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Narrative

Learn the First Stage in the video Production Process

Learning Objectives

Skill

The student has acquired the skills needed to plan and produce interactive video in relation to its intended purpose, including the development of appropriate documentation

Introduction

This is the first stage in the video production process - determining your story:

- What is the story you need to tell?
- Who is your target audience?
- What type/style of video will catch their attention?

Without a story, we have nothing to teach...

Topics

1. Narrative
2. Genre

1. Narrative

Every story has a **Narrative**, without one there is no story:

- A **Narrative** is a story
- The **Narrator** is the one who **narrates** the story
- This is known as a **Narration**
- The **narrative voice** is the way in which the **Narration** is told.

1. Narrative

There are 2 types of **Narrative Voice** or **Focalisation** one can use to tell a story:

- **Homodiegetic narrative** - personal experiences
- **Heterodiegetic narration** – another's experiences

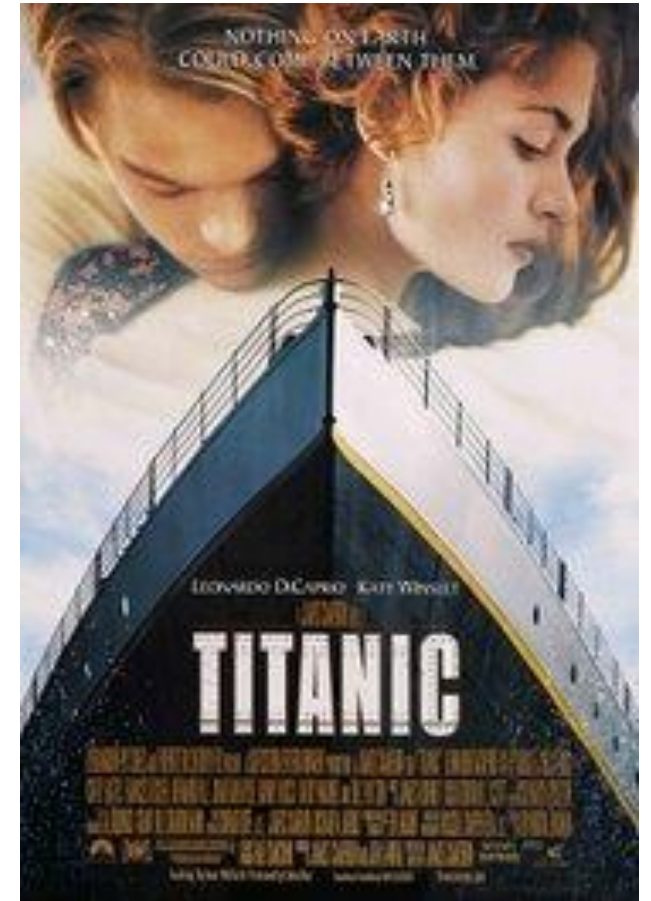
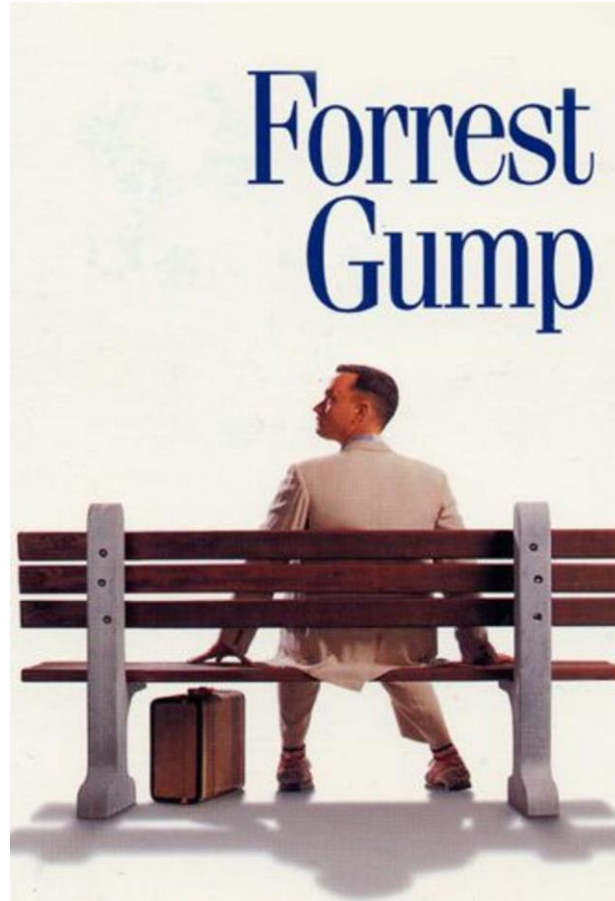
1. Narrative

