

FOLKLORIC ANALYSIS OF KING ARTHUR AND ROBIN HOOD WITHIN BRITISH MYTH*

Britanya Mitinde Yer Alan Robin Hood ve Kral Arthur'un Folklorik İncelemesi

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ABSTRACT

King Arthur and Robin Hood, as two main folkloric figures, play an important role in British national identity especially in the nineteenth century. Throughout centuries, these mythical stories became well-known in the cultural heritage of other countries besides Britain. The lore and depictions of these two characters were not limited to the written and oral literature but came into existence through different mediums such as television, cinema, and computer games. Both the stories of King Arthur and Robin Hood have topical themes reflecting the political, social, and cultural issues and conflicts in societies and shape the future as timeless artefacts. In this sense, the major aim of this paper is to present and analyze the evolution of these two folk legends by using various historical and cultural sources to demonstrate the validity of the two characters across time, place, and medium. *King Arthur and Robin Hood: The History and Folklore of England's Most Famous Folk Legends* by Jesse Harasta (2009) is used as the basis of the evolution of the lore of the two folkloric characters. The stories and the characters, the subjects of various myths and legends throughout centuries, have also been adapted and used in a variety of works and products transmitting local history of the lore of King Arthur and Robin Hood into global folklore. The political, social, and cultural use, adaptation, and evolution of King Arthur and Robin Hood will be traced starting from their emergence in the medieval ages through the twentieth century when the lore of King Arthur and Robin Hood is transformed through story-telling and added to different structures by using different media. As will be exemplified per the aim of the study though some changes in the presentation of the folkloric characters are present; the major dichotomic human characteristics are preserved. The article follows the trajectory of evolution of two legends into myths, literature, and finally products of popular culture. The work questions whether the divisive line between what is local and authentic versus that which is globalized and thus international is as clear as is preserved.

Key Words

King Arthur, Robin Hood, Jesse Harasta, evolution of folkloric characters, national myths.

ÖZ

Kral Arthur ve Robin Hood İngiliz milli kimliği içinde önemli bir yere sahip iki folklorik karakterdir. Bu karakterlere yönelik töresel bilgi, özellikle on dokuzuncu yüzyılda, Britanya'nın ulusal kimliğinin oluşmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Ancak, yüzyıllar boyunca Kral Arthur ve Robin Hood hikâyeleri sadece Britanya halkbilimine özgü kalmamış, başka ülkelerin kültürel mirasında da yer almıştır. İki karakterin töresel bilgisi ve betimlemeleri yalnız yazılı ve sözlü edebiyat ile anlatılmamış, televizyon, sinema, bilgisayar oyunları gibi farklı platformlarla da aktarılmıştır. Kral Arthur ve Robin Hood töresel bilgisi içinde her iki hikâye de toplumlarda yaşanan politik, sosyal ve kültürel olayları ele alan güncel konuları işlemekte ve fakirle zengin, güçsüzle güçlünün karşı karşıya gelmesi gibi politik ve sosyal çatışmaları ortaya koymaktadır. Bu nedenle, hikâyeler, zamansız yapıtlar olarak, geçmişle günümüzü birbirine bağlayarak geleceğe uzanmaktadır. Bu çerçevede, bu makalenin amacı, tarihi ve kültürel kaynakları kullanarak, iki efsanenin zamana, mekâna ve aktarım aracına bağlı kalmaksızın geçerliliklerini koruduklarını göstermek için iki halk kahramanı Kral Arthur ve Robin Hood ile ilgili halkbilimsel dönüşümünü ortaya koymak ve analiz etmektir. Bu analizde, Jesse Harasta tarafından yazılmış *Kral Arthur ve Robin Hood: İngiltere'nin En Ünlü Halk Efsanelerinin Tarihi ve Halkbilimi* (2009) kitabı iki halk efsanesinin töresel bilgisinin gelişimini analiz ederken temel eser olarak kullanılacaktır. Bu iki folklorik hikâyenin ve kahramanın, yukarıda sayılan farklı iletişim araçları kullanılarak, uyarlandıkları görülmektedir. Böylece, Kral Arthur ve Robin Hood töresel bilgisinin yerel tarihin evrensel halkbilime dönüştüğü kanatlanabilmektedir. Bu töresel bilginin adaptasyonu ve gelişimi, anlatımların ortaya çıktığı orta çağdan itibaren hikâye anlatıcılığı ile değişmiştir. Bu değişimin, farklı medya kanalları kullanılarak politik, sosyal ve kültürel yapıların parçası hâline geldiği, yirminci yüzyıla kadar izlenecektir. Toplumlar çağa adapte olarak değişip gelişirken, folklorik öğelerin de değişip evrildiği, insana özgü folklorik özelliklerin de kavramsal olarak değiştiği olgusu kaçınılmazdır. Her ne kadar bu folklorik özelliklerin imgelem olarak değiştiği görülse

