracelets. Even the relationships between creators and their work can be seen as a kind of performance.

Performers of oral epics in India have a variety of ways they engage with written texts. Many of these performers come from the lower sections of society and are often non-literate, so for them, the written text serves as a symbol of authenticity. Others might memorize and recite parts of the text in their performances. However, as Blackburn (1988) points out, an oral performance isn't just a direct copy of a written text. In fact, the text itself often emerges from an oral tradition. It's through these live performances that the epic hero really comes to life. The written text becomes secondary—the oral tradition and the performance are what truly matter. Even if a performer recites the bow song exactly as it's written, it's still part of the oral tradition.

Oral performances are also episodic in nature. Long epics are usually broken up into segments to make them easier to perform. Take the Pabuji epic, for example—it's split into twelve episodes called parvaro, while the Palandu epic, which can take hundreds of hours to perform, is similarly divided into manageable parts. The Alha epic is broken into various battles, or larai. Over time, certain episodes gain more popularity with specific social groups and get performed more often, while others remain less known and rarely make it into performances. It's uncommon for an entire text to be performed at once. The full story stays within the text, but what really matters is the living tradition—the unwritten, unperformed aspects that evolve with each performance.

In India, oral epics do much more than entertain; they also educate and preserve cultural traditions. Through their form and content, they reflect the values and history of Indian society. Sometimes, like with the Sanskrit epics, these performances serve as a way to promote or revive certain values, offering role models for the audience. The insights we gain from observing these performances not only help us understand the oral epics better but also give us a window into Indian society and its cultural dynamics.

Following is a list of Oral Epics in India by performance context: Ritual Entertainment Tampimar (bowsong) Kanyaka Tolubommalata Muttuppattan (bow song) Jungappa Lorik-Canda Kordabbu (paddanna) Guga Dhola Teyyam Alha Annanmar Palnadu Ellamma Pabuji Devnarayan.

For Example: The story of Annanmar unfolds in 15th-century Tamil Nadu, specifically in the Kongu region. It's a martial folk epic that exists in both oral and written forms. What's interesting is that there's no single fixed text or set number of episodes, but across the many versions, there's a clear continuity that points to one central story. At the heart of the epic are two brothers and their sister, all born to the same mother within a few minutes of each other. Depending on the version, the spotlight shifts—sometimes the brothers take center stage, while in other versions, the sister becomes the key figure.



Typically, the performers are male, either professional or semi-professional singers, who accompany their singing with a hand drum. Though rare, there is one known professional female singer who performs this epic as well.

The Annanmar story is usually performed in temple courtyards, making it a public event rather than something you'd hear in a household. During performances, the male audience often joins in with the male singers, sometimes becoming so engaged that they reach a trance-like state. In the climactic scenes, they even draw swords and re-enact battles. At the peak of the performance, the warriors collapse to the ground in a death-like stupor, symbolizing their fall in battle. Their bodies are covered with white cloths to represent death.

At this point, the lead singer steps forward and chants magical verses—the same ones the sister in the story is said to have sung over her fallen brothers. These verses are believed to have the power to revive the dead. And just like that, the performers "come

back to life." The story ends with the sister and her brothers ascending a small chariot and rising toward heaven, bringing the epic to a powerful and symbolic close.

1.4.9 Aesthetics

Because the narrative that develops relies on the individuals in attendance, folklorists emphasize the experiences of the audience and the performance. Individual performance evaluation strategies are included in this examination. According to Bauman, framing or marking off a performance results in an expressive experience that calls for critique and heightens our awareness. As the text evolves through performance, evaluations will be given to both the performance and the overall text. Audiences evaluate the performer's skill and ability, the emerging text, the performer's important role in the group, and the overall aesthetic impact of the performance.

Folklore is closely tied to traditions, and we can see its aesthetics through this connection, as it reflects traditional beliefs and values. A good example of folklore must effectively uphold the tradition, meaning it should preserve the lasting and conservative aspects of that particular genre. Food and classic dishes illustrate this effectively. Makke di Roti and Sarson da Saag is a beloved traditional dish from Punjab, enjoyed across India. The saag, or green gravy, is made from a mix of mustard leaves (sarson), spinach, fenugreek, radish, and spices. It's paired with Makke di Roti, a flatbread made from corn flour. Typically prepared during the winter months, no serving of this dish is complete without a generous dollop of butter and a side of jaggery for that extra touch of sweetness.

If something doesn't align with a group's understanding of a tradition, it might not be considered a good example of that tradition. While your friend's dish might be delicious, it could still be considered a poor representation of meatloaf.

1.4.9.1 Skill

Skill in folklore is shaped by the expectations set by both artists and their audiences within specific folk groups. While skill generally defines art, it is influenced by cultural standards and the level of talent needed to create a piece. The complexity and difficulty of the work also play a role in evaluating skill. Performers, who understand their audiences and apply their own standards, ultimately define what skill looks like. Audiences judge performers based on how well they meet the group's

expectations, and through performance, artists showcase their unique talents, inviting judgment.

Understanding the aesthetics of folklore requires recognizing skill, but like quality, it can't be easily measured. Since folklore is rooted in its cultural context, it reflects the traditions of the people who create it. One way to grasp the concept of skill is by examining how different groups evaluate specific items, spoken expressions, performances, and artists.

1.10 Unit Summary

Folk art includes a wide variety of cultural expressions rooted in traditions passed down through generations within the specific communities. These traditions, rituals, and artistic practices play a key role in shaping folk groups, which are typically united by a shared cultural heritage, values, and beliefs. Rituals in folk art serve as ceremonial acts that mark important life events, seasonal changes, or religious occasions, embodying cultural traditions and preserving the identity of the community.

Folk art performance is a lively representation of these rituals and traditions, incorporating music, dance, storytelling, and visual arts. The aesthetics of these performances are shaped by distinct styles, materials, and techniques that reflect the local environment, historical influences, and social context. These artistic elements not only add to the visual and auditory appeal of the performance but also carry deeper symbolic meanings and cultural stories.

In essence, folk art preserves cultural memory and identity, strengthening community ties and resilience in the face of social change. While it evolves through interactions with modern influences, it remains true to its roots, making it a vibrant and lasting part of global cultural heritage.

1.11 Glossary

1. **Folk:** Refers to the traditional art, music, dances, stories, crafts, and rituals of a community or culture, typically passed down orally or through practice rather than formal instruction.
2. **Folk Group:** A community or collective within a society bound together by shared cultural heritage, traditions, language, beliefs and practices.
3. **Rituals:** Ceremonial acts or practices within a cultural or religious context that are performed to mark significant events, transitions or to honor

traditions and beliefs.

4. **Tradition:** The customs, beliefs, practices, stories, and rituals that are passed down through generations within a specific community or cultural group, contributing to their identity and cohesion.
5. **Performance:** The act of presenting or executing folk art, including music, dance, storytelling, or visual arts, often in a communal or ceremonial setting, to convey cultural narratives and values.
6. **Aesthetics:** Refers to the principles and standards of artistic beauty and taste within folk art, encompassing visual appeal, composition, style, symbolism, and the emotional impact of artistic expression.
7. **Antiquarian:** relating to or dealing in antiques or rare books.

1.12 Self- Assessment Questions

1. Do you agree that traditional literature points out to only written piece of work? Give reasons.
2. Can you distinguish between folk art and other forms of artistic expression?
3. How does folk art connect individuals to their cultural heritage?
4. How does belonging to a folk group contribute to cultural identity?
5. Can you identify examples of folk groups from different regions or communities?
6. What role do rituals play in preserving and transmitting cultural traditions within folk art?
7. How do rituals differ across various folk art traditions?
8. How are traditions in folk art maintained and adapted over time?
9. What challenges might arise in preserving traditional practices in the modern world?
10. How do performances in folk art convey cultural narratives and values?
11. Can you describe the elements of a typical folk art performance?
12. What are the key aesthetic principles in folk art?
13. How do materials, techniques, and cultural contexts influence the aesthetic appeal of folk art?

1.13 Suggested Readings

1. Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art" by Thomas A. Green
2. The Power of Ritual in Prehistory: Secret Schemes and Public Displays of Symbolic Structures" by Brian Hayden
3. "Performance Studies: An Introduction" by Richard Schechner
4. The Craft of Tradition: Essays on Folk Art and Culture" edited by Henry Glassie
5. Aesthetic Practices and Politics in Folklore" edited by Amy Shuman
6. The Oxford Handbook of Music and World Christianities" edited by Suzel Ana Reily and Jonathan Dueck
7. The Power of Folk and Fairy Tales: How to Create Your Own Traditional Storytelling Tradition" by Simon J. Bronner
8. "Folklore and the Internet: Vernacular Expression in a Digital World" edited by Trevor J. Blank

Self-Assessment Questions:

Two Marks:

Explain Folklore

Folklore refers to the traditional knowledge, customs, and creative expressions of a community or group. It encompasses stories, songs, dances, myths, legends, and rituals passed down through generations. Folklore reflects a group's identity, values, and experiences.

Discuss the Historical Overview of Folklore

Folklore has its roots in ancient cultures, with evidence of oral traditions and customs dating back thousands of years. The study of folklore emerged in the 19th century, with scholars like the Brothers Grimm and William Thoms. Folklore continues to evolve, adapting to changing social and cultural contexts.

Folk Group

Define a Folk Group

A folk group is a community or collective that shares a common identity, culture, and tradition. Folk groups can be based on factors like geography, ethnicity, occupation, or shared experience. Members of a folk group often share a sense of belonging and camaraderie.

Explain How Folk Groups Form

Folk groups form through shared experiences, cultural practices, and social interactions. They can emerge organically or intentionally, through shared traditions, customs, or rituals. Folk groups provide a sense of community and belonging for their members.

Tradition

Discuss Tradition

Tradition refers to the passing down of customs, beliefs, and practices from one generation to the next. Traditions can be oral, material, or performative, and are often deeply rooted in a folk group's identity. Traditions provide a sense of continuity and connection to the past.

Explain the Importance of Tradition

Tradition is essential for preserving a folk group's cultural heritage and identity. It provides a shared sense of purpose and belonging, and helps to transmit values and customs to new generations. Tradition also allows for innovation and adaptation, as folk groups evolve and grow.

Ritual

Define Ritual

Ritual refers to a repeated, symbolic act or ceremony that holds meaning and significance for a folk group. Rituals can be related to life events, seasons, or cultural

practices. They provide a sense of structure and continuity, and help to reinforce social bonds.

Discuss the Role of Ritual in folklore.

Rituals play a crucial role in folk groups, providing a shared experience and reinforcing social norms. They can be used to mark important life events, transition periods, or cultural celebrations. Rituals also provide a sense of comfort and familiarity, and help to connect individuals to their community.

Performance

Explain Performance

Performance refers to the act of presenting or enacting a tradition, custom, or ritual. Performance can take many forms, including music, dance, storytelling, or theater. It provides a means for folk groups to express themselves and share their culture with others.

Discuss the Importance of Performance in traditional folklore.

Performance is essential for preserving and transmitting folk traditions. It allows folk groups to share their culture, connect with others, and pass down customs to new generations. Performance also provides a means for innovation and creativity, as folk groups adapt and evolve their traditions.

Aesthetics

Define Aesthetics

Aesthetics refers to the artistic and creative aspects of folk traditions, including music, dance, art, and literature. Folk aesthetics are often characterized by simplicity, functionality, and beauty. They reflect a folk group's unique perspective and cultural values.

Explain the Role of Aesthetics

Aesthetics play a crucial role in folk groups, providing a means for creative expression and cultural transmission. Folk aesthetics are often deeply rooted in tradition and custom, and reflect a folk group's history and identity. They also provide a means for innovation and adaptation, as folk groups evolve and grow.

Five Marks:

1. Defend the significance of folklore in modern society, explaining its role in preserving cultural heritage and promoting community cohesion.
2. Estimate the impact of globalization on folk traditions, appraising both the positive and negative effects on cultural diversity and community identity.
3. Create a new folk tale or legend that reflects contemporary social issues, explaining the symbolism and themes used to convey the message.
4. Defend the importance of preserving endangered folk languages, creating a plan for language documentation and revitalization efforts.
5. Explain the concept of cultural appropriation in relation to folk traditions, appraising the ethical implications of borrowing from other cultures.
6. Estimate the potential benefits of incorporating folk traditions into education, creating a curriculum that integrates folklore and cultural heritage into the learning process.

Eight Marks:

1. How can folklore be maximized as a tool for cultural preservation, and what strategies can be developed to ensure its continued relevance in modern society?
2. Create a new folkloric character or creature, constructing a detailed backstory and mythology that draws on existing folk traditions.
3. How can the study of folklore be improved through interdisciplinary approaches, and what developments in technology or methodology could enhance our understanding of folk traditions?
4. Construct a framework for analyzing the cultural significance of folk tales, and explain how this framework can be used to maximize our understanding of their symbolic meaning.

5. Develop a plan for improving the representation of diverse folk traditions in media and education, and explain how this can help to promote cross-cultural understanding.
6. Create a new folkloric ritual or ceremony, improving upon existing traditions by incorporating modern themes or elements.
7. How can folklore be maximized as a tool for community building, and what structures or institutions can be constructed to support this goal?
8. Develop a theory of folkloric transmission, constructing a model that explains how folk traditions are passed down through generations and adapted to new contexts.

Unit II

Fundamentals of Folklore Studies II

Unit-II

Fundamentals of Folklore Studies II

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The study of folklore encompasses a wide range of traditional cultural expressions, including myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, jokes, and rituals. Folklore is an important aspect of cultural heritage, reflecting the values, beliefs, and norms of a community. This unit will document and preserve endangered cultural traditions. It serves to educate younger generations about the values, history, and norms of their community.

2.2 Introduction

Alan Dundes (1934-2005) an influential American folklorist is renowned for his extensive contributions to the field of folklore studies. He was a professor of Anthropology and Folklore at the University of California, Berkeley, where he taught from 1963 until his death. Dundes a prolific scholar, authored or edited over 250 articles and more than 30 books throughout his career. Dundes played a crucial role in establishing folklore as a respected academic discipline. He emphasised the importance of studying folklore to understand cultural expressions and societal norms.

Dundes is well-known for applying structuralist methodologies to the study of folklore. He adapted the linguistic theories of structuralism, particularly those of Claude Lévi-Strauss, to analyse the structure of folktales, myths, and other folk narratives.

Dundes introduced the concept of “folk ideas”. He says that folk ideas are the underlying cultural beliefs and values expressed through folklore. This concept helped scholars understand how folklore reflects and reinforces cultural ideologies.

Dundes extensively studied proverbs, riddles, and jokes, exploring their deeper meanings and social functions. He argued that these forms of folklore often reveal societal attitudes towards taboo subjects, especially sexuality, politics, and social

norms. Dundes incorporated psychoanalytic theories into his folklore research, drawing on the works of Sigmund Freud. He explored how folklore can reflect unconscious desires and conflicts, offering insights into the collective psyche of a culture.

Some of Dundes' notable publications include "Interpreting Folklore" (1980), "Folklore Matters" (1989), and "Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore" (1999). He also edited important anthologies such as "The Study of Folklore" (1965) and "Mother Wit from the Laughing Barrel: Readings in the Interpretation of Afro-American Folklore" (1973). Dundes' work has had a lasting impact on folklore studies, inspiring subsequent generations of folklorists. His interdisciplinary approach and innovative theories continue to influence the field.

Alan Dundes, a folklorist at the University of California, made significant contributions to the field of folklore studies. His work, including the essay "Who Are the Folk" from his book "Essays in Folkloristics," helped establish folklore as an academic discipline.

In "Who Are the Folk," Dundes examines the concept of "folk" in light of scientific advancements. He explores the term's origin and definition, comparing it to various concepts across different contexts. Dundes argues that the study of folklore, which began in the 19th century, led to the formation of numerous folklore societies in Europe and the United States.

Dundes defines "folk" as a group of people forming the lower stratum of society, often equating them with peasants. He characterizes the folk as those who maintain and identify with their rich cultural heritage. In his view, the folk typically represent the illiterate members of a literate society or a middle group between the elite and the working class.

The author associates the concept of folk with rural settings, viewing them as common people in villages. He also examines the idea of folk in relation to cultural evolution, suggesting that folk people occupy a stage between "savagery" and high civilization.

Through this work, Dundes aimed to deepen the understanding of folklore's role in society and highlight the complexity of folk traditions. His scholarly contributions

continue to influence the field of folklore studies today.

2.3 Alan Dundes “Who Are the Folk”

The Traditional View of Folk: A Historical Perspective

Historically, the concept of "folk" was deeply rooted in 19th-century European thought. This traditional view defined "folk" primarily as peasants or rural populations who were seen as carriers of ancient traditions. The folk were often characterized as:

1. Illiterate or semi-literate individuals living in a literate society
2. Rural dwellers, as opposed to urban populations
3. The lower stratum of society, contrasted with the elite or upper classes
4. Bearers of "primitive" or "backward" traditions

This perspective was closely tied to the romantic nationalism of the 19th century, which sought to identify and preserve "authentic" national cultures. Folklore studies during this period often focused on collecting and documenting rural traditions, songs, and stories that were seen as endangered by modernization and urbanization.

The traditional view also placed "folk" in a specific evolutionary context. They were seen as more advanced than "primitive" or "savage" societies but less developed than "civilized" urban populations. This led to the exclusion of many groups from folklore studies. For instance, Native American or Australian Aboriginal cultures were often not considered "folk" because they were viewed as "primitive" rather than as part of a society with both "folk" and "elite" elements.

Key Concepts of Dundes' Psychoanalytic Analysis:

1. **Symbolism:** Dundes examined the symbolic content of folklore, interpreting symbols as expressions of unconscious desires, fears, and conflicts.
2. **Freudian Concepts:** He utilized Freudian concepts such as the Oedipus complex, repression, and projection to analyze

folk tales and myths.

3. **Cultural Psyche:** Dundes explored how folklore reflects the collective psyche of a culture, revealing shared psychological concerns and social tensions.

2.3.1 Check Your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 01

1. Who was Alan Dundes?

2. What is Alan Dundes best known for in folklore studies?

3. Which theoretical approach did Alan Dundes advocate for in folklore analysis?

4. What is a key concept introduced by Alan Dundes in folklore interpretation?

5. Explain Alan Dundes' contribution to the field of folklore studies?

2.3.2 Analysis of Alan Dundes “What Are the Folk”

Problems with the Old View

1. **Exclusionary Nature:** The old definition excluded vast segments of society, including urban dwellers, educated individuals, and entire cultures deemed either too "primitive" or too "civilized."
2. **Static Understanding:** It presented folk culture as unchanging and resistant to modernity, failing to account for how traditions adapt and evolve.
3. **Ethnocentric Bias:** The traditional view was deeply rooted in European perspectives, often disregarding or misinterpreting non-European cultures.
4. **Assumption of Decline:** There was a prevalent belief that folklore and folk culture would inevitably disappear with increasing literacy, urbanization, and technological advancement.
5. **Overlooking Emerging Groups:** The old definition didn't account for new social groups forming in response to modern conditions, each with their own emerging folklore.

Dundes' New Definition of Folk

1. **Inclusivity:** By stating "any group of people whatsoever," Dundes opened the door to studying folklore in all segments of society, not just rural or "traditional" communities.
2. **Shared Factor:** The emphasis on a "common factor" allows for a wide variety of group formations. This could include everything from professional associations to online communities.
3. **Flexibility:** The definition doesn't specify what kind of traditions a group must have, allowing for a broad interpretation of what constitutes folklore.
4. **Group Identity:** By mentioning traditions "which it calls its own," Dundes highlighted the role of folklore in creating and maintaining group identity.
5. **Minimum Size:** Dundes specified that a folk group must consist of at least two people, though most groups are much larger.

The Multiplicity of Folk Groups: Examples and Implications

1. **National Folk Groups:** Dundes acknowledged that one could speak of American, Mexican, or Japanese folklore traditions shared by large portions of a national population. This might include knowledge of national symbols, shared songs, or common idioms.
2. **Family Folklore:** Each family can be considered a folk group, with its own set of traditions, inside jokes, and shared stories. This might include origin stories about how the family settled in a particular place or unique family customs.
3. **Occupational Folk Groups:** Dundes emphasized that various professions develop their own folklore. For instance:
 - Baseball players have their own superstitions and jargon
 - Miners share legends about the dangers of their work
 - Academics have jokes about different disciplines and the nature of academic life
4. **Ethnic and Religious Groups:** These traditional categories of folk groups remain relevant in Dundes' framework, each with their own rich traditions and folklore.
5. **Emerging Groups:** Dundes noted that new folk groups continually form around shared interests or experiences. He mentioned surfers and computer programmers as examples, but we could add many more in the modern context, such as online gaming communities or fan groups for particular media franchises.

Part-Time Folk

Dundes introduces the interesting idea of "part-time folk". He recognizes that people can belong to many different folk groups and might act differently in each one. For example, someone might tell different kinds of jokes at work than they do with their family. Even temporary groups, like summer camps, can have their own folklore. This concept helps us understand how people navigate between different social groups and adjust their behavior and traditions accordingly.

Folklore in Different Groups

To illustrate how different groups have their own folklore, Dundes uses jokes as examples. He mentions military jokes, like the story about the sea captain, jokes about different religious groups, such as Catholic orders or Jewish denominations, and academic jokes about different types of scientists. By showing these specific examples, Dundes argues that these jokes prove these groups exist as "folk" groups. Each group has its own unique humor that reflects its values, concerns, and shared experiences.

How Small Can a Folk Group Be?

When considering the size of folk groups, Dundes says that a folk group needs at least two people. However, most groups that folklorists study have thousands of members. It's important to note that not all members of a group need to know each other personally. Also, not everyone in a group will know all of the group's folklore. This understanding allows for a more flexible approach to studying folklore in various sized groups.

Technology and Folklore

Some people thought that as technology advanced, folklore would disappear. However, Dundes argues against this idea. He says that technology actually helps spread folklore faster than ever before. Moreover, new technology often creates new folklore, like jokes about computers. There's even folklore about technology itself. This shows that folklore is not tied to old-fashioned ways of life but adapts and thrives in new environments.

Conclusion

Dundes concludes that "folk" includes many more people than just rural, uneducated peasants. He says, "Who are the folk? Among others, we are!" This means that everyone can be part of various folk groups and participate in creating and sharing folklore. It's a much more inclusive and dynamic view of folklore that reflects the complexity of modern society.

2.3.4 Folklore in Dundes' Perspective

To exemplify the nineteenth-century perspective on folklore, I quote various excerpts from the writings of Andrew Lang's essay "The Method of Folklore," which was published in his book *Custom and Myth* in 1884. Folklore is a field of study that gathers and compares intangible remnants of ancient civilizations, such as enduring superstitions, stories, and ideas that exist in our own time but do not originate from it. Folklore mostly focuses on the traditions, habits, and beliefs of the common people and social strata who have been least influenced by education and have experienced minimal advancement. However, the student of folklore quickly discovers that these stagnant social groups still hold on to numerous beliefs and practices that are reminiscent of the primitive societies.

The study of folklore is therefore prompted to investigate the customs, legends, and beliefs of primitive societies, which are still preserved, albeit in a crude form, by the rural population of Europe.

Here we encounter the folk, who are characterized as peasants, belonging to the lowest class, and without the advantages of education and societal advancement. Lang's response to the inquiry, "What is the methodology of Folklore?" effectively demonstrates his understanding of folk. This approach is to examine a place where a comparable practice exists, and where the practice is no longer unreasonable and abnormal, but instead aligns with the customs and beliefs of the people who follow it. Our approach involves comparing the apparently arbitrary customs or behaviors of civilized societies with the corresponding customs and behaviors that persist among uncivilized societies and nonetheless possess significance.

For this type of comparison, it is not required that the uncivilized and civilized races should share the same ancestry, nor do we need to demonstrate that they have ever had contact with each other. Identical mental state results in identical behaviors, regardless of ethnicity or the adoption of ideas and customs.

The approach will consist of juxtaposing the usage or myth that is incomprehensible when observed within a civilized society, alongside a comparable story that is sufficiently understandable when observed among primitive cultures.

This folklore symbolizes the primitive concepts from which civilization has emerged, within the context of a civilized society.

The concept of "non-progressive classes within a progressive society" can be seen as similar to the idea of "illiterate individuals in a literate society." The people possessed what Lang referred to as a "mean term," which served as the intellectual connection between the sophisticated and primal aspects.

Savage or primitive individuals, or peasant communities, as opposed to civilized or elite individuals. Pre-literate or non-literate individuals are those who have not yet acquired the ability to read and write. Illiterate individuals, on the other hand, are those who lack the ability to read and write. Literate individuals, on the contrary, possess the ability to read and write. The terms rural and urban refer to areas that are characterized by either a countryside or city environment, respectively. Lastly, the lower stratum refersto the lower social or economic class.

SAVAGE or PRIMITIVE	FOLK or PEASANT	CIVILIZED or ELITE
Pre- or Non- literate	Illiterate	Literate
	Lower Stratum	Urban
Upper Stratum		

Since folklore was largely defined in regard to its perceived connection to the civilized or elite, it was assumed that folklore only existed in societies where a civilized or elite group was present. Consequently, significant portions of the world, which were considered uncivilized by ethnocentric European thinkers, lacked a distinct cultural group and therefore did not possess any traditional stories or customs. North and South American Indians, Australian aborigines, native peoples of Africa, and others, were not considered civilized and hence did not fit the exact definition of folk. Primarily, the term "folk" originally denoted European peasants only.

Even now, certain European folklorists regard the lives of peasants as the focus of their investigations. Folklorists in this field examine the entirety of the peasants' lives, rather than focusing solely on certain genres like folktales or ballads. This study is

occasionally referred to as folklore instead of folklore and it aligns with what American anthropologists classify as ethnography. Despite expectations, the restricted definition of folk as —European peasant" from the eighteenth century has

not vanished. The music of the American Indian is seldom categorized as folk music, and the art of the Australian aborigine is not commonly classified as folk art.

Folk music and folk art are predominantly limited to European or European-derived civilizations. Only certain kinds of folk literature, such as folktales, are regarded as cross-cultural. However, it is puzzling how American Indians possess folktales but lack folk music or folk art. While they do possess music and art, it is often labeled as "primitive" and "non-Western," which are subjective and ethnocentric terms. In Latin America, folklorists strongly advocate for the nineteenth-century concept of folk as peasants.

In 1948, American folklorists Ralph Steele Boggs engaged in a lively argument with Argentinean folklorist Bruno C. Jacovella regarding the exclusion of so-called primitive individuals from the scope of study for folklorists. Boggs noted that although the original notion of folk referred specifically to European peasants, it was subsequently broadened to encompass primitive societies. Boggs referenced G.M. Theal's *Kaffir Folk-Lore* (London, 1886) as an instance of the broadened application. British folklorists were indeed open to the idea of expanding the definition of the term.

The 1914 version of *The Handbook of Folklore* contains a discussion on the origins of folklore studies. The study commenced by noting that within the less educated populace of contemporary European nations, there is a substantial collection of beliefs, customs, and narratives that have been transmitted orally from one generation to another, primarily belonging to the uneducated and less advanced segment of society. It was observed that savage and barbarous nations have similar and sometimes identical beliefs, practices, and stories.

