

THE PECULIARITIES OF FOLK SONGS

Tosheva Dilbar Muzaffar kizi

Master of Karshi State University

Annotation: *This article written about origin of folk literature. Besides that, folk music vividly depicts people's lives, their attitudes toward reality, and various inner experiences through a variety of sound colors. Song enhances people's spiritual and moral world by influencing their emotions. This article highlights the important role of folk song in the moral and aesthetic education of students.*

Key words: *Folk literature, oral literature, epic, heroic, rhythm, folk music.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqola xalq adabiyotining kelib chiqishi haqida yozilgan. Bundan tashqari, xalq musiqasida kishilarning hayoti, voqelikka munosabati, turli ichki kechinmalari turli tovush ranglari orqali yorqin tasvirlangan. Qo'shiq kishilarning his-tuyg'ulariga ta'sir etish orqali ma'naviy-axloqiy dunyosini yuksaltiradi. Ushbu maqolada xalq qo'shiqlarining o'quvchilarni axloqiy-estetik tarbiyalashdagi muhim o'rni yoritilgan.*

Kalit so'zlar: *Xalq adabiyoti, og'zaki adabiyot, doston, qahramonlik, ritm, xalq musiqasi*

Аннотация: *В данной статье написано о происхождении народной литературы. Кроме того, народная музыка ярко передает жизнь людей, их отношение к действительности, различные внутренние переживания через многообразие звуковых красок. Песня обогащает духовно-нравственный мир человека, воздействуя на его эмоции. В статье подчеркивается важная роль народной песни в нравственно-эстетическом воспитании учащихся.*

Ключевые слова: *Народная литература, устная литература, эпос, героика, ритм, народная музыка.*

The most obvious characteristic of folk literature is its orality. In spite of certain borderline cases, it normally stands in direct contrast to written literature. The latter exists in manuscripts and books and may be preserved exactly as the author or authors left it, even though this may have happened centuries or even millennia ago. Through these manuscripts and books the thoughts and emotions and observations and even the fine nuances of style can be experienced without regard to time or distance. With oral literature this is not possible. It is concerned only with speaking and singing and with listening, thus depending upon the existence of a living culture to carry on a tradition. If any item of folk literature ceases to exist within human memory it is completely lost. The speaker or singer is carrying on a tradition learned from other speakers and delivered to a living audience. It may well be that the listeners have heard this material



many times before and that it has a vigorous life in the community, and they will see to it that the performer does not depart too far from the tradition as they know it. If acceptable to the listeners, the story or song or proverb or riddle will be repeated over and over again as long as it appeals to men and women, even through the ages and over long geographic distances..(Encyclopaedia Britannica, Jun 6. 2005)

Cultures often put their stories from folklore to traditional music. They range from everyday stories of common folk to heroic tales told in ballad form. Some folk songs you might recognize include:

“O Danny Boy” - an Irish ballad that tells the story of Danny going off to war and returning to a much-changed homeland

“Arirang” – a folk song from Korea that has been sung for over 600 years

“My Country, ‘Tis Of Thee” – a traditional American folk song about the history and freedom of the country

“Waltzing Matilda” - a bush ballad from Australia that depicts a traveler who runs into trouble one fateful day. (Jennifer Gunner, M. Ed. Education. Senior Writer UPDATED JULY 10, 2020)

In some cultures nearly everyone can carry on these traditions, but some men and women are much more skillful than others and are listened to with greater pleasure. Whatever the nature of these tradition bearers, the continued existence of an item of oral literature depends upon memory. As it is passed on from one person to another, it suffers changes from forgetting or from conscious additions or substitutions; in any case, the item changes continually.

The more skillful tradition bearers take pride in the exactness with which they transmit a tale or song just as they have heard it many years before, but they only deceive themselves, for every performance differs from every other one. The whole material is fluid and refuses to be stabilized in a definite form. The teller is likely to find room for improvement and may well begin a new tradition that will live as long as it appeals to other tellers. It thus happens that in nearly all cultures certain people specialize in remembering and repeating what they have heard. There are semiprofessional storytellers around whom large groups of people assemble in bazaars or before cottage fires or in leisure hours after labour. Some of these storytellers have prodigious memories and may with only slight variations carry on to a new generation hundreds of tales and traditions heard long ago.(Gloria Lotha, Jun 28. 2008).

Certain bards and minstrels and song makers develop special techniques of singing or of telling epic or heroic tales to the accompaniment of a harp or other musical instrument. In the course of time in various places special poetic forms have been



perfected and passed on from bard to bard. Such must have been the way in which the remarkably skillful heroic meters of the Greek epics were developed.

A different kind of oral tradition is preserved by the ritual specialists: priests, shamans, and others who perform religious ceremonies and healing rites. Frequently these rituals must be remembered word for word and are not believed to be effective unless they are correctly performed. The ideal of such priestly transmitters of oral tradition is complete faithfulness to that which has been passed down to them.

