THE USE AND VALUE OF ORAL TRADITIONS IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Paolo Barbaro
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France

Brooke Hundtoft
Pima Community College, Tucson, USA

Keywords: Anthropology; culture; comparative method; ethnography; ethnology; folklore; myth; mythology; mythography; oral traditions

Contents

1. Introduction
2. What are oral traditions?
2.1. Orality and Literacy
2.2. The Forms of Oral Traditions
2.3. Myth and Mythology
2.4. Folktales
3. About the contents of oral traditions
3.1. Common Contents
3.2. The Comparative Approach
4. About the value of oral traditions
4.1. The Controversy over the Value of Oral Traditions
4.2. On the Value of Oral Traditions
5. On the functions of oral traditions
5.1. About Functionalism
5.2. The Functions of Orality
6. The scientific study of oral traditions: a methodological perspective
6.1. Field Research and Data Collecting
6.2. Recording Oral Tradition
6.3. Accuracy of Recording
6.4. Data Analysis
6.5. Theoretical Approaches
Glossary
Bibliography
Biographical Sketch

Summary

For most of human history, knowledge has been transmitted orally. Still nowadays, oral traditions and orality play a fundamental cultural, psychological and social role in all known forms of human societies. The study of orality, in anthropology as well as in many other disciplines, provides a fundamental contribution to a better understanding of human beings and of their organizations. This contribution explores oral traditions and the oral transmission of information from a number of perspectives: their themes, their functions, the methodology to study them, the forms of classification of oral lores and

the history of the disciplines that focus on orality as the center of their analysis.

1. Introduction

Oral traditions are a fundamental tool and a primary source for the understanding of cultures and societies. They are a key object of study and a source of inestimable and often unique documentary value for Cultural Anthropology. They are also related to one of the most distinguishing features of being human, that is language, and therefore have the great theoretical value of being a primary vehicle to convey, explain and construct (fundamental features of) societies and cultures. They often represent a reservoir of primal or complementary information for other disciplines, such as history or linguistics. To their great variety of forms and functions correspond a wide array of analytical tools. This chapter is an introduction to their unmeasurable value, to the richness of their functions, and to the most common instrument used in Cultural Anthropology to collect, analyze, and interpret them.

2. What Are Oral Traditions?

Oral tradition is an exceptionally complex and an infinitely simple concept. On the one hand, an oral tradition is a culturally embedded, verbally expressed occurrence, of highly varying length, shared among members of a society and usually passed on over the course of multiple generations. In this sense, an oral tradition is part of the intangible heritage of a community. Yet this fairly obvious definition is heavily challenged when examining the implications and effects of studying them: their listing and classifying, examining what they mean, their value, how they change over time or across social groups, how they can be used to understand the history of a people, how they work in relation to other socio-cultural aspects of being human (e.g. music, theater, psychology) or in a specific society, their "life expectancy", and so on. As a start, therefore, it may be useful to discuss the wider context of their occurrence and the most common terms employed to describe them.

2.1. Orality and Literacy

Language is a primary feature of cultures, societies and of human beings. Some scholars maintain that it is also a primary feature of cognition but this is far from being universally accepted. Undoubtedly though, language is a major repository of culture and cultural meanings, as well as one of the main technologies allowing the existence of cultures and societies. Language exists in written and in oral forms, and the interaction between the two is a complex one. Since the 1980s, anthropologists, semioticians, linguists and folklorists have greatly debated upon the value and definition of orality. The term itself was coined as the opposite of literacy, to indicate the use of language in societies where writing is unknown, but this dualistic opposition is today generally not accepted among scholars. In fact, writing is a relatively recent technological development in the history of humanity. The greater part of human history, and the enormous majority of the cultures and societies that have existed on earth, existed in an "orality context only", where only oral language existed, and where spoken language was a primary (although never exclusive) medium of transmission of the systems that we call culture and society. Today many societies present some, yet greatly varying,

degree of literacy, and this naturally contradicts a strict opposition between orality and literacy. Unfortunately, for decades, analysis and theories have been permeated and influenced by over-simplistic dualities or over-simplistic models, such as the use of the expression 'oral societies' as a synonym of 'illiterate societies'. Among the oppositional dichotomies associated in the past by anthropologists to the duality orality/literacy and considered today highly erroneous, there are the couples: uncivilized/civilized, subjective/objective, primitive/evolved, unreliable/reliable.