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de söz konusu iki hikâyenin temel içeriklerinin aynı kaldığı bu makale boyunca tartışılmış ve bazı evrensel değerler korunarak toplumlara çağdaş formatlarla ve yenilenmiş anlatılarla aktarıldığı vurgulanmıştır. Çalışma, efsaneden mite, mitten yazına, yazından ise popüler kültür ürününe dönüşmüş hikâyelere iki tane örneğin yolculuğunu takip etmektedir. Bu bağlamda yerel ve otantik olan ile küreselleşmiş düzende uluslararası nitelik kazanmış ürünlerin arasındaki ayırımı ne kadar geçerli olduğu sorgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kral Arthur, Robin Hood, Jesse Harasta, folklorik karakterlerin evrimi, ulusal mitler.

Introduction

The lores of King Arthur and Robin Hood have always been significant in displaying and shaping of British myths throughout centuries to build not only a consensual but also a celebratory national history. These two characters still serve as inspiration and resonate in many other cultures besides that of Britain. Ongoing research on both characters in both history and lore, and depictions in folkloric and contemporary popular elements such as television and computer games abound.

The following paper utilizes the book *King Arthur and Robin Hood: The History and Folklore of England's Most Famous Folk Legends* (Harasta 2009) as the backbone of the evolution of the lore of the two folk legends. Tracing the relevant folklore through a historical, cultural perspective and spanning multiple modes and compilation of resources to display the longevity, the article examines the possible explanations behind this endurance of the test of time.

As Berk (2016:67) states, humans are meaning-seeking beings, the imaginative faculty enabling us to think perpetuates as folklore. As will be posited in the upcoming analysis, it is common practice for myths and folktales to evolve into legends with multiple 'spin-offs' and derivatives to survive to the present day.

Frog (2018:1) argues that myth is a fundamental frame of reference for Western thinking. Furthermore, from a perspective of folklore studies, myth and legend may be used as tools to understand ourselves and our folklore better. Thus, it may be posited that contemporary folklore studies provide a perspective that brings myth into focus as sources of meaning in communication and understanding, attending to situations of use and variation.

Shippey (1996: 409) argues that, in the present day, with multiple modes of presentation, secondary orality or retelling of folklore is one of continuing oscillation. From this perspective, it is worthy to study how folklore shifts through time, how people interact with folklore and the surrounding discourse, or how the evolution of the folkloric story has incorporated itself into the present. In this sense, myths as folkloric artefact present a model or charter for human behavior and provide guidance for crucial elements of human existence. Siikala (2012: 19) explains myth as a dynamic kaleidoscope in perpetual motion that is used for a source of folklore. Ben-Amos (2021:1) posits that legend and myth are basic folklore concepts, following the line of thought developed by Barthes (1957), who positions myths in folklore. Nurilloevna (2020: 63) discusses the contribution of the masses and the artists in the creation and evolution of folk art and folklore leading to a long-established tradition which appears in new works and variants.

