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Story

A Handbook

Jacqueline S. Thursby

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Preface

Human beings have expressive minds, and inventing and interpreting information by way of narration and story is basic to everyday life. Mark Turner, in *The Literary Mind,* suggests that "the understanding of a complex of objects, events, and actors [is] organized by our knowledge of *story*" (1996: 5). Who told the first story, and where did it come from? What kind of a story was it? Was it a creation story that told how the earth and sky and people came to be, or was it an action story that described how some animal or fish escaped from hungry hunters? Stories have emerged from every culture that has inhabited the earth. Cave paintings from prehistoric times represent stories or narratives humans have long forgotten. "Currently, we know of the existence of more than 200 caves in Europe containing Paleolithic paintings. Most of the images date from the Magdalenian cultural period, which lasted from 15,000 to 10,000 B.C.E., and 90 per cent of them can be found in France and Spain" (Roberts 1998: 49).

Over time many guesses and explanations have been made, shared, and then discarded about what those ancient figures may have meant. Though we may never know the answers to questions concerning such ancient representations, there is much we do know about stories in general. With each telling, stories weave an individual pattern of meaning according to the intent of the teller and the understanding of the listener. There are many kinds of stories used for many purposes, and this handbook will help you understand more clearly what they are and how they are used.

This handbook focuses on the meaning and use of many different kinds of stories. It is a guide to the world of organized words and ideas that surrounds us, and it will help put into order those words and ideas by presenting

narratives both old and new, familiar and unfamiliar, supernatural and real, from faraway places and from your own neighborhood and family. It is nearly impossible to imagine a world without stories. They shape us into the people we are. They determine our culture, give us information, teach us useful skills, help us to form opinions, and provide a way to express our thoughts. The cave paintings from prehistoric times certainly have stories or narratives associated with them. Perhaps the painted animals and figures were part of hunting or fertility rituals, but we can only guess generally at what they may have meant. When human beings learned to write and keep records, some of their narratives unraveled the mysteries of earlier times. Those early records and stories also created baffling new mysteries that have been wondered about diachronically (through time) even to the present.

There are complex story or narrative ownership discussions between and among folklorists, storytellers, and writers of written literary tales. Ethical questions arise about whose property is whose and how the stories can be used. Among folklorists, the transmission of oral or vernacular stories is simply a way of transmitting information about cultural boundaries, traditions, and the maintenance of the mores and folkways of a group. Exclusive ownership issues concerning stories are not much of an issue because folklorists understand that boundaries can be negotiated, and the whole of society benefits by learning from one another through cultural narratives and artifacts.

Among some village or professional storytellers, there is often great reluctance to tell one another's stories. This is not always true, but in some areas of the world, stories are traditionally passed on through inheritance or permission. On the other hand, there are many storytellers who freely borrow stories from one another and generously encourage others to use their stories and styles. Another group, literary artists, own their stories legally by formal copyright. Though the themes or motifs are often borrowed, the creative work itself is rightfully protected, and wisdom dictates that permission be granted before borrowing too freely from a professional writer's work. The stories you will find described and discussed in this text fall in all of the categories listed above, and more. Additionally, however, stories of experiences and hearsay are often passed along casually without thought of origin or ownership. Narrative exchange is reflective of human nature, and that is how we each participate in shaping the ideas in our world.

Traditional storytelling, or a narrated performance by one person, is an ancient practice for transmitting a variety of information. In the old world, stories were carried from place to place by sailors, merchants, and other travelers. The stories were used to transmit cultural tradition, and they were learned from one generation to the next. Storytelling is used today for that

reason, but stories are now used in both entertainment and teaching, and simply for close, social interaction. Stories are used and told by parents, teachers (both religious and secular), and scholars (in every discipline), professional and nonprofessional entertainers, friends, and the unfamiliar woman or man sitting next to you on an airplane or bus. People tell jokes, personal anecdotes, urban myths and legends, and gossip to one another as a part of ordinary daily interaction, and our cultural and social views are strongly influenced by these experiences.

Professional storytellers, or "tellers" as they are often called, have enjoyed a revival of their craft in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Nontraditional storytelling, folklorist and professional storyteller Ruth Stotter states, "may appropriate stories found in published texts, from cultures with which neither the teller nor the audience have firsthand experience. Performance oriented, story interpretation is shaped by the individual teller's personal taste." In the late 1800s, librarians were trained to become storytellers, and "'Story hours' were offered in the U.S. libraries as early as 1896, and in 1909 the American Library Association sponsored a story-hour symposium" (Stotter 1996: 690).

Both the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling (NAPPS), founded by Jimmy Neil Smith in 1973, and the Black Storytelling Festival, a yearly event that began in 1983, have promoted storytelling and provided venues for vast U.S. audiences. At the time of this writing, there are more than 1,000 professional storytellers in the United States who perform in "schools, libraries, museums, coffeehouses, theaters, and festivals" (Stotter 1996: 690). There is no clear demarcation between traditional and nontraditional storytelling because both transmit cultural mores and traditions, both inform and entertain, and both establish an intimacy between the teller and the hearer(s).

This text will provide high school students, undergraduates, and general readers with information that explains the some of the story of stories, their elements, and the tellers who share them. The first chapter, an introduction, provides a general history of the topic and its significance. Thousands of years ago, when the complexity of writing as a method of communication and record keeping was just beginning to take shape, most people did not communicate by written forms, but oral or spoken stories flourished even then. They were transmitted from person to person and country to country by word-of-mouth. Stories of creation, mystic rites, angry gods, vision quests, and magic occurrences were found in every culture. Scribes, priests, nobility, and royalty were the elite (upper) segment of various populations, and they used their knowledge of reading and writing as a medium of power. "Writing

was quickly recognized as a powerful skill, and through the ranks of [early] Mesopotamian society rose the scribe. . . . With all the power that lay in their hands, the Mesopotamian scribes were an aristocratic elite" (Manguel 1996: 180). There was little effort to teach the broad population to read and write until after the medieval period (500 C.E.–1400 C.E.). Various religions, or belief systems, emerged throughout the world and people constructed stories to answer questions about the birth of the earth, natural phenomena, and the purpose of life. Over time and generations, as these stories were told and repeated, they began to include stories about heros, and families, and events. Out of those stories came myths, legends, folktales, and other kinds of narratives that we read, share, and reinvent even in our own, modern-day society.

Chapter 2 defines and classifies the most significant types of stories, both short and long, and techniques mythologists, folklorists, and storytellers sometimes use. It also discusses how some of the stories have been created. This chapter answers some questions and raises others. Many people seem to think that folklore is *only* storytelling, the retelling of legends and old tales, but that is only *part* of what folklore is. Many stories are called folktales, meaning that the stories have been transmitted from person to person over time by word-of-mouth, but the elements of *folklore* often make up the motifs that appear in many kinds of folktale narrative.

Jokes, riddles, limericks, proverbs, ballads, myth, legends, fairy tales, folktales, mythologies, and other oral lore are classified as oral folklore, and they contain folkloric elements; that is, elements that are familiar in everyday life and are used over and over again. Ethnic stereotypes and slurs, common superstitions such as touching wood for luck, wishes and curses—these are some *elements* or *motifs* of folklore, and there are many, many more. Folklore, then, as repeated practices that pass from person to person, is a constant presence in stories.

In the essay "Documenting Folklore," folklorist William A. Wilson suggested three categories for the study of folklore: things people say (jokes, riddles, proverbs); things people make (rugs, pottery, baskets); and things people do (holiday customs, family traditions, folk dances) (1986: 225). Another important category is things people believe (superstitions, home-cures, folk beliefs, and religions). These elements are present in stories and lived human experience whether it is past or present, foreign or domestic, comedy or tragedy. Many scholars of folktale and stories have written varied classification systems in order to study folktale and stories in a systematic way. This chapter describes some of these systems and explains how to use them for research in both traditional and nontraditional storytelling.

Chapter 3 is made up of story examples and narratives from around the world. Roughly half of the stories in this chapter are from the English-speaking world, and half are from the non-English-speaking world. Story examples will be either traditionally *literary* (or written) or *vernacular* (by word-of-mouth), and the text will identify some of the folklore elements used in both kinds of stories as defined and described in chapter 2.

The discussion will explain why the stories included have lasted over time. Many stories are cast aside because they simply no longer have meaning to people in their present life setting. Maybe they are from another time that is unfamiliar to the hearer (or reader), or maybe the story simply didn't serve any purpose. For a good story to be considered great and lasting, it must appeal to the human condition. That is, the reader must find something of herself or himself in it, or at least they must find someone or something they recognize and to which they can relate.