In this paper, we will use the widest definition of orality, the most straightforward and descriptive one: orality is what is spoken and oral tradition is the common lore transmitted orally in a society, an intangible cultural heritage that could theoretically be recorded – and often is by anthropologists and folklorists – and that plays a crucial part in keeping a culture alive. It is however important to quickly overview the main points of the debate on orality and literacy, which means also considering the other, narrower, definitions of orality.

A few scholars still today use the term orality to refer to verbal expressions only in relation to societies where literacy is unknown or unacquainted to most of the members. However, the most influential contemporary scholars and the less flawless theories, both question a rigid division between oral and literate. Undoubtedly, when it is present, literacy greatly influences the use and perception of orality. However, even in the contemporary societies with high literacy rate, orality still plays an important role in everyday life, and many forms of knowledge or traditions are still transmitted – or kept alive – in their oral forms.

The American scholar Walter Ong (1912-2003) is among the researchers who have spent a great amount of analytical effort investigating the relationship between orality and literacy in contemporary societies. He coined the expressions “primary orality” and “secondary orality”, later adding the idea of “residually oral culture”, to distinguish between orality in societies with little or no literacy from that observable in societies with a high literacy. Other important contributions to the theoretical definition of orality – as for instance those employing the concept of diglossia, those introducing the concept of textuality to substitute literacy and those suggesting transitional models between literacy and textuality – were given by the American historian Brian Stock (1939-), by the German scholar Franz Bäuml (1926-2009), the Canadian philosopher Herbert Marshall McLuhan, (1911-1980) and by the British philologist Eric Havelock (1903-1988). Some of their works are listed and briefly described in the bibliography. In the French-speaking academic literature, the idea of *orature* is often employed. This term, coined on literature, is used to express the heritage transmitted orally as having the same importance and complexity of that transmitted with writing.

Related to the above is the work of many scholars who have explored the relationship between textuality and orality in the ancient, now dead, societies that have left written traces of their worldview, as for instance the ancient Greek, Roman, Vedic or Chinese. Within the ancient texts, scholars have tried to discern – because of aesthetic, historical, semiotic and anthropological reasons – which ones (or which parts of them) were originated in orality or were used orally. According to the American scholar Bruce Malina (1933-), “the question of literacy and illiteracy in a given [ancient] culture is not

simply about the prevalence of the ability or lack thereof to read and write in a social group. The basic issue is whether a language document, whether an utterance, a speech, or a writing, was carefully composed and edited, or unprepared and extemporaneous, in the form we have it" (Malina, 1996, p. 98). We may add that basic issues are also when, how and why they were used orally, eventually becoming a form of written literature.

In this chapter we discuss oral traditions and orality, but not the relationship between orality, literacy, culture and language. This chapter, in fact, is focused on a higher organizational and analytical level than that of languages: the level of – for instance – tales and songs. Undoubtedly, languages (and their forms and contexts of existence) shape and influence many aspects of oral traditions. It also happens that linguistic features inevitably affect the contents, as for instance how stories are told, if (and when and why) oral lores are published, or how songs are sung and how poems are structured. However, this volume is not focused on exploring these aspects. The branch of anthropology that focuses on the relation between language and culture is linguistic anthropology. We encourage the reader to consult the chapter on linguistic anthropology in this volume and the volume on linguistic anthropology of this encyclopedia, for a deeper understanding of how languages, cultures and societies are related.

2.2. The Forms of Oral Traditions

The forms of oral traditions are almost infinite. During UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, one of the five main domains identified as intangible cultural heritage is that of "oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage." However, faced with the necessity of identifying their forms, the UNESCO representatives and experts, concluded their work without giving a proper taxonomic scheme, because this domain "encompasses an enormous variety of spoken forms including proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances and more" (UNESCO, 2003). Very few scholars have tried to compile a complete list, categorizing or classifying the various forms of oral traditions, and there is no agreement in the scholar community on a fixed taxonomy of oral traditions. Because of its nature and complexity, this subject is not even considered a relevant or viable one in contemporary debates. However, empirical or implicit taxonomy are often employed in the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical works of many scholars.

