

Syllabus

	Week 1 Mon 7 Oct	Week 2 Mon 14 Oct	Week 3 Mon 21 Oct	Week 4 Mon 28 Oct	Week 5 Mon 4 Nov	Week 6 Mon 11 Nov	Week 7 Mon 18 Nov
9.30 - 10.30	Introduction (all) Lecture: ETG34	Narrative (ML) Lecture: ETG34	Genre (ML) Lecture: ETG34	Representation (MN) Lecture: ETG34	Intertextuality (MS) Lecture: ETG34	Transmediality (MS) Lecture: ETG34	Conclusions (all) Lecture: ETG34
11 - 12	Seminar - groups formed - seminar activity - essay writing guidelines CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Seminar - activity on narrative - assign lunch task on narrative CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Seminar - activity on genre - assign lunch task on genre CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Seminar - activity on representation - assign lunch task on representation CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Seminar - activity on intertextuality - assign lunch task on intertextuality CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Seminar - activity on transmediality - assign lunch task on transmediality CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	All day tutorials CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103
12 - 1.30	No tutorial this week	Students perform lunch task on narrative	Students perform lunch task on genre	Students perform lunch task on representation	Students perform lunch task on intertextuality	Students perform lunch task on transmediality	
1.30 - 3		Group tutorials - review lunch task on narrative CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Group tutorials - review lunch task on genre CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Group tutorials - review lunch task on representation CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Group tutorials - review lunch task on intertextuality CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	Group tutorials - review lunch task on transmediality CCM: ET130, ET135 Journalism: ET103	

<http://mafaldastasi.com> (go to teaching/undergraduate/205MC)

- For the next two sessions we will be considering **storytelling, narrative and genre** and the particular relationships between these three terms

What is Narrative?

- What are the **essential features of storytelling and narrative** (narration)?
- How do these essential features **vary from one media form and another** (eg how is the story of a murder different when told in a feature film to how it is told on the BBC news, how might it differ in a popular song from how it is told on a video game?)
- How do the **specificities of genre** (that is different types or typologies within a particular media genre) affect the mode of narration or storytelling (eg how might a story be told differently in a film if it is in the genre of a western, a gangster, a romantic comedy, a thriller, a documentary etc?)

Story and Narrative



- **A Story is: Simply a sequence of events where something or a number of things happen.** These events can be 'real' (as in a news-story) or fictional (as in a science fiction film or a fairytale). So for example the basic elements of a story could be:

- Boy meets girl
- They fall in love
- Boy has a one night stand with girl's best friend
- Girl Breaks it off with boy
- Boy tries to get back with girl
- Girl eventually weakens and gets back with boy
- They live happily ever after

- **Narrative is: The telling of the story.** A narrative is the descriptive account of the sequence of event. This means it is always told from someone's point of view. The story could be told from the point of view of the girl, the boy, the girls best friend or by an invisible narrator (in literature the invisible narrator is indicated by the use of the third person):

'it was a cold November afternoon when Peter first saw Jane'.

- The *third person* or invisible narrator is often perceived as the 'author' of the story.
- Clearly, our perception of the themes raised by the story will be heavily dependent upon who is telling the story whether we believe their account to be truthful or realistic.
- Notions of 'realism' and 'truthfulness' in storytelling are therefore important issues we shall be covering.

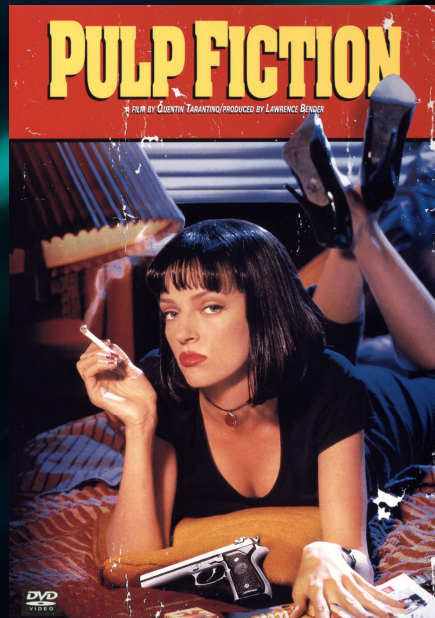
- Long and Wall define narrative as:

‘the organisation of textual elements into a pattern, in terms of space, time and perspective. It is the narrative that encourages us to read specific parts of the text as ‘events’ which are ordered through time (temporal succession) and which we conceive of as the cause of other events (causation)

(Long and Wall 2009:62)

Features of Narrative

1) Messing about with time



- Narratives have liberty to rearrange the sequencing of events, ie they can **depict time in a non-sequential form**. Narratives can move back and forth in time to tell the story (it is not unusual for films to begin at the end and then go back to the start). They can use human memory (often through the device of the flashback) to jumble up the sequence of events. The classic example here might be Pulp Fiction.
- Narrative also have the ability to **play with time**; ie they can reduce time (events that may take days, weeks, months or even years in real time can be condensed into hours or even minutes in a narrative; or they can stretch time (McEwan: the car crash in The Child in Time) where something that takes a few minutes in real time is stretched out for a whole chapter)

2. Narratives are selective

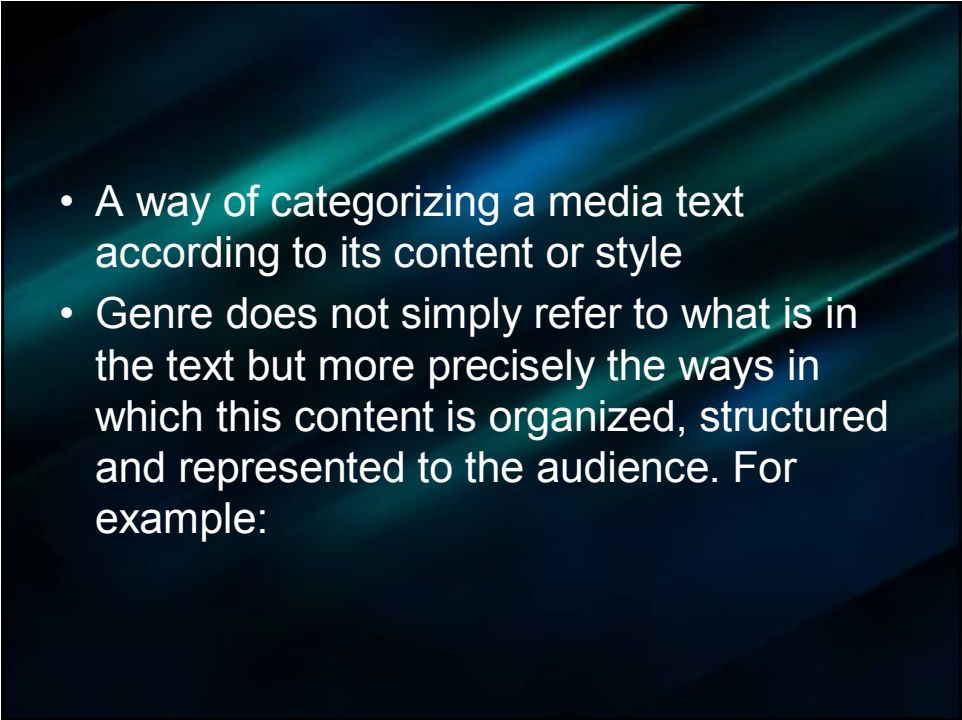
- One of the key features of any narrative is what they choose to include and what they choose to leave out of a story. In other words which 'evidence' they choose to present to the audience drawn from the original sequence of events. This happens in all narratives but is clearly present in the narratives we associate with news stories.

