

# ATTR Summer School 2019: Orality, Textuality, and Tradition

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## Speakers, Abstracts, and Readings (in order of appearance)

### **DAG MICHALSEN, University of Oslo: “Textual Identities of Constitutions”**

#### **Abstract:**

The history of modern constitution is of paramount importance for law, politics, culture and much more. Since modern constitutionalism’s beginnings in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, the idea of a modern constitution has been connected to one written document that represents the basic component in a constitution, thus the constitution concept is connected with texts. But what is a constitutional text? In order to elaborate this point of departure I underline that a constitution may connect with texts not only as connection between one specific constitution and one written document. Rather I want to discuss five possible connections between constitutions and texts that at the same time will represent a structural history of constitutions. The focus of this discussion will be the Norwegian Constitution of 1814 and its connections with texts up until today.

#### **Required reading:**

Michalsen, Dag. “The Many Textual Identities of Constitutions.” Pages 60–74 in *Writing Democracy: The Norwegian Constitution 1814–2014*. Edited by Karen Gammelgaard and Eirik Holmøyvik. New York: Berghahn Books, 2014.

#### **Suggested reading:**

Gammelgaard, Karen, and Eirik Holmøyvik, eds. *Writing Democracy: The Norwegian Constitution 1814–2014*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2014.

### **JACQUELINE VAYNTRUB, Yale University: “The Displaced Voice: Modern Questions of Orality and Ancient Problems of Speech Quotation”**

#### **Abstract:**

What distinguishes the oral from the written in ancient literary production? How can contemporary scholars examining and attempting to recover the ancient literary past reconstruct what was oral, or even make sense of such an intangible but seemingly everpresent storehouse of compositions, traditions, and literary practices? A distinction between the “oral” and the “written” seems obvious from a modern perspective—a perspective in which the orally circulated literary tradition finds a distinct social location from the published written word. This distinction, or “Great Divide” between the oral and the written has come under closer scrutiny and critique over the past several decades in contemporary scholarship. Yet the strategies for bridging this divide frequently reemphasize or re-inscribe distinct categories, whether by bridging through a muddier “spectrum” between

the oral and the written, or replacing the oral with yet a different but analogous and even more undertheorized category of “memory.” But is this distinction between an oral and a written an ancient distinction, or is it simply a modern identification of categories? Readers of Plato’s *Phaedrus* frequently cite Socrates’ character in that dialogue as seemingly elevating the oral over the written, critiquing the written text as problematically displacing the traditional, living teacher. But what if in identifying an ancient debate between the written and the oral, “text,” on the one hand, and “tradition” on the other, we have missed the point? What if what Plato’s character of Socrates was getting at was not the medium or the technology of writing, but rather, that such a position on writing reveals an ongoing, cross Mediterranean and Near Eastern debate on the authority and authenticity of quoted speech more generally? Identifying the boundaries of modern categories of the “oral” and the “written” and correlated concerns of media, I will show how these categories have obscured a distinct set of questions that were active and observable from ancient text production: What happens to the voice when it is displaced from the embodied context of the living speaker? What are the various strategies available in ancient text production, both in terms of selection of media and rhetorical presentation, to anticipate and counter concerns of diminished value or authenticity of a quoted voice? From a perspective that seeks to recover ancient concerns and distinguish these concerns from those shaped by our inherited intellectual categories and contemporary concerns, I will show how the very identification of the oral and the written is a secondary concern of media that has obscured a primary metaphysical question surrounding the fate of words when their living embodied speaker no longer speaks them.

**Required and Suggested reading:**

See the Guided Reading Outline in the document “Vayntrub the displaced voice outline and readings.pdf”

**KARL-GUNNAR JOHANSSON, University of Oslo: “At the Crossroads of Oral and Written Traditions: The Appropriation, Assimilation and Construction of Cultural Memory”**

**Abstract:**

Orality and literacy are often discussed as oppositions and dicotomic in earlier scholarship. In more recent debate, however, the dicotomy has been challenged and a more multi-facetted understanding of oral and literate traditions has been introduced; the Great Divide has been left behind. This will be one starting point of my presentation. Orality as a pure phenomenon is not available for study, I contend, rather oral traditions have been running parallel to the written material that is extant for the scholar. A second focus will be on memory and the construction of memory in societies where oral traditions as well as written are interrelated and influencing eachother. I intend to treat examples of the construction of memories as appropriation of the past in the manuscript culture, but with examples also from more recent periods to illustrate the vulnerability of oral traditions as well as cultural memories. My presentation will end with some reflections concerning the establishing of editions of historical texts and how these editions in themselves represent instances of the construction of memories and monuments, the appropriation of the past in their own time.