Human beings, across time and space, share many biological, emotional, and cultural commonalities. Everyone experiences hunger, fatigue, happiness, sadness, anger, gratitude, envy, pride, or humility at one time or another. People generally like to be noticed and validated, and people hope for physical and emotional safety and continuity of what is familiar to them. Peace of mind is a quest the human family seeks, and stories that last usually appeal to these and other universal biological and emotional human needs. The human conditions listed here are mostly biological or emotional responses to life, but there is another huge and very influential category of the human condition, namely cultural. Human beings construct ideas in an attempt to somehow put their worlds in order. Called cultural or social constructions, people make up guidelines, rules, formal and informal laws, folkways, and mores, in order to structure their families, communities, and even nations. The main way these constructions are transferred from one generation to the next, through home life, schools, churches, and community practice, is through shaping stories, and, along with various stories, some of this is discussed in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter discusses scholarship and approaches that have been practiced over time to try to explain the structure and meaning of stories. Questions about stories have been posed since the time of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), and perhaps before. What is a story? How do stories work? What helps us to remember them? What are the elements of a good story? What parts must it have to hold the reader's interest? Many classifications and approaches have attempted to explain the fundamental meaning of stories and why we continue to use them. From tale-typing to lists of elements and functions to ever-changing literary criticism to folkloric approaches to narratology (a close

examination of the acts and elements of narration), scholars continue to make informed guesses about how stories continue to both entertain us and shape our cultural and social behaviors. Certainly questioning is fundamental to the human condition. Humans are curious about their environment, their past, and their future. They wonder about their survival. Stories, shared one to another, help to dispel confusion. They can teach old principles in new ways, increase our ability to think and analyze, and weigh pros and cons before drawing conclusions. It is through stories that we learn about other people and other cultures, and we learn from their ancient wisdom. Stories deepen our understanding. Theories and discoveries about how stories work have emerged from many sources, and it is interesting to look at some of the more popular speculations.

Chapter 5 discusses the contexts in which story or narrative is used. The application of stories is vast. Artists around the world, over time and space, have interpreted and reinterpreted stories in poetry, prose, music, films, painting, sculpture, comics, and now even in digital form. Stories are used in advertising, and there is commodification (marketing or selling) of popular story motifs or symbols. For instance, from themed Halloween costumes to tableware, retailers make available to buyers goods that represent characters from Ulysses to Luke Skywalker, Cinderella to the three little pigs, Noah and the ark to Disney's Little Mermaid (and so much more). Youngsters around the world wear Harry Potter glasses. This contextual chapter discusses the impact of story and narrative on the contemporary culture in which we are living.

This volume supplies a glossary and index to aid readers in understanding and navigating the text. It also includes a bibliography and list of web resources to lead readers to further research.

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One
Introduction

Questioning is fundamental to the existence of human beings, and stories satisfy many of those questions, though the answers stories give may not be satisfying to all listeners. Humans are endowed with inquiring minds that lead them to find the means to satisfy complex and innate needs and goals. We seek and even construct explanations to clear away confusions. In antiquity our curiosity led us to probe into neighboring caves and jungles, and in our own day we explore other countries and even other galaxies and planets. Inquiry strengthens our own ability to analyze and deduce answers, and through inquiry we also learn about other people and establish new relationships.

Folklorists gather, classify, analyze, and discuss information. The folkloric method is one of many ways to pursue lines of inquiry about the world we live in and the people with whom we associate. We question, and we encourage others to question. Question this text as you read. I suggest that you ask yourself how to apply some of the strategies for discerning meaning that you will find here. Many students of folklore find that when they learn to analyze informal human behavior, they see the life around them in a much different and often more respectful light. Cultural studies such as folklore help us understand the expressive behavior of humankind, and much of that behavior is represented by the peoples' stories.

In a simple sense, sometimes called "reductive" by scholars, components of human existence are things either biological or cultural. Though we as humans try to control genetics and the chemical makeup of our bodies, even our weight, biological cause-and-effect principles of nature remain in control. Culture, on the other hand, is constructed and reconstructed through

human ingenuity and imagination. A scholar named Alexander Eliot wrote that as the atmosphere bathes and serves as a life-shield to the earth and keeps it stable and healthy, the "mythosphere," or imaginative domain of stories, keeps the human mind healthy. It is in the story-domain of our minds that we construct worldviews that shape our lives (Eliot 1990: 1). We are socialized as we grow up, usually by our elders, and then at some point most of us reexamine what we have been taught. Over time we reevaluate our lives from more experienced perspectives and then adjust and carry on in life realizing that our vast combinations of understandings need reshaping every now and then. Stories help us do that. There are many experiences and nuggets of wisdom that we learn from stories rather than firsthand experience.

Since the dawn of time, human beings have tried to define themselves through their expressed culture; that is, repetitive traditions. Those traditions, often expressed through stories, material artifacts, or behavior, were named *folklore,* a term coined in England by a nineteenth-century scholar named William J. Thoms. He wanted an Anglo-Saxon word to replace the Latin-based term *popular antiquities.* Modern folklorists use the term to designate cultural items that are passed on by vernacular (oral) or customary tradition. It is important to remember that folklore can emerge from any culture of any social, economic, or ethnic level. The word *folk* does not refer to the less educated or less financially secure.

From starting a fire to avoiding it, from making or finding early water vessels to tanning hides, vernacular transmission of traditional ways of living, called folklore, has carried humanity from generation to generation. There isn't a lot we can do to change or control biology, but our ability and inclination to construct and reconstruct cultural perceptions, controls, and worldview is almost infinite. We describe and transmit most of these constructions through verbal exchange; that is, through myth, legend, folktales, anecdotes, ballads, jokes, proverbs, limericks, rhymes, and esoteric (known to an in-group) storylike general conversation.

How do the most familiar stories, in this case, folk and fairy tales, begin? There are countless ways, of course, but people in the Western or Occidental world often carry an expected stereotype associated with story beginnings. Even so, there are many ways of beginning, and the following quotation lists just a few. Sometimes the beginning phrase suggests what is to come after.

> Many folktales open with standard beginnings that capture the attention of the listener and establish time and mood. Sometimes these beginning phrases vary in folktales from different cultures. "Once upon a time" is a recognizable opening for many English variants, while folktales from the Philippines open with

> "In the first times," and many African storytellers begin with "A story, a story, let it come, let it go." These phrases not only help to place the listener in a "dream world where anything is possible" (Sutherland 1997) but also provide a hint at the culture the story may reflect. (Roe, Alfred, and Smith 1998: 169)

Though Americans often seem to think of stories as formal narratives that begin with "once upon a time" and end with "and they lived happily ever after," that occurs only in one genre (classification) of story type. This discussion will help you recognize and use many other types of oral accounts that can be called story. Reflect on yesterday for a few minutes. Can you remember any stories that you may have been told? Think about conversations that may have taken place before school or work, between classes or tasks, or even in class or at the proverbial water cooler. Did you get a note from anyone? Did someone pass along some interesting (or disturbing) gossip? Or, did you hear a new joke? Maybe you watched television before you left home. The commercials seen on television today are usually presented in narrative or story form. Some of the advertising is so captivating that you may have even remarked that some of the commercials are better than the programs they interrupt or the products they represent. Think about the yearly Super Bowl and its sponsors. Those commercials do a great storytelling job. In their efforts to try to persuade us to use their products, they usually use verbal or material motifs that are familiar to us. They try to grab our attention and keep it with a mini-story that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The underlying concept is often an appeal to our improved happiness if we buy and use their products. Several advertisements declare on television and in magazines, for instance, that you will be much more popular if you use their mouthwash, drink their soda, or drive their high-powered car.

When we hear and then pass stories along, any kind of stories, they enter the realm of what folklorists simply call folklore, or the lore of the folk (meaning all of us). Though many of the world's stories or narratives have been written down, it has been suggested that when they are passed orally through several tellers and listeners, the stories become a part of expressive human culture and are considered to be folklore. The many kinds of folk narrative, from fairy tales to gossip, help to determine who we are and what we value.

Stories that are invented or created by talented writers or journalists are literary works. Though they may use folkloric items in the development of their stories, their creations did not really emerge from the lived culture of people. There is a difference between the authenticity of a tall tale about a mythic Paul Bunyan or Pecos Bill and a shared story about actual lumberjack initiations in the deep woods of Oregon or Michigan. This point will be discussed

later in the text; it is an important concept because it points to different kinds of stories and varied uses. Think about a smooth, polished stone, and in your mind compare it to a seashell covered with oddly shaped barnacles and bumps. The smooth stone represents a writer's literary creation—an invented and polished literary narrative. Many oral tales have been passed through that process, and where they were once invented and rarely told exactly the same way twice, they were polished, written, and became static. The rough shell represents traditional, vernacular folklore. In its transmission, it has been tossed about, added to, broken and chipped here and there, and has emerged as a sturdy survivor. The ancient Nordic stories of Odin and Thor are good examples of those wonderful, complex, added upon, barnacled stories.

Story, as a word, emerges from the ancient Latin word *historia.* That word evolved into the Old French word *estoire* and entered Middle English as *storie.* Our word *story* was derived from the Middle English. According to one dictionary I consulted, "story, the broadest in scope of these words, refers to a series of connected events, true or fictitious, that is written or told with the intention of entertaining or informing" (Agnes 2002: 1413). The attribute that qualifies a story for the label of *folklore* is oral repetition. If the story has been casually repeated many times in oral tradition, and even recorded or written down at some point, then it can be called folklore. For many years, stories or narrative were only considered folklore if they were vernacular, or oral, and not written down. With the creation of archives and libraries in many universities around the world, and an increase in the number of people gathering these stories, many have been written, published, and then filed away in various archives. Because of that, *folklore* as a term has different implications than it had years ago. Though there are many definitions, it is expressive culture created and repeated by human beings and reflective of their lived culture. As stated above, the "folk" can be of any culture or socio-economic class from doctors and lawyers to ranchers/farmers and blue-collar laborers, male or female, adult or child, in any country of the world. True folklore is not a literary invention by a professional writer. It emerges from people's lived experience, and if it is repeated and passed along, it is valid whether or not it is written.

