

Making Connections: Traditional Folktales from the Ao and Angami Communities in Nagaland, India and Contemporary Narratives of Globalization

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Research Goals

This project aims to raise awareness of ongoing contemporary issues in the era of globalization confronted by the Angami and the Ao tribes, minority communities in Nagaland. Our folktales will be analyzed as to how cultural values can be reflected through art. Connections will then be made between cultural values of the tribe and globalization today. The research especially targets the younger generation of Naga's.

Literature Review

For a start, it is important to investigate how the endangered folktales of Nagaland could be preserved through the use of art and texts, with reference to the studies done by Asst Professor Junko Yokota. In her book "The Book Matters", it was said that the role of illustrations in a book is very crucial given that it attract children's attention, and that images are the first things that children come across before they even learn to speak and read. (Teale, W.H., Yokota, J., & Martinez, M., 2008, 106).

Building on Yokota's observations, I suggest that the illustrations for the folktales could be in the form of realistic illustration that could resonate with the experiences of the children. The choice of medium and the style of illustration would take into account the preferences of the children as well as its compatibility in depicting the folktales.

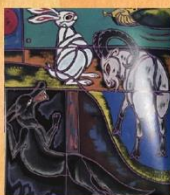
Furthermore, there is also an examination on how the illustrations of the folktales can hint on the political climate of Nagaland. Their folktales consisting of animal stories, legends and fairy tales that were being passed down orally are mainly "observations of human foibles" (Hutton 1921, 253), and reflections of their traditions and customs (Mills 1973, 30). As such, it is evident that there are subtle depictions of the workings politics in Nagaland that are revealed through the interaction of the characters in most of the folktales.

Contextual Review

As there are several neighboring countries border Nagaland (e.g. Burma, India, Tibet and even the minority cultures in China), it is thus important to refer to these cultures that possibly influence the aesthetics or the folktales of Nagaland. Case studies of illustrated books and their styles have been done and analyzed pertaining to this aspect, together with studies of illustrated books and their styles.



Why Snails Have Shells? (China)



The Rabbit Judge (Tibet)



Hanuman's Ramayan (India)

Methodology

I study the targeted audience for the illustrated folktales by analyzing children's drawings from a drawing workshop conducted by Assistant Professor Joan Marie Kelly —this crucial case reveals the Naga children's idea of themselves in relation to society.

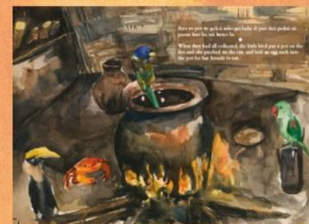


Self-portraits done by children in an orphanage at the city of Dimapur, 2013.

I am also in the process of collecting the data in the form of children's drawings from another workshop conducted in Nagaland with Naga Children by a native Naga, Kenei Kuotsu, who is assisting me. My aim is to gain imagery and iconography from the Naga children and incorporate this into my illustrations of the Naga folktales.



I have also completed a prototype for the first illustrated folktale titled "Boiled Crab", using photographic references from Naga speakers and discussions with Kenei. This prototype has been sent to Nagaland via Kenei. He will share this first draft with the Naga elders to get a response to the interpretation I have made of the folktale.



Boiled Crab

