

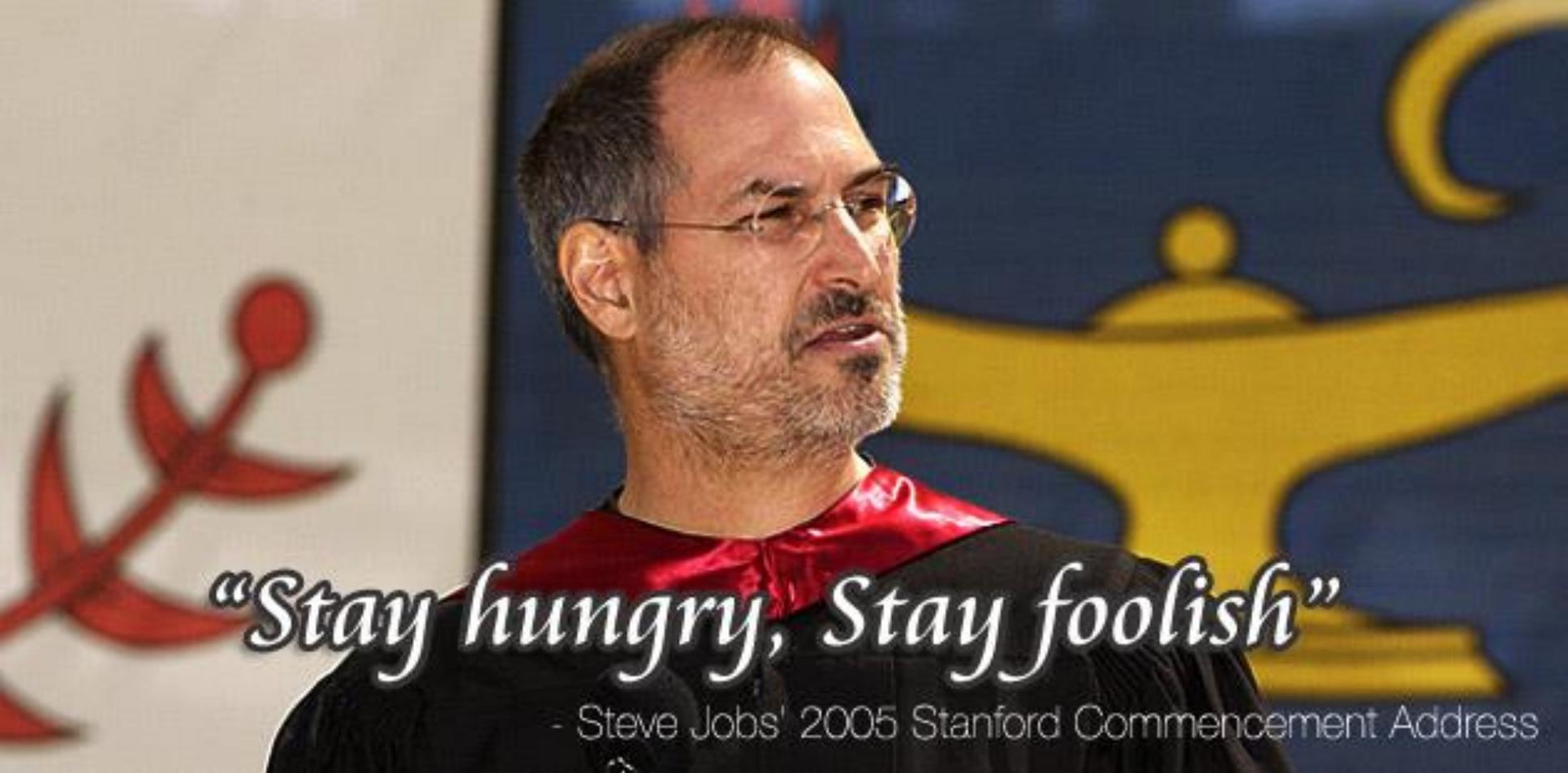
# Narratives in public discourse

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In 2005 Steve Jobs, former CEO of *Apple Inc.*, delivers his famous commencement address at Stanford University. This speech is interesting, particularly because what he basically did was tell three stories.

