

INSIDE STORY

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Inside Story explores the essence of story and attempts to connect the audience to the significance of story in their own lives. The documentary examines story and determines the elements necessary for its formation. The film investigates the psychological aspects of story, inspects the physiological processing of story that connects story to the way we think and perceive, and finally, emphasizes the functions and values of story.

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CHAPTER 1
PROSPECTUS

1.1 Summary

Many people consider story a peripheral activity confined to books and movies, but story is actually a central principle of our existence. Humans continuously create narratives to interpret the world and find order. Stories help us navigate life's complex social challenges. They improve cognition, encourage cooperation, and inspire imagination. Stories have been with us as long as we have been able to communicate. Stories exist in all cultures. The fact that story is universal is an indication that instead of being generated by culture, story has a biological function. Some neuroscientists believe our brains are hardwired for story. Our propensity for story may be an evolutionary adaptation that has not only aided our survival, but also facilitated our rise to the position of the uncontested top species on this planet.

The proposed documentary project, *A Likely Story*, will explore the essence of story. The documentary will examine story and determine the elements necessary for its formation, discover the origins and history of story, delve into the psychological aspects of story, inspect the physiological processing of story that connects story to the way we think and perceive, and finally, emphasize the functions and values of story.

1.2 Project-At-A-Glance

Title: *A Likely Story*

Format: High Definition Video

Genre: Documentary

Length: ~ 40 minutes

Producer: Jim Crawford

Production Schedule: 18 weeks

Cast/Crew: TBD

Post Schedule: 16 weeks

Budget: \$5810.00

Distribution: Fest submissions

Funding Sources: TBD

Project Status: Pre-production

1.3 Concept and Approach

Most people are not aware of how much of our lives are devoted to story and how important those stories are. The documentary, *A Likely Story*, will attempt to connect the audience with the significance of story in their own lives.

The documentary will be centered on the 28th annual Texas Storytelling Festival that takes place in Denton, Texas, March 7th through 10th, 2013. It will be presented in three acts. Each act will revolve around a story told by one of the featured storytellers. In addition, a narrator will interweave within the stories some recent theories and concepts concerning *story* and attempt to illustrate how those concepts connect story to the modern human condition.

Act I will clear up the misconception that story is merely entertainment. The audience will discover the many places we encounter story, the origins and history of story, and the elements that comprise a story. Act II explains the biological and psychological foundations of story. Act III views story from an evolutionary perspective. Finally, the conclusion emphasizes the audience's own personal connection to story and the significance of story in their own lives.

Video clips, archival footage, animations, or graphics that may illustrate or amplify each particular message will accompany the narrator's commentary.

The approach will be to use several documentary modes to create a hybrid form. *A Likely Story* is primarily expository emphasizing rhetorical content toward the goal of disseminating information. Exposition will remain foremost, but other modes will be engaged. Much of the narrator's commentary will be filmed in front of a green screen so that a chroma-key technique may be used to place the narrator within the same space and time as the illustrative footage. The narrator will also be filmed at the locations of some of the illustrative footage, enabling the illusion of being without spatial and temporal boundaries. The narrator engages what may be considered a performative mode that departs from pure exposition and allows greater freedom in terms of visual abstraction and narrative. The tension between the narrator as a real person and her performance as a character in the story points toward authorship and the documentary as being constructed rather than merely observed and recorded. These characteristics are indicative of the reflexive mode, which aids the audience in understanding the process of creation so they may develop a more sophisticated, and critical

attitude toward arguments presented. Consequently, the documentary will be a hybrid, mixing both actuality and performance, and incorporating the production strategies of several different modes.

1.4 Treatment

Act 1

Adults and children gather in an area in front of a stage. Someone walks to the microphone and begins to speak. She is telling a children's story. Children in the audience are absorbed in the tale.

Cut to

A young woman (The Narrator) stands behind the audience. Beyond the woman and the audience we can see the storyteller on stage.

Narrator:

We're at the Texas Storytelling Festival. The stories we hear make a nice entertainment. But, these storytellers seem to expend a lot of time and effort just to entertain us. And, people seem to spend a lot of time on something that has no apparent value beyond entertainment. Americans spend twenty-seven billion dollars a year on books (Abbot) and ten billion dollars a year on movies (Cinefacts). Seventy percent of Americans go to the movies each year. Television reaches eighty-nine percent of American adults on a daily basis. The average American watches TV four and a half hours a day (Herr). The broadcast television industry took in forty-five billion dollars in advertising revenue in 2011 (Ad Revenue). Our love of stories is reflected in how we spend our time and our money.

Still, many people think of story as a peripheral activity; an entertainment that is isolated or disconnected from the productive, meaningful portions of their lives. Story though, is much more than an entertainment. Story is fundamental to our thought. It is a central principle of our experience. It is the predominant cognitive instrument that enables our understanding of the world.

When we look we find stories everywhere. We enjoy "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat." Two hundred nineteen million people in the U.S. watched the London Olympics. It was the most watched television event in U.S. history. Around the world two billion people

watched Usain Bolt break his own world record in the one hundred meter dash (Two Billion People). Professional sports, in this country alone, pocket \$50 billion in revenue each year (Changing The Game). Those dollars depend on sports stories; The stories of heroes and villains clashing in epic battles, stories of colorful characters contending with their own inner demons, stories of determined athletes training and struggling for years, overcoming obstacles and enduring pain to be able to compete at the highest levels. Sports stories inspire and galvanize public attention. Almost every week millions of fans follow the continuing narratives of their favorite teams. But, sport is only one element of society that depends on story.

Sermons, scriptures, prophecies, and parables are the engines that drive the religions of the world. More than two billion Christians read the Bible. Nearly that many Moslems study the Koran. Eight hundred million Hindus are familiar with the Vedas and Upanishads. Five hundred million Buddhists rely on the Pali Canon or the Mahayana Sutras. Thirteen million Jews trust in the Torah. Other peoples depend on oral traditions for their religion, ethics and values. They transmit their essential cultural information from generation to generation through stories. Religion's stories explain the world, illuminate the human condition and instill social norms and values. The billions of adherents of religion throughout the world are both informed and transformed through their encounters with stories. However, there is an even more multitudinous portion of society engaged with other types of stories.

According to economists Deirdre McCloskey and Arjo Klamer, persuasion, advertising, counseling and consulting account for twenty-five percent of U.S. gross domestic product. If story is a component of only half of those efforts, then story is worth about \$1 trillion a year to the U.S. economy (Pink 107). 3M gives its top executives storytelling lessons. NASA uses storytelling in its knowledge management initiatives. Xerox recognized that rather than read manuals, their repair personnel traded stories to learn to fix machines. They have collected those stories into a database called Eureka that *Fortune* magazine estimates is worth one hundred million dollars (Pink 108).

The previous examples run counter to the conventional wisdom that says, stories amuse, facts illuminate; Stories divert, facts reveal; Stories are for cover, facts are for real (Pink 102). Today though, minimizing story may place your career in peril. When facts become widely

and instantly available, they become less valuable. What begins to matter is the ability to place facts in context and deliver them with emotional impact (Pink 103). Aptitude for story is becoming a critical business currency.

So, stories are important for large segments of society, but stories also may go beyond those segments of society and reach every living person. We understand our lives in terms of narratives.

Cut to

Dr. Jay Allison

Dr. Allison talks about the stories of our daily lives.

Cut to

Narrator:

Story is universal. It affects everyone and is a part of every culture. It is not new. It has been around as long as modern humans and it has evolved along with our technology.

Cut to

Dr. Kelly Taylor

Dr. Taylor talks about the origins and history of story.

Cut to

Narrator:

Story has always been with us, but people explain it in different ways. Put simply though, stories are characters, who encounter trouble, and take actions, to achieve resolutions. Stories convey information in a way that engages our emotions (Story). Mark Twain said, "A story shall accomplish something and arrive somewhere (Martin)". Story leads to meaning. The 'somewhere' it arrives, is meaning. What it 'accomplishes,' is transformation; the transformation that occurs when a character overcomes fear to achieve what they desire.

Cut to

The Storyteller

The children's storyteller completes her story. The audience responds.

Act II

A new storyteller approaches the microphone and begins a parable. We listen until we know the protagonist's problem, what he fears, and what he desires.

Narrator:

The ubiquity of story is an indication that it is not simply culturally derived but may have a biological foundation. Over the last several decades that is exactly what cognitive psychologists and neurobiologists have found. To understand this we must evaluate the way our minds work in relation to the way story works.

The conception that our consciousness accurately reflects what is happening in our brain is misleading. It leads to the view that the mind calls on an orderly warehouse full of neatly filed memories and packets of information to construct meaning (Gazzaniga 1998 123). In reality no experience is represented as a set of values in a tightly bound set of neurons. There are actually a multitude of brain systems doing their work automatically, largely outside our conscious awareness. In fact, about ninety eight percent of what the brain does is outside our conscious awareness (Gazzaniga 1998 21). We don't plan those actions. We merely observe their output (Gazzaniga 1998 63).

The human brain has about one hundred billion neurons. Each, on average, connects to about one thousand other neurons. That equals about one hundred trillion synaptical connections (Gazzaniga 2008 283). The cerebral cortex is the outermost sheet of neural tissue that covers the cerebrum and cerebellum. It is the folded and wrinkly gray matter of the brain. It contains seventy five percent of the brain's connections. The cerebral cortex plays a key role in memory, attention, perceptual awareness, thought, language and consciousness (Gazzaniga 2008 17).

Mapped upon the cerebral cortex are four sets of lobes that perform specialized functions. The frontal lobes are involved in planning, organizing, problem solving, memory, impulse control, decision-making, selective attention, and controlling behaviors and emotions. On the side of the brain, the temporal lobes recognize and process sound as well as understand and produce speech. Behind the frontal and above the temporal lobes, the parietal lobes integrate sensory information, contain the primary sensory cortex that controls sensation, and

tells us where we are and how we are oriented in space. At the back of the cerebral cortex, the occipital lobes receive and process visual information and contain areas that help perceive shape and color (Brainline). Another important area is the primary motor cortex, located on the posterior portion of the frontal lobes. It is where body movements are planned and perceived (Bergen 37).

