



BOOK REVIEW: POSTHUMAN FOLKLORE

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Tok Thompson endeavors deep into a daunting intellectual topography by questioning the margins of humanity and folklore through the emergent spectacle of posthumanism. This study on folklore is a noteworthy involvement to folklore studies, cultural theory, and interdisciplinary humanities, relocates folkloric discourse within a theoretical yet critical assessment needed to posthuman framework. The book is part of a rising scholarly urge of reconsidering the anthropocentric bias of outmoded knowledge structures in light of fast technological development, ecological crisis, and the ontological reconfigurations of the human subject. Thompson's study takes stances as both a critique and an invitation – one that stresses folklore researchers to reconceive the epistemological and ontological norms that have historically braced up the field.

Theoretical Anchoring and Methodological Approach

Thompson's intrusion is theoretically fastened in posthumanist thought process, as expressed by scholars such as Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, and N. Katherine Hayles etc. Thompson integrates these conceptual frameworks with the engaging contexts of folklore studies, a discipline habitually ingrained in the humanistic belief of safeguarding and expounding oral customs, belief systems, and vernacular activities and practices. However, rather than keen-sighted on posthumanism as an intimidation to folklore's humanistic legacy, Thompson hypothesizes it as an indispensable evolution – a new method to inflate the environs of what folklore is, and more essentially, who or what should be its conveyer.

The methodological approach is principally conceptual and based on critical theory, pervaded with speculative investigation. Thompson designated case studies, historical illustrations, and contemporary phenomena regarding traditional practices – stretching from robot pets to artificial intelligence (AI), from viral memes to ecological personhood – to demonstrate how folkloric practices encompass beyond the human. His technique is non-empirical in the conventional ethnographic logic; rather, it is an intensely reflexive and theoretic implementation that questions the conventions of folklore as a discipline.

Re-conceptualizing the Folk and the Lore

Posthuman Folklore has uniquely contributed in its re-conceptualization of the "folk" and the "lore." Thompson contests the anthropocentric demarcation of the folk as utterly human societies. He asks provocative questions: Can a digital intelligence like AI possess capability of generating folklore? Do non-human animals have oral traditions or belief systems? What happens when folklore is mediated or even created by non-human agents?

In this regard, Thompson's work is in dialogue with a broader intellectual trend that seeks to deconstruct the category of the human. His engagement with Braidotti's "posthuman subject" and Hayles' "posthuman condition" is not superficial; rather, it is deeply integrative. He creates networks among posthuman theories of subjectivity and the combined nature of folklore communication. The "lore" in Thompson's investigation turns out to be a dynamic and rhizomatic accumulation, not essentially

tangled to human reminiscence or oral recurrence, but to methods of communication that comprise algorithms, neural networks, and even bio-semiotic processes.

Memes and Artificial Intelligence: The Posthuman Agents

The chapters addressing AI and digital culture contain some of the most interesting ideas in the book. Thompson uncovers the ways in which digital memes, which are ubiquitous yet fleeting cultural artifacts, operate as folklore in posthuman ecosystems. Folklore is now decoupled from stable points and thrust into fluidity in its exchange and evolution as Thompson illustrates through memes as sharable, anonymous, and recursive vernacular modes of expression. Thompson's inquiry into Artificial Intelligence is one of the most challenging. He goes into whether AI systems, particularly that adept at Natural Language Processing (NLP) and autonomous reasoning, qualify as transmitters or originators of folklore. He restrained himself from overly personifying AI, but does argue for broader systems of attribution that treat machines as potential culture co-creators. At this point, he seems to support Karen Barad's 'Agential Realism' and Latour's 'Actor-Network theory', which he has not yet cited.

Ecocritical stance and Personification of Non-Human Entities

Posthuman Folklore also engages with ecological and animistic forms of knowledge. Thompson explores Indigenous cosmological perspectives where rivers, fauna, and mountains are granted agency and personhood. He relates these perspectives to posthumanist focus on the anthropocentric pivot and suggests that many pre-modern and Indigenous traditions were infused with a posthuman ethos long before critical theory entered the West.

This belief holds particular resonance today against the backdrop of the Anthropocene and climate emergency. Thompson enhances the relevance of folklore to environmental contemporary studies by stressing eco-critical concerns. Folklore, in this case, is a site of subversion to Extractivist logic and Anthropocentric Hubris, where he cites sacred coppices, animal interlocutors, and geomorphology folklore to illustrate how non-human reality has long participated in cultural narratives.

Epistemology and Ethical Grounds explored

The book Posthuman Folklore carries subtle shades of meaning within its exhortation of ethical aspiration. If we accept that folklore is not exclusively human, what does this mean for fieldwork, authorship, and representation? How should folklorists engage with AI-generated content, or the lore of digital communities composed of both humans and bots? Thompson offers no easy answers, but his insistence on epistemic humility is refreshing. Thompson Propounded the conceptual framework for folklore that has stances like inclusivity and deep ethical propositions to the continuous changing factors of subjective point of view.

Moreover, the well-researched account of Thompson raised some fundamental questions regarding the preservation and archiving of folklore. Usually, folklore traditions depend on generational archiving process like scriptures, Transcripts, recordings, relics, oral accounts to survive through the test of times. Here Posthuman Folklore, in opposition to the usual process, depicts the unique characteristics of folklore developed with the technological transition which are in nature transient, flexible and algorithmic. Art centers, Museums, catalogues or databases are insightful and of much importance while using as application for folklore archiving. Author stressed on the role of institutions to continuous assessment of procedures and its aims of archiving folklore. It also encourages critical parameters of technology based archival system which holds capabilities of being flexible, Open-ended and easy access to techno erudite audience.

Confines and Critical Echoes

Posthuman Folklore does provide opportunities and rational detail, but it is not without confines. Some scholars entrenched in empirical methodologies may be driven away by some of the arguments' notional character. Given the posthuman theory's Eurocentric roots, I wonder how the book would have benefitted from deeper postcolonial engagements. While Thompson does work with Indigenous epistemologies, these parts tend to feel more like an afterthought rather than components that have been woven into the fabric of the book.

While the book does reconfigure folklore as expected, it is largely confined to a Western theoretical framework. The inclusion of perspectives from South Asia, Africa, or Latin America regarding non-human agency and shared commemoration would have strengthened the book's claims to global relevance. There is also a void in terms of gender analysis; even though posthumanism is often entwined with feminist theory, this association left undeveloped in the text.

Conclusion

Toward a Posthuman Folkloristics Posthuman Folklore is a landmark text that offers a bold reconfiguration of folkloric theory and method. It is not merely an academic exercise in redefinition, but a call to action – urging folklorists, cultural theorists, and communication scholars to adapt to the rapidly changing ontological landscape of the 21st century. Thompson's work exemplifies what it means to think beyond disciplinary boundaries, to take risks, and to embrace the uncertainty of new epistemological frontiers.

In an algorithmic era where digital algorithm curate cultural reminiscence, where faunae are acknowledged as legitimate persons, and where ecological breakdown challenges the very idea of human supremacy, Posthuman Folklore delivers a critical roadmap. It stresses that we not only be aware of the multiplicity of mediators in cultural creation but also recalibrate our

practices and ethics accordingly.

For researchers in cultural and communication studies, this book presents a productive conceptual framework to cross-examine contemporary cultural phenomena – ranging from AI art to eco-narratives, from meme culture to Indigenous confrontation. It asserts that folklore is not a remnant of the bygone but a bodily, metamorphosing, multispecies phenomenon that demands new theoretical speculations. Thus, Tok Thompson has gifted the field with an In-depth text that is as timely as it is visionary.

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