The **Homodiegetic narrative** is usually delivered by a character in the story:

- someone actively involved in the narrative
- Usually uses the first-person in his address
- He may be the protagonist or just a player
- is somehow affecting or affected by the actions in the story

1. Narrative

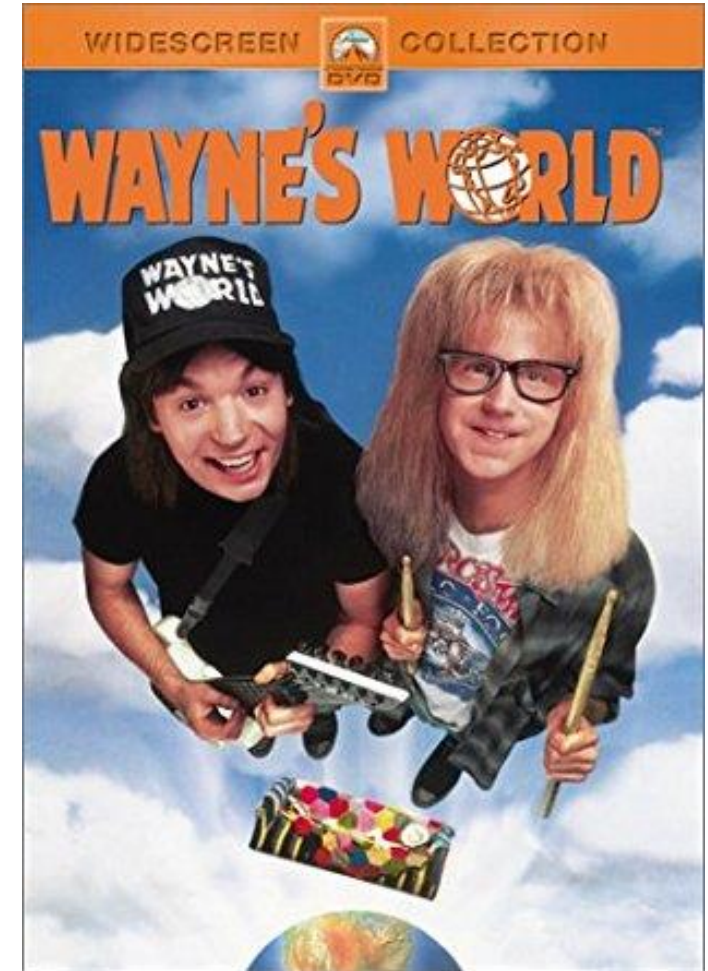
Examples of **Homodiegetic** narrators:



1. Narrative

Some **Homodiegetic narrators** can become aware of their fictional nature:

- They address the audience
- This is known as "**breaking the fourth wall**"