To explain more fully the relationship between folklore and story, understand that items identified as folkloric appear in all kinds of stories that are not classified as folktales or fairy tales. From the material lore of an apron of fig leaves representing what Adam and Eve covered themselves with in the Garden of Eden as used in the high Masonic rituals, to the magic wand in *Harry Potter*, and from the oral lore of superstitions in *Huckleberry Finn* to the customary and stereotypical pirate behaviors in Gore Verbinski's *Pirates*

of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, literary writers have used, both consciously and unconsciously, elements of traditional folklore to shape their stories.

Looking for folkloric elements in stories helps the reader to connect more fully with meaning. One of the ultimate purposes of stories is to create *empathy,* or understanding for others through shared information. By listening to and reading stories from our own and other cultures, we discover that though people have constructed different languages and life systems, our biological needs and emotional responses have been much the same throughout time.

Adam and Eve leaving the garden covered with skins in place of the fig leaf aprons.

Stories help us understand one another, and when we understand, we have better relationships.

ORAL TRADITIONS, NARRATIVES, AND RITUALS

How did the world come to be? We see galaxies of light, the sun, the moon, the mountains, and oceans, and like primitive humankind, we wonder. In our modern age, we have discovered many scientific explanations, but long ago humans constructed creation stories to provide some kind of answers to those mysteries. Did the earth and humans hatch from an egg as the ancient Greeks and Romans, and many Asian cultures, seemed to believe? Was it created in six days by a great, powerful god, as it is explained in the Hebrew testaments? Or did the earth reside on the back of a turtle with people and animals climbing to the surface from deep within the world sphere as some of the North American Indian myths suggest? Sometimes these old creation stories are incorporated into the peoples' religion or belief systems, rituals, and practices; other times they have been perceived as having secular (non-religious) purposes. The many examples of different kinds of stories presented in chapter 3 will help to inform you as you explore the fascinating and often interconnected web of world narratives.

Mystic rites and rituals, from birth to death, honor and celebrate significant transitions or rites-of-passage through life. In the ancient Greek tradition, the Eleusinian Mysteries initiated, with deepest reverence, both men and women of all ages into the symbolic meanings of life as the ancient Greeks understood it. With processions, baptisms, seals and symbols (passwords), the initiates were guided by a hierophant (a holy teacher) through various symbolic lesser and greater mysteries and rituals similar to Egyptian rites of Isis. After nine days, the initiates were considered to have been informed about the origins and ends of life (Taylor 1980: xii).

Religious rituals include christening, blessing, or naming ceremonies for infants. A folk belief attached to the christening of babies in the Episcopal or Anglican Church suggests that if the little one cries during the ceremony, it will have a holy and protected life because all of the evil spirits that surround it will be frightened away by the shrill cries. At the other end of life, there are folk beliefs, rituals, and stories to help maintain both dignity and peace of mind for the living and the dying. In the Muslim tradition, honey or tiny sips of cool water are sometimes given to the dying in their last moments. It is believed that the spirit leaves the body through the throat. The honey keeps the spirit sweet, and the water makes the spirit's journey easier. It is believed that, soon after death, the deceased will be questioned by the angels Munkar

Early Egyptian rites of Isis influenced later rituals in the Mediterranean region.

and Nakír, and the deceased's salvation depends on correct and complete answers (Kassis 1997: 54). The dying are coached with the correct answers, kept comfortable, and hopefully kept sweet enough that they will not cry out against their god in their anguish. No believer would deliberately incur god's wrath.

Stories about angry gods abound in world mythologies. This might have something do to with instilling fear in people in order to keep social order, but one of the most interesting of these angry gods is Odin. He is

also known by the names of Wotan and Woden, All father (*Alfodr*), Father of the Slain (*Valfodr*), and many more. One early writer, Snorri Sturluson (c.1220), listed 49 or more names that reflected elements of Odin's fierce character (Auerbach 1997: 28). Sturluson himself was a source of interest and stories. He was a very different Icelandic landowner and chieftan, well traveled and well educated. In 1218 "he visited the Norwegian court, where he was granted feudal titles. Snorri was a poet . . . and so composed his *Prose Edda,* which is at the same time a handbook on the rules of style and metre and a manual on Scandinavian mythology" (Simpson 1997:17). One of the reasons Sturluson, a Christian, wrote the epic tales of the Scandinavian

Odin, sometimes called Wotan or Woden, "All Father" or "Father of the Slain."

tradition was that he recognized that they would be lost if not recorded. Though other early writers recorded tales also, Sturluson created the most easily understood collection.

Odin was the primary god of the Northern European Norse and Germanic tribes. Odin had one eye and wore a dark, wide-brimmed hat that cast a mysterious shadow over his face. He roamed widely, was unpredictable, and could turn against favorites without notice; further, it was said that unpredictably he would award rather than punish the unjust. Hanging, stabbing, and burning are ritual practices associated with Odin, and in the ancient Nordic poem *Havamal* ("Words of the High One"), the story is told of how Odin hung

Thor, a well-known and powerful Scandinavian god. He usually wielded a hammer.

from the world tree (Yggdrasill) for nine days without food or water after having been slashed with a spear. The story carries some Christian elements, but it is difficult to determine consistent relationships between the two.

Thor was another very well known and powerful god in the ancient world of the Scandinavians; although he was called the god of thunder, his character was helpful and benign. Odin was the god of the aristocracy, while Thor was much loved by farmers and laborers, who made up the majority of these early civilizations. Both of these great Nordic gods traveled far and near in pursuit of giants, their sworn enemies. Giants, a noun used as a metaphor (a word that symbolizes meaning beyond its literal use), can mean any manner of things. A metaphorical giant can be anything that portends evil—from violence to deception. In these early days of the world, and in many cultures up to the present, individuals have sought protection from the evils, or "giants," of the world. Stories, with various characters and motifs, emerge that describe these challenges.

In many of the Native American traditions, young people embark on a rite-of-passage called a vision quest to find their totem animal and personal attributes and identity. It is believed that knowing these things will help guard them from their own weaknesses and from the evil intentions of others, including supernatural forces of evil. In metaphorical terms, we might call these fears "giants," not unlike the ancient people of the North. Wallace Black Elk, a Lakota Sioux, explained that isolation is an important part of the vision quest, and over time, personal visions and ritual responses lead the questers to higher levels of understanding. The vision quest, Black Elk tells us, is initially four days long, and the individual has to go through four stages of understanding. Even so, the process may need to be repeated many times with diligent prayer, hard work, and again, complete isolation before real understanding begins to happen (Black Elk 1990: 43).

Questions about the universe and natural phenomena began this section. Scientists have theorized and attempted to answer these questions, but there is still much that remains unknown. Hearing great thunder and feeling the earth shake under one's feet is frightening to most people, and humans from the earliest times have wanted to gain power over the great, destructive forces of nature. As we witnessed in 2004, the great Asian tsunami demonstrated that we have not achieved that control, but there are many who like to think they have. There are also many theories about whether myth or ritual came first, but inherent or present in both, at least anciently and still in some traditions of the world, is *magic*. And just what is magic? Is it weeds and toads, warts and snails, all mixed in a caldron of steaming brew and waved over with a magic wand and then used for casting spells?

Perhaps a better question to ask is: *Why* is magic? From the ancient, priestly Druids in the Celtic tradition, to the shaman, or medicine men, in tribal traditions of both the past and present, there have been powerful leaders who seemed to understand nature enough to have some control over it. Usually powerful and persuasive personalities, they perhaps knew some natural laws and used them, or it could be that they were simply skilled in deceiving their followers. Either way, magic is the practice of using spells, charms, and rituals in seeking or pretending to have power or governance over natural or supernatural forces. Basically, again, reductively, magical behavior can be divided into two huge categories. *Magic,* as a word, is a general term that applies to effective power over the natural or supernatural; *sorcery* implies spells or charms cast over people or places usually for evil or harmful purposes. Magic and sorcery appeal to humans because they suggest mysterious power over any circumstance, including death. There are stories and traditions concerning the pursuit of eternal life, or at least the pursuit of extended youth and long-lasting mortality, and many of these have become classics, such as the Greco-Roman story of Eos and Tithonus (a matter of aging because of the failure to ask a god for youth) and *Faust,* by Goethe (briefly, a story of bargaining with Satan for extra years in order to enjoy power, knowledge, and earthly pleasure).

Folkloric elements and motifs play symbolic roles in these stories and accounts of individuals who have sought to confirm their own eternal survival. In the ancient Sumerian story of *Gilgamesh,* the Oceanic tradition of Maui, the medieval traditions of the early alchemists, and the traditional stories of the Eastern European vampires, we are reminded of the extraordinary effort humans will put forth to overcome the unknown veil of death.