The definition of folklore provided is as follows: "the overarching term that encompasses the traditional beliefs, customs, stories, songs, and sayings that are prevalent among less developed societies or preserved by the less educated segments of more advanced societies". Jacovella argued that the examination of American Indian communities falls under the purview of ethnography or anthropology, and hence should not be included within the scope of folklorists' study.

Characteristics of Folk Groups

Alan Dundes, emphasized several key characteristics that define folk groups and differentiate them from other types of social groups. These characteristics help explain how folk groups maintain their cultural identity and cohesion. Here are the primary characteristics of folk groups as outlined by Dundes:

Shared Traditions

- **Oral Tradition:** Folk groups often share a body of oral traditions, including stories, proverbs, jokes, and songs. These are passed down verbally from generation to generation.
- **Rituals and Customs:** Shared practices, rituals, and customs play a crucial role in the cultural life of a folk group, helping to reinforce group identity and values.

2. Common Identity

- **Self-Identification:** Members of a folk group typically recognize themselves as part of a distinct community. This self-identification is a key element in defining the group's boundaries and fostering a sense of belonging.
- **Cultural Symbols:** The group shares specific symbols, such as dress, language, and other cultural markers, that signify their identity and heritage.

3. Social Cohesion

Interpersonal Relationships: Close interpersonal relationships and a sense of mutual support and cooperation are characteristics of folk groups. These relationships are often strengthened through shared activities and collective experiences.

- **Group Solidarity:** The sense of unity and solidarity among members is reinforced through communal activities and shared cultural expressions.

4. Tradition Bearers

- **Custodians of Culture:** Certain individuals within the group, known as tradition bearers, play a vital role in preserving and transmitting the group's folklore. These may include storytellers, musicians, or elders who possess deep knowledge of the group's traditions.
- **Transmission of Knowledge:** The transmission of knowledge and cultural

practices occurs both formally and informally, often through direct teaching and participation in cultural events.

5. Variability and Stability

- **Dynamic Tradition:** While folk groups maintain a core set of traditions, they are also dynamic and adaptable. Folklore can change and evolve in response to new circumstances and influences, reflecting the group's ongoing adaptation to its environment.
- **Conservatism:** Despite their dynamic nature, folk groups also exhibit a degree of conservatism, striving to preserve their cultural heritage and maintain continuity with the past.

6. Functions of Folklore within the Group

- **Education:** Folklore serves an educational function by teaching younger members about the group's values, norms, and history.
- **Entertainment:** Many forms of folklore, such as stories and songs, provide entertainment, fostering enjoyment and leisure within the group.
- **Social Control:** Folklore can reinforce social norms and expectations, serving as a means of social control by promoting conformity and discouraging deviant behavior.

7. Context and Performance

- **Situational Context:** The performance of folklore is often context-dependent, taking place in specific social and cultural settings that enhance its meaning and impact.
- **Audience Interaction:** The interaction between performer and audience is a critical aspect of folklore, with the audience's response playing a role in shaping the performance.

2.3.5 Check your Progress- Answer in a line or two-2

1. Explain a defining characteristic of folk groups?

2. How do folk groups typically transmit cultural knowledge?

3. What role does geographic proximity play in the formation of folk groups?

4. How do folk groups typically define membership?

5. Distinguish Folk groups from formal organisations

2.4 Transmission of Folklore

The persistent use of a narrow interpretation of "folk," which primarily includes peasants, has excluded both indigenous populations and urban dwellers. American anthropologists have played a role in this exclusion. Redfield, for instance, devised an idealized classification system that placed "folk" and "urban" at opposite ends of a continuum. Within this framework, discussing urban folklore was considered illogical. While peasants might bring their traditional beliefs and stories with them when migrating to cities, the idea that urban residents could form distinct folk groups, each with their own traditional customs, was not taken seriously by those who followed Redfield's dichotomy.

In his 1953 essay "What is Folk Culture?", Forster sought to clarify Redfield's distinctions. He suggested that a folk society is not an isolated entity, but rather a

subordinate part of a larger social unit, typically a nation. The folk component had a mutually beneficial relationship with the more complex parts of the larger society, often represented by the upper classes of preindustrial urban centers. Once again, "folk" here is defined in opposition to the upper class and the urban center.

Forster further argued that true primitive cultures should not be classified as "folk" but as isolates, which are inherently more complex. His distinctions align with the narrow definition of folk that was common in the 18th century. According to Forster, widespread industrialization would lead to the disappearance of folk cultures. He also claimed that countries like the United States, Canada, England, and Germany lack true folk cultures, with only limited expressions of such culture in peripheral regions. Given the global trend towards industrialization, Forster believed it unlikely that new folk cultures would emerge.

If contemporary folklorists were to adopt the 19th-century definition of folk as uneducated, rural, and culturally backward peasants, the study of their traditions might eventually become a mere effort to preserve remnants of the past, with folkloristics itself fading along with the people it studies. One could envision a future in which rural inhabitants worldwide become urbanized or heavily influenced by metropolitan areas, losing their distinct rural characteristics.

Modern media, such as radios and movies, has generally promoted cultural standardization in food, clothing, language, and more. However, if we reconsider the question "Who are the folk?" from a different angle, it becomes clear that folk cultures are not disappearing. In fact, vibrant folk cultures exist in the United States, Canada, and Europe. This broader interpretation of "folk" allows a collective to include an entire nation or as small a unit as a single family. We can speak of American, Mexican, or Japanese folklore, as there are shared cultural elements familiar to most people in each society. For example, most Americans recognize Uncle Sam, know how to sing "Jingle Bells" or "Happy Birthday," and understand expressions like "o.k."

Every family has its own folklore, often blending traditions from both parents' heritage. Family folklore might include stories about how the family came to settle in a particular place or how their last name evolved. It could involve a family signal, like a melody or tone used in public to gather everyone to leave a place. It might even

include teasing comments about family members' quirks, such as frugality or a habit of invading personal space.

2.5 Folklore and Identity

Jokes specific to particular groups often signal the existence of these groups. Sometimes, these jokes are shared only among members of the group, while in other cases, they are shared exclusively by outsiders. There are also instances where both group members and nonmembers share these jokes. Context often plays a crucial role. For example, Catholics might tell anticlerical jokes, and Jews might share anti-Semitic jokes, but these are typically told only within their respective groups and not in the presence of outsiders.

Military organizations, for instance, have a rich tradition of stories and beliefs. I recall a Navy anecdote from the late 1950s. These stories were often shared during the long hours of a sea cruise. Whenever a crisis arose, the captain would quickly retreat to his cabin for a moment before returning to the deck to issue precise orders, such as "change course to 270 degrees" or "start firing." The officers and crew were mystified by the source of his confidence, yet no one knew the secret. Eventually, the elderly captain passed away while at sea. Intrigued, the executive officer entered the captain's private quarters and opened his secure storage. Inside, he found a single piece of paper with a simple message: "Port means left, starboard means right." This story could easily be adapted to other cultural groups.

For example, consider a joke from the banking industry during the 1930s. A bank employee, a cashier, would start each day by opening his top drawer, looking at a piece of paper, and putting it back. After forty flawless years of service, he retired, and his colleagues, driven by curiosity, searched his drawer for the mysterious paper. When they found it, the message read: "The numbers in red must equal the numbers in black." Similarly, in the music world, there was a famous conductor who commanded great respect. Before each concert, he would take a small piece of paper from his pocket, read it, and then return it. One evening, he accidentally dropped the paper. The concertmaster picked it up and read the simple message: "Violins go on the right, violas on the left."

These examples illustrate that countless folk groups exist. The Navy can be seen as

a distinct group, just as bankers and musicians are. Furthermore, each of these groups can be divided into smaller folk groups. For example, within the world of musicians, jazz players have their own unique set of traditions and beliefs, distinct from those in other genres.

The idea that an ethnic group could consist of smaller subgroups is not far-fetched. The key indicator is the presence or absence of folklore specific to these subgroups. To illustrate this, consider the famous "priest and rabbi" joke cycle, one of the most well-known in American folklore. Many variations of this joke have been widely circulated. Here is an example from a Protestant informant in 1964:

One day, a Catholic priest and a rabbi were driving along the highway, with the priest following closely behind the rabbi. At a traffic light, the rabbi braked smoothly, but the priest, lost in thought, failed to notice and crashed into the rabbi's car at 40 mph, destroying both vehicles. When a police officer, an Irishman, arrived at the scene, he approached the priest and said, "Forgive me, Father, but do you happen to know how fast the rabbi was going when he reversed into you?"

This joke reflects the presence of folklore surrounding Jews and Catholics in the U.S., both of which are considered ethnic groups. Less obvious is the fact that these larger groups contain smaller subgroups. For instance, within Catholicism, there are various religious Orders, each with its own distinct identity. In another joke, a power outage occurs during a meeting. The Dominican says, "Let us reflect on the nature of light and darkness." The Franciscan sings a hymn to honor "our little sister, darkness." The Jesuit, on the other hand, simply replaces the fuse.

These differences between religious Orders are not widely known outside Catholicism, but they are evident within. Similarly, within Judaism, there are distinct branches, such as Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism. In one story, Jewish couples in predominantly non-Jewish areas struggled with the dilemma of whether to put up a Christmas tree. One man called an Orthodox rabbi and asked if there was a blessing he could say to sanctify the tree. The rabbi, offended, hung up the phone. When the man asked a Conservative rabbi the same question, the rabbi was sympathetic but explained there was no appropriate blessing.

The same pattern of subgroups defined by folklore is found in other areas, including

academia. In one example, a chemist, a physicist, and an economist are stranded on a deserted island with no tools to open a can of food. The chemist looks for chemicals to dissolve the can's top, the physicist calculates the angle and force needed to break it open with a rock, and the economist simply says, "Let's assume the can is open."

Across academic fields, there is a distinction between those who focus on theory and those who prioritize practical solutions. Economists are often criticized for constructing theoretical models based on hypothetical scenarios. Natural sciences have similar stereotypes. For instance, a statistician once shared a story about flying over Montana with a physicist and a mathematician. They saw a flock of sheep, all white except for one black sheep. The physicist began calculating the odds of a black sheep appearing in a herd, while the mathematician observed that at least one sheep in the flock was black on one side.

Given that groups can be divided into smaller subgroups, how small can a folk group be? I argue that a folk group can consist of as few as two people. Two individuals can develop their own set of traditions, including gestures and slang, forming a highly specific "folk" group. However, I would not classify an individual as a folk group, since the concept of "folk" implies a collective. While individuals may have personal quirks, these only become folk traditions if they are shared by at least two people.

In practice, the smallest folk group studied by folklorists is the family. Most folk groups, such as those defined by religion, occupation, or ethnicity, typically consist of thousands of members.

2.5.1 Check Your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 03

1. How does folklore contribute to cultural identity?

2. Which of the following is an example of folklore shaping collective identity?

3. How do folk narratives and myths contribute to group identity?

4. What role does folklore play in the construction of regional identities?

5. How does folklore help communities maintain their identity over time?

2.6 Vladimir Propp's "The Method and Material"

Introduction

Vladimir Propp was a Soviet folklorist and scholar known for his pioneering work in the structural analysis of folktales. His most influential work, "Morphology of the Folktale," revolutionized the study of narrative structure by identifying common patterns and functions in Russian fairy tales. Here is an overview of his life, key contributions, and the impact of his work: Vladimir Propp was born on April 17, 1895, in St.

Petersburg, Russia. He studied at the University of St. Petersburg, where he focused on Russian and German philology. Propp began his academic career by teaching German at Leningrad State University. His early work was influenced by his background in philology and linguistics.

Introduction to Vladimir Propp's Methodology

Robert Wilson Lynd was a prolific writer, known primarily for his essays,

journalism, and literary criticism. Some of his notable works include:

- 1. The Art of Letters (1905):** Lynd's first book, which explores the art of letter writing and its significance in literature and communication.
- 2. The Book of This and That (1915):** A collection of essays covering a wide range of topics, from literature and art to social issues and human behavior.
- 3. Old and New Masters (1919):** A collection of essays on literature and literary criticism, in which Lynd discusses various authors and their works, both classical and contemporary.
- 4. The Blue Lion and Other Essays (1923):** Another collection of essays, showcasing Lynd's wit, humor, and keen observations of everyday life.
- 5. The Pleasures of Ignorance (1921):** A collection of essays exploring the joys of curiosity, intellectual exploration, and the pursuit of knowledge.
- 6. Essays and Soliloquies (1931):** A collection of Lynd's essays, which touch on a wide range of subjects, including literature, politics, society, and culture.
- 7. The Peal of Bells (1932):** A collection of essays in which Lynd reflects on various aspects of life, from the simple pleasures of nature to the complexities of human relationships.
- 8. Selected Essays (1948):** A curated selection of Lynd's essays, showcasing some of his best-known works and providing an overview of his writing style and themes.

2.6.1 Propp's Functions of Characters

Vladimir Propp's theory of the functions of characters, outlined in his influential work "Morphology of the Folktale" (1928), revolutionized the study of narrative structure in folktales. Propp analyzed Russian fairy tales to identify recurring narrative elements and roles that characters play within these tales. He proposed that despite the variations in plots and settings, folktales follow a set of narrative functions performed by characters. These functions are essential actions or roles that characters fulfill in the progression of the story.

The Villain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles against hero • Does bad things • Get's in hero's way • "We hate them"
The Helper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidekick • Always there to help in critical moments • Limited against hero in ability
The Princess or Prize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something to achieve • Something to chase after
Her Father	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not always present • Older • Obstacle • Dominant
The Donor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives hero something special, clues
The Hero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads narrative • Usually looking for something • "Good guy"
The False Hero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially mistaken for hero the turns into an obstacle for hero
The Dispatcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send hero on the mission

1. Hero (Seeker Hero) - The protagonist who initiates and drives the action of the story. The hero sets out on a quest or journey, often in response to a lack or a problem in the initial situation.

2. Villain (Anti-hero) - The antagonist who opposes the hero and creates conflict or obstacles. The villain's actions typically provoke the hero into action or hinder their progress.

3. Donor (Provider) - A character who provides the hero with a magical agent, advice, or assistance necessary for completing their quest. The donor empowers the hero to overcome challenges.

4. Helper (Dispatcher): A character who sends the hero on their quest or provides initial guidance or aid. The helper may also assist the hero throughout their journey with practical support or knowledge.

5. Princess (Prize or Seeker's partner): A sought-after person or object that serves as the goal of the hero's quest. The princess can represent a reward, a symbol of completion, or a resolution to the initial lack or problem.

6. False Hero (Anti-Seeker): A character who initially appears to be the hero or seeks the same goal as the hero but is ultimately revealed as deceitful, cowardly, or incompetent. The false hero contrasts with the true hero's virtues.

7. Dispatcher (Helper): A character who initiates or sends the hero on their quest. The dispatcher can be a mentor, advisor, or magical being who provides a mission or task to the hero.

Roles and Archetypes in Folktales

In the study of folktales and mythology, various roles and archetypes recur across different cultures and narratives. These roles often embody universal themes and serve specific functions within the storytelling tradition.

1. Hero/Heroine: The central protagonist of the tale who embarks on a quest or journey. The hero typically confronts challenges, faces adversaries, and undergoes personal growth or transformation.

2. Villain/Antagonist: The character who opposes the hero and creates conflict within the narrative. Villains often embody evil, jealousy, or opposition to the hero's goals.

3. Helper/Ally: A supportive character who aids the hero in achieving their quest. Helpers provide guidance, magical assistance, or practical aid to overcome obstacles.

4. Donor/Mentor: A character who provides the hero with essential tools, knowledge, or magical items necessary for success. The donor equips the hero for their journey or quest.

5. Princess/Damsel in Distress: A character who serves as a goal or reward for the hero's quest. The princess may need rescuing or represent a symbolic prize or resolution to the story's conflict.

6. False Hero/Traitor: A character who initially appears heroic or trustworthy but later reveals deceitful intentions or incompetence. The false hero contrasts with the true hero's virtues and may cause setbacks or betrayals.

2.7 Archetypes in Folktales

1. The Trickster: A mischievous or clever character who outwits others through cunning and trickery. The trickster challenges social norms and conventions, often

bringing about unexpected outcomes.

2. The Wise Old Man/Woman: An elderly character who possesses wisdom, knowledge, or supernatural abilities. The wise old man or woman serves as a mentor or advisor to the hero, offering guidance and insight.

3. The Threshold Guardian: A character or obstacle that tests the hero's readiness to embark on their quest. The threshold guardian may block the hero's progress until they demonstrate courage or resolve.

4. The Shape-shifter: A character who can change forms or identities, often to deceive or manipulate others. The shape-shifter creates uncertainty and challenges the hero's ability to discern truth from illusion.

5. The Shadow: The darker or hidden aspects of a character's personality or society that they must confront and integrate to achieve wholeness. The shadow represents the hero's internal conflict or moral dilemma.

6. The Herald: A character or event that announces the call to adventure or signals a significant change in the hero's ordinary world. The herald motivates the hero to embark on their journey.

Functions of Archetypes: Universal Symbols: Archetypes embody universal symbols and themes that resonate across cultures and generations, conveying deeper meanings and truths about human experience.

Psychological Depth: Archetypes represent aspects of the collective unconscious, as proposed by Carl Jung, tapping into primal fears, desires, and motivations.

Narrative Structure: Archetypes serve specific narrative functions, guiding the hero through stages of initiation, transformation, and resolution in the hero's journey.

Understanding these roles and archetypes helps reveal the underlying structures and symbolic meanings within folktales, illustrating how these narratives transcend cultural boundaries to reflect fundamental aspects of human existence and imagination.

2.8 Narrative Analysis: Propp's Approach

Vladimir Propp's narrative analysis, as outlined in his seminal work "Morphology of the Folktale," introduced a systematic approach to understanding the structure and functions of narratives, particularly in Russian folktales. Here's an overview of Propp's approach to narrative analysis,

1. **Functions of Characters:** Propp identified 31 narrative functions that recur in Russian folktales. These functions are essential actions or roles performed by characters that drive the plot forward.
2. **Dramatis Personae (Character Roles):** Propp categorized characters into distinct roles, such as the hero, villain, donor, helper, and princess. Each role is defined by the functions they perform within the narrative rather than by their individual characteristics.
3. **Narrative Structure:** Propp proposed that folktales follow a fixed sequence of functions, although the specific content and settings may vary. He argued that the order and combination of these functions create narrative patterns that can be analyzed and compared across different tales. The structure includes initial situations, complicating actions, sequences of functions, and resolutions that lead to a final outcome or resolution.
4. **Seven Sphere Model:** Propp also introduced a model known as the Seven Spheres of Action, which categorizes narrative functions into groups based on their relationship to the protagonist's quest or journey. These spheres include the initial situation, the villain's actions, the donor's actions, the hero's journey, the princess's actions, the dispatcher's actions, and the struggle and victory.

Propp's approach involves systematically classifying narrative elements and functions to identify recurring patterns and structures within folktales. He argued that while his analysis was based on Russian folktales, the framework of narrative functions could be applicable to folktales from other cultures, highlighting universal storytelling elements.

Propp emphasized the functional roles of characters and actions rather than the specific content or cultural context of the tales, aiming for a universal understanding of narrative structure.

Propp's approach had a profound impact on the fields of folklore studies, narratology, and literary theory, influencing subsequent scholars such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes. His emphasis on the structural analysis of narratives laid the groundwork for the development of structuralism in the study of literature and culture. Propp's work continues to be studied and adapted in various disciplines, providing a foundational framework for understanding the underlying

patterns and functions of stories.

2.8.1 Comprehensive analysis of Propp's "The Method and Material"

Fairy tales are a unique type of story, and for this study, the tales classified by Aarne under numbers 300 to 749 will be considered. While this classification might seem arbitrary, it will be further refined based on what we discover through analysis. Our goal is to break down fairy tales into their basic parts, or components, and compare them. The result of this will be a "morphology," or a detailed description of fairy tales based on their parts and how they fit together.

The big question we are asking is: what methods can we use to accurately describe fairy tales? Let's start by looking at a few examples of how similar actions take place in different stories:

1. A tsar gives a hero an eagle, which flies the hero to another kingdom.
2. An old man gives a character named Súcenko a horse, and the horse takes him to another kingdom.
3. A sorcerer gives Iván a little boat, which carries him to another kingdom.
4. A princess gives Iván a ring, and men from the ring transport him to another kingdom.

In each case, the names and objects differ, but the basic action – the hero being taken to another kingdom – stays the same. From this, we can see that fairy tales often involve the same kinds of actions, even though the characters or objects change. This gives us a clue: we can study fairy tales by focusing on the actions of the characters rather than the characters themselves. The characters' actions, or "functions," are the constants that repeat in various tales. Identifying these functions is key to understanding the structure of fairy tales.

2.9 Identifying Functions in Fairy Tales

To continue this study, we need to determine how many functions exist in fairy tales. It turns out that the same functions occur over and over again, even though the characters and specific details vary. For example, many fairy tales feature characters like Bába Jagá (a witch), a bear, or a forest spirit testing and then rewarding the hero or heroine. Even though each of these characters might act differently, the overall

function – testing and rewarding the character – remains constant. The way the function is carried out may change, but the function itself stays the same.

To study fairy tales effectively, we need to focus on what characters do, not on who they are or how they do it. For example, if one character marries a tsar's daughter, and another marries a widow with two daughters, these are two different functions, even though both involve marriage. Similarly, if a hero receives money from his father and uses it to buy a clever cat, this is a different function than if the hero is given money as a reward at the end of a tale. Even though both involve receiving money, the function of the money in the story differs.

These functions are recurring actions or roles that characters play within a fairy tale. Regardless of which character performs a function or how the action is carried out, the underlying function remains the same. Let's explore in detail the three key ideas about functions that were introduced:

1. Functions of Characters as Stable, Constant Elements

A "function" in a fairy tale refers to an action performed by a character that serves a specific role in moving the plot forward. For example, in one tale, a character might be given a magical object, like a sword or a ring, that helps them on their quest. In another tale, the hero might receive help from an animal or a wise old man. Even though the characters and objects change, the function receiving help or guidance stays the same. This is what makes functions stable and constant.

Example:

- In one story, a **tsar** gives the hero an **eagle** that carries him to another kingdom.
- In another, an **old man** gives the hero a **horse** that also takes him to another kingdom.
- In a third, a **sorcerer** gives the hero a **boat** that serves the same purpose.

In all these cases, the characters and objects differ, but the action transporting the hero to another kingdom remains the same. This is the stable, constant function.

In this way, functions are independent of who performs them or how they are performed. Whether it's an eagle, horse, or boat doesn't matter the function is still "helping the hero travel to another kingdom." Thus, fairy tales often feature similar **actions** repeated across different characters and objects, showing that the action

itself (the function) is what's important, not the specific details.

2. The Sequence of Functions is Always the Same

Fairy tales do not only have recurring functions they also follow a specific sequence of these functions. This means that fairy tales are not just a random collection of events but follow a structured, predictable pattern.

For example, consider the following sequence in many fairy tales:

1. **The hero is given a task or quest** (e.g., "Go find the golden bird").
2. **The hero receives help from a magical object or creature** (e.g., an eagle helps the hero fly to the golden bird's location).
3. **The hero overcomes challenges and succeeds in the task** (e.g., the hero retrieves the bird and returns).

This sequence is common in many fairy tales. The **order** of events remains the same even though the characters, objects, or challenges may differ. Just like in real life where certain actions must happen in a specific order (e.g., you must plant a seed before you can harvest a crop)—fairy tales follow a similar logic. There is a natural flow or sequence to the story, and certain functions always come before others.

Example of Sequence:

1. **Interdiction (a warning or prohibition):** The hero is told not to do something. For instance, the hero might be warned not to open a certain door.
2. **Violation of the interdiction:** The hero ignores the warning and opens the door.
3. **Punishment or consequences:** The hero faces trouble as a result of their disobedience (e.g., a monster is released).

3. All Fairy Tales Follow the Same Basic Structure

One of the most surprising conclusions of this study is that all fairy tales share the same basic structure when it comes to functions. While fairy tales might seem wildly different—featuring different settings, characters, and plots the underlying structure of how the story progresses is universal. In other words, fairy tales are all variations of the same type of story.

Example:

Consider two very different fairy tales: one may involve a poor farmer's son who

sets out to find treasure, while another may involve a princess who is trying to break a curse. Despite the differences in setting and plot, both stories likely follow a similar sequence of functions:

1. The hero is given a task.
2. The hero encounters helpers (e.g., magical creatures or wise mentors).
3. The hero faces challenges or enemies.
4. The hero succeeds in their task and is rewarded (e.g., the treasure is found, or the curse is broken).

Even though the details of the stories differ, the structure is the same. This is what makes fairy tales feel familiar, even when they are from different cultures or times. The functions and their sequence are like the framework of a house, while the characters and setting are the decorations that change from tale to tale.

2.10 Check your Progress-04

Answer the following in a sentence or two

1. How does Propp's method classify characters in folktales?

2. Which function in Propp's analysis involves an interdiction or prohibition that the hero violates?

3. According to Propp's method, what follows the recognition of the hero's identity in folktales?

4. What role does Propp's method play in understanding the narrative structure of folktales?

5. In Propp's analysis, what function typically involves the hero receiving magical

2.11 Unit Summary

Upon initial observation, this conclusion may seem illogical or even unconventional, however it can be confirmed with utmost precision. The typological unity in question poses a highly intricate issue that requires additional examination. This phenomenon will give rise to a multitude of inquiries. Thus, we reach the fourth fundamental proposition of our study:

2.12 Glossary

1. **Folklore:** The traditional beliefs, customs, stories, songs, and practices of a community, passed through generations by word of mouth.
2. **Folkloristics:** The academic study of folklore, encompassing various methods and approaches to analyzing and interpreting traditional cultural expressions.
3. **Märchen:** A type of folktale or fairy tale, characterized by magical elements, adventures, and moral lessons.
4. **Motif:** A recurring thematic element, symbol, or pattern in folklore or literature. Dundes often analyzed motifs to understand cultural and psychological aspects of folklore.
5. **Öicotype:** A localized version of a folklore motif or tale type, adapted to fit the cultural context of a particular community.
6. **Oral Tradition:** The practice of passing stories, history, and cultural knowledge through spoken word rather than written texts.
7. **Psychoanalytic Folklore:** An approach to folklore analysis that applies psychoanalytic theories to understand the unconscious meanings and symbols in folklore.
8. **Text:** The actual content of the folklore item.
9. **Context:** The situation and environment in which the folklore is told.
10. **Morphology:** The study of the structure and form of something. In Propp's

work, it refers to the structural analysis of folktales.

11. **Narrative Functions:** Specific actions or roles performed by characters in a story that drive the plot forward. Propp identified 31 functions that commonly appear in Russian folktales.

12. **Dramatis Personae:** The set of character roles that perform the narrative functions in folktales, such as the hero, villain, donor, and helper.

13. **Hero's Journey:** A common narrative arc where the protagonist embarks on a quest, faces challenges, receives aid, and ultimately achieves their goal. While not coined by Propp, his work on the hero's role influenced later studies on this narrative structure.