1. Narrative

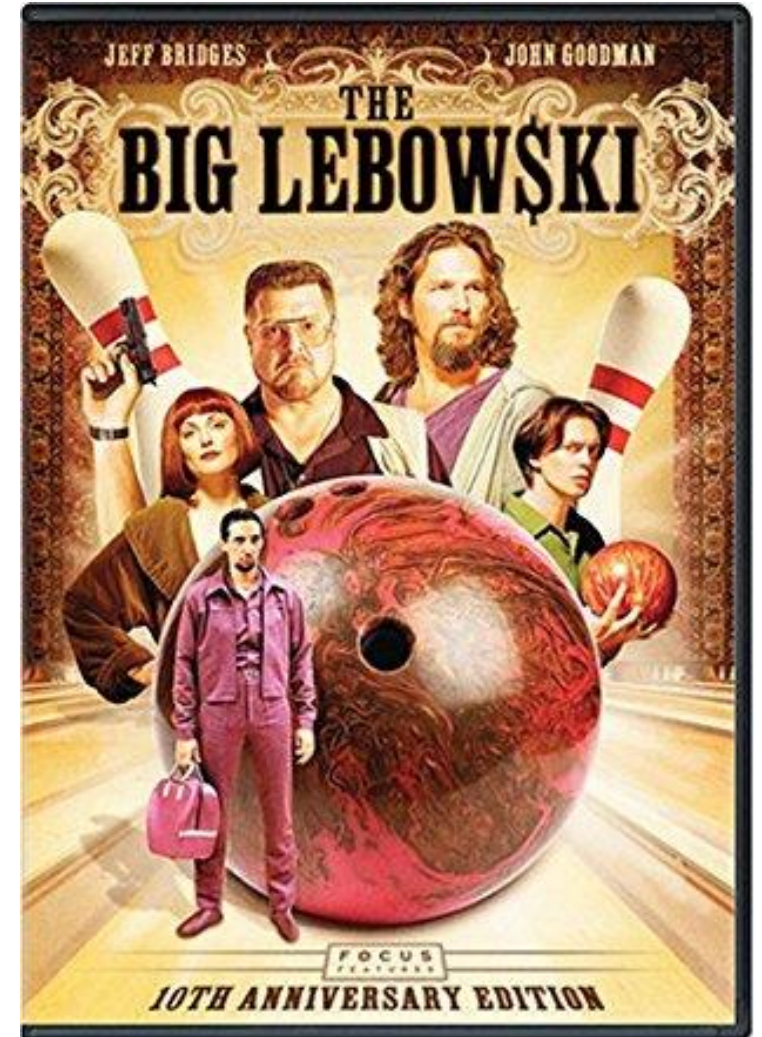
Heterodiegetic narration is the accounts of *other people's experiences*:

- usually told by one who is not a character
- vary widely in their knowledge
- may be restricted to the single perspective
- may be all-knowing or **omniscience**

1. Narrative

Some **Heterodiegetic narrators** are also characters in the story:

- They have an all-knowing perspective
- But they are also able to effect the actions of the characters in the story



1. Narrative

Some **Homodiegetic** narrators can also be **Heterodiegetic**:

- telling the story of another character from a godlike perspective
- Although they are also characters in the story
- And therefore can effect and be effected by the actions of other characters



