

THE BASICS

Stories are lessons in problem solving. If you allow us the assumption that we can separate a story from the storytelling (the way it is told), then we will show how the structure of a story is similar to the structure of solving problems. How characters represent the different aspects of a problem. How conflict and dramatic potential can be measured and evaluated (and something else here in how that relates to problem solving). How the steps one takes in solving a problem can be used as guide posts for constructing a story. And finally, how having all of the proper pieces in the story puzzle gives you a solid basis from which you can employ all the story telling techniques you want.

- A paragraph here about stories as lessons in problem solving. Some of the information might be regarding the morality plays of the middle ages, moral dilemmas, dealing with life situations in general. Also, no problem = no reason for story.
- A paragraph here about our assumption. Story about ten architects given same building materials -- ten different structures. Some complete, others with left overs -- incomplete (no bathroom or such).

In a story with simple characters, like Star Wars and The Wizard of Oz, there appear to be a predictable group of seven characters. All seven fall into very traditional character "types".

1. There is the traditional Protagonist as portrayed by Luke and Dorothy. They are the "heroes". They are the driving force behind the story. They are the ones on the quest for whatever it is they want. In short, it is their story that is being told.

2. There is the Intellectual as represented by Princess Leia and the Scarecrow. They are the "brains". They use reason to solve problems. They suggest calm, well-thought-out plans of attack.
3. There is the Emotional character as represented by Chewbacca and the Tin Man. They are the "feelings". They solve problems by following their "gut" feelings. Their approach is usually spontaneous, sometimes frenzied.
4. There is the Skeptic as represented by Han Solo and the Cowardly Lion. They are the nay-sayers. They solve problems by denying that they exist. Their approach is to avoid conflict altogether.
5. There is the Sidekick(s) as represented by the team of R2D2 & C3P0 and, of course, Toto too. They are there purely as plot devices. They solve a writer's problem by giving the "Protagonist" someone to talk to so that the audience knows what is going on in their head. They are often used by writers as bait to force the protagonist into situations they would otherwise avoid.
6. There is the Guardian as represented by Obiwan Kenobi and Glinda, the Good Witch of the North. They are our conscience. They teach the way to "salvation". They lend that helping hand that always seems to get the protagonist out of tight spots.
7. Let us not forget the traditional Antagonist as represented by The Evil Empire and The Wicked Witch of the West. They are the "problem". They are the force that is running exactly opposite of the protagonist. Their approach is to compete with the protagonist on the quest and make sure

they get whatever it is that the protagonist wants. In short, they are the reason the story is being told at all.

Let's recap these seven characters in a nice little table:

CHARACTER	STAR WARS	WIZARD OF OZ
<i>Protagonist</i>	Luke Skywalker	Dorothy Gale
<i>Intellectual</i>	Princess Leia	The Scarecrow
<i>Emotional</i>	Chewbacca.....	The Tin Man
<i>Skeptic</i>	Han Solo.....	The Cowardly Lion
<i>Sidekick</i>	R2D2 & C3P0	Toto
<i>Guardian</i>	Obiwan Kenobi.....	Glinda
<i>Antagonist</i>	The Evil Empire	The Wicked Witch

Now, if you look at these lists carefully you may notice that there is a character from each story that is missing -- BIG IMPORTANT characters, not little bit parts. Got it? Now ask yourself, "Where do **Darth Vader** and **The Wizard** fit into the scheme of things?" They are what we have coined the **CONTAGONISTS**.

What is a contagonist? What part does it play? How are Darth Vader (who seems to be a real bad guy) similar to The Wizard (who seems to be a pretty good guy)? Hold on a moment and we'll tell you.

Isn't Darth Vader just another antagonist and The Wizard just another guardian? The answer is emphatically, "NO!", and here's the reason why.

We stated earlier that characters represent different aspects of a problem. By enumerating the parts of a problem, we can assign each of the tradition characters to a

part. At the end, we'll find that there will be one part left and that will be for the contagonist.

We have found there to be seven parts to solving a problem. (NOTE: The Sidekick is a storytelling device and is not part of the problem solving process, so it does appear in the following list).

1. **THE PROBLEM.** The first part to solving a problem is the problem itself. As long as the problem is around there is a need to solve it. The character who best fits this part is the Antagonist.
2. **FAITH.** The second part to solving a problem is the belief that the problem has a "correct" solution. Until an acceptable solution is determined, this part keeps the search for a solution going. The character who best fits this part is the "Protagonist".
3. **SKEPTICISM.** The third part to solving a problem is the belief that the problem does NOT have a "correct" solution. As long as a decision has not been made, nothing is lost. The character who best fits this part is the SKEPTIC.
4. **REASON.** The fourth part to solving a problem is to approach it from a completely intellectual point of view. Justifying a decision based on logic is the only reasonable way to go. The character that best fits this part is the INTELLECTUAL.
5. **EMOTION.** The fifth part to solving a problem is to approach it from a completely emotional point of view. Justifying a decision based on feelings

is the only satisfactory way to go. The character that best fits this part is the EMOTIONAL.

- 6. CONSCIENCE. The sixth part to solving a problem is to do what is the morally proper thing to do. A decision carries responsibilities and ramifications to others that should outweigh all other considerations. The character that best fits this part is the GUARDIAN.
- 7. TEMPTATION. The seventh, an unspecified up until now, part to solving a problem is to do what you WANT to do. Put desire ahead of responsibilities and damn the ramifications. The character that best fits this part is the CONTAGONIST.

By looking at the different parts of a problem you can see where each of the characters fit into the "Big Picture". Let's recap:

CHARACTER	FUNCTION	STAR WARS	WIZARD OF OZ
Antagonist	<i>The Problem</i>	The Evil Empire	The Wicked Witch
Protagonist	<i>Faith</i>	Luke Skywalker	Dorothy Gale
Skeptic.....	<i>Skepticism</i>	Han Solo	The Cowardly Lion
Intellectual.....	<i>Reason</i>	Princess Leia	The Scarecrow
Emotional	<i>Feelings</i>	Chewbacca	The Tin Man
Guardian.....	<i>Conscience</i>	Obiwan Kenobi.....	Glinda
Contagonist.....	<i>Temptation</i>	Darth Vader.....	The Wizard