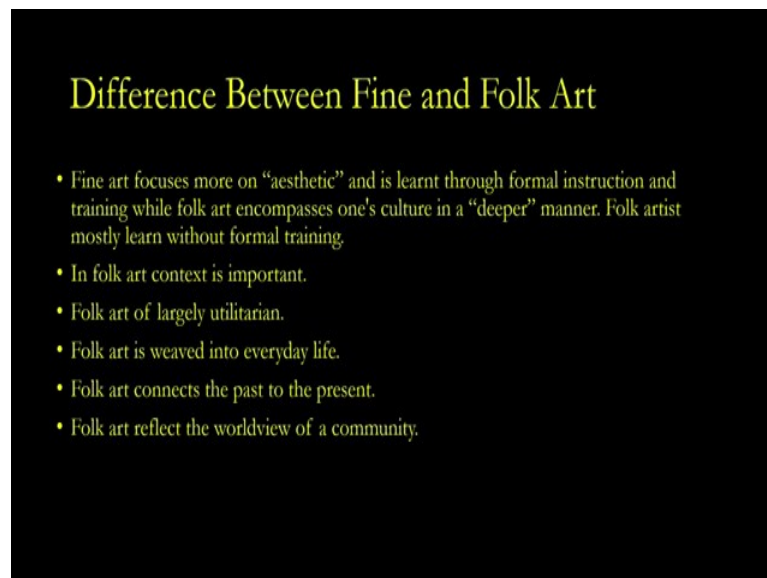


Artistic Exploration in Scientific Research And Technology
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Lecture – 05
Importance of Folklore

Hello, in the last class we have seen what is folklore and folk art, in today's class let us discuss what is the importance of Folklore and folk art and what is its relevance in the society.

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But before that let us see let us recapitulate a little bit what we had done in the last class. In the last class we have seen the difference between fine art and folk art; to sum up let us see the points that differentiates fine arts from the folk art. Fine art focuses more on aesthetic and is learned through formal instruction and training where folk art encompasses once culture in a deeper manner. Folk art is mostly learned without formal training.

In folk art context is important that is the society that it comes from is reflected in the art that is why the context is important. Folk art are largely utilitarian that is they have utility value, they come handy in day to day matters. Folk art is weaved into everyday life folk art connects the past to the present because it entails tradition. So, it connects the past to the present folk art reflects the worldview of a community; folk art has been of interest

and object of enquiry not only for a folklorist, but there have been attempts to define and understand folk art from various calling disciplines.

In the 1970s the difficulty of theorizing folk art was intensified by competing scholarly factions. Art collectors and commercial from artistry standpoint categorize the folk object into paintings, sculptures, decorative arts and then exercised them in terms of the material and design. In a position where folklorist: who connected folk art to material culture and view in the context of the culture that produced it.

For collectors and historians folk art was a new artistic category to name and describe folklorist and ethnologist interpreted. The folk objects as a document for understanding the life stories and motivation of individuals living in a particular time and space.

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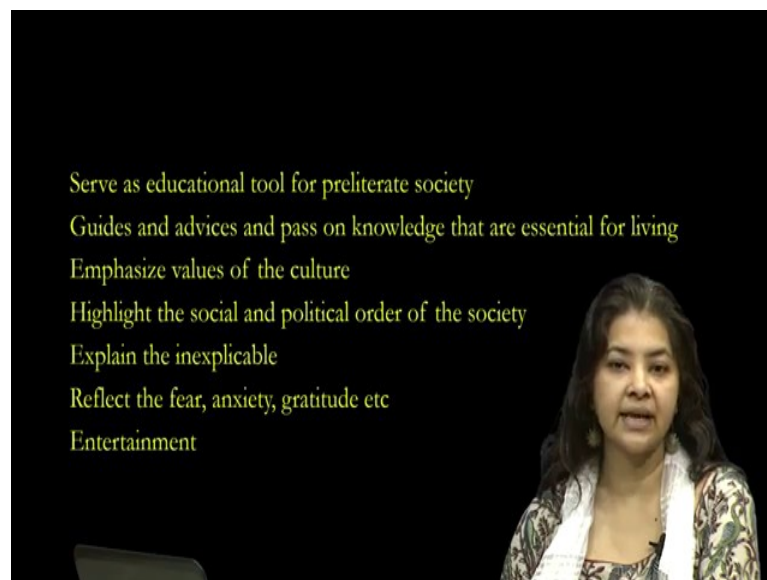
Now, let us pay some attention to this two paintings on the left is a painting of by a very renowned Indian artists Manu Parekh and on the right is a Sohrai painting of Jharkhand. The left the painting on the left is part of the Banaras series that Manu Parekh is renowned for. He is known to paint the teeming ghats and temple set against the orange hues of sunsets and cobalt blue skies.

Whereas, the Sohrai paintings are particular to the region they come from immediately after Diwali the worlds of tribal houses of Jharkhand starts scintillating with the layers of indigenous white mud to welcome the winter harvest to worship the cattles as the god of

wealth and to offer a thanksgiving to the forces of nature, the tribal communities mostly the Santal Munda Prajapati Kurmi etcetera of Jharkhand and West Bengal celebrate the festival called Sohrai in the month of October and November.