Not least important of the many reasons for the existence and perpetuation of folk literature is the need for release from the boredom that comes on long sea voyages or in army camps or on long winter evenings. Some folk literature is primarily didactic and tries to convey the information people need to carry on their lives properly. Among some peoples the relation of man and the higher powers is of special concern and gives rise to myths that try to clarify this relationship. Cooperative labour or marching is helped by rhythmic songs, and many aspects of social life give rise to various kinds of dance.

A great many of the special forms of literature now in manuscripts and books are paralleled in traditional oral literature, where history, drama, law, sermons, and exhortations of all kinds are found, as well as analogues of novels, stories, and lyric poems.

Folk literature is but a part of what is generally known as folklore: customs and beliefs, ritualistic behaviour, dances, folk music, and other nonliterary manifestations. These are often considered a part of the larger study of ethnology, but they are also the business of the folklorist.

Of special importance is the relation of all kinds of folk literature to mythology. The stories of Maui and his confreres in the Pacific and of gods and heroes of African or American Indian groups have behind them a long and perhaps complicated history. This is especially true of the highly developed mythologies of India, and the Greek, Irish, and Germanic pantheons. All are the results of an indefinitely long past, of growth and outside influences, of religious cults and practices, and of the glorification of heroes. But whatever the historical, psychological, or religious motivations, the mythologies are a part of folk literature and, though traditional, have been subject to continual changes at the hands of the tale-tellers, singers of stories, or priestly conductors of cults. Eventually singers or storytellers of philosophical tendencies have systematized their mythologies and have created with fine imagination the figures of Zeus and his Olympic family and his semidivine heroic descendants. Though the details of these changes are beyond the scope of this article, stories of the gods and heroes and



of supernatural origins and changes on the earth have played an important role in all folk literature.

Since the tales, legends, and epic and lyric songs discussed here are a part of the experience of a preliterate group or at least of the essentially unlettered, they differ in many ways from literary works addressed to a reading public. Long forgotten are the person or persons originally responsible for the tradition that has resulted in examples of folk literature. Only the tale or song remains to be repeated and often changed by subsequent storytellers, singers, or bards. In the course of its history it is listened to by generations of the unlettered, and its success and its very survival depend on how well it satisfies their emotional needs and intellectual interests.

Since in essence all folk literature is oral and subject to its survival in the human mind, it is full of devices to aid memory. Perhaps most common of all is mere repetition. Especially in folktales and epics it is common to hear the same episode repeated with little or no verbal change. As the hero encounters his successive adversaries the description changes only enough to indicate the increasing terror of the enemy, always leading to a climax and usually to the hero's success. These long repeated passages often enable the teller of tales or the singer of an epic to extend his performance as much as he desires.

Aside from repetition of entire episodes, folk literature of all kinds is filled with formulaic expressions. It may be the beginning or the ending of a folktale—the “once upon a time” or the “married and lived happily ever after” or sometimes quite meaningless expressions—or standard epithets attached to certain persons or places. These formulas are so characteristic of oral literature that an abundance of such commonplaces seems to be a guarantee of authentic oral origins even of a great epic. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Jun 6. 2005).

These formulas are matters not only of words but of structure. The storyteller or singer has at his disposal a large variety of conventional motifs and episodes and may use them freely. How appropriately they are made a part of his composition depends on his skill, but his listeners are not likely to be very critical so long as he keeps them interested. Indeed it is remarkable that in spite of this apparent freedom of improvisation so many rather well-articulated plots have lived for centuries retaining all their essential features. It is this combination of a basic narrative type with a freedom of treatment within traditional limits that makes it possible to identify hundreds of versions of the same tale or song as they appear over long stretches of time and space.

Though much of narrative folk literature is frankly fictional and filled with unrealistic events, the successful storyteller or epic singer gives his story credibility by



the use of realistic details. Often these are merely homely touches linking the never-never land of the tale or song to everyday life or emotions. For the unlettered listeners such realistic details may allow a stretching of the imagination to embrace a larger world. Heaven or hell it may be or kingly palaces where the peasant hero rules with a splendour only known to those who have never seen a court. Often these details are given only to ensure that willing suspension of disbelief characteristic of all fiction, but sometimes a realistic touch, even in the midst of weak motivation and violence, may give nobility to a mediocre tale or song.

Repetition, formulas both in words and in structure, realism enough to support the marvelous in tale or song, violent actions and simple strong emotions—these qualities are generally found in all folk literature. The varying demands of the listeners are all-important influences. In some cultures this implies that actions should be well motivated so that listeners may identify themselves with certain characters. But in others, such as in many parts of India and in many preliterate cultures, motivation is often weak or entirely lacking. For lyric songs, proverbs, riddles, and charms (and often legends), the relation of artist and audience is of little importance.

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