Cut to

The second storyteller. In the story the protagonist is taking action, but is faced with overwhelming obstacles.

Cut to

Narrator:

When the brain is presented with language, like the word 'dog', where does it find what the word dog actually means? First of all, 'dog' is more of an ambiguous concept than a real thing. A dog has properties like size, shape, texture and color. A real dog is not static but occupies and moves through space. It wags its tail and barks. There is no place in the brain that defines dog as a "domesticated canine". There are constellations of neurons that become active in the areas that describe size, shape, color, sound, smell and movement. It all depends on the specific dog we visualize or imagine when we hear or see the word 'dog'.

The areas of the brain that become active when we see the word 'dog' are the same areas of the brain that are active when we see, hear or smell a dog. So, symbolic representations of objects and events, like spoken or written language, are perceived the same way real objects and events are perceived, using the same synaptic pathways. There is no one point in the brain that contains the concept of 'dog'. Finding meaning is a dynamic and also personal process, because our possible definitions of dog are updated with every encounter with 'dog', and each specific definition of 'dog' depends on the context in which we find it.

The process is automatic and beyond our consciousness. Try not to think of a dog.... See, You're thinking of a dog. You can't help it. Now, try not to think of a white poodle standing on its hind legs. You can't do it. You're automatically visualizing a white poodle standing on its hind legs. Language activates the same circuits we use to perceive real objects and events. Benjamin

Bergen calls this construction of meaning through the intersection of language and our memories 'embodied simulation' (Bergen 13).

Michael Gazzaniga refers to a similar phenomenon called mirror neurons (Gazzaniga 2008 63). When we are attentively watching someone performing an activity, like riding a kayak through class IV rapids, neurons are firing in the same patterns and in the same regions as in the kayaker's brain. Our synaptic patterns and activity can closely mirror those of the characters we pay attention to. This is how, at the movies, we can climb into the hero's skin; feel what he feels, and see things from his perspective. We can experience the same thrill of riding the whitewater by just watching. We are rewarded through the imagined participation in the experience of others.

What we have learned about the brain though, raises some questions. If there are so many functional regions in our brains, all operating at the same time, why do we feel like one whole unitary person instead of a collection of sensors, processors and operators. The answer lies in what Gazzaniga calls 'The Interpreter'. It is located only in the left hemisphere in the left frontal lobe. The function of The Interpreter is to bring order out of chaos, to explain how one thing relates to another, to interpret our emotional and cognitive responses to what we encounter in the environment. The Interpreter creates hypotheses and makes predictions. It keeps a running narrative of our actions, emotions, thoughts and dreams. It keeps our story unified and creates our sense of being a coherent, rational agent (Gazzaniga 2008 301). Like Sherlock Holmes, the Interpreter is very good at syllogistic reasoning and makes many decisions based on anecdotal evidence. The interpreter is sometimes wrong. Take a look at what is called the Heider-Simmel animation (Gottschall 105) and think about what you are seeing.

Cut to

Heider-Simmel Animation:

About a minute in length. Geometric shapes move around the screen.

Cut to

People responding to what they have seen. People talk about the shapes as if they were people and the movements they saw comprised a mini-drama.

Cut to

Narrator:

As you can see, most people project human characteristics upon the geometric shapes. This is the Interpreter at work, creating a story where there really wasn't one. Another example of The Interpreter can be found in the Kuleshov effect (Gottschall 107). Watch what happens.

Cut to

A big screen and an audience. On the screen we see a picture of a man followed by a picture of a bowl of soup. The narrator asks the audience to say what the man is feeling. Several respond that he is hungry. We then see a picture of a man followed by a picture of a body in a coffin. Some of the audience members say the man is sad. Finally we see a picture of a man followed by a picture of a lovely woman. The audience says the man is lusting. The narrator then explains that the first picture in each sequence is the same, the man's expression never changed.

Cut to

Narrator:

The interpreter part of our brain sees a pattern of events and resolves it into a story. There always seems to be a private narrative taking place inside each of us. We need to believe we are in control of ourselves even though ninety eight percent of what we do is outside our conscious control. Our inner narrative consists of the effort to maintain order and fashion a coherent whole from the thousands of brain systems all working at the same time to cope with the challenges in our environment. The interpreter seeks explanations for internal and external events. It looks for causes and relationships. The interpreter never rests. It is always trying to make sense out of what is going on. If it doesn't know the real story it invents one (Gazzaniga 1998 141).

Cut to

The second storyteller. He finishes his parable.

Act III

Narrator:

We witness the events of our lives and make connections between them. We attribute the events to causes and the agents that are responsible. We see patterns of events and resolve them into stories. Our minds despise uncertainty, randomness, and coincidence. Our minds

demand meaning and order. If we can't find meaningful patterns in the world we try to impose them. Our desire for cognitive order may be the explanation for story, but how did we, as humans, get to be this way?

Cut to

Another storyteller begins a story that places selfish desires in conflict with family and community.

Cut to

Narrator:

To understand how we came to be storytellers and story consumers we should look to the fact that we are the only species we know of that tells stories. We are a unique species that occupies a very special niche. Ours is the cognitive niche (Boyd 89). We are *Homo Sapiens*. That name means we are the wise animal, the rational animal. We have taken a very unique evolutionary path to occupy the cognitive niche. So, perhaps we should look at the fact that we are the only storytelling animal in evolutionary terms.

Natural selection is the means through which evolution occurs. The central concept of natural selection is the fitness of an organism. Fitness is measured by an organism's ability to survive and reproduce, and so determines its genetic contribution to the next generation (Wilson 2012 50-56). The aphorism 'survival of the fittest' comes from this concept.

Compared to other large mammals, humans don't appear adequately equipped to survive. We are not as strong or as fast as the great predators. We have no large teeth, talons, or claws. We have little fur to keep us warm, no stripes or spots to camouflage, no wings to fly. What we have is a cerebral cortex that is more highly connected to other brain regions than any other species. This structure permits more integration of information and more control of the rest of the brain than other species, more capacity to inhibit automatic response and attend to and manipulate information in search of new responses (Boyd 47). What this big brain means is that we don't act as instinctively as other animals. Most animals, when faced with a challenge, respond as their species has always responded, quickly and instinctively. This works for them. Quick reaction, fight or flight, is a good survival strategy. But, for us humans, we can inhibit instinctive urges because we have the tools to use a different strategy. Our deliberate

attention to a problem amplifies relevant information and inhibits the irrelevant. We can process that information through a series of representations, perceptions, memories and projections (Boyd 47). Memory intersects with imagination as images and scenarios run through our mind's eye. New solutions, better solutions are achieved because we can create stories in our heads. This is how we compete with other species and with each other. Whoever creates the best story wins...survival of the fittest.

Cut to

The third storyteller. The protagonist is wrestling with the conflict between selfish desires and sacrifice for the greater good.

Cut to

Narrator:

There is another evolutionary dimension that has helped humans flourish as a species. We are social animals. It is a paradox. As a species we operate both competitively and cooperatively. Our human ancestors learned that living and working together provided survival advantages. But, cooperation is not an easy thing to achieve.

Contemporary biologists explain our evolution toward sociality with what they call *multilevel selection theory*. The key postulate of this theory is: Selfishness beats altruism in single groups, but altruistic groups beat selfish groups (Boyd 52). How can cooperation begin though, if evolution operates on only the immediate rather than future advantages? Let's remember that big, well-connected cerebral cortex humans possess; the instrument that allows us to detach from the present moment and create scenarios of what might happen in the future. Creating a scenario of the future is what facilitates one person saying to another, "I'll help you, if you'll help me later." That expectation of future reward drives cooperation. But, the benefits of cooperation face the risk of defection by the party that owes the return favor (Boyd 57). "For altruistic cooperation to be effective, a whole suite of motivations must be in place: Sympathy, so that I am inclined to help another; trust, so that I can offer help now and expect it will be repaid later; gratitude, to incline me, when I have been helped, to return the favor; Shame, to prompt me to repay when I still owe a debt; a sense of fairness, so that I can intuitively gauge an adequate share or repayment; indignation, to spur me to break off

cooperation or even inflict punishment on a cheat; and guilt, to deter me from seeking the short term advantages of cheating” (Boyd 58). People must understand and align their motivations to be able to cooperate and live socially

The process that allows humans to do this is another of their unique features. It is called Theory of Mind. Theory of Mind is the understanding that other people have beliefs, desires, and intentions of their own. We as humans have the capacity to infer the beliefs, desires and intentions of others, and a self-awareness that allows us to understand how others might infer our motives and react to our moves. People are obsessively compelled to monitor each other, read each other’s body language, and determine emotional states. Remember those mirror neurons. We know how others feel because we can literally feel what they are feeling (Boyd 46). People who lack this intuitive psychology have difficulty socially. Instead of automatically knowing that when you smile you are happy, or that a furrowed brow indicates displeasure, they have to learn and memorize what these expressions indicate. For autistic individuals who seem to lack Theory of Mind, other people can be terrifying because they do not act like objects (Gazzaniga 2008 266-267). They move and do things that are unpredictable according to their beliefs of how objects should act. So, Theory of Mind enables us to synchronize our intentions and motivations for cooperation and social living.

Cut to

The third storyteller. He finishes the story about sacrifice for the common good.

Cut to

Narrator:

Understanding and synchronizing our motivation is not enough though. Social living requires a common knowledge and a long memory. Story is the glue that holds social living together. It arises out of our intense interest in monitoring one another and out of our evolved capacity to understand one another through Theory of Mind (Boyd 382). Stories make norms explicit; they solve the problem of common knowledge (Boyd 107). Story fosters cooperation by engaging and attuning our emotions and values by enticing us to think beyond the immediate in the way our minds are most naturally disposed. Storytelling sharpens our social cognition, prompts us to reconsider human experience and spurs creativity (Boyd 384). By shifting our

perspective to that of another, story spurs empathy and encourages a moral sense. Story maximizes the advantages of the human brain so that we may remove ourselves from the here and now, imagine the world as other than it is, and see the possibilities.