14. **Fairy Tale (Wonder Tale):** A type of folktale that involves magical elements, fantastical adventures, and typically a clear moral or lesson.

15. **Function Sequence:** The specific order in which narrative functions appear in a story. Propp argued that this sequence is consistent across many folktales.

16. **Seven Spheres of Action:** Propp's categorization of narrative functions into seven groups based on their relationship to the protagonist's quest:

2.13 Self Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the universal applicability of Propp's narrative functions across different cultural traditions. What challenges and advantages are associated with applying his framework to folktales from non-Russian cultures?
2. How does Propp's Seven Sphere Model help organize and categorize narrative functions within folktales? Provide examples to illustrate how this model can be applied to analyse specific tales.
3. In what ways has Propp's methodology influenced the study of storytelling and narrative structure in fields beyond folklore studies, such as literary theory and film analysis?
4. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of Propp's approach to narrative analysis. How does his emphasis on function and structure contribute to our understanding of folktales, and what aspects of storytelling does it potentially overlook?

2.14 Suggested Readings

1. *Interpreting Folklore* (1980) - A collection of essays by Alan Dundes
2. *Folklore Matters* (1989)
3. *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore*" (1999)
4. *The Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes*" (2007) - Edited by Simon J. Bronner,
5. *Vladimir Propp- Morphology of the Folktale*" (1928, translated 1958)
6. *The Russian Folktale by Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp*" (1984, translated 2012)
7. *Theory and History of Folklore*" (1984)
8. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*" (1963, translated 1984)

2.15 Open Source E-Content Links

1. https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/modules/fulllist/special/en336fantastika/week2/propp_morphology.pdf
2. https://books.google.com/books/about/Interpreting_Folklore.html
3. https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Meaning_of_Folklore.html

2.16 References

1. *Interpreting Folklore* (1980) by Alan Dundes
2. *Folklore Matters* (1989) by Alan Dundes
3. *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore* (1999) by Alan Dundes
4. *The Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes* (2007), edited by Simon J. Bronner.
5. *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928, translated 1958) by Vladimir Propp
The Russian Folktale by Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp (1984,

Self-Assessment Questions:

Two Marks

2.1

Pen down Dundes' argument about the concept of "folk" in folklore studies

Dundes argues that the concept of "folk" is often romanticized and misunderstood, and that it is essential to recognize the diversity and complexity of folk cultures.

Explain how does Dundes challenge the traditional notion of folklore as a preserve of the rural, illiterate, and primitive.

Dundes challenges this notion by highlighting the presence of folklore in urban, literate, and modern societies, and by emphasizing the dynamic and evolving nature of folk cultures

2.2

Discuss Propp's main argument about the structure of folktales in "The Methods and Material"

Propp argues that folktales follow a uniform structure, consisting of a sequence of narrative functions that are invariant across cultures.

How does Propp's work on morphology contribute to the field of folklore studies?

Propp's work on morphology provides a systematic and scientific approach to the study of folktales, enabling researchers to identify patterns and structures that were previously unknown, and shedding light on the underlying mechanisms of folklore creation and transmission.

Five Marks:

1. Elaborate the significance of the term "folk" in understanding cultural identity
2. How does Dundes' definition of "folk" challenge or reinforce traditional notions of culture?
3. Explicate the implications of considering folklore as a shared cultural practice
4. State the importance of understanding narrative structure in folklore
5. How does Propp's morphological approach contribute to our understanding of folktales?
6. List down the limitations of applying Propp's theory to diverse cultural contexts

Eight Marks:

1. Discuss the implications of Dundes' challenge to the traditional notion of folklore as a preserve of the rural, illiterate, and primitive. How does this affect our understanding of the dynamics of folk cultures and their relationship to power and identity?
2. Critically evaluate Dundes' notion of "folk" as a social category, exploring the tensions between his emphasis on shared cultural practices and the inherent diversity within folk groups. How do power dynamics and social hierarchies complicate the concept of "folk"?
3. Analyze the implications of Dundes' argument that folklore is a "reflection of the collective unconscious" (Dundes, 1965). How does this idea intersect with contemporary debates on cultural memory, identity, and the role of folklore in shaping societal values?
4. Discuss the limitations of Propp's morphological approach to folklore study, particularly in relation to its neglect of historical context, cultural specificity, and the role of power in shaping narrative structures. How might a more nuanced understanding of these factors enrich or challenge Propp's theory?
5. Examine the relationship between Propp's concept of "narrative functions" and the idea of "cultural universals" in folklore. How do Propp's findings on the shared structures of folktales across cultures intersect with debates on human universals, cultural evolution, and the role of folklore in shaping human experience?

Unit III
Folktales from India I

Unit- III

Folktales from India – I

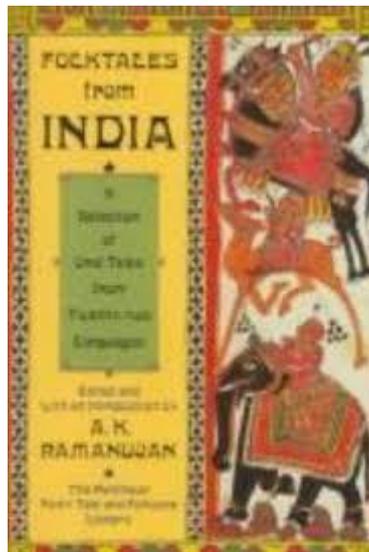
3.1 Unit Objectives

Folklore studies examine diverse traditional cultural expressions like myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, jokes, and rituals. As a key part of cultural heritage, folklore reflects community values, beliefs, and norms. This field works to document and preserve endangered cultural traditions, while educating younger generations about their community's values, history, and customs.

3.2 Introduction

Indian folktales are deeply rooted in the country's rich cultural heritage and have been passed down orally through generations. These stories often reflect the diverse traditions, beliefs, and moral values of different regions across India. They serve as a means of entertainment, education, and preserving cultural identity.

Many Indian folktales feature animal characters with human-like qualities, known as fables. These stories often convey moral lessons or practical wisdom in a simple, engaging manner. The Panchatantra, an ancient collection of animal fables, is one of the most famous examples of this tradition and has influenced storytelling worldwide.



Indian folktales frequently incorporate elements of mythology and religion, blending stories of gods, goddesses, and mythical beings with everyday life. These tales

often explain natural phenomena, historical events, or social customs through imaginative narratives. They also sometimes feature magical objects, supernatural beings, and divine interventions.

3.3 “The Clay Mother-in-law”

Once upon a time, there was a very docile daughter-in-law. She was obedient to her husband's mother and waited upon her slightest wish. The old woman kept up her dignity as a mother-in-law, saying very little and often merely nodding her commands. Every morning, the daughter-in-law would come to the old woman and ask her how many measures of rice she should cook for that day. The old woman would ponder the problem seriously and then hold up her hand. On some days the hand would show two outstretched fingers, on other days it would show three, according to her fancy. The daughter-in-law would take the order silently and go into the kitchen to cook two measures of rice, or three, as the wrinkled hand commanded.

One day the old woman fell ill and passed away. The young daughter-in-law wept her eyes out. She could not see her way about the little house and she missed her mother-in-law's daily instructions. Who was there now to tell her how much she should cook for the day? She was in a perpetual funk, unable to make any decisions. Her husband was at first pleased with his wife's devotion to his mother, but he soon tired of answering her eternal question about measures of rice.

He thought of a way out of all this bother. He went to the nearest potter and ordered a clay image of his mother, as large as life. He gave special instructions to the potter to make one hand show two fingers and the other three. In a few days the clay mother-in-law was painted, dressed, and ready for use. The husband brought home and planted it in a prominent place near the kitchen. The young wife was delighted at the return of her lost mother-in-law and seemed to be the end of her troubles, and she could begin the day properly now. Whenever she was in doubt about measures of rice, she would look out of the kitchen and take orders. If she happened to see the two-fingered hand first, she would cook two measures for the day, if she caught a glimpse of the three-fingered hand, that day the rice-pot would overflow with boiled rice. She was happy with the clay mother-in-law, and her husband was happy with the happiness of his wife.

Things went on smoothly for a while, till one day the husband became aware that his rice-bags were being emptied every few weeks though there were only two people in the house. He asked his wife and she told him her daily procedure: she asked her mother-in-law every morning and followed her instructions. Her husband was furious: "Two or three measures of rice every day for just the two of us? Ridiculous! We aren't eating all of it, are we? When my mother was alive, you used to cook the same two measures and all three of us would have our bellies bursting! She replied in a low voice. 'We are not two, but three. You've forgotten Mother. As usual, I give her dinner before I eat. On many days, I've very little left for myself. If you don't mind my saying so, Mother eats more rice than she used to.'

The husband couldn't believe his ears. What was this wild tale of a mother-in-law eating up whole bags of rice? He flew into a rage and beat up his wife. Then he threw her out, and her mother-in-law with her.

But the truth was this: twice every day, the young wife, according to custom, would spread a leaf before her mother-in-law and serve all the dishes one by one. But as soon as she went into the kitchen, the neighbor's wife would come in quietly through a cunningly made hole in the wall, steal all the food, and vanish the way she came. This way, she didn't have to cook at all. The poor fool of a daughter-in-law believed all along that her mother-in-law had dined off her leaf as usual. Her innocence had now landed her in the streets.

She was miserable. She took the effigy of her beloved mother-in-law in her arms and walked into the night, afraid of the dark, crying, praying, cursing her fate. She walked and walked and soon came to the woods outside the town. She clutched her mother-in-law closer to her bosom and shivered in the terrifying dark. Every little sound scared the poor young woman, who had rarely before stepped out of her house. She somehow climbed a tree and tied herself to a branch with her sari, clinging all the while to her mother-in-law. As she sat there trembling, she heard loud footfalls. Burly mustached men, with burning torches in their hands, were parting the bushes and coming towards her tree. From their dress and their murderous looks, she guessed they were thieves. They came right under the tree where she was hiding. Tired after a busy day, they lowered their burdens from their backs and sat down to share the loot. In the light of the

torches, they seemed like devils to her. The poor woman began to shake with fear and lost her grip on the clay mother-in-law. Down it fell, with a great big crash, right on the gang of thieves under the tree.

The thieves panicked and took to their heels, and fled in directions before they knew what had hit them. young wife had fainted from sheer terror, and she lay among the branches till dawn. Meanwhile the unconsi

When day dawned and she woke up as from a nightmare, th first thing she broken in three pieces, surrounded by countless treasures and a few burnt-out torches. After making sure there was no one around she carefully climbed down from her perch and gathered up the phe ca of her clay mother-in-law. She thanked her for saving her le and for bringing her an undreamed-of treasure. mother-in-la

A few hours later, when she made her way back, the furious husband saw his wife at his door, with a broken clay effigy in one arm and a heavy bundle in the other. He scolded her first for coming back, but soon learned of the precious bundle she had brought. He dragged her inside the house and heard her story in all its detail. His eyes popped out as he saw the rubies and gold in the bundle. He put them aside safely, and with her help he went back to the tree in the forest, bundled up the remaining loot, and brought home secretly a treasure worth a kingdom.

As he spread the treasures on the floor and sorted them out, he wanted to know how much it all amounted to. He sent his wife to the neighbor's house to borrow a big measuring vessel, warning her not to breathe a word about what they were going to measure.

The neighbor woman was curious to know what these poor people had that day to measure in such a big vessel, but the young wife wouldn't tell her anything. So the neighbor stuck a piece of tamarind at the bottom of the measuring vessel before she lent it to the young woman. When the measuring vessel was returned later, the neighbor woman and her husband were astonished to see a brilliant gem stuck to the tamarind at the bottom. They wondered, speculated, and thought of all the possible ways in which their neighbors, penniless till yesterday, could have amassed such wealth, enough to be measured in measuring vessels. It was a mystery, and the woman grilled the young wife with questions at the very next opportunity. The very now and then pou whispers (Don't

tell anyone,' she said every now and then), pouring out her breathle tale of her adventures in the night-how she had been driven out, how frightened she was, how she had stayed in a tree with her mother-in-law, and all the rest of it. She ended by saying it was all her mother-in-law's doing that they now had all this wealth.

The clever neighbor knew better than to believe this nonsense about the dead mother-in-law. Her husband thought that here was a shortcut to fortune. He too had a big clay doll made, put it in his wife's arms; took her into the jungle, and left her there. He told her he would never take her back into his house unless she brought her husband as much wealth as their neighbor's stupid wife had brought hers.

Now, this woman was confident of her plans and had worked out her strategy carefully. As expected, the same thieves came there with torches in hand to share the day's loot. As soon as they untied their bundles, the woman in the tree threw down her doll on them. There was a big crash. At once, the thieves took to their heels, but they didn't go far this time. They were suspicious. They had been taken unawares the first time; but now they wanted to see what this crash was all about. They hid behind some trees and watched. They saw a woman get down from the tree and begin robbing them of their ill-won riches. With shouts of anger, they closed in on her, scolded her for scaring them out of their treasure the other night, and before she could say anything, beat her till she was blue and faint, and left her tied up to the tree.

Her husband found her the next day, nearly gone mad with fear, very much worse for the night's treasure-hunt, but not a penny richer.

3.3.1 Summary and analysis

Once upon a time, in a small village in Tamil Nadu, there lived a docile and obedient young woman who had recently become a daughter-in-law. Her life revolved around the daily rituals of attending to her mother-in-law's needs and fulfilling her every command. Though her mother-in-law rarely spoke, she always gave instructions with gestures—mostly through her fingers. Each morning, the young daughter-in-law would ask how many measures of rice to cook for the day, and her mother-in-law would either

show two fingers or three. The daughter-in-law would follow this gesture religiously and prepare accordingly.

This routine continued until one unfortunate day, the old mother-in-law passed away. The daughter-in-law was devastated by her death, not just emotionally but practically as well, because she was completely dependent on her mother-in-law for making decisions. Her grief extended to her confusion about how much rice to cook each day. Without the old woman's guidance, she felt lost. At first, her husband was sympathetic to her plight, recognizing her deep devotion to his mother, but soon he became frustrated with the constant questions about rice. He needed a solution to free himself from this trivial yet recurring issue.

In desperation, the husband came up with a strange idea. He visited a local potter and ordered a life-sized clay statue of his mother, specifically instructing the potter to sculpt one hand with two fingers extended and the other with three. When the clay image was complete, the husband brought it home, dressed it in his mother's old clothes, and placed it near the kitchen where his wife could see it daily. The daughter-in-law was overjoyed, believing that her mother-in-law had returned to guide her. Now, she could once again ask for her mother-in-law's instructions. If she saw the hand with two fingers first, she would cook two measures of rice; if she saw the three-fingered hand, she would cook three. This method restored a sense of normalcy to her life, and she was content, as was her husband—at least initially.

However, over time, the husband noticed that his rice supply was being depleted at an alarming rate. Bags of rice that should have lasted months were being emptied in mere weeks, though only he and his wife were living in the house. He asked his wife how much rice she was cooking each day, and she explained her routine of consulting the clay mother-in-law. Angrily, he pointed out that when his mother was alive, she used to manage the household with just two measures of rice a day for all three of them, but now his wife was cooking the same amount even though there were only two people in the house. The daughter-in-law defended herself, saying that she still served her mother-in-law every day, placing a meal in front of her before eating herself. In fact, she remarked that the clay mother-in-law seemed to eat more than the real one had.

The husband, frustrated and unable to believe such a preposterous explanation, grew furious. He beat his wife and threw both her and the clay statue of his mother out of the house. Heartbroken, the young woman took the effigy of her beloved mother-in-law in her arms and wandered into the night. She was lost, alone, and overwhelmed by fear. As she walked through the dark streets, she eventually found herself in the woods on the outskirts of town. Terrified and exhausted, she climbed a tree and tied herself to a branch with her sari, clutching the clay statue as if it were her lifeline.

While sitting trembling in the tree, she suddenly heard footsteps. A group of thieves appeared below her, carrying torches and heavy sacks of loot. The men were rough and menacing, and the young woman was paralyzed with fear. Her grip on the clay statue loosened, and it fell from the tree with a loud crash, landing directly on the thieves below. Startled by the noise and thinking they were under attack, the thieves panicked and ran in all directions, leaving their treasure behind.

The young woman, overwhelmed by fear, fainted and remained unconscious in the tree until dawn. When she awoke, she saw that her clay mother-in-law had shattered into three pieces, but to her astonishment, the thieves' abandoned loot lay scattered around the remains of the statue. Unsure of what to do but thankful to her clay mother-in-law for seemingly saving her life and providing this unexpected fortune, she collected the treasure and carried it back home.

When she arrived at her doorstep, her furious husband initially scolded her for returning. However, his anger quickly turned to astonishment when he saw the wealth she had brought back with her. He demanded to know the full story, and his eyes widened as he saw the gold, rubies, and jewels she had gathered. Eager to retrieve even more of the treasure, he hurried back to the forest with his wife to collect the remaining loot, which they carefully brought back to their house.

Excited by the newfound wealth, the husband wanted to know exactly how much they had acquired. He sent his wife to their neighbor's house to borrow a large measuring vessel. However, the neighbors, curious about the sudden change in the couple's fortunes, suspected something was amiss. The neighbor's wife attached a small piece of tamarind to the bottom of the vessel before lending it to the young woman, hoping to find out what was being measured. When the vessel was returned, a brilliant

gem was stuck to the tamarind. The neighbor couple was astonished and began speculating on how their once-poor neighbors had come into possession of such wealth.

Curiosity got the better of them, and the neighbor woman cornered the young wife, peppering her with questions. The naïve young woman, swayed by her neighbor's persistence, eventually spilled the entire story of how her mother-in-law's clay effigy had saved her from thieves and brought her treasure. She made the neighbor woman promise not to tell anyone, but the neighbor was already formulating her own plans.

Seeing an opportunity to enrich themselves, the neighbor couple decided to imitate their neighbors' success. The husband ordered a large clay statue, similar to the one their neighbor had, and left his wife in the jungle with the statue, just as the other husband had done. The wife, confident in their scheme, climbed a tree and waited for the thieves to appear. When they arrived, she dropped the clay statue on them just as the young wife had done. The thieves, startled again, ran off at first but this time quickly returned. Suspicious of what had happened before, they hid behind trees and watched the woman come down from her perch and start gathering their loot. Furious, they confronted her, accusing her of trying to rob them twice. Before she could explain herself, they beat her severely and tied her to the tree.

The next morning, her husband came to find her, hoping she would have returned with treasure. Instead, he found his wife bruised, terrified, and penniless. Their attempt to replicate the success of their neighbors had backfired, leaving them worse off than before.

Meanwhile, the original young wife and her husband enjoyed their newfound wealth, which had come to them through the kindness and simplicity of the young woman's unwavering faith in her clay mother-in-law. Despite the husband's initial anger and disbelief, they now lived in comfort, their lives forever changed by a series of events that began with a simple clay effigy.

The tale of the "Clay Mother-in-Law" offers many lessons. It emphasizes the themes of innocence, faith, and the unexpected rewards that come from devotion, even when it appears misguided. The young wife's devotion to her deceased mother-in-law, though seemingly foolish, leads to her salvation and prosperity. On the other hand, the neighbor's attempt to manipulate the situation for personal gain results in disaster,

illustrating that greed and cunning often lead to downfall. Additionally, the story highlights the cultural importance of familial hierarchy and rituals in traditional Tamil society, where even after death, a mother-in-law's role could profoundly influence the daily life of a daughter-in-law.

3.3.2 Character Sketch of "The Clay Mother-in-law"

1. The Daughter-in-Law:

Obedient and Submissive: The daughter-in-law is a quintessential example of traditional obedience. She follows every instruction of her mother-in-law to the letter, whether it is cooking the exact quantity of rice or serving her deceased mother-in-law meals. Her docility reflects her deeply ingrained sense of duty toward her elders, a common expectation in traditional Tamil society.

Naïve and Gullible: Her naivety is apparent in how she believes the clay effigy can give her daily guidance and even consumes the food she offers. She cannot comprehend the practical realities around her and takes everything at face value, which makes her both endearing and pitiable.

Devoted: Her devotion to her mother-in-law is almost extreme, continuing even after the older woman's death. She clings to the routine established while the mother-in-law was alive and shows a deep respect for her even when the figure is reduced to a clay statue. This blind faith is a central part of her character, driving the story forward.

Resilient and Fortunate:** Despite her husband's cruelty, the daughter-in-law's unwavering faith eventually brings her unexpected fortune. Her innocence and steadfastness lead her to riches, showcasing her strength in an indirect way. Her character suggests that goodness and sincerity, even if misguided, can lead to positive outcomes.

2. The Husband:

Pragmatic but Short-Tempered: The husband is practical and devises a solution to stop his wife's endless questioning by creating the clay mother-in-law. His problem-solving ability is apparent, but he lacks patience, as he quickly grows frustrated with his wife's simplemindedness and beats her in a fit of anger when their rice supply dwindles.

Self-Centered: His main focus is on his own comfort and convenience. Initially, he sympathizes with his wife's grief, but this turns into irritation when it affects him. Even when the daughter-in-law brings back treasure, his greed overshadows any affection he might feel toward her.

Greedy: Once he realizes the wealth his wife has stumbled upon, the husband quickly becomes consumed by greed. He hurries back to the forest to collect more loot and even sends his wife to the neighbor's house to secretly borrow a measuring vessel. His character highlights the moral weakness of greed and materialism.

3. The Mother-in-Law (Clay and Real):

Authoritative but Silent: In life, the mother-in-law is shown to be a figure of authority and control. She communicates solely through gestures, emphasizing her dominance over the household, yet she rarely speaks. Her position commands respect, and her daughter-in-law obeys her without question.

Symbol of Tradition and Hierarchy: Both in life and as a clay effigy, the mother-in-law represents the patriarchal family structure, where elders' decisions are not to be questioned. Even after her death, her presence looms large in the household, dictating daily routines.

Supernatural Influence: The clay version of the mother-in-law takes on an almost supernatural role in the daughter-in-law's eyes. The effigy becomes not only a source of guidance but also a protector when it ultimately "saves" her from the thieves. This reinforces the cultural reverence for ancestors and the belief that they continue to guide and protect even in death.

4. The Neighbor Woman:

Cunning and Manipulative: The neighbor is depicted as a schemer who becomes envious of the young wife's newfound fortune. She tricks the daughter-in-law into revealing her secret by acting friendly and curious, only to use the information for her own gain.

Greedy and Envious: Her actions are driven by greed and a desire to outdo her neighbors. When she sees the gem stuck to the tamarind in the borrowed measuring

vessel, her jealousy and ambition lead her to attempt to recreate the daughter's success. However, her greed leads to her downfall, as her scheme fails spectacularly.

Contrasts with the Daughter-in-Law: The neighbor represents the opposite of the daughter-in-law's innocence and faith. While the latter relies on devotion and simplicity, the neighbor believes in manipulation and self-serving strategies, which ultimately backfire.

5. The Thieves:

Dangerous but Cowardly: The thieves are portrayed as menacing figures, initially seen as a threat to the daughter-in-law's life. However, their cowardice is revealed when they flee upon the sudden crash of the clay mother-in-law, mistaking it for an attack. They are quick to run at the first sign of danger.

Vengeful: Although they flee the first time, their suspicion and desire for revenge lead them to return the second time. They brutally punish the neighbor woman for trying to rob them, showing their ruthless nature when cornered. Their actions serve as the primary obstacle and challenge in the story.

Each character in the story embodies a specific set of values or traits, creating a rich tapestry of moral lessons about faith, innocence, greed, and the consequences of cunning.

3.3.3 Check Your Progress- Answer in a line or two - 01

1. What is the occupation of the protagonist, Vasudev Sharma, in "The Clay Mother-in-Law" folktale?

2. Why does Vasudev Sharma create a clay statue of his mother-in-law?

3. How do the villagers react when Vasudev Sharma brings the clay statue home?

4. What does Goddess Lakshmi do to the clay statue of Vasudev's mother-in-law?

5. What is the moral lesson of "The Clay Mother-in-Law" folktale?

3.4 Shall I Show You My Real Face

A fierce tiger had somehow acquired the art of changing his form, and he wanted very much to marry a Brahman wife. Though he liked his meat and couldn't live without it, he loved the smell and taste of food cooked by Brahmans, even though it was vegetarian. So, one day, he took on the shape of a learned young Brahman who could recite the Ramayana and went to the door of a Brahman family. The family invited him in with great respect and fed him great meals of rice and curried vegetables and mango pickles and yoghurt. The tiger didn't take long to express his interest in marrying the daughter of the family. The family admired the learned Brahman's voice and his knowledge of Sanskrit, and they were delighted. The wedding was arranged quickly, as the son-in-law seemed to be in a hurry and didn't have any family of his own to invite. A few days later, the son-in-law said he should return to his home beyond the jungle and asked permission to take his new bride with him.

The old Brahman father readily agreed and said, 'Son-in-law, sir, you are her husband and she is all yours. We have brought her up lovingly. Sending her away is like sending her into the wilderness, but I know you'll take good care of her. The son-in-law left the very next day. His mother-in-law prepared all sorts of sweets and cakes for her daughter's and her new husband's journey. To ward off any lurking demons, she put a couple of neem leaves in each bundle of food and in the hair of her innocent daughter, as she blessed the young couple and tearfully bade them farewell.

On the way, everything went well and they had a pleasant journey. But anytime the girl wanted to sit down near a pond or under a tree to rest, the son-in-law would get angry and say, 'Will you be quiet and come along, or shall I show you my real face?' Though she didn't understand what he was saying, she rightly felt the menace in his voice and manner. So she till she came to another pond or tree and felt like resting, and

he said again, 'Will you be quiet and come with me, or shall I show you my real face?'
went meekly along

After hearing this for a while, and not particularly liking the change that was coming over her husband as they entered deep into the woods, she said to him, 'All right, show me your real face!'

As soon as she said that, the husband was transformed. Four legs, black stripes all over a long yellow body, and a whiskered tiger's face confronted her. This was a tiger and not a man! And it said, Your husband is a tiger. Never forget it. We'll reach home very soon. I'll bring you everything you need, vegetables, rice, spices and some meat for myself. Cook and keep house for me. But don't you disobey me, ever!

They lived together as husband and wife in a proper house in the middle of a jungle, and she even had a son, who was a tiger cub, But she was miserable. She hadn't bargained for a life with a mean man-eating tiger, nor for the meat and entrails he brought home. As she was crying all alone in the house one day, a crow happened to come down to peck at some grains of rice. He noticed the crying girl and asked her what the matter was. The girl told the crow her story and asked it if it would take a letter for her. The crow said 'Yes, anything to help you.'

The girl brought out a palmyra leaf and wrote a letter with an iron nail describing her misery in the woods and begging her brothers to come and rescue her. She tied this palmyra leaf to the neck of the crow, which flew to the village and landed in front of her brothers. They noticed the leaf around its neck, untied it, and read the letter. There were three of them and they set out at once guided by the crow.

