Public Folklore, Nation-Building, and Regional Others: Comparing Appalachian USA and North-East India

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Abstract

This article argues that public folklore has a unique and important role to play in combating the reifying and fragmenting effects of economic globalisation, which is vitiating the fabric of public space. It suggests that there are different tasks for public folklore at different levels of public space—with particular concern for the points where local publics articulate into state, regional, national and international publics. A comparison of the cultural politics of the Appalachian region of the united States, with Arunachal Pradesh in North-East India, helps to draw out underlying macrostructural patterns. This article calls for participatory and cultural conservation projects to supplement more centralised venues. The central venues of public folklore in the past—festivals, archive, museum—can be supplemented and re-imagined within new missions to steward the civic and environmental commons.

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