**Required reading:**

Johansson, Karl G. 2018. “II: 6 Text Editing.” In: Jürg Glauser, Pernille Hermann & Stephen Mitchell (eds), *Pre-Modern Nordic Memory Studies: An Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. Pp. 427–432.

**Suggested reading:**

- Assmann, Jan. 2011. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization. Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fried, Johannes. 2004. *Der Schleier der Erinnerung. Grundzüge einer historischen Memorik*. München: Beck.
- Gottskálk Jensson. 2010. "Tylensium thesauri: Den islandske kulturkapital i Gesta Danorum og Heimskringla." In: Jon Gunnar Jørgensen et al. (eds.), *Saxo og Snorre*. København: Museum Tusulanums forlag. Pp. 187–207.
- Johansson, Karl G. 2010. "Snorri, Saxo och medeltidens berättelser om kungarnas historia." In: Jon Gunnar Jørgensen et al. (eds.), *Saxo og Snorre*. København: Museum Tusulanums forlag. Pp. 131–166.

## Source Literature:

- Saga Óláfs konungs hins helga. *Den store saga om Olav den hellige*, ed. Oscar Albert Johnsen & Jón Helgason. Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift-institutt, Oslo 1941.
- Saxo Grammaticus. *Gesta Danorum. Danmarkshistorien*, ed. Karsten Friis-Jensen. Gad: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, Copenhagen 2005.
- Theodoricus. *De antiquitate regum Norwagiensium. On the Old Norwegian Kings*. Novus: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, Series B: Skrifter 169, Oslo 2018.

**TORJER OLSEN, Arctic University of Norway: "The curriculum as authoritative text: Curricular definitions and negotiations of citizenship and indigeneity"****Abstract:**

Educational systems have important roles when it comes to the making, articulation, and performance of citizenship. Thus, the curriculum, stating what schools should do, teachers teach, and students learn, is a document that potentially has the power to define and express dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. In the lecture, I will look into and discuss curricular definitions of and negotiations around indigeneity and citizenship, especially when it comes to the practical use of and discussions around the curriculum.

**Required reading:**

- Keskitalo, Pigga P.K., and Torjer A. Olsen. "Historical and political perspectives on Sámi and inclusive school systems in Norway." Pages 109–124 in *Including the North: A Comparative Study of the Policies on Inclusion and Equity in the Circumpolar North*. Edited by Mhairi Beaton et al. Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press, 2019.

**Suggested reading:**

- Gjerpe, Kajsa Kemi. "From indigenous education to indigenising mainstream education." *FLEKS - Scandinavian Journal of Intercultural Theory and practice* 5.1 (2018): 1–18.
- Olsen, Torjer. "Privilege, decentring and the challenge of being (non-)Indigenous in the study of Indigenous issues." *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 47.2 (2017): 206–15.

**MATTIAS ÅHRÉN, Arctic University of Norway: “Landscapes as documents; writing the history of oral cultures”**

**Abstract:**

As to all scholars, "truth" and "facts" are cornerstones in the social sciences. Not uncommonly though, alternative narratives compete to represent the truth, not least in law. In such competitions, a narrative told by the written word regularly triumphs over one spoken or told by nature. The written is accepted for truth and with time tells history. The unwritten narrative is dismissed as hearsay or legend, and soon gone. Is it necessary right though, to simply assume that a written word is more likely to represent the truth than one told or carved in nature, and, as a consequence, more relevant to the scientist? The lecture offers some thought on these issues.