QUESTS FOR IMMORTALITY

The oldest known written and preserved epic in the world may be the Sumerian story of the hero Gilgamesh (Thury and Devinney 2005: 143). Seeking answers about immortality, Gilgamesh wandered through crushing darkness hoping to receive answers from the great sun god, Shamash. The 4,000-year-old narrative reveals, once again, humankind's constant quest for explanations of the human condition; it also reveals a heroic pattern that occurs over and over in stories of heroes and saviors. The hero is somehow called to adventure, crosses a threshold into the unknown, receives supernatural aid, usually meets with a goddess, suffers some kind of atonement, passes through a road of trials, and then returns to his or her people. Symbols of light and darkness, certain common artifacts, and beliefs in the lore of eternal

Gilgamesh wrestling with the Bull of Heaven.

glory once more demonstrate the driving power of constructed explanations in expressive culture. We will see in the next chapter how folklorists have identified and analyzed complex and multiepisodic stories like *Gilgamesh.*

Gilgamesh had been devastated by the death of his best friend, Enkidu, and sought comfort through knowledge. The *Gilgamesh* account in the third chapter of this text will unfold this multilayered plot, which, as is common in many lasting narratives, includes stories framed within one another. Gilgamesh eventually does learn the secret of eternal youth, but a serpent steals it from him. He then, in typical heroic mode, returns to his people where he (or his scribes) engraved the entire adventure story on a stone. Most, though not all,

of the tablets upon which the story is written in cuneiform have been found, along with some ancient but later versions, and several versions of the story have been pieced together.

Another ancient quest-for-immortality story tells about the trickster figure, Maui (Maui-tiki-tiki-a-Taranga). From New Zealand to Hawaii, many children are told of the exploits of this founding god. In epic segments, his story includes metaphorical or representational elements. He made a weapon from his grandmother's jawbone. The weapon, like words, was very powerful. Scholars wonder if the jawbone motif itself represented the power of talking. One of the things he did with the jawbone was to cripple the sun so that it would move more slowly across the sky, therefore providing humans with a longer day. It is said that he furnished the world with New Zealand by fishing it up from the bottom of the sea using the jawbone for a hook. He also made fire available to individual humans rather than their always having to get fire from a communal center, and though he quested for immortality, he lost his own life in the process of the quest (Eliot 1990: 81).

Alchemy is an early form of chemistry, and its chief purpose was twofold. First, it was a search for turning base (ordinary) metals into valuable gold, and second, it was a quest to discover the key to perpetual youth. The practice of alchemy had attached to it superstition, mysterious philosophies, and magic. One of the most legendary alchemists was Nicholas Flamel. Historical memory of Flamel has been revived by the appearance of his name in the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling. Because of the curious nature of Flamel's work and claims, there are many stories about him.

Questions remain about just what happened to him, and some people wonder if perhaps he was able to discover the secret of immortality and failed to die. He drew many strange illustrations, and in those drawings are folkloric elements related to alchemy and the occult. Triangles, crowns, angels, devils, pestles and mortars, the caduceus (winged medical symbol), and various unusual animals and human beings appear in various positions and relationships in the pictures. Curiosity got the best of some people, and so eventually his grave was opened and his coffin examined. It was empty. The stories of Nicholas Flamel and his wife, Perenelle, are complex and interesting, and they have appeared in literature and oral lore many times since the thirteenth century when they lived. In chapter 3, I will share some of their quest and mention a few other alchemists whose names you might recognize, but you may be left with more unresolved questions than answers!

Though there are many historical characters and groups who have sought the secrets of eternal life over time and in various places around the world, a particularly interesting category of these seekers are the so-called vampires. Well-known

The alchemist observing his experiment of possibilities. *The Granger Collection, New York.*

myths, legends, and folktales abound about these mysterious creatures, and those stories have been formed and reformed into televisions shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer,* vampire novels by Anne Rice, the new Elizabeth Kostova book, *The Historian,* and several films including Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and Hiroyuki Kitakubo's *Blood: The Last Vampire* (2000).

Vladimir Tepes (1431–76), a ruler in early Romania, is thought to be the source of the Dracula legend. He was a cruel person who destroyed his enemies by impaling them with wooden stakes. For that reason, he was called Vlad the Impaler. Most of the stories of vampires seem to emerge from Eastern Europe, though there are stories of vampires from the Western hemisphere as well. When examining horror stories like these, it is reasonable to ask why we humans enjoy them. Do we like to be shocked? Do we really believe such

things? Could there really be such distortions of human life that some could survive indefinitely on others' blood? In the animal world vampire bats (*Desmodus rotundus*) exist in Central and South America, but they do not attack humans. Personally I don't think human vampires exist, but the stories are gruesomely interesting and somewhat worth pondering.

RELIGIONS AND BELIEF SYSTEMS

In today's world, there are countless religions and belief systems, but the five largest of all of the world religions are Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. There are many subsets of each of these, and even combinations of beliefs (syncretism) where the religions have crossed over and adapted ideas from one another. Underlying all of the great religious systems of the world are codes of ethical behavior. In order to teach these behavioral guidelines to adherents, all the major religions use stories in a didactic (teaching) sense. Some of the greatest folklore of the world has emerged from these simple stories, parables, and proverbs invented to teach people how to get along with one another and how to make the best human beings out of themselves. Chapter 3 presents some of these stories; for now, the following brief overview of these five main religions and some of their dominant beliefs will help you further understand the stories you will read later.

Judaism

The religion of the Jews is monotheistic, meaning that central to their religion is a belief in one God. That God, they believe, created the world and led the Jews out of Egyptian bondage. The Hebrew Bible, which has one story after another, is the primary sacred text of Judaism, and the family is the basic unit of Jewish ritual. In the early Judaic tradition, storytelling for entertainment was not acceptable, and the stories told had to represent the orthodox versions approved by the leaders and written in their official scrolls. Even so, the folklore scholar Alan Dundes, reminding us that the oral tradition (folklore) preceded the written, asks: "[I]f the Bible was once folklore, why is it not still folklore? Just because it was written down does not automatically negate its original folkloristic nature" (Dundes 1999: 9). There are, even in the written text, a few examples of storytelling. For instance, in Judges 9:7–20, Jotham narrates a convincing parable to the people of Shechem describing metaphorically the horrible deeds done by their ruler, Abimelech. There are other examples of cursings, deceit, and resolution used to teach these ancient people (Deuteronomy 11:29 and Joshua 9:7).

Most of today's Jews are descended from either Central or Eastern European Jews (Ashkenazim) or Spanish and Portuguese Jews before they were expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492 (Sephardim). There are currently over 14 million Jews in the world. Primary religious branches among contemporary Jews are Orthodox Judaism, Reform Judaism, and Conservative Judaism. Orthodox Judaism seeks to preserve ancient traditions, Reform Judaism tries to interpret the religion in consideration of modern scholarship and knowledge, and Conservative Judaism attempts to modify orthodox traditions by emphasizing only positive historical elements (Goring and Whaling 1994: 270, 271). The formal Sabbath, for most Jews, continues to be from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday.

The Hasidic Jews, whose men generally wear black clothing and also distinctive earlocks of hair, live in communities throughout the world including large settlements in the United States. Each group is led by a rebbe, a Hasidic rabbi. The Hasids trace their heritage as a group to eighteenth-century Poland. Their protest at that time was that there was too much rabbinic authority and tradition, and they wanted their practice to be based on direct communication with God through prayer. Storytelling is very important to the Hasidic Jews. Jerome Mintz, a Jewish scholar, wrote:

> Storytelling won an established place in the life of the earliest hasidim and it became a part of the Shabbes ritual. . . . Rebbes often wove their teachings into an extended metaphor or parable or told an illustrative tale. . . . The telling of tales can be a mystical expression on various levels. To tell tales of the tsaddikim is one means of glorifying the tsaddikim and of contacting their piety and power. . . . In this light, the hasidim believe that tales, like prayers, contain the potential to be active agents. (Mintz 1968: 4–8)

The Hasidic Jews consider storytelling to be the best way to introduce their beliefs and practices to their children.

Traditional Jews of all divisions and sects of Judaism place great importance on the cycle of life (Steinberg 1975: 132–34). Ceremonies celebrating the stages of life from birth to death are respected and practiced. Traditional stories, folktales, legends, and proverbs are commonly used for cultural transmission and the shaping of subsequent generations, and the stories often have many levels of meaning: entertainment, human interest, social examples, and moral teaching.

Jewish humor, both from within the culture and without, is a popular form of folklore. Sometimes respectful, sometimes not, it is often told in a narrative joke style, and the Jews are often demeaned by the humor. Both males

and females in the Jewish tradition, generally speaking, are articulate, well-educated individuals. Jews have been misunderstood, consistently blamed for the death of the Christian divinity, Jesus Christ, and persecuted throughout much of recorded history. The heinous persecutions culminated in the Nazi Holocaust, which resulted in the tragic death of over six million Jews.

Islam

The worldwide religion of Islam was founded in Arabia in the seventh century by a prophet named Muhammad. Like the Jews, Muslims (or Moslems), the followers of Islam, believe in one God (Allah), and they believe that individuals, societies, and governments should all be obedient to the will of God. The will of God, according to the Islamic faith, is found in the Qur'an, which was revealed to Muhammad. There are over 700 million Muslims in the world, the majority of whom are Sunni. The Shiites are the largest minority group.

Because Islam spread into different parts of the world far from the founding center, folk Islam emerged among the adherents. Old and new beliefs merged, and a belief in spirits called jinn, invisible beings with supernatural power, entered the lore. The plural of the word is *jinn* or *jinna,* but "the singular is jinni, the origin of the story of the 'genie' in Aladdin's lamp" (Burke 1996: 247). Though mentioned in the Qur'an, stories of the jinn became exaggerated in folk Islam, and rituals for protection from these spirits became a part of daily life. Superstitious behaviors such as guarding against the evil eye, the use of amulets and charms, the chanting of protective sayings, and the practice of divination became common. Stories of the jinn describe them as formed of fire. They are shape-shifters and can present themselves as hideous giants. They are said to live on the mountains of Káf, which encircle the world.

