

# Chapter 1

## A Brief History of Storytelling: From Primitive Dance to Digital Narration

**Recep Yılmaz**

*Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey*

**Fatih Mehmet Cığerci**

*Harran University, Turkey*

### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this chapter is to examine the history of storytelling. This brief history includes the concept of storytelling from myths to the digital era. In the first part of the chapter, the origins of storytelling in primitive communities and its development in later periods are examined. In the second part of the chapter, the development process of digital storytelling is explained. According to this, traditional storytelling has gained a new form called digital storytelling which started with a workshop in 1993 by Dana Atchley. One year later, the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) was established in Berkley, CA. The Center for Digital Storytelling has organized workshops and partnered with organizations around the world to hold projects on story facilitation, digital storytelling and other forms of digital media production and since 1993, it has helped more than 20,000 people to share their own stories. Though the digital storytelling movement started in North America, it has also spread in Europe, Australia, Asia, Africa and South America. The movement has found a place in the world of today.*

### INTRODUCTION

Telling stories is one of the basic qualities of human understanding. For this reason, it would not be wrong to search the depths of human history for the origins of storytelling. However, the forms and functions of it have undergone a fundamental transformation within different human situations. The aim of this chapter is to disclose the historical development of storytelling and to give detailed information about digital storytelling. In the first part of the study, the origins of storytelling in primitive communities and its development in later periods are examined. Emergence forms, structure, social functions of primitive storytelling forms such as art, myths and ornaments are discussed here. In the last subsection, it is tried to determine what kind of modern narrations emergences progress is made by comparing traditional

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-5357-1.ch001

storytelling with primitive forms. In the second part of the chapter, the development process of digital storytelling is explained in detail. The future of digital storytelling is discussed in the conclusion part.

## **THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF STORYTELLING**

### **Primitive Art and Its Features**

History of storytelling is as old as human history. Since human understanding is largely related to storytelling -especially in relation to the concept of 'relocation', which means being able to refer to events belonging to a different time and place than ongoing communication- it will be the right approach to look at the first narrative examples. The greatest contribution to the study of the primitive communities' understanding of the world is to present the living principles of today. Ethnographic data have a significant contribution to this issue, which has entered the subject of anthropology. Nevertheless, despite the fact that primitive peoples were got in touch in the 15th and 16th centuries, there was little interest in the subject. Even so, at that time, scientists were ridiculous in debating whether the locals were human or not. Until 1512, the Church defended the idea that these "strange creatures" were not human. The most important element that affects primitive artists was social and geographical (Haviland, 2002, p. 102, Örnek, 1995, pp. 160-162).

In the course of time, the knowledge acquired through the advancement of science fields revealed the characteristics of these communities day after day. The most striking characteristic of the art was that artistic work was a social act beyond individuality in these societies. The primitive artist who remained under the influence of the first social circle and then the geographical circle did not have aesthetic aims. The social environment drew the boundaries of the artist's social function. The artist was not able to go out of the way of the community's thinking. Primitive art was a ritual or socially oriented field, and this situation affected not only the artist but also the artist. So, the purpose of the primitive artist was the same as the purpose of society and it is hardly a matter of the artist to do art at his / her own discretion. Those who placed orders to the artist were members of the society, such as family rector, tribal chief, clergy or secret society members. That is, primitive art served institutional and social purposes before personal purposes. The primitives believed that mythic ancestors, deaths, sacred animals and plants, extraordinary powers and supernatural beings had an effect on people's lives either positively or negatively. All sorts of troubles and victories and abundance were considered to be a manifestation of the will of these persons who were superior to the ordinary people. To get along well with mythic ancestors was dependent on so many things, such as organizing ceremonies and keeping their memories alive, except for the victim and the devotions. This situation showed and reflected itself in the way of making sculptures, masks, and busts of the ancestors and blessing them. In this way, basic artistic subjects were determined. The main subjects that primitive artist works were ancestors, gods, totem animals' emblems, symbols, figures and masks. In this respect, the member had a significant contribution to the regular attendance of the material and spiritual affairs of the community. The overriding meaning that principals assigned on the artificiality was that there was no other meaning order, because there was no writing and art was the most natural expression tool and a common idol. The artist portrayed the past, legends, ancestors, mythical heroes of this ritualistic field tribe, and thus had an important function in daily and holy life. From the point where we find the most important criterion of understanding the concept of art of the principals,

12 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-brief-history-of-storytelling/207419](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-brief-history-of-storytelling/207419)

## Related Content

---

### The Importance of Being Honest: Issues of Transparency in Digital Visualization of Architectural Heritage

Stefano Brusaporci (2017). *Handbook of Research on Emerging Technologies for Architectural and Archaeological Heritage* (pp. 66-93).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-importance-of-being-honest/164363](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-importance-of-being-honest/164363)

### Communicating Architectural Heritage: CAH

Alfonso Ippolito (2017). *Handbook of Research on Emerging Technologies for Digital Preservation and Information Modeling* (pp. 1-25).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/communicating-architectural-heritage/165614](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/communicating-architectural-heritage/165614)

### Theories of Appraisal in Archives: From Hillary Jenkinson to Terry Cook's Times

Olefihle Mosweu and Lekoko Sylvester Kenosi (2018). *Handbook of Research on Heritage Management and Preservation* (pp. 24-46).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/theories-of-appraisal-in-archives/196840](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/theories-of-appraisal-in-archives/196840)

### The Fabrication of "The Cloud": Introducing Material Constraints in Complex Geometry Optimization

Stefano Converso (2018). *Handbook of Research on Form and Morphogenesis in Modern Architectural Contexts* (pp. 381-403).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-fabrication-of-the-cloud/198098](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-fabrication-of-the-cloud/198098)

### Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge in the Preservation of Collections at the Batonga Community Museum in Zimbabwe

Simbarashe Shadreck Chitima and Ishmael Ndlovu (2018). *Handbook of Research on Heritage Management and Preservation* (pp. 396-407).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/incorporating-indigenous-knowledge-in-the-preservation-of-collections-at-the-batonga-community-museum-in-zimbabwe/196858](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/incorporating-indigenous-knowledge-in-the-preservation-of-collections-at-the-batonga-community-museum-in-zimbabwe/196858)