Since the article deals with the current fascination with two topics of legend dating back to medieval Europe, this may require explanation. One possible line of thought is that as well as touching on humanistic themes such as love, passion, chivalry, honor, the legend reflects the story of both political and cultural changes as will be exemplified in upcoming sections. From this point of view, a chronicle of history with a repetitive theme becomes something that millions can identify with in any day and age. The same can be

said of the folkloric recent artefacts surrounding the myths of Robin Hood and King Arthur which have accessible narrative formula, and the theme of enduring binary opposite social conflicts may be said to be one of the reasons for the continuing use of the stories and characters throughout centuries.

Myths give people a sense of belonging and validate social order. Through this folklore, the 'beliefs' are enhanced and codified. In some sense, all folklore and histories, whether factual or fictional, are attempts to create cohesion between the past, present, and implicitly the future. This connection fosters geographical and temporal lines between communities and resistance to changes in represented societies.

Myths are usually understood as stories of the divine and answer many comprehensive questions; on the other hand, legends deal with human and superhuman heroes and semi-historical basis to shape a period. Folklore covers both, as well as a range of other artefacts and beliefs rooted in general human experience and common universal values and patterns.

In compilation from above stated facts, myths such as the ones studied are fundamental references which in turn survive the test of time leading to a long-established tradition which appears in new works and variants. The following article embraces this viewpoint from the perspective of folklore as local history and legends as folklore as well as global folklore formulated through compilations of centuries of 'story weaving'. The study concentrates on two characters and the surrounding lore: King Arthur and Robin Hood.

King Arthur and Robin Hood: The History and Folklore of England's Most Famous Folk Legends

King Arthur and Robin Hood: The History and Folklore of England's Most Famous Folk Legends, penned by Jesse Harasta in 2009, the main corpus used in the study, explains the reasons behind the choice of the subjects of the study. The first is the fame of the lore of the characters and surrounding stories. The second reason is the historical and cultural research available on the subjects and the endurance of both through several centuries in various transformations.

The study chronicles the search for the historic and folkloric origins of Arthur, presents chroniclers' accounts, and the modern Arthur. In the same vein, for Robin Hood, the study investigates the historical and folkloric setting, the literary origins, the transformation of Robin Hood into a good and noble outlaw, Robin in the modern era, and the eternal attraction of the lore.

In this compilation of historic, folkloric and other artefacts used to create an idea about the importance and endurance of the characters and the surrounding folklore, the author underlines the importance and the interconnectedness of the past with the present, and folklore with popular culture. The writer suggests that one method of investigation is the scouring of historical and archaeological record to reach the 'real' characters, and a second is to disregard the reality of the character and concentrate on the mythological cycle that developed the folklore and the transformations.

The current study uses this compilation and integration of other resources as a starting point, carrying the research one step further into the realm of folklore to popular global and local culture. Methodologically, the article starts out with tracing the roots of both legend cycles, using the main resources given above and the supporting works. The work then further develops on the theme of the legends as integrated into folklore. From these original arguments based on the analysis of the main corpus studied, the article also chronicles popular global and local culture products to support the notion of the longevity

of the legends evolving into folklore. This style of argumentation in turn strengthens the aim of the article of following the ‘story weaving’ of a legend into folklore, then into products of global popular culture.

Tracing the Roots of the Arthurian Legend Cycle

Incarnations of King Arthur’s story are perhaps the most legendary icon of medieval England. Snyder (2011: 8) states that, in almost every artistic medium portrayed, there was and is a figure of Arthur made up of complex and varied elements. The author argues this is what has made a deep impression in the hearts and minds of humans for more than a thousand years. In the last twenty years, there have been Hollywood movies, computer games and re-creative retelling of the tale. For example, a key-words search of ‘King Arthur’ on the IMDB database yields over 50 results including anime, cartoons, adult content, popular films, B-movies, science fiction, remakes etc. in a multitude of languages (see: URL-1). Also a key-words search over the internet yields over 40 titles of video-games with the King Arthur theme (see: URL-2). There are further examples of the use of the figure in advertisements (see: URL-3). The epic hero emerges in the present as a modern legend and satisfies the needs of the audience/reader, reassuring end users of products in the models of the past. Thus, the character is still serving as an inspirational and evolutionary standard of moral integrity and visionary leadership. It could be argued that the folklore of King Arthur is a combination of English ethnocentrism with a universal politicized romance.