As they entered the jungle, they saw a stray donkey. The youngest fellow, who was a bit lame, was also quite playful. He wanted to take the donkey along. His brothers argued over it for a while, but the youngest brother took the animal along anyway brother took it along in a coconut shell. Nearby there was also a big palmyra tree lying and when they found the eldest took it with him might come in handy when they fought the tiger, he thought it was already noon, and they had nothing to eat. So they sat near a pond and

drank up practically all the water. When they sat about to leave, they found a washerman's vat, round as a fat man's belly, and they took that along with them.

They soon reached their sister's house, and the sister welcomed them.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said, 'but the tiger will be here any minute. Go hide in the loft, and when he goes out again, we'll plan the next thing to do.

She helped them get up into the loft, which they did with their belongings, the ant, the donkey, the palmyra trunk, and the washerman's vat. When the tiger returned, he sniffed all around and said, 'I smell human smells!'

His wife said, 'Of course, what do you expect? You married a human girl!'

I know your smell. This is different,' he said. He was hungry and wanted to be fed the Brahman food she had made for him. Just as she served him rice on a banana leaf, the lame youngest brother in the loft whispered, 'I need to pee. I can't hold it any longer. The eldest said, 'Then go, but don't make any noise. And he did, and his piss fell right onto the rice on the tiger's leaf.

'What's that?' said the tiger, suspiciously.

'Oh, that? I left some ghee in a pot in the loft and it must have toppled over,' said the wife.

After a little while, the youngest brother said, "I've got to shit. What shall I do?"

The eldest brother said, 'All right, go ahead.' And the youngest brother did, and it fell right onto the tiger's leaf. The tiger roared, 'What's this? It looks like shit!' His wife said, 'Don't say ugly things when you're eating. That's just some mashed lentils I cooked and put up in or something is playing up there.' in the loft, Some

The tiger ate it all up, thinking it was some kind of tovarjal lentils cooked, mashed, and spiced.

Suddenly he heard a big voice say from the loft, 'Tiger, your time is up. I'm your brother-in-law up here. I want to eat you up The tiger, taken aback, looked up and said, 'Where are you?'

Up here! Hear me roar!' said the eldest, while the younges put the ant into the donkey's anus. When the ant bit the donkeyin that tender place, the donkey began to bray in the loudest possible voice. The tiger was terrified. 'Is that your voice? Show me your leg!' he said.

The eldest brother showed him the palmyra trunk, brandishing it from the loft. The tiger said, Abba! I've never seen such a leg! Taking advantage of the tiger's fright, the middle brother said, 'Look at my belly! Big enough to hold you!' and showed him the washerman's vat.

The tiger shuddered and took to his heels, saying, 'Such a voice, such a stout leg, such a huge belly, I've never seen anything like it! And he fled for his life.

It was dark by that time, and they wanted to return home while the tiger was still in a state of terror. So they quickly ate what little food was left and prepared to leave. The tiger cub was asleep. They wanted to get rid of it, so they cut it in two pieces and suspended them over the hearth, with a hot plate on the stove. And they made haste and ran, the three brothers and their sister, towards home.

The sister had bolted the front door of the house from inside, and they had left from the back door. As the pieces of the slain tiger cub began to drip blood over the hearth and onto the hot plate, it hissed and sputtered. When the tiger cautiously returned that night, found the front door locked, and heard the hiss and the sputter on the hot plate, he thought his wife was making dosai, pancakes.

'So you've locked the door and you're making dosai for your brother! Let's see,' he said, tiptoeing around to the back of the house. As he entered, what did he see but his dear tiger cub abced in two and hung over the hearth, his wife gone, and with her everything that was valuable in the house. For the tiger had collected all the finery from the travelers he had attacked and killed-rings and necklaces and silks and such.

The tiger grieved over the cruel death of his son and was furious at the treachery of his wife. He vowed revenge. He swore he would get her back and tear her to pieces as she had torn his son.

But how? He used the one magic trick he knew and assumed the shape of the Brahman husband and made his way to his father-in-law's village. His wife and brothers-in-law saw him from a distance and were ready for him. As he came to the door, her parents welcomed him. The brothers-in-law also scurried here and there, serving him, bringing rice and vegetables and molasses for the feast. The tiger Brahman was very pleased with the hospitable welcome. He didn't see any brother-in-law who looked huge and terrifying and had a big harsh voice. The family were all small-boned and had soft voices.

Meanwhile, the eldest brother had spread some twigs and grass across the mouth of a disused well behind the house, and spread a fine silken mat over it. It is customary in such households to give the son-in-law an oil massage and a hot bath before dinner, and so his three brothers-in-law requested the tiger Brahman to take his seat on the lovely mat for the massage and the bath. As soon as he sat on it, the mat, and the twigs and the grass under it, gave way and sank under him. And down fell the tiger son-in-law into the well with a great crash. They filled the well with stones and rubbish, and that finished off the tiger.

3.4.1 Summary and Analysis

A tiger learns the art of shape-shifting and, fascinated by Brahman food and life, takes the form of a learned Brahman man. He goes to a Brahman family and wins their trust, eventually marrying their daughter. Shortly after the wedding, he takes his new wife into the jungle, where he threatens her by saying, Shall I show you my real face. Eventually, when she insists, the tiger reveals his true form. He is a tiger, and he forces her to live with him deep in the jungle, where she bears him a tiger cub.



Miserable with the situation, the wife manages to send a message to her brothers through a crow. Her brothers come to rescue her, bringing along strange items: a donkey, an ant, a palm tree trunk, and a washerman. When they arrive, they hide in the loft of her jungle home. The tiger returns and grows suspicious, but is tricked when the youngest brother urinates and defecates on his food, and the brothers pretend it is part of the meal. Eventually, they terrify the tiger by making the donkey bray loudly and showing him the palm trunk and vat, causing him to flee.

The brothers kill the tiger cub and flee with their sister. The tiger returns and vows revenge after finding his cub dead. He uses his shape-shifting power again and returns to his father-in-law's house, pretending to be his Brahman form. However, the brothers are prepared, and they trick the tiger into falling into a well, which they fill with stones, killing him for good.

3.4.2 Character Sketches of “Shall I Show You My Real Face?”

1. The Tiger (Husband)

The tiger is the central antagonist of the story, representing deception and cruelty. He is clever and manipulative, learning the art of shape-shifting to take on a Brahman's form to marry a human woman. Though he manages to fool the family, his true nature as a dangerous predator is always present. His repeated threat, “Shall I show you my real face?” symbolizes his desire to control and instill fear. The tiger is selfish, caring only for his desires, forcing his wife into a life of misery and terror. Ultimately, his arrogance and overconfidence lead to his downfall when he underestimates his wife's family and is tricked into falling into the well.

2. The Brahman Girl (Wife)

The Brahman girl is initially portrayed as innocent and trusting. She marries the disguised tiger, unaware of the true danger lurking behind his human form. As the story progresses, her resilience and intelligence become evident. Despite being trapped in a terrible situation, she finds a way to seek help by enlisting a crow to deliver a message to her brothers. She symbolizes the theme of endurance and survival, as she manages to hold on until her family comes to her rescue. Her cleverness in managing the tiger's suspicions shows her adaptability and inner strength.

3. The Brothers

The three brothers represent courage, loyalty, and resourcefulness. Upon receiving their sister's plea for help, they immediately set out to rescue her, showing their deep familial bond. Each brother contributes to the plan with seemingly odd items, such as a donkey, an ant, a palm tree trunk, and a washerman's vat, which are later used to scare off the tiger. The eldest brother takes charge, devising plans and tricks, while the youngest is portrayed as playful but essential to their plan. Together, the brothers symbolize the power of unity and cleverness in overcoming threats.

4. The Crow

The crow plays a small but crucial role in the story, acting as the messenger between the Brahman girl and her family. It represents hope and the importance of allies in times of need. Though a minor character, the crow is pivotal in reuniting the girl with her brothers, enabling the rescue.

5. The Brahman Family (Parents)

The Brahman parents, particularly the father, are portrayed as trusting and perhaps naïve. They quickly marry off their daughter to the tiger, disguised as a Brahman, without investigating his background. Despite their good intentions, they fail to recognize the danger posed by their son-in-law, reflecting a trusting nature that may overlook potential threats. Their role in the story is more passive, serving as the catalyst for the daughter's predicament.

3.4.3 Check Your Progress: Answer in a line or Two: 02

1. What traits did the young woman exhibit that allowed her to confront and outsmart the demon?

2. How did the young woman's knowledge of her grandmother's mantra play a crucial role in the story?

3. Why do you think the demon hesitated when the young woman asked, "Shall I show you my real face?" and how did this moment change the course of the story?

4. What does the story suggest about the role of women in Tamil folklore, and how does this reflect broader cultural values?

5. In what ways does this folktale convey the theme of good versus evil, and what lessons can be drawn from this struggle?

3.5 A Friend in Need



A tortoise in a pond and a fox in a nearby den were good friends.

Once when they were chatting of this and that by the pond, a leopard arrived on the scene. The fox fled in panic. The tortoise, poor thing, couldn't move fast enough to hide or escape. With one leap, the leopard grabbed him with his mouth and settled down under a tree to make a meal of him. But neither his teeth nor his claws could make a dent in the hard shell of the tortoise. The fox was watching the leopard's struggles from his den and thought of a way to save the tortoise. So he came out, approached the leopard, all courtesy and innocence, and said, 'I know an easy way to crack the shell of that tortoise. Just throw him into the water. He will soak in it, and the water will soften the shell in a few minutes. Try it.'

The foolish leopard said, 'Never thought of it. What a good idea!' and threw the tortoise into the pond. What more could the tortoise have wished for?

3.5.1 Summary and Analysis

A tortoise and a fox were good friends. One day, while chatting by the pond, a leopard arrived. The fox quickly ran away, but the slow-moving tortoise was caught by the leopard, who tried to eat him. However, the tortoise hard shell protected him. The fox, watching from a safe distance, devised a plan to save his friend. He approached the leopard and suggested throwing the tortoise into the water, claiming it would soften the shell. The foolish leopard agreed and tossed the tortoise into the pond, unknowingly helping him escape. The tortoise was safe, thanks to his clever friend.

3.5.2 Character Sketches of the Main Characters in A Friend in Need

Tortoise:

The tortoise is portrayed as slow and vulnerable, unable to escape the leopard's sudden attack. Despite his physical limitations, his hard shell offers natural protection, symbolizing resilience. Though the tortoise lacks speed, he benefits from the cleverness of his friend, the fox, showing the importance of mutual dependence in friendships.

Fox:

The fox is clever and resourceful. Though initially scared and fleeing the scene, he quickly observes the situation and devises a plan to save his friend. His intelligence is

highlighted by his ability to manipulate the leopard into throwing the tortoise into the water.

Leopard:

The leopard is portrayed as powerful but foolish. Though physically dominant, he lacks the intelligence to figure out how to break the tortoise's shell. His gullibility is showcased when he blindly trusts the fox's advice and throws the tortoise into the water, thereby losing his prey. The leopard symbolizes brute strength without wisdom.

Each character represents different qualities: resilience (tortoise), cleverness (fox), and brute strength (leopard). Together, they illustrate a tale of wit over power.

3.5.3 Check Your Progress:03

Answer in a line or Two:

1. How did the crow, the tortoise, and the deer each contribute to the plan to save the deer from the hunter's trap?

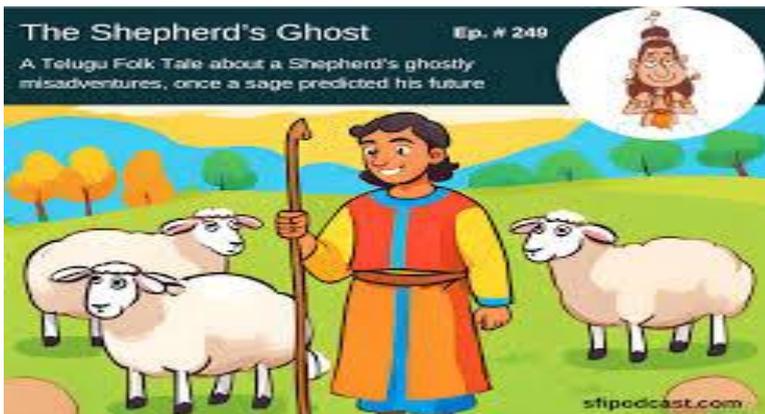
2. What qualities do the three friends demonstrate through their actions in the story?

3. How does the story "A Friend in Need" illustrate the theme of teamwork?

4. Why did the deer pretend to be injured in front of the hunter, and what does this reveal about his character?

-
5. What lessons can be learned from the way the friends handled the crisis with the hunter?
-

3.6 Shepherd's Ghost



A shepherd and his wife lived in a village. Every day he went to graze his sheep. One day, he climbed a tree, sat on a branch facing the tree, and began cutting the branch where it joined the trunk. A Brahman who was passing that way looked at him and said, 'Hey, you! You'll fall down! You're cutting the branch you're sitting on.' The shepherd said, 'How do you know I'll fall down, sami?' The Brahman said, 'Let me show you. Put your upper cloth on the branch, sit on the next branch, and cut the first one as you were doing. Then you'll see for yourself.'

The shepherd did as he was told: he put his upper cloth on the branch and continued to cut it. When he was done, the garment fell to the ground with the branch.

The shepherd was greatly impressed. He thought, "AM This Brahman sami really knows a lot. He's a great man. Then he got off the tree in a hurry, fell at the feet of the Brahman, and adhim. "O sami, tell me, when am I going to die? You must tell me The Brahman said, 'How do I know, you foolish man, about your birth and death? Just leave me alone.'"

The shepherd insisted: 'I know you know everything. You really know. You must tell me. I'll give you a sheep. And he held on to his feet and refused to let go till the Brahman told him. The Brahman didn't know what to do. So, just to get out of the situation, he said, 'Look here. Before you die, your nose will get shorter. Your eyes will be sunken. That's when you'll die.'" Then he moved on.

The shepherd tended his sheep, thinking all the time of what the Brahman had said. Summer came. One day his wife didn't bring his food on time. He was thirsty. He was famished. He measured his nose with his finger and felt it was shorter than usual. He felt his eyes with his fingers. They felt sunken. 'Chhat! I'm going to die!" he thought. He left his sheep then and there in the meadow and went home.

His wife was getting ready to leave home with his food basket. When he came home, she asked, 'Where did you leave the sheep?" He didn't answer. "What's the use of talking? I'm dying anyway,' he thought and was silent like a deaf-mute. His wife said, 'Why don't you talk? What's happened to you?' He came into the house, held in his breath, and sat against the wall. He sat on his haunches, without breathing, I don't know how. His wife tried shaking him this way and that, but he wouldn't talk, nor would he breathe. He shut his eyes and wouldn't move. 'Oh, my husband's dead!' she cried, and ran out and told all her caste-people. They all came, pinched him, and slapped his cheek. But he made not a sound nor did he move. "Yes, he's dead,' they said.

They brought a new cloth, made a bier, put him on it, and took him to the burial ground. There they made a pit this long and buried him in it. The idiot still held his breath. They kicked more earth into the pit, covered him with it, and were about to leave him there to go to the river to wash their feet and hands. The man, once he was stuck in the earth, wasn't able to let out his breath. So he pushed the earth this way and that and moved around in the pit. The loose earth gave way. He got up, with dirt all over his head, his mustache, and all over his body. He sat up and yelled, 'Hey you fellows! Where are you going, leaving me here?' When they heard him yelling, they turned and looked at the man they had just buried and saw him rise as if from the dead, covered from head to foot with dirt. They panicked and took to their heels, crying, 'Ayyo! The shepherd's ghost is coming after us!'

When the other villagers asked them, they told them that the shepherd's ghost had risen and was coming after them. They all ran home, shut themselves in their houses, and bolted the doors. The shepherd walked to the village, went straight to his wife's place, and said, 'Hey, woman, I didn't die. Open the door and let me in!'

She called out from behind the door, 'O sami, please go away. I'll offer new clothes and break a coconut in your burial place. Leave me alone. Don't come to my house.' He tried to explain, but she was too frightened to listen to what he said.

By now he was very hungry. Who would feed him now? He walked out of the village and found the temple of Hanuman, the Monkey God. He thought, 'The priest will come with offerings of food to the god. I'll ask him to give me some.' So thinking, he sat inside the temple. He sat there all night. Nobody came. Nobody opened a door in the whole village. The next morning, long after sunrise, the villagers got up and opened their doors, started sweeping their front yards, and began going about their business. The priest cooked up some rice and lentils, poured some ghee on it, plucked some flowers and what not on the way, and came to the Monkey God's temple. There he poured ritual water on the image and was about to put flowers on the god's head. Just then, the shepherd, who was sitting behind the image, stood up and said, 'Why, sami, you were late today. I was waiting for you.' 'Oh, the shepherd's ghost is here!' hollered the priest, threw everything down right there, and fled the place. People who were sweeping their front yards heard this hullabaloo and threw down their brooms and baskets. People untying the bullocks for the day's work

left them there. They all ran in and bolted their doors. The shepherd went again to his wife's house and tried to persuade her. She wouldn't open the door even a chink. Then he went back to the temple and ate the food for a few days. But he had no clothes to wear-they had stripped him when they buried him. A thought occurred to him: 'I must go to the washerman's ghat and get some clothes. When the washerman comes there, I'll ask him for a piece of cloth to cover my shame. I'll wrap it around me and come home.' So he went to the ghat and hid in the ubba, the vat in which the washermen boil the dirty clothes.

A police inspector came around on his beat and saw that the villagers were all hiding in their houses behind bolted doors. He wondered: "The doors are shut at midday? Why, what's happening He knocked on people's doors and asked them what the matter was.

They said, "There's a shepherd's ghost abroad. We won't open the doors till it's gone. He said, 'I don't see any ghost anywhere. What nonsense!" That report to the village headman Reddy, who said the same thing. The police inspector said, 'I'll protect you. Open the door then Reddy took courage, opened the door, and came out. By and by, others also opened their doors and began going about their daily business.

Meanwhile, the policeman said to the washerman, 'My clothes are dirty. I'll give them to you. Go to the river and wash them for me. The washerman said, 'I can't. When I went there earlier, I saw the shepherd's ghost. He'll get me!'

'Oh, don't be such a coward. I'll come with you,' said the policeman. So he mounted his horse and took the washerman with him to the ghat. There he asked the washerman to go and look into the vat while he held his horse. The washerman went to the vat to put the dirty clothes in. There he saw the shepherd sitting in the vat-ashes and dirt all over his body, face, and mustache. When the washerman came near him, the shepherd called him by name: 'Why, Subbanna! Why are you so late this morning? I've been waiting for you.'

When the policeman heard this, he quickly mounted his horse and fled for his life. The washerman yelled and ran for his life. Again all the people in the village hurried home and bolted their doors.

Now the shepherd cursed them: "These motherfuckers!" He picked up a piece of cloth, wound it around his waist and draped another over his shoulder, and went home. Whatever he said to his wife, she just wouldn't hear him and didn't budge. Finally he cried, 'No, I didn't die. A Brahman told me I'd die. I believed him. That's why I'm in all this trouble. Open the door and see for yourself.'

When she opened the door a little and looked at him, he looked human all right. He had some clothes on. She took him in, poured water on him, washed off the dirt that

was caked all over him, and gave him proper clothes. He put them on and went back to his sheep like every day.

3.6.1 Summary and analysis

In this folk tale, a simple-minded shepherd climbs a tree and begins cutting the very branch sitting on. A passing Brahman warns him that he will fall, but the shepherd doubts him. The Brahman suggests the shepherd place his cloth on the branch and continue cutting from another branch to see for himself.

The branch eventually falls, impressing the shepherd, who becomes convinced the Brahman knows everything, including when he will die. The shepherd pesters the Brahman to predict his death, and to escape the situation, the Brahman tells him that when his nose becomes shorter and his eyes sink, he will die. Over time, the shepherd becomes fixated on this, and one day, after being thirsty and hungry, he feels his nose has shortened and his eyes have sunk. Convinced he's dying, he goes home and refuses to speak or breathe. His wife and fellow villagers believe he's dead, and they bury him.

However, the shepherd is not actually dead. As he tries to breathe, he pushes the loose earth away, rises from the pit, and shouts to the villagers. Mistaking him for a ghost, the villagers flee in terror. His wife refuses to let him into the house, believing he is a ghost, despite his attempts to convince her.

In his desperation, the shepherd takes refuge in a temple but frightens the priest, who also thinks he is a ghost. The villagers remain in fear until a police inspector arrives and attempts to restore order. The inspector takes a washerman to wash his clothes, but when the washerman sees the shepherd covered in dirt and ash at the river, he believes the ghost has returned, causing more panic.

Eventually, the shepherd finds some clothes and returns to his wife. After much convincing, his wife finally lets him in and realizes he is still alive. The shepherd cleans up and resumes his life as usual, having learned a valuable lesson about blindly believing predictions.

3.6.2 Character Sketch of “The Shepherd’s Ghost”

1. The Shepherd

Naïve and Gullible: The shepherd is portrayed as a simple and naïve man. He lacks common sense, as shown by his cutting of the branch he is sitting on, and his over-reliance on the Brahman’s words. His gullibility is further demonstrated when he believes he is dying just because his nose feels shorter and his eyes sunken, leading to unnecessary fear.

Obsessive and Superstitious: Once the Brahman tells him about the supposed signs of his death, the shepherd becomes obsessed with the idea. This obsession drives him to irrational actions, such as stopping his daily work and pretending to die. His superstition and inability to think logically shape much of the narrative.

Symbol of Common Folly: The shepherd represents the common man who, through ignorance and fear, may be easily influenced by others’ words without questioning them. His experience serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of blind belief.

2. The Brahman:

Practical and Witty: The Brahman is portrayed as a man of wisdom and practicality. He instantly recognizes the foolishness of the shepherd’s actions and offers simple advice to correct him. His understanding of human behavior also becomes evident when he gives the shepherd a false answer to get rid of him, though this backfires.

Reluctant Mentor: While the Brahman helps the shepherd see his immediate mistake (cutting the branch), he is unwilling to play the role of an all-knowing seer when the shepherd pesters him about his death. His advice about the shepherd’s death is more of a way to escape the situation, highlighting his reluctance to take on the role of a guide in this regard.

Symbol of Knowledge: The Brahman symbolizes wisdom and reason, but also highlights the limits of knowledge. He knows enough to warn the shepherd but is unwilling or unable to truly guide him through life’s larger questions.

3. The Shepherd's Wife:

Pragmatic and Concerned: The wife is a practical character. When the shepherd returns home acting strangely, she is more concerned about the sheep and household duties than indulging in his irrational behavior. She doesn't immediately believe her husband is dead and tries to talk sense into him.

Superstitious in Crisis: Like the other villagers, the wife eventually gives in to the collective fear of the "ghost." Despite her initial pragmatism, she too becomes frightened by the thought of her husband's supposed death and refuses to let him back into the house.

Symbol of the Everyday Woman: The shepherd's wife represents the everyday woman who balances household duties with concern for her family, but who is also susceptible to fear and superstition, especially when influenced by the beliefs of those around her.

4. The Villagers:

Fearful and Superstitious: The villagers are quick to believe that the shepherd has turned into a ghost and react with collective panic. Their immediate flight from any encounter with the shepherd, without questioning the situation, showcases the tendency of people to give in to irrational fear and superstition.

Symbol of Mass Panic: The villagers symbolize how collective fear and superstition can spread quickly within a community. They blindly accept that the shepherd is a ghost and let fear control their actions, without attempting to investigate or verify the truth.

5. The Priest and the Policeman:

Secondary Figures of Authority: The priest and the policeman are important supporting characters. The priest, like the villagers, becomes convinced of the shepherd's ghostly nature and flees in fear. The policeman, representing authority and order, tries to restore calm but is ultimately powerless in the face of widespread superstition.

Ineffective in Crisis: While they both hold positions of authority, neither the priest nor the policeman can counter the collective fear of the villagers. Their presence serves to show that even figures of authority can fall victim to mass panic and superstition.

3.6.3 Check Your Porgress-04

Answer in a line or two

1. What characteristics made the shepherd a beloved figure in the village, and how did his personality affect the villagers' response to his ghost?

2. How did the villagers initially react to the sightings of the shepherd's ghost, and what cultural beliefs influenced their reactions?

3. What was the significance of the elder villager's dream about the shepherd, and how did it change the villagers' approach to the ghost?

4. What actions did the villagers take to help the shepherd's ghost find peace, and what does this reveal about their values and sense of community?

5. How does the story of "The Shepherd's Ghost" illustrate the themes of community, respect for the deceased, and the importance of resolving unfinished business?

3.7 In the Kingdom of Fools



In the Kingdom of Fools, both the king and the minister were idiots. They didn't want to run things like other kings, so they decided to change night into day and day into night. They ordered that everyone should be awake at night, till their fields and run their businesses only after dark, and all go to bed as soon as the sun came up. Anyone who disobeyed would be punished with death. The people did as they were told for fear of death. The king and the minister were delighted at the success of their project.

One day a guru and his disciple arrived in the city. It was a beautiful city, it was broad daylight, but there was no one about. Everyone was asleep; not a mouse stirred. Even the cattle had been taught to sleep by day. The two strangers were amazed by what they saw around them and wandered around town till evening, when suddenly the whole town woke up and went about its nightly business.

The two men were hungry. Now that the shops were open, they went to buy some groceries. To their astonishment, they found that everything cost the same, a single duddu-whether they bought a measure of rice or a bunch of bananas, it cost a duddu. The guru and his disciple were delighted. They had never heard of anything like this. They could buy all the food they wanted for a rupee.

When they had cooked and eaten, the guru realized that this was a kingdom of fools and it wouldn't be a good idea for them to stay there. "This is no place for us. Let's go," he said to his disciple. But the disciple didn't want to leave the place, Everything was cheap here. All he wanted was good cheap food. The guru said,

"They are all fools. This won't last very long, and you can't tell what they'll do to you next.

But the disciple wouldn't listen to the guru's wisdom. He wanted to stay. The guru finally gave up and said, 'Do what you want. I'm going,' and left. The disciple stayed on, ate his fill every day, bananas and ghee and rice and wheat, and grew fat as a streetside sacred bull.

One bright day, a thief broke into a rich merchant's house. He had made a hole in the wall and sneaked in, and as he was carrying out his loot, the wall of the old house collapsed on his head and killed him on the spot. His brother ran to the king and complained: 'Your Highness, when my brother was pursuing his ancient trade, a wall fell on him and killed him. This merchant is to blame. He should have built a good strong wall. You must punish the wrongdoer and compensate the family for this injustice.

The king said, 'Justice will be done. Don't worry,' and at once summoned the owner of the house.

When the merchant arrived, the king asked him questions.

'What's your name?'

'Such and Such, Your Highness.'

'Were you at home when the dead man burgled your house?' "Yes, my lord. He broke in and the wall was weak. It fell on him.'

"The accused pleads guilty. Your wall killed this man's brother. You have murdered a man. We have to punish you.'

Lord,' said the helpless merchant, I didn't put up the wall. It's really the fault of the man who built the wall. He didn't build it right. You should punish him.'

"Who is that?"

'My lord, this wall was built in my father's time. I know the man. He's an old man now. He lives nearby.'

The king sent out messengers to bring in the bricklayer who had built the wall. They brought him, tied hand and foot.