Stories are not meant to provide exact literal models of situations we might encounter in everyday life. They don't have to be realistic. They are only meant to clarify our thinking about reality. Stories select information of relevance and focus our attention on what is strategically important. Stories compress time and space to compel our attention to the significant and meaningful (Boyd 193). Story increases the range of our experience and behavioral options without physical risk. Story evokes our intense engagement without requiring our belief. Knowing that story is a fundamental principle of our understanding and existence empowers us to affect and change our world through one of the most powerful tools humans have known – Stories.

1.5 Feasibility

Determining the feasibility of a documentary project requires the producer to consider all the elements necessary to accomplish the objective. Questions must be answered. Is access to locations and characters available within the time limits of the production schedule? Do the director and creative team possess the necessary skills? Are the appropriate equipment and resources available? Are funds available to pay for all costs incurred? And, beyond determining the feasibility of producing a project, a producer must consider whether the final product will be worth the time, effort, and expense of its creation. The answers to those questions concerning *A Likely Story* now follow:

1.5.1 Access

Many subject matter experts, authors of primary research documents, and acclaimed literary authors are simply not available. Fortunately the University of North Texas employs many well-informed professors willing to share their expertise with students. This documentary will utilize two professors as subject matter experts. Instead of many other subject matter experts this project will employ a narrator who will present the appropriate

information. The advantage of employing a narrator is that the information can be condensed to the most relevant constituents. Additionally, a narrator says exactly what the director wants her to say without all the tangential facts and minutiae provided during interviews with experts. And finally, this project enjoys a very long, accommodating production schedule that allows time to re-schedule portions, if necessary. So, access to characters and locations within the time limits of the production schedule is feasible.

Equipment and other resources – All necessary production, post-production equipment, and software are either owned by the producer or available to the producer through the Radio/Television/Film Department of The University of North Texas. The producer owns his own car that has enough room to transport equipment and a small crew. Some colleagues, fellow MFA candidates, have consented to perform as crewmembers for this project. Therefore, the necessary equipment and other resources are available and contribute to the feasibility of the project.

1.5.2 Cost

Transportation, incidental meals for crew, and expendables will contribute to production costs, but because all production will take place in the local area and equipment is available without cost, the total cost of production will be very low. Marketing and distribution efforts will incur more costs than production. However, marketing and distribution costs can be limited in real time and not pose a risk for the producer. Even though possible financing has yet to be determined, it is feasible for the producer to determine that the cost of the project is not out of reach.

1.5.3 Competence

The producer has spent several years acquiring the skills necessary to realize this project. He will employ the proven talents of his documentarian colleagues. The work of a graduate student composer has been appraised and the composer is now engaged to provide music for the production. Student animators are being interviewed and evaluated to work on the project. A narrator is yet to be determined, but student actors are available in the local

area. Consequently, a creative team with the appropriate skills is feasible and is currently being formed.

1.5.4 Value

The producer must determine the benefits of production balanced against the costs before deciding to proceed. The completion of the project is a necessary step toward graduation. The experience of producing a complex project carries its own inherent rewards. The final product will offer, hopefully, both educational and entertainment benefits. Therefore, the producer determines that *A Likely Story* is a project that is feasible and worthy of being achieved.

CHAPTER 2

PREPRODUCTION RESEARCH

2.1 Subject Matter Research

Subject matter research for *Inside Story* was not an orderly process. In fact, much of the process was dedicated to finding exactly what the subject matter itself was to be. There was no guiding structure to the research, only one idea leading to another. Throughout the process conceptual streams converged and diverged, each fed by tributaries of both art and science, but each stream began with Jonathan Gottschall's book, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*.

Gottschall's book describes human life as a landscape of stories with the events of our lives unfolding as narratives. He tells us that our perceptions coalesce into a narrative structure and these stories help guide us through complex social challenges. Gottschall says that storytelling evolved in humans as an adaptation to help ensure our survival, and we are therefore physically hardwired for story. Consequently, these ideas formed the foundation for further research.

It is only in looking back that I can find a thematic structure to my research. As it occurred there were only questions leading to answers unbound by categorization. But, in retrospect, four main channels of research emerge. Those channels are psychology, neuroscience, evolution, and story-as-apparatus.

In the realm of psychology my research led me to Dan P. Macadams's, *The Stories We Live By*. He tells us that we discover what is true and meaningful in our lives through the creation of personal myths. He says we are the stories we tell. Keith Oatley explains how literature works in the brains and imaginations of both readers and authors in *Such Stuff as Dreams: The Psychology of Fiction*. Lisa Zunshine discusses theory of mind and its implication in literary studies in *Why We Read Fiction*. And, *How the Mind Works*, by Steven Pinker, synthesizes explanations of our mental life from cognitive science, evolutionary biology, and other fields to explain what the mind is, how it evolved, and how it works.

Dr. Michael Gazzaniga is the pre-eminent neuroscientist who has the ability to write lucidly about the complexities of our brains. In his book, *Human: The Science Behind What*

Makes Us Unique, he focuses on the brain systems underlying language, meaning, emotion, and perception. He discusses the importance of language and art in defining the human condition. Another of his books, *The Mind's Past*, discusses how our experience is a construction of the apparatus of our brain. Gazzaniga reviews the state of current neuroscience and makes a provocative claim about a section of the brain he calls the interpreter.

At first glance, storytelling as an evolutionary adaptation in humans would seem a very limited area of study, but there is substantial contemporary inquiry into the subject. *The Social Conquest of Earth* by Edward O. Wilson explains how creative forces have biological functions, and his book *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* postulates biological principles underlying works of art. Brian Boyd's *On The Origin of Stories* is an account of the evolutionary origins of storytelling and proposes that art is a specifically human adaptation offering tangible advantages for human survival. Brian Boyd teamed with Gottschall and Joseph Carroll to edit *Evolution, Literature and Film*, which contains thirty-nine essays explaining the contribution of evolution to a study of the human mind, human behavior, culture and art. And, Mark Turner argues that the literary mind is the central tool of everyday reason in his book *The Literary Mind: The Origin of Thought and Language*.

The elements, organization, functions and processes of story comprise the channel of storytelling-as-apparatus. This is a broad area extensively covered in literary theory, television and film analysis, but a specific few books particularly aided my understanding. *Wired for Story* by Lisa Cron is a guide to using brain science to hook readers and create compelling stories. Of Course, *The Power of Myth* by Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers is the definitive account of man's search for meaning in the myths and stories of the world. Jonah Sachs in *Winning the Story Wars* says that the only tool that has ever moved minds and changed behavior is great stories. Annette Simmons says that we have been conditioned to believe that business communication should be clear, rational, objective, with no place for emotion or subjective thinking. But, in *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins* she contradicts the conventional wisdom and argues that storytelling is a critical leadership skill.

Researching story through the perspectives of psychology, neuroscience, evolution, and story-as-apparatus exposed an immense body of information. But, finding the places where the

various perspectives intersected helped reduce and clarify the subsequent propositions of the project. Those propositions are (1) Story is fundamental to our thought and underlies our perception and knowledge of the world. And, (2) Story is a human adaptation that provides evolutionary advantage. Additionally, I found that most of the other material discovered either supports, illustrates, or provides evidence leading to the two previous propositions.

2.2 People and Location Research

Finding the right people to participate in a documentary is a challenging process. For *Inside Story* I was ignored more often than I was refused, and refused more often than accepted. Even some of the successful efforts were disappointing when the material recorded did not quite fit within the objectives of the project.

I was disappointed more often in the beginning when my ambitions were loftier and I was searching for a notable storyteller to participate. I was ignored by John Irving, Cormac McCarthy, and Louise Erdrich and refused by Jonathan Gottschall and Larry McMurtry. I tried to take advantage of Professor Tomhave's family connection to Sherman Alexie, but was quickly informed that he had explicit instructions to refuse all exploiters of that relationship. It was at this point that I began to question the direction I was taking and to consider using experts in different fields.

In the field of neuroscience I found Antonio Damasio, Michael Gazzaniga, and Vilayanur S. Ramachandran all published fascinating articles that connected story to the way the brain works. One problem I faced was that they are all based in California, about a thousand miles out of the range of my budget. The other, probably more significant, problem I faced with these neuroscientists was that when they weren't busy with their research or presenting their findings to esteemed scientific organizations, they occasionally granted interviews to Charlie Rose or *NOVA*, but not to presumptuous graduate students from Texas. So, I reassessed my aspirations for the project and began to search more locally for subject area experts.

Professor Levin pointed me toward the communication studies department and Dr. Kelly Taylor. Dr. Taylor contributed a substantial interview, provided direction toward other people and research areas, and subsequently agreed to participate on my thesis committee. Dr. Taylor

also guided me to Dr. Treat whose interview contributed significantly to the project. Both Dr. Treat and Dr. Taylor told me about Ghost Stories on Denton Square and the Texas Storytelling Festival. So, the communication studies department at the University of North Texas served as one of my most fruitful research sources.

Researching other departments at UNT for subject matter experts was not as rewarding as within the Communication Studies Department. Several professors of psychology ignored me completely. A few professors in the English and literature department responded to my queries, but none were enthusiastic about participating in interviews. One particularly gruff neuroscientist at UNT told me I was wasting my time as well as his. Consequently, I expanded my search for subject matter experts beyond UNT, but still within the confines of Texas. After researching the web sites of neuroscience departments at every major university in Texas I found that Dr. Russell Poldrack's research at the University of Texas most closely coincided with the subject areas of my thesis. Fortunately, Dr. Poldrack found some time he could commit to an interview. Unfortunately though, Dr. Poldrack completely contradicted one of the primary theories I was hoping he would support. But, that is a story reserved for another section.

