Emotional and meaning arcs of stories

Last updated: 2023/08/22, 11:48:21 EDT

Principles of Complex Systems, Vols. 1, 2, & 3D
CSYS/MATH 6701, 6713, & a pretend number, 2023–2024 | @pocsvox

Prof. Peter Sheridan Dodds | @peterdodds

Computational Story Lab | Vermont Complex Systems Center
Santa Fe Institute | University of Vermont

Outline

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.

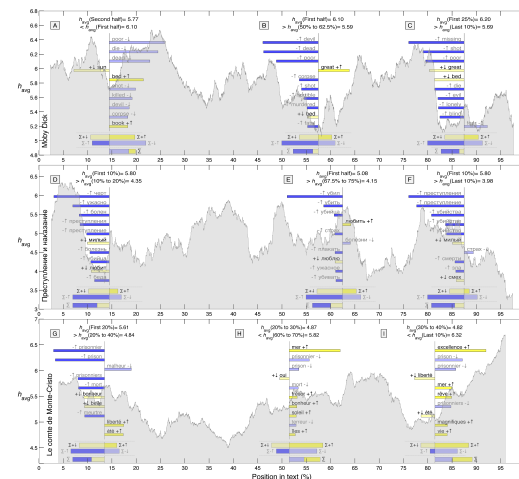🐕 The essential (true) Colbert interview: Pt. 1⎘ and Pt. 2⎘.

The emotional shapes of stories—Moby Dick:
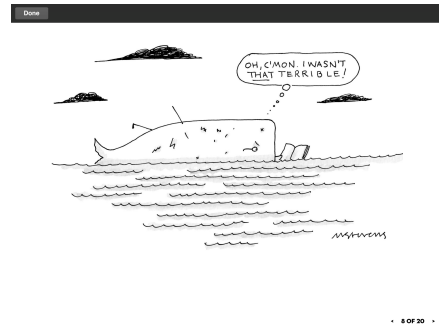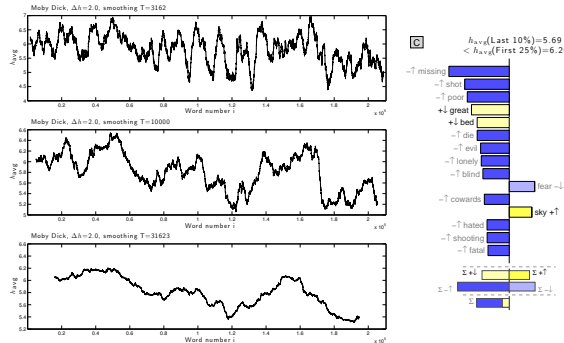
Online, interactive Emotional Shapes of Stories⎘ for 10,000+ books:

Frankenstein; Or the Modern Prometheus (wiki)
by Mary Shelley
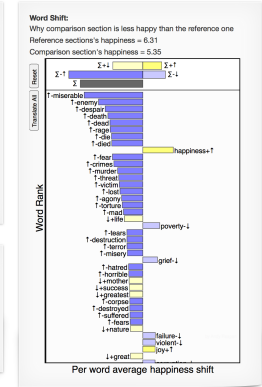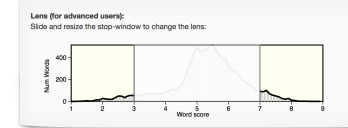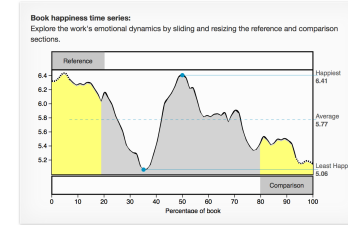
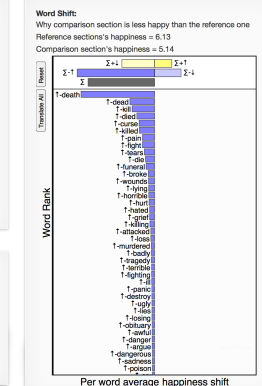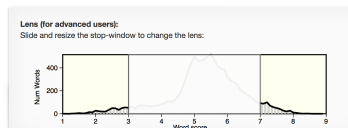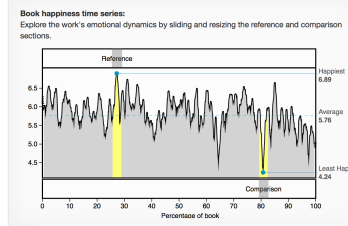## Online, interactive Emotional Shapes of Stories⎘ for 10,000+ books:
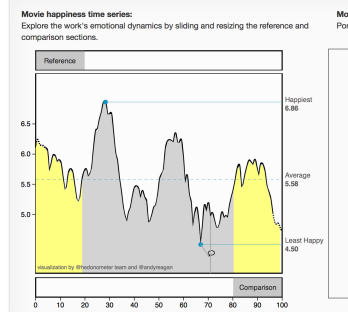
Harry Potter (all books together)
by J.K. Rowling

