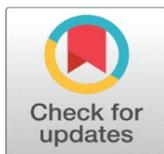


# NARRATIVE ACROSS CULTURES AND MEDIA: ORALITY AND LITERARY TRADITIONS

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Received 07 July 2024  
Accepted 08 August 2024  
Published 30 September 2024

DOI  
[10.29121/granthaalayah.v12.i9.2024.6681](https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v12.i9.2024.6681)

**Funding:** This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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## ABSTRACT

The most basic human expression forms through storytelling which people consider to be their most essential form of expression. People from different cultures and historical times have used storytelling to share their experiences and to protect their memories while they describe how society functions. People use narrative because they believe it exists as an inherent human thought process which applies to their personal existence and to their shared human history and social relationships. People use narrative to connect their inner thoughts with cultural traditions, which create their personal identity and their understanding of the world. Societies which lack written language have relied on storytelling to transmit their knowledge and maintain their traditional cultural practices. Through oral storytelling, people used tales and songs and epics to deliver entertainment while they also preserved historical events and moral teachings and community identity. The legendary blind poet Homer serves as a symbol of oral creativity because he demonstrates how non-literate cultures use their imaginative abilities. The modern novel developed from oral traditions which historians consider to be its most essential roots. Storytelling serves as the main element of literary creativity because it develops from one person speaking to others into permanent text. All human storytelling functions through fictional stories which create their own narrative paths to reach their final form. The storytelling process includes personal stories and witness accounts and descriptions of actual events. The novel establishes itself as the primary literary form for all future literature after this period. This research examines how storytelling and narrative and truth function throughout oral and written cultures, which challenges the basic beliefs that supports literary theory and anthropology and social science research.

**Keywords:** Narrative, Oral Tradition, Literature, Print Media, Fiction, Truth, Social Science

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of printing methods completely changed the way stories were produced, distributed and received. Unlike oral traditions, where narrators engaged in direct social interaction and were closely tied to shared experiences, the novelist addresses an anonymous and rather dispersed readership, travelling across distances without direct human contact. The transition led to a significant shift in the literary world. Storytelling became less immediate and somewhat detached from lived experience, altogether acquiring new forms of abstraction and reflection. If one were to inspect the novel's origins, the complex and contested nature of story telling reveals itself. Scholars of the literary circuit have now come to use the term 'storytelling' in a broader context. Authors have begun identifying earlier/traditional narrative structures and forms found in heroic adventures,

romances, episodic tales and biographical narratives. The earlier works of literature had introduced several new elements like structured plot and time, flat and round character development, morally-driven arcs, all of which later evolved in conjunction and ended up in the modern novel. Nonetheless, the novel as it is commonly understood today is inextricably related to the steady emergence of literacy and printing in the late medieval and early modern periods. Writing and printing brought about profound fundamental changes to the art of storytelling, because it provided writers with a newly integrated approach to create stable stories, intricate plots and allowed audiences to think about their work across extended timelines and backgrounds. The historical perspective further establishes the argument that humans everywhere possess an innate capability to understand or comprehend narratives, deeming it as an essential element of storytelling. Narrative in this context exists as a concept that derives its boundaries from the practices of reading, writing and the distribution of printed literary works. People belonging to varied cultures and traditions use their native languages to communicate and create images from their past experiences. However, they do not necessarily share the same understanding of narrative structure. A unified understanding of narratives in storytelling requires specific structure that includes an initial part, a central part and a final part, altogether forming the plot of the novel or story. The term "narrative" itself has developed from its initial meaning of an account or tale to now describing almost every type of sequential storytelling method. The concept has developed into a significant yet ambiguous term which people use to analyze political events, historical events and psychological variables. The usage of the term becomes too broad for effective analysis. The process of memory exists as a base for understanding all narrative forms, although presenting a problem because it creates confusion about how people use different methods to communicate.

The essential difference between written records and human memory/remembrance, is that oral traditions may face the threat of becoming invisible while written texts would not. The practice of treating all oral genres as "literature" leads to the loss of special characteristics that define oral performance. These include improvisational elements, group participation and memory-based exchange instead of permanent written material. Any sequence that people define as narrative results in the loss of its value as a precise analytical tool. The more precise definition of narrative which emerged from this research describes narrative as an organized form which follows established patterns. The definition of narrative in this limited view describes an organized sequence of events which develops through specific stages while maintaining internal logical connection. The definition enables researchers to analyze different types of narrative through their unique elements which separate them from description and argument and chronological narration. The concept of narrative becomes useless because it includes everything which exists as a result of its excessive boundaries. Modern theory demonstrates a strong inclination to treat narrative as a universal element which functions as the main human mental process used to study ideological systems and historical events and cultural developments. Some psychologists describe storytelling as the primary mode of cognition, while philosophers and educators identify narrative competence as a defining human skill.