Generally speaking, in the scientific literature there are a few distinctions usually employed to discern the types of oral traditions. They are all based on one or more of the following features, often employed together: mode of expression, aesthetic or other formal criteria, context of use, function, and emic perception. Scholars interested in the mode of expression usually differentiate performances from non-performances. Although this distinction could be considered a subset of the aesthetic and formal criteria, it should be noticed that the aesthetic/formal criteria tend to be much more specific: they are in fact the richest system of classification for oral traditions. This kind of differentiation usually employs traditional categories, distinguishing for instance a tragedy from a comedy, and can be very descriptive and precise, such as when employing categories such as slapstick, ode or monologue. Very popular formal

classifications are those that distinguish prose from poetry; or musical expressions (especially songs and their numerous subtypes) from non-musical ones. On the other hand, a scholar studying the mode of expression may be more interested in, for instance, the use of body language, or the interaction with the audience, but there is no clear-cut differentiation between formal systems and those for modes of expression.

The distinctions based on the context of use and those based on functional criteria are also osmotic. The latter are usually employed when a lore is related to a specific and/or predominant function, as may be prayers, battle cries or magical formulas. The context of use is a broader category. Most of the items included in functional schemes can be classified also under a label belonging to the system 'context of use', but the contrary is not always true, as it is the case for instance with the lores known as 'children stories'. As their name goes, in fact, children stories are supposed to be employed in the context that could be described as "audience made of children", yet their function can be for instance didactic, entertaining and more. It should also be noted that a subfield of oral studies labeled childlore exists. It studies oral traditions specifically related to childhood, distinguishing various genres such as playground songs, lullabies or rhymes.

The most common distinction based on the emic (or internal) perception of an oral tradition is the one that separates what is perceived as fiction and what is perceived as factual. To this group belongs the distinction between legend and myth. In this context, the former is a narration believed to be fictional in the culture where a narration is transmitted, while the latter is believed to be the account of matters that really happened. Among many societies for instance, orally transmitted genealogies are perceived as factual or historical, while at the same time a category corresponding to the fictional, amusing oral literature known in Europe as fairy tales, can often be observed across cultures. Of course, emic perception may not be perceived as factual from an etic (or external) perspective, and this is particularly true in the case of myths. The use of other emic categories is less common, and it is often confined to the anthropological literature of specific cultures or societies. A typical example are the types of pre-British storytellers in Ireland, and the stories associated to them. Among the Gaelic speaking people of nowadays Ireland, story-telling has been for centuries an important and popular form of art, of historiography and of entertainment. According to scholars of Irish folklore, professional storytellers were divided into well-defined ranks, each with its own training, repertoire of stories and audience. The four main groups were: *ollaimh* (professors), *filì* (poets), *baird* (bards), *seanchaithe* (oral historians). It is clear that such emic categories are fundamental for – and broadly employed by – scholars of Irish folklore and in the related cultures, but that they can hardly be applied in other contexts.

The weak and strong points of the terminology employed in the study of oral traditions, and the discussions among scholars about the proper wording to be employed, cannot be analyzed here in more details for lack of space. We invite the reader interested in deepening this subject to read specific publications (Bendix / Hasam-Rokem 2012). We will limit our analysis to the most employed labels. In fact, notwithstanding the lack of a general consensus on terminology among scholars, there is a mainstream use of some terms and expressions. These terms and expressions will be employed here, for two main reasons: on the one hand, the necessity of categories and words to proceed with the analysis, and on the other hand the fact that the continuous use and overwhelming

presence in academic literature of certain words makes them unavoidable, as well as necessary to the presentation of theories and research, even if they may sometimes lack a precise definition.

2.2.1. Tales

Tale is without any doubt among the most employed and popular words used to analyze oral traditions. This is simply the consequence of the fact that tales are among the most widespread mode of oral fiction: a multifaceted form of oral narrative found in virtually all cultures and historical periods. As a genre, tales are frequently divided into a number of subtypes without standardized terminology, often labeled in English with compound words such as folk tales, tall tales, fairy tales, formula tales, didactic tales, etc.

