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Introduction: mapping the territory.

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Introduction:

Mapping the Territory

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This book is a contribution towards better understanding the complex interconnectivity of folklore, people and place, across a range of different cultural and geographical contexts. In compiling these chapters together we hope to engage in a critical conversation about the ways that folklore can influence human behaviour in certain landscapes, and to explore how tourism and land use decisions can be geared toward the protection and preservation of these places by adopting a folklore-centric perspective. In addition, we hope to explore how folklore can help to change attitudes and behaviours towards the natural environment for local people and visiting tourists alike, to act as a tool for the transfer, dissemination and improved understanding of ecological and traditional cultural knowledge for the benefit of the human and non-human world. In this introduction we aim to map out some of the conceptual territory explored in the chapters that follow.

Folklore: Tradition and Experience

There is a distinction between folklore materials and their academic study, though both are often referred to by the same word. The term ‘folkloristics’ was proposed by folklorists in the nineteenth century in an effort to make clear the distinction between the formal *study* of folklore (including explanatory paradigms, theories, research methodologies, and so on), and the folklore materials themselves (Dundes, 1965, p. 3; Burns, 1977). Folkloristics spans multiple disciplinary boundaries, including literature, linguistics, history and anthropology, all of which are drawn on in the analysis of folklore materials (Dundes, 1996). Others prefer terms such as ‘folklore studies’ to establish the distinction (Bronner, 2017). Folklore materials—the objects of folkloristic research—frequently include, but are not limited to: “traditional ideas” (Burns, 1977, p. 109), “speech, tales, songs, dances, and customs” (Bronner, 2017, p. 1). Alan Dundes (1934-2005) provided a very influential definition of folklore in terms

of the word's etymology. 'Folk,' he suggests, "can refer to *any group of people whatsoever* who share at least one common factor […] Every group has its own folklore," which may consist of any number of items featured in an expansive (though not exhaustive) list, including: "myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts," and so on, as well as "folk costume, folk dance, folk drama […] folk art, folk belief (or superstition), folk medicine, folk instrumental music […], folk metaphors […], names (e.g. nicknames and placenames," and much more (Dundes, 1965, pp. 2-3). It is these things that constitute the 'lore' in folklore.

With the emergence of scholarly approaches to analysing and interpreting the vast spectrum of folklore materials and traditions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came a (gradual) proliferation of different attempts at defining the field and its subject matter. Early definitions of folklore implied an assumption of the 'antiquity of the material, the anonymity or collectiveness of composition, and the simplicity of the folk' (Ben-Amos, 1971, p. 4). Romantic notions of folklore suggested the existence of a golden age in the distant past, which folk stories provided fleeting glimpses of, and pointers as to how it could be restored. It is well known that the folk stories collected by the Brothers Grimm were influential in the establishment of a pan-German identity in the nineteenth century, for example, ultimately contributing to the establishment of a unified German state in 1871 (Csapo, 2005, p. 6). Dan Ben-Amos points out, however, that the criteria of anonymity and antiquity are 'circumstantial and not essential to folklore' (Ben-Amos, 1971, p. 4). Folklore is not necessarily 'old,' indeed folklore could equally be defined as 'current popular knowledge.' Alan Dundes, for example, suggested that folklore could be conceived as 'autobiographical ethnography—that is, it is a people's own description of themselves' (Dundes, 2007, p. 55), with individual elements of folklore constituting 'units of worldview' (Dundes, 1971). Furthermore, folklore is not just a collection of beliefs disconnected from reality. More recent efforts to define folklore have shifted towards an emphasis on practice, and away from beliefs. Simon Bronner, for instance, explains: 'Put simply, folklore is "traditional knowledge, put into, and drawing from, practice"' (Bronner, 2017, p. 46). It is, therefore, cultural—passed down from one generation to the next.

There is also an element of folklore that is experiential in origin, emerging out of direct practical engagement with the world. This is true for traditional ideas about the weather, agriculture, horticulture and other aspects of the ecological environment—which are built up over many generations of practical experience and observation (see the next section on Traditional Ecological Knowledge)—as much as it is true for 'supernatural' folklore traditions. It has been suggested that some supernatural folk traditions have been constructed around pre-cultural core experiences, such as the 'Old Hag' tradition in Newfoundland, for example, which the folklorist David Hufford recognised as a particular cultural interpretation (amongst many others in the cross-cultural context), of the medically recognised sleep paralysis phenomenon (Hufford, 1982). Folklore is not, therefore, necessarily irrational or 'superstitious' in nature, but may in fact be 'associated with accurate observations interpreted rationally' (Hufford, 1982, p. xviii). Crucially, however, this does not necessarily 'suggest that all such belief has this association. Nor is this association taken as proof that the beliefs are true' (ibid.).

Folklore, then, can broadly be understood as consisting of complex systems of beliefs, ideas, experiential knowledge, traditions, techniques, crafts, customs and stories, held and practised by contemporary people across a wide range of local contexts, which relate as often to the everyday world of plants, animals, weather, seasonal cycles, human relationships and so on, as they do to the supernatural world of fairies, ghosts, goblins and other spirits.