Psychology became the area in which I was missing a subject matter expert until I read an online article from the journal *Communication Theory* titled "Understanding Media Enjoyment: The Role of Transportation Into Narrative Worlds." One of the authors, Dr. Melanie Green, agreed to my email request to be interviewed. Because she was based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill I contracted with a local videographer to conduct the interview. The difficulty of finding a subject matter expert in the area of psychology turned out to be worth the effort. Dr. Green's wide ranging knowledge and animated, articulate expression made her an exceptionally beneficial interview subject.

The process of researching subject matter experts and trying to acquire good interview subjects never came to a definitive halt until the late stages of post-production. It was only then that I realized I was satisfied that the interview material and that it covered everything I wanted to assert. The following are short biographies of featured interviewees:

Dr. Kelly Taylor is associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies. Dr. Taylor teaches storytelling, group interpretation of literature, and performance theory. She is

the faculty sponsor for University Storytellers. Her research interests include history of theatre, family narratives, on-line communication, and chambers of rhetoric.

Dr. Shaun Treat is assistant professor of rhetoric in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of North Texas. Dr. Treat is a National Communication Association officer for psychoanalysis and communication. His research interests include rhetorical theory and criticism, political communication, cultural and media studies, psychodynamics of fantasy, free speech issues, propaganda and mediated persuasion, mythic narratives, and the constitutive rhetoric of postmodern civic identities.

Dr. Russell Poldrack is professor of psychology and neuroscience and Director of the Imaging Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin. His research interests are generally formed around questions of how new skills are acquired, how existing skills are expressed, and how people exert executive control during thought and behavior. He examines these questions using brain-imaging techniques, particularly functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). He is also interested in conceptual and methodological issues surrounding the relation between cognitive and neural processes.

Dr. Melanie Green is assistant professor of psychology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Her research focuses on the power of narrative to change beliefs, including the effects of fictional stories on real-world attitudes. Her theory of “transportation into a narrative world” focuses on immersion into story as a mechanism of narrative influence.

Andrew Garrison is an independent filmmaker based in Austin, Texas, who works in both documentary and fiction. His most recent film, *Trash Dance*, is the winner of several festival awards including Special Jury Recognition at its premiere at SXSW, and the unprecedented winner of the audience award for Best Documentary Feature at both the AFI Silverdocs Film Festival and the Full Frame Film Festival. He is an associate professor of film and media production at The University of Texas at Austin.

Karen Gossett is director of communication applications at Guyer High School in Denton, Texas. She has a passion for communication in the classroom. She has taught in middle school, high school and college. Karen received her master of arts in communication from the University of North Texas in 1985. She has received the Robert M. Estes Award for the Arts and

the Secondary Teacher of the Year Award from Texas Education Theatre Association. Karen is also a member of the Community Theatre Governing Board.

2.3 Funding

Inside Story was produced within a budget that did not require funding beyond my own personal resources.

2.4 Distribution Possibilities

Apart from the local venues for documentary, appropriate forums for submission are venues that are strictly for documentary and may accept more educational type films. The following is a list of possibilities:

DOXA Documentary Film Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, is devoted to presenting independent and innovative documentaries.

The Big Sky Documentary Festival in Missoula, Montana, celebrates the art of nonfiction film by giving voice to the powerful ideas that come forth in documentary.

Full Frame Documentary Film Festival in Durham, North Carolina, is committed to enhancing public understanding and appreciation of the art form while making films more accessible to a wider audience.

Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival in Hot Springs, Arkansas, emphasizes documentary as an art form as well as a means to promote critical thinking on real life issues.

The National Institute of Health Science in Cinema Festival is a part of the American Film Institute's Documentary Film Festival in Silver Spring, Maryland. It celebrates the power of documentary to improve our understanding of the world.

Hot Docs in Toronto, Canada, is the largest documentary festival in North America. Its mission is to advance and celebrate the art of documentary.

The Imagine Science Film Festival in New York City aims to transform the way science and scientists are portrayed in mainstream media, while emphasizing the importance of storytelling, narrative structure and visual communication.

The American Psychological Association Conference 2014 in Washington, D.C. The association seeks to attract filmmakers from outside the traditional psychological community who are creating media that artistically comments on psychological and social issues of the day.

Another strategy to place the documentary in front of viewers after a festival run is to use word-of-mouth and social network recommendations to guide viewers to my VIMEO site where the documentary may be streamed or downloaded.

Wide distribution is not an expectation for this documentary, but if the project garners enthusiastic attention and critical praise, then a broader distribution strategy will be pursued. This strategy would include seeking a relationship with Amazon or a video distribution company like *DogWoof*, which is looking to build their documentary brand globally and now handles documentaries that include *Food Inc.*, *Burma VJ*, and *Restrepo*.

2.5 Goals of Production

The primary goal of producing *A Likely Story* is to connect the audience with the significance of story. Even though many people may be aware of the ubiquitous nature of story, most people do not consider the power and influence story has on their lives. Stories can be high intensity cognitive workouts. They engage our attention and activate our minds. They prompt us to reconsider human experience, sharpen our social intelligence, and spur creativity. Attention to story may produce for the audience a wider array of behavioral options, more effective solutions to their problems, and more extensive cooperation among their communities. So, the goal of production is to exalt the value of story for the audience.

Several accompanying goals exist in conjunction with the primary goal of delivering a message. One goal of attending graduate school is to cultivate specific knowledge and skills. The experience of producing a complex project concurrently increases that knowledge and sharpens those skills. Of course, at the same time, the completion of the project fulfills requirements for earning the master of fine arts degree. Another goal is to produce a product that is technically and aesthetically suitable for acceptance to film festivals. And finally, another goal is to form and maintain relationships with creative collaborators and advisors and to increase a mutually beneficial social network.

CHAPTER 3

RECONCEPTUALIZATION BEFORE PRODUCTION

I never reconceptualized before production. I began production immediately after proposing the concept for this thesis project. Of course the project has conceptually changed, but not as a result of intentional reconceptualization or revelation or even a methodical evolution. Evolution would imply a refining, a making of finer distinctions in concept. That didn't happen. As there was no evolution there was also no revelation, no epiphany to direct me to a higher realization of concept. No, there was only the continuous stream of minor disasters requiring responses, revisions, alterations, modifications, and yes, reconceptualizations.

The stream of minor disasters began when the on-screen narrator decided her schedule had become too full to continue with the project. The search for a new on-screen narrator proved fruitless before the first shoot dates occurred. I decided to proceed without an on-screen narrator. At the time, this predicament did not seem like a calamity. But, the event was actually a harbinger of incidents yet to come.

The on-screen narrator was not the only dropout among my collaborators. I spent weeks coordinating with a student animator before he fell off the earth and I never heard from him again. I found another student animator who seemed very enthusiastic. During our phone conversations he indicated he was making fantastic progress. I set up a meeting to see his work. He never showed up and stopped answering phone or email inquiries. After researching the costs involved with commissioning professional animation companies, I decided to reconceptualize the visual aesthetic of my project. Graphics and illustrations have now replaced the idea of animations because I found a stable, responsible student illustrator whose charges don't reach beyond my budget.

My original concept called for a structure revolving around storytellers at the Texas Storytelling Festival in Denton, Texas. All the headlining storytellers agreed to be videotaped. Their stories were entertaining, but long; too long to include in the documentary. And, the stories did not relate well to the elements of story that I intended to communicate. I tried

another approach by taping one person telling ghost stories on the town square. Even though my photographer created some excellent low light images using only the ambient Christmas lights hung throughout the trees on the town square, I did not use the footage. The historical ghost stories were also too long and did not provide appropriate structure. I tried a third approach by recording a staged gunfight at The Stockyards in Fort Worth, thinking that perhaps the shootout story might illustrate essential story elements. The actors though, ruined the drama with their over-the-top acting style. So, I reconceptualized the structure of the documentary. I wrote a short script in which four scenes correspond to the four primary elements of story. The scenes act as chapter markers and illustrations and become a foundation around which informative interviews and narration may be placed. When the narrative fiction became impossible to produce because of conflicting schedules I decided to use bits and pieces of archived movie trailers to illustrate elements of story and aid with structure. Alfred Hitchcock movies are engaging, but bits of them used as illustration distract from the flow I desired. Eventually though, I found Karen Gossett, an accomplished storyteller, and Mark Twain's, *A Fable*, to create a structure and illustrate the primary elements of story.

Another difficulty that compelled reconceptualization was the issue of children. The concept to be illustrated is that children don't have to be taught or culturally instilled with story. They naturally engage in acting out stories through their play. I began with the University of North Texas Child Development Laboratory. The director said she would look over my release forms before giving them to parents and advise me on how best to write them. I made a few changes based on her advice and waited for approval. None came. The director asked me why I thought parents would approve filming of their children with the release forms written the way they were. I didn't want to argue the logic of the question with someone who already seemed irritable. So, I moved on. I reconceptualized. I made inquiries at the north branch of the Denton library about children's story time. I received positive feedback about receiving permission to film there, but I needed permissions from other people. I negotiated my way through the library bureaucracy with positive results at each step until the head librarian of Denton said absolutely not, no way. I reconceptualized again. I had seen pictures of children on Facebook posted by Mark Dobson, the radio/television/film department's media services coordinator. I

asked Mark if he would use my camcorder to videotape his children at play. As it turns out, I couldn't have asked for a better result. Mark filmed a scene that perfectly illustrates the imagination of children as they engage in story.

Thus, I reconceptualized during production rather than before. I am surprised that this will end up being nearly an eleven-month production process. But, the actual shooting days only add up to fifteen. That leaves about three hundred and fifteen days for reconceptualizing, researching, re-coordinating, and rescheduling. Considering the prolonged sequence of disruptions to accomplishing the original thesis concept, the ratio seems appropriate.

