

Jack and His Masters: Real Worlds and Tale Worlds in Newfoundland Folk tales.

Summary:

--“Jack and His Masters”, is an article by Martin Lovelace that explores the tradition of Newfoundland folk tales.

-- These tales often act as advice to the younger generation on how to best seek, as well as keep a job. They can also advise young men on other matters such as who to befriend and even who to date.

--There is a direct connection found between these magic tales and real world Newfoundland life during the time that they were written and told. The master and man relationship in the folk tales can be drawn from the real life relationship which once existed in Newfoundland, between the well to do employer, and the poor employee.

--The character of Jack acts as a working class hero for the people of Newfoundland and is someone whom they should emulate in their lives. These tales act as a roadmap in which the younger generations should adhere to for success.

--The characters in the “Jack” tales were linked to the beliefs and traditions of the people of Newfoundland. Who Jack should trust and who he should be wary of is connected with the values and beliefs of older generations of Newfoundlander’s.

Discussion Questions:

---Magic tales or Folktale’s were once very popular in Newfoundland so why are they no longer told on a regular basis?

---Are the tales strictly a Newfoundland tradition or are there other areas which share the tradition?

---Why have oral stories lost their popularity these days when they were once such a big part of our past?

Background Research:

Holbek, Bengt. This Danish author has been very inspirational on the subject of fairy tales which fall in the same ballpark as folk tales and magic tales. His book “Interpretation of Fairy Tales” (1987) breaks down the meaning behind fairy tales using his own groundbreaking methods.

To learn more about Jack tales there are texts available. The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folk tales and Fairy Tales is written by Donald Haase and is loaded with Jack tales and folk tales from all over the globe. This text is very lengthy and offers a bit of everything relating to folk tales.