The tribal woman decorate the mud houses repairing it after the rains with designs of flowers, fruits, sparrows, peacocks, squirrels, cows and various other nature inspired design. These wall paintings of Jharkhand traditionally known as Sohrai named after the namesake harvest festival. So, we see that the folk art are very contextual, they talk a lot about the society they come from, but what are the purposes of folklore, why do they exist in the society?

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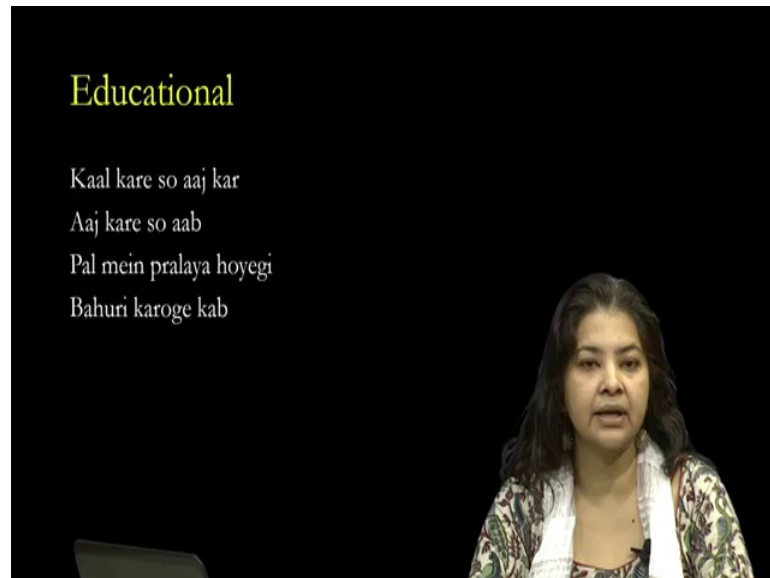


Folklore serve as educational tool for pre literate society, in society which has not been touched by formal education. The folklore items serve as educational material, they talk a good deal about wisdom about knowledge and try to proliferate the traditional knowledge through this tools. Guides and advice and passed on knowledge that are essential for living. They are like a guidebook, they talk about they give you advice they tell you how to go about life. So, this folklore exist as guides and advice for societies.

Emphasize values of culture they entail a lot of values which the generations after generations are passed on. So, this is another purpose of folklore highlights the social and political order of the society. So, the social and political order is emphasized and its tried to be maintained by passing on this knowledge through folklore; explains the

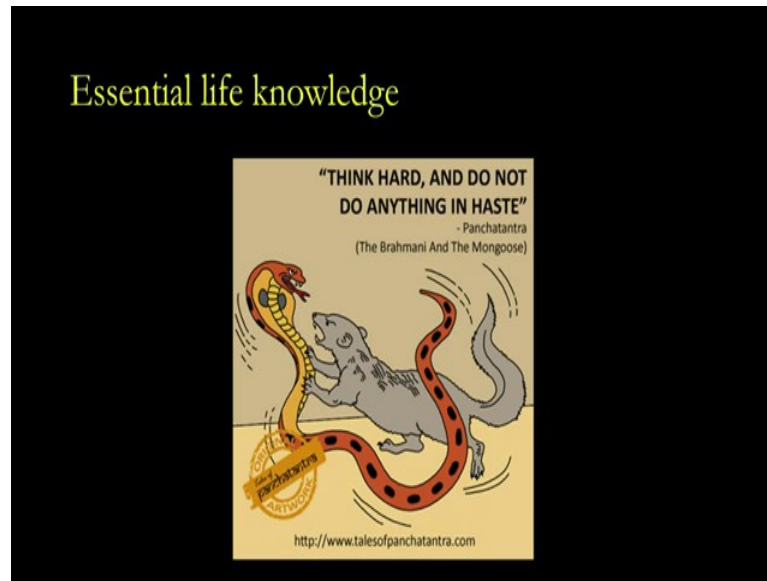
inexplicable, but there are many things which are not explicable. So, folklore material provides an explanation to this phenomena reflect the fear anxiety gratitude etcetera of the society and last, but not least its entertainment.

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For the first point educational let us pay some attention to this phrase it is one of the Kabir Doha [FL]. So, this is a phrase which tells us the importance of time, it tells us that how you should respect time and if you have to do something tomorrow do it finish it off today because you never know what happens the next moment. So, it tries to instill value for time, it tells people to respect time only then you will be able to succeed in life.

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Essential life knowledge; so, as you see this is one of the examples that I have cited from Panchatantra, this is a story of the Brahmani and the Mongoose. So, it this story actually tells you gives you a moral that think hard and not do anything do not do anything in haste that is tells you to be patient and think carefully before doing anything. So, the story goes that once a Brahmin befriended a mongoose and he brought him home, the Brahmins wife was a little skeptical that mongoose is kept at home.

