Storytelling has long been a form of entertainment among people, but folktales do more than provide amusement. They are a tradition. Often passed along through generations, usually from elders to youth, stories provide an oral link to our past and offer insights into their narrative structure and history. The Chol Maya live today in rural areas of the Yucatan Peninsula. The stories in this volume were collected in the 1980s by Hopkins and Josserand, who were linguists working on the Chol language. Hopkins and Josserand seem to be distinguishing between the kinds of stories that would have been told by each group. Great traditions would have told stories on a larger scale, to public audiences and inspired by ideology and philosophy. Little traditions would have been a household activity, told at home by elders around the hearth fire. In this sense, Hopkins and Josserand's dichotomy between Great and Little traditions is important for understanding the scale, intent, origins, and forms that stories can take.

The authors divide their book into several sections. Chapter 1 provides some background, being an introduction to the southern Maya and the tradition of telling stories. At the start, they distinguish between what they call the Great and Little traditions of the Maya (p. 4). The Great traditions are those found at the household level. Hopkins and Josserand seem to be distinguishing between the kinds of stories that would have been told by each group. Great traditions would have told stories on a larger scale, to public audiences and inspired by ideology and philosophy. Little traditions would have been a household activity, told at home by elders around the hearth fire. In this sense, Hopkins and Josserand's dichotomy between Great and Little traditions is important for understanding the scale, intent, origins, and forms that stories can take.

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The stories are divided into three parts: Myths and Fables, Tales of the Earth Lord, and Things that Come out of the Woods. There are ten stories in all, some that seem to date back to at least the Classic period, such as certain deities and supernatural beings present in ancient art and iconography (p. 33). Chapter 3 introduces the folktales transcribed by the authors. Many of their elements have been observed in the folktales of other cultures, though Hopkins and Josserand also utilize pre-Columbian imagery with figures drawn from Classic Maya texts (p. 59-60). The Celestial Bird, for example, is a story that appears in both the Mayan and Aztec traditions. It also utilizes pre-Columbian imagery with figures drawn from Classic Maya texts (p. 59-60). The Celestial Bird is a story that appears in both the Mayan and Aztec traditions. It also utilizes pre-Columbian imagery with figures drawn from Classic Maya texts (p. 59-60).
Stories from Part 2, Tales of the Earth Lord, recount those that deal with a principle deity of the Classic Maya, Chaik Grandfather, uses Chaik to explain the origins of archaeological artifacts, such as polished axes and obsidian blade. Cave of Don Juan (p. 77-90) and A Visit It Don Juan (p. 91-112) both tell of the deity's capacity to provide resources. Both stories relate visiting caves to contact Don Juan (another name for Chaik). The act of making ritual offerings in continues to this day, now incorporated within the dominant Catholic faith.

Part 3, Things that Come Out of the Woods, relates stories about supernaturals of various forms. The Messengers records techniques and items for repelling or escaping such creatures. The Jaguar Man (p. 129-138), The Blackma stories of creatures that take human form to prey on people but are ultimately outsmarted by humans. The final chapter examines each individually in terms of the narrative structure put forth in chapter 2. It maps out their forms and poin

There is no concluding chapter to the book, which leaves the reader feeling a little as if it is incomplete. However, contemporary stories that provide insights into Chol mythology, morality, and lifeways. It is notable in its relevance to a valuable resource for linguists and folklorists. It is also strengthened by the authors’ decades of work studying Maya communities in the region. People are drawn to stories, which reflect shared cultural identity, morality, and values. S community and can teach us a lot about other groups of people. In this way, the book offers to transport the reader to hum of insects with corn hanging from the ceiling to dry.

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