

REPORT ON THE SYMPOSIUM "THE
FORMATION OF FOLKLORE TRADITIONS
IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA"
AND OTHER FOLKLORE SESSIONS AT
THE CONGRESS OF AMERICANISTS*

Roger D. Abrahams, University of Texas

THE FOLKLORE PROGRAM AT THE XXXVII INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF Americanists included a two-day symposium and two general folklore sessions that represented the most extensive of the folkloric contributions to the Congresses to date. The symposium, jointly chaired by Richard M. Dorson and Paulo de Carvalho Neto, was broadly titled "The Formation of Folklore Traditions in North and South America." It was unique in bringing together folklorists from the two Americas and providing a forum in which they could share their insights and approaches. Because of the international participation, the sessions were held in both Spanish and English, and were sometimes marred by a lack of understanding on a purely linguistic level.

More evident, however, was a disparity in approaches to the study of folklore on the two continents. South Americans, who are schooled in European techniques and approaches and are from countries in which social distinctions between Indians, peasants, and city-dwellers are still strongly felt, regard folklore solely as the product of peasant cultures. The majority of North Americans, on the other hand, have grown up in areas in which no true peasantry exists and tend to look upon folklore study as a way of analyzing the expressive culture of any group—aboriginal, rural, or sophisticated. Once this disparity became apparent, a significant degree of agreement was achieved on the desirable foci of future folklore studies. Participants agreed, for example, that much work needs to be done on the role of folklore in the traditional community, and on other integrating uses of expressive culture within specific cultural contexts. In addition, folklorists from both continents emphasized the role of folklore in developing and preserving a concept of national and regional identity.

The papers in the symposium, as well as many of the offerings in the general sessions generated a great deal of interesting and important discussion. But the meetings were marred by a number of political cross-currents, not always completely comprehensible to the North American delegates. So complicated

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was the situation that none of the more important senior folklorists from Argentina gave papers in the folklore sessions at the Congress, and most of them were not even present. Consequently, further meetings were held in Buenos Aires after the Congress.

The symposium was conducted jointly by Dorson and Carvalho Neto, the former introducing the papers by the North American participants, and the latter those of his South American colleagues. Each gave an extended commentary in conclusion. Comments by other panelists and by the audience followed the presentations. Thus each member of the symposium was able to comment upon a number of different topics and areas. The North Americans, Dundes, Abrahams, and Paredes, espoused psychosocial approaches that received a good deal of comment, not all of it adverse. Similarly, the structuralist approach was examined by Abrahams and Dundes from different frames of reference, and was explicitly rejected by Dorson. The technique of analyzing folklore in terms of historical and geographical forces and literary conventions was the most universally approved; all the participants used it to some extent. The *contretemps* that did arise in discussing this technique was concerned with the uses of synchronic as well as diachronic analysis.

The papers in the general session were more diverse, and generally focused on more specific problems than those in the symposium. The mark of success in the folklore sections was the addition of a day of general sessions by the various communities of scholars, who were keenly interested in continuing their discussions. The additional day seemed especially successful because the participants were able to build on already established areas of understanding, while introducing new materials and concepts.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Papers Presented in the Symposium

United States:

ABRAHAMS, ROGER D. The Formation of Folklore Traditions in the British West Indies.

DORSON, RICHARD M. Anglo-American and other European Folk Groups.

DUNDES, ALAN. Indians of North America.

PEREDES, AMÉRICO. Mexican-American Folk Groups.

Iberoamérica:

ACOSTA SAINES, MIGUEL. The Formation of Folklore Traditions in Venezuela.

DE CARVALHO NETO, PAULO. The Formation of Folklore Traditions in Ecuador.

NAJENSON, JOSÉ LUIS. The Formation of Folklore Traditions in Argentina.

SERAINÉ, FLORIVAL. The Formation of Folklore Traditions in Brazil.

ZELA, MILDRED MERINO DE. The Formation of Folklore Traditions in Peru.

FORMATION OF FOLKLORE TRADITIONS IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

Papers Presented in the Two General Folklore Sections

- ABRAHAMS, ROGER D. (U.S.A.). Toward a Rhetorical Theory of Folklore.
- AGUERO BLANCH, VICENTE ORLANDO (Argentina). Supervivencia aborigen en la alimentación en el Depto. Malargüe, Mendoza.
- ANTOGNAZZI, IRMA Y ALESSIO, MARTHA (Argentina). Ensayo metodológico sobre datos folklóricos del valle de Santa María (N.O. argentino).
- DUNDES, ALAN (U.S.A.). New Directions in Contemporary Folklore Theory and Methodology.
- FORGIONE, CLAUDIA ALICIA (Argentina). Contribución al estudio de la actividad del Resero y su papel en la economía pecuaria de la Provincia de Buenos Aires.
- GONZÁLEZ, MIGUEL HÁNGEL (Argentina). Identificación de la cultura itateña en términos actuales.
Vida espiritual de los itateños.
- LEMON, NÉSTOR (Argentina). Metodología científica del Folklore.
- LOCATELLI, ANA MARÍA (Argentina). Proyecciones folklóricas en la canción de cámara argentina.
- MASRAMÓN, DORA OCHOA DE (Argentina). Creencias y ritos en la Provincia de San Luis.
- NAJENSON, JOSÉ LUIS (Argentina). Relevamiento integral de una especie folklórica: "La Salamanca" en el N.O. de Córdoba, Argentina.
- PAREDES, AMÉRICO (U.S.A.). Estados Unidos, México y el machismo.
- PIÑA, NELLY C. (Argentina). Algunas prácticas obstétricas vigentes en la Provincia de Corrientes.
- RUÍZ, MARÍA ANGÉLICA (Argentina). Ceremonias rituales alrededor del árbol de 'La Yunga,' Comunidad Pampa-Cocha, Yaso, Perú.
- SERAINE, FLORIVAL (Brazil). Fundamentos para una classificação da materia folclórica.