Even then she agreed. One day when both the Brahmin and his wife had gone out the lady had asked the mongoose to look after the small kid which was lying in the cradle. So, after returning she saw blood all over the ground she thought that the mongoose had eaten away the small baby, but in reality a snake had come to attack the baby and the mongoose had saved it. But, without thinking anything the lady she killed a mongoose, which she thought had harmed a baby it was actually the friend of the baby who was saved it.

So, this story tells the importance of thinking wisely and not to do anything in haste. So, this is a purpose of folklore that it tells us how to go about life and tells gives us life knowledge.

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Values of culture; so, folklore another purpose of folklore is that it entails it contains the values of a culture. So, this is one example that I have put is many of you might have heard about the Vedanta project that was supposed to be done in Odisha in Niyamgiri hill.

And, the tribal community called Dongria Kondh were very much against it they did not want the mining corporation to come and uproot them from their region and start the bauxite mining because it taught a Niyamgiri mountain was their ancestor it was it was their gods and they did not want to separate from their god and ancestor. So, you see that how much importance this community gives to the mountain range. So, folklore this folk belief and contains the values of a culture.

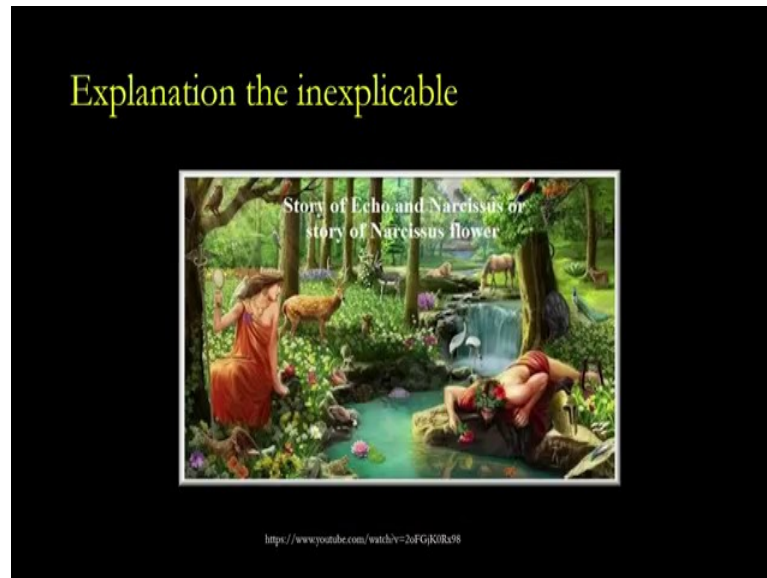
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Social and political order for this I have put a picture of this small boy of Satere Mawe (Refer Time: 09:11) community of Brazil. This is a custom that is followed when a boy is about 12 years of age and it is a custom that is done to celebrate this transformation of a small boy from being a boy to a warrior. So, what happens in this custom?

A boy has to wear gloves in his two hands which has bullet hands and his voice is supposed to endure this pain of this thousands and millions of ant bite in his hand for about 5 minutes and this is done over a period of time for about 20 times and only when the boy is able to endure this kind of pain, he supposed to have become a warrior from being a boy. So, this way the community maintains a social and political order. So, this is how the boy becomes the warrior and he is he is initiated into warrior hood.

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Explanation of the inexplicable; so, there are many phenomena in which are not easily explicable. So, folklore tries to explain them and give us more or less satisfactory answer why certain things happen. So, this is a story a folk tale about echo and narcissus, and this story tells us why there is echo in the mountains and why there is a why the flower narcissus always looks towards the water. So, the story goes that echo was a very talkative names who is live in a mountain and she was cursed by the goddess Juno who had come looking for a husband but because echo liked to talk so, much he was not listening to her, what she wanted and she kept on talking.

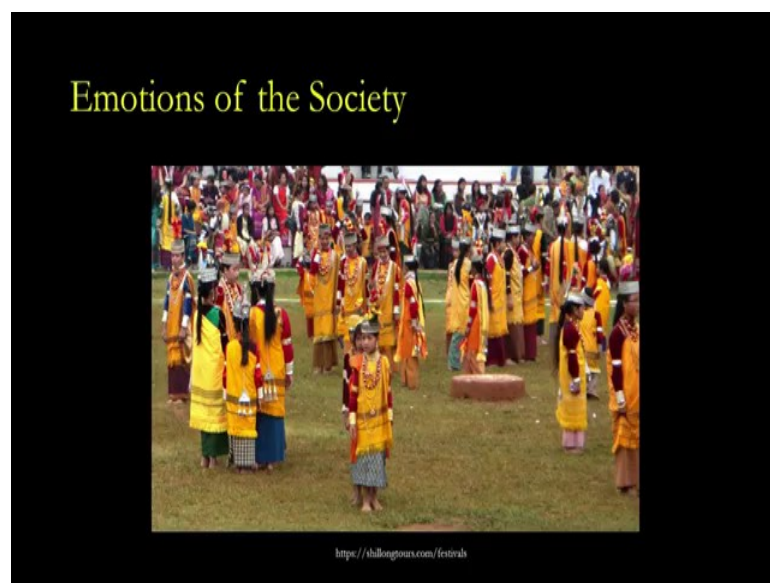
So, Juno cursed her that you will not be able to talk and only can repeat something that we have heard last. So, this was a curse given to her then what happens is that she echo falls in love with a very good looking a young guy called Narcissus and she wanted to express a love for him, but she was not able to do so, because she could not speak anything and she could only repeat what she had heard last. And whereas, on the other hand narcissus fell in love with his own image in the water he kept on looking at himself and thinking how beautiful this image is. So, he told that you are so, beautiful and that way echo got a chance and so, she said you are so, beautiful when narcissus said that I am in love with you echo repeated it saying that am in love with you this way.