The afterlife Paradise for Muslims is a place of beauty, peace, and the best of nature's bounties. To live the religion fully and earn the right to go to Paradise after mortal death, the five pillars of Islam are observed: sincere recitation of the Muslim creed of belief; formal prayer said five times a day; alms-giving; the duty to fast; and at least one pilgrimage during one's lifetime to Mecca, the center of Islamic worship. These elements, in addition to private prayer, are practiced throughout the world. The Muslims are an extremely diverse people, and their stories reflect syncretic (combined) traditions of their Muslim religious folkways and mores and those of the country or region where they live. Though formal worship services are held on Friday at noon, Muslims are expected to incorporate the practice of their faith at all times. Children, no matter where they live in the world, are taught the Arabic language and to memorize from the Qur'an from a very young age. The method of teaching is

Many stories of the *Jinn* describe them as formed of fire.

by oral recitation: children listen to simple verses and repeat them until they become familiar. In this way, both the language and the lessons of the Qur'an are integrated into their upbringing.

Christianity

Followers of the Christian belief system believe that Jesus Christ (1–33 C.E.) was the world Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. The core of the religion is that God is the creator of all things, including humans, and that He is good. Humans, though essentially endowed with goodness, are inclined toward pride and greed. Through the guidance of the Spirit of God and the

grace of Christ, believed by Christians to be the son of God, humans can be redeemed by making right choices if they focus their moral ethics and behaviors on the teachings of Christ. The death and subsequent resurrection of Christ provided an example for all humans, and through belief in that event, Christians believe that forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life are promised to them if they keep his commandments.

By the end of the first century, many of the instructions, parables, and stories of Christ were written, approved, and became accepted as the New Testament tradition in fulfillment of prophecies of the Old Testament. Through the testimonies of Jesus Christ's 12 Apostles and their followers, Christianity spread quickly through the Mediterranean world, and in 315 C.E., it was declared by the emperor Constantine to be the official religion of the Roman Empire. The teaching survived over time by the oral and written testimonies of monks. There are three major divisions of Christianity: Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholic, and Protestant. Within these three traditions are countless sects and interpretations. The primary sacraments practiced by the Christian churches are baptism and communion.

The parables of Christ, traditional stories of saints, individual experience narratives, and accounts of miracles have given themes and motifs to artists throughout the centuries since Christ's life. The earliest identified examples of fables or anecdotes to which Christian morals were added are the homilies of Saint Gregory the First (around 600 C.E.). Called exempla, by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Franciscan and Dominican monks had developed them into oral performances and shared them with the public in marketplaces, fairs, and other gatherings. Christianity has permeated much of the Western world's art and literature, sometime subtly and sometimes openly. Ancient Nordic stories as well as *Beowulf,* the oldest known Anglo-Saxon narrative, bear the influence of early Christian motifs.

In contemporary life, Christian storytelling takes place in both Sunday schools and parochial schools around the world. From Sunday school manuals to flannel board stories, teachers in the Christian churches continue to transmit the parables and fables found in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible to their listeners. Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox Christians use storytelling to transmit both morality and their belief systems.

Hinduism

Hinduism is actually a Western term for a belief system that developed within the ancient historical and social system of India. Thousands of years

old, it emphasizes a correct or right way of living called dharma. There is no particular founder, and there are myriad variations in gods, systems of worship, scriptures used, and festivals observed. One commonality among the many Hindu sects is the concept of transmigration or reincarnation. *Samsāra* is the term used to represent the process of birth and rebirth continuing for life after life. One's karma, or cause, determines the next life in the cycle as the next life form one finds oneself in is a consequence of one's choices in each state (Pandharipande 1996: 114).

There are rich writings related to the Hindu belief system, though none are considered as the final authority. The Vedas (1200–500 B.C.E.) are the earliest, followed by the *dharma sutra* and the *dharma shastras* (500 B.C.E.–500 C.E.), and added later were the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (which contains the *Bhagavad Gita,* one of the most influential scriptures in the Hindu belief system).

There are over 500 million Hindus, and their practices include many examples of oral, material, customary, and ritual lore. In the Hindu belief system, prose commentaries called the *Brahmanas* explain the relationship between the sacred texts (the Vedas) and the many ritual ceremonies that have been constructed to reflect the texts. Myths and stories serve to transmit the ancient messages, and throughout India, story cloths with pictures are used to tell the tales of gods, animals, warriors, various symbols, and most importantly, stories of the Mother God. The three primary Hindu gods are Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma, and obsessive devotion among the monks and priests often results in transcendent practices of spiritual over physical needs. Festivals, based on the lunar calendar, are varied regionally, but there are general patterns of festival celebrations throughout India and also wherever there are settlements of people who follow this ancient religion.

Buddhism

The teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, in India around 2,500 years ago, resulted in the Buddhist belief system. Similar to and derived from ancient Hindu traditions, the system is summarized in four noble truths, which incorporate karma, or acts and consequences, by which good or evil deeds result in rewards or punishment in this life and in the next. The Buddhist path of enlightenment winds through morality, meditation, wisdom, and the eightfold path. As is true for Hinduism, storytelling has been an important element of this belief system, and many of the tales emphasize rebirths and former lives.

The goal is called nirvana, or an absorption of self into the infinite. The eightfold path is progressive and includes a mastery of understanding,

aspiration, speech, conduct, means of livelihood, endeavor, mindfulness, and contemplation, always seeking the middle and perfectly balanced practice of these attributes. The underlying purpose of Buddhism is spiritual development and a release from human suffering.

Buddhists believe that adoption of the tenets of religion by *skillful means,* a term often used in the religion, meaning that whatever temperament or level of understanding a people might have, is acceptable. Therefore, Buddhism is a system that could be easily adapted by vastly different cultures. The popular version of Buddhism often differs greatly from the official and original teachings. Though it is impossible to give a firm number of individuals who follow Buddhism, the belief system is present and dominant in Asia, where over one billion people live.

PATHS TO UNDERSTANDING STORIES AND FOLKLORE

Over time, scholars have developed definitions and classifications to aid readers in their understanding of the vast world of expressive human culture as preserved in stories and folklore. In the next chapter, different types and uses of traditional stories and folklore will be defined. Words are used for many purposes in the human experience. They can both entertain and teach, they can uplift or curse, and they can illuminate or baffle the human mind. Understanding the many kinds of stories, their origins, and both the commonalities and differences between and among them, has been the work of many professional researchers throughout the twentieth century. The stories and lore formed of words have been made more accessible to students and their teachers by the scholars' definitions and classifications.

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231). Variations in titles, similar characters, local adaptations, oral tales without titles, and other complexities revealed that the Grimm system of numbering tales was limited only to their collection.

In the middle to late 1800s, scholars in Europe attempted to establish classification systems for both ballads and folktales. Various forms were tried, and in 1910 a Finnish scholar named Antti Aarne produced a catalog named *Verzeichnis der Märchentype.* This began a foundation for a usable classification method, and in 1928, American folklorist Stith Thompson translated and enlarged it (*The Types of the Folktale*) (Brunvand 1998: 231). Thompson revised the index and published it in 1961 as *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* The Type-Index is usually referred to as the "Aarne-Thompson" or "AT" types by scholars who use and reference it. It combined the systems that Aarne and Thompson developed. In the text *Folkloristics: An Introduction,* Robert Georges and Michael Jones state: "Folklorists use the term *tale type* to identify a group of stories configured into a set and identified in a common way because the similarities discernible in their plots are judged to be too striking and significant quantitatively [in numbers] or qualitatively [having to do with the quality] to be attributed to chance or coincidence" (1995: 24 n.6).

Stith Thompson then continued the classification work and created the *Motif-Index to Folk Literature* (1955–58), a system that classifies international narrative elements such as characters, behaviors, artifacts and objects, settings, and other details. The two systems, the type-index and the motif-index, are cross-referenced, but the first focuses on European tales, while the second is world-ranging and includes motifs or elements from narratives that would not be considered folktales (such as ballads, medieval romances, jestbooks, and other sources of motifs). University libraries have these references, and Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* is available on CD-ROM at: http://www.Indiana.edu/~librcsd/cdrom/Detailed/38.html.