The observations demonstrate the importance of storytelling, yet they demonstrate a risk which leads to excessive generalization as well. The narrative form which encompasses all things sometimes leads to confusion because its meaning becomes vague or unclear when different elements coexist or function together. The same issue emerges when people discuss what constitutes truth and

fiction. People from different cultures who interact with one another use this way to tell apart honest stories from made-up tales and lies. Social interaction needs this distinction because it creates a framework for developing trust while maintaining accountability. People would lose their ability to understand if they had no means to assess which information served to inform them or entertain them or deliver falsehoods. Fiction and deliberate falsehoods both diverge from actual truth yet they do so through different methods. Fiction permits authors to create imaginary worlds that disregard real-life facts whereas lies exist to create false impressions through intentional lies. Social actors maintain their use of practical truth versus untruth distinctions through all philosophical debates that exist about truth. The fundamental distinction exists within the structure of language which acts as the foundation for historical documentation and moral evaluations and shared cultural understanding. When narratives blur this boundary, the consequences can extend beyond literature into politics and history, where repeated distortions may eventually be accepted as fact. The paper will show how storytelling functions as a fundamental component of human social behavior. The paper reaches the conclusion that narrative should not be treated as an all-encompassing or timeless category. The existing dominant forms of this text type have developed through writing and literacy and printing. The existing dominant forms of this text type have developed through writing and literacy and printing. The existing dominant forms of this text type have developed through writing and literacy and printing. The existing framework of this text type includes specific definitions which create analytical challenges through their multiple interpretations.

## **2. TRUTH AND FICTION IN LITERARY TRADITIONS**

People nowadays understand lying through different methods because psychoanalysis, psychology and sociology provides the basis to study human behavior. Past research examining human behavior shows how people choose to hide their true selves or their mental states through self-deception, repression or simply through fear and social pressure. When conducting social interactions, people need to identify what's accurately true or false. People in daily life require accurate knowledge about whether an event really occurred. The social trust between people relies on this distinction, which remains true despite the complicated psychological reasons that lead people to lie. The concept of lying needs to recognize that not all false statements result from intentional deception. People can create falsehoods or fabrications through the process of composing works that contain imaginative elements. People who create fantasy stories typically avoid creating direct links between their work and real-world facts, mainly because they intentionally design their stories to differ from actual events. Fiction can use two different methods to present its content. The content may seem to be authentic but it actually operates as a fictional work that allows readers to decide its authenticity. The English novel evolved through this framework, altogether becoming essential during its early development phase. The earlier romances contained imaginative elements while the first realistic novels of the early 1700s encouraged readers to judge their authenticity. Writers such as Defoe presented his fictional stories as factual accounts which he claimed contained actual truth. The statement made both experiential and symbolic truth but it claimed to present actual facts about imagined events. So, amid such confusions people have still managed to create two separate systems of thought, which would allow them to study actual events and mythical stories through historical evaluations.

People in ancient societies recognized that fictional stories and non-fictional works which present actual events as evidence complete different types of writing. In societies without writing systems people use spoken language as their main form of communication. The evidence from ethnography shows that adults in many oral cultures communicate through conversation rather than storytelling which scholars use when they study early human communication methods. The LoDagaa people from northern Ghana create a clear boundary which differentiates between honest communication and deceptive communication. The term "proper speech" which people use to refer to accurate speech acts requires speakers to deliver truthful messages while lies need to be marked as false. The sacred texts of certain rituals which include major myths from the religious tradition exist in a state between two defined categories. The information describes non-truthful statements which people consider false yet they do not proceed to treat them as genuine personal accounts. People see them as manifestations of divine order which convey sacred truth instead of representing actual historical events. Folktales occupy yet another category. The narrative does not present actual factual information which makes it impossible to label it as a falsehood. The story does not present true information because it shows animals with human attributes and describes events which could never happen. The audience for these stories consists mainly of children who will learn moral lessons through the stories while enjoying them. The classical philosophers identified these narratives as useful falsehoods which provided social benefits through their educational value (as they expressed non-literal truths). Adults use fictional stories as a common means of communication which people use in their daily activities. People who grew up in oral cultures but learned Western ways of thinking provide personal accounts which show how their culture influences their understanding of this issue.