She was able to express her feelings for narcissus, but narcissus when the image in the water vanished he was too sad and he also jumped into water and he got submerged, but

echo was very sad at this at this and she roamed around in a in the mountains it is said that that is why we hear echo in the mountain when we talk something and its come back to us the sound come comes back to us because echo is roaming around in the mountain.

Same with the flower narcissus always looks towards the water, when it is near the near some water body. So, these are two phenomenon which is tried to be explained by this folk tale. So, this is one purpose of folk tale that it tries to explain to us things that are not easily explicable.

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The next is the emotions of the society this is one picture of the Nongkrem festival of Shillong celebrated by the Khasi community. It is a thanksgiving festival where people gather and girls wear colorful clothes and there is deal days together days festivity and the girls dance in the colorful costumes, it is a kind of thanksgiving for the wonderful harvest they have had and people come gather there and to take part in this thanksgiving ceremony.

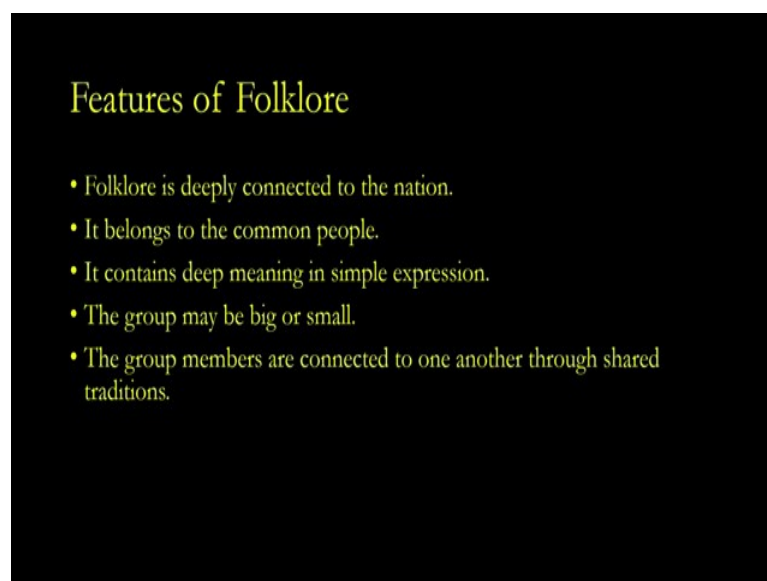
So, this is a way how the folk elements of folklore are supposed to depict the emotions of the society, the folk dance here is trying to depict the thanksgiving emotion of the community.

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Entertainment; so, this is a picture of Bhand Pather of Jammu and Kashmir region, these are stories which are satirical and are very humorous and the bund which is the main character he talks he talks about various issues, he talks about the political order, he talks about the societal wrong doings and he makes it very witty and very jovial so, that people enjoy, but also get the message. So, this is another feature of for folklore that it is entertainment people escape from the gadgetry of life looking at the folk folklore material.

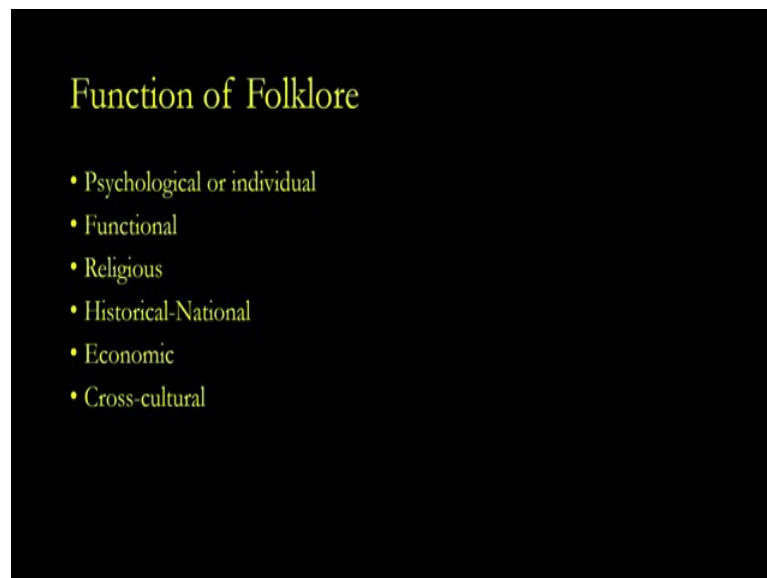
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So, these are the features of folklore, folklore is deeply connected to the nation you can know the essence of the nation by looking at the folkloric material, it belongs to the common people, the common people are the author or owners of the folkloric material it contains deep meaning in simple expression you see simple stories you say simple songs and.