The tale classifications in Thompson's 1961 revision are still used by folklorists throughout the world. There are complementary indices that utilize the Aarne-Thompson system that focus on folktales from non-European countries in Asia and the Americas. Thompson's main classification headings in *The Types of the Folk Tale* are:

I. Animal Tales (1–299)

1–99	Wild Animals
100–149	Wild Animals and Domestic Animals
150–199	Man and Wild Animals
200–219	Domestic Animals

220–249	Birds
250–274	Fish
275–299	Other Animals and Objects

II. Ordinary Folktales (300–1199)

300–749	A. Tales of Magic
300–399	Supernatural Adversaries
400–459	Supernatural or Enchanted Husband (Wife) or Other Relatives
500–559	Supernatural Tasks
560–649	Magic Objects
650–699	Supernatural Power or Knowledge
700–749	Other Tales of the Supernatural
750–849	B. Religious Tales
850–999	C. Novelle (Romantic Tales)
1000–1199	D. Tales of the Stupid Ogre

III. Jokes and Anecdotes (1200–1999)

1200–1349	Numskull Stories
1350–1439	Stories about Married Couples
1440–1524	Stories about a Woman (Girl)
1525–1574	Stories about a Man (Boy)
1575–1639	The Clever Man
1640–1674	Lucky Accidents
1675–1724	The Stupid Man
1725–1849	Jokes about Parsons and Religious Orders
1850–1874	Anecdotes about Other Groups of People
1875–1999	Tales of Lying

IV. Formula Tales (2000–2399)

2000–2199	Cumulative Tales
2200–2249	Catch Tales
2250–2299	Unfinished Tales
2300–2399	Other Formula Tales

V. Unclassified Tales (2400–2499)

2400–2499	Unclassified Tales

Because the tale-type and motif indices are somewhat complex to use and even occasionally inconsistent in their bibliographical entries, contain a myriad of languages, and often refer to texts that are out of print, more recent scholars

have created less complex guidelines for folktale research. Two of these are D. L. Ashliman, who wrote *A Guide to Folktales in the English Language: Based on the Aarne-Thompson Classification System* (1987) and Margaret Read MacDonald, who wrote: *The Storyteller's Sourcebook: A Subject, Title, and Motif Index to Folklore Collections for Children* (1982).

The Ashliman text is a useful index of story types that can be expanded and elaborated for storytelling. The MacDonald text is an excellent numerical index to juvenile story publications. MacDonald has adapted the motif-index and provides an index for set stories. Both of these books are for English-speaking scholars and lay researchers. Doug Lipman, a folklore scholar and storyteller, has provided a user-friendly Web site to guide interested researchers in the use of type-indices: http://www.storydynamics.com/Articles/Finding_and_Creating/types.html.

PROPP'S FUNCTIONS

Another perspective on folk and fairy tales useful to scholars, storytellers, and students came from the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp (1895–1970). In Propp's book, *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968: 25–65), he discussed the structural elements of folktales after analyzing 100 Russian Märchen. His discussion is from what is called Russian Formalism, and the functions he offered as ever-present in Märchen or fairy tales are categorized in scholarly terms as narratology (the study of narrative structure). In the Russian Formalist approach, sentence structures were broken down into elements that could be analyzed. In his approach to folktales, Propp identified narrative structures among them, including the characters and kinds of actions, and concluded that there were 31 generic elements or "narratemes."

He stated that these 31 consistent components or functions work together in pairs in order for the tales to be legitimate or not. He suggested that the functions must unfold in a consistent pattern or order, and that their doing so accounts for the structural stability of the tales. The examples that accompany the list below show how the functions are used as narrative elements in various tales. The 31 functions and contexts he listed are:

Initial Situation: Context

Preparatory Section of the Tale

1. Absence: Someone is missing from the family or social unit.

   Consider a story like "Cinderella." Who is missing? In that story, it is the mother who is missing. In a story like "Sleeping Beauty," who is missing? Certainly in "Sleeping Beauty," the missing person becomes the beautiful princess herself.

2. Interdiction: An instruction of restraint

Think of the instructions to Luke Skywalker in the *Star Wars* film series. In the beginning of the original trilogy, Luke learns about a damsel in distress from R2-D2. R2-D2 draws Luke into the quest, informs him of a damsel in distress, and foreshadows events to come. C-3PO also appears and is soon followed by Obi-Wan (Ben) Kenobi, who gives Luke his history, warnings, and initial instructions.

3. Violation: Violation of some instructions.

At the blessing of the baby princess in "Sleeping Beauty," the parents invited 12 good fairies to bestow the infant with good fortune. They neglected to invite

The uninvited witch pronounced a curse on Sleeping Beauty and her household.

the thirteenth fairy, who arrived and cursed the child with the threat that she would die when she pricked her finger on a spinning wheel. The parents intended to destroy all of the spinning wheels in the kingdom, but overlooked one high in a tower of their castle. The curse, softened by one of the fairies who had not yet given her blessing, was 100 years of sleep for the princess and everyone else in the castle.

4. Reconnaissance: The antihero (villain) seeks information.

In the story of the arrest of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, the antiheroes are the chief priests and elders of the people led by Judas, the betrayer. They are told that Judas will lead them to the garden and kiss Christ, thereby reveal his identity (Matthew 26). Delilah, loyal to the Philistines, sought to know the source of Samson's strength. Samson believed that his great strength was in his unshorn hair (Judges 13:24–16:30).

5. Delivery: The antihero receives information

Christ was delivered into the hands of his enemies when Judas identified him. (Matthew 26). Samson revealed to Delilah the source of his strength, and she had his head shaved as he slept. The consequence was death to Samson and the Philistines when he managed to pull loose supporting pillars of the building that housed them (Judges 13:24–16:30).

6. Trickery: Deceit by the antihero or antiheroine in order to take possession of the hero or heroine or their possessions.

In the story of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,* Kasim, the greedy brother-in-law of Ali Baba, seeks to learn the magic word (or code) to the treasure cave. He does obtain it, enters the cave, gathers treasures, but fails to remember the word in order to open the cave door to exit. Consequently, he is slain by the robbers when they return to their lair.

7. Complicity: The victim unwittingly submits to deception and helps the antihero's goal.

In the story of "Snow White," the poison apple is taken willingly but unknowingly by the victim and causes her to fall into a comalike sleep.

Inauguration of the Plot

8. Villainy: The antihero causes harm to a family member.

The harm may be theft, casting a spell, threats, bodily harm, or other examples of villainy. When the thirteenth witch casts the spell on Aurora, or Sleeping Beauty, or when Snow White falls into the coma after tasting the apple, these actions represent the villain's harmful behavior.

8a. Lack: A member of the family lacks or desires something.

In addition or alternatively to the villainy, there is something missing that needs to be supplied. This often relates to the lack of a bride, groom, or friend. In *Shrek* (both I and II), for instance, Donkey becomes a friend to Shrek, the ogre, and in spite of Shrek's resistance, the friendship satisfies many needs.

9. Mediation: A response by the hero or heroine to a call for help.

At this point, the hero or heroine is appealed to for help. The hero or heroine appears in the story, sometimes for the first time, and the situation is explained to him or her.

10. Beginning counteraction: The hero/heroine agrees to respond.

Sometimes this is not expressed in the story, but it occurs when the hero/heroine overtly responds to the challenge. When the hero is a seeker, as in "Jack and the Beanstalk," the beginning counteraction becomes visible. Jack is pursued by the giant and Jack chops down the beanstalk or ladder to the giant's mansion.

11. Departure: The hero/heroine departs.

In *Star Wars,* Luke must leave his Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru to perform his tasks. Though his aunt and uncle were benign and protective, he must overcome the obstacle of their boundaries and take the first steps of his mission as the hero. He follows R2-D2 into the Dune Sea, and it is there he realizes that he will never really return home again.

12. The first function of the donor or mentor: Testing of the hero/heroine.

In the story of Cupid (Eros) and Psyche, she (our heroine) was warned by Cupid, who loved her deeply, never to look upon him. She was hidden away in an enchanted palace, and he made his visits to her in the night. Cupid was testing the obedience and compliance of Psyche. However, at the suggestion of her jealous sisters, Psyche lit a candle one night and looked upon the handsome, sleeping god. Unfortunately, a drop of wax fell from the candle (or oil from an oil lamp) and awakened him.

13. The hero's/heroine's reaction: reaction to the mentor

In the story of Cupid (Eros) and Psyche, Cupid vanished at the moment of awakening, which left Psyche wandering about for a long time seeking aid from mortals and gods.

14. Provision or receipt of a magical agent: help

The mother of Cupid, or Eros, was the beauty Venus, who was actually jealous of Psyche. Even so, the humble, suffering Psyche appealed to Venus to help her. Psyche was given two seemingly impossible tasks. One was to sort an enormous number of seeds and grain into neat piles, by evening. Ants assisted Psyche, and

Psyche, the beautiful bride of Eros and daughter-in-law of the jealous Venus.

the work was accomplished. The second task was to gather some of Proserpine's beauty in a box or urn that Venus provided. In order to obtain it, Psyche had to descend into Hades. She accomplished the task with aid of many kinds, but was curious about the contents of the box, opened it, and immediately fell into a deep sleep because "sleep" is what the box contained (beauty sleep?). Venus took pity on the girl, and the lovers were at last reunited.

15. Guidance: The hero/heroine is transported to the necessary place.

In the wonderful story of "Cinderella," the heroine is transported to the Prince's ball in a pumpkin, which has been changed, magically, into a carriage. The Disney

studio's *Cinderella* created colorful visual animation to let viewers see the process through which animals are changed into driver, horses, and coachmen. In fairy tales, heroes and heroines are transported by magic carpets, underwater crafts, and time machines, always arriving where they need to be just in the nick of time.

Struggle with Villain and Villainy

16. Struggle: Combat between the hero/heroine and antihero.

In the story of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* the two title characters ultimately meet at Green Castle for the culmination of the headless Green Knight's challenge a year earlier. The face-to-face "battle" turns out to be one of words, rather than swords, and Sir Gawain, who has been sorely tested by the wife of Bertilak (the Green Knight), feels that he has failed. Though he did not yield to her physical temptations, he did accept a green scarf or sash from her and attempted to keep that hidden from Bertilak. The word *battle* turns out to be somewhat playful, both mocking and praising, and Gawain feels he has lost the encounter because he failed to remain open and honest about his choice of accepting the scarf.