Harasta (2009) argues that Arthur embodies the ideals of the Middle Ages, evoking the visions of chivalry and bravery in history. Prevalent in global pop culture, the surrounding lore of his sword and his queen and the character himself, have become household words. Today, the legend is accompanied by deeper layers of storytelling beyond the plastic swords and Disney knockoffs sold to tourists. Tintagel Castle, marking the birthplace of the legend, was rebuilt during the Tudor age in a grander style than its original. The fifteenth-century grandiose construction demonstrated that Tudor kings positioned themselves as the foretold return of Arthur, who for them was the representation and embodiment of the code of chivalry. The Arthurian Cycle of folklore is about humanity. Arthur’s durability across time may be due to the mythological components in the lore, his relation to the ancient stories and above all the universal human story.

Many researchers have tried to pinpoint the real Arthur. The chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote of Ambrosius Aurelianus who after many victories over the Saxons came to be known as the King of the Britons. His role as a defender of Britain was also recorded by St. Gildas (*On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*) who refers to an orphaned man of noble birth who rose to become the king defending his people. Another historian, Bede the Venerable, also refers to Ambrosius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (AD 731), describing the character of one of noble birth surviving the death of his parents to defeat the enemy and become a king. Thus, with many resources pointing to a character that is a nobleman that disappears and then returns to take up his appointed role as the defender of the Britons and during whose reign the Saxons are held back is repetitive in the lore. Also, his description as wise and moderate is a common thread in all the lore. As for the name, Arthur, speculative accounts state that this was not only a name but also a title meaning ‘The Bear King’ as the word ‘Art’ means ‘bear’ in Celtic languages. The Arthurian lore cycle also has other repetitive elements central to its retellings such as the existence of the Holy Grail. Arthur’s court of Camelot predates the romantic literature surrounding the court in the twelfth century.

Arthur's chroniclers have been important in the longevity of the lore. Geoffrey of Monmouth, the first to refer to Arthur as 'king', is pointed out as the most important chronicler and a kingmaker. Aware of the Welsh legends surrounding Arthur, he incorporated these directly into his writing creating a fusion of his imagination and previous works such as Welsh language texts and the oral tradition of the bards. It was his chronicle that rooted Arthur in the real world and presented him as a benevolent ruler who grants largess. The next chronicler of import was Sir Thomas Malory (publishing in approximately 1469-70) who compiled the popular tales in a single work *Le Morte d'Arthur*, changing the nature of the story. His version became synonymous with chivalry and a template for knighthood. While Malory put the roundtable at the center, he did not invent the concept. It dates back to the times of King Edward I, a great Arthur enthusiast. Malory's work was the first to describe the sword in the stone and expand on Merlin's role. In addition, he incorporates the story of the treacherous Morgan la Fey, the tale of Tristan and Isolde, and many others into the lore. Malory gives flesh to a character that was non-existent in print. The most important shift in the lore came with Malory's positioning of Arthur as a symbol of Englishness and the legitimizer of English monarchs, versus a symbol of Welsh and Cornish resistance. The popular book greatly shaped an already nascent presence of Arthur among the English populace.

The modern-day Arthur builds on the lore that came before it. Supported by the above chroniclers, the first place Arthur gained popularity was France. Jean Bodel, a poet who lived between 1165-1210, designated Arthurian lore as one of the great literary cycles of their times. Jacques de Longuyon wrote in 1312 in *Voeux du Paon* that there were Nine Worthies who should emulate, designating Arthur as a Christian-European example to be upheld. In the mid-nineteenth century there was a new surge of interest in medieval times with the Romanticism movement, and one of the contributors to Arthur lore was Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) who in *Idylls of the King* retold Arthur's story. The final Arthur that survives today is a legend with women in flowing gowns, knights in polished armor, a mysterious Merlin, love, treachery, gallantry and sadness. Arthurism looks back on a better time when rulers lived up to the values they represented.