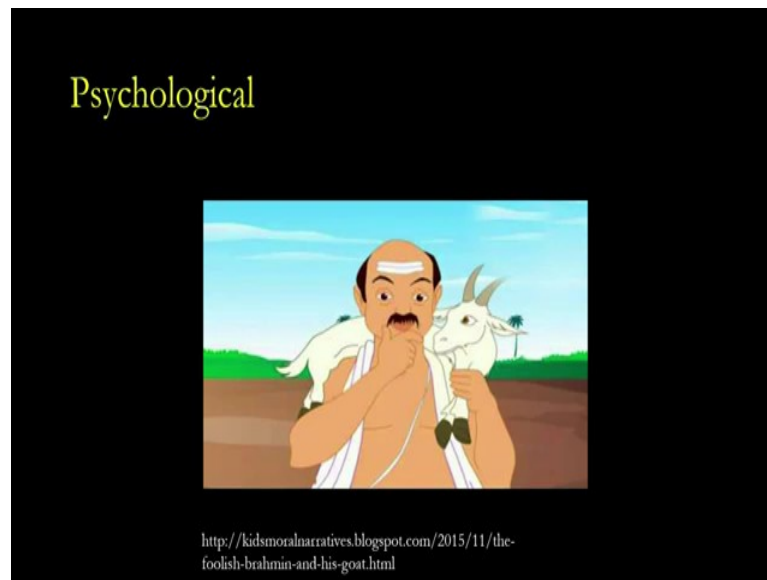
But they contain a lot of deeper meaning the group may be because small the group sometimes contains thousands of people, but it might also consist of a handful of people. The group members are connected to one another through shared traditions. So, the group members share something in common and which they call the tradition. So, this is these are the few features of folklore.

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What are the functions of folklore? What functions are they supposed to fulfill in a society? Scholars have listed this six functions of folklore first is psychological.

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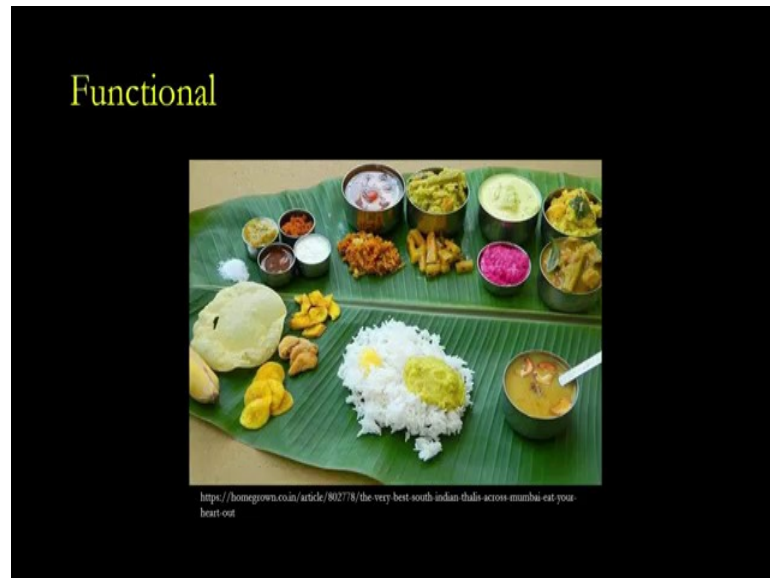
Jokes, riddles metaphors, tales and performance as well as art highly entertained people and our distraction from the humdrum and daily needs of life. Stories and anecdotes as heard of often cultural symbols and values and shape individuality archetypes and hero figures instead courage and love amongst the listeners. Four customs rituals and narrative enrich individual interaction with the community, stories that emphasize good over evil we could damage getting slain which is getting locked up in cages and thrown away immediately gratified the viewers.

Folklore maintains group cohesion and interaction for example, games make children cooperative and bond with each other in a community, superstition riddles often reflect the social context, individuals and social tab views are also either reinforced or denigrated by the folklore. Myths and legends in a mirror or distorted reality of society and reflect the individual position in society. This picture is of another story in the folk tale of India called Hitopadesha this is about a Brahmin and Brahmin here is shown to be a very foolish guy.

So, this it happen that the Brahmin buys this goat, but there are three thieves who are eyeing on the goat and they say that being a Brahmin they try to mock him by saying that being a Brahmin you are carrying a dead cow on your shoulders what kind of Brahmin are you? So, the Brahmin believes them and he leaves the goat and he goes away. So, in this in this story the Brahmin is showed to be a foolish guy.

In source in real society a Brahmin is supposed to be who is learned and he is also supposed to be somebody from the higher alliance in the society, but folkloric material try to subvert this, they try to show that the Brahmin is stupid, the Brahmin is foolish; this is a way in which the there is some kind of resistance some kind of restraint is exercised by the society at large.

