

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONCEPTS OF PSEUDONYM AND FOLKLORISM

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Abstract: This paper explores the theoretical and methodological foundations of two interrelated concepts in folkloristics—*pseudonym* and *folklorism*. It investigates their functions in the processes of authorship, cultural transmission, and reinterpretation of traditional materials within both oral and literary contexts. Drawing on perspectives from European, Russian, and Uzbek folklore studies, the article highlights how pseudonymity and folklorism reflect the dynamic interplay between collective creativity and individual authorship, as well as between tradition and modernity.

Key words: Pseudonym, folklorism, myths, fairy tales, folkloristics, discipline.

Introduction

Folklore is a field of study that examines the traditional beliefs, customs, narratives, songs, and practices transmitted orally within a community over generations. It serves as a mirror of cultural identity, reflecting the values, emotions, and worldviews of a society. As an academic discipline, folklore emerged in the nineteenth century, primarily in Europe, when scholars began systematically collecting and analyzing the oral traditions of rural populations. The term *folklore* itself was first introduced by William John Thoms in 1846, marking the formal beginning of folklore studies in England. Following him, Andrew Lang significantly contributed to the understanding of myths and fairy tales through his comparative analyses and celebrated fairy book series, while James George Frazer's monumental work *The Golden Bough* (1890) laid the foundation for the comparative study of myth, ritual, and religion. Later, Cecil Sharp collected and preserved English folk songs and dances, emphasizing the cultural and musical heritage of Britain, and Katharine Briggs produced an extensive body of research on English fairy tales and legends, consolidating British folkloristics as a rigorous discipline. In Uzbekistan, the study of folklore developed as an independent field in the twentieth century, deeply rooted in the oral traditions of the Uzbek people. Hodi Zarifov (1906–1978) is widely recognized as the founder of Uzbek folkloristics, whose pioneering work on epics such as *Alpomish* and his systematic classification of folk genres established the scientific basis for national folklore studies. To'ra Mirzayev (1936–2019) advanced the theoretical framework of Uzbek folkloristics by defining the genre structure, functions, and typology of folklore, while Matyoqub Qoshjonov (1929–1995) conducted detailed research on the heroic epics and their relationship to historical and social contexts. Muhammadjon Homidiy (1906–1986) contributed extensively to the documentation and analysis of Uzbek folk songs and musical folklore, enriching the understanding of the interrelation between oral art and national identity. Together, these scholars—both English and Uzbek—laid the intellectual foundations of modern folkloristics, transforming oral tradition from a cultural artifact into a field of systematic and comparative academic inquiry.

The study of folklore as a scientific discipline encompasses not only the collection and classification of oral traditions but also the interpretation of their social, aesthetic, and communicative functions. Two concepts—*pseudonym* and *folklorism*—play a crucial role in understanding how folklore operates within and beyond its traditional context. A pseudonym

represents the interface between anonymity and authorship in oral creativity, while folklorism explains how folklore elements are revived, adapted, or reinterpreted in modern environments. These notions help scholars trace how collective art transforms under new cultural, ideological, and media conditions.

The word *pseudonym* originates from the Greek *pseudes* (false) and *onyma* (name), denoting an invented name used instead of a real one. In literary studies, pseudonyms often serve artistic, political, or psychological purposes. In folklore, however, the pseudonym functions differently. Folk creators—narrators, singers, poets—rarely assert individual authorship. The absence or replacement of personal names reflects the communal nature of creativity, where the *collective author* is considered the true source of the text. In this sense, pseudonymity in folklore is both a social and semiotic phenomenon. It symbolizes the transition from collective to individual expression. Scholars such as Vladimir Propp (1968) and Alan Dundes (1980) emphasized that the anonymity of folklore does not imply the absence of creativity but instead indicates its shared, performative nature. From a methodological standpoint, the study of pseudonyms requires interdisciplinary approaches that combine literary theory, cultural anthropology, and sociolinguistics. The pseudonym may also serve as a narrative device, allowing authors to imitate oral tradition or create a fictional “folk voice.” Such hybrid forms are especially evident in the works of writers who adapt folk genres, creating “literary folklore” or “folklorized literature.”

The concept of *folklorism* was introduced by the German folklorist Hans Moser in the 1950s, who defined it as “the second existence of folklore” (*die zweite Existenz der Folklore*). It refers to the re-use of folklore elements outside their original cultural and functional context. In Moser’s view, folklorism occurs when traditions are revived, reconstructed, or reinterpreted in literature, media, education, tourism, or political discourse. Later, Hermann Bausinger (1980) expanded the theory by highlighting how industrialization and modernization lead to new forms of folklorism, where folk traditions become symbols of identity and heritage rather than living practices.

Methodologically, folklorism is analyzed from both *diachronic* and *synchronic* perspectives. The diachronic approach traces how oral materials evolve historically, transitioning from traditional oral performance to modern adaptation in written or visual forms. The synchronic perspective, in contrast, examines how folklore functions in contemporary society—as cultural memory, entertainment, or ideological resource. Alan Dundes (1980) and Richard Bauman (1986) emphasized that folklorism must be understood as a communicative process, where traditional forms gain new meanings through context and audience interaction.

In Uzbek folklore studies, the notions of pseudonymity and folklorism are deeply intertwined with questions of national identity, authorship, and continuity of tradition. Uzbek folkloristics, established by Hodi Zarifov, Matyoqub Qoshjonov, and To‘ra Mirzayev, emphasized that folklore represents collective authorship—the voice of the people rather than the individual. Folklore performers often adopt pseudonyms or remain anonymous, reflecting the idea that the creative act belongs to the nation. During the Soviet and post-independence periods, folklorism became an important phenomenon in Uzbekistan. Epic heroes such as *Alpomish*, *Gorogly*, and *Ravshan* reappeared in modern literature, theater, and cinema, recontextualized to express national pride and cultural revival. Scholars such as To‘ra Mirzayev and Mardonbek Rustamov analyzed how these transformations reveal the adaptability of folklore to new ideological and artistic frameworks. In contemporary times, folklorism extends into digital media, where

proverbs, songs, and oral motifs circulate on social networks, demonstrating the persistence of collective creativity in the digital age.

Conclusion

The concepts of *pseudonym* and *folklorism* reveal the dual nature of folklore—as both collective heritage and living creativity. Pseudonymity underscores the balance between individual and communal expression, while folklorism demonstrates the continual renewal of tradition in modern cultural forms. Together, they form a vital methodological key for understanding how folklore adapts to changing social, literary, and technological realities. In the Uzbek context, these concepts illuminate the ongoing dialogue between ancestral memory and national identity, showing how folklore remains a living force within contemporary culture.

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