Folklore and Place

The experiential dimension of folklore also connects traditions of belief and practice to place. Certain locations may become associated with particular traditions because of historical and legendary events that apparently took place there (Baker, 1972), or with ghosts, witches, fairies or UFOs because of experiences repeatedly reported in those places over time (McCue, 2012, p. 91). First-hand extraordinary experiences become stories, and are passed on from one individual to another in the form of *memorates*—stories of events that are believed to be true (Honko, 1964)—which help to build up a location's reputation. Folklorist Lauri Honko explains: 'Belief in the existence of spirits is founded not upon loose speculation, but upon concrete, personal experiences, the

reality of which is reinforced by sensory perceptions' (1964, p. 10). Place names in Wales, for example, "show the wide spread of belief in bugbears and spirits" in the country (Richards, 1969). Some locations come to be associated with stories of miraculous healing (Kõivupuu, 2020), and rocks, wells and springs are often connected to an origin story relating to the deeds of Saints, or other folkloric and pre-Christian figures (Cusack and Wilson, 2016, pp. 69-72). Key landmarks in the local environment, such as boulders deposited by ancient glaciers in unlikely places, or prehistoric standing stones, might also be explained by recourse to the activities of giants—or other supernatural entities, such as dragons or the devil—in the primordial past (Richards, 1934; Spooner, 1965; Hunter, 2022). As anthropologist Christopher Tilley points out, such narratives can contribute to a distinctive sense of place, local identity and wider landscape, which may be understood as "a series of named locales [and] a set of relational places linked by paths, movements and narratives" (Tilley, 1994, p. 34). Stories help to explain, define and connect places. They provide a means to establish a personal or communal sense of relationship to place. Adopting an Aristotelian perspective, sacred geographer Bernadette Brady suggests that: 'As an area becomes rich with cultural layers […] it will grow in its potential to influence human activity, such activity as wanting to maintain place names and taking measures to protect a storied location' (2022, p. 184).

Storied landscapes and places play an important role in many spiritual and religious traditions. We only need to think of the central significance of landscapes in the major world religions—the Holy Land for Jews, Christians and Muslims, for example—and the monuments and locations that become sites of pilgrimage for many thousands of believers each year. Indeed, pilgrimage is a central point of connection between travel, people, culture, belief and the land, as pilgrims move through significant locations and reflect on their participation and faith (Nolan and Sidney, 1989). Justine Digance explains that:

> Traditional religious pilgrimage is far from diminishing in popularity with age-old centres such as Rome, Jerusalem and Lourdes still attracting the faithful, with newer sites such as Medjugorje and Sri Sathya Sai Baba's palatial Ashram at Puttaparthi in India, proving to be popular pilgrimage sites today. A veritable cornucopia of secular pilgrimages [also] abound […]" (Digance, 2006, p. 37).

Movement through storied landscapes is not just a hallmark of the pilgrimage traditions of the major world religions. The Aboriginal Australian concept of "the dreamtime" goes a long way towards demonstrating the close relationship between narrative, spirituality and the landscape amongst indigenous communities as well. Although there are many different indigenous Australian terms that are translated into English as "dreamtime," making it a tricky concept to use accurately, there are nevertheless some defining characteristics across tribal groups that are worth mentioning in this context. Indeed, Alan Rumsey suggests that the apparent differences in defining the dreaming between groups are in fact '[…] variants of a single 'mode of orientation,' to place,' in which 'enduring, physical features of the lived landscape [are the] prime locus of objectification' (Rumsey, 1994, p. 126). Similar orientations to place are found in other indigenous cosmologies, and are also reflected in traditional European folklore. The dreaming also refers to ancestral creation myths—the stories of how the world and the features of the landscape came to be—as well as to an "a-temporal metaphysical reality" that overlays and interpenetrates the physical environment (Hume, 2000, p. 125). In moving through the landscape, through sacred sites and mythic locations, and re-telling dreaming stories, it is possible to *participate* in the act of creation itself. Lynn Hume explains that from the 'orientation' of the dreaming:

> Everything is interconnected in a vast web of sacredness. Ancestor tracks and sites, and the Dreaming stories associated with them, make up the sacred geography of Australia. The entire continent is criss-crossed by tracks that the Ancestors made on their travels […] Those responsible must take care of the country by periodically following songlines pertaining to these myths, thus maintaining their connections to the land and keeping the land (Hume, 2000, p. 127).

For indigenous Australians the physical features of the natural landscape offer a direct connection to the creation event, and are revered and protected as sacred sites (many of which are currently under threat from government coal mining operations, despite their cultural, ecological and spiritual significance, see Lewis and Scambary, 2016). Indigenous Australia's sacred landscapes and dreaming stories are also echoed and reflected in the folk traditions of other parts of the world, which similarly portray the

image of a living mythical landscape with which we can participate. Traditional stories about place often also contain detailed ecological and environmental knowledge about the varieties of plants, animals and other-than-human beings that inhabit the land, including their characters, properties, behaviours and uses, as well as prescribed modes of interaction with them.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is a term that has been gaining increasing relevance and attention since the 1980s, and might be considered a branch of folklore dealing with the ecological environment. Social ecologist Fikret Berkes explains that systems of traditional ecological knowledge represent the cumulation of ‘experience acquired over thousands of years of direct human contact with the environment’ (Berkes, 1993, p. 1), which includes 'an intimate and detailed knowledge of plants, animals, and natural phenomena, the development and use of appropriate technologies for hunting, fishing, trapping, agriculture, and forestry,’ and so on (Bourgue, Inglis and LeBlanc, 1993, p. vii). Moreover, it is argued that systems of traditional ecological knowledge represent a form of ‘holistic knowledge, or “world view” which parallels the scientific discipline of ecology’ (Bourque, Inglis and LeBlanc, 1993, p. vii). Traditional forms of knowledge and knowledge transmission include:

> […] oral narratives that recount human histories; cosmological observations and modes of reckoning time; symbolic and decorative modes of communication; techniques for planting and harvesting; hunting and gathering skills; specialised understandings of local ecosystems; and the manufacture of specialised tools and technologies (e.g., flint-knapping, hide tanning, pottery-making, and concocting medicinal remedies) (Bruchac, 2014, p. 3814).

