

Emotional and meaning arcs of stories

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Principles of Complex Systems, Vols. 1, 2, & 3D
CSYS/MATH 300, 303, & 394, 2022-2023 | @pocsvox

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Outline

Stories

References

The PoCSverse
Meaning arcs
1 of 18
Stories
References

Aside: From a 2013 Believer Magazine interview with Maurice Sendak

BLVR: Did the success of *Where the Wild Things Are* ever feel like an albatross?

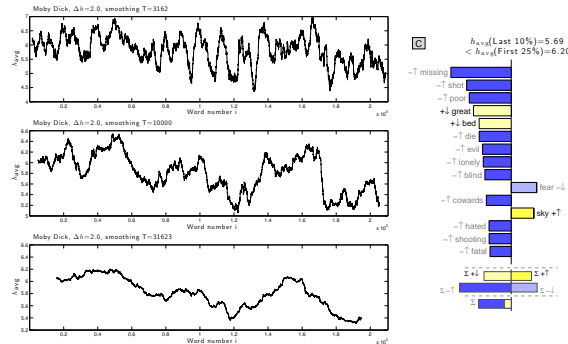
MS: It's a nice book. It's perfectly nice. I can't complain about it. I remember Herman Melville said, "When I die no one is going to mention Moby-Dick. They're all going to talk about my first book, about forking maidens in Tahiti." He was right. No mention of Moby-Dick then. Everyone wanted another Tahitian book, a beach book. But then he kept writing deeper and deeper and then came Moby-Dick and people hated it. The only ones who liked it were Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne. Moby-Dick didn't get famous until 1930.

Sendak named his dog Herman.

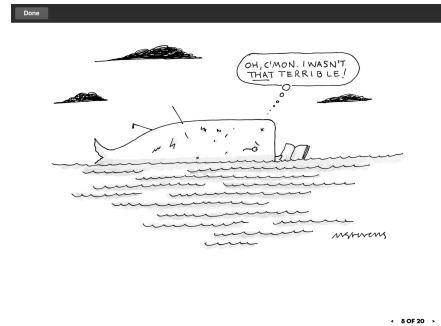
The essential (true) Colbert interview:
Pt. 1 and Pt. 2

The PoCSverse
Meaning arcs
2 of 18
Stories
References

The emotional shapes of stories—Moby Dick:



The PoCSverse
Meaning arcs
3 of 18
Stories
References



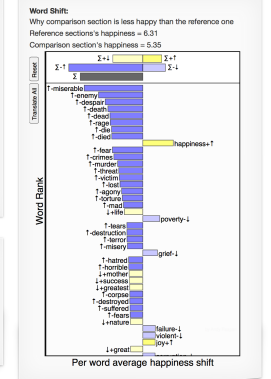
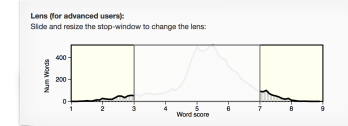
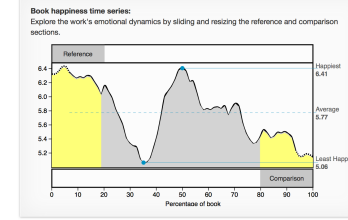
The New Yorker, December 16, 2013, p. 56.

The PoCSverse
Meaning arcs
4 of 18
Stories
References

Online, interactive Emotional Shapes of Stories for 10,000+ books:

Frankenstein; Or the Modern Prometheus

by Mary Shelley

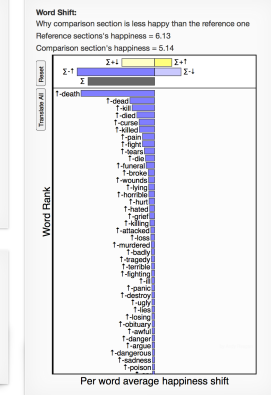
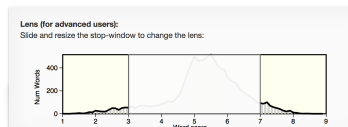
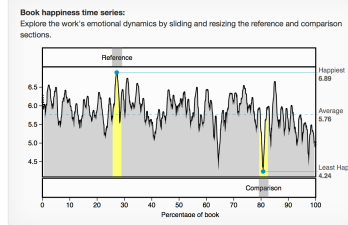


The PoCSverse
Meaning arcs
5 of 18
Stories
References

Online, interactive Emotional Shapes of Stories for 10,000+ books:

Harry Potter (all books together)

by J.K. Rowling

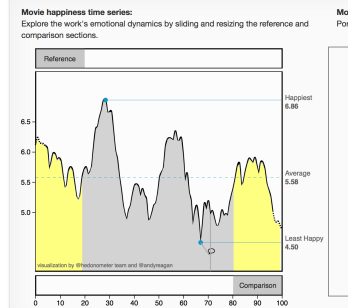


The PoCSverse
Meaning arcs
6 of 18
Stories
References

Online, interactive Emotional Shapes of Stories for 1,000+ movie scripts:

Pulp Fiction

directed by Quentin Tarantino



Movie script:
Portion of script scored for each point in timeseries.

Sam takes the chair, sits it in front of the two prisoners, then lowers into it. Heynard hands the clip to Sam, then backs away.

SAM
Down!

The clip gets on its knees.

Heynard hangs back while Sam appraises the two men.

SAM
Who's first?

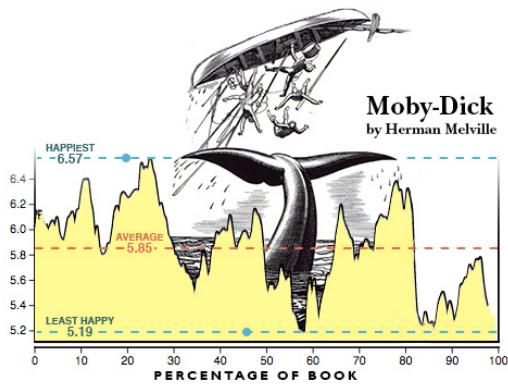
Sam's first.