You there, did you build this man's wall in his father's time?

Yes, my lord, I did.'

"What kind of a wall is this that you built? It has fallen on a poor man and killed

him. You've murdered him. We have to punish you by death.

Before the king could order the execution, the poor bricklayer pleaded, 'Please listen to me before you give your orders. It's true I built this wall and it was no good. But that was because my mind was not on it. I remember very well a harlot who was going up and down that street all day with her anklets jingling, and I couldn't keep my eyes or my mind on the wall I was building. You must get that harlot. I know where she lives.'

"You're right. The case deepens. We must look into it. It is not easy to judge such complicated cases. Let's get that harlot, wherever she is.'

The harlot, now an old woman, came trembling to the court. 'Did you walk up and down that street many years ago, while this poor man was building a wall? Did you see him?'

"Yes, my lord. I remember it very well.'

'So you did walk up and down, with your anklets jingling. You were young and you tempted him, so he built a bad wall. It has fallen on a poor burglar and killed him. You've killed an innocent man. You'll have to be punished.'

She thought for a minute and said, 'My lord, wait. I know now why I was walking up and down that street. I had given some gold to the goldsmith to make some jewelry for me. He was a lazy scoundrel. He made so many excuses, said he would give it now and he would give it then and so on all day. He made me walk up and down to his house a dozen times. That was when this bricklayer fellow saw me. It's not my fault, my lord, it's that damned goldsmith's.'

Poor thing, she's absolutely right, thought the king, weighing the evidence. "We've got the real culprit at last. Get the goldsmith wherever he is hiding. At once!"

The king's bailiffs searched for the goldsmith, who was hiding in a corner of his shop. When he heard the accusation against him, he had his own story to tell.

'My lord,' he said, "I'm a poor goldsmith. It's true I made this harlot woman come many times to my door. I gave her excuses because I couldn't finish making her jewelry before I finished the rich merchant's orders. They had a wedding coming, and they wouldn't wait. You know how impatient rich men are!"

'Who is this rich merchant who kept you from finishing this poor woman's jewelry, made her walk up and down, which distracted this bricklayer, which made a mess of his wall, which has now fallen on an innocent man and killed him? Can you name him?'

The goldsmith named the merchant, and he was none other than the original owner of the house where the wall had fallen. Now justice had come full circle, thought the king, back to the merchant. When he was rudely summoned back to the court, he arrived crying, 'It wasn't me but my father who ordered the jewellery!

He's dead! I'm innocent!' But the king consulted his minister and ruled decisively: 'It's true your father is the true murderer. He's dead, but somebody must be punished in his place. You've inherited everything from that criminal father of yours, his riches as well as his sins. I knew at once, even when I first set eyes on you, that you were at the root of this horrible crime. You must die.'

And he ordered a new stake to be made ready for the execution. As the servants sharpened the stake and got it ready for the final impaling of the criminal, it occurred to the minister that the rich merchant was somehow too thin to be properly executed on the stake. He appealed to the king's common sense. The king was worried about it.

"What shall we do?" he said, when suddenly it struck him that all they needed to do was find a man fat enough to fit the stake. The servants were immediately all over town looking for a man who would fit the stake, and their eyes fell on the disciple who had fattened himself for months on bananas and rice and wheat and ghee. What have I done wrong? I'm innocent. I'm a sannyasi! he cried.

"That may be true. But it's the royal decree that we should find a man fat enough to fit the stake," they said, and carried him to the place of execution. He remembered his wise guru's words: 'This is a city of fools. You don't know what they will do next.' While he was waiting for death, he prayed to his guru in his heart, asking him to hear his cry wherever he was. The guru saw everything in a vision; he had magic powers, he could see far, and he could see the future as he could see the present and the past. He arrived at once to save his disciple, who had got himself into such a scrape through love of food.

As soon as he arrived, he scolded the disciple and told him something in a

whisper. Then he went to the king and addressed him: 'O wisest of kings, who is greater? The guru or the disciple?' 'Of course, the guru. No doubt about it. Why do you ask?'

"Then put me to the stake first. Put my disciple to death after me.' When the disciple heard this, he caught on and began to clamor: 'Me first! You brought me here first! Put me to death first, not him!'

The guru and the disciple now got into a fight about who should go first. The king was puzzled by this behavior. He asked the guru, "Why do you want to die? We chose him because we needed a fat man for the stake.' You shouldn't ask me such questions. Put me to death first. 'Why? There's some mystery here. As a wise man you must make me understand."

"Will you promise to put me to death if I tell you?" said the guru. The king gave him his solemn word. The guru took him aside, out of the servants' earshot, and whispered to him: 'Do you know why we want to die right now, the two of us? We've been all over the world but we've never found a city like this or a king like you. That stake is the stake of the god of justice. It's new, it has never had a criminal on it. Whoever dies on it first will be reborn as the king of this country. And whoever goes next will be the future minister of this country. We're sick of living the ascetic life. It would be nice to enjoy ourselves as king and minister for a while. Now keep your word, my lord, and put us to death. Me first, remember.

The king was now thrown into deep thought. He didn't want to lose the kingdom to someone else in the next round of life. He needed time. So he ordered the execution postponed to the next day and talked in secret with his minister. 'It's not right for us to give over the kingdom to others in the next life. Let's go on the stake ourselves and we'll be reborn as king and minister again. Holy men do not tell lies,' he said, and the minister agreed.

So he told the executioners: 'We'll send the criminals tonight. When the first man comes to you, put him to death first. Then do the same to the second man. Those are orders. Don't make any mistakes.'

That night, the king and his minister went secretly to the prison, released the guru and the disciple, disguised themselves as those two, and as arranged beforehand with their loyal servants, were taken to the stake and promptly

executed. When the bodies were taken down to be thrown to the crows and vultures, the people panicked. They saw before them the dead bodies of the king and the minister. The city was in confusion.

All night they mourned and discussed the future of the kingdom. Some people suddenly thought of the guru and the disciple and caught up with them as they were preparing to leave the town unnoticed. 'We people need a king and a minister,' said someone. Others agreed. They begged the guru and the disciple to be their king and their minister. It didn't take many arguments to persuade the disciple, but it took longer to persuade the guru. They finally agreed to rule the kingdom of the foolish king and the silly minister, on the condition that they could change all the old laws. From then on, night would again be night and day would again be day, and you could get nothing for a duddu. It became like any other place.

3.7.1 Summary and Analysis

The story begins by introducing a kingdom where the king and his minister are known for their foolishness. The most peculiar rule in the kingdom is that night is treated as day and day as night. People sleep during the day and work at night. A wise guru and his disciple arrive in the kingdom, unaware of its strange customs. They are surprised to see people working at night and sleeping during the day but decide to stay because everything is very cheap. The disciple is tempted by the cheap food and decides to stay, while the guru, sensing danger in the foolishness of the kingdom, decides to leave. One night, a thief breaks into a merchant's house. While escaping, the thief is accidentally killed when the merchant's wall collapses on him. The thief's brother demands justice.

The foolish king orders the merchant to be executed for the thief's death. The merchant blames the bricklayer who built the weak wall. The bricklayer blames a dancing girl who distracted him. The dancing girl blames a goldsmith who delayed her order, causing her to rush past the bricklayer. The goldsmith blames a wealthy man who insisted on his order first. The king, following this chain, orders the wealthy man to be executed, but finds out the man has since died. The king decides that someone must be executed regardless. The soldiers capture the disciple because he

is the right size to fit the stake. The disciple prays to his guru, who arrives to save him. The guru whispers to the disciple to insist on being executed first, which confuses the king.

The king asks why, and the guru fabricates a story that whoever dies on the stake first will be reborn as the king, and the second as the minister. The foolish king and his minister, greedy for rebirth as more powerful figures, decide to die in place of the disciple and the guru. They order their execution, and the guru and disciple are saved. The people of the kingdom, grateful for being rid of their foolish rulers, invite the guru and the disciple to take their places. The guru declines, but the disciple agrees to stay and rule wisely, transforming the kingdom into a sensible and prosperous place.

3.7.2 Character Sketch for "In the Kingdom of Fools"

The King -

Foolish and Arbitrary: The king enforces absurd rules, such as reversing day and night, showcasing his lack of wisdom.

Authoritarian: He rules with an iron fist, making arbitrary decisions without considering fairness or justice.

Superstitious and Gullible: Easily deceived by the guru's clever ploy, the king shows his susceptibility to superstition and gullibility.

The Minister

Submissive and Complicit: The minister blindly follows the king's foolish orders without questioning their logic or justice.

Equally Foolish: He shares the king's absurd beliefs and decisions, contributing to the kingdom's irrational governance.

Greedy and Ambitious: His eagerness to be reborn as a powerful figure shows his ambition and greed, making him susceptible to the guru's trick.

The Guru

Wise and Perceptive: The guru quickly recognizes the foolishness of the kingdom and

foresees potential danger.

Clever and Strategic: He devises a smart plan to save his disciple by exploiting the king and minister's gullibility.

Calm and Composed: Even in the face of adversity, the guru remains calm and uses his wisdom to turn the situation to his advantage.

The Disciple

Naive and Tempted by Indulgence: Initially, the disciple is swayed by the cheap food and decides to stay in the kingdom despite the guru's warning.

Obedient and Trusting: When faced with danger, he trusts his guru completely and follows his instructions without hesitation.

Grateful and Loyal: After being saved by the guru, the disciple's loyalty and gratitude are evident, leading him to eventually rule the kingdom wisely.

The Merchant

Innocent and Victimized: The merchant becomes an unintended victim of the kingdom's foolish justice system when blamed for the thief's death.

Resourceful and Desperate: He tries to shift blame to avoid execution, showcasing his desperation and resourcefulness in a dire situation.

The Thief

Cunning and Unlucky: The thief's actions lead to his own accidental death, highlighting his cunning nature and unfortunate fate.

Catalyst for Conflict: His death sparks the chain of blame that exposes the irrationality of the kingdom's justice system.

3.7.3 Check your Progress- Answer in a line or two- 05

1. What were the peculiar rules enforced by the king and his minister in the kingdom, and how did these rules reflect their foolishness?

2. Why did the guru decide to leave the kingdom while his disciple chose to stay, and what does this decision reveal about their characters?

3. How did the series of events following the thief's death illustrate the absurdity of the kingdom's justice system?

4. What strategy did the guru use to save his disciple from execution, and how did it exploit the king and minister's weaknesses?

5. In what ways did the disciple's experience in the kingdom transform his character, and what lessons did he learn by the end of the story?

3.7.4 Unit Summary

Folktales from South India are rich in diversity and cultural depth, reflecting the region's unique traditions and beliefs. These tales often blend mythological elements with everyday life, featuring gods, goddesses, heroes, and common folk in various adventures and moral dilemmas. Stories from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh include narratives of valorous kings, cunning animals, virtuous women, and mystical beings. Themes of righteousness, loyalty, justice, and the triumph of good over evil are recurrent, showcasing the values cherished by South Indian societies.

These folktales not only entertain but also educate, preserving age-old wisdom and cultural heritage through oral tradition passed down through generations. They continue to resonate with audiences, offering insights into South India's vibrant folklore landscape.

3.7.5 Self Assessment Questions

1. What are some common themes found in South Indian folktales, and how do these themes reflect the cultural values of the region?
2. Describe the role of mythological elements in South Indian folktales. How do gods, goddesses, and mythical creatures influence the narratives and characters?
3. Compare and contrast the storytelling styles in folktales from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh. What are some distinctive features of each region's storytelling tradition?
4. Discuss the significance of animals as characters in South Indian folktales. How do they embody human qualities and serve as moral guides or symbols?
5. Examine the portrayal of women in South Indian folktales. What roles do they typically play, and how do these roles reflect societal norms and expectations?
6. Evaluate the moral lessons conveyed in South Indian folktales. How do these stories teach virtues such as bravery, honesty, compassion, and perseverance?
7. Reflect on the impact of South Indian folktales on contemporary literature, cinema, and culture. How have these traditional narratives been adapted and reinterpreted in modern contexts?
8. Explore the oral tradition of storytelling in South India. What are the challenges and advantages of preserving folktales through oral transmission in today's digital age?

3.7.6 Suggested readings

1. *Folk Tales of Kerala* by K.M. George
2. *South Indian Folk Tales* by A.K. Ramanujan

3. *Tales from South India* by S. Muthiah
4. *Kannada Folktales* by A.K. Ramanujan
5. *Malabar and its Folklore* by T. Ganapathi Sastri
6. *Tales of the Deccan* by Charles Phillips
7. *Folklore of Southern India* by J.H. Hutton
8. *Kathasaritsagara (Ocean of Story)* by Somadeva

3.7.7 Open E-Resources Links

1. "Folk Tales of Tamil Nadu" by A. K. Ramanujan
2. SurLaLune Fairy Tales](<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/>)
3. Project Gutenberg](<https://www.gutenberg.org/>)

3.7.8 References:

1. A.K. Ramanujan. *Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-Two Languages*. Pantheon Books, 1991.
2. K.M. George. *Folk Tales of Kerala*. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2004.
3. S. Muthiah. *Tales from South India*. Penguin Books India, 1993.
4. T. Ganapathi Sastri. *Malabar and its Folklore*. Asian Educational Services, 1998.
5. A.K. Ramanujan (Editor). *The Oxford Anthology of Indian Folk Tales*. Oxford University Press, 1999.

Self Assessment Questions:

Two Marks

3.1

Discuss how does the story subvert traditional notions of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships

The story challenges traditional roles by portraying the mother-in-law as restrictive and the daughter-in-law as assertive. Their dynamic showcases the tension between traditional values and modern aspirations. The narrative emphasizes the need for self-expression and individuality.

Inscribe the significance of the clay mother-in-law's character in relation to societal expectations of women

The clay mother-in-law represents the fragile and restrictive nature of societal expectations. Her character highlights the tension between traditional roles and modern aspirations. The narrative critiques the oppressive nature of these expectations.

3.2

Explain how does the protagonist's transformation comment on the performative nature of identity?

The protagonist's transformation highlights the tension between authenticity and performativity. Their growth symbolizes the power of self-acceptance and the rejection of societal expectations.

List out the implications of the title's question on the theme of self-expression

The title's question signifies the tension between authenticity and conformity. It represents the protagonist's journey of self-discovery and the struggle for self-expression.

.3.3

Discuss the story explore the complexities of friendship and loyalty

The story showcases the challenges of maintaining friendships in the face of adversity.

The protagonist's relationships highlight the importance of empathy and understanding.

Engrave the significance of the protagonist's journey in relation to personal growth

The protagonist's journey represents the importance of self-reflection and personal growth. Their experiences highlight the need for empathy and understanding in relationships.

3.4

Outline the story use the supernatural to comment on the human condition

The story uses the supernatural to highlight the consequences of human actions. The shepherd's ghost represents the guilt and redemption that follow wrongdoing.

What is the significance of the protagonist's relationship with the shepherd's ghost?

The protagonist's relationship represents the tension between guilt and redemption.

Their dynamic highlights the importance of acknowledging and learning from mistakes.

3.5

Inspect the story use satire to comment on societal norms

The story uses satire to critique the absurdity of societal expectations. The kingdom of fools represents the illogical nature of societal norms.

Inscribe the significance of the protagonist's journey in relation to self-discovery

The protagonist's journey represents the importance of self-reflection and personal growth. Their experiences highlight the need for critical thinking and individuality.

Five Marks

1. Perceive the protagonist's relationship with her mother-in-law as a reflection of generational conflict.
2. Classify the themes present in the story, exploring their relevance to contemporary society.
3. Discover the symbolism behind the clay mother-in-law's rigidity and fragility.
4. Inspect the story's critique of societal expectations and norms.
5. Justify the importance of embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity.

6. Estimate the impact of self-acceptance on personal liberation.
7. Classify the themes present in the narrative, exploring their relevance to human connections.
8. Discover the importance of self-reflection and personal growth in the story.
9. Inspect the portrayal of true friendship and its value.
10. Justify the use of the supernatural to comment on the human condition.
11. Recognize the shepherd's ghost as a symbol of guilt and redemption.
12. Classify the narrative's exploration of personal responsibility and accountability.
13. Discover the significance of the protagonist's relationship with the shepherd's ghost.
14. Examine the story's critique of actions without consequences.
15. Inspect the story's critique of conformity and societal pressure.
16. Justify the importance of embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity.
17. Estimate the impact of critical thinking on personal growth and development.

Eight Marks

1. Estimate the story's portrayal of the clay mother-in-law reinforce or challenge traditional notions of femininity and motherhood
2. What commentary does the narrative offer on the tension between individual desire and societal expectation, particularly in the context of women's lives?
3. In what ways does the protagonist's transformation serve as a critique of societal pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and expectations?
4. Elaborate the story's exploration of identity and self-expression intersect with themes of power, privilege, and marginalization
5. Evaluate the story reveal about the complexities of male friendships and the ways in which societal expectations can both unite and divide individuals?
6. Explain the narrative's portrayal of empathy and understanding challenge or reinforce traditional notions of masculinity and male relationships?
7. In what ways does the story's use of the supernatural serve as a commentary on the human condition, particularly in relation to guilt, redemption, and personal responsibility?

Unit IV
Folktales from India II

Unit 4

Folktales from India II

4.1 Unit Objectives

North Indian folktales offer a glimpse into the region's varied cultural heritage, beliefs, practices, and ideals. These narratives mirror the historical, societal, and spiritual contexts of their origins, showcasing the area's cultural diversity. They serve as valuable literary sources for examining storytelling methods, narrative structures, character types, and recurring themes. Studying these components enhances comprehension of narrative traditions and their evolution across generations.

4.2 Why Audiences Laugh or Cry



A Muslim preacher was once holding forth in his mosque on sinners and the torments that awaited them in hell. As he carried on, getting more eloquent by the minute, he saw a member of his audience, a poor farmer, weeping. Tears were running down his cheeks.

'Ah, crying for your sins, are you?' said the preacher, very happy with the effect he was having on his audience. 'My words have struck home, have they? When I speak of the torments of hell, you remember your sins, don't you?'

'No, no,' answered the man, wiping his tears. 'I was not thinking of my sins. I was thinking of my old he-goat that got sick and died last year. Such a loss! My old he-goat had a lovely beard just like yours. I've never seen two beards more alike.'

Hearing this, the villagers began to laugh, and the preacher took refuge in the Koran.

4.2.1 Summary and Analysis

A Muslim preacher, delivering a passionate sermon on sinners and the torments of hell, noticed a poor farmer in the audience weeping. Assuming his words had deeply affected the man, the preacher remarked that the farmer must be recalling his sins. However, the farmer explained that his tears were not due to guilt but because the preacher's beard reminded him of his beloved he-goat, which had died the previous year. The villagers burst into laughter, and the preacher, embarrassed, sought refuge in the Koran.

4.2.2 Character sketch of “Why Audiences Laugh or Cry”

Muslim preacher is portrayed as a fervent and dedicated religious figure, deeply invested in delivering his message. He is confident in his ability to evoke an emotional response from his audience and takes pride in his eloquence, particularly when he notices the farmer's tears. However, his pride and seriousness are quickly deflated when the farmer's tears are revealed to be unrelated to the sermon, leading to an awkward, humorous moment. This shows that while the preacher is sincere in his mission, he is also somewhat self-assured and easily embarrassed.

The poor farmer is a simple, straightforward man with a deep connection to his personal life and emotions. His tears are not driven by fear of sin or religious fervor, but by the fond memory of his he-goat, revealing his sentimental nature. The farmer's candidness and innocent response unintentionally disrupt the preacher's sermon, demonstrating a sense of humility and lack of pretense. He doesn't seem aware of the effect his comment would have on the preacher or the villagers, further emphasizing his unassuming and genuine character.

The villagers, meanwhile, provide a lighthearted contrast to the preacher's solemn tone. Their laughter at the situation shows a collective sense of humor and the ability to find joy in everyday life, even during a religious sermon. They bring the story full circle, reminding the reader of the gap between the preacher's intentions and the simple realities of village life.

4.2.3. Check Your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 01

1. How does the farmer's wit and humor contribute to the community's cohesion and morale in the Punjabi folktale "Why Audiences Laugh or Cry"?

2. What role does tragedy play in shaping the emotional depth of the story "Why Audiences Laugh or Cry," and how does it contrast with moments of humor and laughter?

4.3 Other Lives



For many years, a Brahman practised austerities and offered worship to the gods in order to learn something of what happens to us when we die. At last the gods favored him.

One morning, as he was bathing in the river, his spirit left him and went into the body of an untouchable cobbler's child. The child grew up, learned his father's business, married, and became the father of a big family. Then suddenly he became aware that he was truly a Brahman, so he abandoned everything and went to another day. So the ministers and elders resorted to the popular custom of sending an elephant and a hawk

around the country to elect a king. Now, just as he reached that country, the king died without a successor. The people would accept as king anyone that the Brahman in the body of the cobbler, was chosen for the royal right hand, and thus proclaimed him king in the presence of all the people.

A few years later, the cobbler's untouchable wife came to know of his whereabouts and went to join him. Then people began to ask questions, and soon it became known that the king was a cobbler and that his wife was also lowborn. The people were outraged. Some rioted, some fled, some took to their swords and others burned themselves. Everyone was afraid of being excommunicated. The king too could not bear the shame and the chaos, and threw himself into a fire.

After his spirit went and reoccupied the corpse of the Brahman that still lay on the riverbank, and went home. When his wife sat at the door, she said, "You're back already! How quickly you bathed and performed your morning prayers!" The Brahman said nothing. He only looked surprised and wondered: "Can this be what happens when one dies? Did all this really happen? Or did I dream it?"

Just about a week after this a man came into the Brahman's courtyard and begged for food, saying he had eaten nothing for five days. He said he had been running away from his country as fast as he could, because a cobbler had become king and polluted the whole kingdom. All the people, he said, were running away or burning themselves to escape the evil that might befall them. The Brahman gave the man some food, but said nothing. "How can such things be?" he thought. "I've lived as a cobbler and raised a family for years, and then reigned as a king for several years. Just when I was convinced it was a dream, this man arrives at my house and confirms the truth of those happenings. Yet my wife says I've not been absent from the house for very long this morning. I believe her, for she does not look a day older, nor is the place changed in any way. Maybe the soul passes through various stages of existence according to a man's thoughts and words and acts, and in the great Hereafter time is measured differently: in that time, a day is equal to an aeon and an aeon is equal to a day. Maybe."

A Brahman, after years of practicing austerities and worship, was granted insight into the mysteries of life and death by the gods. One morning, while bathing in the river, his spirit left his body and entered the body of a cobbler's child. The child grew up, learned the cobbler's trade, married, and had children. One day, the cobbler suddenly realized his true identity as a Brahman. He abandoned his family and went to another country, where he was unexpectedly chosen as king when an elephant and a hawk recognized him as the rightful ruler.

Years later, his cobbler wife found him and came to join him in his royal life. When the people discovered that their king was from a low-caste cobbler background, they were horrified. Many rioted, fled, or even burned themselves, fearing contamination. The king, unable to bear the shame and chaos, threw himself into a fire. His spirit then returned to his Brahman body, still lying by the riverbank, and he went home. His wife greeted him, noting how quickly he had bathed and performed his prayers.

Perplexed, the Brahman wondered if the entire experience had been a dream. A week later, a man came to the Brahman's house, begging for food and recounting how a cobbler had become king in his land, causing turmoil. The Brahman, astonished, realized the events had truly happened, yet his wife and home remained unchanged. He pondered whether the soul passes through different stages of existence and how time may be measured differently in the afterlife.

4.3.1 Character Sketch of “Other Lives”

The Brahman

The Brahman is a deeply spiritual and devout individual, committed to understanding the mysteries of life, death, and the afterlife. His years of austerities and devotion show his patience and dedication to higher knowledge. When his spirit enters the body of a cobbler's child, he adapts to his new life and fully experiences a different existence, demonstrating an openness to whatever the gods have planned for him. Even as a cobbler and later as a king, he remains humble and introspective. After his return to his original body, the Brahman is thoughtful and reflective, questioning the nature of

reality, time, and the soul's journey. His character embodies curiosity, spirituality, and a search for meaning beyond the physical world.

The Cobbler's Wife

The cobbler's wife is a simple, loyal, and unassuming woman. She lives a traditional life, unaware of her husband's true identity as a Brahman. When she hears that her husband has become king, she sets out to join him, demonstrating her faithfulness and attachment to him despite their humble origins. Her arrival at the royal court triggers the gossip and unrest among the people, but she remains steady in her role as a wife. When the Brahman returns home, she doesn't notice any significant passage of time, indicating her simple, grounded perspective on life. She is practical and focused on her immediate reality, contrasting with the Brahman's more spiritual and philosophical mindset.

The People

The people in the story represent society's rigid adherence to caste and social norms. They are quick to judge, and their sense of identity and order is deeply disturbed when they learn that their king, who had ruled them well, was of low caste. Their outrage, gossip, and extreme actions, such as rioting, fleeing, and even self-immolation, reveal their fear of breaking traditional hierarchies. They are a collective force, resistant to change, and driven by the fear of social contamination and excommunication.

The Beggar

The beggar serves as a messenger of truth and reality. He arrives at the Brahman's house, recounting the events in the kingdom where a cobbler had become king, which shocks the Brahman. His role highlights the disparity between the physical world's perception of time and events and the Brahman's spiritual journey. The beggar's character, while minor, is pivotal in confirming the reality of the Brahman's experiences, leaving the Brahman in a state of wonder and deeper contemplation.

4.3.2 Check Your Progress- 02

Answer in a line or two

1. How does the character of Mir influence Gulzar's worldview and personal growth throughout the folktale "Other Lives"?

2. What role does storytelling play in the development of the narrative and the themes of resilience and interconnectedness in "Other Lives"?

3. Discuss the significance of Gulzar's grandmother in shaping his character and guiding his moral compass in the Kashmiri folktale "Other Lives".

4. How does the setting of the Kashmir Valley during winter contribute to the atmosphere and themes of isolation and community in "Other Lives"?

5. Examine the cultural and symbolic meanings behind Mir's encounters with supernatural beings in his stories.

4.4 The Kite's Daughter



4.4.1 Summary and analysis

A rich potter threatened to sell his wife to the Gypsies if she bore him another daughter. When she gave birth to another girl, she feared him and sent the baby down a river in a pot. A washerman found the baby, but a kite (a large bird) took the child, raised her lovingly in a banyan tree, and provided everything she needed. As the girl grew into a beautiful woman, a merchant resting under the tree saw her and asked who she was. The girl, scared, called for her kite mother by singing a special song. The kite arrived, told the merchant the girl's story, and agreed to let him marry her.

The merchant, who already had seven wives, took the kite's daughter home. His other wives were jealous of her beauty and tried to make her life difficult by assigning tasks like cooking and cleaning, which she didn't know how to do. Each time, the girl summoned her kite mother, who helped her complete the tasks miraculously. The other wives became frustrated and plotted to kill the kite. They tricked the kite by mimicking the daughter's song and killed her with a broom. The daughter, unaware of her mother's death, called for her in vain and eventually realized what had happened.