**Required reading:**

Napoleon, Val. 2016. “Delgamuukw: A Legal Straightjacket for Oral Histories?” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 20.2 (2005): 123–155.

**ARKOTONG LONGKUMER, University of Edinburgh: “‘Writing Orality’: Stories, Methods, and Crafting Textualities”**

**Abstract:**

In this presentation I chart the process through which the crafting of texts happens. I explain how engaging in ‘textuality’ with entangled worlds – human-human; human-non-human – creates a space to explore the tension between different kinds of knowledge and the ability to translate that across different cultural contexts. Drawing very much on my own research amongst indigenous peoples in the Northeast of India, I elaborate on the processes through which stories are told, remade, and retold. At the same time, I explore the ways in which the ethnographer needs to capture these stories without losing the ‘presence’ and ‘aura’ in which they are told and the ability of the ‘telling’ to inform, inspire and expand the imagination..

**Required reading:**

Longkumer, Arkotong. 2016. “‘Lines that speak’”: The Gaidinliu notebooks as language, prophecy, and textuality’. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6 (2): 123–147.

**Suggested reading:**

Ao, Temsula. 2007. ‘Writing Orality’ in *Orality and Beyond: A North-East Indian Perspective*. Soumen Sen and Desmond L Kharmawphlang, eds. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

Basso, Keith. 1996. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Jackson, Michael. 2002. *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Museum Tusulanum Press.

Longkumer, Arkotong. 2018. ‘Spirits in a Material World: Mediation and Revitalization of Woodcarvings in a Naga Village’. *Numen* 65 (5-6): 467–498.

**MARGHERITA POTO, Arctic University of Norway: “Indigenous Law and Methodology: an eye opening experience generously funded by YoungCAS 2018”****Abstract:**

The presentation will describe the experience of a workshop funded by the YoungCas in Oslo, that brought together a diverse group of ten leading and young researchers from around the world to explore and raise awareness of critical questions in Indigenous law and methodologies. The first three days were led by Val Napoleon and Rebecca Johnson, two professors with the Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU) at the University of Victoria, as they taught the ILRU-developed methodology to revitalise Indigenous legal orders. This methodology starts from the premise that Indigenous people were and are rational beings who are governed by rational laws. However, years of State-organized discriminatory and assimilationist policies have degraded these legal orders. Now is the time to begin the hard work to rebuild Indigenous legal orders. At the heart of this approach is a deep and abiding commitment to identifying, articulating, and applying the intellectual resources from Indigenous legal orders to the work of rebuilding Indigenous citizenries and governance. This workshop includes interactive discussion on the theories, debates, and challenges in the Indigenous law, and a practical hands-on introduction to a specific approach for accessing, understanding, and applying Indigenous laws today.

The last two days saw the other eight workshop participants present on their current or past research projects related to Indigenous peoples and law. The interventions were diverse and fascinating, stretching several disciplines and continents.

**Required reading:**

Friedland, Hadley, and Val Napoleon. “Gathering the Threads: Developing a Methodology for Researching and Rebuilding Indigenous Legal Traditions.” *Lakehead Law Journal* 1:1 (2015–2016): 16–44.

**TRUDE FONNELAND, Arctic University of Norway: “Exhibitions as Authoritative Texts”****Abstract:**

In 1973, the exhibition Samekulturen (The Sámi Culture) opened its doors to the audience for the first time, and for over forty years this exhibition has served as an important arena for the dissemination of Sámi traditions and cultures to tourists, students and other visitors. Exhibitions have social and political consequences. It is Samekulturen as an authoritative text that contributes to the production of knowledge about Sami traditions and cultures that is the starting point for my discussions in the seminar. In the view of the museological and ethno-political contexts in which Samekulturen was shaped, my aim is to shed light on the exhibition as a producer of traditions and discuss the conditions for it as a space for collaborative relations and interaction.

**Required reading:**

Clifford, James. “Second Life: The Return of the Masks.” Pages 261–314 in *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013.

**Suggested reading:**

Clifford, James. "Among Histories." Pages 13–49 in *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Brenna, Brita, and Marit Anne Hauan, eds. *Kjønn på museum*. Trondheim: Museumsforlaget, 2018.