Texts

• Different types of text (including pictures, paintings etc.)
• Discourses (Discourse and discourse)
• Narratives (Grand narrative and small narrative) – importance of plot
• Stories – narratives with relatively
A definition

Stories are “narratives with plots and characters, generating emotion in narrator and audience, through a poetic elaboration of symbolic material. This material may be a product of fantasy or experience, including an experience of earlier narratives. Story plots entail conflicts, predicaments, trials and crises which call for choices, decisions, actions and interactions, whose actual outcomes are often at odds with the characters’ intentions and purposes” (Gabriel, 2000, p. 239).
Stories and facts

Stories present events not as they happened, but as people wish to believe they happen.

In their very distortions, stories can be said to give us access to a deeper truth - the truth of how people experience events.

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Why are stories important?

• they entertain, console and warn
• they help us make sense of events
• they help us express our emotions
• they enable us to learn from the experiences of others and transfer knowledge
• they enable us to influence others
• They become an important part of our identity
Some characteristics of stories

• sacrifice of accuracy for effect
• plots
• relatively simple characters
• the skill of the storyteller
• Narrative contract between storyteller and audience
Alternative views

• David Boje – fragmented, terse, momentary, unplotted, polysemic, multi-authored; ante-narrative

• Barbara Czarniawska – plotted, a universal genre that includes theories and other type of discourse

• Stephen Denning – designed springboard stories
A few examples

• An accident at work
• A worker’s outburst
• A leader’s hospital visit
• A cook’s suicide
• An office romance
• A sacking
• A merger
Stories and organizations

- a great deal of stories are told in and about organizations;
- many of these stories are important in disseminating knowledge and enhancing organizational learning;
- we can learn a lot about an organization by listening carefully to the stories told by its members;
- stories can instigate processes of social and organizational change, for the better or for the worse; they can also block change;
- good stories can have a profound effect on audiences, building solidarity, focusing energy and unleashing creativity;
- leadership involves the management of meaning and emotions, both of which rely crucially on using stories, allegories, metaphors, labels and other narrative devices.
• Management of culture – how to use them in studying organizational culture
Stories and the management of meaning

- Let me give you an example …
- This is a similar situation to …
- Using metaphors
- Asking rhetorical questions
- Placing events in a **plot**
• What are the main types of stories, plots, characters, emotions and tropes
Types of story

• Comic
• Tragic
• Epic
• Romantic
# Generic poetic modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODE</th>
<th>Comic</th>
<th>Tragic</th>
<th>Epic</th>
<th>Romantic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protagonist</td>
<td>deserving victim, fool</td>
<td>non-deserving victim</td>
<td>hero</td>
<td>Love object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other characters</td>
<td>trickster</td>
<td>villain, supportive helper</td>
<td>rescue object, assistant, villain</td>
<td>Gift-giver, lover, injured or sick person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot focus</td>
<td>misfortune as deserved chastisement</td>
<td>undeserved misfortune, trauma</td>
<td>achievement, noble victory, success</td>
<td>Love triumphant; misfortune conquered by love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicament</td>
<td>accident, mistake, coincidence, repetition, the unexpected and unpredictable</td>
<td>crime, accident, insult, injury, loss, mistake, repetition, misrecognition</td>
<td>contest, challenge, trial, test, mission, quest, sacrifice</td>
<td>Gift, romantic fantasy, falling in love, reciprocation, recognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>misfortune</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Fixed qualities</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(pompous, arrogance, vanity etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Mirth, aggression, (hate), scorn</td>
<td>Sorrow, pity, fear, anger, pathos</td>
<td>Pride, admiration, nostalgia, (envy)</td>
<td>Love, care, kindness, generosity,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>gratitude, gratitude</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Interrogating a story

- Is it a good story? What makes it a good story?
- What is your emotional response to the story?
- Is there anything about the story that troubles/bothers you?
- If you could re-write history how would you change the story?
- What do you see as the main meaning/moral of the story?
- What does the story tell us about (a) the nature of the project, (b) the nature of the organization, (c) …
- What meaning/moral may outsiders read into the story?