Most definitions of tales agree that they are fiction or narrative, and many scholars employ the terms folktales and tales as synonyms. The American folklorist Robert Adams – whose books are often employed as teaching tools in English-speaking universities – distinguishes folktale from folk-legend. The former is characterized by two main features: a "relative stability as to form" and a "complete lack of any claim that what is portrayed in the tale actually happened" (Adams 1973, p. 27). The latter, instead, tells "of extraordinary events in the lives of everyday people, told as if it were an historical account" (Adams 1973, p. 8). Adams also differentiated folktales into two main groups. The first one is characterized by articulated forms and is called fairy tales or wonder tales. Adams also refers to this group with the German word *Märchen.* The use of non-English words, such as the French word *conte de fées* or the Italian *fiaba*, is appreciated or employed also by other scholars whether to refer to – or redefine – this group or to clarify some of its subtypes. The second class created by Adams in the folktale group is also based on formal features. It is in fact characterized by simpler forms, and typical examples of genres belonging to this group are anecdotes, animal tales and jokes.

Although some scholars consider part of it outdated or theoretically objectionable, Adam's work has two qualities: it sets some ground for taxonomic analysis, and it introduces – and sometimes defines – some of the most employed (sub)genres and labels. Among the many other influential scholars who treated the subject, it is worthy to mention the work of the French-Bulgarian philosopher Tzvetan Todorov (1939-) who, in his studies, underlined the importance of the form, writing for instance that "what distinguishes the fairy tale is a certain kind of writing" (1975, p. 54). The relationship between form and genre has often been underlined in studies of oral traditions. As Jessica Tiffin (1969-) puts it, for many genres of tales "the form depends for its identity […] on a clearly recognizable overall effect which is constructed through a number of characteristics, including tone, form, structure, pattern, and motif" (Tiffin 2009, p. 5). Another possible distinction in the tales group, introduced by the German-American philologist Michael Witzel (1943-), is based on the gender division of power: grandfather's tales, or official story lines, and grandmothers' tales, closer to folklore and to legends.

Finally, the list of subtypes recognized in the "tales family" cannot ignore the term fables, usually associated with the famous Aesop's *Fables* (aka *Aesopica*), a collection

of tales that portray anthropomorphized animals in a plot implying a moral lesson, traditionally credited to the ancient Greek storyteller Aesop (ca 620- ca 560 BCE). Modern scholarship, agreeing that Aesop probably didn't compose all of the fables attributed to him, has investigated extensively Aesop's *Fables*, for which also a widely employed, numerical index exists. It is known as the Perry index, from the name of the American scholar who created it: Ben Edwin Perry (1892–1968). The term *fable* is ambiguously employed to mean animal folktales with a moral, but also folktales with anthropomorphized animals and also, rarely, didactic tales. Yet, many scholars prefer to use the term "parable" to refer to a moral, fictional story that does not portray anthropomorphized animals. Fables are a very popular genre among traditional cultures: over the centuries, ethnographers, as well as enthusiasts of oral literature, have collected and published great numbers of fables from around the world. Examples of collectors are the Belgian painter Fernand Allard l'Olivier (1883-1933), who recorded and published folklore during his travels in Africa, or the anthropologist Mudimbe (1991). Fables are also a fertile literary genre in Western societies, from medieval times to contemporary literature. Among the most popular collections of fables written by known authors, there are the ones from the French fabulist Jean de La Fontaine (1621–1695). Some of La Fontaine's fables re-elaborate oral traditions, and many of them have become oral literature, confirming that a strict opposition between orality and literacy fails to grasp the reality of cultures.