CHAPTER 4

THE INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRODUCTION

4.1 Theories, Rationales and Approaches

More than thirty thousand years ago some of our human ancestors mixed a paste of charcoal and painted animals on the walls of Chauvet Cave in southern France. The date falls in the middle of what is called the Upper Paleolithic Period. It coincides with the appearance of human behavioral modernity, characterized by a greater diversity of artifacts and the first appearance of art. The cave paintings were not discovered until 1994 and it was only in 2010 that Werner Herzog made *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, allowing a much wider audience to discover the paintings. What I like most about Herzog is his enthusiasm. He is unapologetic about his curiosity and his search for what it means to be a human. What I like most about this film occurs when Herzog says, "Silence, please. We are going to listen to the cave and perhaps we can hear our own hearts beat" (*Cave of Forgotten Dreams*). The paintings speak to us through the centuries. We can make up our own stories about what those human ancestors were thinking when they painted horses, lions, bison, and rhinos because we can understand the way they were thinking. We can connect with their desire to express themselves. We realize that this desire is universally human and maintains itself through a bridge spanning more than thirty thousand years. We hear our own hearts beat in the hearts of the painters of Chauvet Cave.

I reviewed *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* because of its connection to the ubiquity and universality of story. The element of the film that is most useful toward making my own film is understanding the determination Herzog needed to create the documentary. He was restricted to six four-hour shooting days. Herzog was only allowed a crew of three, and they all had to wear special suits and shoes that had no previous contact with the exterior of the cave. Because there were near toxic levels of radon and carbon dioxide, no one could stay in the cave for more than a few hours. No one could touch the floor or walls of the cave and they were confined to a two-foot walkway. They could only use battery-powered equipment and no lights that transmitted excess heat. So, Herzog is inspirational for those of us who must adapt, re-conceptualize and overcome.

Herzog has said that in Chauvet cave we can witness “the awakening of the modern human soul” (Topham). It is an audacious statement, that through a few paintings we may witness a moment in time, before humans were the dominant species on the planet, when the organization of human thought began to change. The paintings are representations. No other animal creates representations. The paintings also infer that their painters made causal attributions. Their thought must have included agents, obstacles, actions and results - the stuff of narrative. More than opposable thumbs, the wheel, or fire, this type of representational, narrative thinking was the engine that drove the descendants of those painters in Chauvet cave to develop language and become the dominant species on earth.

With *Inside Story* I want to emulate Herzog and make an audacious statement. The combined voices of the characters of the film say that stories are not just for children. Story is fundamental to our thought. Story is the foundation of our perception and what we know of the world. Audiences may take stories for granted, but after viewing *Inside Story* I hope they realize that understanding story may significantly elevate their understanding of the world.

I am drawn to the work of Errol Morris more than that of any other documentarian. I have studied and reviewed his works more than any other filmmaker. Most of Morris’s work is built around interviews. Most of my documentary work has been based on interviews. *Inside Story* is founded on interviews. So, it would seem that it might be useful to emulate Morris’s technique. But, in reviewing his films I find that his technique is profoundly different from the way I have chosen to build my film.

Morris invites his audience to be skeptical about what his interviewees say, to question the veracity of their answers. The graphics and archival footage he uses counterpoint rather than support the person being interviewed. There is a dialectic tension created in the editorial flow of his documentaries that impels the audience to question the subjects and think critically about their answers. Morris is very aware that people want to understand and explain the meaning of their existence; that as humans we share a desire to be connected to each other and the universe through something certain, something true. But, his subjects seem to assert strangely incongruous and odd explanations of their worlds.

Morris may interview his subjects for hours. His method is to let people talk. The reason is that eventually the real character, with all their flaws and eccentricities, will become apparent. With perhaps the exception of Stephen Hawking, hardly anyone comes out of an Errol Morris documentary unscathed.

Conversely, *Inside Story* is presented in a very straightforward manner. The interviewees are placed in surroundings in which they are at ease. Captions identify who they are. The graphics and additional footage are used to highlight and support rather than counterpoint the interview subjects. The locations, backgrounds and lighting are intended to enhance the expertise and integrity of the subjects. So, the audience is urged to trust the subjects and believe what they say.

The subjects were never interviewed for more than two hours so they would be fresh and not appear weary or frustrated. There were specific things I wanted them to say. The questions guided their responses. The interview process was intended to make the characters comfortable and enthusiastic about their subjects. Editing decisions were made to amplify their expertise rather than reveal any incongruity.

Instead of emulating my favorite documentarian, I contradicted his method. But still, there is something in his work I would like to imitate. Perhaps it is because in most of Morris's films there seems to be a philosophical message hidden below the surface. His characters synergistically increase each other's effectiveness. The whole of each film is greater than the sum of its parts. One of my goals in editing was to connect each subject to the others; to create a flow that allows each character to illuminate and amplify the assertions of the others.

Morris claims to have a pessimistic outlook on the world. He says, " I am a secular anti-humanist. There is a simple reason. Religion is nasty and so is mankind" (Morris, *The Grump*). He is a pessimist, a skeptic. Therefore his method for understanding the world and finding truth utilizes finding what is wrong. He exposes the misconceptions, fallacies, and lies we tell each other and ourselves. Morris believes we all want to be connected to the world by understanding what is true, but we deny the truth to avoid the underlying meaninglessness and chaos. Like Morris, I believe we all want to be connected; we all want to find truth and meaning

in the world. But, *Inside Story*, rather than searching for truth by exposing misconceptions and lies, strives to reveal truth through the passion and proficiency of the interview subjects.

4.2 Review of Additional Texts

This project was originally proposed as a hybrid documentary, meaning that it might incorporate the use of different modes. A hybrid documentary may use the strategies of both documentary and fictional filmmaking. A hybrid may use animations, re-creations, intentionally directed sequences, or special effects. But, because of circumstances and the necessities of time and budget *Inside Story* has evolved into an almost exclusively expository documentary. The expository mode emphasizes rhetorical content. Its goal is to inform or persuade. It is imbued with a set of implied values and a preferred meaning. That meaning is usually expressed through a narrator. I only know this and am able to distinguish the particular traits and conventions of various documentary styles because Bill Nichols pioneered the conceptual scheme of documentary modes that all documentarians are now familiar with. So, it is appropriate that I have reviewed relevant parts of his book, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*.

In the final stages of postproduction I have cut out all traces of narration. The exposition and authority is now borne exclusively by my interview subjects. They are asserting their subjective opinions. Their opinions are usually backed by research, but they are occasionally contradicted by others in their fields. Because I have edited the film to achieve specific goals it is not an objective discourse, but rather expresses my own subjective opinions. So, it is somewhat disconcerting knowing that Nichols connects the truthfulness of a documentary to its objectivity (Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries*, 95). I am comforted though, by Stella Bruzzi who says:

It is perhaps more generous and worthwhile to simply accept that a documentary can never be the real world, that the camera can never capture life as it would have unraveled had it not interfered, and the results of this collision between apparatus and subject are what constitutes a documentary – not the utopian vision of what might have transpired if only the camera had not

been there... Documentaries are inevitably the result of the intrusion of the filmmaker into the situation being filmed... they are performative because they acknowledge the [same] construction and artificiality of even the non-fiction film and propose, as the underpinning truth, the truth that emerges through the encounter between filmmakers, subjects and spectator. (Bruzzi 10-11).

So, even though *Inside story* is not a totally objective film it may still be considered truthful. And, it can be considered performative as well as expository since the storytellers 'perform' stories and the interview subjects 'perform' their roles as experts. Perhaps now I can call it a hybrid again.

For this project I learned abundantly about story and I had many things I wanted to say about story, but I found myself concerned about engaging the audience. I wanted to make it more than a mere presentation of facts. In the beginning I knew that this would be an expository documentary. I had theses, evidence, examples and logical arguments. I could be very persuasive on paper. But, translating paper arguments to moving images requires something different. It requires more than a concern for facts and truth. It requires a concern for engaging the audience and connecting their interest to the facts and truths presented.

Lisa Cron's *Wired For Story* is the source of the rationale I wanted to use to present *Inside Story*. Her work synthesizes and refines a considerable volume of other work resulting in simple, easy-to-use maxims. The delineation of those maxims often repeats the information contained in *Inside Story*.

Stories are the means through which our brains ensure we survive. "The pleasure we derive from a tale well told is nature's way of seducing us into paying attention to it" (Cron 1). "The rush of intoxication a good story triggers doesn't make us closet hedonists – it makes us willing pupils" (Cron 2). "But, there's a catch. For a story to captivate an audience, it must continually meet their hardwired expectations" (Cron 2). Understanding those expectations and knowing how to satisfy them are the basis to engaging, persuading and moving people through story.

The human species has survived because we are risk takers, but to stay safe we avoid change and risk as much as possible. "Story is about change, which results only from

unavoidable conflict” (Cron 124). It is the potential for conflict that gives urgency to everything that happens. How we handle conflict, the “battle between fear and desire” (Cron 126) is what story is all about. There is no real conflict in *Inside Story*, but I wanted to create conflict by using the device of a narrative fiction. The conflict would serve as example, but also instill the audience’s desire to see what happens next. After several attempts at finding or creating a narrative fiction, I finally found a storyteller and a tale that fit within the context of *Inside Story*. Karen Gossett’s storytelling style and Mark Twain’s writing skill combine to create the desire within the audience to find out what happens next. Hopefully there are also other aspects of *Inside Story* to keep the audience engaged.

One of our brain’s primary functions is to make causal connections – *If this, then that*. “A story follows a cause and effect trajectory from start to finish” (Cron 144). One thing I’ve tried to do with *Inside Story* is make causal connections, to show how one thing leads to another. The sequencing of interview responses takes advantage of those connections. The images are intended to connect to what the voices are saying. The aim is for the audience to not only understand the intended connections, but to make connections from the material they are viewing to their own experience, their own memories, and integrate the two.

The human brain abhors randomness. “It’s always converting raw data into meaningful patterns, the better to anticipate what might happen next. [Audiences] are always on the lookout for patterns. To the audience, everything is either a set-up, a payoff, or the road in between” (Cron 185). Set-ups invite us to figure out what might happen next. “When we identify a set-up we feel smart. They make us feel involved and purposeful, like we are a part of something” (Cron 188). Karen Gossett, the storyteller, sets the audience up; not only for the next part of the story, but also for all the information that comes between. The payoff is in the interviews when the audience may come to understand the significance of story. Additionally, the interview portion is structured around the four primary elements of story. The pattern is to introduce the element set-up with a corresponding part of Mark Twain’s, *A Fable*, and then pay off with the interview material that explains why the element is important.