1. Narrative

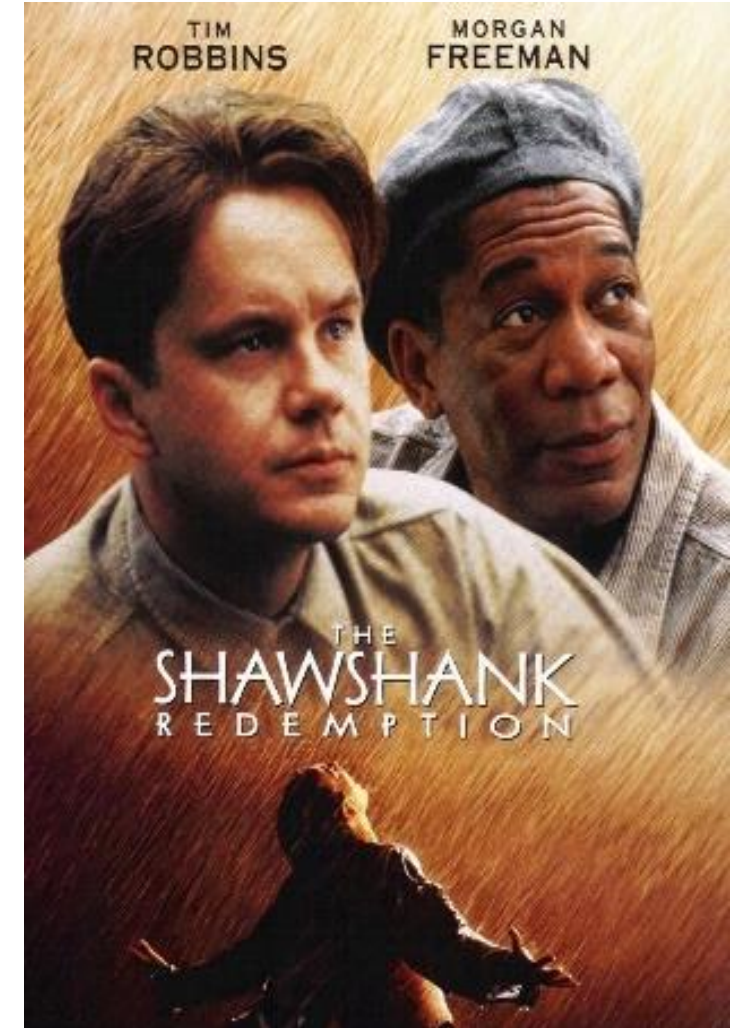
The amount of information the audience is privy to, is determined by the **narrative voice**:

- **Overt narrator** – Tells the facts as they know them to be
- **Covert narrator** – Deliberately misleading the audience

1. Narrative

An **Overt narrator** is open and honest:

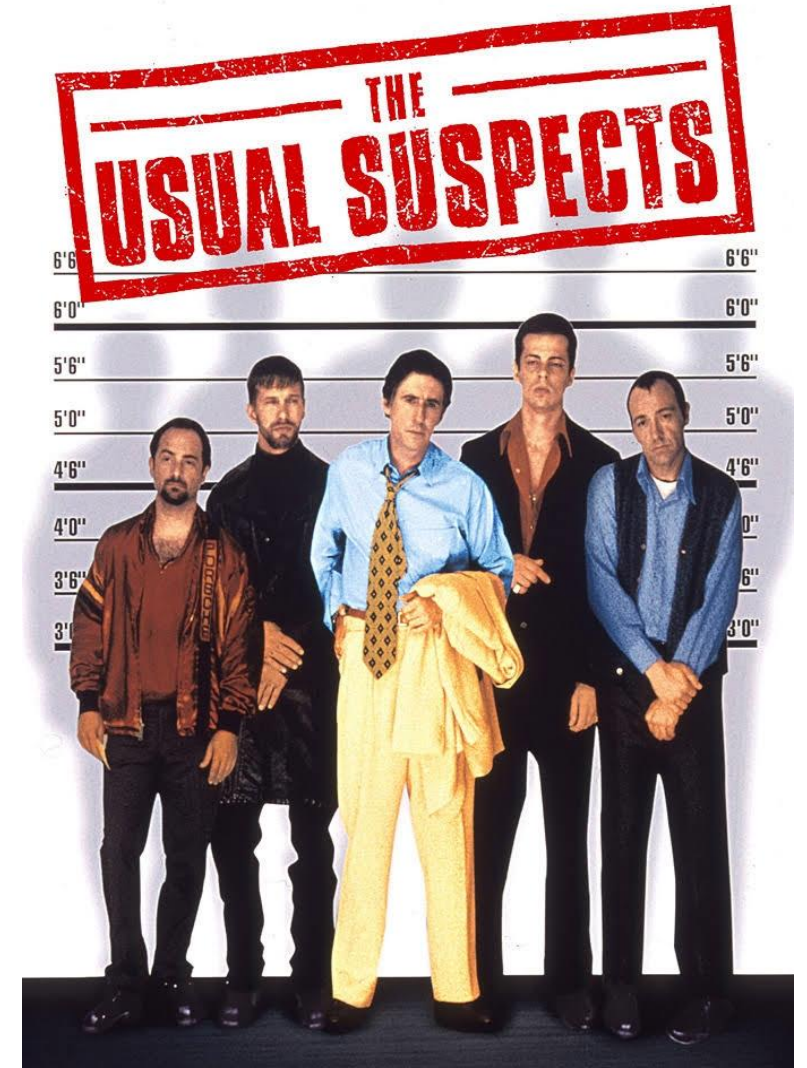
- telling the full story is the main focus
- important for the audience to know and understand everything