-

-

TO ACCESS ALL THE **41 PAGES** OF THIS CHAPTER,
Visit: http://www.eolss.net/Eolss-sampleAllChapter.aspx

Bibliography

Aarne, A.A. (1910). *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen.* Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakalemian Toimituksia. [Text where the widely used Aarne folktale classification system was first presented]

Adams, R. (1973). *Introduction to Folklore*. Columbus: Collegiate Pub. Inc. [Still used as a reference and instruction book in universities, this book is a classic of folklore studies that dedicates a great share of its pages to the study of typologies and functions of oral traditions]

Alahidari, A. (2012). "Meaning, Origin and Functions of Myth. A Brief Survey". IJSST, 1, 3. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/2077634/Meaning_Origin_and_Functions_of_Myth_A_Brief_Survey [A brief and relatively complete overview on the definitions and functions of myths and mythology]

Alieva, A. (1996). "Caucasian Epics: Textualist Principles in Publishing". *Oral Tradition*, 11/1: 154-162 [A brief introduction on the vitality and antiquity of oral traditions in Russia, with a special focus on Caucasus and on the Nart saga]

Apte, M. (1985). *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach.* Itaca: Cornell University Press [One of the first complete socio-anthropological analysis of humor and laughter. The paper can be downloaded online: https://www.isca.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/ISCA/JASO/Archive_1993/24_3_Parkin.pdf]

Barthes, R. (1957). *Mythologies*. Paris: Editions du Seuil. [A pioneering and very influential study on mythological thinking and behavior in modern French society. In this book Barthes analyzes some

cultural traits that are given for granted and constitute, in his interpretation, aspects of what he defines contemporary French mythology]

Bäuml, F. (1986). "The Oral Tradition and Middle High German Literature." *Oral Tradition.* 1(2). 398-445. [A survey of researches about the oral-formulaic theory on Middle High German literature]

Bendix, R. F. Hasan-Rokem, G. (2012). *A Companion to Folklore*. Wiley-Blackwell. [A very useful, complete and updated companion to folklore studies edited by two leading contemporary scholars]

Bettelheim, B. (1977). *The Uses of Enchantment.* New York: Alfred A. Knoff. [A classic of the psycho-analitical approach to fairy tales.]

Buchan, David. (2015). *Scottish Tradition*. New York: Routledge. [A collection of Scottish folk literature, including folk songs, stories, dramas, and folk sayings with accompanying analysis.]

Burkert, W. (1979). *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual.* Berkeley: University of California Press. [This book uses a structuralist approach to study myths while examining the link between myth and ritual in ancient Greece.]

Campbell, J. (1949). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* New York: Pantheon Books. [This book is often considered the seminal popular discussion of comparative mythology in the west. It chronicles the journey of the hero across myths all over the world and develops the concept of the monomyth.]

Campbell, J. (1959-1968). *The Masks of God*. New York: Viking Press. [This four-volume series examines myths across the world and analyzes the variations within the monomyths. The volumes are: *Primitive Mythology*, *Oriental Mythology*, *Occidental Mythology*, and *Creative Mythology*.]

Chomsky, N. (1996). *Powers and Prospects. Reflections on human nature and the social order.* London: Pluto Press. [Part of this book is dedicated to discuss the appearance of language among humans]

Colarusso, J. Salbiev, T. (2016). *Tales of the Narts. Ancient Myths and Legends of the Ossetians.* Princeton: Princeton University Press [The latest book on, and a great introduction to, the network of related oral traditions in the Caucasus that are labeled as the Nart saga and are related to the lore of the Ossetians]

D'Huy**,** J. "Polyphemus (Aa. Th. 1137). A phylogenetic reconstruction of prehistorical tale". In: *Nouvelle Mythologie comparée*. Available online at: http://nouvellemythologiecomparee.hautetfort.com/archive/2013/01/20/julien-d-huy-polyphemus-aa-th-1137.html#_blank [An article that shows the results of using computer programs designed for the study of genome to the diffusion of tales to explain diffusion]

DiFonzo N., Bordia P. (2006). "Rumeurs, ragots et légendes urbaines. Contextes, fonctions et contenus". *Diogène*, 213. 23-45 [Analysis of the production, function and content of rumours, gossips and urban legends in contemporary societies]

Draper, J. (ed.). (2004). *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill [The book analyzes orality and literacy in the context of colonialism and the use of each as a means of rebellion and/or social control]

Dundes, A. (ed.). (1965). *The Study of Folklore*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. [Collection of essays on folklore from a variety of disciplines]

Dundes, A. (1988). *The Flood Myth*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [The most comprehensive scholar work so far on – and an unavoidable reading upon the subject of – flood myths.]

