

mon pioneer and Paiute stories that eventually sparked his interest in regional folklore. Primarily a college administrator at Chico and Sonoma State Colleges in California throughout his career, Lee published a major study of Mormon legend and several collections of California tales; he also popularized folklore studies in the West as a well-known lecturer, interview subject, and raconteur.

After studies at the Universities of Utah and California, Berkeley, Lee became the first recipient of a doctorate in American civilization at the University of New Mexico with a dissertation later published as *The Three Nephites: Their Substance and Significance in Folklore* (1949). Returning to the University of Utah to teach English and folklore, in 1944 Lee obtained a Rockefeller Foundation grant to establish the Utah Humanities Research Foundation, a folklore archive, and the quarterly journal *Utah Humanities Review* (1947–1949), which featured Western literature and folklore and later evolved into the literary and critical journal *Western Humanities Review*.

Lee's most significant work is represented by his research on Mormon lore. Drawing on his own collecting and the work done by his contemporaries Wayland D. Hand and Austin E. and Alta S. Fife, Lee showed that Mormon folklore reflects the changing circumstances, experiences, and identity of people of Mormon culture and that the Three Nephite legends illustrate the adaptation of old traditions to the new West.

After settling in California in 1947, Lee published four collections: *Tales of California* (1974), *The Bodega War* (1988), *Tales of the Redwood Empire* (1962), and *Heroes, Villains, and Ghosts* (1984). He also hosted television and radio shows and was active in the California Folklore Society, serving as its president from 1973 to 1975.

Stephanie Sherman

Legend

A monoepisodic, localized, and historicized traditional narrative told as believable in a conversational mode. Psychologically, legend is a symbolic representation of folk belief and reflects the collective experiences and values of the group to whose tradition it belongs. Thematically, legends often deal with the supernatural or other remarkable phenomena. These events typically are said to occur in a specific place and time with named characters.

Characterizing the legend genre was begun by Jacob Grimm, who observed that "the folktale is more poetic, the legend is more historical." The view of the legend as historically true informed the majority of legend scholarship throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Most studies of legend focused on attempts to isolate the historical kernel of the narrative. Consequently, studies of legend concentrated primarily on the text, ignoring important aspects of the genre, such as the manner of performance.

Legend is characteristically a highly localized narrative. Legend accounts have also been characterized as highly oikotypified. Carl Wilhelm von Sydow introduced the concept of oikotypes (or "ecotypes") to explain differences between similar folk expressions collected from separate tradition groups. Through oikotypification, tradition participants change a nar-

rative to fit their needs, adapting it to the cultural and geographical environment in which it is told. The internal reality of the legend account often mimics the external reality of the tradition participants, both culturally and geographically. Because legend narrators wish their accounts to be believable, they are further inclined to situate the account in the immediate geographical area. Thus, a legend told in one area about events closely linked to a specific place can be found in other areas closely linked to entirely different places. For example, one variant of "The Vanishing Hitchhiker" begins: "A traveling man who lived in Spartanburg was on his way home one night . . ." while another begins: "This friend was driving up Hearst Avenue one night . . ." (Brunvand 1981:25–26).

The use of historically verifiable personal names, or the reference to people known to the tradition participants, is another characteristic of legend. The inclusion of known individuals in the stories further contributed to the early characterization of the genre as "historical." However, identical stories with different named individuals appear in disparate traditions. Just as place names and topographical features of a story are varied to fit the tradition participants' physical environment, so, too, are proper names and historical referents varied to fit the tradition participants' historical environment. For example, Maurice Alley told the legend of "Buying the Wind" as follows: "Paris Keller was the captain of a vessel, and he got out one day and got becalmed. He was going to the west'ard and wasn't no wind. And he wanted some wind, so he throwed a quarter overboard. He wanted to buy a quarter's worth. He said he wished it would blow so hard she wouldn't lug a nail in a paulpost. . . . So he said it commenced to blow; it blowed till it blowed the sails off her . . ." (Dorson 1964:32–33). Richard M. Dorson reports similar variants of the legend that relate how George Beal, Captain Belmore, Nick Bryant, Cam Crowley, and Malcolm Lowell buy the wind in a similar fashion. These examples confirm the tendency of legend-tellers to attribute their accounts to individuals known to the tradition participants. In a study of medieval legends and their modern analogs, Shirley Marchalonis shows how legends extant in the Middle Ages have been updated to fit contemporary times. This process of variation can be labeled "historicization." Therefore, one can propose a modification of the Grimms' earliest characterization of the legend. The legend is not historical narrative, but rather *historicized* narrative.