Arthur may be referred to as a folk hero built on countless tales that comprise the Arthurian legend, but the question whether an actual person existed on which this persona is based remains yet unanswered. The Arthur of the present can be described as a composition of the works and the folklore of diverse artists and storytellers built on ancient stories and possibly historical facts. It is from a single seed of myth that the folkloric retellings were born, and its companions have evolved throughout the ages.

Film, as one of the newest mediums through which folklore can be relayed to the masses in a variety of cultures across time, is also an artefact used in the continuation of the Arthurian folklore cycle. As Driver (2007:159) argues, such 'transmission' of folklore not only contributes to our knowledge of history but also the teaching environment as a tool to perpetuate folklore.

Today, we see Arthur in many languages and modes around the world within a variety of works and products. The lore has been adapted in almost every form of media as exemplified above. Though it would be practically impossible to give an exhaustive list, some notable works include: appearances in modern fantasy literature; theatre including musical theatre, straight plays, classical verse plays and modern verse plays; opera; film, English language theatrical films; adaptations of the original Arthurian legend, adaptations of the Tristan legend, adaptation of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight", films based on a Connecticut Yankee, films based on Prince Valiant, films set in the Roman Empire,

animated films, modernizations and parodies; foreign language films based on Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*, films based on the Tristan legend; English language live-action television series, films, and specials, modernizations and parodies, animation, foreign language television series and films, audio recordings, paintings; tapestry; comics; advertising; games (board games, role-playing games, video games, MMOs); music and so forth. Arthurian legend and folklore live on in the present through varieties of storytelling across multiple media.

Tracing the Roots of Robin Hood Lore

Egan's (2016) "Robin Hood" is illustrated as social conflict narrative and of a folk hero's democratic performance within a nationalist setting. Similarly, Scott (2010) reflects the character as a mythical figure creating a national union to fight a foreign enemy. From the onset, Robin Hood has been a persona of drama. He has acted out people's desires for communal political unrest, even before being elevated to the literary realm of political hero.

Both the durability and the adaptability of Robin Hood may be attributed to his ability to be shaped through the ages. Although the origin of the story has been the subject of many studies, each subsequent era in society has made use of the character, linking the force and power of folklore in shaping and molding societies.

Legend, lore, and storylines converged over this period under the name of Robin Hood, with the character changing to suit each time. Paonessa (2013, 87) argues that the ability of Robin Hood to fit into any period, situation, and historical context with relative ease makes it an indicator of moods, values, problems, and folklore. The oldest ballads that survive today are *Robin Hood and the Monk* (c.1450) and *Robin Hood and the Potter* (c.1500). In these artefacts of folklore, Robin is an outlaw who outwits both the state and the church, gaining property and money for the poor. In these earlier depictions, the cunning outlaw is fiercer than in more current versions (Knight & Ohlgren 1997).

The Robin Hood character as an archetype is found in a vast majority of pre-1600 sources (Everett & Parakootathil, 2016: 1-16). Barczewski (2000: 20) argues that Robin Hood is symbolic to the repertoire of political subversion. The original story takes place in early modern England at a time when a general fear of social disorder was accompanied by growing popular pressure and poverty. Georgian and Victorian depictions of the character elevate him to the status of a hero of 'Englishness'.

In reference to the historical setting for Robin Hood, the stories surrounding the character are set in the High Middle Ages, the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, dominated by the feudal system and the power of the Catholic Church. It was a period of developments with the building of sophisticated castles, technological, military, and social innovations, and the suffering of the peasants who were easy targets under the constant conflict of the era.

Robin Hood stories are set in the forests, especially Sherwood Forest, an ideal place for bandits living outside the law. Archery, specifically the longbow, also figured dominantly in the lore of the time. The myth of a common but free man defending his king entered at this setting. The Robin Hood stories served as a symbol of the strength of Saxon commoners to overcome their oppressors and reverse the power balance. The common folk ground under the weight of taxes and tithes, official corruption, arbitrary and cruel punishment are portrayed as the heroes in these stories. The Sheriff of Nottingham, a real post at the time, is a symbol of a royal agent and an inept, corrupt civil servant.