Dundes, A. (1997). "The Motif-Index and the Tale Type Index: A Critique". *Journal of Folklore Research*. 34 (3). 195-202 [Analysis and critics of the use of the Tale Type Index]

Eco, U. (1979). *A Theory of Semiotics.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. [A seminal work in semiotics]

Finnegan, R. (1991). "Tradition, but What Tradition and for Whom?". *Oral Tradition*. 6(1). 104-124. [A thorough discussion of the connotations of the word "tradition" in scholarship]

Finnegan, R. (1992). *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts*. London/New York: Routledge. [A review of oral literature research methodologies and common issues faced by researchers in the field]

Foley, M. (1985). *Oral-formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography.* New York: Garland Publishing. [A complete, annotated bibliography to compile the collective works on folklore from authors across disciplines. It encompasses a time span from the beginning of research up to 1982]

Genette, G. (2004). *Fiction et diction*. Paris: Seuil [A theoretical discussion on the deep relationship between what is told and how it is told]

Goody, J. (1975). *Literacy in Traditional Societies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [This book studies the effect and context of literacy in traditional or pre-literate societies.]

Graça da Silva, S. Tehrani J. (2016). "Comparative Phylogenetic Analysis Uncover the Ancient Roots of Indo-European Folktales". *Royal Society Open Science*. The Royal Society. Online: *10.1098/rsos.150645.* [Ground breaking study that tries to date folktales applying phylogenetic analytical tools used in biosciences]

Haase, D. (ed.). (2007). *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group. [This 3-volume encyclopedia presents a multicultural summary of folk and fairy tales, authors, themes, motifs, and folklorists along with a bibliography for further reading.]

Havelock, E. (1986). *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press. [An analysis of the transition between orality and literacy in ancient Greece.]

Headley S. (ed.). (1996). *Towards an Anthropology of Prayer: Javanese Ethnolinguistic Studies*. Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence. [A collection of six essays on the religious and ritualistic oral traditions of Java.]

Kelber, W. H. (1997). *Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press. [This book examines the oral and textual origins of the texts of Mark and Paul in the New Testament]

Korom, F. (ed.). (2013). *The Anthropology of Performance: A Reader*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. [Collection of essays on the value of performance studies in analyzing aspects of social structure, community, identity, among others]

Kunio, Y. (2008). *The Legends of Tono*. Lenham: Lexington Books. Trans. By Ronald Morse. [A collection of Japanese folktales recorded at the end of the 19th century by the so-called 'father of Japanese folklore study']

Levi-Strauss, C. (1962). *La Pensée Sauvage.* Paris: Librairie Plon. [One of the early books in structural anthropology]

Levi-Strauss, C. (1973). *Anthropologie structurale II.* Paris: Librairie Plon. [This work is the second part of the seminal *Anthropologie structurale* in which the term structural anthropology was first coined. Within the second volume is a discussion of how myths and rituals can be analyzed using a structural framework]

Lord, A. B. (1960). *The Singer of Tales.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [This work builds on the work of Parry by supporting the hypothesis of oral composition of the Homeric epics with field research conducted in Serbo-Croatia]

Lwin, S. M. (2010). *Narrative Structures in Burmese Folk Tales*. Amherst (NY): Cambria Press. [This book is both an introduction to the theoretical study of folktales (especially from a structural perspective) and an anthology of Burmese folktales]

MacDonald, R. M. (1999). *Traditional Storytelling Today: An International Sourcebook*. London and New York: Routledge. [A collection of essays about the importance, impact, and effect of storytelling in societies across the world]

Malinowski, B. (1926). *Myth in Primitive Psychology*. New London: Norton. [A classic reading, biased by evolutionist theories, that analyzes the role of myth within a community and among community members. While not strictly a functionalist approach, this work argues that myths serve as a social charter to members of a community]