Much of the believability of the legend resides in the close link between the daily reality of the tradition participants and that found in the legend. In a buried-treasure legend from the Texas Gulf Coast, the narrator uses a familiar setting for the action: ". . . up here on the Tres Palacios River, there was an old trading post . . ." (Mullen 1978:97). This descriptive setting stands in stark contrast to the folktale in which the inner reality of the tale usually bears little or no resemblance to the outer reality of the tale-teller and the audience. Often, phrases such as "This actually happened to a fellow I know . . ." contribute to the presentation of the legend as a believable account, while the well-known "Once upon a time . . ." opening is used in the folktale.

Legend also derives believability from the folk beliefs of the tradition participants. Scholars proposed a subgenre of legend, the "belief legend," as a means for categorizing legends that primarily made use of folk belief, 'but since legend itself is a believable narrative, it by default reflects folk belief. Consequently, *all* legends can be said to fit the category "belief legend," thus presumably rendering the added appellation "belief" unnecessary. Legend taps already established belief and thereby reinforces those beliefs. Just as legend relies on folk belief, so, too, does folk belief rely on legend. The following account illustrates this close interrelationship: "I was loading ice, threw the hatches off, and one of them flipped over on the deck. My brother came down and told me to never let that happen again, that that damn boat was going to sink. The next night it did. Where he got it from I don't know; that was the first I heard of it" (Mullen 1978:4). This legend incorporates reference to the belief among fishermen of the Texas coast that turning hatch covers upside down leads to calamity. As the complex forces at work in society change people's beliefs and values, the changes become reflected in the legends. If the legend fails to adapt to its new cultural, historical, or geographical environment, it loses its viability in tradition and is no longer told.

An important characteristic of legend is its narrative form—legend tells a story. For an account to be considered a legend, it must include a temporal junction: X *then* Y. The above example of "Buying the Wind" illustrates this point: "And he wanted some wind, so [Temporal Junction] he threw a quarter overboard." The narrative form sets legend apart from other nonnarrative folk genres and helps distinguish it from simple nonnarrative statements of folk belief such as "If you throw money overboard you can buy some wind."

A legend does not typically include multiple episodes; instead, it relates a single event. Scholars have attempted to provide a structural description of legend narrative without great success. W.F.H. Nicolaisen's structural scheme is perhaps the most successful of the suggested systems, because it allows for great variation and attempts to describe only the most general aspects of legend structure. At the very least, legend can be said to have three structural components. The first of these, the "orientation," sets the stage for the action. The second component, the "complicating action," recounts the event. The third component, the "result," relates what happened as a result of the complicating action. Using this map, one can describe a variant of "The Vanishing Hitchhiker" as follows: "Someone Miss Packard knew, unfortunately, I cannot remember the person's name, was driving on a deserted road towards Holbrook on a cold, rainy night [Orientation]. As she was driving, she saw a figure on the side of the road, soaking wet trying to thumb a ride. She felt sorry for the person, stopped the car, and a young man sat down in the front seat [Complicating Action]. After a long period of silence he said, 'Jesus is coming again.' She turned to look at him, and he was gone [Result]" (Brunvand 1981:39). Often, the complicating action or result of a legend includes an unexpected or supernatural event.

Despite the brevity of the monoepisodic legend account, the legend form is extremely elastic. Legend can be contracted or expanded depending on the requirements of the performative setting. Legend can include numerous allied motifs, detailed description, nuanced actions, and intricate dialogues—or, a legend can be presented in a nearly skeletal form, exhibiting great economy of expression. Because of legend's narrative elasticity as well as the extreme localization and historicization of the accounts, scholars have encountered difficulties in developing useful type indexes of legend collections.

Legend is closely allied to rumor. Rumor, like legend, is performed as a believable account. It, too, is highly localized and closely linked to a particular historical period. The notable difference between rumor and legend is that rumor is not always a narrative. The designation "rumor" can also refer to nonnarrative expressions of folk belief. Therefore, the term "rumor" does not describe a specific genre, but rather a hyperactive transmissionary state. If a legend is repeated frequently within a short time period in a circumscribed area, it can be called a "rumor." Even after the disappearance of the "rumor," the potential for the legend to be told remains.