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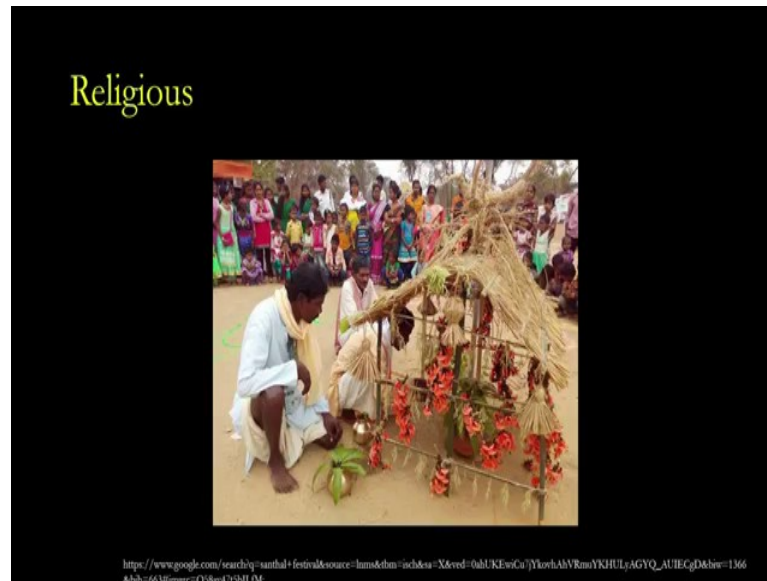


Second is functional folklore also entertains traditional knowledge and wisdom how to grow crops folk medicine recipes etcetera. Rites of passage help the individuals to integrate with the society, weddings newborn baby birth ceremony death rights are such examples. This custom accompany the change of place state social status and age.

In this the social and the physical position of an individual is either altered or reinforced. It is a cultural socialization process, important symbols and values of the people are often expressed in traditional and passed down from one generation to another. Folklore hands passes on pre existing ethics and standards of the society.

So, we get to know about the recipes the traditional knowledge of weaving etcetera through handing over this knowledge from generations to generation. So, it folklore also serves a functional purpose, religious legends about saints like that of Sant Kabir.

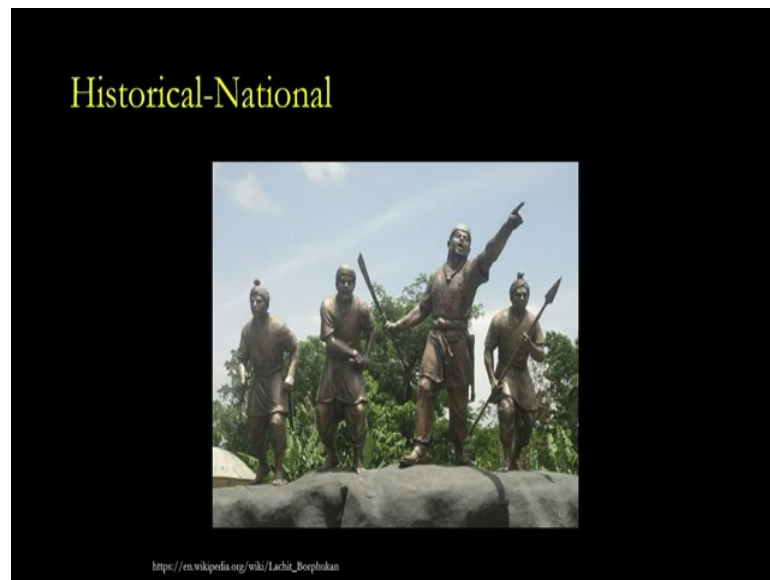
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Tukaram supernatural narratives like the myths of Krishna magic and local practitioners are deeply religious in context tells man and taught him proverbs and sings folk songs dance and theater use of divisional text etcetera. Folk religion differs from formal state religion, folk belief also get manifested in healing context such as occultism and folk medicine, the belief system is largely communicative. Some religious rights are performed during time of crisis for example, the practice of vocal and shamanism to remove illness.

Some religious rights are performed theoretically like special rights are performed while cutting the grain during Vaisakhi and rituals of New Year Gudipadwa in Gujarat and Pongal in south; religious rights have social goals that make ritual symbolic. So, this is one picture of the Karam festival of Jharkhand; so, folkloric materials are also religious.

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Historical national; folklore inspires national and ethnic pride this is done through the development preservation, imitation and collection of literature language and tradition. This picture is of hero of Assam Lachit Borphukan, who had successfully defeated mughals and he has chased him them out of the region he this folk hero is reward even today. So, folkloric materials are also historical national in character.

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Economic: Folklore has also made great contribution to economic life cycle of the people this can be seen immigration of material culture that has economic as well as utilitarian

base crafts are one such example. It is processed through which goods are created by hand, craft can become essential to the daily utilities of life as well as have some decorative and spiritual functions.

Tare also provide with basic equipments needed for domestic life to be its tools furniture furnishing houses clothes etcetera. Folklore also presents opportunities for consumption for the selling. It has become a pivotal point through which tourists are attracted. Many craft bazars are held all over India that create an opening for sale and economic transaction. So, the crafts also fulfill economic necessity of certain communities certain artisans. So, this is another purpose of folklore material.