Fictional and factual storytelling does not maintain the cultural importance which theoretical studies of early oral societies assign to it. Pre-literate societies used storytelling as their main communication method but this view fails to recognize that modern storytelling techniques evolved from those earlier practices. Contemporary theoretical approaches that seek to dissolve distinctions between truth and fiction, myth and history, or narrative and non-narrative discourse achieve their goals by erasing traditional binary frameworks. The drive toward intellectual holism needs to be understood but it creates dangers because it deletes essential historical distinctions which help with analytical tasks. Different types of discourse create distinct ways that humans think while various cultures develop their own methods of creating boundaries. Different social settings create distinct patterns of memory and meaning and communication that scientists need to comprehend. Oral cultures use narrative forms that can be classified into five main types which include legends and epics and myths and folktales and personal narratives. Among these, the epic is the most clearly narrative in a formal sense. The epic combines fictional content with historical elements which describe heroic events that probably occurred in real life. The narratives use poetic form to tell stories about warriors and chiefs and founding figures. For a long time, scholars assumed that epics were the natural literary form of non-literate societies and extensive efforts were made to demonstrate that famous epics were composed entirely within oral traditions. The research into African oral literature presents challenges to this belief. In sub-Saharan African regions long poetic epics exist as the main form of epic poetry.

The African continent displays intricate storytelling traditions through its mythical stories. The ritual recitations require extended performance because they contain deep philosophical content which explores creation and human-divine

relations and life purpose. The three works establish a complete contrast to heroic epics because they explore universal themes through their depiction of both moral values and cosmic order. Professional praise singers perform Islamic-influenced musical traditions which mainly focus on chief and lineage and political authority references. The artists belong to specific social groups who perform at royal courts for elite audiences to create and maintain shared memory through their artistic performances. The actions of these performers follow different patterns. The performers use two distinct methods of delivering praise. The two groups maintain their distinct professional identities as musicians and verbal artists. Their narratives are shaped by their social position, their audience, and the broader cultural context in which they operate. African societies which developed political systems and received written religious teachings display their long epics through their traditional storytelling methods. The narrative recitation in these settings establishes a historical framework which presents the accomplishments and conflicts of ancestral kings. The epic content maintains a flexible nature which allows it to exist beyond its final form. Storytellers shape each performance through their own personal style which includes both their relationship to their audience and the particular event. Local groups display different interests which lead them to change or stress different parts of episodes. The open-ended evolution of epic narratives exists as an unending storytelling universe which defies all boundaries. The two groups use different approaches to public speaking which lead to distinct results.

### **3. NARRATIVE LIMITS AND CULTURAL MEANING**

The research on oral cultures has determined that storytelling functions as the main element of these cultures. The evidence from various regions establishes that societies without writing systems experience a more intricate and diverse social structure. The New Guinea Highlands area shows multiple societies which have developed their own unique epic oral tradition. The recitations deliver a story through their entire performance which includes traditional elements that define oral storytelling. The technique of repeating specific elements assists with three functions which include helping people remember information and improving their performance and enabling spectators to join in the event, which compares to established patterns in traditional oral storytelling. The Highland communities recognize two main story categories which they use for their storytelling traditions. The categories use European standards to separate fiction from reality yet they create an understanding that separates the narrated world from the actual time of narration. All aspects of a story require evaluation to determine their complete honesty yet truth remains essential to the process. The specific stories demand particular storytelling environments which include indoor nighttime sessions following dinner when specific performance rules must be followed. The established rules of turn-taking allow one speaker to maintain control of the discussion while other speakers must wait until their turn. The narratives divide into two categories which include stories designed for children and family environments and stories intended for public presentation. Storytelling develops through social control which depends on the specific situation according to these established patterns. The New Guinea recitations share certain elements with European epics yet their purpose and size display major differences. The performance lasts about ten to twenty minutes because it contains short content that does not exceed this duration.

#### **4. TO CONCLUDE**

The research demonstrates through its initial examination of storytelling as an alleged universal human practice and its subsequent in-depth study of epics and myths and folktales and personal narratives that strong plotted narratives exist as a specific cultural practice which people use less than current theoretical frameworks assert. The form exists as a specific form which developed through historical processes that essential writing and printing technologies brought forth. The researchers began their investigation by examining why people assume that narrative serves as an automatic framework which all humans use to think and show their thoughts. People from all cultures use communication and memory and experience interpretation while they create their narratives through literate practices which require them to define a story structure with three parts that begin and develop and finish. The introduction of writing produced a new form of storytelling that established permanent story structures through which writers could develop their stories while maintaining specific connections between their different events. The development of printing technology increased these patterns which led to the creation of contemporary novels that heightened public admiration for storytelling traditions. The instinct which seems to exist permanently within people actually arises from particular social and material conditions that exist in their environment. The research study identifies two key themes which demonstrate how research distinguishes between two types of falseness and between truth and falsehood. The concept of lying becomes more complicated through psychological and psychoanalytic investigation because it reveals how people hide their real motives by manipulating their emotional states according to their own perspective. The society requires people to make a clear choice between what is true and what is false because this distinction serves as the basis for their everyday social interactions. The capacity to determine whether a statement reflects actual events or represents fiction or deceptive content serves as the fundamental requirement for effective communication. The linguistic distinction exists as a practical distinction which functions through different cultural contexts because it remains inherent in both linguistic and social systems.

#### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

None.

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