The seven wives then sold the girl to a fisherman, who made her work drying fish. One day, the merchant passed by and recognized her voice as she sang a sad song about her life. He rescued her and brought her home in a box. The merchant confronted his other wives, and they lied, claiming the girl had gone to her mother's house. The merchant tested their guilt by making them walk across a thread over a pit of thorns. Six wives fell and were buried alive, while the seventh, who was innocent, survived. The merchant then lived happily with his seventh wife and the kite's daughter.

4.4.2 Character Sketch of “The Kite’s Daughter”

1. The Kite’s Daughter (Main Character)

- Innocent and naive: Raised by a kite in isolation, she had no experience with the world or humans, making her vulnerable and trusting.
- Beautiful and kind: Her beauty captivates the merchant, and her kindness is evident in her interactions, even when mistreated by her co-wives.
- Helpless but resilient: She often finds herself in difficult situations, whether it’s cooking or cleaning, but relies on her mother kite’s help and shows perseverance.
- Loyal and dutiful: Despite her challenges, she tries to fulfill her duties as a wife and cope with the jealousy of her co-wives.
- Dependent on her mother: The kite remains her primary source of guidance and support, symbolizing her deep connection to her origins and vulnerability.

2. The Kite (Foster Mother)

- Protective and caring: Though a bird, the kite raises the girl with love, providing her with food, clothes, and comfort. She acts as a mother figure, always protecting and guiding her daughter.
- Resourceful and magical: The kite has the ability to perform miracles, helping the girl with tasks like cooking and cleaning, and providing inexhaustible supplies.
- Wise and selfless: The kite assesses the merchant’s character before allowing her daughter to marry him. She selflessly helps her daughter whenever needed, even though it costs her life in the end.

3. The Merchant (Husband)

- Wealthy and powerful: As a successful merchant with seven wives, he lives a life of luxury, but his interest in the kite’s daughter shows his attraction to beauty and charm.
- Just and loving: He treats the kite’s daughter with affection, but his love for her provokes jealousy in his other wives. In the end, he seeks justice by testing the guilt of his wives and punishing the wrongdoers.
- Naive in family matters: Though caring, he is somewhat blind to the cruelty of his other wives until the situation escalates.

4. The Seven Co-Wives

- Jealous and spiteful: The wives are driven by jealousy and envy toward the kite's daughter, fearing that the merchant will favor her over them.
- Manipulative and cruel: They plot against the girl, setting her up to fail in domestic tasks and ultimately selling her to a fisherman. They also murder the kite to deprive the girl of her support.
- Cunning but ultimately doomed: Their cruel actions lead to their downfall, as they are eventually caught and punished for their evil deeds.

5. The Seventh Wife

- Innocent bystander: She plays no part in the cruel schemes of her co-wives and is not involved in the plot against the kite's daughter.
- Survivor: She is the only one to pass the merchant's test, showing that she had no ill intentions, and she is spared.

6. The Potter and Potter's Wife (Birth Parents)

- Indifferent and fearful: The potter cares only about having a son and threatens to punish his wife if she gives birth to another daughter. The wife, out of fear, abandons her child, setting the story in motion.

4.4.3 Check Your Progress: Answer in a line or Two- 03

1. Why did the potter's wife abandon her daughter?

2. Who found the baby floating in the river, and what happened next?

3. How did the kite raise the abandoned child?

4. What song did the kite teach her daughter in case of danger?

5. Why did the merchant decide to marry the kite's daughter?

4.5 The Parrot called Hiranman



In the second folktale, a poor bird catcher captures a talking parrot, the "hiraman." The bird advises the bird catcher to sell it to the king, promising a hefty reward. When presented to the king, the bird astonishes him by demanding a price of ten thousand rupees, claiming it will be of great service to the king. The king, charmed, pays the sum and becomes so fond of the parrot that he starts neglecting his six queens. Enraged and jealous, the queens plot to kill the bird but are dissuaded initially by the bird's recitation of the 330 million gods of the Hindu pantheon. However, their jealousy returns, and they again attempt to kill the bird. The hiranman cleverly tricks the queens by asking to be set free to give an accurate judgment on their beauty and then escapes through a water passage.

Upon the king's return, he mourns the loss of his parrot. Hearing of the king's distress, a woodcutter returns the parrot and is rewarded. The hiranman reveals the

queens' plot to kill it, prompting the furious king to banish them to the wilderness, where they are devoured by wild animals.

The story then takes a magical turn when the parrot mentions the beauty of a princess living beyond seven seas and thirteen rivers, stating that she is far more beautiful than the queens. Intrigued, the king decides to find this princess. The parrot instructs him to obtain a magical winged horse, the "pakshiraj," which can take him to the princess. After feeding the horse special grain for six months, the king embarks on a journey with the parrot and reaches the princess's palace. Through a clever trick involving silver-fried rice, the princess is lured to the king, who captures her and brings her back.

However, in his eagerness, the king whips the magical horse twice, despite the parrot's warning to only whip it once. As a result, the horse loses its power, and they are stranded in a forest. A local king arrives, kidnaps the princess, and blinds the king. But the parrot remains loyal and eventually helps the princess escape. The parrot fetches a rare remedy from a distant land, curing the blinded king, and the couple, along with the parrot, finally return to their kingdom. They marry, and the hiranman stays with them, continuing to recite the gods' names, and they live happily ever after.

4.5.1 Character Sketch of "A Parrot called Hiranman"

The Hiranman (Talking Parrot)

The hiranman is the central figure in the folktale, serving as a wise and magical bird with remarkable intelligence. Its cleverness and ability to speak allow it to play a vital role in shaping the events of the story. The parrot is loyal, resourceful, and quick-witted, traits that help it escape danger and protect its master, the king. Throughout the tale, the hiranman consistently proves its worth, from advising the birdcatcher to sell it to the king for a handsome sum, to tricking the jealous queens who plot to kill it, and ultimately saving the king and the princess. The parrot's loyalty remains steadfast, even when faced with threats to its life, and it uses its wit to manipulate situations for the greater good. Its knowledge of the gods and its magical insight into distant lands make it indispensable to the king, and it plays a crucial role in the happy conclusion of

the story.

The King

The king is a curious, ambitious, and somewhat impulsive character, driven by his desire for power and beauty. He becomes enamored with the hiranman after purchasing it, trusting the bird's advice and allowing it to guide his decisions. However, his impulsiveness and impatience, most notably when he whips the magical horse twice despite being warned by the parrot, lead to his temporary downfall. The king's neglect of his queens due to his fascination with the parrot sparks jealousy, setting off the chain of events that follow. His determination to find the princess beyond the seven seas and thirteen rivers, based on the parrot's description of her unparalleled beauty, highlights his adventurous spirit. Despite his blindness and loss of power at one point, the king's faith in the parrot and his persistence in regaining his kingdom and love lead him to a victorious conclusion, where he marries the princess and restores his reign.

The Six Queens

The queens represent jealousy and betrayal in the story, driven by their fear of losing the king's affection to the talking parrot. Initially, they plot to kill the Hiranman out of rage and frustration, feeling neglected and replaced by the bird. Although they are momentarily dissuaded when the parrot recites the names of the 330 million gods of the Hindu pantheon, their jealousy resurfaces, leading them to attempt the parrot's murder once again. Their cunning and manipulation ultimately result in their banishment, as the hiranman reveals their conspiracy to the king. Their tragic end, being devoured by wild animals in the wilderness, serves as a cautionary tale about the destructive power of jealousy and deception.

The Princess

The princess, though a key figure in the story, is portrayed as a passive character whose beauty serves as the catalyst for the king's quest. Living beyond seven seas and thirteen rivers, she is described by the Hiranman as being far more beautiful than the queens, which intrigues the king and prompts him to embark on a dangerous journey to find her. The princess's role is largely reactive; she is lured to the king through a trick involving silver-fried rice and later kidnapped by a local king. Though she doesn't take an active role in her own rescue, the loyalty and cleverness of the parrot ultimately secure her freedom. In the end, the princess marries the king, but her

motivations remain unexplored, making her a figure of idealized beauty rather than a fully developed character.

The Local King (Antagonist)

The local king serves as a secondary antagonist in the story, characterized by his cruelty and opportunism. When the main king, the parrot, and the princess are stranded in the forest due to the loss of the magical horse's power, the local king seizes the opportunity to kidnap the princess and blind the main king. His actions reveal his ruthless nature, as he capitalizes on the misfortune of others for his own gain. However, his role is short-lived, as the loyalty and intelligence of the HIRAMAN ultimately lead to the downfall of his plot. The local king's character adds an element of danger and heightens the stakes of the story, but his defeat by the parrot's intervention reinforces the theme of loyalty and wisdom triumphing over greed and cruelty.

The Pakshiraj (Magical Winged Horse)

The pakshiraj, a magical winged horse, is a mystical creature that aids the king in his quest to find the princess. It is portrayed as a powerful but sensitive being, capable of great feats but easily harmed by mistreatment. The horse's loyalty is evident in its willingness to take the king on his journey, but when the king whips it twice instead of once, the horse loses its magical power, leaving them stranded in the forest. The Pakshiraj serves as a symbol of the king's impulsiveness and the consequences of not heeding wise advice. Although it plays a minor role in the story, the horse's presence is crucial to the king's initial success in reaching the princess.

4.5.2 Check Your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 04

1. What makes HIRAMAN the parrot special in the Bengali village?

2. How does HIRAMAN impact the villagers?

3. Who disrupts the harmony in the village by trying to acquire Hiranman?

4. What values does the story "A Parrot Called Hiranman" emphasize?

5. How does the story conclude?

4.6 Winning a Princess



In a kingdom, a king had three sons, all skilled in martial arts. When a contest in string and ball games was announced in the north, the youngest prince, despite his brothers' warnings of danger, competed and won numerous prizes. Later, when a

contest required walking a mile on the ocean, the youngest prince succeeded again, winning diamond medallions.

Subsequently, the kingdom of Ramarajya announced that Princess Kamasandage was seeking a suitor, and many had failed, ending up as water carriers in her garden. The eldest prince, eager to marry before his younger siblings, set out but was humiliated by magical dolls in the palace, ending up as a gardener. The second prince faced the same fate.

The youngest prince, undeterred, set off to try his luck. On his way, he rescued a trapped demon, who later helped him by transforming into a fly to accompany him. The prince learned that Kamasandage's palace had magical dolls and tricky trials. Using his wits, the prince cleverly solved the challenges posed by the palace's magical creatures by offering them items like bananas, a buffalo calf, a piece of coconut, and an egg. He also outsmarted the dolls by using oranges to pacify them.

In the final test, he successfully moved two beds together by telling stories with the demon's help. Kamasandage, impressed by his ingenuity, tried to win him back by searching for him. She found him disguised as a sesame guard, and after a brief confrontation, he agreed to marry her. They married, and the prince released all other captive princes from her garden, ruling Ramarajya with Kamasandage in great style.

4.6.1 Character Sketch for “Winning a princess”

The Youngest Prince

The youngest prince is a figure of courage and determination. Despite his older brothers' warnings, he repeatedly ventures into contests and challenges that others avoid due to their risks. His bravery is evident when he participates in dangerous contests and succeeds where others have failed. His persistence is rewarded as he returns with prizes and medals. His resourcefulness shines through when he faces the trials set by Princess Kamasandage's palace. His cleverness in dealing with the magical dolls and creatures, along with his strategic use of gifts like bananas, a buffalo calf, and a piece of coconut, demonstrates his quick thinking and adaptability. Ultimately, his bravery and intelligence lead him to win Kamasandage's hand and rule the kingdom with wisdom and honor.

The Eldest Prince

The eldest prince is portrayed as ambitious and competitive, eager to marry before his younger brothers. His pride and sense of superiority are evident in his belief that he should be the first to try his luck with Princess Kamasandage. However, his arrogance leads to his downfall when he fails to handle the magical trials in the palace, becoming another gardener in Kamasandage's garden. His inability to overcome the challenges shows his lack of true resourcefulness and perseverance.

The Second Prince

The second prince shares a similar fate with his eldest brother, failing to win Kamasandage's hand. His attempt to succeed where his brother failed demonstrates his persistence but also highlights his lack of unique strategy or skill. He ends up in the same humiliating position as his elder brother, working in the garden, indicating that he lacks the distinctive qualities needed to overcome the palace's magical trials.

Princess Kamasandage

Princess Kamasandage is initially presented as a figure of great beauty and challenge, known for her difficulty in finding a suitor. Her palace is filled with magical trials designed to test the worthiness of her suitors. She is portrayed as proud and somewhat impatient, as seen when she becomes furious and tears the curtains and fabrics during the prince's storytelling. Her ultimate pursuit of the youngest prince indicates her deep interest and admiration for his cleverness and bravery. Her decision to marry him and rule alongside him reflects her recognition of his true worth.

The Demon

The demon is a formidable and initially threatening figure who is later revealed to be a crucial ally. His transformation into a fly and his assistance to the prince demonstrate his willingness to repay the prince's kindness. His role in helping the prince navigate the trials and acquire necessary items shows his importance as a supportive character. Despite his fearsome appearance, the demon's actions reveal a sense of loyalty and cooperation.

The Palace Servants and Magical Creatures

The palace servants and magical creatures, such as the dolls and animals, serve as obstacles for the suitors. They are characterized by their magical abilities and their role in testing the suitors' worthiness. Their actions—whether slapping the suitors,

guarding doors, or posing challenges—add to the narrative’s magical and challenging elements, reinforcing the difficulty of winning Princess Kamasandage’s hand.

4.6.2 Check Your Progress

Answer in a line or two- 05

1. What motivates the youngest prince to participate in dangerous contests?

2. How does the eldest prince’s attempt to win Kamasandage’s hand end?

3. What challenges does the second prince face in the palace?

4. What key strategy does the youngest prince use to overcome the palace trials?

5. How does Princess Kamasandage react to the prince’s storytelling?

4.6.3 Unit Summary

The story unfolds as the prince, driven by his noble upbringing and a desire to prove himself worthy, undertakes a series of challenging tasks set by the princess's father, the king. Along the way, he faces mystical creatures, solves riddles, and demonstrates acts of bravery that win him allies and admiration among the kingdom's inhabitants. Through his trials, the prince learns valuable lessons about

honor, perseverance, and the true nature of love. Ultimately, after overcoming daunting obstacles and adversaries, he succeeds in impressing the princess with his character and determination. The tale concludes with their union, symbolizing the triumph of courage, integrity, and the transformative power of love within Tulu cultural traditions.

4.6.4 Glossaries

1. **Anthropomorphism-** The attribution of human traits, emotions, or intentions to animals, gods, or inanimate objects.
2. **Archetype-** A typical character, action, or situation that represents universal patterns of human nature.
3. **Moral-** A lesson or principle contained within a story, especially a folktale or fable, often teaching right from wrong.
4. **Hero's Journey-** A narrative pattern identified by Joseph Campbell, in which the protagonist goes on an adventure, faces challenges, and returns transformed.
5. **Symbolism-** The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities in a narrative.
6. **Motif-** A recurring element, theme, or idea in a literary work.
7. **Fable-** A short story, typically with animals as characters, that conveys a moral.
8. **Protagonist-** The main character in a story who drives the plot forward and whose journey or transformation is central to the narrative.
9. **Allegory-** A story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, often moral or political.

4.6.5 Self-Assessment questions

1. Write a short reflection: Why do you think laughter and tears are powerful in storytelling? What moments in your own life have triggered these emotions?
2. Reflect on how the story "Other Lives" teaches lessons about empathy. How do folktales promote understanding of others' experiences?

3. Analyze the cultural significance of kites in different societies. What is the role of women in folktales like "The Kite's Daughter"?
4. Discuss why animals like parrots are often used to convey messages in folktales. What are the key moral lessons from the story "A Parrot Called Hiranman"?
5. Compare this folktale with other "hero quest" narratives. How do different cultures depict the theme of "winning a princess"?

4.6.6 Suggested Readings

1. "Folktales of the World" by Richard M. Dorson
2. "Women and Gender in Folktales" by Kay Turner
3. "The Story of Kites: A Story about China" by Ying Chang Compestine
4. "Other Lives: Narratives of the Self in Folklore" by Elliot Oring
5. "The Moral of the Story: Folktales and Their Meanings" by Heather Forest
6. "Aesop's Fables: A New Translation" by Laura Gibbs
7. "Birds in Folklore" by Gillian Cross
8. "Talking Animals in Myths and Folklore" by David Adams Leeming
9. "Folktales from India" by A. K. Ramanujan (This includes the story of Hiranman)

4.6.7 Open Source E-content links

1. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/folklore>
2. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/>

4.6.8 References

1. **"Folktales and Fairy Tales: A Cultural History"** by Jack Zipes
2. **"The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales"** by Bruno Bettelheim
3. **"Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale"** by Marina Warner
4. "World Tales" by Idries Shah
5. **"The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion"** by James George Frazer

Self-Assessment Questions:

Two Marks

4.1

Explain how the story's use of emotional connections between the audience and characters contribute to its emotional impact

The story's use of emotional connections creates a sense of empathy and understanding between the audience and characters. This connection enables the audience to invest in the characters' experiences and emotions. As a result, the story's emotional impact is heightened.

Describe the narrative techniques the story employ to build tension and suspense, leading to an emotional climax

The story uses techniques like foreshadowing, imagery, and symbolism to build tension and suspense. These techniques create a sense of anticipation and uncertainty, leading to an emotional climax. The narrative's pacing and plot twists also contribute to the emotional impact.

4.2

Describe the story's representation of Kashmiri identity and culture challenge dominant narratives about Kashmir

The story challenges dominant narratives by presenting an alternative perspective on Kashmiri history and politics. It highlights the human cost of conflict and the resilience of the Kashmiri people. This representation encourages readers to think critically about dominant narratives.

Analyze the characters' experiences and perspectives play in shaping the narrative's themes and messages

The characters' experiences and perspectives are crucial in shaping the narrative's themes and messages. They provide a personal and humanizing perspective on the

conflict and its impact. Through their stories, the narrative conveys the complexities and nuances of the issue.

4.3

Compare the kite symbolize the protagonist's aspirations and desires for freedom and empowerment

The kite represents the protagonist's aspirations and desires for freedom and empowerment through its flight and soaring. It symbolizes the joy and beauty of life, contrasting with the harsh realities of the protagonist's world. The kite's flight signifies the protagonist's desire for liberation.

Elucidate the role does the narrative play in challenging traditional notions of femininity and female empowerment

The narrative challenges traditional notions of femininity and female empowerment by presenting a strong and independent female protagonist. It showcases her growing independence and self-awareness, encouraging readers to think critically about gender roles. The story promotes a more nuanced understanding of female empowerment.

4.4

Discuss the parrot's relationships with the characters reveal their personalities and emotions

The parrot's relationships with the characters reveal their personalities and emotions through its interactions and behavior. The parrot's responses and reactions reflect the characters' traits and feelings. These interactions add depth to the narrative and characters.

Justify the significance of the story's representation of Bengali culture and identity hold

The story's representation of Bengali culture and identity is significant as it showcases the community's values and customs. It highlights the importance of cultural heritage and tradition. The narrative promotes a sense of pride and belonging among readers.

4.5

Portray the story's use of humor and satire critique societal norms and expectations

The story uses humor and satire to critique societal norms and expectations by exaggerating and mocking them. It challenges traditional notions of love and marriage, encouraging readers to think critically. The narrative's lighthearted tone makes it engaging and entertaining.

What role do the characters' experiences and relationships play in shaping the narrative's themes and messages?

: The characters' experiences and relationships are crucial in shaping the narrative's themes and messages. They provide a personal and relatable perspective on love and relationships. Through their stories, the narrative conveys the complexities and nuances of romantic relationships.

Five Marks

1. Formulate a theory on how the emotional impact of "Why Audiences Laugh or Cry" is maximized or minimized.
2. Categorize the emotional conflicts presented in "Why Audiences Laugh or Cry" and organize them into themes.
3. Judge the effectiveness of the narrative in representing the complexities of Kashmiri history and politics in "Other Lives".
4. How can "Other Lives" be improved to enhance its cultural significance?
5. Devise a theory on how "The Kite's Daughter" builds a sense of freedom and empowerment.
6. Sort the traditional notions of femininity and female empowerment presented in "The Kite's Daughter".

7. Formulate a theory on how "A Parrot Called Hiranman" builds a sense of community and belonging.
8. Classify the traditional notions of cultural heritage and tradition presented in "A Parrot Called Hiranman".
9. Organize the traditional notions of love, marriage, and family presented in "Winning a Princess".

Eight Marks

1. Judge the effectiveness of the narrative in proposing a new understanding of Bengali culture and identity in "A Parrot Called Hiranman".
2. Modify the narrative of "A Parrot Called Hiranman" to challenge or defend traditional notions of cultural heritage.
3. Review the effectiveness of the narrative in resolving emotional conflicts in "Why Audiences Laugh or Cry".
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the narrative in proposing a new understanding of Assamese culture and tradition in "The Kite's Daughter".
5. Change the narrative of "The Kite's Daughter" to challenge or defend traditional notions of femininity
6. Alter the narrative structure of "Why Audiences Laugh or Cry" to change the audience's emotional response.
7. Formulate a theory on how "Other Lives" proposes a nuanced understanding of Kashmiri identity and culture.
8. Classify the dominant narratives about Kashmir and its people presented in "Other Lives".
9. Judge the effectiveness of the narrative in proposing a new understanding of love and relationships in "Winning a Princess".
10. Amend the narrative of "Winning a Princess" to challenge or defend traditional notions of love and marriage

Unit V
Folktales from outside India

Unit-V

Folktales from Outside India

5.1 Unit Objectives

Folktales from outside India can serve several objectives, each contributing to a deeper understanding of global cultures and storytelling traditions. To appreciate and understand the cultural diversity of different regions through their folktales, highlighting unique customs, beliefs, and values. To compare and contrast themes, motifs, and narrative structures across different folktales, identifying universal human experiences and cultural variations. To foster empathy and respect for diverse cultures by exploring their folklore, recognizing similarities and appreciating differences in storytelling traditions.

5.2 About Chinese Folktale

Chinese folktales have a rich history spanning thousands of years, deeply rooted in the country's cultural, philosophical, and religious traditions. These stories often reflect Confucian values, Taoist principles, and Buddhist teachings, blending moral lessons with fantastical elements. They serve not only as entertainment but also as a means of passing down cultural wisdom and societal norms from generation to generation.

Many Chinese folktales feature legendary figures and mythical creatures. Stories about the Jade Emperor, the Monkey King, and the Eight Immortals are widely known and beloved. These tales often involve quests, magical transformations, and encounters with supernatural beings, captivating audiences with their imaginative narratives while imparting important life lessons.

A significant number of Chinese folktales revolve around the concept of filial piety, a cornerstone of Confucian ethics. These stories emphasize the importance of respecting and caring for one's parents and ancestors. Tales like "The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars" showcase extreme acts of devotion to reinforce this cultural value, though modern interpretations often focus on more practical applications of filial respect.

Chinese folklore also includes numerous origin stories that explain natural phenomena, cultural practices, or historical events. For instance, the tale of Chang'e

explains the existence of the moon goddess and is closely tied to the Mid-Autumn Festival.

5.2.1 The Fairy Serpent (Chinese)

ONCE there was a man who had three daughters, of whom he was devotedly fond. They were skillful in embroidery, and every day on his way home from work he gathered some flowers for them to use as patterns. One day when he found no flowers along his route homeward he went into the woods to look for wild blossoms, and he unwittingly invaded the domain of a fairy serpent that coiled around him, held him tightly, and railed at him for having entered his garden. The man excused himself, saying that he came merely to get a few flowers for his daughters, who would be sorely disappointed were he to go home without his usual gift to them. The snake asked him the number, the names, and the ages of his daughters and then refused to let him go unless he promised one of them in marriage to him. The poor man tried every argument he could think of to induce the snake to release him upon easier terms, but the reptile would accept no other ransom. At last the father, dreading greater evil for his daughters should they be deprived of his protection, gave the required promise and went home. He could eat no supper, however, for he knew the power of fairies to afflict those who offend them, and he was full of anxiety concerning the misfortunes that would overwhelm his whole family should the contract be disregarded. Some days passed; his daughters carefully prepared his meals and affectionately besought him to eat, but he would not come to the table. He was always plunged in sorrowful meditation. They conferred among themselves as to the cause of his uncommon behavior, and, having decided that one of them must have displeased him, they agreed to try to find out which one it might be by going separately to urge him to eat. The eldest went, expressed her distress at his loss of appetite, and urged him to partake of food. He replied that he would do so if she would for his sake marry the snake to whom he had promised a wife. She bluntly refused to carry out her father's contract and left him in deeper trouble than before. The second daughter then went to beg him to take food, received the same reply, and likewise declined to fulfill the engagement he had made.

The youngest daughter then went and entreated him to eat, heard his story, and at once declared that if he would care for his own health properly, she would become

the bride of the serpent. The father therefore took his meals again, the days sped without bringing calamity, and the welfare of the family for a time seemed secure. But one morning as the girls were sitting at their embroidery, a wasp flew into the room and sang: Buzz! I buzz and come the faster; Who will wed the snake, my master? Whenever the wasp alighted the girls prodded him with their needles and followed him up so closely that he had to flee for his life. The next morning two wasps came, singing the same refrain; the third morning three wasps came; and the number of wasps increased day by day, until the girls could no longer put them to rout, nor endure their stings. Then the youngest said that in order to relieve the family of the buzzing plague, she would go to her uncanny bridegroom. The wasps accompanied her on the road and guided her into the woods where the fairy serpent awaited her in a palace that he had built for her reception. There were spacious rooms with carved furniture inlaid with precious stones, chests full of silken fabrics, caskets of jade, and jewels of gold. The snake had beautiful eyes and a musical voice, but his skin was warty and the girl shuddered at the thought of daily seeing him about. After the wedding supper, at which the two sat alone, the girl told her spouse that she appreciated the excellence of all that he had provided for her and that she should perform all her domestic duties exactly. For many days she kept the house neat, cooked the food, and made all things pleasant for her repulsive bridegroom. He doted upon her and pined whenever she was out of his sight. So heedful was he of her wishes and her welfare that she grew to like his companionship and to feel a great lonesomeness when ever he was absent.

Having no help in her household work, she was, one day, on finding the well dried up, obliged to go into the forest in search of water, which she finally discovered and toilsomely brought back from a distant spring. On returning she found the snake dying of thirst, and in her eagerness to save his life she grasped and plunged him into the water, from which he rose transformed, a strong and handsome man. He had been the subject of wicked enchantment, from which her dutiful quest and gracious pity set him free. Thereafter she often with her admirable husband visited her old home and carried gifts to those who were less happy than she.

5.2.3 Summary and Analysis



A man with three daughters, known for their embroidery, ventures into the woods to find flowers. Unwittingly, he enters a fairy snake's domain, who captures him and demands one of his daughters as a bride in exchange for the man's release. The father reluctantly agrees, fearing the fairy's wrath.

The father becomes troubled and refuses to eat, prompting his daughters to investigate. The eldest and middle daughters refuse to marry the snake, but the youngest daughter selflessly agrees, ensuring her father's wellbeing.