Macaulay, Cathlin. (2012). "Scottish Oral Tradition". *Oral Tradition.* 27(1). 171-186. [This article

describes the efforts and methodologies employed to record and catalog oral traditions in Scotland]

McLuhan, H. M. (1962). *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. [A very influential book that analyzes the influence of printing press on European cultures]

McMillan, A. D. Hutchinson, I. (2002). "When the Mountain Dwarfs Danced: Aboriginal Traditions of Paleoseismic Events along the Cascadia Subduction Zone of Western North America." *Ethnohistory* 49:41-48. [An analysis of oral traditions from western North America comparing evidences of geological events and their impact on societies as seen in oral lores]

Monaghan, P. (2004). *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore*. New York: Facts on File. [A reference of elements of Celtic myth and folklore including, tales, themes, characters, deities, and archetypes]

Muller, F. M. (1896). *Contributions to the Science of Mythology.* New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co. [A book based upon mostly outdated theories that is interesting for the history of the discipline. In this work, Muller argues that myth is used by societies to explain natural phenomena, social constructs, and religious belief systems.]

Mudimbe, V. Y. (1991). *Parables and Fables: Exegesis, Textuality, and Politics in Central Africa*. Madison & London: The University of Wisconsin Press. [This book explores issues of identity, community, belonging, and alterity through the oral traditions of a community, namely the Luba of Zaire.]

Olrik, A. (1921). *Nogle Grundsaetninger for Sagnforskning.* København: Det Schønbergske Forlag. [This book offers a first theoretical framework for the study of folklore.]

Ong, W. J. (2002). *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the Word.* London; New York: Routledge. [This work examines thought and verbal expressions in oral, or pre-literate, and literate societies.]

Ogunjimi, B. Na'allah, A. R. (2005). *Introduction to African Oral Literature and Performance*. Asmare & Trenton: Africa World Press. [An introductory text to oral tradition and performance in cultural studies of Africa.]

Parry, M. Parry, A. (1971). *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. [This work is the first to make and support determinations about the oral composition of the Homeric epics by examining the use of formulas.]

Peterson Royce, A. (2004). *Anthropology of the Performing Arts: Artistry, Virtuosity, and Interpretation in a Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Walnut Creek/Lanham/Oxford: Altamira Press. [A comparative, anthropological analysis of performance across cultures.]

Propp, V. (1958). *Morphology of the Folktale.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. [A classic reading, this is one of the first texts to offer folklorists tools for morphological and typological analysis of tales using a wide collection of Russian fairy tales.]

Samoray C. (2016). "No fairy tale: Origins of some famous stories go back thousands of years." Science News. Society for Science & The Public. [Linguistic evolution and statistical analysis indicate that many modern fairy tales have their roots in oral traditions from thousands of years ago.]

Saussure, F. (1916). *Cours de Linguistique Generale*. Glasgow: Fontana/Collins. [A must reading for aspiring linguists, this work lays the groundwork for the study of structural linguistics and semiotics.]

Schmidt, P. R. (2006) *Historical Archaeology in Africa: Representation, Social Memory, and Oral Traditions.* Lanham: Altamira Press. [In this book the author proposes a rich study of historical archaeology in which researchers use a wid range of resources in their study, including social memory and oral traditions.]

Segal, R. (2004). *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [This book serves as an introduction and summary of the scholarship of myth across many fields over the last 3 centuries.]

Sherman, J. (2011). *Storytelling. An Encyclopedia of Mythology and Folklore*. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe. Available online at: http://npu.edu.ua/!e-book/book/djvu/A/iif_kgpm_Sherman_Storytelling_An_Encyclopedia_of_Mythology_and_Folklore.pdf. pdf (last retrieved 04/10/2016). [A encyclopedia of the various elements of mythology and folklore from

around the world, including tale types, themes, authors, characters, etc.]

Stock, B. (1983). *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. [This book explores the interplay between culture and literacy in eleventh and twelfth century Europe.]

Tantala, R. (1991). "Kantu and the Kings: The Cosmology of Politics in Precolonial Kitara (Western Uganda)," paper presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association, Denver. [A discussion on cosmology that includes observations on the importance of oral traditions]

Thompson, S. (1955). *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-books, and Local Legends.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. [This 6 volume set originally published between 1955 and 1958 expands the folktale classification system developed by Antti Aarne.]

