

## Forward

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Culture is a circle of tradition. We are constantly conserving, discarding, renewing, and reviving traditional practices and customs within a cultural frame. When we speak of folklore, we are considering this push-and-pull between what has been preserved, what has been forgotten, and what is in the process of being reinvented. With reinvention, we, in the present moment, discover new value, new meanings, of traditional customs, and we creatively reinterpret them to suit our current needs and realities. Reinvention is where the magic of folklore happens: it's the place where tradition lives.

For our first issue after a six-year hiatus, Re[Invented] felt like the suitable theme for a journal called *Culture & Tradition*. Founded in 1976, the journal has seen a lot of change. The world now, in 2024, is quite different from the social, cultural, and political landscape of the mid-1970s, yet we are still dealing with issues of identity, belonging, conservancy, and becoming. We still seek to understand our place in the world, who we are and where we fit. We express both delight and discomfort at our technological advancements and the way they are used to shape our world. We use social media to both connect and argue across physical boundaries, creating bonds but also rupturing communities across political divides. While the world around us changes, folklore remains the tool of expression of these cultural anxieties, concerns, fears, and joys. As such, we celebrate change and the ability to reinvent ourselves, our world, and our traditions.

The articles in this issue all attempt to grapple with some of these concerns and joys of twenty first-century life as expressed through folklore. True to our theme, we also seek to reinvent understandings of knowledge, inviting for the first time in the journal's history creative art pieces, including visual and poetic. By including these art forms alongside our more "academic" articles, we hope to celebrate and highlight the value of creativity within folkloristics, and how we, as

individuals and as humanity, often turn to folk art forms in order to craft our understandings of the world and each other.

The first half of this issue considers reinventions of art and genre in contested spaces. While examining geographically disparate regions, the authors demonstrate the inseparability of folklore, identity, and nationalism. Roshni Caputo-Nimbark's paper explores how *dengbêji*, a lyrical genre performed by Kurdish bards, is being reinvented to assert a Kurdish nation within the Turkish state. Encountering modern technologies and lifestyles that diverge from traditional performance contexts and long-running political efforts to silence Kurdish culture and tradition, the bards are adopting new techniques for shifting audiences, including a growing diaspora, spurring novel ideas about Kurdishness. In a similar vein, Udit Banerjee elucidates efforts by *Miyah* poets to bring visibility to the humanitarian and identity crises of the Miyah community in the Indian state of Assam. She demonstrates how, by experimenting with linguistic structures, modes of expression, and technological outlets, Miyah poets are building a poetic movement from the ground up, effectively subverting dominant narratives that perpetuate injustices among a subaltern population lacking a formal political platform.

Blending poetry, identity, and longing, "Stone Island" by Brandon M. Ward is an homage to a former fishing community in Newfoundland that was all but forgotten over the years by resettlement and fading memories. Evoking the sounds and images of fishers, themselves uprooted from a homeland in Europe, and retelling their physical hardships, informed in part by stories from his own rural Newfoundland upbringing, he invites us to revive the memory of bygone lives and celebrate their fortitude. Rebecca Horeth also evokes the ghosts of an ancestral past, but her paper uses material culture to explore the complexity of identity and the negotiation of migrant identity with Canadian identity. For her, the shifting contexts of the Transylvanian Saxon *Haube*, an embroidered folk costume traditionally presented to a new bride by her mother-in-law,

complicate singular notions of genre and identity. Merging history and autoethnography, these authors provide powerful justifications for why the reinvention of tradition matters.

*En français*, Fritz-Gerald Louis uses a material culture lens to consider museums as places where culture is not only preserved but also created. Through an interview process, Louis questions if “la communauté haïtienne montréalaise” are able to see themselves and their experiences as Haitian and Montréalers, as well as immigrants, within these museum spaces. Continuing with the theme of material culture and hybridity, Enzina Marrari’s *Burn Your Lips* is an embroidered art piece combining textiles with a Russian proverb. Embroidered on a discarded piece of linen, the art reclaims and gives new life to the material while also considering the ways in which trauma causes us to reassess and, at times, reinvent ourselves and our identity.

The final section of this issue questions the relationship between technological advancements, popular culture, and folkloristics. In her contribution, Ainjel Stephens considers how a modern form of expression, the video game, reinvents the way we tell and think about traditional fairy tales. Through examining the intersection between tradition and modernity, Stephens suggests that fairy tales remain an important form of folk expression and provide valuable insights into contemporary issues, making us reconsider the meaning of the so-called original fairy tale itself. In a multimedia art piece, Lana Thorimbert combines images of nature with the powerful force of the stock market with *Organic Growth*. The different textures evoke feelings of hybridity and the conflicting nature of reinvention. On the cusp of either-neither, this piece forces us to ask ourselves: how will we reinvent tomorrow? Lastly, John E. Priegnitz II’s contribution revisits the identity of folkloristics itself. As technology evolves, folklorists such as Tok Thompson have considered the role of the human in folklore. Continuing these discussions, Priegnitz questions if and how Artificial Intelligence can contribute to and create folklore.

Although diverse, these articles circle around questions and concerns of contemporary life: of finding our place in the world, of connecting with others across borders and boundaries, of the hybridity of living, and of the power of folklore to reimagine and reinvent the world we live in.

We welcome you to the [Re]invented *Culture & Tradition*.