In addition to the techno-ecological-medical-scientific knowledge contained within indigenous traditions—which Western scientific approaches have often been very keen to exploit—systems of TEK are also frequently bound up in wider spiritual cosmologies, with implications and frameworks for participating in and understanding the world that far exceed those of Western science and ecology. Notably, this often includes an animistic worldview, in which the cosmos is conceived as personal and

relational in nature. In Graham Harvey's words, from an animistic perspective 'the world is full of persons, only some of whom are human, and […] life is always lived in relationship with others' (Harvey, 2005, p. xi). These animistic and relational elements of traditional knowledge are often sidelined, or dismissed, by Western science in favour of more 'practical' information (Wright, 2021). Linda Tuhiwai Smith explains:

> The arguments of different indigenous peoples based on spiritual relationships to the universe, to the landscape, to stones, rocks, insects, and other things, seen and unseen, have been difficult arguments for Western systems of knowledge to deal with or accept […] These arguments give a partial indication of the different world views and alternative ways of coming to know, and of being, which still endure within the indigenous world […] (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 78).

Rather than being at odds with Western scientific perspectives, however, biologist Robin Wall Kimmerer has suggested that traditional ecological knowledge and Western scientific ecological knowledge have many points of overlap and might be complementary to one another, explaining that the synergy of perspectives can be useful in a variety of different ways:

> Traditional ecological knowledge can be a source of new biological insights and potential models for conservation biology and sustainable development […] Examination of traditional ecological knowledge explicitly brings multicultural perspectives into the core of the science curriculum, where they have generally been absent […] Recognition of traditional ecological knowledge increases opportunities for productive partnerships between Western scientists and indigenous people […] Traditional ecological knowledge integrates scientific and cultural concerns in a holistic manner […] (Kimmerer, 2002, pp. 432-435).

Just as there is scope for the incorporation of TEK into scientific ecological knowledge, so too is there scope for the incorporation of other folkloric perspectives and traditions, and the ecological information they contain, which may have practical applications in the conservation of endangered ecosystems and sacred sites. In a study of TEK in

Northern Ghana, for example, Boafo *et al*. (2016), found that 'diverse forms of TEK developed over generations are still being applied by communities and households in the form of taboos and totems, customs and rituals, rules and regulations, and traditional protected areas' (2016, p. 32). They conclude that it is 'imperative that national, regional, and local policies aimed at identifying, documenting, and implementing potent TEK are formulated to help safeguard ecosystems and improve livelihood systems' in Ghana (ibid.).

This kind of ecological knowledge might also be referred to as ethnobiology, or folk biology. Ethnobiological frameworks (of which there are many, including those of Western biology), can be either adaptive or maladaptive. Anthropologist Roy Rappaport explains that 'Nature is seen by humans through a screen of beliefs, knowledge, and purposes, and it is in terms of their images of nature, rather than of the 'actual structure' of nature, that they act. Yet it is upon nature itself that they do act, and it is nature itself that acts upon them, nurturing or destroying them' (Rappaport, 1979, p. 97). The assumptions inherent in different worldviews, then, lead to different behaviours towards and within the natural environment. For example, misconceptions about certain animal species in bodies of traditional ecological knowledge *can* lead to those animals being persecuted when encountered in the wild, with the consequence of destabilising ecosystem dynamics. As an interesting illustration of this principle, Ceríaco *et al.* (2011) conducted a study of contemporary folk theories of geckos (Hemidactylus turcicus) in Portugal (Ceríaco *et al.,* 2011). They found, for instance, that:

> Several locals (4%) thought that geckos feed on human blood and skin, while approximately 25% believed the gecko to be poisonous and 24% that the animal was a vector of dermatological diseases. Several stories were reported regarding the poisonous and disease vector nature of the gecko. One of the most typical stories presented by the locals (10%) related to the poisoning of an entire family by a gecko falling into a saucepan on the stove (Ceríaco *et al.*, 2011, p. 5).

Folk ideas such as these have led to the active extermination of gecko populations in the region, threatening their survival. Recent research on the role of beliefs about

‘magical animals’ in wildlife conservation efforts in Madagascar also supports the dual role played by folklore, having both the potential to protect and endanger rare species and natural habitats. In their case study, Holmes *et al.* describe how aye-ayes (Daubentonia madagascariensis) on Madagascar face similar persecution to geckos in Portugal because of their associations with witchcraft in local traditions of belief (Holmes *et al.*, 2018).

There is, then, a complicated relationship between folklore, other bodies of traditional knowledge and the ecological environment in which they have developed. Systems of traditional ecological knowledge undoubtedly contain valuable lessons for developing healthy human relationships with the natural world, but, as with geckos in Portugal and aye-ayes in Madagascar, some traditions may also have the inverse effect. There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to the relationship. Every region and group has its own stories and frameworks for engagement with the world—different orientations, assumptions and behaviours—and it is the differences in folk traditions between regions that contributes to the appeal of folklore tourism.