As with many legends, though it dates back hundreds of years, there are hints but no firm answers as to the historical roots of Robin Hood. Although many of the versions of

Robin Hood lore date to King Richard's captivity from 1192 to 1194, historically the tales of the rogue predate the reign of Richard I and continue long after it.

The origin of Robin Hood lies in folktales among the common people within which an antihero challenges the vested authority of the king and the church and gets away with it. The search for a real Robin Hood is not simple, as this character has been used to describe all sorts of miscreants including Guy Fawkes, one of England's most notorious criminals. There seems to be evidence of a man referred to as Robehod from 1260-1300. Given the similarity of the era, it is possible that this historical figure became symbolic for outlaws and lawmen alike.

Medieval ballads and plays made Robin Hood famous and the folklore of this type provides or rather bears the imprint in which this lore was developed and performed. The early ballads include both comic and serious songs but no reference about robbing from the rich to give to the poor. The earlier ballads served as the foundation on which the lore travelled to parts of Britain with nineteenth-century modern tales about him being written at the time. The story of Robin Hood was popular and incorporated into plays, where the character of Maid Marion was introduced as a piece of the lore and a counterpart to Robin Hood who evolves through time and retellings. One of the earlier tales, *The Gest*, displays the character as a person who loans money to the poor knight Sir Richard, and lays out a code of conduct for his men. This demonstrates that he and his followers were portrayed differently from the brutal ruffians that travelers feared.

The early tales depict him as a remarkably malleable character who can sometimes be selfish and serious, in others he is portrayed as selfless and humorous. Earlier versions such as *Robin Hood and Guy de Gisbourne* portray a barbaric side which includes mutilation of corpses, brutality and the like that are very different from the nineteenth-century depictions of the character as a lovable rogue.

The character Little John appears in almost all versions as a moniker for Robin's best friend and criminal partner. Will Scarlet, another recurring character, is also present in the early ballads but evolves into completely different characters with each retelling of the story. The Sheriff of Nottingham, the character Guy Gisbourne, is also a prominent feature of the lore with constant reference to brutality, cruelty, and cowardice.

Robin Hood's evolution into a good and noble outlaw has a traceable trajectory. In the seventeenth century the outlaw who was previously a Saxon yeoman became ennobled. In this century, he represented values such as hospitality, generosity, courteousness, Christianity, and loyalty to the crown that the gentry saw in itself. The Tudors fascinated with him in the seventeenth century went as far as giving a noble title to Robin. During the rule of Queen Elizabeth I, Anthony Munday the playwright broke from previous versions and gentrified the hero, making him the victim of courtly betrayal and making his primary concern not thievery but politics and justice. This shift meant Robin had loftier motivations than simply material gain.

The twentieth century was also a rich period for Robin Hood lore thanks to the invention of new media like films, television, comic books, and video games. While these newer versions held on to the motifs and plots of earlier depictions, they also moved in different directions including going back in time to a historically more accurate portrayal. Even in these versions Robin is a noble on a quest for justice. Some examples are Erol Flynn's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), Disney's animated version in 1973, the spoof *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*, Russel Crowe's *Robin Hood* (2010), Sean Connery's *Robin and Marion* (1976), Kevin Costner's blockbuster *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), and *The Green Arrow* comics series.

Tracing the lore surrounding Robin we can reference ballads and tales' early ballads, May Day games, child ballads, films, adaptations, new concept etc.; historicity, early references, Robert Hood of York, Robin Hood of Wakefield; mythology, associated locations, and many examples in popular culture. Some examples from popular culture are especially inherent in films and television series such as Robin Hood English language live-action films and television series, Robin Hood in *Ivanhoe*, Robin Hood themed parodies, Robin Hood animated films and television series, Robin Hood themed foreign language films and television series.