17. Branding, marking: A wound, sign, or object used for identification.

One of the most famous uses for an identity is in the Old Testament of the Bible. Because of the surmised oral nature of many of these ancient stories, many scholars consider them to be folktales. In Genesis 4:15, Cain was punished for killing his brother. The scripture states: "And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him" (Gen. 4:15).

18. Victory: The antihero is defeated.

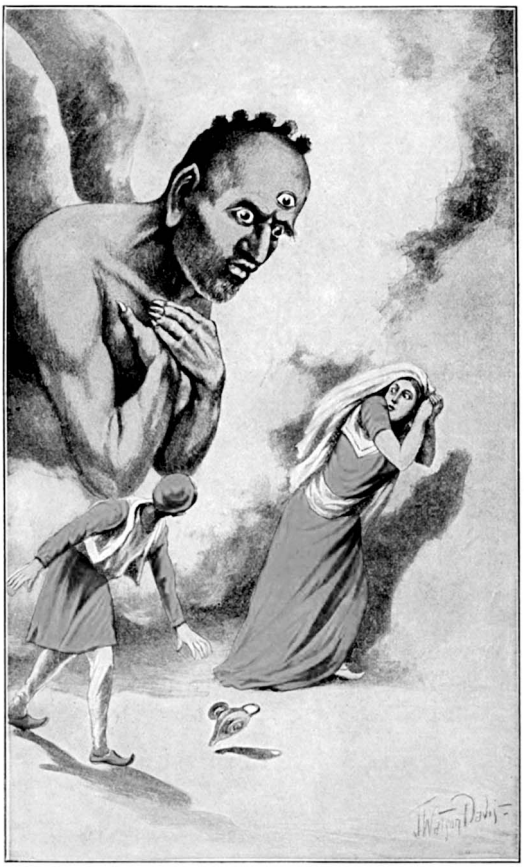
The story of Aladdin, or Ala-ed-Din, as it is sometimes spelled, has several versions. In a text called *Stories from a Thousand and One Nights,* published between 1909 and 1914, the villains, a Moorish sorcerer and his accursed brother, were both killed by the hero Aladdin. The first died by poison, and the second was stabbed to death (Eliot, Lane, and Lane-Poole: 2001, n.p.).

19. (No designator): The misfortune is eliminated.

Again, referring to Aladdin and his magic lamp, the misfortune of the lamp being in the hands of the enemy is resolved when, after murdering the villain, Aladdin recaptures the lamp.

20. Return: The hero/heroine returns to their beginning location (home).

Aladdin's bride, the princess, is transported (along with their abode) to Africa, far away from their homeland in China, by the evil sorcerer. After the sorcerer and



Aladdin, the lamp, and the peculiar but powerful Genie of the lamp.

his brother are destroyed, Aladdin and his princess (and their castle) are transported back to the city of their birth in China.

21. Pursuit/Chase: The hero/heroine is pursued and threatened.

In the story of "Little Red Riding Hood," the big, mean wolf certainly pursues the maiden. Many other stories reflect the pursuit of the good hero or heroine by an evil adversary.

22. Rescue: Rescue of the hero/heroine from pursuit.

Using the example of "Little Red Riding Hood," in most versions, the woodsman rescues both the child heroine and her grandmother from certain death by the wolf.

Glossary

Aarne-Thompson. Antti Aarne (1867–1925) collected and created the first tale-type index, which was called *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* (Index of Folktale Types). It identified and classified animal tales, ordinary folktales, and humorous tales. Later, Stith Thompson (1885–1976) twice revised and expanded Aarne's type index and added formula tales and unclassified tales, which made five generic subsets. Available to folklorists now are Aarne-Thompson indexes, which classify folktales from specific countries around the world.

Acculturation. Cultural changes that occur as a result of contact between societies. The contact may be brief or extended. This also occurs when an individual adapts to a culture that is not the one into which he or she was born.

Aesthetics. The theory of beauty and the perceived or psychological response to beauty as interpreted by individual cultures. Contemporary use of the concept applies it to all types of art. The ancient Greeks used the concept of aesthetics in reference only to material things.

Aetiological Legend. An origin tale. *See also* Etiologic Tale.

Allegory. An allegory is a story that has symbolic or hidden meaning that lies outside of the narrative. The characters, objects, and action in the story are used to teach ideas, moral principles, or other ideas. Many folk and fairy tales have symbolic meaning; for instance, "Rapunzel" is often interpreted as a story about maturation and dangers of the adult world; "Hansel and Gretel" is an allegory about good overcoming evil and the independence, cunning, and practical resourcefulness of children; "Sleeping Beauty" is a tale representing death and resurrection.

Alliteration. Repetition of the initial consonant sound. An example of alliteration in a typical and familiar nursery rhyme would be: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, how many pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick?

Anecdote. In folklore, a short, entertaining, verbal account of an event that really happened. It may be autobiographical, biographical, or historical.

Animal Tale. A short, simple folktale in which animals are the major characters. Trickster tales often feature animals.

Animism. The belief that animals, plants, and other physical matter, such as minerals and water, have souls.

Anthropology. Past and present study of human beings and their varied cultures. A social science, the focus of anthropological study varies. Some of the branches of anthropology are: cultural anthropology (study of invented cultural behaviors), physical anthropology (the study of physical characteristics of humans), archeology (study of past life by site excavation), aesthetic anthropology (the study of human perception of beauty).

Anthropomorphic. A practice of giving gods, animals, or inanimate things human shape or characteristics. Stories with talking animals or trees are anthropomorphic. The most common use of the anthropomorphic concept is in religion or belief systems, in which gods are often described as having human strengths and weaknesses. Many stories continue to be told of Zeus, the chief Greek god, who was said to have the human weakness of chasing after unwilling but beautiful women. Hermes, the Greek trickster, continues to be presented as a deceitful character ready to serve his own interests.

Antiphonal. Singing, chanting, or creating poetry in a style in which both sides are verbally performing. There is dynamic, verbal call-and-response interaction between the two sides such as in some religious services in which the congregation responds with a line of scripture to the minister's line of scripture or song.

Archetype. Carl Jung (1875–1961) was a European psychologist who theorized that human beings share a collective knowledge called the collective unconscious. Archetypes are images, symbols, and motifs that seem to have universal meaning and shared understanding among the human family because of this shared "collective unconscious." Motifs and imagery in folk and fairy tales are thought to make logical sense to people across the world because of shared and recognizable *archetypal* elements such as wands, which seem to wield power, or birds, which often represent freedom. *See also* Collective Unconscious.

Archive. A repository in which collections of fieldwork, public and private records, artifacts, and documents are stored. The collected folklore is arranged by types, informants, regions, and collectors. The collections can be retrieved and examined under controlled circumstances in order to protect the materials.

Artifact. A material object made by humans that represents the style and tradition of a culture. Common artifacts are pottery, baskets, and rugs, but there are countless other examples of artifacts from around the world.

Artistic Communication. Verbal folklore traditional and often familiar communication in small groups. It may be communication in the form of anecdotes, stories, jokes, proverbs, gossip, or many other forms of narrative exchange. It is artistic because it carries cultural meaning, and its influence in bonding participants helps them to understand and maintain their cultural milieu.

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Sobol, Joseph Daniel. *The House between Earth and Sky: Harvesting New American Folktales.* Portsmouth, NH: Teacher Ideas Press, 2005.

MULTINATIONAL COLLECTIONS

Faces: The Magazine about People. Published by Cobblestone Publishing, this magazine covers a variety of traditional and folkloric customs. See http://www.cobblestonepub.com for further information.

Jackson, Ellen. *Here Come the Brides.* Walker and Company, 1998. This is a text about various brides and bridal lore and customs around the world. For instance, in Greece, a bride throws a ripe pomegranate at a door smeared with honey. If the seeds stick to the door, people believe that the marriage will be happy and blessed with many children. Folk practices included in the book range from dying the hands with henna and wearing red on the wedding day to a bridal custom of adorning the face with white dots.

NONTRADITIONAL COLLECTIONS

Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts: A Guide to Research Practices.* New York: Routledge, 1992.

Foley, John Miles. *How to Read an Oral Poem.* Urbana: University of Chicago, 2002.

Foley, John Miles. *Teaching Oral Traditions.* New York: Modern Language Association, 1998.

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Ashliman, D. L. *Folk and Fairy Tales: A Handbook.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004.

de Vos, Gail, and Anna E. Altmann. *New Tales for Old: Folktales as Literary Fictions for Young Adults.* Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1999.

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Radin, Paul. *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology.* New York: Schocken Books, 1972.

BOOKS ABOUT REGIONAL FOLKLORE

Anderson, Janet Alm. *Bounty: A Harvest of Food Lore and Country Memories from Utah's Past.* Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing, 1990.

Barden, Thomas, ed. *Virginia Folk Legends.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991.

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Butler, Anne M., and Ona Siporin. *Uncommon Common Women: Ordinary Lives of the West.* Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996.