Folklore and Tourism

Travel with the purpose of visiting places associated with folklore stories, customs and traditions is recognised as a global phenomenon by scholars (Buchmann, 2006; Everett and Parakoottathil, 2018; Harsono, 2017). However, despite the growing interest from tourist destinations in adopting folklore into their development strategies, scholarship in this area remains relatively limited. The term ‘folklore tourism’ has received some attention, and is often regarded as a subset of heritage and cultural tourism. Its amorphous nature, in this sense, encapsulates wider reasons to travel—literature, language, art, events, people, film—and arguably makes this area of tourism particularly difficult to define neatly. Broadly though, folklore tourism is considered to be a form of travel associated with motivations to witness and participate in folklore performances, including traditional rituals and cultural events, combined with pilgrimage to landscapes of folkloric significance (for instance, natural rivers and mountains connected to folktales, or sites of religious worship and practice, see Harsona, 2017). More recently, scholars have also recognised the role of supernatural folktales and storytelling as a form of folklore-based tourism incorporating wider

terminology, such as “paranormal tourism” (Houran *et al.,* 2020), “ghost tourism” (Hanks, 2016) and “mythical tourism” (Buchmann, 2006). As such, folklore tourism is multifaceted, encompassing a wide-range of visitor experiences from folklore-inspired events (such as the Robin Hood Festival, see Everett and Parakoottathil, 2018), to supernatural trails and walks (such as ghost tours in Gettysburg, see Thompson, 2010), to immersion in the food and drink culture of a nation (Yunxia, 2019). In this book, we consider folklore tourism in its widest sense, as a form of travel to places associated with folkloric tradition, custom and storytelling.

While pilgrimage to places of religious, spiritual, and cultural significance (many of which are also connected to folklore), has a long history, the emergence of folklore tourism is considered a relatively recent development. Through the late nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, rapid modernisation, urbanisation, and rationalisation, contributed to a movement away from spiritual and esoteric thinking towards more scientific, secular ways of approaching the world. A process of ‘disenchantment’ that Max Weber recognised in his lecture on *Science as a Vocation* that he explained as being:

> […] the knowledge or belief that, *if only one wanted to*, one could find out any time; that there are in principle no *mysterious, incalculable powers at work*, but rather that one could in principle master everything through *calculation* (1946, p. 7).

As such, folklore stories, customs, and their landscapes, particularly in Euro-American countries, encountered a de-prioritisation in mainstream culture in favour of modernisation. For some countries, a movement away from superstition and traditional customs was considered a necessary step towards progress and the opportunity to change global perceptions of national identity (see Light, 2007).

However, despite Max Weber’s assertion that modernisation equated with the end of religious and spiritual thinking, the mid-to-late twentieth century witnessed a profound re-emergence of alternative, non-secular beliefs, and contemporary hyper-real popular cultures (Bowman, 2000; Possamai and Lee, 2011). More recent perspectives have suggested that, rather than returning after a period of absence, this esoteric

dimension of Western thought never really left in the first place, and its traces can be seen threaded right throughout the modern history of mainstream science, technology, media, social science and culture (Josephson-Storm, 2017; Noakes, 2020; Natale and Pasulka, 2020; Espirito Santo and Hunter, 2021).

The growth of folklore tourism gained momentum towards the end of the 1900s as destinations around the world sought to establish new ways of engaging local and visiting communities. In part, this 'folklorisation' of place was spurred on by local government and destination marketing organisations (DMO's) who, in an effort to harness the economic potential of tourism (which was seeing significant growth in the 1970s), sought to capitalise upon the culture and traditions of a region to draw visitors in. This was a top-down approach to folklore tourism, which led to the development of physical and cultural infrastructure, as well as the rebranding and identity shaping of particular destinations. On April 4th 1975, for instance, key stakeholders in Germany met to establish the 'German Fairy Tale Route' celebrating the country's rich tradition of folk literature. Heinrich Fischer, first director of the newly established consortium, founded the route to attract tourists to the area on the premise that 'folk literature, after a period of partial submersion in floods of printed social criticism, appeared to experience the beginnings of a renaissance' (Hemme, 2005, p. 71). In other countries, government backed initiatives also sought to celebrate and preserve local traditions and culture through tourism initiatives. For example, the Bomas of Kenya opened in 1973 as a cultural museum and performing-arts venue, and still to this day invites tourists to celebrate the cultural heritage of the nation through traditional dance and performance (Bruner, 2001).

Folklore tourism has also been unplanned, even accidental, emerging from the bottom up. The rise of popular media—including television, film and latterly the internet—has played a key role in popularising places and their associated folklore narratives (Hill, 2010). The emergence of Dracula tourism in Romania from the 1970s onwards, for example, provides a compelling illustration of the media's role in popularising a destination based on its associated stories. While Bram Stoker's classic book, *Dracula*, was published in 1897, it was only during the second part of the twentieth century—amongst a plethora of Dracula-based films, television programmes and books (including the best-selling *In Search of Dracula*, 1972)—that Romania was 'put

on the map' for tourists seeking an experience with the vampire-myth and its associated folklore. This was despite a general reluctance to embrace the Dracula narrative from Romanian authorities (Light, 2007). Similarly, in Roswell, New Mexico, USA, the first tourist attractions and events promoting the Roswell Incident emerged in 1991. Publication of the book *The Roswell Incident* in 1980 renewed interest in the story (which had been all but dismissed by the mainstream at that point) and led to the development of the International UFO Museum and Research Centre (IUFOMRC), later followed by the first UFO festival in 1997, which attracted over 47,000 people (Meehan, 2008). Similarly, at Rendlesham Forest in Suffolk, UK, Forestry England have recently established a UFO walking trail. Their website explains how the 'trail will stimulate your imagination, taking you through forest, heathland and wetlands and some of the areas connected to the UFO sighting in December 1980' (Forestry England, 2022).