Toelken, B. (1996). *The Dynamics of Folklore. Revised and Expanded Edition*. Logan: Utah State University Press. [A comprehensive introduction to the history and meaning of folklore.]

Tiffin, J. (2009). *Marvelous Geometry: Narrative and Metafiction in Modern Fairy Tale*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. [An analysis of the relevance, variation, and evolution of fairy tales in modern fiction, both written and performed.]

Tingle, T. (2003) *Walking the Choctaw Road*. El Paso TX: Cinco Punto Press. [A collection of myths and stories from the Choctaw Native Americans of Oklahoma.]

Todorov, T. (1975). *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [A structural analysis of the literary genre of the fantastic, this book attempts to develop a methodology for studying any literary genre.]

Tylor, E.B. (1871). *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom.* London: John Murray. [Outdated, this two volume set explores the characteristics of what Tylor referred to as primitive cultures and includes two chapters on the function of myth within primitive cultures.]

UNESCO, "Oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage" http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/?pg=00053

Uther, H. J. (2004). *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography, Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson.* Helsinki : Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Academia Scientiarum Finnica. [This is the most recent update of Antti Aarne's original folktale classification system.]

Vansina, J. (1985). *Oral Tradition as History.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. [In this work, Vansina argues for the use of oral traditions in the study of history and lays out a methodology and system of study for doing so. The book is close to a step by step guide for the proper recording and analysis of oral traditions by historians]

Watkins, C. (1995). *How to Kill a Dragon. Aspects of Indo-European poetics*. Oxford: Oxford UP. [An essay on comparative poetics and on the very widespread theme in Indo-European folklore and mythology of a hero slaying a dragon]

Witzel, M. (2012). *The origins of the world's mythologies*. Oxford and New York : Oxford University Press. [This is, to this day, the most comprehensive explanation of Witzel philogenetic theory on the world mythology, that divides them in two main branches (Laurasian and Gondwana) both originated during prehistory.]

Wundt, W. (1905). *Volkerpsychologie.* Leipzig: Engelman. [This 10-volume set lays out Wundt's ideas of Volkerpsychologie and lays the foundation of future research in the field.]

Zerubavel, E. (1996). "Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past". *Qualitative Sociology.* 19(3). 283-299. [In this article, Zerubavel analyzes myth as a function of social memory and social identity.]

Zipes, Jack (ed.). (2000). *Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales: The Western Fairy Tale Tradition From Medieval to Modern*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press. [This Oxford Companion comprises a collection of articles related to multiple aspects of the western fairy tale tradition, including essays on authors, regions, comparative analyses, and specific topics in psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature, and more.]

Biographical Sketch

Paolo Barbaro is a Post-Doctoral research fellow at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Paris) who's currently working on a research project on mythological hermeneutic in Japan. After obtaining a BA degree in Japanese Language and Literature at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy), in quest for a continuous and broader education, and before obtaining his PhD, he pursued his education in linguistics, computing, history and anthropology obtaining BAs and MAs degrees with the Universities of Pisa, Oxford, Naples and with the Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes. His research interests span from the linguistics of the Kim in Chad, where he conducted extensive field research, to comparative ethno-astronomy between Japanese and Austronesian starlores, and to religious travel and tourism in Japan.

Brooke Hundtoft has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from California State University, Long Beach and a Master of Arts degree in Classics from the University of Arizona. Brooke has taught Classical Mythology and Western Humanities for Pima Community College in Tucson, AZ since 2011. In 2015 Brooke organized and moderated an interdisciplinary panel at Pima Community College for the Art and Humanities Lecture Series on myth in the modern world called *Heroes, (Not) Dying, and Star Wars: How Modern Myth Affects Your Life.* Brooke has conducted archaeological research on Rapa Nui (Easter Island), and the Bronze Age sites of Mycenae and Glas in Greece. Brooke's research interests include Bronze Age Greek archaeology, the anthropology and archaeology of cultural interaction, mythology, social identity in myth, and the construction of the hero.