Study of legend-telling events reveals that legend is more closely linked to "joke" than to "folktale." While folktales are generally told by a single narrator who uses opening and closing formulas to signal the beginning and end of the performance, legends are characteristically told conversationally. Often, jokes appear alongside legends in these settings. This proximity between jokes and legends during performance has led Linda Dégh to dub the two forms "symbiotic." In the conversational performance of legend, the beginning and the end of the story are rarely clearly defined. Furthermore, participants other than the main narrator interject their own variants into the performance. Legend-telling events often progress in fits and starts, with the position of primary narrator frequently shifting. Often legend arises in the conversational setting as a means for making a point or substantiating a claim, leading to the conclusion that legend may serve various rhetorical purposes.

One of the main areas of study for legend scholars has revolved around the distinction between "memorates" and "fabulates." Von Sydow proposed that firsthand accounts of supernatural events were qualitatively different from accounts in which the narrator was at a greater distance from the narrated events. He labeled firsthand narratives "memorates" and called narratives that placed the narrator at more than two transmissional links from the narrated events "fabulates." According to this theory, memorates could become fabulates when they became part of the tradition of a folk group and lost their firsthand narration. However, field recordings reveal that tradition participants often eliminate transmissional links between themselves and the reported events. Depending on the situation, a narrator can perform a legend as a memorate even though he or she may originally have heard it as a fabulate. Thus, the memorate-fabulate distinction ultimately fails. Narrators are motivated to eliminate numerous transmissionary links in their accounts to bolster the believability of their stories. A story that begins: "A friend of a friend of a

friend told me that his friend . . ." has virtually no believability. Since narrators are inclined to reduce the number of transmission links between themselves and the narrated events, legend cannot be characterized by the proximity of the narrator to the narrated events.

The reasons people tell legends are linked to psychological factors. Legends organize complex environmental and cultural forces, tap beliefs, and express fears and values common to the tradition participants (see Crane 1977). Telling legends allows people an opportunity to explore their outer reality through the symbolically constructed inner reality of the legend as well as the opportunity to express both anxieties and aspirations. The values and beliefs of the teller and the audience inform the legend account and allow for a narrative negotiation of their concerns.

Contemporary legends have come under close scrutiny particularly among scholars interested in psychology. These legends are often referred to as "modern urban legends." While this term suggests that these legends are different from other legends, because they are both "modern" and "urban," actually many modern legends have counterparts in traditions from the 19th century and before. This suggests that all legends, at some point, were "modern" (see Marchalonis 1976). Therefore, it may be more accurate to refer to these legends as "contemporary." The label "urban," although traditional among folklorists, seems likewise misplaced. Legend narrators adapt their stories to their historical, geographical, and cultural environments. Thus, a story that is set in an urban center by one narrator can often be set in a rural setting by another narrator. There is nothing exclusively "urban" about these contemporary legends.

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See also Anecdote; Lovers' Leaps; Memorate; Namelore; Rumor; Urban Legend

Legend Trip

A ritual; teenagers hear a legend about uncanny events said to occur at a particular spot, then visit the site to test the legend. Widespread in many parts of the United States, such trips focus on "spooky" places such as a bridge, an abandoned house, or a remote church or graveyard.

Many types of legend trips are common in the United States. Often a baby is said to have died or been murdered, frequently at a bridge, and its ghost is said to cry at certain times. Or a person—man or woman—was decapitated in an accident, and a ghostly light lingers at the site of the tragedy. Near Maco, North Carolina, generations of teens have come to witness a mysterious light along a railroad track, said to be a headless brakeman looking for his lost head (Walser 1980:50-52). In many places, a headless horseman—or now a headless motorcyclist or little old lady in a VW—rides over back roads at night. In certain graveyards, a monument or statue may carry a curse, so that those who touch or sit on it will soon suffer death or misfortune; if vandalized, the stone will magically heal itself.

Roads used for parking may collect such legends, particularly about a parent figure, crazed or disfigured in some way, who will try to interrupt couples' lovemaking and attempt to murder them or scare them away (Samuelson 1979). In some cases, a mystery animal like a werewolf or goat-man is believed to appear to visitors (Harling 1971), or a strange force is said to pull cars uphill or off railroad tracks (Glazer in Bennett and Smith 1989:165-177). Such legends do not keep teens away from the legendary spots but, paradoxically, function as dares that excite repeated visits to invoke danger.

The visit is usually made by automobile, and illegal drinking, recreational drug use, and sexual experimentation are integral parts of the "trip" (Ellis 1983). Legend trips typically have a three-part structure. First, as the site is often remote from the teens' home neighborhoods, the group will spend time on the way there sharing "origin legends" about why the site is haunted and "proof legends" about spooky things that supposedly happened on previous visits. During these storytelling sessions, participants may add other migra-