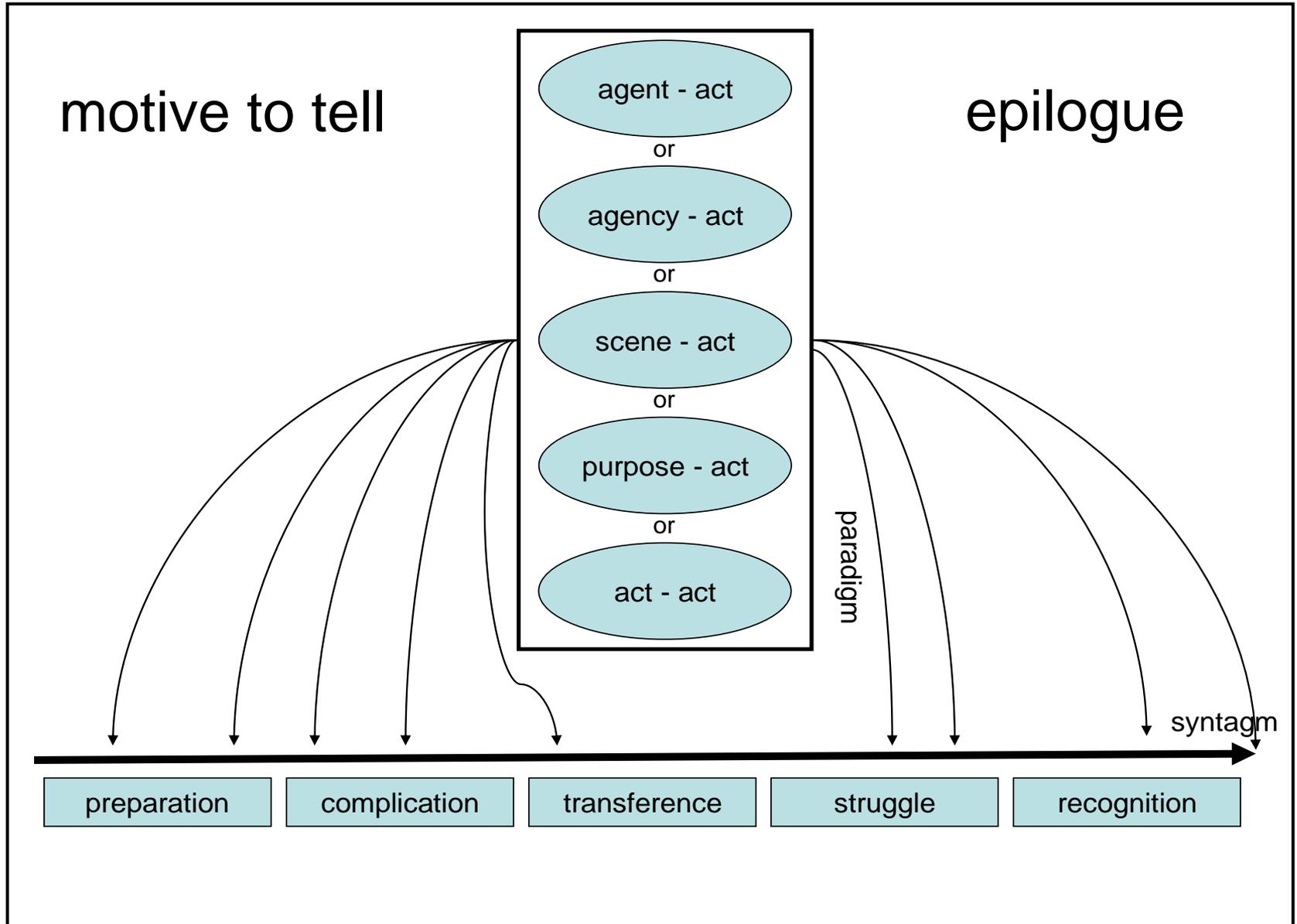
I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.