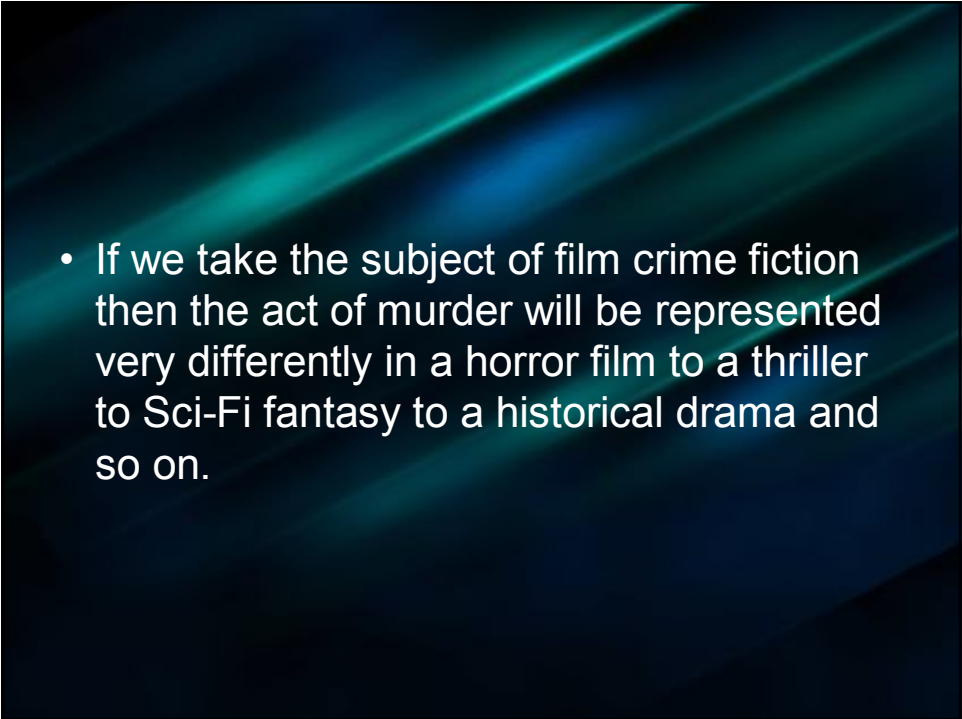
3. Narratives use different formal techniques and devices to tell the story.

- Each media form (film, news broadcast, novel, TV documentary etc) has its own set of established codes and conventions to tell the story. For example film fiction uses such things as editing, camera shot conventions, lighting and sound to tell the story effectively; a newsbroadcast will use other established techniques (anchorperson who talks to camera, the reporter who talks to the anchor and not the audience etc)

Genre and Narrative

- What is genre when applied to media texts?

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- A way of categorizing a media text according to its content or style
 - Genre does not simply refer to what is in the text but more precisely the ways in which this content is organized, structured and represented to the audience. For example:

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- If we take the subject of film crime fiction then the act of murder will be represented very differently in a horror film to a thriller to Sci-Fi fantasy to a historical drama and so on.

Genres have formal features

- As we shall see later genres have certain key formal features that distinguish them from other genres. These can be visual (eg how lighting is used); stylistic; musical; defined by certain character types (eg the hard-boiled detective) and above all defined by their narrative styles and devices (eg Rom Com – the boy and the girl always get together in the end; the action thriller – the villain always gets caught or killed).

4. Narratives mediate reality

- This doesn't mean that narratives lie to us but simply that narratives represent only one possible version of reality amongst a range of other possible versions of that reality (ie that seen through the point of view of the storyteller). This is where genre is important as genres will determine how a particular reality is presented to us through the features described

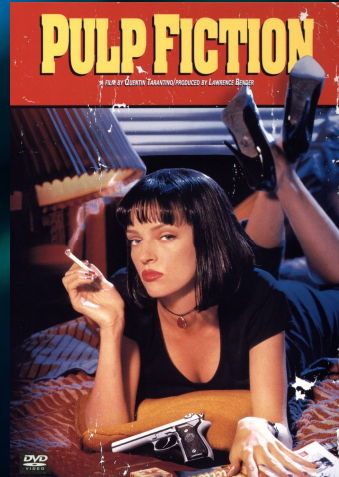
- Here the key word is **realism**. Let us first make sure we understand what is meant by the term realism.
- In media, the term 'realism' **does not mean 'the real'** itself. The real is always the here and now, the present moment. In any form of media the real is always, by definition, **a representation of the real**, ie a **re**presentation of the real, or indeed an imagined or imaginary real. Therefore when we use the term 'realism' what we mean is the attempt to make the events being described **appear to be real, to have the illusion of being real**. In other words **to be believable**.