“The brain summons past memories to evaluate what’s happening in the moment in order to make sense of it” (Cron 200). “Memories are not just for reminiscing. Memories are for

navigating the now” (Cron 201). Provoking the audience’s memory can connect them to the present of a story. *Inside Story* attempts to provoke the memories of the audience with example stories. The memory sets expectations and creates anticipation, the desire to see what comes next. That memory foreshadows and characterizes what is to follow.

The preceding rationales summarize the approach and some of the theory I have tried to integrate in producing *Inside Story*. The rationales are based on the ways the human mind works and how that knowledge can be used to engage, persuade, and move people through stories.

CHAPTER 5
PRODUCTION

5.1 Overview

The production process took eleven months even though shooting only comprised fifteen days of the total time. Unlike the graphic below that illustrates the original schedule, each production task did not constitute a smooth continuous flow bounded within a specific time frame. Each task started and stopped and restarted depending on a variety of factors. The availability of subjects and crew resulted in extended periods of inactivity. Reviewing previously recorded material and finding it ineffective generated modifications to existing aesthetic concepts and a restart of that specific production task. Other academic obligations and the demands of everyday life also affected the production process. But overall, the process yielded gratifying results.

5.2 Schedule

The proposed production schedule ran from December 2012 until the middle of April 2013. In practice shooting was not completed until October 2013. Though actual production ran for almost eleven months, shooting time only comprised fifteen days. Of course, post-production overlapped production time and most of the eleven months of production time was spent waiting for people to become available. The following illustrates the original production schedule:

Production Task	NOV				DEC				JAN				FEB				MAR				APR			
	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22
Interviews																								
Storytelling Festival																								
Other Images																								
Narrator																								
Animation and Graphics																								

5.3 Creative Team

Hanny Lee is the Director of Photography. After moving from Taiwan to the U.S, Hanny pursued her passion for cinematography and documentary film. Her films have received awards and been screened at festivals including the Broadcast Education Association, Texas Black Film Festival, Dallas International Film Festival, Thin Line Film Festival, Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival and Mammoth Film Festival. As a graduate student at the University of North Texas she developed several projects dealing with various social issues. Her recent project, *Kicking All Odds*, features players on the National Palestine Women's Soccer Team.

Sara Masetti assisted with some sound recording and lighting. Sara was born and raised in Italy. She graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in Documentary Production and Studies at the University of North Texas in 2013. Her films have screened at several venues including the United Nations Association Film Festival, New Filmmakers New York, the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, and the Texas Theater. Sara previously worked as a producer and director in Austin, Texas, but now works in New York. Her own films explore themes of Latino, Muslim, and LGBT identity and the celebration of the human family.

Zoe Brinkley is the Illustrator. Zoe is a twenty-one year old illustrator and graphic designer based in Denton, TX. She is attending the University of North Texas. She is a double major in Communication Design and Anthropology and has plans to graduate in the spring of 2015. She has been recognized as having one of the top portfolios in her class.

Mark Lambert is the Narrator. Mark is the only full-time staff member of the University of North Texas 100,000 watt radio station, KNTU-FM, where he has been helping students learn about broadcasting since February 2000. With nearly three decades of experience, Lambert has worked in newspapers as a writer and a photographer; in radio as a DJ, production director, news writer, newscaster, and news director; in network radio as correspondent, editor, producer, writer, and anchorman; in cable TV as news gatherer, writer, and editor; and as a voice-over talent for projects sponsored by GM, Chrysler, the U.S. Army, Jiffy Lube, and law enforcement. He has won two New York Radio and Television Gold Medals and a Dallas Advertising League Gold TOP Award.

Jim Crawford is the Producer/Director. Jim is a retired Air Force Master Sergeant and

ten-year veteran of the telecommunication services industry. He graduated with academic honors earning a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 2010. He is currently a graduate student in the Department of Radio/Television/Film at the University of North Texas.

5.4 Equipment

A wide variety of both school owned and personal equipment was used in the production of *Inside Story*. Hanny Lee, the Director of Photography, used her own Canon 5D Digital Single Lens Reflex camera for principal photography. The primary lens used was a 70-200mm f/2.8 telephoto zoom. I used my own Canon 7D with an 18-135mm f/3.5 zoom lens for some illustrative footage. The sequence involving children was shot on a Canon HV20 camcorder. Additionally, the type of equipment used to shoot the Dr. Green interview is unknown, but I required the contracted videographer to use high definition recording at 1920 X 1080 pixels resolution, 24 progressive frames per second and two sources of sound.

Sound was recorded using both Sennheiser and Sony wireless lavalier microphones, Rode boom mounted microphones, and onboard camera microphones. A Sound Devices 702 recorder was used to record sound on a compact flash (CF) card. For shooting where a high degree of mobility was required a Zoom H4n was used to record sound to a Secure Digital High Capacity (SDHC) card.

To light for most interviews we used an Arri 4 light kit and sometimes an additional 650-watt softbox. The LED light kit was used for an outdoor shoot at night. During that shoot Sara Masetti innovatively rigged a battery powered 12X12" LED to a boom pole and followed Dr. Treat as he told historic ghost stories throughout the Denton, Texas, town square.

5.5 Releases, Copyright, and License Agreements

Inside Story contains a diverse array of people and materials requiring releases and license agreements. Just as there are many sources for the materials, there are many ways the materials are released for use.

The people who are featured in *Inside Story* have given their permission to be recorded and displayed either through email conversations, on camera conversations, or written release forms. A combination of the previous permission types applies to most featured characters.

The rights to all music contained in *Inside Story* was purchased from Audio Network, an online production music library based in New York. The license is for home and student productions and I was provided with both email and hard copies.

The graphic artist Zoe Brinkley supplied many titles, collages, and reworked still photos. She sourced her material from stock photo suppliers or public domain sources. She paid for some material and acquired some material without charge, but only one photo required attribution. Ricardo Makyn is credited for the Usain Bolt Olympic photo.

There are other still photos used in *Inside Story* that are not provided by Zoe Brinkley. A few of the still photos are sourced from the galleries of government agencies like NASA and are therefore in the public domain. But, most are sourced from Wikimedia Commons. Wikimedia Commons requires all uploaders to verify that their material is their own work and to choose a type of license to apply to their work. All photos copied from Wikimedia Commons have been identified as being either in the public domain or as carrying a Creative Commons Attribution and Share Alike License. This means the photos must be attributed to their authors and any derived work must be distributed under the same or similar license.

Copyright restrictions and license agreements were much harder to identify for archival videos used in this project. All are downloaded from the Internet Archive. The Internet Archive though, is comprised of many collections, each having their own rules. The Internet Archive is not like Wikimedia Commons in that they don't require their contributors to verify that it is their own work they upload. The Internet Archive encourages their contributors to choose a Creative Commons License to connect to their work, but it is not required. Therefore, the copyright restrictions associated with some of the video clips are more nebulous than they are with others. For example, the clips from Alfred Hitchcock movie trailers come from the Video Cellar Collection, which clearly displays a *Rights* notice on their home page. The *Rights* notice says, "Unless otherwise noted the films in this collection are public domain and free to be redistributed, reused, or remixed." Alternatively, the Olympic video clips featuring Michael

Phelps are from the Community Video Collection, which are supposed to be public domain videos. But, there are no copyright notices and no licenses connected to the clip. So, for some video clips the issue of copyright infringement would be clouded if it were not for the Fair Use Doctrine.

Fair Use is an exception to the exclusive rights granted by copyright law to the author of a creative work. According to the Stanford University Library Copyright and Fair Use web page, whether a particular use is Fair Use is determined by the application of four factors. Those factors are (1) The purpose and character of your use (2) The nature of the copyrighted work (3) The amount and substantiality of the portion taken (4) The effect of the use upon the potential market. I believe that all video clips used in *Inside Story* meet all four criteria to be categorized as Fair Use.

Inside Story is an informative and educational work. The meaning of each video clip is transformed from its original into an educational expression that illustrates or provides evidence of academic premises, therefore, satisfying factor 1.

The nature of each video clip is different, but for the movie and TV clips; wide audiences have seen each previously. The authors have had the opportunity to control the primary, secondary and even tertiary public appearances of their work. So, inclusion of bits and pieces of their work in *Inside Story* provides negligible impact to the author's control.

Very small amounts of each video clip are copied and no copied portion gives away the substance of any movie or TV show, thereby satisfying factor 3. In addition, there will never be a charge to view *Inside Story*. So, this work could not possibly deprive any author of income or modify their markets in any way. Consequently, factor 4, as well as all other factors, is satisfied. And, *Inside Story* meets all Fair Use obligations so that all the video clips it contains can be used whether or not they have correlating Creative Commons Licenses.

5.6 Budget

A complete budget is provided in appendix A.

CHAPTER 6

POST PRODUCTION

6.1 Schedule

Except for a four-week period beginning September fifth, post-production overlapped the production time for *Inside Story*. Downloading video and audio files from storage media, converting video to Apple ProRes 422 files, and uploading files to Final Cut Pro occurred after each video shoot. Some review and picking of scenes occurred before September, but most post-production ensued according to the following schedule:

September 5 through 10 – Transcribe interviews

September 6 through 13 – Pick interview and illustrative clips

September 8 through 11 – Synchronize best interview audio

September 9 – Record narration

September 10 through 13 – String-out

September 13 through 19 – Rough-cut

September 19 through 30 – Color balance, audio leveling and fine cut

October 1 through 3 – Add montages, titles and some graphics

October 3 – Final cut

6.2 Equipment

Editing was accomplished on an iMac with OSX 10 version 10.6.8 operating system. The system utilizes a 2.97 GHz Intel Core i7 processor with 4 GB memory and 1 terabyte hard drive. Final Cut Pro version 7 was used for editing. All video, audio, and Final Cut files were stored and backed up on Western Digital My Passport external 1 terabyte drives with Firewire 800 and USB connections. All video files were converted to ProRes 422 files before uploading to Final Cut. MPEG StreamClip version 1.9.2 was used as the converter.