Then with his little finger, Sam does a slight "twink, winky, winky, non-..." Sam's mouth touching the neck and his finger going back and forth between the two.

Butch and Marsellus are terrified.

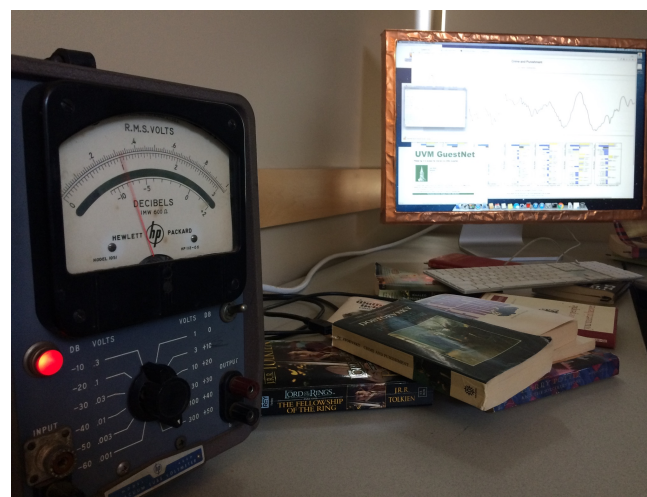
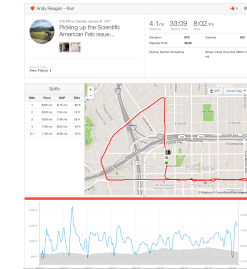
Heynard looks back and forth at the victims.

The Slice's eyes go from one to the other inside the mask.

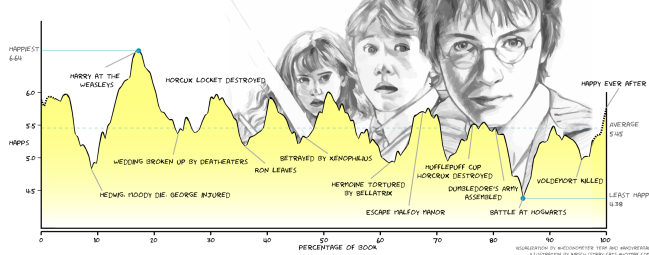


Moby-Dick illustration by Rockwell Kent, 1930

<http://whyfiles.org/2015/in-10-languages-happy-words-beat-sad-ones/>

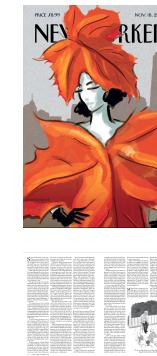
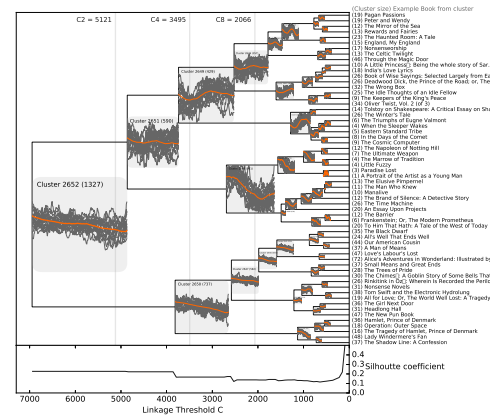


Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows
by J.K. Rowling



"The emotional arcs of stories are dominated by six basic shapes"
Reagan, Mitchell, Danforth, and Dodds.
EPJ Data Science, 5, 31, 2016. [1]

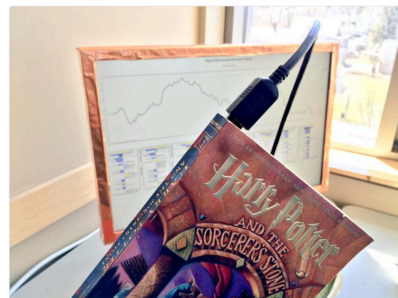
Emotional arcs for 1748 books from gutenberg.org



"So, in writing, there are six basic plots, and their sequels and derivative franchises."



USB in a book? What is this wizardry? Check it out at the Student Research Conference creative lounge. #uvmresearch



9:30 AM - 28 Apr 2016

Stories with a few ups and downs most downloaded:

Mode	Mode Arc	N _m	N _m /N	DL Median	DL Mean	DL Variance	Download Distribution
SV 1		265	15.1%	295.0	644.3	2297201	
-SV 1		442	25.3%	337.5	606.0	913464	
SV 2		230	13.2%	314.0	630.3	1058916	
-SV 2		169	9.7%	296.0	569.1	783365	
SV 3		104	6.0%	298.0	874.5	7826707	
-SV 3		108	6.2%	298.0	748.7	2517822	
SV 4		108	6.2%	316.0	848.8	2763060	
-SV 4		50	2.9%	292.0	770.7	1546202	
SV 5		48	2.7%	280.0	421.7	182443	
-SV 5		48	2.7%	263.5	462.0	211259	

FIG. 6: Download statistics for SVD Modes with more than 2.5% of books. Modes SV 3 through -SV 4 (both polarities of modes 3 and 4) exhibit a higher average number of downloads and more variance than the rest.

References I

- [1] A. J. Reagan, L. Mitchell, C. M. Danforth, and P. S. Dodds.
The emotional arcs of stories are dominated by six basic shapes.
EPJ Data Science, 5:31, 2016.
Available at <https://arxiv.org/abs/1606.06820.pdf>