- Long and Wall define realism thus:

'Realism is a rhetorical and signifying strategy (in media texts) for representing the worlds to which those texts refer'

(Long and Wall 2009: 106)

Fact or Fiction



- Realism can be said to be a mode of storytelling that **gives the impression of recording or 'reflecting' faithfully an actual way of life**. It matters not whether this way of life is based on true (actual) events and circumstances (as with TV news for example) or on entirely fictional events and circumstances (such as a science fiction film or fairy tale).

- What matters here is not whether the events actually happened or not in 'real life' but whether the story is **credible and believable within the logic of the story**, ie that characters act in ways we would expect them to given the particular nature of the story.

Fact or Fiction?



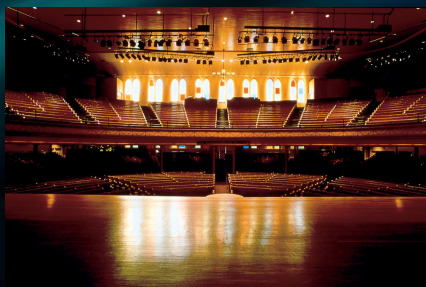
- in a bio pic or a film about a real-life event we would not expect to see characters having supernatural powers – to give them these attributes would break the rules of realism and make the story/film unbelievable. However in a horror story or fantasy film such as Peter Pan, it is totally permissible to give characters supernatural powers without breaking the rules of realism because, within their own terms and generic contexts, these films remain believable.

Summary

- Realism is simply the set of formal devices and codes and conventions within particular media forms and genres that makes stories believable.
- In fiction it is often said we '**suspend our disbelief**'. In other words whilst we know the story is not literally real (ie the events never actually happened) the process of realism persuades us to 'pretend that it is real' for the sake of the story – the suspension of disbelief.

The Fourth Wall

- In film, TV drama, theatre and arguable in other media forms to the concept or idea of the fourth wall is vital in presenting the illusion of reality. The concept originally comes from theatre and describes the relationship between the stage and the theatre, or between the actors and the audience.



- To make the play believable, ie to give it realism, the audience and the actors assume the front of the stage to be an invisible wall (ie the other wall of the room where the action takes place). Hence in theatrical realism the actors ignore the audience and the audience is not allowed to communicate in any way or disrupt the actors. To do so would be to break the fourth wall and hence destroy the illusion of realism.

- In film and TV drama the fourth wall is represented by the camera lens. The rule for the vast majority of film and tv drama is that the actors do not look at the camera for to so they would be looking directly at the audience. When actors do in fact look directly at the camera their eyes are nearly always looking beyond it, often at the character they are speaking to – they are not addressing the audience.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzQTF--oQ-U>



- Think about what happens to the notion of realism in the two following clips
- Annie Hall
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpIYz8tfGjY>
- Amelie
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhrYfJlkqPU&feature=related>

- It is arguable that all forms of media have their own equivalents of the fourth wall and we can discuss these in seminars but for now it is worth thinking about what the fourth wall is in a) TV news broadcasts, b) advertising, c) photography d) music video.



- In each of these case the rule are very different because of the specificities of the genre, for example in tv news broadcasts it is precisely the job of the anchor to address the audience directly (he or she will always look at them directly through the camera and often refer to the audience as 'you'). Yet TV news broadcasts are also based around notions of realism too – ie they have to be believable. Consequently we need to think carefully about what the fourth wall might actually be in tv news broadcasts.

To recap

- A story is simply a sequence of events
- A narrative is how those events are told or depicted in the telling

Summary

The process of narrative, or story-making, involves certain key elements. Stories need

- a **narrator**, to **organise, select and comment** on the events and characters within the narrative;
- it involves a **point of view** from which the action and characters are presented,
- it also implies a **listener**, or an **audience**, and the ways in which the audience will respond to what is being told;
- it involves a basic **structure** of some type (beginning, middle and end?);
- it involves a basic decision about the **type (or genre)** of story being told (horror, comedy, dream, factual account, etc.);
- and it also implies the use of various **codes** to perform certain distinctive functions (create or reveal character; to generate suspense, to provide setting, to further the plot).