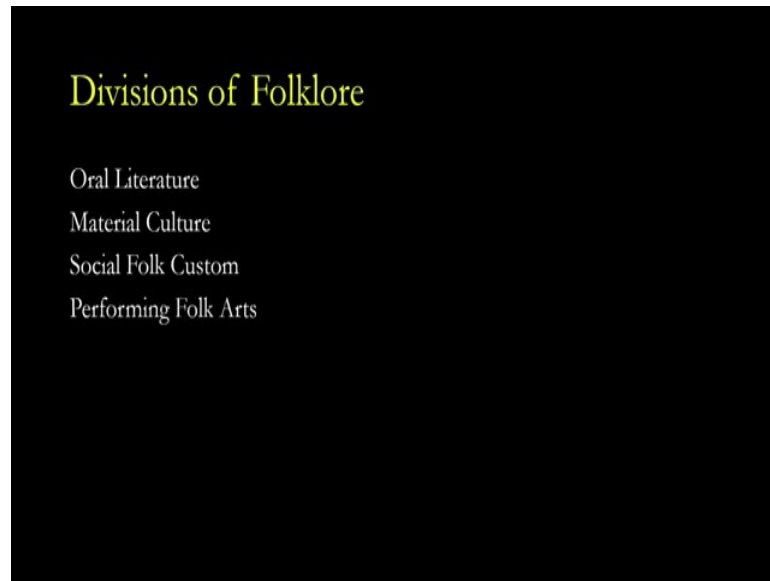
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Cross cultural all folklore material is based on commonality and inter cultural diffusion. This helps us to imagine that we all live in pluralistic open ended and free world in which every society possesses its own unique history and values. For examples the folktales have traveled far and wide one folk tale can be of different in different versions in different society.

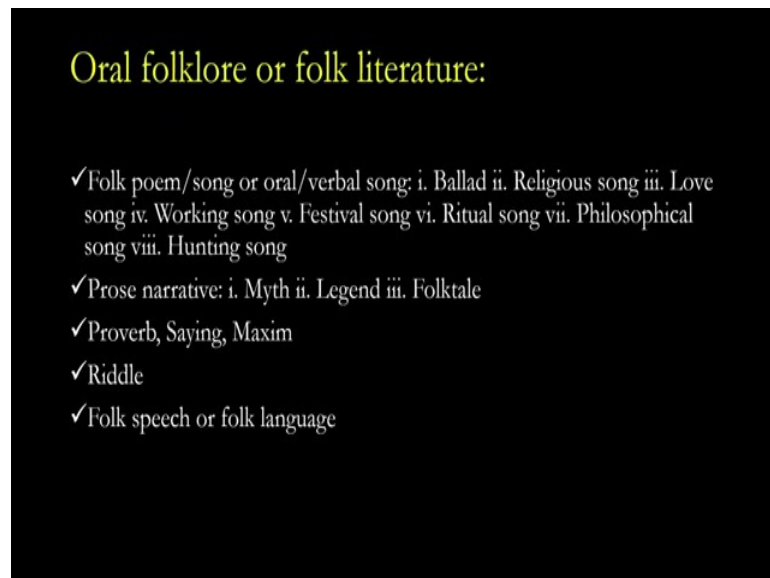
We have seen that the panchatantra has traveled to various regions of the world and it has been translated to various languages. The folklore material is cross cultural it goes beyond the boundary cultural boundaries and of nation or region. So, let us now having this in our background, now let us look back at the divisions of folklore that we have discussed in the previous class.

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The divisions are folk oral literature material culture social folk custom and performing folk arts.

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These are the subdivisions or of oral folklore or folk literature, folk poems folk songs or oral verbal song that that can again be divided into ballet religious song, love song working song festival song ritual song philosophical song hunting song then there is another division of oral folklore, that has pros narrative that can again be subdivided into myth legend folk tale.

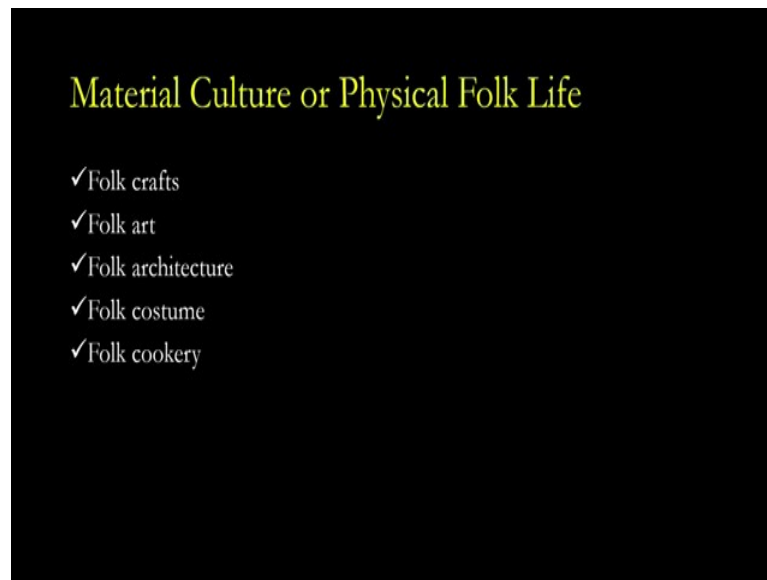
There is another division of proverb sayings maxims, another division of riddle, another division of folk speech and folk language. Oral literature is the repository of the critical knowledge philosophy and wisdom of non illiterate or pre literate society. This literature through narrative poetry song dance myths and fables and text for religious ritual provide the treasure of the meaning of life is experienced by the society at a particular time and place, which its unique existences still challenges. It encapsulates the traditional knowledge beliefs and values about the environment and the nature of the society itself.

