All of the presentations were centred on the conference concept of Folklore as Discourse. Excerpts from the presentations are presented here…

**Jawaharlal Handoo:** The paradigm of thinking, writing, and perpetuating history is essentially a powerful civilising discourse based on the stories of kings, and more often than not, on the exaggerated or false stories of kings and their palace surroundings. I call this the “palace paradigm.” It has misled many generations the world over, and has blurred the story — the real story — of humankind, and has helped the hegemony of power politics and domination.

**Arupjyoti Saikia:** Scholarship on colonial psychiatry opens a new and important window, revealing a great deal about what psychiatric practitioners, judges, police, families, and neighbors considered pathological in the colonial context, thereby shedding light on the normal as well.

**Peter Claus:** Excessive professionalism in scholarship — which encourages the distancing theories of the social sciences — entails an elitist irrelevance and rapidly diminishing understanding of precisely what one wants to know.

**Sadhana Naithani:** Colonialism generated space for many kinds of new oral discourses: the colonisers talking about the colonised (which is largely known and studied), and the colonised talking about the colonisers. The latter area of research remains almost untouched.

**K.M. Chandar:** Five essential attitudes of Critical Regionalism are love of: 1) Place, 2) Nature, 3) History, 4) Craft, 5) Limits. The emphasis is on establishing a meaningful dialogue, a synthesis, between one’s tradition and innovation, the specific and the universal, the transitory and the enduring.

**Molly Kaushal:** The symbols and images that are displayed in the public domains of traditional societies are used to legitimate authority. My goal here is to explore the cultural spaces generated by folklore in a number of instances to see how, if at all, numerous distinct voices are permitted to articulate separate and possibly conflicting aspirations in these domains.

**Venugopalan Nair:** Jagar refers to a night-long performance, an ardent vigil to commemorate and worship the village protector who is believed to invoke countless blessings on the people of the village. Performed in the mand (an open space in the village, which through traditional use has become sanctified), Jagar is accompanied by the indigenous musical instrument, ghumat, a semi-circular earthen vessel, the front of which is covered with lizard skin, the back of which is open.

**Premeela Gurumurthy:** The Kirtan (the Marathi term for Harikatha) was very entertaining, featuring many lilting tunes along with histrionic presentation of various characters in the story, which was given prime importance. The philosophical and upanishadic focus became somewhat diluted with the music and the humorous anecdotes, thus enabling the Kirtan to become a popular entertainment which could appeal to a larger and less learned audience.
Chandan Kumar Sharma: History writing is a construction created from the vantage point of the present. The socio-political environment of the present plays a vital role in determining the ‘history’ of a particular people, leading to different and contested discourses.

Vanishi, S.P.: The study of discourse has developed in Anthropology, Folklore, Sociology, Linguistics, (Social) Psychology, and other disciplines. Thus, discourse analysis takes different theoretical perspectives and analytical approaches, such as speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, pragmatics, conversation analysis, and variation analysis. All of these approaches view language in the context of social interaction.

Desmond Kharmawphlang: The Khasi form of storytelling known as phawar is often performed at festivals, workplaces and other gathering places, hunting and fishing expeditions, and during participation in games and archery. The phawar master is acutely aware of the effect he has on audience members, and responds with enthusiasm to their reactions, especially in contests. This performer/audience interaction provides scope for the development of call-and-response, or leader-choral antiphony, which is the most salient feature of the phawar tradition.

Kishore Bhattacharjee: The major concern of legends is the construction of the history of locality and local geography, public places, and the lives of saints. The plots of legends tend to be simpler than those of folktales and myths. Members of local communities spin these stories to glorify their places, and to communicate local identities and worldviews. The mythological elements in legend discourse are used for negotiation with the dominant discourses.

Laltluanglana Khiagte: The most memorable personality in the world of Mizo folk literature would naturally be the great Chhurbura, the unchallenged hero of Mizo folktales. There is a great paradox in his character. He can be considered to be the silliest of all simpletons. At the same time, he can also be considered to be the cleverest of all wise men, as all of his actions and behaviour by which he was considered foolish were, in fact, due to his abiding love and affection for his elder brother, Nahaia, who happened to be one of the laziest of all men.

Pulikonda Subbachary: A caste myth, or kulapurana, is basically a folk narrative. In the eyes of the people whose caste’s origin, identity, and status is discussed in a kulapurana, this narrative is sacred, as it tells the story of their caste originators, heroes, and deities.

Lalita Handoo: A discourse is a system that determines the production of knowledge and the distribution of power. A society’s gender discourse becomes a ritualized practice of ideology that shapes the natures of both men and women, and defines their relationships to each other and to their surroundings.

Subbalaxmi Das: We find that mostly women are supposed to keep vratas [a ritual involving fasting and storytelling] for the prosperity and long life of the husband, children, and other members of the family. But husbands, sons, and other males in the family seem to rarely observe vratas for the longevity of their female relatives.

Saugata Bhaduri: Three areas in which the vrata katha narratives challenge normative gender, class, and caste assumptions are: 1) gods and goddesses are anthropomorphized, often to the extent that their divinity itself is jeopardized; 2) rituals and practices that are animistic in nature are presented; and 3) the possibility of Hindism-Muslim syncretism is shown.
**Guru Rao Bapat:** In India today, many performance traditions — and the discourses that they project — are undergoing radical changes. These changes have to be understood in the context of the fast-changing Indian society as a whole.

**M.D. Muthukumaraswamy:** In the storyteller’s art, the thin membrane separating fiction and reality breaks many a time, assisting the audience to traverse through both realms.

**Nirmal Selvamony:** A *kalam* is a geometrically designed space associated with various activities, such as worship, fortune telling, acting and dancing, combat, and threshing. It is not on raised ground, but rather is marked off by a diagrammatic figure. It is the prototypical dramatic stage of antiquity.

**Eric Miller:** The very people who should be here, who should be taking an active part in the centre of these deliberations and explaining many things to us, are not here: I am speaking of the grandmothers who live in small villages, a kilometre or two away from the main road.

**Raghavan Payyanad:** In *Teyyam* worship, man is completely submissive before the power of God and tries to appease it by several means, including by singing praises. God is pleased by the praise, and arrangements are made for its appearance on a divine stool. Later, it transfers into the body of the performer through rice, fire, and sword. In the end of the ritual, it returns to the divine stool and disappears.

**V. Bharathi Harishankar:** In studying the use of printed single sheets — including invitations and greetings, drama and movie notices, and pamphlets — in Tamil Nadu during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one finds that their publication by individuals for personal/commercial uses displaces numerous binaries, including: technology vs. tradition, high vs. low culture, print vs. orality, public vs. private spheres, and coloniser vs. colonised. One binary does not replace the other, but instead there is a negotiation between the binaries.

**Theodore Baskaran:** The questions I would like to raise are: How was the new art form of cinema received in Tamil Nadu? What were the responses of writers? In other words, what was the nature of the discourse that followed, and how did that discourse affect the development of cinema, and of cinema appreciation? I would like to argue that the nature of a cinema is in part shaped by such a discourse, and that the filmmakers themselves are not the only people who can be held responsible for the quality of what the tradition produces.

**G. Sandhya Nayak:** The resurgence in interest in preserving and celebrating ethnic and linguistic identities, traditions, and histories has resulted in a close link between mass culture, advertising, and folklore in India.