6.3 Reconceptualization During Postproduction

During production, in the middle of the interview with Dr. Poldrack, I realized I had a major complication. It was only during postproduction though, that I found the appropriate way to deal with it. The problem that occurred during the interview was that Dr. Poldrack seemed to be contradicting one of the primary neuroscientific concepts that my arguments were based upon. The critical concept was that of the Left Brain Interpreter. The concept was first introduced by Dr. Michael Gazzaniga who performed research on split brain patients and it referred to the construction of explanations by the left hemisphere of the brain in order to make sense of the world by reconciling new information with what was known before. Dr. Gazzaniga concluded that this interpreter function was localized to a specific portion of the left frontal cortex. The importance of this concept to my project is that it can be projected that the Left Brain Interpreter is where stories are born. And, Dr. Poldrack was contradicting that assertion. He was saying that stories are not created in one specific locale in the brain, that the brain must process information in a multitude of areas to create stories.

I don't have the knowledge or resources to disagree with either of the neuroscientists. In fact, in looking back, I agree with both of them and believe I simply failed to explain Gazzaniga's findings adequately to Dr. Poldrack. But, in postproduction, I did have a problem in determining whether to abandon the concept or find an alternative way to deal with it.

After many reviews of the interview footage and further research of Dr. Gazzaniga's studies, I finally determined that where this interpretive function takes place does not play a significant role for my project. What is significant is that humans are particularly concerned with creating explanations and interpreting the continuous barrage of our sensory experience. We create stories to provide a sense of coherence to the mind, to reconcile the past with the present, and to predict the future. Both neuroscientists seemed to agree with that. So, for *Inside Story* it is not important where the interpretive process happens in the brain. It is only important to know that creating stories is one of the most significant functions of our minds. And, that is what I tried to present through Dr. Poldrack's responses.

Losing the on-screen narrator at the beginning of production was a problem I did not really face until postproduction. Sequencing interview responses and illustrative footage

clarified the reasons why I had wanted an on-screen narrator. The concepts I wanted to advocate required introduction. They needed to be advanced step by step. They sometimes needed additional clarification and perhaps even repetition to be fully appreciated. An on-screen narrator could be a more personal guide through a conceptual journey. But, the opportunity to acquire a charismatic personality to lead the audience was missed and I needed an expedient alternative.

Voice-over narration was the obvious answer, but communicating with an audience through a disembodied voice could be a precarious endeavor. Without a strong visual persona to narrate, the words of the narration become more important. So, I waited until I had arranged a sequence of clips I was satisfied with before creating the narration script. I kept in mind the purposes of introduction, amplification, and clarification as I wrote and I tried to be accurate, brief, and clear. After that, finding a narrator was easy since I had already heard Mark Lambert narrate a classmate's documentary. So, Mark's voice became the navigator guiding the audience through *Inside Story*.

One reason voice-over narration can be a precarious endeavor, especially in a documentary that is composed mainly of interviews, is that the audience can be overwhelmed by all the talking. This was confirmed during a screening of a rough cut of *Inside Story* at the colloquium meeting of my classmates. Most people agreed that the project needed breathing room. So, I added clips and extended others so that some short periods of silence punctuated and separated all the talking.

Even this was not enough to overcome the incessant talking. There was too much narration. So, I cut the first five minutes of the film. I originally perceived the first five minutes as necessary foundation for the rest of the film. Since there were no expert interviewees explaining the ubiquity of story in our daily lives, I thought a narrator was required to talk about story in sports, religion and business. Additionally, I cut narrated transitions and other narrated sequences. All that was left of narration was only what I considered to be the absolutely essential bits that need to be explained.

Finally, after further review, I found narration to be unnecessary. With some re-arranging, the addition of some interview clips, and the addition of one inter-title I found the

content could stand on its own without explanation by a narrator. The narration script though, remains as an appendix to this thesis as an example of how the project has evolved.

Along with the narration all of the archival video and still photographs have been thrown out. Their use in creating foundation for the body of *Inside Story* is no longer necessary. Although archival clips are no longer included in the film, explanation concerning researching, licensing, fair use, and attribution remains within this thesis because those activities comprised significant portions of this endeavor.

An additional issue requiring Reconceptualization of the film during postproduction was the use of a narrative fiction. A very simple way to explain story and its primary elements is to use the following formula: Story = Characters facing Trouble who take Action to achieve a Resolution. Or, Character + Trouble + Action + Resolution = Story. To visually illustrate those primary elements of story and to act as organizing structure or foundation for the expert interviews, I developed a script comprised of four scenes that corresponded to the four elements of the story formula. I waited for the fall semester to begin, when the people I thought appropriate to play the characters and the necessary crew would be available. Unfortunately, I could not arrange a schedule when everyone necessary could participate. Therefore, I needed a different way to both illustrate the elements of story and provide a foundational structure for the four different areas in which the interview responses had already been sequenced. After vigorous research concerning copyright restrictions and Fair Use I decided to use clips from a collection of Alfred Hitchcock's movie trailers for that purpose. That decision represented the final link in a lengthy chain of reconceptualizations until, after considerable review, those sequences were determined to not be working appropriately.

So, after consultations with Professor Levin and Dr. Taylor I found both a story and a storyteller. Mark Twain's, *A Fable*, can be broken into four parts that coincide with and illustrate the primary elements of story. It is also short enough to fit into the flow of the film. Karen Gosset's storytelling technique keeps the audience engaged, and though her style contrasts with that of the subject matter experts, it complements rather than distracts from their interview sequences.

CHAPTER 7

EVALUATION OF COMPLETED WORK

7.1 Preproduction

Although I am quite pleased with the amount of subject matter research and the level of understanding I have achieved, I am disappointed with the effort I put into considering how to present all I had learned. My desire to get started with production quashed the patience required to thoroughly develop a strategy. Consequently, in production I improvised and modified much more than would have been necessary if I had done more coordination previously. The production period was much longer than necessary because of incomplete preproduction.

Another minor irritation I have about preproduction is the resulting scarcity of appropriate illustrating footage. I feel I had to rely too much on archival footage. More consideration of exemplar material in the beginning could have resulted in more appropriate illustrating material.

7.2 Production

We are normally not aware of our technical errors until we see them in postproduction. *Inside Story* is certainly not without those flaws, but I am quite satisfied with the technical quality. I am especially pleased when I compare this project to earlier work and find that I can complete a project without glaring technical blemishes.

Most of the production process consisted of interviews. Those interviews turned out to be Master Classes for both my crew and me. All the subject area experts were enthusiastic, articulate, and inspiring. It is a little disappointing that I had to cut so much of the interviews to account for the proper flow and length for the project because we recorded so much more than is seen in the final cut.

I am gratified by the new and continuing relationships with my collaborators. I feel that I was successful in communicating a vision and specific directions, and I am pleased in the way they responded.

7.3 Postproduction

The editing process is like a harvest. One gets to see the fruits of his labors. It is very fulfilling to see your product take shape and grow into its final form. The final form though, is never completely removed from critique. One can always find room for improvement. I am pleased though, with the postproduction process for *Inside Story*. My only critique is that I had to pay someone to create some graphics and illustrations. Today, even many children know how to use Photoshop or similar software. I don't. Learning how to use Photoshop and integrate the results into inter-titles and illustrations would improve my postproduction skills.

APPENDIX A
BUDGET

Budget for Jim Crawford

Production Title: Inside Story

Length: 40 minutes

Format: HD Video

Preproduction: 4 weeks

Production: 10 weeks

Postproduction: 8 weeks

	Unit Type	# of Units	Rate	Cost	In Kind	Total	Vendor / Notes
1.Preproduction							
Director Research	Week	4	\$500	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	Self
Administrative	Week	4	\$10	\$40	\$0	\$40	Office expendables
Total Preproduction				\$0	\$0	\$0	
2. Production							
Producer/Director	Week	22	\$1,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$0	Self
Director of Photography	Week	10	\$1,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	Hanny Lee
Sound Recordist	Week	10	\$300	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0	self
Camera Package # 1 Canon 7D, 2 zoom lenses, tripod, 2 batteries, charger, 4 CF cards	Week	4	\$750	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0	Owned
Camera Package # 2 Canon 5D Mark II, 2 batteries, 3 CF cards, 2 zoom lenses, tripod	Week	5	\$1,200	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$0	DP, Hanny Lee, owned
Camera Package #3 Canon 5D Mark III, batteries, tripod, follow focus, rig	Week	1	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	UNT
Videographer for Melanie Green Interview	Allow	1	\$350	\$350	\$0	\$350	Todd Tinkham
Sound Gear - SD 702 recorder, boom mic, 2 wireless mics, batteries	Week	10	\$250	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0	UNT
Lighting - Arri 4 light kit, Softbox (2), LED kit, stands, gels, flags	Week	8	\$200	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$0	UNT
Travel to Austin for Russell Poldrack interview	Allow	1	\$300	\$300	\$0	\$300	Self
Meals for self and crew	Each	35	\$10	\$350	\$0	\$350	Self
Gas	Allow	1	\$500	\$500	\$0	\$500	Self
Expendables	Allow	1	\$300	\$300	\$0	\$300	Batteries, notepads etc.