It arises in response to the universal aesthetic impulse to provide narratives, that explains the nature of life and describes human response to challenges. This literature portrays how one is to live a moral life and explain the nature of one's relationship to divinity. It does retain the societies knowledge to be passed on to succeeding generation, it contains the history of the society in analytics and it experiences.

In various forms the oral literature portrays the society's belief systems and makes sense of life. It provides a guide to human behavior and how to live one's life. Oral literature also serves to communicate ideas, emotions, belief and appreciation of life this literature defines interprets and elaborates on the society's vision of reality in a danger in the world.

It deals with the human adventure and achievements against odd. Oral literature is also sometimes entertainment fosters feeling of solidarity with others who have had similar experiences in some. Oral literature may encompass many genres of linguistic experience and may perform many different functions of the society. So, keeping the background keeping the functions of folklore in the background we see that oral folklore have many functions to perform in a society. Now, let us go to the next division of folkloric material.

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That is material culture or physical folk life as it is sometimes called. They include the folk crafts, the folk art, folk architecture for costume, for cookery. The term material culture emphasizes how inanimate things within the environment act on people and are acted upon by people for the purpose of carrying out social function.

Regulating social relation and giving symbolic meaning to human activity. Studies on material culture focus upon things not just as material objects but also on how they reflect our meanings and uses. Material culture reflects how people and things interact how things structure human life and actions material culture and the preservation of heritage memory itself is material.

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Now, let us look at the third division of folklore that is folk social folk custom they encompass the festival and celebration recreation and games, folk medicine, folk beliefs and religion like customs, folk customs play an important role in managing and shaping social life. With the conservative character traditional tradition influence social institutions such as the family, law, religion and politics, art and science are less affected by iteration.

When a person goes against the community or societies tradition he will face sanctions in appropriation to the degree of that resistance. The punishment can be of different level it might be ostracism or even or just as something like ridiculing him. Just as custom they are laws originating from originating from the traditions, laws are intended to establish appropriate sentences for violations of tradition; in general tradition governor wider area than legal codes.

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And the last division of folklore, that is the performing folk art which folk drama, folk music, folk dance fall under this category. Performing folk art form a part of our country's unique identity, perform folk performing arts are a part of our history and they are often revealed a lot about the period this art had developed.

Folk performing art embodies fundamental values of great work to our culture and nation. They help keep the people connected to the ancestry and traditions they help to preserve the cultural unity of the people. So, these are the functions that the folkloric material perform in a society.

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In a major article published in 1954, folklorist William Bascom argued that folklore can serve four primary functions in a culture:

- ❖ Folklore lets people escape from repressions imposed upon them by society ex: tall tales
- ❖ Folklore validates culture, justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them.
- ❖ Folklore is a pedagogic device which reinforces morals and values and builds wit. ex: scary stories/moral lessons
- ❖ Folklore is a means of applying social pressure and exercising social control. ex: the boy who cried wolf

In a major article published in 1954 folklorist William Bascom argued that folklore can serve four primary functions in a culture, folklore lets people escape from repression imposed upon them by society example tall tales where you laugh and you make jokes out of things happening around you. Folklore validates culture justifies its rituals and institution to those who perform and observe them folklore is a pedagogic device which reinforces moral and values and builds with examples carry stories, morals lessons etcetera. Folklore is a means of applying social pressure and exercising social control.

Example the boy this is a story that a boy who cried wolf finally, was it eaten by the wolf because he was lying. So, folklore also try to impose social order. So, that people are virtuous. It is often said that folk art must be studied in its context, it cannot be removed from the context and they are best understood when we look them against the context of the origin.

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- There are contrasting views on Folk art.
- One view holds that the value of folk art lies in its ability to communicate information about the society in which it was made.
- Opposed to them - and each other - are two groups of historians.
- One camp feels that it is possible to study folk art for its aesthetic merits alone, without considering its sociological origins or utilitarian properties.
- Another group of historians argues that consideration of both the context and the appearance of folk art is vital for appreciation of the objects classified in this category.

There are contrasting views on folk art. One view holds that value of folk art lies in ability to communicate information about a society in which it was made, opposed to them and each other are two groups of historians. One can feel that it is possible to study folk art for its aesthetic merits alone without considering its sociological origin or utilitarian properties.

Another group of historians argue that consideration of both the context and the appearance of folk art is vital for precession of the object classified in the category. So, friends from the next class onwards we will look closely into the folk art of India and see how it has been studied following that we will see how science and folk art can come together to have a meaningful dialogue. That is all for today.

Thank you.