Let's have a look

[Steven Jobs' speech](#)

# the cognitive narrative scheme



# Connecting the dots

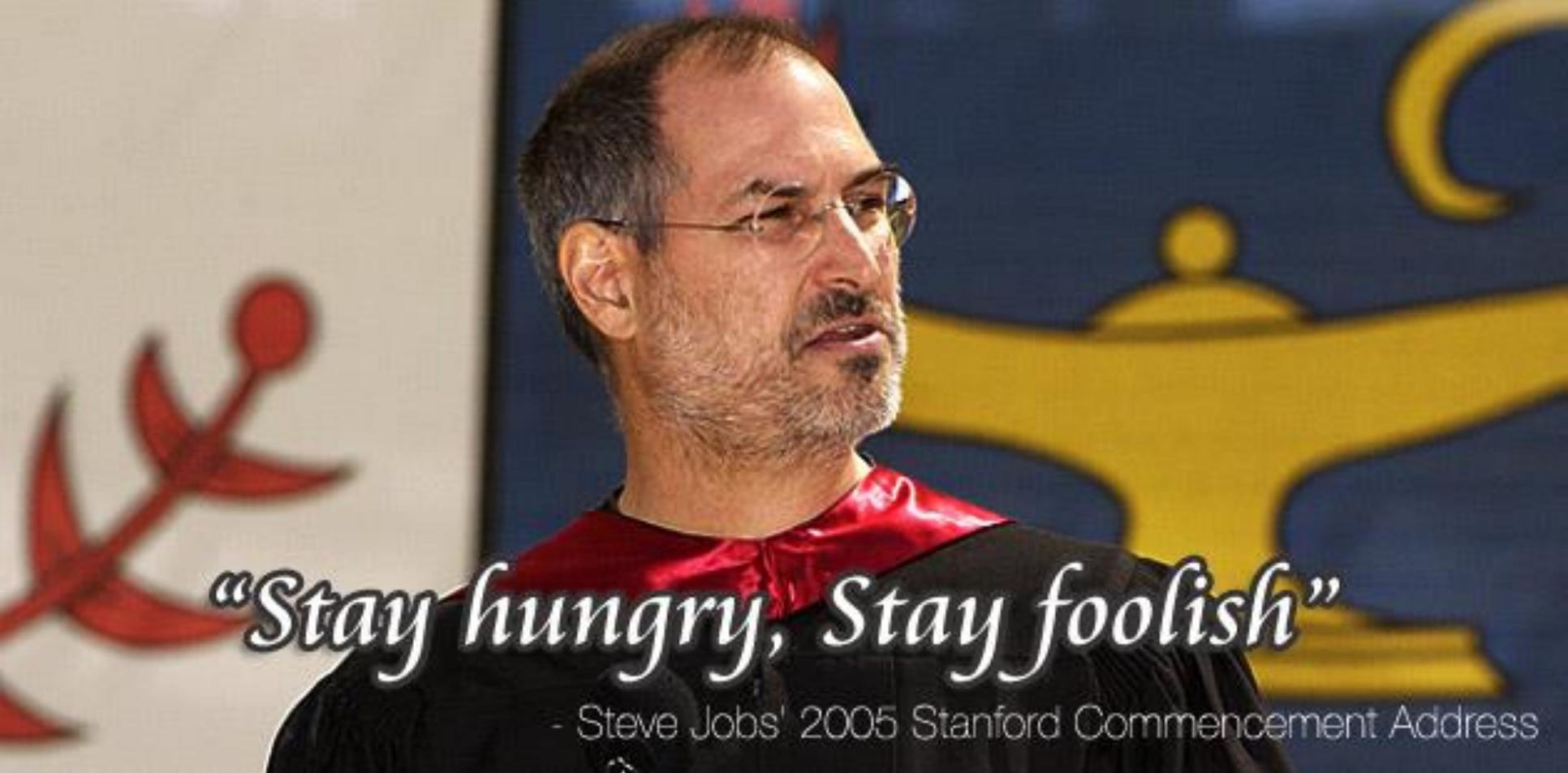
- preparation
  - complication
  - transference
  - struggle
  - recognition
  - **epilogue**
- pregnant, adopted, boy, adopted, go college [embedded narrative]
  - no value, waste of money
  - drop-out and find a way
  - chaotic period, garage
  - Mac, famous, rich
  - **dots connect afterwards, trust**

# Love and loss

- preparation
  - complication
  - transference
  - struggle
  - recognition
  - epilogue
- Mac, famous, rich
  - fired/ how: agency – act/[shame]
  - start all over [love]
  - lightness: scene - act/ NeXT + Pixar:  
agency – act
  - Apple buys NeXT/finds his love
  - follow your love/don't lose faith/don't  
settle

# Death

- epilogue
  - preparation
  - complication a
  - transference
  - complication -a
  - struggle
  - recognition
  - epilogue
- everyday counts, you are going to die, follow your heart
  - [-]
  - diagnosed cancer, you die
  - prepare to die
  - you not die yet
  - [not needed]
  - [-]
  - you time is limited, don't waste it/follow your heart

A photograph of Steve Jobs at the 2005 Stanford Commencement. He is wearing a black graduation gown with a red stole and glasses. He is looking slightly to the right. The background features a blue wall with a yellow Stanford University logo and a red floral emblem on the left.

*“Stay hungry, Stay foolish”*

- Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford Commencement Address

# narration as a cognitive process

- The interpreting subject extracts a meaning from the form.
- The narrative form is merely an organized sign vehicle; the interpreting subject extracts the meaning.



# narration as a cognitive process

- The narrator, the organizing principle, mediates.
- To interpret is always an interaction between a textual form and foreknowledge.



# narration as a cognitive process

Human beings understand acts and actions in their world predominantly as elements of narratives; of motivated, focused causal chains.



*Little Red Riding Hood*

# narration as a cognitive process

Narration employs the human inclination to understand an act as part of a focused causal chain, to identify goals and intentions, to evaluate acts and agents.



# narratives are everywhere

Human beings understand acts and actions in their world predominantly as elements of narratives; of motivated, focused causal chains.



Fashion claims more victims than you think.



# fashion claims more victims than you think

- *Motive:* [genre: advertisement] Make the audience support WWF.
- *Preparation:* [vehicle in fusion] Once wild life lived undisturbed by man.
- *Complication:* [tenor in fusion] Then humans came with their exorbitant wishes and changed beautiful creatures into fashion materials; these villains make more victims than you, audience, think.
- *Transference:* [implicit] At last, the good people must and will take over and restore the balance between human life and wild life!

# fashion claims more victims than you think

- *Struggle*: [implicit] These heroic good people struggle and – with your help – can win.
- *Recognition*: [Hopefully] [implicit] The fashion villains will be punished, the victims will survive, the S and XL labels can be removed, you, enlightened mankind will be rewarded.
- *Epilogue*: Fashion claims more victims than you think, [so do something about it.]

Almost everything can stay implicit. The audience's mental narrative scheme does the work.

# *No survivors, bodies found after Tibet landslide*

*China Daily, March 30, 2013*



# *No survivors, bodies found after Tibet landslide*

*China Daily*, March 30, 2013

MAIZHOKUNGGAR, Tibet Autonomous Region - Rescuers have not yet found survivors or bodies 28 hours after a massive landslide buried 83 miners at a gold mine in Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region, authorities said on Saturday.

A spokesman for the regional government said at a press conference at the site that rescue work was continuing. The landslide happened at about 6 am in Maizhokunggar county of Lhasa, the regional capital. The victims were workers from Tibet Huatailong Mining Development Co Ltd, a subsidiary of the China National Gold Group Corporation.

# *No survivors, bodies found after Tibet landslide*

*China Daily*, March 30, 2013

As the site is at an altitude of more than 4,600 meters, most rescuers have been suffering from slight altitude sickness, according to one member of the group. Further minor landslides have hampered their efforts. And temperatures as low as minus three degrees Celsius have also affected the sniffer dogs' senses of smell.

He said the miners' survival chances were slim due to the scale of the landslide. The affected area is 3 km wide, covered with about 2 million cubic meters of mud, rock and debris, a Xinhua reporter said from the disaster site.

# *No survivors, bodies found after Tibet landslide*

*China Daily*, March 30, 2013

- the struggle of courageous men who took up the task of rescuing survivors (transference)
- the ratio used: a prototypical scene – act ratio; these men are bound to fail
- fourth paragraph guides the audience to an epilogue: these men are not to blame for not being able to restore equilibrium
- if the heroes on the spot are not to blame, then surely would this not equally apply to the local authorities, the dispatcher, the ones who sent them there?

# *Lone female student leaves 29 broken hearts*

*China Daily*, March 22, 2013

1. The only female student majoring in mining at a university in Wuhan has applied for a transfer, and the other 29 students in her class, all male, wrote letters asking her to stay, *Wuhan Morning Daily* reported Friday.
2. On March 20, Wu Lin, a student at Wuhan University of Science and Technology, received 29 "lover letters". Wu is the only female student in the class of 30. She is undoubtedly the "class flower" and is especially looked after by her classmates.
3. On March 7, a day before Women's Day, Wu received apples and blessings from all the male students. "You are our princess, and we are sure to take good care of you."

# *Lone female student leaves 29 broken hearts*

*China Daily*, March 22, 2013

4. But Wu applied to change majors not long after the new term started.
5. "Mining major is difficult to find jobs for a woman. I have to make my decision for the long run," Wu said. "I will come back to see my classmates frequently."
6. Though the 29 letters could not make her change her mind, the male students send their best wishes for Wu. "Come back and see us often, and whoever bullies you, come to us."

# *Lone female student leaves 29 broken hearts*

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- In (1) the two narrative lines are balanced; female as well as males are presented in agent – act ratio in a logical order: cause – effect.
- In (2) the discourse voice describes the preparatory situation.
- In (3) Wu is foregrounded as the object of an act.
- In (4) she takes over: agent – act ratio, she applies.
- In (5) she justifies her act with a scene – act and purpose – act ratio; (future) agent – act ratio again, in which she compensates for the negative recognition in the male narrative: “I will come back frequently”.
- In (6) the males understand: Wu deserves a reward = support.

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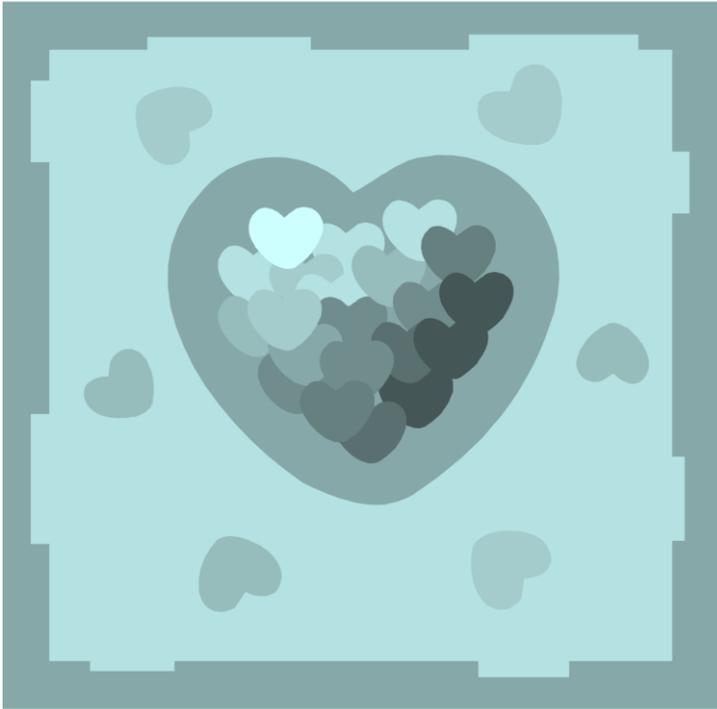
- *Preparation*: 29 boys and 1 girl are studying mining at Wuhan University.
- *Complication*: The girl is going to apply for a transfer.
- *Transference*: The boys take on the task of keeping her in the class.
- *Struggle*: The boys all write her a letter, send apples and blessings. The attempt fails.
- *Recognition*: No reward, though they do get her sympathy.

# *Lone female student leaves 29 broken hearts*

*China Daily, March 22, 2013*

- *Preparation:* 29 boys and 1 girl are studying mining at Wuhan University.
- *Complication:* The girl finds out there is no future for her in mining.
- *Transference:* The girl takes up the challenge to make a decision for the long run.
- *Struggle:* The boys try to keep her, but shortly after the start of the new term she manages to resist the tempting offer to stay in the warm environment and leaves.
- *Recognition:* Immediately she earns the boys' respect and sympathy: "Come back and see us often, and whoever bullies you, come to us." Hopefully in the long run she will be rewarded with a great future.

The end



The classical Hollywood double love script in China Daily!

# *Shanghai getting old as people are living longer*

March 22, 2013, *China Daily*

- One in four registered Shanghai residents are seniors, with the city reporting an increase of about 200,000 elderly residents in 2012, the Shanghai Morning Post reported on March 23.
- With its rapidly aging population, Shanghai had 3.67 million people aged 60 or above at the end of 2012, the newspaper said, citing the city's civil affairs bureau.
- [\[more demographic statistics\]](#)
- Gao Julan, deputy director of the city's civil affairs bureau, said more care will be given to senior residents, whether they were born in Shanghai or not.
- The city is studying a plan to have non-local senior residents enjoy some of the same benefits as local elderly people, such as the free bus rides.

# *Shanghai getting old as people are living longer*

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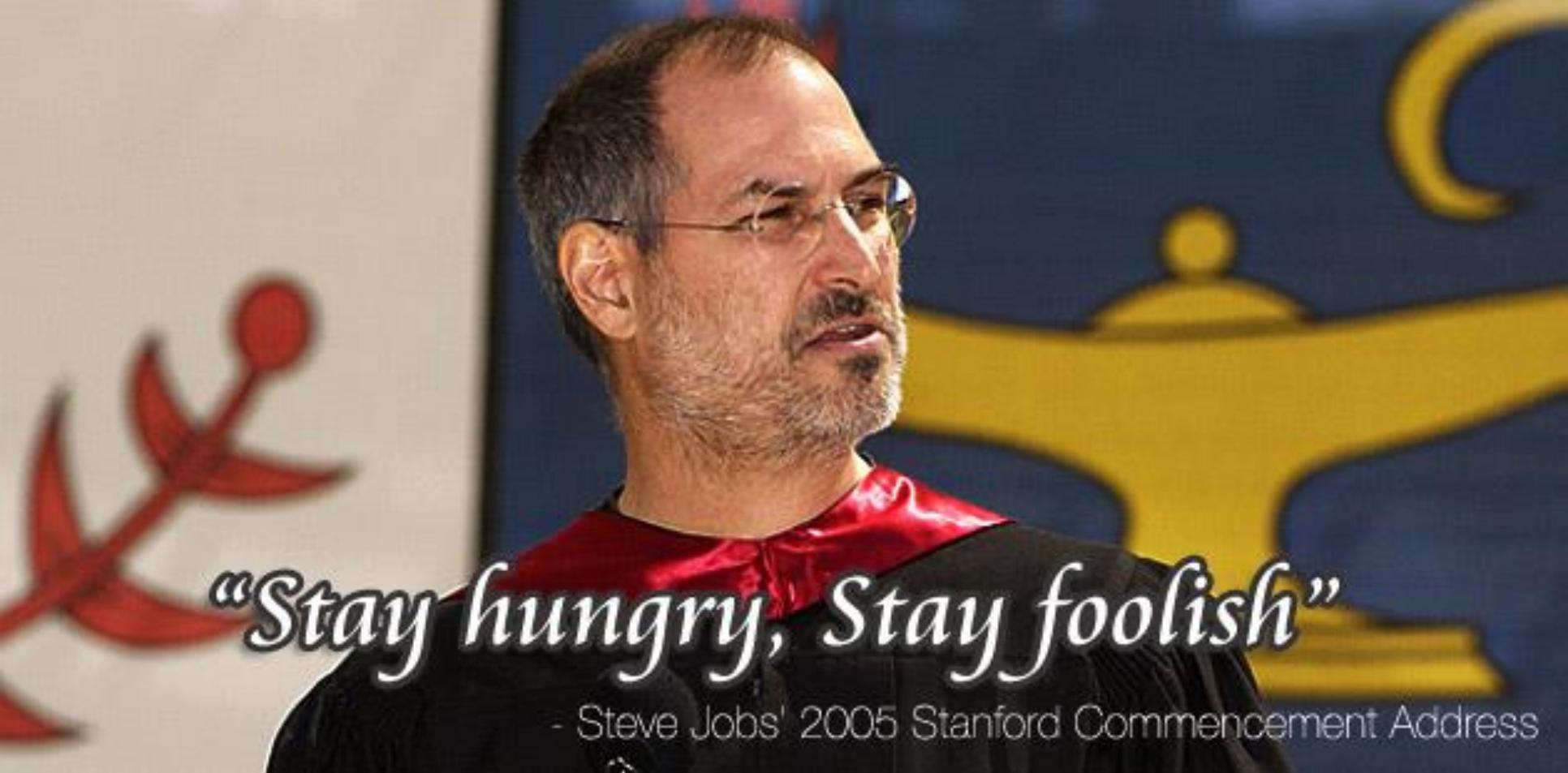
- *Preparation*: Shanghai had a balanced population.
- *Complication*: The proportion of elderly inhabitants is rapidly increasing, disturbing this balance.
- *Transference*: Someone, the assigned protagonist will be the government, has to take on the task of addressing the problem.

Accused has terrorized his family for a large number of years. He has used disproportionate violence as an instrument to maintain authority in the family. Among other things, he has repeatedly assaulted family members – regardless of their age – by beating them, also with a belt, and kicking them. He also has bitten his wife during a scrimmage which resulted in a bite wound. During a fight he has kicked his son, hit him and gave him a hard butt of the head. [...] Furthermore, the accused has hit his daughter once with a tool on her fingers while her fingers were resting on the table. On another occasion he has twisted her wrist and thereupon hit it with a hammer. This broke her wrist. [...] Finally the accused has threatened his family repeatedly with arson. To enforce his threats he stored jerry cans filled with petrol in the basement. During such a threat he sometimes locked the door. Never did his wife and children know whether he was going to put his threats into effect. Because of this he has caused his family terrifying moments over a long period of time. [...] Considering the above, the court deems a [...] detention of the following length appropriate. [...]

- *Preparation*: [implicit] Equilibrium is that of the father, the wife, the son, the daughter, living together in peace as a normal family should live; this family with a situation ‘as it should be’.
- *Complication*: The storytelling starts after the disrupting event has occurred: the father turns out to be a ‘villain’. We get an extensive description of his villainous deeds. A long period of continuous terror exercised over the victims by the villain.
- *Transference*: [the communicative act as such] At last, the judicial system takes over!
- *Recognition*: The villain receives his punishment, the family is free.

# Epilogue

- Human beings do apply narratives all the time (Labov).
- Assuming narrative interpretation explains implicitness.
- Narrative analysis explains the construction of *motivated* narrative chains.
- The often implicit epilogue needs to be assumed to explain the individualized emotive response.



Thank you