

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910953950503321
Autore	Boyd Brian <1952->
Titolo	On the origin of stories : evolution, cognition, and fiction / / Brian Boyd
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge, Mass., : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009
ISBN	9780674053595 0674053591
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 recurso en linea (555 páginas)
Classificazione	EC 2490
Disciplina	809.3 801.92
Soggetti	Fiction - History and criticism - Theory, etc Fiction - Authorship
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 457-507) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction: animal, human, art, story -- Book 1: Evolution, art, and fiction -- Part 1: Evolution and nature -- Evolution and human nature? -- Evolution, adaptation, and adapted minds -- The evolution of intelligence -- The evolution of cooperation -- Part 2: Evolution and art -- Art as adaptation? -- Art as cognitive play -- Art and attention -- From tradition to innovation -- Part 3: Evolution and fiction -- Art, narrative, fiction -- Understanding and recalling events -- Narrative: representing events -- Fiction: inventing events -- Fiction as adaptation -- Book II: From Zeus to Seuss: origins of stories -- Part 4: Phylogeny: the Odyssey -- Earning attention (1): natural patterns: character and plot -- Earning attention (s): open-ended patterns: ironies of structure -- The evolution of intelligence (1): in the here and now -- The evolution of intelligence (2): beyond the here and now -- The evolution of cooperation (1): expanding the circle -- The evolution of cooperation (2): punishment -- Part 5: Ontogeny: Horton hears a who! -- Levels of explanation: universal, local, and individual -- Levels of explanation: individuality again -- Levels of explanation: particular -- Meanings -- Conclusion: retrospect and prospects: evolution, literature, criticism.
Sommario/riassunto	A century and a half after the publication of Origin of Species, evolutionary thinking has expanded beyond the field of biology to

include virtually all human-related subjects—anthropology, archeology, psychology, economics, religion, morality, politics, culture, and art. Now a distinguished scholar offers the first comprehensive account of the evolutionary origins of art and storytelling. Brian Boyd explains why we tell stories, how our minds are shaped to understand them, and what difference an evolutionary understanding of human nature makes to stories we love. Art is a specifically human adaptation, Boyd argues. It offers tangible advantages for human survival, and it derives from play, itself an adaptation widespread among more intelligent animals. More particularly, our fondness for storytelling has sharpened social cognition, encouraged cooperation, and fostered creativity. After considering art as adaptation, Boyd examines Homer's *Odyssey* and Dr. Seuss's *Horton Hears a Who!* demonstrating how an evolutionary lens can offer new understanding and appreciation of specific works. What triggers our emotional engagement with these works? What patterns facilitate our responses? The need to hold an audience's attention, Boyd underscores, is the fundamental problem facing all storytellers. Enduring artists arrive at solutions that appeal to cognitive universals: an insight out of step with contemporary criticism, which obscures both the individual and universal. Published for the bicentenary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Origin of Species*, Boyd's study embraces a Darwinian view of human nature and art, and offers a credo for a new humanism.

---