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

Pulp Fiction
directed by Quentin Tarantino

Moby-Dick
by Herman Melville

HAPPIEST ~6.57

AVERAGE ~5.85

LEAST HAPPY 5.19

PERCENTAGE OF BOOK
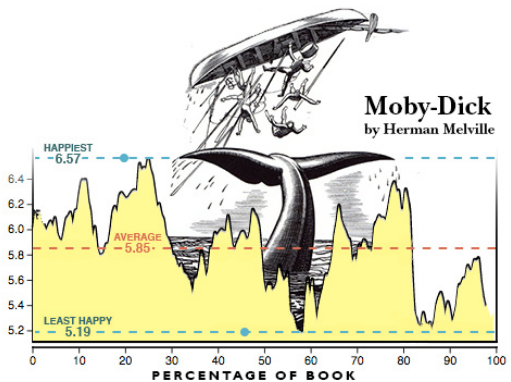
Moby-Dick illustration by Rockwell Kent, 1930

http://whyfiles.org/2015/in-10-languages-happy-words-beat-sad-ones/
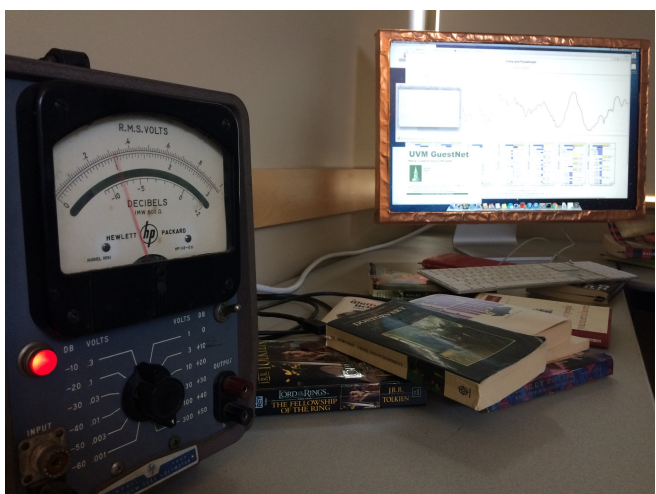
Another Great Moment in being Andy Reagan:

Emotional arcs for 1748 books from gutenberg.org
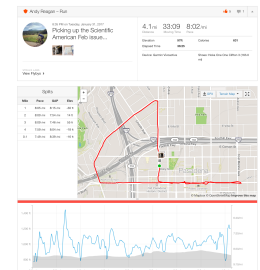
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows
by J.K. Rowling

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

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

UVM ✔
@uvmvermont

⚙ Following

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

RETWEETS 8   LIKES 14

9:30 AM - 28 Apr 2016

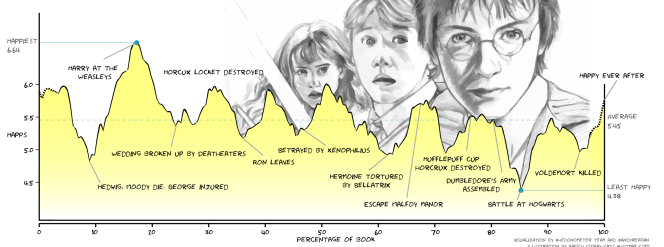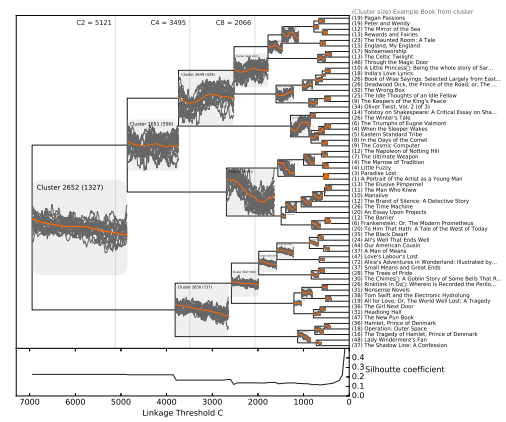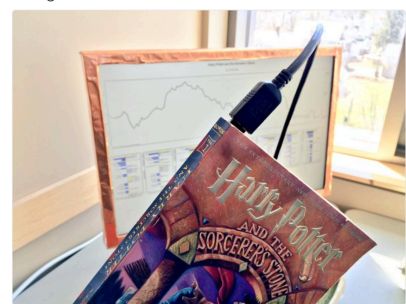## Stories with a few ups and downs most downloaded:

Mode	Mode Arc	N_m	N_m/N	DL Median ▼	DL Mean ▽	DL Variance	Download Distribution
SV 1		263	15.1%	295.0	644.3	2207201	
-SV 1		442	25.3%	337.5	636.0	913464	
SV 2		230	13.2%	314.0	630.3	1058916	
-SV 2		169	9.7%	296.0	569.1	780365	
SV 3		104	6.0%	298.0	874.5	7826797	
-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