A swarm of wasps soon arrives daily, singing about the snake, until the youngest daughter is forced to marry the snake. She follows the wasps into the woods and finds herself in a luxurious palace. Though the snake is kind and generous, his appearance repulses her. She performs her duties faithfully, and over time, she grows fond of him. One day, while fetching water, she returns to find the snake dying of thirst. In her desperation to save him, she plunges him into water, transforming him into a handsome man. The snake had been under a wicked enchantment, and her compassion freed him. Together, they live happily, visiting her family often and bringing gifts to those less fortunate.

This story, much like the traditional "Beauty and the Beast" tale, revolves around themes of sacrifice, compassion, and transformation. The youngest daughter emerges as the true heroine, embodying the virtues of selflessness and duty. Unlike her elder sisters, she willingly sacrifices her own desires to protect her father and family. This act of selflessness becomes the key to her eventual happiness, as her compassion for the snake later transforms him into a prince.

The snake symbolizes an external ugliness masking inner goodness. Despite his repulsive form, he treats his wife with kindness and love, showing that appearances can be deceiving. His transformation into a handsome man represents the idea that love and kindness can break even the darkest of enchantments.

The story also emphasizes familial duty and love. The youngest daughter's willingness to marry the snake contrasts with her sisters' refusal, highlighting her unique sense of responsibility and care for her family.

In the end, the fairy tale reinforces the moral that true beauty lies not in appearance but in the heart and character of a person, and that compassion and love can bring about miraculous change.

5.2.4 Character Sketch of “The Fairy Serpent”

The Father:

The father is depicted as a devoted and caring parent, who cherishes his three daughters. His daily routine of bringing them flowers shows his deep affection and desire to nurture their creativity. However, his love and responsibility for his daughters also become his downfall when he unknowingly trespasses into the fairy snake's domain. His decision to promise one of his daughters in marriage to the snake, though made under duress, is driven by fear for his life and concern for the well-being of his family. The father's internal struggle is evident in the way he becomes consumed with guilt and sorrow after making the promise, unable to eat or find peace. His character reflects the weight of parental responsibility and the difficult choices one must sometimes make to protect their loved ones, even if those choices bring personal torment.

The Eldest and Second Daughters:

The eldest and second daughters are dutiful and loving, though not as self-sacrificing as their younger sister. They notice their father's distress and try to comfort him, but when faced with the prospect of marrying the fairy snake, they each refuse outright. Their refusal can be seen as a mixture of self-preservation and fear of the unknown, as neither daughter is willing to sacrifice their personal happiness for the sake of their father's promise. Unlike their younger sister, they are more pragmatic and perhaps less inclined to embrace danger or discomfort. While they love their father and

are concerned for his well-being, their refusal to marry the snake highlights their limitations when it comes to selflessness and courage.

The Youngest Daughter:

The youngest daughter is the central figure of the story, embodying qualities of selflessness, bravery, and compassion. Upon learning of her father's plight, she immediately agrees to marry the snake to relieve him of his guilt and suffering. Her willingness to sacrifice her own happiness for the sake of her family shows her deep sense of duty and love. As she moves into her new life with the snake, she remains dutiful and caring, performing her household tasks with grace despite her initial repulsion toward her husband. Over time, her empathy and kindness allow her to look beyond the snake's grotesque appearance and see the goodness in his character. Her ultimate act of saving his life by plunging him into water breaks the curse and transforms him into a handsome prince. This transformation is not only physical but also symbolic of her ability to see past appearances and recognize the true worth of an individual. Her character represents the power of love, duty, and inner strength to overcome even the most challenging circumstances.

The Snake/Enchanted Prince:

The snake, though initially a fearsome figure, is revealed to be a tragic character under a wicked enchantment. Despite his frightening appearance, he treats the youngest daughter with great kindness and respect, providing her with a lavish palace and ensuring her comfort. His genuine affection for her is evident in his attentiveness and desire to make her happy. Over time, the snake's love for his wife becomes his redeeming quality, as he pines for her when she is away and cherishes her presence. His transformation back into a human at the end of the story is a direct result of the youngest daughter's compassion and care. The snake's character reflects the theme of hidden beauty, showing that true goodness lies within, and love has the power to break even the strongest curses.

The Wasps:

The wasps act as agents of fate in the story, serving as a reminder of the promise made by the father. Their persistent buzzing and increasing numbers symbolize the inescapability of destiny, driving the youngest daughter to fulfill her role as the snake's bride. As they swarm the household, their presence becomes unbearable, prompting the youngest daughter to embrace her fate and leave with them to meet the snake.

The wasps represent the forces of nature and magic that compel the characters toward their destinies, pushing the story toward its resolution.

5.2.5 Check your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 02

1. Why does the father enter the woods?

2. What condition does the fairy serpent set for the father's release?

3. How do the eldest and second daughters react to their father's request to marry the snake?

4. Why does the youngest daughter agree to marry the snake?

5. How does the youngest daughter's perception of the snake change over time?

5.3 About Japanese Folktale

Japanese folktales, known as "mukashibanashi" (tales of long ago), form an integral part of Japan's cultural heritage. These stories have been passed down through generations, often blending elements of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs with local customs

and historical events. They serve as a window into traditional Japanese values, social norms, and the country's rich mythological landscape.

Many Japanese folktales feature supernatural beings and mythical creatures. Yokai, a class of supernatural entities, play prominent roles in these stories. These can range from mischievous spirits like the shape-shifting kitsune (fox) to more malevolent beings like the oni (demon). Tales involving these creatures often serve to explain natural phenomena, reinforce moral lessons, or simply entertain with their fantastical elements.

A common theme in Japanese folktales is the importance of humility, kindness, and respect for nature. Stories like "The Grateful Crane" or "The Bamboo Cutter" emphasize these virtues, often portraying characters who are rewarded for their good deeds or punished for greed and arrogance. These tales reflect the Japanese cultural emphasis on harmony with nature and society.

5.3.1 The Tea-Kettle (Japanese)

Long ago, as I've heard tell, there dwelt at the temple of Morinji, in the Province of Kotsuke, a holy priest.

Now there were three things about this reverend man. First, he was wrapped up in meditations and observances and forms and doctrines. He was a great one for the Sacred Sutras, and knew strange and mystical things. Then he had a fine exquisite taste of his own, and nothing pleased him so much as the ancient tea ceremony of the *Cha-no-yu*; and for the third thing about him, he knew both sides of a copper coin well enough and loved a bargain.

None so pleased as he when he happened upon an ancient tea-kettle, lying rusty and dirty and half-forgotten in a corner of a poor shop in a back street of his town.

"An ugly bit of old metal," says the holy man to the shopkeeper; "but it will do well enough to boil my humble drop of water of an evening. I'll give you three *rin* for it." This he did and took the kettle home, rejoicing; for it was of bronze, fine work, the very thing for the *Cha-no-yu*.

A novice cleaned and scoured the tea-kettle, and it came out as pretty as you please. The priest turned it this way and that, and upside down, looked into it, tapped it with his finger-nail. He smiled. "A bargain," he cried, "a bargain!" and rubbed his hands. He set the kettle upon a box covered over with a purple cloth, and looked at it so long that first he was fain to rub his eyes many times, and then to close them altogether. His head dropped forward and he slept.

And then, believe me, the wonderful thing happened. The tea-kettle moved, though no hand was near it. A hairy head, with two bright eyes, looked out of the spout. The lid jumped up and down. Four brown and hairy paws appeared, and a fine bushy tail. In a minute the kettle was down from the box and going round and round looking at things.

"A very comfortable room, to be sure," says the tea-kettle.

Pleased enough to find itself so well lodged, it soon began to dance and to caper nimbly and to sing at the top of its voice. Three or four novices were studying in the next room. "The old man is lively," they said; "only hark to him. What can he be at?" And they laughed in their sleeves.

Heaven's mercy, the noise that the tea-kettle made! Bang! bang! Thud! thud! thud!

The novices soon stopped laughing. One of them slid aside the *kara-kami* and peeped through.

"Arah, the devil and all's in it!" he cried. "Here's the master's old tea-kettle turned into a sort of a badger. The gods protect us from witchcraft, or for certain we shall be lost!"

"And I scoured it not an hour since," said another novice, and he fell to reciting the Holy Sutras on his knees.

A third laughed. "I'm for a nearer view of the hobgoblin," he said.

So the lot of them left their books in a twinkling, and gave chase to the tea-kettle to catch it. But could they come up with the tea-kettle? Not a bit of it. It danced and it leapt and it

flew up into the air. The novices rushed here and there, slipping upon the mats. They grew hot. They grew breathless.

“Ha, ha! Ha, ha!” laughed the tea-kettle; and “Catch me if you can!” laughed the wonderful tea-kettle.

Presently the priest awoke, all rosy, the holy man.

“And what’s the meaning of this racket,” he says, “disturbing me at my holy meditations and all?”

“Master, master,” cry the novices, panting and mopping their brows, “your tea-kettle is bewitched. It was a badger, no less. And the dance it has been giving us, you’d never believe!”

“Stuff and nonsense,” says the priest; “bewitched? Not a bit of it. There it rests on its box, good quiet thing, just where I put it.”

Sure enough, so it did, looking as hard and cold and innocent as you please. There was not a hair of a badger near it. It was the novices that looked foolish.

“A likely story indeed,” says the priest. “I have heard of the pestle that took wings to itself and flew away, parting company with the mortar. That is easily to be understood by any man. But a kettle that turned into a badger—no, no! To your books, my sons, and pray to be preserved from the perils of illusion.”

That very night the holy man filled the kettle with water from the spring and set it on the *hibachi* to boil for his cup of tea. When the water began to boil—

“Ai! Ai!” the kettle cried; “Ai! Ai! The heat of the Great Hell!” And it lost no time at all, but hopped off the fire as quick as you please.

“Sorcery!” cried the priest. “Black magic! A devil! A devil! A devil! Mercy on me! Help! Help! Help!” He was frightened out of his wits, the dear good man. All the novices came running to see what was the matter.

“The tea-kettle is bewitched,” he gasped; “it was a badger, assuredly it was a badger ... it both speaks and leaps about the room.”

“Nay, master,” said a novice, “see where it rests upon its box, good quiet thing.”

And sure enough, so it did.

“Most reverend sir,” said the novice, “let us all pray to be preserved from the perils of illusion.”

The priest sold the tea-kettle to a tinker and got for it twenty copper coins.

“It’s a mighty fine bit of bronze,” says the priest. “Mind, I’m giving it away to you, I’m sure I cannot tell what for.” Ah, he was the one for a bargain! The tinker was a happy man and carried home the kettle. He turned it this way and that, and upside down, and looked into it.

“A pretty piece,” says the tinker; “a very good bargain.” And when he went to bed that night he put the kettle by him, to see it first thing in the morning.

He awoke at midnight and fell to looking at the kettle by the bright light of the moon.

Presently it moved, though there was no hand near it.

“Strange,” said the tinker; but he was a man who took things as they came.

A hairy head, with two bright eyes, looked out of the kettle’s spout. The lid jumped up and down. Four brown and hairy paws appeared, and a fine bushy tail. It came quite close to the tinker and laid a paw upon him.

“Well?” says the tinker.

“I am not wicked,” says the tea-kettle.

“No,” says the tinker.

“But I like to be well treated. I am a badger tea-kettle.”

“So it seems,” says the tinker.

“At the temple they called me names, and beat me and set me on the fire. I couldn’t stand it, you know.”

“I like your spirit,” says the tinker.

“I think I shall settle down with you.”

“Shall I keep you in a lacquer box?” says the tinker.

“Not a bit of it, keep me with you; let us have a talk now and again. I am very fond of a pipe. I like rice to eat, and beans and sweet things.”

“A cup of *saké* sometimes?” says the tinker.

“Well, yes, now you mention it.”

“I’m willing,” says the tinker.

“Thank you kindly,” says the tea-kettle; “and, as a beginning, would you object to my sharing your bed? The night has turned a little chilly.”

“Not the least in the world,” says the tinker.

The tinker and the tea-kettle became the best of friends. They ate and talked together. The kettle knew a thing or two and was very good company.

One day: “Are you poor?” says the kettle.

“Yes,” says the tinker, “middling poor.”

“Well, I have a happy thought. For a tea-kettle, I am out-of-the-way—really very accomplished.”

“I believe you,” says the tinker.

“My name is *Bumbuku-Chagama*; I am the very prince of Badger Tea-Kettles.”

“Your servant, my lord,” says the tinker.

“If you’ll take my advice,” says the tea-kettle, “you’ll carry me round as a show; I really am out-of-the-way, and it’s my opinion you’d make a mint of money.”

“That would be hard work for you, my dear *Bumbuku*,” says the tinker.

“Not at all; let us start forthwith,” says the tea-kettle.

So they did. The tinker bought hangings for a theatre, and he called the show *Bumbuku-Chagama*. How the people flocked to see the fun! For the wonderful and most accomplished tea-kettle danced and sang, and walked the tight rope as to the manner born. It played such tricks and had such droll ways that the people laughed till their sides ached. It was a treat to see the tea-kettle bow as gracefully as a lord and thank the people for their patience.

The *Bumbuku-Chagama* was the talk of the country-side, and all the gentry came to see it as well as the commonalty. As for the tinker, he waved a fan and took the money. You may believe that he grew fat and rich. He even went to Court, where the great ladies and the royal princesses made much of the wonderful tea-kettle.

At last the tinker retired from business, and to him the tea-kettle came with tears in its bright eyes.

“I’m much afraid it’s time to leave you,” it says.

“Now, don’t say that, *Bumbuku*, dear,” says the tinker. “We’ll be so happy together now we are rich.”

“I’ve come to the end of my time,” says the tea-kettle. “You’ll not see old *Bumbuku* any more; henceforth I shall be an ordinary kettle, nothing more or less.”

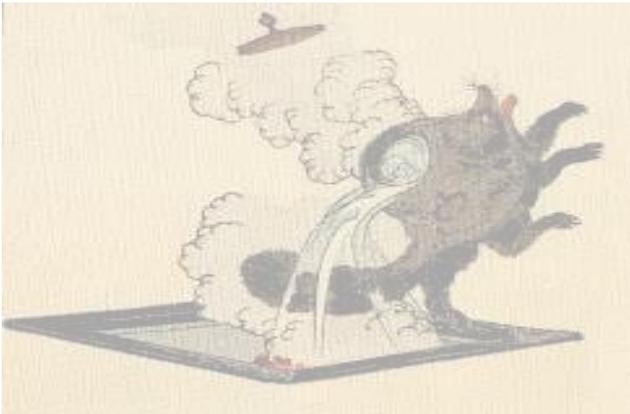
“Oh, my dear *Bumbuku*, what shall I do?” cried the poor tinker in tears.

“I think I should like to be given to the temple of Morinji, as a very sacred treasure,” says the tea-kettle.

It never spoke or moved again. So the tinker presented it as a very sacred treasure to the temple, and the half of his wealth with it.

And the tea-kettle was held in wondrous fame for many a long year. Some persons even worshipped it as a saint.

5.3.2 Summary and Analysis



In the Province of Kotsuke, a holy priest at the Morinji Temple is deeply absorbed in his religious practices, including the study of sacred texts and the tea ceremony known as Cha-no-yu. Despite his spiritual demeanor, he has a keen eye for bargains. One day, he stumbles upon a rusty, old tea-kettle in a poor shop and buys it for a mere three rin, seeing it as a good deal due to its fine bronze craftsmanship. The priest takes the kettle home, where a novice cleans it, revealing its true beauty. The priest is thrilled with his purchase and sets the kettle on a box covered with a purple cloth, admiring it with satisfaction. Exhausted from his reverie, he falls asleep.

During his slumber, something extraordinary occurs: the tea-kettle begins to move on its own. It transforms into a badger-like creature with a furry head, bright eyes, and a bushy tail. The magical kettle dances, sings, and causes a commotion in the room, much to the dismay of the novices studying nearby. They attempt to catch the kettle, but it evades them with playful agility, making a great deal of noise and confusion.

When the priest awakens, he finds the kettle back in its original place, appearing as innocent as ever. The novices report the kettle's bizarre behaviour, but the priest dismisses their claims as nonsense, attributing the events to illusions. The next evening, the priest fills the kettle with water and places it on the hibachi to boil for tea. As the

water heats, the kettle starts to cry out in distress, jumping off the fire and causing another uproar. This time, the priest is thoroughly frightened, believing the kettle to be bewitched. The novices, once again, find the kettle back to its normal, quiet state and advise the priest to pray against illusions.

The priest, terrified and unable to handle the kettle's behaviour, sells it to a tinker for twenty copper coins. The tinker, who is curious about the kettle, takes it home and observes its movements by the moonlight. The kettle reveals itself as a magical being named Bumbuku-Chagama, a prince of Badger Tea-Kettles. It expresses its dislike for the mistreatment it received at the temple and asks to be treated well. The tinker, open and kind, agrees to let Bumbuku-Chagama stay with him. They become friends, and the kettle suggests they use its talents to make money. The tinker sets up a show featuring Bumbuku-Chagama, who performs impressive tricks, sings, and dances. The show is a tremendous success, attracting both common people and nobility, and the tinker grows wealthy from the venture.

Eventually, Bumbuku-Chagama decides it is time to end its magical existence and return to being an ordinary kettle. It asks to be presented as a sacred treasure to the temple. The tinker, now prosperous, complies, giving both the kettle and half of his wealth to the temple. The kettle is revered and honoured as a sacred object, and its tale of transformation and the tinker's kindness become legendary.

5.3.3 Character Sketch

The Holy Priest is a deeply spiritual figure, devoted to the rituals and teachings of his faith. Despite his piety, he is paradoxically obsessed with material bargains, particularly those related to the tea ceremony he so cherishes. His reverence for sacred practices is undercut by his keen eye for acquiring valuable items at a low cost. This juxtaposition reveals a character who, while outwardly devout, struggles with a superficial attachment to material wealth. His dismissal of the tea-kettle's magical antics as mere illusions and his subsequent fear when the kettle exhibits strange behavior highlight his limited grasp of true spirituality and the real magic present in the world.

The Novices are earnest yet naïve followers of the priest, reacting with a mixture of curiosity and fear to the tea-kettle's magical transformation. Their initial amusement at

the kettle's antics quickly turns to panic as they witness its unpredictable behavior. The novices' fear and their frantic attempts to catch the kettle introduce a comedic element to the story, reflecting their lack of understanding and the confusion that arises when encountering the supernatural. Their eventual alignment with the priest's dismissive view underscores their limited perspective and their need for spiritual growth.

The Tinker is a practical and kind-hearted character who comes into possession of the magical tea-kettle after the priest's sale. Open-minded and receptive to the kettle's unique qualities, he treats Bumbuku-Chagama with the respect and care it had long desired. The tinker's resourcefulness shines through as he recognizes the kettle's potential and leverages it to create a highly successful show, leading to significant financial gain. His generosity and genuine friendship with the kettle highlight his character's depth and his ability to turn unexpected opportunities into remarkable successes.

Bumbuku-Chagama (The Magical Tea-Kettle) is the enchanting and whimsical heart of the story. Originally a tea-kettle, it transforms into a lively, badger-like creature with extraordinary abilities, such as dancing and singing. The kettle's playful and assertive nature contrasts with its initial mistreatment at the temple. Bumbuku-Chagama's interactions with the tinker reveal its caring side and its desire for a better life. The kettle's journey from mischievous troublemaker to a revered sacred object underscores its deep need for kindness and respect.

5.3.4 Check your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 02

1. Where does the priest find the tea-kettle?

2. What strange thing happens when the priest falls asleep?

3. How does the priest react when he first hears about the kettle's strange behavior?

4. What happens when the priest places the kettle on the fire?

5. Who does the priest sell the kettle to, and for how much?

5.4 About West African Folktale

West African folktales represent a vibrant and diverse storytelling tradition that spans numerous ethnic groups and cultures across the region. These tales have been passed down orally for generations, serving as a means of entertainment, education, and preservation of cultural values and history. They often reflect the rich spiritual beliefs, social structures, and natural environments of West African societies.

Many West African folktales feature animal characters as central figures, similar to Aesop's fables. However, in these stories, animals often embody human characteristics and social roles. The clever spider Anansi, originating from the Akan people of Ghana, is one of the most famous characters in West African folklore. Anansi tales, which spread to the Caribbean and Americas through the Atlantic slave trade, typically showcase the spider's wit and cunning as he outwits larger, stronger animals, often imparting lessons about intelligence overcoming physical strength.

West African folktales frequently incorporate elements of the supernatural and magical realism. Stories may feature interactions between humans and spirits, shape-shifting creatures, or journeys to otherworldly realms. These elements reflect the

complex spiritual beliefs of many West African cultures, where the natural and supernatural worlds are often seen as interconnected.

Many of these tales serve didactic purposes, teaching moral lessons and reinforcing cultural values. They often emphasize the importance of community, respect for elders, the consequences of greed or dishonesty, and the rewards of kindness and perseverance. The storytelling tradition itself is valued as a communal activity, with tales often told by elders to groups of children and adults, fostering a sense of shared cultural identity.

West African folktales also often reflect the region's historical experiences, including stories that subtly critique social injustices or colonial experiences. Some tales have evolved over time to incorporate modern elements while retaining their traditional moral core, demonstrating the adaptability and enduring relevance of these storytelling traditions.

5.4.1 How we Got the Name Spider Tales' (West African)

In the olden days all the stories which men told were stories of Nyankupon, the chief of the gods. Spider, who was very conceited, wanted the stories to be told about him.

Accordingly, one day he went to Nyankupon and asked that, in future, all tales told by men might be Anansi stories, instead of Nyankupon stories. Nyankupon agreed, on one condition. He told Spider (or Anansi) that he must bring him three things: the first was a jar full of live bees, the second was a boa-constrictor, and the third a tiger. Spider gave his promise.

He took an earthen vessel and set out for a place where he knew were numbers of bees. When he came in sight of the bees he began saying to himself, "They will not be able to fill this jar"—"Yes, they will be able"—"No, they will not be able," until the bees came up to him and said, "What are you talking about, Mr. Anansi?" He thereupon explained to them that Nyankupon and he had had a great dispute. Nyankupon had said the bees could not fly into the jar—Anansi had said they could. The bees immediately declared that of course they could fly into the jar—which they at once did. As soon as they were safely inside, Anansi sealed up the jar and sent it off to Nyankupon.

Next day he took a long stick and set out in search of a boa-constrictor. When he arrived at the place where one lived he began speaking to himself again. "He will just be as long as this stick"—"No, he will not be so long as this"—"Yes, he will be as long as this." These words he repeated several times, till the boa came out and asked him what was the matter. "Oh, we have been having a dispute in Nyankupon's town about you. Nyankupon's people say you are not as long as this stick. I say you are. Please let me measure you by it." The boa innocently laid himself out straight, and Spider lost no time in tying him on to the stick from end to end. He then sent him to Nyankupon.

The third day he took a needle and thread and sewed up his eye. He then set out for a den where he knew a tiger lived. As he approached the place he began to shout and sing so loudly that the tiger came out to see what was the matter. "Can you not see?" said Spider. "My eye is sewn up and now I can see such wonderful things that I must sing about them." "Sew up my eyes," said the tiger, "then I too can see these surprising sights." Spider immediately did so. Having thus made the tiger helpless, he led him straight to Nyankupon's house. Nyankupon was amazed at Spider's cleverness in fulfilling the three conditions. He immediately gave him permission for the future to call all the old tales Anansi tales.

5.4.2 Summary and Analysis



In the olden days, all stories were about Nyankupon, the chief of the gods. However, the conceited Spider (Anansi) wanted all stories to be about him instead. Anansi approached Nyankupon with his request, and Nyankupon agreed on the condition that Anansi bring him three things: a jar full of live bees, a boa constrictor, and a tiger.

Using clever tricks, Anansi fulfilled the tasks. He tricked the bees into entering a jar by claiming they could prove their flying ability. He measured the boa constrictor by getting it to stretch along a stick and then tying it up. Lastly, he sewed up his own eye and convinced the tiger to do the same, rendering the tiger helpless and delivering him to Nyankupon. Impressed with Anansi's cleverness, Nyankupon granted his wish, and from that point onward, all tales were called Anansi stories.

This tale emphasizes the cleverness, cunning, and trickery of Anansi, a recurring figure in African folklore. Anansi uses his wit and psychological manipulation to accomplish what seem to be impossible tasks. His ability to outsmart creatures much larger and stronger than him (like the boa constrictor and tiger) reflects a theme of intelligence over brute strength.

The story also explores the idea of gaining recognition and fame through intellect rather than through traditional means of power. Anansi's desire to have all stories named after him highlights his ego and ambition. Nyankupon, representing higher authority and power, sets seemingly difficult conditions, but through ingenuity, Anansi manages to outwit even the gods.

This folk tale encapsulates themes of trickery, resourcefulness, and the quest for personal glory, with Anansi representing the archetypal trickster hero common in many cultures. It also conveys a moral lesson about how cunning can triumph over strength or size, illustrating that intellect is a powerful tool in overcoming challenges.

5.4.3 Character Sketch of "How We Got the Name Spider Tales"

Anansi is a central figure in West African folklore, often depicted as a spider or a human with spider-like traits. He is the quintessential trickster character, embodying wit, cunning, and the ability to manipulate others to achieve his goals. In this particular story, his personality and characteristics come through vividly in the way he tackles the challenges set by Nyankupon.

1. Clever and Resourceful:

Anansi's defining trait is his sharp intellect. He constantly uses clever tricks and psychological manipulation to outsmart his opponents and achieve seemingly impossible tasks. In the story, he tricks the bees into flying into the jar by creating a fabricated

argument about their abilities. Similarly, he uses a clever dispute about length to deceive the boa constrictor into stretching itself along a stick, which allows Anansi to tie it up easily. His resourcefulness also shines through when he sews up his own eye to convince the tiger to let him do the same, rendering the tiger helpless.

Anansi's problem-solving ability is not just about intelligence but about his deep understanding of the weaknesses and psychological tendencies of others. He knows exactly how to provoke curiosity or pride in his targets, leading them to fall into his traps. This attribute makes him a master of manipulation and deception, always finding ways to use others' vulnerabilities to his advantage.

2. Ambitious and Egotistical:

Anansi's desire to have all stories named after him is driven by his deep-seated ambition and vanity. He is not content to simply exist in a world where tales are about the chief god Nyankupon; he wants his own legacy to surpass that of the gods. This ambition shows his desire for power and recognition, and it reflects his egotistical nature.

His willingness to take on such daring tasks—capturing bees, a boa constrictor, and a tiger—demonstrates his confidence in his own abilities. Anansi does not shy away from challenges, no matter how impossible they may seem. This ambition sets him apart from others and drives him to go to extreme lengths to achieve his goal of making all tales about him.

3. Deceptive and Manipulative:

Anansi's trickery is not just clever—it is often deceptive. He uses lies, fabrications, and half-truths to get what he wants. For example, when dealing with the bees, he concocts a false story about a dispute with Nyankupon to lure them into the jar. His manipulation of the boa constrictor is similarly based on false pretenses, as he pretends to measure the creature out of sheer curiosity when his real intent is to trap it. With the tiger, Anansi's most manipulative moment comes when he sews up his own eye and convinces the tiger to follow suit, making the tiger powerless and easy to capture.