There are very few characters in the English language and literature more iconic than Robin Hood. Like the lore of Arthur, the lore of Robin Hood has emerged from a seed, in this case the ballads of the High Middle Ages, and survived through various permutations to the present pop culture depictions. This green-clad archer has become an icon representing a playful, irreverent, and cunning resistance to corruption and injustice. Though in the current versions he is a folk hero, the earlier depictions tell of a different story which in itself is proof of the evolution and survival of the story.

Scholars such as Cartlidge (2016: 23) attribute the success and longevity of Robin Hood to aspects such as Robin and his men successfully mirroring the values and expectations of a diverse predominantly lower-class 'audience' and mechanisms of its discourse and characters allowing for such audiences to take the outlaw's side, to become complicit in the deeds and at the same time to impose upon this lore a kind of complicity in the values that they themselves hold.

Clout (2001: 37-46) follows the trajectory of the lore of Robin Hood over a period of 600 years in his research as he exemplifies how the English hero has been a medieval revolutionary, an earl in Renaissance drama, a Saxon freedom fighter in previous centuries turned courteous robber and currently romantic film star. The way the legendary hero has been reinterpreted over centuries and the way in which medieval folklore has been 'translated' and adapted to suit the taste of new audiences may be demonstrated in the twenty-first century through various filmic adaptations of a legitimate bandit fighting coercive and unjust authority.

Viewed through this prism, Robin Hood's actions become an original and successful form of dissent. Within this cultural context, it may be possible to fully understand Robin in both early and modern depictions in lore. Robin Hood is not a set story but rather a tradition consisting of stories, songs, plays, images, films, and television programs. This constellation of characters, storylines and the lore float around universal concepts such as justice, honor, corruption, and resistance to established norms. While societies have changed over the centuries, these themes remain relevant to the present day, thus the folklore of Robin Hood travels through generations of tale-tellers who have selected and added new aspects. This ensures that Robin makes it to the present and will perhaps make its way into the future and remain relevant.

Discussion and Conclusion

Language, myth, art, religion, and science are the elements that contribute and form the constitutive conditions of folklore in society which open a new dimension to create a cosmos of symbols (Hankiss 2001: 54-55), and that is what endures through the centuries. The importance of oral traditions including all forms of folklore, legends, myths in transmitting and preserving unique cultural values, traditions, and history is underlined by many scholars (Dorji 2005). Capturing the human imagination and evolving through time and interpretation involves a complex yet rudimentarily stable transformation process.

Whereas folklore or the local may be viewed as authentic and the global as an inauthentic imposition, currently these concepts need to be reconsidered. Arthur and Robin Hood are two characters linked by the facts that they are fundamental characters of British lore and have survived in retellings to the present due to the universalistic themes and humanitarian issues they embodied. It is convenient to think of the local lore, such as the two examples presented as authentic folk culture and the global as a homogenized mass culture. But one may consider the issue from a deeper complex perspective and perceive the global as part of the local and the local as what resists the global. Said (1993: xxix) observes that “all cultures are involved in one another ... they are all hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic”. The examples of Robin Hood and King Arthur presented in the study are clear indicators of the involvement of local folklore in the creation of a globalized folkloric culture.

Globalization, which is the transfer of the local to the global in the age of digitalization and commodification, allows for a folkloric and cultural mixing never encountered before. The nomadic nature of the travelling of past folklore and cultures to present and around the world fosters the view of culture not as root but as multiple ‘routes’ of the total of the human experience and existence (Storey 2003: 117). The culture that created the two characters studied no longer exists in either a physical or a historical sense, but the routes of the stories and lore surrounding the characters have been manifest as new globalized folklore as has been posited throughout the article.

Mindful of folklore, analysts frequently confront the idea of tradition and culture as a philosophical concept and cognitive process, sociohistorical conditioning, behavioral response, and pragmatic exercise. With this insight in mind, it is not wrong to presume that within the dispersion and distribution of folklore in the current age we find that travelling stories are weaved through the web of realities and humanities. These new manifestations of characters and stories in turn have universal qualities that reach and capture wider audiences. This has been proven in the case of the canons of both Arthur and Robin Hood rooted in the folklore of a specific culture, but today a part of a wider shared global folklore.

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