

# Narrative

## What is Narrative?

The **way** the story is told through the plot. **The story is what happens, the plot is how we are told the events.** You need to consider - In what order do events unfold, and why? From whose perspective, and why? The **narrative devices** used in a film can be split into 2 areas of thought:

### Structuralism:



#### Levi Strauss' Binary Oppositions:

- Symbolic **juxtapositions** that have a deeper ideological meaning.
- Binary Oppositions create **conflict**, this is the essence of drama.
- These can be entwined within the elements of form, aesthetic & visuals.
- They can be **thematic** or **representational**.

#### For example:

Protagonist Vs Antagonist

Anarchy Vs Order

Internal dilemma Vs External problem

Male Vs Female

Young Vs Old

### Formalism:



#### Chronology & Time:

- How have **flashbacks/flashforwards/ellipsis** been used? (Flashback = **Analepsis**, Flashforward = **Prolepsis**)
- What information are we told and in what order? How does this affect our reading of the film?
- Does the film follow conventional structure?
- How is **verisimilitude** & **equilibrium established** in the opening sequence? What **enigmas** are constructed?
- What messages and values does the **resolution** (final sequence) offer? Is there a **new equilibrium**?
- What is the **time frame** of the film?
- How is time **condensed**? **Montage**? **Editing**? What effect does this have on the audience?
- How does the **pace** of the film alter in different moments and why?

#### Genre:

- 'Genre **C&C's** are a repertoire of possibilities' - Stafford
- 'Genres are constantly **evolving**' - Neale
- Are there **expected** narratives & characters associated with the genre?
- What codes and conventions are **recycled**? What conventions of the genre are **subverted**?
- Are the genre expectations of the audience satisfied or challenged?

#### Voice and Perspective:

- Through whose **POV** are we told the story?
- How would you describe the voice/character? Are they reliable?
- Does their understanding change/evolve?
- How is their voice/POV visualised?
- Is it a male or female voice?
- Is it a **restricted** narrative? How is it visualised?
- How is **v/o** used?
- What are their key lines of **dialogue**?
- How are characters constructed?
- Are they **stereotypes**/archetypes?
- Who are we asked to align & identify with? Is this 'comfortable'?
- What does this suggest about meaning and **representation**?