	Total Production			\$51,900	\$50,100	\$1,800	
Postproduction	Unit Type	# of Units	Rate	Cost	In Kind	Total	Vendor / Notes
Editor	Week	8	\$1,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$0	Self
Illustrator	Allow	1	\$275	\$275	\$0	\$275	Zoe Brinkley
Hard Drives	Each	2	\$200	\$400	\$0	\$400	B&H
iMac and editing software	Each	1	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	Owned
Music	Allow	1	\$15	\$15	\$0	\$15	
Sound Mix	Allow	1	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$0	Rights purchase
Color Correction	Allow	1	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$0	Self
	Total Postproduction			\$13,690	\$13,000	\$690	Self
	Total			\$65,590	\$63,100	\$2,490	
	Total Costs					\$65,590	
	Total In Kind					\$63,100	
	Cost to Producer/Director					\$2,490	

APPENDIX B
ATTRIBUTIONS

B.1 Photo Attributions

Axel Springer Haus Newsroom. Thomas Schmidt. Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons 3.0 License.

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Filmmaker Rahit Gupta at the Symbiosis Institute. Carflo 213. Wikimedia Commons. GNU Free Documentation License.

Johnson Space Center. NASA. Public Domain.

Koran. Cezary Piwowarski. Wikimedia Commons. GNU Free Documentation License.

Menorah. Susan Katz Miller. OnBeingBoth Blog. Public Domain.

STS-128 MCC Space Station Flight Control Room. James Blair of NASA. Public Domain.

Usain Bolt at London Olympics. Ricardo Maykin.

B.2 Video Attributions

Alfred Hitchcock Trailers. The Video Cellar Collection. Public Domain.

Alien Trailer. Movie Trailers Collection. Creative Commons 1.0 License.

Andy Murray Gold Medal London Olympics 2012. I.V. Hilali. Community Video Collection. Public Domain.

Earth Time Lapse Video From Space. Image Science and Analysis Laboratory. Johnson Space Center. Community Video Collection. Public Domain.

Heider-Simmel Animation Redone. Uploader = Translating Nature. VIMEO. Public Domain.

Hubble Flies_HD_Large_QT_Video_2. NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. Public Domain.

Lucy Gets a Room Mate. The Lucy Show. Classic TV Collection. Public Domain.

Marlboro Presentation Reel. UCSP Tobacco Industry Video Collection. Public Domain.

Michael Phelps 1st Gold Medal Men's 400m Medley. Community Video Collection. Public Domain.

NASA Kennedy_G4Wm8_IITI. NASA Kennedy Space Center. Public Domain.

Sheik Sudais Kaba Wash 2012 29 November. Community Video Collection. Public Domain.

Triumph of the Will. Leni Riefenstahl. Feature Films Collection. Public Domain.

B.3 Music Attribution

Alabama Self. Elfed Hayes. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Artisan. Lincoln Grounds. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Banjo Blue Picker. Mark Johns. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Banjo Ditty. Chris Norton and Frank Mizen. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Chickens In The Yard. Chris Norton and Frank Mizen. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Dust Trail. Mark Johns. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Hanging Tree. Tim Renwick. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Hoedown Showdown. Barrie Gledden. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Mitchell's Peak. Chris Norton and Frank Mizen. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Red Mountain. Mark Johns. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

Rock The Rodeo. Tim Reilly, Jeremy Shermand, and Jason Pedder. Audio Network. Home / Student License Agreement.

APPENDIX C
NARRATION SCRIPT

C.1 Narration Script

Narration

Video

We're at the Texas Storytelling Festival and this is Willy Claflin. He is a professional storyteller. People are entertained by his stories, but many people consider stories a peripheral activity, something that is isolated or disconnected from the productive, meaningful portions of their lives. People though; seem to spend a lot of time and money on something that they may think has no apparent value beyond entertainment. Americans spend twenty-seven billion dollars a year on books. They spend ten billion dollars a year on movies. Seventy percent of Americans go to the movies each year. Television reaches eighty-nine percent of American adults on a daily basis. The average American watches TV four and a half hours each day. The broadcast TV industry took in forty-five billion dollars in advertising revenue in 2011. Our love of stories is reflected in how we spend our time and money. When we look we find stories everywhere. We enjoy the "thrill of victory and the agony of defeat." Two hundred million people in the U.S. watched the London Olympics. It was the most watched television event in history. Around the world two billion people watched Usain Bolt break his own world record in the one hundred meter dash. Professional sports, in this country alone, pocket fifty billion dollars in revenue each year. Those dollars depend on sports stories; the stories of heroes and villains clashing in epic battles, stories of colorful characters contending with their own inner demons, stories of determined athletes training and struggling for years, overcoming obstacles and enduring pain to be able to compete at the highest levels. Sports stories inspire and galvanize public attention. Almost every week millions of fans follow the continuing narratives of their favorite teams. But, sport is only one element of society that depends on story. Sermons, scriptures, prophecies, and parables are the engines that drive the religions of the world. More than two billion Christians read the bible. Nearly that many Moslems study the Koran. Eight hundred million Hindus are familiar with the Vedas and Upanishads. Five hundred million Buddhists rely on the Pali Canon or the Mahayana Sutras. Thirteen million Jews trust in the Torah. Societies transmit their essential cultural information from generation to generation through stories. Religion's stories

Willy Claflin

Texas Book Festival

Movie collage

TV collage

Usain Bolt

Sports Montage

Religion Montage

explain the world, illuminate the human condition and instill social norms and values. The billions of adherents of religion throughout the world are both informed and transformed through their encounters with stories. However, there is an even larger portion of society engaged with other types of stories. Persuasion, advertising, counseling and consulting account for one quarter of U.S. gross domestic product. If story is a component of only half of those efforts, then story is worth about a trillion dollars a year to the U.S. economy. Many companies give their top executives storytelling lessons. NASA uses storytelling in its knowledge management initiatives. The conventional wisdom says, "stories amuse but facts illuminate. Stories divert but facts reveal." Today though, minimizing story may place your career in peril. When facts become widely and instantly available, they become less valuable. What begins to matter is the ability to place facts in context and deliver them with emotional impact. Aptitude for story is becoming a critical business currency.—

Business Montage

Most people are not aware of how much of our lives are devoted to story and how significant those stories are. Stories help us navigate life's complex social challenges. They improve cognition, encourage cooperation, and inspire imagination. Humans continuously create narratives to interpret the world and find order.—

Chicago sidewalk

To understand how we create narratives watch this simple animated video and think about what you are seeing. In 1944, Psychologists Fritz Heider and Mary Ann Simmel created this animation....How do you interpret these movements? Do you see a drama? Do you see a love story? Is the aggressive triangle picking on the smaller triangle? Is the circle fearful? Do the circle and the small triangle join forces to defeat the large triangle bully? Or, do you just see geometric shapes moving around the screen? Our human minds, it seems, create stories to interpret what we encounter, even if those stories don't correlate with reality.

Heider Simmel

For more than thirty thousand years, since humans lived in caves, We have been telling stories. Stories exist in all cultures. The fact that story is universal is an indication that instead of being generated solely by culture, story has a biological function. Some neuroscientists believe our brains are hardwired for story. Evidence for this assertion is found in children. Children don't need to be taught how to create stories. They live in their own story worlds. From the earliest ages children create and act out stories. Children's playtime is usually filled with brilliant acts of

Chauvet Cave

Kids play with rocks

imaginative drama.

To better understand how stories work look at this simple formula that uses the primary elements of story. In any story characters face problems, obstacles, or challenges that we'll generically call trouble. In stories characters take actions to resolve their troubles. The characters may not always be successful, but they act. They do something. We encounter this pattern of story elements every day. And now, to illustrate these elements of story let's begin a new story.

Story Formula graphic

Chapter 1 Graphic
Characters Sequence

~~Characters are always found in a context, a specific time and place. So, Characters are the agents that act in a story. We engage with stories because we can connect with the characters, but how does this happen and why?~~

~~Character interview
Sequence~~

~~Characters in stories may be a lot like us and the people around us. But, in some ways, they are very different. Here are some reasons why.~~

~~Elements Interview
Sequence~~

~~Stories focus our attention on what is strategically important. Stories compress time and space to compel our attention to the significant and meaningful. Story evokes our intense engagement without requiring our belief. But, how do stories specifically help us function in the world?~~

~~Functions interview
Sequence~~

~~Let's move to chapter two and take a look at some trouble.~~

~~Chapter 2 graphic
Trouble Sequence~~

~~Story is always about trouble. But, here is the paradoxical question: Why do we enjoy stories so much when they are always about the terrible problems we face?~~

~~Trouble interview
Sequence~~

~~Since story usually involves overcoming obstacles, surviving, or winning; can there be a downside to stories?~~

~~Negatives interview
Sequence~~

~~Chapter 3 graphic
Action Sequence~~

~~Story maximizes the advantages of the human mind so that we may remove ourselves from the here and now, imagine the world as other than it is, and see the possibilities. Story increases the range of our experience and behavioral options without physical risk. Story evokes our intense engagement without~~

~~Immersion and
Persuasion Sequence~~

~~requiring our belief. Story has the ability to compel us to action.—~~

~~Stories have existed as long as modern humans have.~~

~~Story affects everyone and is a part of every culture.~~

~~The ubiquity of story is an indication that it is not simply culturally derived but may have a biological foundation.~~

Compared to other large mammals, humans don't appear adequately equipped to survive. We are not as strong or as fast as the great predators. We have no large teeth, talons, or claws. We have no stripes or spots to camouflage, no wings to fly. What we have is a cerebral cortex that is more highly connected to other brain regions than any other species. This structure permits more integration of information and more control of the rest of the brain than other species, more capacity to inhibit automatic response and attend to and manipulate information in search of new responses. What this big brain means is that we don't act as instinctively as other animals. Most animals, when faced with a challenge, respond as their species has always responded, quickly and instinctively. This works for them. Quick reaction, fight or flight, is a good survival strategy. But, for us humans, we can inhibit instinctive urges because we have the tools to use a different strategy. Our deliberate attention to a problem amplifies relevant information and inhibits the irrelevant. We can process that information through a series of representations, perceptions, memories and projections. Memory intersects with imagination as images and scenarios run through our mind's eye. New solutions, better solutions are achieved because we can create stories.

Evolution Sequence

Chapter 4 Graphic

~~A Good story never really ends. It merely closes a~~

~~chapter and implies that a new story may be about to begin.—~~

Conclusion sequence

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