This constant use of deception underlines Anansi's mastery of manipulation. He can shape reality through words and illusions, making others believe in things that are not true. His manipulative nature makes him a dangerous but fascinating character, one

who thrives on bending situations to his will through mental cunning rather than physical strength.

4. Fearless and Daring:

Despite being smaller and physically weaker than many of his targets (like the boa constrictor and the tiger), Anansi shows no fear in facing them. His confidence in his intellectual superiority emboldens him to face much larger and more powerful creatures. This fearlessness is a significant part of his character, as he always believes he can outwit any challenge or danger that comes his way. His daring nature is evident in his willingness to confront such dangerous animals in pursuit of his ultimate goal—gaining the stories of the world.

5. Self-Centered but Strategic:

Anansi's actions are always driven by self-interest. His desire to have all stories named after him is a personal quest for fame and legacy, and he does not show any consideration for the well-being or rights of the creatures he manipulates. The bees, the boa constrictor, and the tiger are all mere pawns in his larger plan to gain control over the narrative world.

However, while he is self-centered, Anansi is also deeply strategic in his approach. Every step he takes is carefully calculated to maximize his chances of success. He knows exactly what to say and how to act to exploit the weaknesses of his targets. His plans are meticulous and efficient, which ensures that he achieves his objectives without ever having to rely on brute force.

6. Charming and Persuasive:

Despite his trickery, Anansi is a master of charm. He is able to convince dangerous and intelligent creatures like the boa constrictor and tiger to comply with his absurd requests. This reveals his skill in persuasion and his ability to make others trust or

believe in him, even when his intentions are deceitful. Anansi's charm lies in his ability to make his trickery seem harmless and playful, which lowers the guard of his targets.

5.4.4 Check Your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 03

1. Why does Spider claim the dead antelope is his grandfather's body?

2. How do Wolf and Leopard discover that Spider has an antelope?

3. What strategy does Spider use to trick Wolf and Leopard into having their teeth filed?

4. What does Spider do to get back at Wolf and Leopard after they free him?

5. What is the long-term consequence of Spider's trick on the White Ant?

5.5 Why White Ants Always Harm Man's Property (West African)

THERE came once such a terrible famine in the land that a grain of corn was worth far more than its weight in gold. A hungry spider was wandering through the forest looking for food. To his great joy he found a dead antelope.

Knowing that he would not be allowed to reach home in safety with it, he wrapped it up very carefully in a long mat and bound it securely.

Placing it on his head, he started for home. As he went, he wept bitterly, telling every one that this was his dead grandfather's body. Every one he met sympathized heartily with him.

On his way he met the wolf and the leopard. These two wise animals suspected that this was one of Spider's tricks. They knew that he was not to be trusted. Walking on a little way, they discussed what they could do to find out what was in the bundle.

They agreed to take a short cut across the country to a tree which they knew Cousin Spider must pass. When they reached this tree they hid themselves very carefully behind it and waited for him.

As he passed the place they shook the tree and uttered frightful noises. This so frightened Mr. Spider that he dropped his load and ran away.

The two gentlemen opened the bundle and, to their great joy, discovered the flesh of the antelope in it. They carried it off to their own home and began to prepare supper.

When Mr. Spider recovered from his fear he began to wonder who could have been at the tree to make the noises. He decided that his enemies must be Wolf and Leopard. He made up his mind he would get his meat back from them.

He took a small lizard and filed his teeth to fine, sharp points. He then sent him to spy upon the wolf and leopard—by begging fire from them. He was to get the fire and quench it as soon as he left their cottage. He could then return and ask a second time. If they asked him questions, he must smile and show his teeth.

The lizard did as he was told, and everything turned out just as Spider had expected. Wolf and Leopard eagerly asked the lizard where he had had his teeth filed so beautifully. He replied that "Filing Spider" had done it for him.

Wolf and Leopard discussed the matter and decided to have their teeth filed in the same way. They could then easily break the bones of their food.

Accordingly, they went to the house of the disguised spider and asked him to make their teeth like Lizard's. Spider agreed, but said that, to do it properly, he would first have to hang them on a tree. They made no objection to this.

When he had them safely hung, Spider and his family came and mocked them. Spider then went to their cottage and brought away the body of the antelope. The whole village was invited to the feast, which was held in front of the two poor animals on the tree. During this festival every one made fun of the wolf and leopard.

Next morning White Ant and his children passed the place on their way to some friends. Mr. Leopard begged them to set him and his friend free. White Ant and his family set to work, destroyed the tree and set them at liberty. Leopard and Wolf promised the ants that on their return they would spread a feast for them.

Unfortunately, Spider heard the invitation and made up his mind to benefit by it. On the third day (which was the very time set by the wolf and leopard) Spider dressed up his children like the ants. They set out, singing the ants' chorus, in order to deceive Leopard.

Wolf and Leopard welcomed them heartily and spread a splendid feast for them, which the spiders thoroughly enjoyed.

Soon after their departure the real ants arrived. The two hosts, thinking these must be Spider and his family, poured boiling water over them and killed them all except the father.

White Ant, on reaching home again, in great anger, vowed that he would never again help any one. He would take every opportunity to harm property. From that day to this white ants have been a perfect pest to man.

5.5.1 Summary and analysis

In a time of famine, a hungry spider finds a dead antelope in the forest. Knowing others would try to take it from him, he wraps the antelope in a mat and claims it is his dead grandfather's body, deceiving everyone he meets. Suspicious of Spider's trickery,

the wolf and leopard decide to spy on him. They hide near a tree and scare Spider into dropping his bundle, which they then steal and take to their home to prepare for supper.

Determined to reclaim his meat, Spider devises a plan. He sharpens a lizard's teeth and sends it to the wolf and leopard to ask for fire, ensuring the lizard quenches the fire to return for more. The wolf and leopard, impressed by the lizard's sharp teeth, ask where they were filed. The lizard tells them that Spider did it.

Wolf and Leopard then visit Spider, who agrees to sharpen their teeth but says he must hang them from a tree first. Once they are helplessly hung, Spider and his family mock them and retrieve the antelope's body. They hold a feast, inviting the entire village to mock Wolf and Leopard as they hang from the tree.

The next day, White Ant and his children pass by and free Wolf and Leopard, who promise to host a feast in their honor. Spider overhears this and disguises his children as ants, fooling Wolf and Leopard into thinking they are the White Ant family. Spider and his family enjoy the feast. When the real ants arrive, Wolf and Leopard, thinking they are Spider in disguise, pour boiling water over them, killing all but the father. Angry, White Ant vows to never help anyone again and declares he will destroy property, which explains why white ants (termites) have been a pest ever since.

This story presents a classic example of the African trickster narrative, with Spider (Anansi) as the central character who relies on wit and cunning to outmaneuver his more powerful adversaries. The tale is steeped in themes of survival, deception, and the interplay between intelligence and strength.

Spider's initial deception, where he disguises the dead antelope as his grandfather's body, exemplifies his ability to manipulate the perceptions of others for personal gain. His actions, however, are not based on malice but on the instinct for survival during a time of famine, reflecting the practical and often morally ambiguous strategies that tricksters employ to navigate harsh realities. This aligns with a recurring motif in trickster tales, where the protagonist bends rules and societal norms to secure personal advantage.

The wolf and leopard, representing physical power and suspicion, are not easily fooled by Spider's ruse. Yet, despite their intelligence, they too are outwitted by Spider's

clever plan to reclaim the stolen antelope meat. By sharpening the lizard's teeth and sending him to provoke curiosity, Spider manipulates Wolf and Leopard into desiring the same "improvement." Their trust in Spider leads them to their own downfall, as they are humiliated and outsmarted when Spider ties them up and regains the meat.

The story underscores the theme of intelligence prevailing over brute strength. While Wolf and Leopard are larger and stronger than Spider, their reliance on force is ultimately undermined by Spider's cunning. This reinforces the idea that, in many African folk traditions, intelligence and resourcefulness are more valued than mere physical power. The trickster, though morally ambiguous, is often admired for outwitting those who rely on traditional forms of authority or strength.

However, the narrative also hints at the potential consequences of constant deception. While Spider gains the upper hand, his actions inadvertently lead to the death of the innocent White Ants, who were promised a feast by Wolf and Leopard. This introduces a darker aspect of Spider's manipulations—his tricks, though successful, result in unintended harm to others. The transformation of the White Ants into pests as a result of their betrayal suggests that deception can have far-reaching consequences, even for those not directly involved in the initial conflict.

The story, therefore, offers a nuanced view of Spider's cleverness. While his wit allows him to succeed, it also brings about discord and chaos. This duality reflects the complex role of the trickster in folklore: both hero and troublemaker, Spider's actions benefit himself but leave a wake of disruption.

Ultimately, the story highlights the tension between survival and morality, and between cunning and consequence. While Spider's intelligence allows him to thrive, the broader impact of his deceit serves as a cautionary reminder that trickery, though effective, can come at a cost.

5.5.2 Character Sketch of the Ant

Clever and Deceptive:

Spider is exceptionally intelligent and resourceful, relying on his wits to overcome obstacles. He devises intricate schemes to outsmart stronger animals, such as using the pretense of a dead grandfather to transport meat and tricking Wolf and Leopard into

giving up their antelope. His ability to deceive others and manipulate situations showcases his cleverness and strategic thinking.

Self-Serving:

Primarily driven by self-interest, Spider's actions are often motivated by a desire to secure resources and improve his own situation, regardless of the impact on others. He schemes to obtain the antelope meat and humiliate his rivals, reflecting his self-serving nature. Despite his trickery, his resourcefulness allows him to thrive in a world where brute strength is not always sufficient.

Playful and Mischievous:

Spider's character is also marked by a sense of mischief. He takes pleasure in outwitting others and deriving amusement from their misfortunes. His joy in mocking Wolf and Leopard during the village feast highlights his playful, if morally ambiguous, nature.

Consequences of Actions:

While Spider's cleverness often leads to success, it also has unintended repercussions. His schemes result in the White Ants' death, demonstrating the broader impact of his actions on innocents. This aspect of his character illustrates the moral complexity of his behaviour and the sometimes harmful effects of his cunning.

5.5.3 Check Your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 04

1. What does Spider want to change about the stories told by men?

2. What three things does Nyankupon require Spider to bring him?

3. How does Spider manage to capture the bees in the jar?

4. What trick does Spider use to capture the boa-constrictor?

5. How does Spider capture the tiger?

5.6 About Ukranian Folktales

Ukrainian folktales, known as "kazky" in Ukrainian, form a rich tapestry of oral traditions that reflect the country's cultural heritage, historical experiences, and spiritual beliefs. These stories have been passed down through generations, evolving over time while maintaining core themes and motifs that are distinctly Ukrainian.

Many Ukrainian folktales feature elements of nature and rural life, reflecting the country's strong agricultural traditions. Forests, fields, and rivers often play significant roles in these stories, sometimes personified as living entities or serving as homes to magical creatures. This connection to nature in Ukrainian folklore underscores the cultural importance of the land and its resources to the Ukrainian people.

Supernatural beings are common in Ukrainian folktales, drawing from both pre-Christian Slavic mythology and later Christian influences. Characters like Baba Yaga, a supernatural being who appears as a deformed old woman, are shared with other Slavic cultures but often take on uniquely Ukrainian characteristics. Other recurring figures include domovyk (house spirits), mavka (forest nymphs), and various magical animals. These characters often interact with human protagonists, testing their moral character or offering magical assistance.

5.6.1 The Serpent Wife (Ukranian)

There was once a gentleman who had a labourer who never went about in company. His fellow-servants did all they could to make him come with them, and now and then enticed him into the tavern, but they could never get him to stay there long, and he always wandered away by himself through the woods. One day he went strolling about in the forest as usual, far from any village and the haunts of men, when he came upon a huge Serpent, which wriggled straight up to him and said, "I am going to eat thee on the spot!" But the labourer, who was used to the loneliness of the forest, replied, "Very well, eat me if thou hast a mind to!"—Then the Serpent said, "Nay! I will not eat thee; only do what I tell thee!" And the Serpent began to tell the man what he had to do. "Turn back home," it said, "and thou wilt find thy master angry because thou hast tarried so long, and there was none to work for him, so that his corn has to remain standing in the field. Then he will send thee to bring in his sheaves, and I'll help thee. Load the wagon well, but don't take quite all the sheaves from the field. Leave one little sheaf behind; more than that thou needst not leave, but that thou must leave. Then beg thy master to let thee have this little sheaf by way of wages. Take no money from him, but that one little sheaf only. Then, when thy master has given thee this sheaf, burn it, and a fair lady will leap out of it; take her to wife!"

The labourer obeyed, and went and worked for his master as the Serpent had told him. He went out into the field to bring home his master's corn, and marvellously he managed it. He did all the carrying himself, and loaded the wagon so heavily that it creaked beneath its burden. Then when he had brought home all his master's corn, he begged that he might have the remaining little sheaf for himself. He refused to be rewarded for his smart labour, he would take no money; he wanted nothing for himself, he said, but the little sheaf he had left in the field. So his master let him have the sheaf. Then he went out by himself into the field, burnt the sheaf, just as the Serpent had told him, and immediately a lovely lady leapt out of it. The labourer forthwith took and married her; and now he began to look out for a place to build him a hut upon. His master gave him a place where he might build his hut, and his wife helped him so much with the building of it that it seemed to him as if he himself never laid a hand to it. His hut grew up as quick as thought, and it contained everything that they wanted. The man could not understand it; he could only walk about and wonder at it. Wherever he looked there was

everything quite spick and span and ready for use: none in the whole village had a better house than he.

And so he might have lived in all peace and prosperity to the end of his days had not his desires outstripped his deserts. He had three fields of standing corn, and when he came home one day his labourers said to him, "Thy corn is not gathered in yet, though it is standing all ripe on its stalks." Now the season was getting on, and for all the care and labour of his wife, the corn was still standing in the field. "Why, what's the meaning of this?" thought he. Then in his anger he cried, "I see how it is. Once a serpent, always a serpent!" He was quite beside himself all the way home, and was very wrath with his wife because of the corn.

When he got home he went straight to his chamber to lie down on his pillow. There was no sign of his wife, but a huge serpent was just coiling itself round and round and settling down in the middle of the pillow. Then he called to mind how, once, his wife had said to him, "Beware, for Heaven's sake, of ever calling me a serpent. I will not suffer thee to call me by that name, and if thou dost thou shalt lose thy wife." He called this to mind now, but it was already too late; what he had said could not be unsaid. Then he reflected what a good wife he had had, and how she herself had sought him out, and how she had waited upon him continually and done him boundless good, and yet he had not been able to refrain his tongue, so that now, maybe, he would be without a wife for the rest of his days. His heart grew heavy within him as he thought of all this, and he wept bitterly at the harm he had done to himself. Then the Serpent said to him, "Weep no more. What is to be, must be. Is it thy standing corn thou art grieved about? Go up to thy barn, and there thou wilt find all thy corn lying, to the very last little grain. Have I not brought it all home and threshed it for thee, and set everything in order? And now I must depart to the place where thou didst first find me." Then she crept off, and the man followed her, weeping and mourning all the time as for one already dead. When they reached the forest she stopped and coiled herself round and round beneath a hazel-nut bush. Then she said to the man, "Now kiss me once, but see to it that I do not bite thee!"—Then he kissed her once, and she wound herself round a branch of a tree and asked him, "What dost thou feel within thee?"—He answered, "At the moment when I kissed thee it seemed to me as if I knew everything that was going on in the world!"—Then she said to him again, "Kiss me a second time!"—"And what dost thou feel now?"

she asked when he had kissed her again.—“Now,” said he, “I understand all languages which are spoken among men.”—Then she said to him, “And now kiss me a third time, but this will be for the last time.” Then he kissed the Serpent for the last time, and she said to him, “What dost thou feel now?”—“Now,” said he, “I know all that is going on under the earth.”—“Go now,” said she, “to the Tsar, and he will give thee his daughter for the knowledge thou hast. But pray to God for poor me, for now I must be and remain a serpent for ever.” And with that the Serpent uncoiled herself and disappeared among the bushes, but the man went away and wedded the Tsar’s daughter.

5.6.2 Summary and Analysis

In this tale, a solitary labourer who prefers solitude in the forest encounters a Serpent that demands he follow specific instructions to obtain a beautiful wife. The Serpent instructs the labourer to leave one sheaf of corn in the field, ask for it as his wage, burn it, and a lovely lady will emerge. The labourer follows these instructions, marries the lady, and enjoys a prosperous life with her help.

However, the labourer’s dissatisfaction with his new life leads him to insult his wife by calling her a serpent. The insult triggers a curse, transforming his wife back into a Serpent. Despite her departure, she leaves behind all the gathered and threshed corn as a final act of kindness. Before she fully departs, the Serpent grants the labourer extraordinary knowledge through three kisses. The labourer uses this newfound knowledge to marry the Tsar’s daughter. The Serpent remains a serpent forever, while the labourer prospers with the Tsar’s daughter.

In this tale, the themes of gratitude and discontent are vividly illustrated. The labourer initially benefits from his encounter with the Serpent, who provides him with a beautiful wife and helps him achieve prosperity. However, his dissatisfaction with his new life and the work of his wife reveals a deep-seated discontent. His inability to appreciate the magical assistance he received ultimately leads him to insult his wife by calling her a serpent. This betrayal triggers a transformation, turning her back into a serpent and causing the labourer to lose her.

The story emphasizes the theme of transformation and consequence. The wife’s change back into a serpent symbolizes the immediate repercussions of the labourer’s ingratitude. Her departure is a direct result of his unkind words, highlighting the story’s

message that actions and words, especially those that undermine or insult others, have significant consequences. The tale suggests that respect and appreciation for those who aid us are crucial, and failing to honour this can lead to dire outcomes.

Magical assistance and its limits are another central theme. The Serpent's aid is initially selfless and generous, demonstrating a contrast between the benevolence of magical beings and the often ungrateful nature of humans. The story implies that even magical entities have their limits and will withdraw their support if disrespected. This withdrawal of aid underscores the importance of maintaining respect and gratitude towards those who help us.

The story also explores the role of knowledge and its rewards. The labourer's eventual acquisition of extraordinary knowledge through the Serpent's kisses symbolizes personal growth and the benefits of learning from one's experiences. His ultimate reward—marrying the Tsar's daughter—reflects the elevation in status and success that can come from using the knowledge gained through personal trials. This aspect of the story suggests that true wisdom and success often come as a result of overcoming one's shortcomings and errors.

Finally, the tale touches on the theme of isolation. The labourer's preference for solitude and his reluctance to engage with others are contrasted with his eventual need to interact with the broader world. His initial isolation serves as a backdrop for the narrative, illustrating how isolation can both protect and limit one's opportunities for growth and connection. The labourer's journey from solitude to broader engagement mirrors his personal growth and eventual success, highlighting the complex relationship between isolation and interaction in the quest for fulfilment.

5.6.3 Check Your Progress- Answer in a line or two: 05

1. What does the labourer encounter in the forest?

2. What does the Serpent ask the labourer to do in exchange for not eating him?

3. How does the labourer manage to capture the bees and boa-constrictor?

4. What trick does the labourer use to capture the tiger?

5. What is the result of burning the sheaf of corn?

5.6.4 Unit Summary

The theme of transformation is central as the serpent evolves from a creature of the forest into a human maiden, highlighting the ability to change and grow beyond one's original form. The folktale explores the theme of love that transcends conventional boundaries, emphasizing the deep connection between the human and supernatural realms. The protagonist undergoes tests of bravery, loyalty, and integrity to prove his worthiness of his serpent-wife, illustrating themes of personal growth and moral strength. It emphasizes the theme of respecting and preserving the natural world, portraying humans as stewards responsible for maintaining balance and harmony in their environment. It emphasizes the importance of storytelling in preserving cultural heritage, passing down wisdom, and entertaining audiences, highlighting the role of narratives in shaping identity and community values.

5.6.5 Glossary

1. Prince: The noble protagonist in "Winning a Princess," known for his bravery and determination to win the hand of the princess.
2. Princess: The object of the prince's quest in "Winning a Princess," renowned for her beauty, wisdom, and high status.
3. Quest: The journey or series of challenges undertaken by the prince in "Winning a Princess" to prove his worthiness as a suitor.
4. Parrot: Refers to Hiranman, the talking parrot in "A Parrot Called Hiranman," known for its ability to mimic human speech and impart wisdom.
5. Wisdom: The moral lessons and insights shared by Hiranman the parrot in "A Parrot Called Hiranman," often through its stories and conversations.
6. Community: The village or group of people in "The Kite's Daughter," illustrating themes of unity, support, and collective action.
7. Wind: Symbolizes Amara's unique ability in "The Kite's Daughter," used to control and influence natural elements, reflecting power and freedom.
8. Tradition: Represents the customs, beliefs, and practices upheld by characters in "The Kite's Daughter," often juxtaposed with innovation and change.
9. Village: The setting where characters in "The Kite's Daughter" reside, emphasizing themes of community, heritage, and interconnectedness.
10. Morality: Central to all three folktales, referring to the ethical principles, values, and lessons imparted through the characters' actions and decisions.

5.6.6 Suggested Readings

1. Books on Indian Folklore and Tales**:"Indian Folktales" by Pratibha Nath
2. Folktales of India" by Brenda Beck
3. Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-two Languages" edited by A.K. Ramanujan
4. Indian Fairy Tales" by Joseph Jacobs
5. Folktales from Northern India" by K.L. Joshi
6. Indian Folklore" by Pramod Kumar
7. Folklore and Folklife in India" edited by P.K. Misra

5.6.7 Open Source E-Content Links

1. Website: [Project Gutenberg](<https://www.gutenberg.org/>)
2. Website: [Internet Archive](<https://archive.org/>)
3. Website: [Digital Library of India](<https://www.dli.indianrailways.gov.in/>)
4. Website: [Google Books](<https://books.google.com/>)
5. Website: [HathiTrust Digital Library](<https://www.hathitrust.org/>)
6. Website: [Sanskrit Documents](<https://sanskritdocuments.org/>)
7. - Website: [Folkscanomy](<https://archive.org/details/folkscanomy>)

5.6.8 References

1. Aarne, Antti, and Stith Thompson. *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1928.
2. Naidu, Sarojini. *Indian Folktales*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2002.

5.6.9 Self-Assessment

1. Have I identified key cultural elements and traditions reflected in North Indian folktales?
2. Can I explain how historical, geographical, and societal factors influence the themes and characters in these tales?
3. Have I identified and articulated the main themes present in

- North Indian folktales (e.g., bravery, justice, trickery)?
4. Can I discuss the moral lessons conveyed through these stories and their relevance to contemporary life?
 5. Have I analyzed the main characters in the folktales, their traits, motivations, and roles within the narratives?
 6. Can I compare and contrast characters across different folktales to identify recurring archetypes or cultural values?
 7. Have I recognized the storytelling techniques used in North Indian folktales (e.g., oral tradition, use of symbolism)?

5.6.10 Suggested Readings

1. "Folk Tales of Uttar Pradesh" by A.K. Sinha
2. "Punjab Folklore" by Flora Anne Steel
3. "Rajasthani Folktales" by Vijaydan Detha
4. "Folk Tales of Bengal" by Lal Behari Day

Self Assessment Questions:

Two Marks

5.1

Explain the story's use of magical realism comment on the human condition

The story's use of magical realism highlights the complexities and mysteries of human nature, suggesting that there is more to reality than what we can see and touch.

Write the significance of the serpent's transformation into a beautiful woman

The serpent's transformation symbolizes the fluidity of identity and the power of love and acceptance to transform and redeem.

5.2

Elucidate the story's use of symbolism explore the theme of identity?

The story's use of symbolism, particularly the tea-kettle's transformation into a tanuki, explores the fluidity of identity and the search for self.

Discuss the significance of the old man's relationship with the tea-kettle?

The old man's relationship with the tea-kettle represents the human need for connection and understanding, highlighting the importance of empathy and compassion.

5.3

Trace the story's use of Anansi as a trickster figure comment on the nature of storytelling?

Anansi's character highlights the power of storytelling to shape reality and create meaning, while also acknowledging the complexity and nuance of truth.

Inscribe the significance of the spider's web in the story?

The spider's web represents the interconnectedness of all things, symbolizing the power of storytelling to connect people and create community.

5.4

How does the story's use of punishment as a teaching tool comment on the nature of morality?

The story's use of punishment highlights the importance of accountability and responsibility, suggesting that our actions have consequences that affect the world around us.

Note down the significance of the white ants' role in the story?

The white ants represent the natural world's power to correct human wrongdoing, symbolizing the importance of respecting and honoring the land and its creatures.

5.5

Discuss the story's use of the serpent-wife as a supernatural being comment on the nature of love?

The serpent-wife's character highlights the transformative power of love, suggesting that it can overcome even the most fundamental differences between beings.

Mark the significance of the peasant's relationship with the serpent-wife?

The peasant's relationship with the serpent-wife represents the human capacity for love and acceptance, highlighting the importance of empathy and understanding in bridging cultural and supernatural divides.

Five Marks

1. Evaluate the moral lesson of the story, considering the consequences of the farmer's actions and the serpent's gift.
2. Compare and contrast the story's portrayal of humans and nature with other Chinese folktales.
3. Examine the story's use of magical realism, exploring its effects on the narrative and themes.
4. Explore the significance of the tea-kettle's transformation into a tanuki, analyzing its connections to Japanese folklore and culture.
5. Discuss the theme of identity in the story, examining how the tea-kettle's transformation affects its sense of self.
6. Assess the symbolism of the spider's web, considering its meanings in the story and broader cultural context.
7. Compare and contrast the story's portrayal of animals and humans with other West African folktales.
8. Analyze the story's use of humor, exploring its effects on the narrative and themes.
9. Discuss the theme of consequences in the story, examining how it relates to the characters and their actions.
10. Evaluate the farmer's character development, considering his motivations and relationships with the ants.

11. Compare and contrast the story's portrayal of humans and nature with other West African folktales.
12. Evaluate the peasant's character development, considering his motivations and relationships with the serpent-wife.
13. Compare and contrast the story's portrayal of humans and supernatural beings with other Ukrainian folktales.
14. Investigate the story's use of symbolism, exploring the meanings behind the serpent-wife and other elements.

Eight Marks

1. Analyze the symbolism of the serpent in the story, exploring its connections to Chinese mythology and culture.
2. Discuss the theme of transformation in the story, examining how it relates to the characters and their relationships
3. Estimate the old man's character development, considering his motivations and relationships with the tea-kettle.
4. Compare and contrast the story's portrayal of humans and objects with other Japanese folktales.
5. Scrutinize the significance of Anansi's character in West African folklore, analyzing his role in the story and broader cultural context.
6. Argue the theme of storytelling in the story, exploring its connections to West African oral traditions.
7. Explore the significance of the white ants' punishment, analyzing its connections to West African cultural values and traditions.
8. Examine the significance of the serpent-wife's character in Ukrainian folklore, analyzing her role in the story and broader cultural context.
9. Discuss the theme of love and sacrifice in the story, exploring its connections to Ukrainian cultural values and traditions.