1. Narrative

A Covert narrator is interpretive:

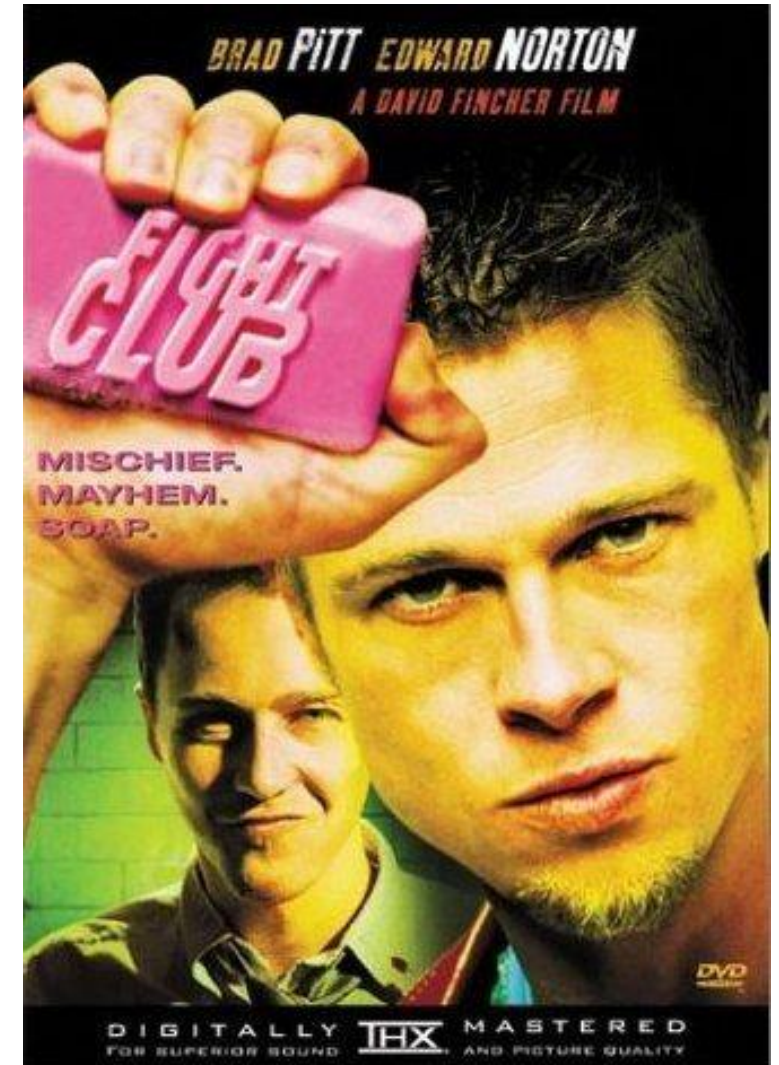
- May give misleading information
- May have opinions that sway the audience
- Allowing for the audience to decide on their own
- May be totally unreliable



1. Narrative

Some narrators can be both **Overt** as well as **Covert**:

- telling a story to the best of their knowledge without bias
- Although are they are unknowingly giving audiences misleading information



1. Narrative

Where there is no obvious **Narrator**:

- stories are told from the perspective of the '**auteur**' (The Director)
- usually through visuals and dialogs
- Actions and events reveal the information needed to tell the story

Guided Practice

In your groups, find and discuss an example of a story (film or novel etc...) told by a:

- **Covert** (interpretive) **Heterodiegetic** (other people's accounts) **Narrator?**

And a:

- **Overt** (reliable) **Homodiegetic** (own accounts) **Narrator?**
- Note the **Title of the story** and the name of the **Narrator**

2. Genre

The word ***genre*** is French and it simply means “kind” or “type.”