Consequently, we can say that tourism in storied places has evolved from a combination of deliberate top-down economic strategies in tandem with bottom-up public interest in locations associated with folklore. For destinations, embracing folklore as a tourism asset has led to significant economic benefits. In Scotland, for instance, the visitor economy surrounding 'Nessie' was worth over £41million to the Scottish economy in 2018 (The Press and Journal, 2018). As such, folklore has become a valuable resource for placemaking. In the past fifty years, folklore has not only featured in tourism itineraries, but places have become tourist destinations explicitly *because of* the folklore associated with them. Contemporary examples include; Salem, Massachusetts, promoted as 'The Witch City'; York, England, hailed as the 'Most Haunted City in the World' in 2014; and Roswell, New Mexico, where the local tourist information website hosts the tagline 'We Believe' in connection with its popular UFO folklore.

Why do people take part in folklore tourism?

The growth and success of folklore tourism over the past fifty years suggests a healthy demand amongst travellers globally. But, *why*? In heritage and cultural tourism scholarship, understanding why people consume cultural experiences has long been an object of study. Motivations including; a desire to learn (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer,

and Benckendorff, 2012; Richards, 1996), culture seeking (Correia, Kozak, and Ferradeira, 2013), escapism (Özel and Kozak, 2012) and identity construction (Bond and Falk, 2013), are of key importance. Research into the reasons behind participation in folklore tourism is somewhat more limited, although given the close connection between folklore, heritage, and cultural tourism there are likely many motivational similarities. Recent research suggests in particular that seeking out 'excitement, joy, and surprise' (Pharino, Pearce and Pryce, 2018), and a general sense of curiosity about folklore and the paranormal (Obradović *et al.*, 2021) are central motivations.

Ironside (2018) argues that some forms of contemporary folklore tourism (such as ghost tourism) may have their roots in cultural practices such as legend-tripping. As Bill Ellis (1996) defines it, legend-tripping is the practice of visiting places where something uncanny has occurred with the intention of experiencing something supernatural. Places such as abandoned buildings, cemeteries, and bridges often become popular sites for legend-tripping because of the folklore and legends attached to them. The Mothman of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, popularised by the Fortean writer John A. Keel's famous book *The Mothman Prophecies*, is an interesting case in point. A whole industry has built up around the sightings of the enigmatic cryptid, including the establishment of a Mothman Museum and the erection of a steel statue of the winged humanoid, which has become a popular tourist attraction in itself (Sherwood, 2013). While legend-tripping is often considered an activity undertaken by youths who travel to locations to test the veracity and credibility of a legend (Bird, 1994), the experiential dimensions of legend-tripping—the desire to "escape from the mundane" (Ironside, 2018, p. 97) and the "conscious suspension of reality in the interest of fun" (Holly and Cordy, 2007, p. 346)—may resonate with the motivations of contemporary tourists. Like legend-tripping, folklore tourism offers participatory experiences for visitors. As Everett and Parakoottathil (2018) observe in their study of the Robin Hood Festival in Nottingham, this participation may be explicit and involve visitors taking part in performance and role-playing as a form of everyday escapism. Alternatively, participation may be subtle or implicit. On ghost tours, audience participation may be limited, yet the audience is invited through storytelling to suspend rationality and engage with the *possibility* of seeing a ghost (Carruthers & Krisjanous, 2014). Both situations—events that take place in liminal spaces between the ordinary

and the extraordinary, the real and the imaginary—provide opportunities for contemplation and the enchantment of place.

Tourists may also seek opportunities for alternative forms of knowledge-acquisition and education through folklore experiences. Folklore stories are deeply embedded in the culture, heritage, and environment of local communities, and yet can often offer something more than historical or scientific fact alone (Hopper *et al.*, 2019; Paphitis, 2013). In her study of haunted heritage in the UK, Michele Hanks (2011) explores the role of ghost stories in the presentation of difficult history. As she argues, ghosts may act as a form of social memory—constituting a mythico-history (Malkki, 1995)—that offers a blend of historical fact, interpretation, and myth, to provide a back-stage glance into places and their people. Despite the obvious commercial agenda of most ghost tourism, entertainment is interwoven with history to encourage engagement with place at a deeper level (Garcia, 2012; Gentry, 2007; Holloway, 2010). The incorporation of humour, and the "nip and bite" of playfulness common in ghost walk narratives (Thompson, 2010), enables the presentation of dark heritage in a way that authorised heritage alone may find difficult to achieve. As such, tourists may actively seek out folklore stories as an alternative form of heritage, or dark tourism.[1]

In their study of the push-pull motivations for ghost tourism in Spain, Dancausa, Hernandez and Perez (2020) also identified the search for novelty and emotional experience (push motivation), as well as the organisation of the tour (pull motivation), to be important motivating factors. Others have noted the desire for thrilling or scary experiences (Holloway, 2010; Garcia, 2012), an interest in pursuing ontological and spiritual questions (Eaton, 2015; Ironside, 2018), and the inherent draw of atmospheric and spooky places (Ironside, 2018; Thompson, 2010).

Arguably, the desire for an *experience*—whether that be novelty, emotion, thrill, learning, or escapism—is especially important to the folklore tourist. By providing the opportunity for this, folklore tourism appeals to the contemporary consumer who, as

[1] Dark Tourism as defined by Stone (2006) involved travel to "sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre" (p. 146).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) observed over two decades ago, are seeking more memorable and meaningful interactions in an experience economy. Others have observed that forms of folklore tourism, like paranormal tourism, may indeed be driving a shift from an experience economy to an "enchantment economy" (Houran *et al.*, 2020).

Problems with Folklore and Tourism

The potential for folklore to offer tourists the opportunity to learn about, reflect on and experience place through particular cultural lenses is undoubtedly beneficial. Furthermore, the economic impacts and opportunities provided through placemaking initiatives have helped to reinvigorate destinations—both rural and urban—through the celebration and commercialisation of folklore. However, the 'folklorisation' of place can present complex challenges for local communities, visitors, and the surrounding natural and heritage environment.

In her study of ghost tours in Edinburgh and Toledo, Garcia (2012) observed the tensions that exist between the presentation of ghost tours as an educational experience, and the need to entertain for the purposes of commoditisation and appealing to consumer interests. Unlike historical fact, folklore often relies on the interpretation (and re-interpretation) of multiple narratives—as such, one story may take many forms depending on the context and storyteller. The separation between 'fact' and 'fiction' is, therefore, more fluid with folklore and can lead to the fragmentation of historical and personal narratives (Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas, 2007). Like dark tourism, the tendency to trivialise, or glorify, certain aspects of dark heritage, such as gore, human suffering and misery may also be prominent in the interests of providing an 'entertaining' experience for tourists (García, 2012). For local communities this can be problematic. On one hand, folklore may provide a tool to present the difficult heritage of a place, while at the same time may shape the tourist gaze so that visitors come to see and understand a place in ways that are not fully authentic, or sympathetic, to the local culture and community. In Transylvania, for example, promotion of Dracula tourism was initially met with strong resistance from local communities. The connection to Vlad Tepes, who for many was a national hero, was

considered culturally insensitive and disparate from the heritage narratives the region wished to portray for itself (Light, 2007).

For local communities, the use of folklore may also contribute to a sense of ‘otherness’ and a disconnection between authentic local culture and that constructed through the tourist gaze. Performing folklore customs (through traditional dance, song, storytelling, or dress) has the potential to reinforce cultural stereotypes that may be distinct from the contemporary lives of local people (Lőrincz, 2021). Furthermore, the appropriation of folklore customs for tourism purposes, such as in the form of souvenirs and other consumable trinkets, may devalue their meaning and importance for the community (Viken, 2022). As recognised by George (2010) and Lőrincz, (2021) this disconnect is heightened when there is a lack of consultation between local communities and those developing folklore-based tourism strategies. The co-creation of tourism resources is, therefore, vitally important in maintaining a sense of authenticity for tourists and ownership for local people.

High volume tourism to places associated with folklore also raises challenges for local communities and the natural environment. As Ironside and Massie (2020) discuss, the high volume of visitors to the Fairy Glen located on the Isle of Skye, Scotland, presents environmental challenges. The performance of spiritual practices to appease the fairies (such as creating stone circles and spirals) as well as removing stones and other natural souvenirs, has led to dramatic changes to the landscape and ecology. Local communities are also impacted by the volume of traffic on the narrow, single-track roads and the ‘invasion’ of land once enjoyed more peacefully by those living in, and around, the Glen. Similar issues of souvenir collecting, and vandalism have been reported in both natural habitats—such as the Fortingall Yew Tree, Scotland (The Times, 2019)—and heritage sites, such as Loon Lake Cemetery, USA, known by legend as a ‘witches cemetery’ (Waskul and Waskul, 2016).

The use of folklore in tourism, therefore, raises questions about the balance between the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental value of places and people. In some instances, this may lead to a conflict between local ‘identity vs. economy’ (Tunbridge 1994). The issue of appropriation is also apparent here. As Obradović and colleagues point out in relation to the potential for paranormal tourism in Serbia: 'It is important to

ensure that during the development of this type of tourism […] the customs and rituals of the local population are not endangered, but preserved' (Obradović *et al.*, 2021, pp. 229-230). Local people must be at the centre of folklore tourism. The difference between 'placemaking' (a top-down approach led by governments and agencies) and 'place-making' (a bottom-up approach led by communities) is perhaps an important distinction here. As Ironside and Massie (2020) suggest, a folklore-centric gaze that shifts the tourist focus from the *consumption of folklore in landscapes* to a *relational approach with folklore* that considers the people, environment, and heritage of a place as part of a 'living' landscape may be especially beneficial.

Folklore-Centric Tourism and Environmental Education

In recent years, the sciences have been at the forefront of climate education and ecological knowledge exchange, but research increasingly suggests that narrative approaches to ecological learning—through myth and storytelling, for example—are often more effective than purely fact-based approaches, especially with children and young people (Holm *et al.,* 2015*;* Hopper *et al.*, 2019; Hallam, 2019). Education about ecology and the environment is paramount to developing solutions to, and resilience against, further climate change and ecological degradation, and is essential for establishing a sense of connection to the natural world, leading to 'a stronger commitment to nature,' which in turn 'could lead to higher human interest in environmental protection' (Restall & Conrad, 2015, p. 1). Storytelling has been shown to be a very effective way to engage people with their environment and local ecology in meaningful and fulfilling ways (Hopper *et al.*, 2019). For instance, we may be encouraged to preserve certain sites and natural landscapes because of the stories and folk-traditions that are attached to them. A brief survey of newspaper reports from the last twenty-five years reveals that the power of the association between natural landscape features and folk-traditions is still very much alive. Take, for instance, the role of the elves or Huldufólk in Iceland (The Guardian, 2013), or the fairies in Ireland (The Irish Times, 1999), in influencing planning body decisions about roads and other construction projects. The association of certain rocks, trees or bushes with stories of the fairies, then, can lead to very real changes in human behaviour, especially in the direction of pro-environmental action. Research by Kim *et al.* on Korean nature proverbs found a similarly beneficial role in that they can be particularly 'meaningful

for communicating ecological principles and natural resource management practices' (Kim *et al.,* 2017, p. 14). They suggest that proverbs have the potential to enhance ecoliteracy, even amongst urban populations:

> [..] environmental educators can use proverbs or folklore sources as a bridge for unifying traditional ecological wisdom and cultural expressions with modern scientific and systems-based learning of sustainability (Kim *et al.,* 2017, p. 14).

Recent moves to recognise the legal personhood of environmental features, such as rivers, mountains and entire ecosystems, in order to ensure their protection might also be understood in this context (The Guardian, 2017)—a recognition that the landscape and its features are not merely resources to be plundered for human consumption, but have an intrinsic value in their own right and with which we can participate and interact. Thinking about landscapes and ecosystems in this way—as many indigenous traditions do (cf. Yunkaporta, 2019; Nelson and Shilling, 2018), and as the folklore suggests our ancient ancestors likely did too (see Taylor, 2019; Shapland, 2020), has the potential to transform the way that we relate to, and behave within, them.

As Ironside and Massie define it, a 'folklore-centric' approach is a relational approach, and in this way it resonates with perspectives contained within systems of traditional ecological knowledge. Robin Wall Kimmerer emphasises three key elements of traditional ecological knowledge that could have important implications for folklore tourism. She explains how TEK is founded upon notions of animacy, reciprocity and ceremony. The element of animacy suggests an understanding that we live in a 'world of being, full of unseen energies that animate everything' (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 49). Reciprocity calls for the establishment of mutually beneficial relationships between people, place and the other-than-human beings that constitute them, and the development of what Kimmerer refers to as 'cultures of gratitude.' She explains:

> In such cultures, people have a responsibility not only to be grateful for the gifts provided by Mother Earth, they are also responsible for playing a positive and active role in the well-being of the land. They are called not to be passive consumers, but to sustain the land that sustains them (Kimmerer, 2011, p. 257).

Finally, ceremony serves as a means to establish mutually beneficial relationships between the human and non-human worlds. Ceremonies 'are a form of reciprocity that renews bonds between land and people and focuses intention, attention, and action on behalf of the natural world, which is inclusive of the spiritual world' (Kimmerer, 2018, p. 31). A folklore-centric tourism that draws on local traditional knowledge, insights and perspectives to encourage respectful participation with place could be an important strategy for the simultaneous preservation of traditional intangible cultural knowledge, ancient monuments and natural ecological habitats.

This Book

The chapters collected together in this book have been selected in order to give as broad a perspective on the cross-cultural context as possible. As we have already seen, folklore is universal to human groups, and so the potential scope of a book like this is near-infinite. We acknowledge that the full cross-cultural context is not addressed by all of the chapters, for example we do not have chapters on the rich varieties of African, Australian or Asian folklore traditions, but we hope that what we have drawn together in this volume will lead to opportunities for more inclusive, global studies in this area in the near future.

Part 1: Re-making and Re-shaping the Past

Part I begins our exploration of the relationship between folklore, people and place by considering different attempts to rediscover lost traditions of connection to the natural world, and to preserve fragile remnants of ancient ways of living in, and with, the land. We explore how connections between folklore, people and place serve to enliven heritage for local and visiting communities. Chapters in this section investigate forms of intangible heritage in particular places that are remembered, preserved, but also reimagined through contemporary folkloric and artistic practice. In her chapter, María Martínez Pisón describes Basque folkloric traditions of fairies, gods and goddesses, and a plethora of sacred wells and springs that are far removed from mainstream tourist routes in the region. Martínez Pisón describes initiatives that are being developed to help protect these locations for future generations, and to encourage a

re-engagement with them by tourists and locals, with an aim to establish a renewed sense of connection to natural sacred sites. Next, Ethan Doyle White's chapter, 'Bedecked in Ribbons and Bows,' investigates the Southern English tradition of dressing Rag Trees. A practice that initially emerged as a folk-remedy for certain ailments in the nineteenth century, but which took on new meanings in the 1990s and 2000s. During the COVID-19 lockdowns the practice transformed again into a means of bringing socially isolated communities together. Sophie Parkes-Nield then goes on to discuss the role of calendar customs in establishing both a sense of community, and a community's sense of connection to place. This is achieved through the presentation of three case studies of different traditions, some of which are generations old, while others are much more recent in origin. While such customs undoubtedly draw tourists into communities, they do so in different ways. Next we explore how folklore is embedded in the languages and dialects of different regions. In the two case studies examined here—Scotland presented by Peter Reid and Ireland by Shane Broderick—folklore and language contribute to the distinctive identity of place and community. In Reid's chapter the identity of the North-East of Scotland is explored, with a particular emphasis on the role of the Doric dialect in encapsulating the culture and traditions of the region. This sense of uniqueness is considered in relation to its value as a form of place-making and heritage consumption. In Broderick's chapter, we explore the long oral and written traditions of Ireland—myths, stories, monuments and place names—and consider their potential for the creation of touristic experiences that conserve and protect natural, cultural and intangible heritage simultaneously. Matthew Cowan's chapter then goes on to describe the processes and outcomes of an art project in Helsinki to discover hidden places and their folklore through semi-ethnographic interviews, exploring the very personal reasons why people develop a distinctive sense of connection to particular places, as well as to the sense that certain places are 'wild.' The chapters in this section suggest that the act of remembering ancestral, forgotten or hidden folklore holds potential for the re-discovery, re-animation and re-enchantment of landscapes. Together the chapters in this section offer a rich perspective on the role of folklore in remaking and reshaping the past in an increasingly globalised world, exploring challenges and opportunities for people and place.

Part II: Folklore and Indigenous Landscapes

Part II looks to the folklore of indigenous peoples in Canada, Hawaii and Nicaragua to provide case-studies of indigenous folklore traditions and their close entanglement with the natural environment. In her chapter, Renée Bedard describes the folklore of Okikendawt, the Island of the Kettle Pots, in northern Ontario, home of the Dokis First Nation. Anishnaabe tradition and folklore binds the people who have lived in this region for thousands of years to elements of the landscape understood as ancestors and relations—a perspective that provides a powerful framework for engagement with place that is bound up with ethical and behavioural guidelines known as *bebaamaadiziwin*. Apela Colorado and Ryan Hurd then explore an alternative to the usual touristic approach to the petroglyphs of Olowalu, on the island of Maui, by presenting them in the context of indigenous science and traditional folklore, which invite a deeper participation with sacred places than many standard tours allow for. Of particular interest at Olowalu are the unusual acoustic phenomena that occur when percussive instruments are played there, providing an embodied sense of connection to place, if only people would take the time to participate when they visit. Paul Edward Montgomery Ramirez's chapter takes us next to Nicaragua to explore the tensions that have arisen from the appropriation of indigenous folklore for state tourism purposes, highlighting the complexities that can arise through the politicisation of folklore. Ramirez describes the establishment of La Cuna del Folklore Nacional (the cradle of national folklore) in the Masaya region, a top-down effort to attract tourists to the region that draws on, and transforms, indigenous Chorotega folkloric traditions. Finally, Kajsa Åberg and Doris Carson's chapter turns to consider the role of local food consumption and storytelling in Västerbotten, a region in the far north of Sweden, where indigenous Sami cuisine has become a booming tourist attraction. All four chapters in this section highlight the struggles of indigenous peoples to maintain their traditions in the face of colonial oppression, and highlight the very different orientation to the world that underlies indigenous approaches to tourism, travel and place. Taken together these chapters offer a range of insights into potentials for the decolonisation of tourism, and for a shift in the perception of indigenous landscapes for visiting tourists through the reclamation and enhanced representation of traditional stories of people and place by indigenous communities.

Part III: Reimagining Folklore in a Globalised World: Tourism, Placemaking and Re-Enchantment

In Part III, we turn our focus to investigate how folklore has been reimagined in a globalised world. As we have explored, folklore can be an asset for places who seek to attract new, and existing audiences, and create experiences that engage tourists with place and community. For some destinations, folklore has become the primary identity of a place, such as Salem, Massachusetts, or Transylvania, Romania, at least from the perspective of tourists. For others, folklore is an evolving form of tourism presenting new opportunities and challenges. The chapters that follow address some of these issues in both natural and urban environments. In Madrid, Leticia Cortina Aracil considers folklore in the city from the perspective of a tour guide. By considering the changing demographic and physical landscape of Madrid, Leticia explains how places hidden by the process of modernisation can be enlivened through storytelling, fostering a sense of re-enchantment for visitors. In Sian MacFarlane's chapter, we are taken underground to the subterranean landscape of Dudley, England. In these mysterious underground places, Sian explores the relationship between the industrial, the rural and the folkloric. While the rich folklore traditions of Dudley are currently underutilised, Sian argues that the subterranean landscape provides a unique opportunity to connect visitors to the socio-cultural history of the region and its relationship with the natural resources so important to its industrial past. In the third chapter, Eva Kingsepp draws upon her case study in Sweden to explore the tensions between the traditional, secular worldview still prominent in Sweden and the movement towards embracing forms of paranormal tourism by the regional tourism board in Värmland. Through her discussion, Eva highlights how some forms of paranormal tourism are deemed more acceptable than others and examines the role of the media in developing social perceptions. In the final two chapters, Katja Virloget and Alicia Edwards-Boon, draw upon case studies to investigate how the use of technology can play a role in engaging people with places of folklore. In the natural landscape of the Mythical Park, Slovakia, Katja identifies key challenges and opportunities presented after the creation of a new folklore trail available via a GSM mobile app, or in written form. As she acknowledges, the development of a new tourism product using folklore raises concerns about the petrification, banalisation, and misinterpretation of heritage, reinforcing the vital importance of co-creation between

community and developers. In the urban landscape of Manchester, Chester and Liverpool, Alicia introduces the armchair ghost tourist through an examination of virtual Ghost Bus tours. Alicia argues that, much like in-person ghost tours, digital alternatives perform a role in the production of supernatural and weird spaces. Indeed, virtual forms of folklore tourism may offer more inclusive opportunities to engage with place, providing access to global tourism without the restrictions of traditional travel.

Collectively, each of the chapters in Part III considers the relationship between folklore and place from the perspective of new and evolving tourism experiences. Despite geographical differences, similar opportunities to connect and re-enchant people with place through folklore emerge whether this is through traditional storytelling in-place, or new digital and virtual technologies. In developing folklore tourism, the intra-history of a place, the hidden, and sometimes forgotten, landscapes and stories are given a platform to be remembered and celebrated. However, these opportunities are also recognised in light of the inherent challenges of commercialising folklore. As the chapters in this section address, using folklore as a tool for placemaking raises important questions about how to manage the creation of folklore experiences in a way that is true to the heritage, culture and tradition of local communities and landscapes.

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