Where Have Urban Folklore Studies Gone?

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Urban folklore studies attracted much attention in the 1970s and 1980s. How were the studies established? What possibilities and limitations did they have? In order to answer these questions, this paper analyzes the design and formulation stages of urban folklore studies to track their transitions. The analysis also covers the studies which did not clearly claim to be part of urban folklore studies but which actually examined urban folklore phenomena to verify such a possibility. This paper especially emphasizes that the verification should be based on whether the studies focused on small talks and individuals or not. On the whole, urban folklore studies are considered to have been a transitional form of folklore studies in the process of evolving from simple “village studies” to studies of modern society and folklore changes. The questions, subjects, and concepts dealt with by folklorists in the process indicated that folklore studies were developing as an independent discipline to explore folklore phenomena in modern times.

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