- It is related to the word *genus*
- is used in the biological sciences
- Classification for groups of plants and animals

2. Genre

All stories have at least one major **genre** although most stories are considered crossbreeds or hybrids:

- Categories for genre are broad and can be mixed
- They are convenient terms developed informally
- It is normal to see 3 or 4 overlapping genre (or sub-genre) in a story

2. Genre

Examples of stories that straddle several **genres**:

- Is *Groundhog Day* (1993) - romantic comedy/fantasy
- *Alien* (1979) - horror/science fiction
- *Being John Malkovich* (1999) - Drama/fantasy
- *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) - romantic comedy/science fiction

What determines the **Genre** a story belongs to?

2. Genre

Generally, **Genres** are identifiable by their **conventional iconography**:

- Sci-Fi – Space Ships, aliens, technology
- Action – Guns, car chases, fight scenes
- Horror – Monsters, blood, darkness

Can you name some other **Genre conventions**?

2. Genre

- Comedy – Slap stick, laughter....
- Drama – Break-ups, loss....
- Romance - Tears, Lust,
- Fantasy – Knight, dragons,
- Mythology – Gods, monsters,
- Adventure – Exotic Places, gadgets,

..and so on.

2. Genre

A **Genre** may also be identifiable by its **Subjects** or **Themes**:

- Gangster - centers on large scale urban crime
- Sci fi - features technology beyond the reach of contemporary science
- Westerns - life on some frontier
- Sports - climax with a big game.

2. Genre

A **Genre** can also be identifiable by their **presentation style**:

- Musical – big budget high entertainment value
- Crime – intriguing plot patterns
- Drama – engaging realism
- Comedy - willing suspension of disbelief
- Suspense - amount of tension

2. Genre

A **Genre** can also be identifiable by using the **The Auteur System**:

- Based on the expression of the director's style or authoring vision or 'signature':
 - Woody Allen – Drama and comedy
 - Alfred Hitchcock - suspense and thrillers
 - John Wayne – westerns
 - Errol Flynn - classic swashbuckler adventures

2. Genre

A **Genre** can also be identifiable by their **Cinematic techniques**:

- Thriller or Horror - Somber lighting
- Action or Adventure - Rapid cutting and slow motion
- Drama - Poignant music
- Film Noir - High contrasts between light and shadows
- Epic - Sweeping wide angle camera movements

2. Genre

A **Genre** can also be identifiable by their **Plotline**:

- **Plotlines** are short descriptions that give meaning to a story
- There are many type of plotlines
- Not all stories follow a specific plotline
- Whilst many stories include two or more

2. Genre

These are 7 basic **Plotlines**:

1. Overcoming the Monster
2. Voyage and Return
3. Rags to Riches
4. The Quest
5. Comedy
6. Tragedy
7. Rebirth

2. Genre

A **plotline** would read like this:

1. **Overcoming the Monster** - Our hero sets out to defeat an antagonistic force which threatens the protagonist and/or protagonist's homeland.
2. **Voyage and Return** - Our hero goes to a strange land and, after overcoming the threats it poses to him/her, returns with nothing but experience.
3. **Rags to Riches** - Our hero peruses wealth, acquires wealth. Loses it all and gains it back again upon growing as a person.

Summary

Storytelling:

Summary

1. **Narrative** – The perspective from which the story is told
2. **Genre** – Denotes a Plotline and or Style of story

Independant Practice

On you own, take 5 minutes to review what has been learnt to day:

- In your working portfolios
- Write down in your own words
- what you understand about today's key topics

Resources

- The Language of Film - p39-54
- Mieke Bal, 2009. Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative. University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division. Pp. 43-65
- 10 Best Structured Movies of All Time:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgk6e8gWDbk>
- What is Narrative Writing? - Definition, Types, Characteristics & Examples:
<http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-narrative-writing-definition-types-characteristics-examples.html>
- Andrew Stanton: The clues to a great story:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxDwieKpawg>