Telling Stories

E.M. Foster's Literary model of narratives how the three conditions of temporality, causation and human interest interact with each other.

The king died and then the queen died of grief.

Formulaic oral narratives in different cultures provide prototypes of story telling.

Vladimir Prop's (1928) Morphology of Folktale provides a model of story telling based on a limited number of actions that can occur in a story.

He analyzed 115 Russian Fairy tales and found that the fairy tales involved permutations of 31 possible actions or functions.

1. One of the members of a family absents himself from home.

Durant and Lambrou page 97-98

Basic character types or roles identified by Propp

- Villain
- Donor/provider
- Hero(seeker or victim)
- Dispatcher
- Helper
- Princess(+father)
- False hero

Characteristics present in any story -Barthes

- A basic sequence of events
- A dialectic of enigma followed by reversal, followed by resolution/closure
- A set of connections between the story and the world outside the story
- Themes and contrast which give the story significance
- Symbolic question of identity and sexuality

Personal narratives as story telling modes

- Newspapers and magazines pay large sums of money to secure interviews from celebrities and public figures

- In such cases the more famous the narrator and the more scandalous, tragic, shocking or damaging the story, the better the story will be in terms of readership and sales.

- Survivor stories associated with major world events are prime case of this.

General properties of personal narratives

- The narrator is the protagonist
- The first person pronoun 'I' is used
- It is spoken but in media written
- The events actually happened
- Events are temporally ordered
- Past tense is used
- The present historic is also used

Functions of personal narratives

- Socialization
- Identity construction
- Display performance abilities
- Provide insights
- Resource for personal interaction

Labov and waletzky's narrative schema model

Schema or stage   Function

1. Abstract   -   signals what the story is about
2. Orientation -   provides who, what, where of the story
3. Complication action - provides the what happened? part of the story
4. Evaluation -   provides the so what? What is interesting
5. Resolution- provides what finally happened part of the story
6. Coda -   provides the end of the story in the form of moral or lesson