

Terms to Know: Folk Literature

Global Folklore

A word about these notes...

- Some of the upcoming terms we have already looked at this semester. They are here in a shortened form as a reminder. For those terms, you do not need to write them down if you already have them.
- For those terms that are new, you will want to jot down the definitions.

Folk Literature

- also called folklore or oral tradition
- It is transmitted by word of mouth and consists, as does written literature, of both prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas, rituals, proverbs, riddles, and the like.
- Nearly all known peoples, now or in the past, have produced it.
- With the advent of the written word, folk literature has been become a print medium to preserve it

Myth

- a traditional story, esp. one which explains the early history or a cultural belief or practice of a group of people, or explains a natural event

Folktale

- Folktales are traditional fictional stories.
- They are normally anonymous narratives that have been transmitted from one teller to another over an uncertain period of time.
- They have been shaped by multiple narrators into the form and style that are characteristic of oral narratives.
- “Folktale” is an umbrella term for a number of subgenres: fairy tales, tall tales, the animal tale and fables are examples.
- Unlike myths and legends, folktales are narrative fictions, make no serious claim to historicity, and are not ordinarily accorded credence.

Tall Tale

- A tall tale is a story with unbelievable elements, related as if it were true and factual.

Legend

- A traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but unauthenticated (can't prove it's true).
- Often these stories begin with a nugget of truth that gets expanded over time and telling.

Urban Legend

- This is a modern story of obscure origin and with little or no supporting evidence that spreads spontaneously in varying forms.
- They often have elements of humor, moralizing, or horror.
- They are told as the truth, but most of them end up being mostly, if not totally, false.
- Despite being false, they reach a wide audience, because they are passed along from person to person like the latest news.

Oral

- by word of mouth; spoken rather than written.

Tradition

- the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way.

Entertain

- provide (someone) with amusement or enjoyment.

Inform

- give (someone) facts or information; tell.

Educate

- give intellectual, moral, and social instruction to someone (especially a child).