Hufford, Mary, Marjorie Hunt, and Steven J. Zeitlin. *The Grand Generation: Memory, Mastery, and Legacy.* Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987.

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Toelken, Barre. *The Anguish of Snails: Native American Folklore in the West.* Logan: Utah State University Press, 2003.

Zeitlan, Steve, et. al. *A Celebration of American Family Folklore.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.

BOOKS ABOUT GENDER ISSUES AND FOLKLORE

Bell, Elizabeth, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells. *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Jordan, Rosan A., and Susan J. Kalčik, eds. *Women's Folklore, Women's Culture.* Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

Warner, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blond: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996.

BOOKS ABOUT STORY AND STORYTELLING

Bauman, Richard. *Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative.* Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1986.

Lipman, Doug. *Improving Your Storytelling: Beyond the Basics for All Who Tell Stories in Work or Play.* Little Rock, AR: August House, 1999.

Mooney, Bill and David Holt, eds. *The Storyteller's Guide: Storytellers Share Advice for the Classroom, Boardroom, Showroom Podium, Pulpit, and Center Stage***.** Little Rock, AR: August House, 1996.

Stotter, Ruth. *The Golden Axe and Other Folktales of Compassion and Greed.* Oakland, CA: Stotter Press, 1998.

JOURNALS

Marvels and Tales
Parabola
Children's Folklore Review
The Lion and the Unicorn

Web Resources

INTRODUCTION

In the following presentation book titles are given in *italic type* and Web site names in **bold type.**

The Internet is a valuable center for folklore and story information, and the material on the net has improved with time. Even so, some information is not credible and some, because of copyright infringements, is not even legal. New sites and materials are added daily, and old sites often change their addresses or disappear altogether without a forwarding address. This makes an up-to-date list of working sites a dynamic process. Using the search engines as a supplement, rather than a primary research, eliminates some disappointment and frustration that comes with researching on the ever-mercurial Internet.

SEARCH ENGINES

The most effective search engine I have found is **Metacrawler** (http://www.metacrawler.com). Nearly any noun, topic, or combination of words typed into the window will result in a useful list of sites. **Metacrawler** is forgiving in that it will often search for the topic even if the initial request is slightly misspelled. Listed below are several other search engines that have proven dependable and are easily accessible:

Google (http://www.google.com)
All the Web (http://alltheweb.com)
Alta Vista (http://altavista.org)

DMOZ (http://dmoz.org)
Excite (http://www.excite.com).
Lycos (http://www.lycos.com)
Teoma (http://www.teoma.com)
Webcrawler (http://www.webcrawler.com)
WiseNut (http://www.wisenut.com)
Yahoo! (http://www.yahoo.com)

ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND GENERAL REFERENCE WORKS

General encyclopedias and reference works are excellent resources for finding helpful historical and contextual facts for storytelling. Basic information about authors, collectors, movements, and genres is also given, and story plots and short versions of popular narratives are often included.
The Columbia Encyclopedia (online):

- **Bartleby.com** (http://www.bartleby.com)
- **Encyclopedia.com** (http://www.encyclopedia.com)
- **Infoplease.com** (http://www.infoplease.com)

Microsoft's *Encarta* encyclopedia: (http://encarta.msn.com)
Encyclopedia Britannica of 1911 (online): (http://75.1911encyclopedia.org)
Dictionary of the History of Ideas (1973–74): (http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/DicHist/dict.html)

RESEARCH LIBRARIES

The following list of large European and North American libraries provides online catalogs for bibliographic information about published myth, legend, and folktale books. These listings provide sufficient information to enable the user to find or order (through outside circulation) the listed texts in a local public or university library.

COPAC (British Library and university libraries in the United Kingdom and Ireland): (http://copac.ac.uk/copac/)
Gabriel (The World Wide Web service of Europe's national libraries): (http//:www.kb.nl/gabriel/)
Library of Congress (U.S.): (http://www/loc.gov/)
Folklore Sourcebook (U.S.): (http://www.loc.gov/folklife/source/sourcebk.html)
Libweb (Internet resources from libraries in more than 115 countries): (http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Libweb/)

Melvyl (University of California Libraries): (http://melvyl.cdlib.org/)
World eBook Library (University of Pennsylvania): (http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/titles.html)

ELECTRONIC TEXT INDEXES

Many myths, legends, fables, and folktales can be found on the Internet as electronic texts. Some are free, and some are available for a fee.

Online Books (University of Pennsylvania): (http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/)
Digital Book Index (University of Pennsylvania and commercial titles): (http://digitalbookindex.com/)

DIRECTORIES OF ELECTRONIC TEXT SITES (ALL SUBJECTS)

DMOZ (directory of electronic text archives): (http://dmoz.org/Arts/Literature/Electronic_Text_Archives/)
Google (directory of electronic text archives): (http://directory.google.com/Top/Arts/Literature/Electronic_Text_Archives)
Yahoo! (directory of electronic literature (http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/Literature/Electronic_Literature/)

DIRECTORIES OF MYTH, LEGEND, FAIRY TALE, AND FOLKTALE SITES

Listed below are Web sites that have countless links to myths, legends, fairy tales and folktales from around the world.

Folklore, Myth, and Legend: (http://acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/storfolk.html)
Myths and Legends—frames: (http://home.comcast.net/~chris.s/myth.html)
Regional Folklore and Mythology: (http://www.pibburns.com/mythregi-htm)
American Folklore: (http://www.americanfolklore.net/)
Myth, Legend, Folklore, Ghosts: (http://www.teacheroz.com/myth-legend.htm)
Canadian Folklore: Myths, Legends, Folktales, Fairytales: (http://www.american-folklore.net/canada.html)
Appalachian Folktales in Children's Literature and Collections: (http://www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/FolkBib.htm)
The Serene Dragon: Sources of the Myths, Tales, Legends, and Other Stories: (http: www.theserenedragon.net/sources.html)

FOLKLORE, STORY, AND EDUCATION

American Folklore Society Folklore and Education Section Newsletter. (http://www.afsnet.org/sections/education/Spring2005)

The 2005 CARTS Culture Catalogue furnishes authentic teaching resources in folk arts, folklore, and oral history—from folktales to documenting neighborhoods, family history, to math games. (http://www.carts.org)

Florida Folklife Collection Online. Twenty years of records from Florida's Folklife Program. The site includes information, images, and links. There are over 50,000 images and 5,000 audio recordings. (http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/folklife/index.cfm)

American Folklife Center's Veteran's History Project website. (http://www.loc.gov.folklife/vets/youth-resources.html). Contact Peter Bartis: phone, 202-707-4919: e-mail, peba@loc.gov.

Louisiana Voices. Folklore lessons with background, activities, and interviewing strategies. (http://www.louisianavoices.org)

Masters of Ceremony. Master folk artists provide a window into the way several ethnic groups mark the rites of passage: birth, coming of age, marriage, and death. (http://www.ohw.org/exhibitions/moc)

"Preserve the Stories of Your Family and Community. The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide. Available to download. (http://www.folklife.si.edu./explore/resources). Contact Marjorie Hunt: phone, 202-275-2025; e-mail, marjorie@folklife.si.edu.

Rites of Passage in America. This online Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies exhibit includes essays and images. (http://www2.hsp.org/exhibits/Balch%20exhibits/rites/lifecycle.html)

FOLKLORE AND MUSIC

Richard Burgess, at the Smithsonian/Folkways, has informed the public that "The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage announces the launch of our highly anticipated web site, **Smithsonian Global Sound.** It offers downloads of music and sound from around the world. The site has a wealth of educational content and downloads are accompanied by extensive liner notes. Our goal is to encourage local musicians and traditions around the planet through international recognition, the payment of royalties, and support for regional archives. Users can browse by genre, instrument, geographical location, and cultural group and enjoy Artist Features and Radio Global Sound. Subscriptions are available for educational institutions. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our site to meet the needs of educators, students, and fans of great music." (http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org)

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings offers nearly 300 commercial recordings and over 3,000 made-to-order archival titles of American folk music, traditional world music, children's music and spoken word—all with original liner notes. The web site offers 30-second sound clips of the 40,000 tracks in the archive. (http://www.folkways.si.edu)

GENERAL STORYTELLER'S SITES

Jonesborough Storytelling Guild: (http://www.storytellersguild.org/main.htm)

Storypage: Links to Storytelling Websites: (http://www.ac.wwu.edu/~rvos/Storytelling/storytellinglinks.htm)

Story-Telling.com: (http://www.story-telling.com/References/WebSites.htm)

Navigating the Storytelling Ring: (http://www.storydynamica.com/resources/storyring.html)

Center for Digital Storytelling: (http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html)

Storytelling Resources: (http://user.icx.net/~richmond/smsa/recourselist.html)

Tim Sheppard's Storytelling Resources for Storytellers: Stories: (http://timsheppard.co.uk/story/storylinks.html)

ORGANIZATIONS AND JOURNALS

American Folklore Society: (http://afsnet.org/)

Children's Literature Association: (http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/chla/)

Folklinks: (http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folklinks.html)

Storytelling: (http://www.eldrbarry.net/roos/art.html)

Storytelling, Self, Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Storytelling Studies: (http://courses.unt.edu/efiga/SSS/ContentsNews.htm)

Marvels and Tales: (http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/MarvelsHome/Marvels_Tales.html)

The Lion and the Unicorn: (http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/)

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