GFM

GCSE Film Studies

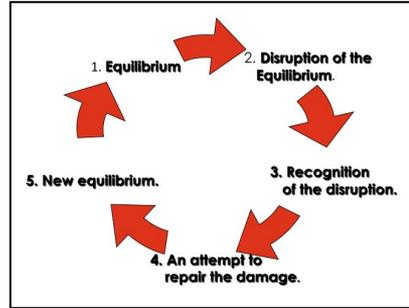## Module 1: Introduction to Film

Welcome to Film Studies
Genre and
Narrative Theories

Subject-specific Vocabulary	Definition
Genre	A style or category of film, recognisable to audiences through the director's use of genre conventions
Narrative	A story that unfolds in an ordered series of events connected by the logic of cause and effect
Genre Convention	The detailed 'rules' of a genre — the elements of film form and structure that audiences come to expect when they hear the name of a specific genre

Narrative Theories

1. Equilibrium
2. Disruption of the Equilibrium.
3. Recognition of the disruption.
4. An attempt to repair the damage.
5. New equilibrium.

Todorov's Narrative Theory

A five-step cycle that explores how narratives are structured. Tzvetan Todorov believed that all narratives must follow this cycle to further the storyline.

EXAMPLES OF BINARY OPPOSITES

o Rich and Poor
o Good and Bad
o Black and White
o Male and Female
o Clever and Dumb
o Vampire and Werewolf
o Strong and Weak
o Human and Supernatural Being
o Young and Old
o Fast and Slow

The Theory of Binary Opposition

A theory that two opposing forces must be against each other within a film for the narrative to progress. These conflicts are usually resolved by the end of the film.

helper
the hero
dispatcher
villain
false hero
the donor
princess
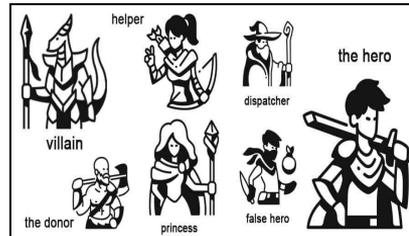
Propp's Narrative Theory

The theory that narratives have archetype characters and that they follow the 31 functions of a story.
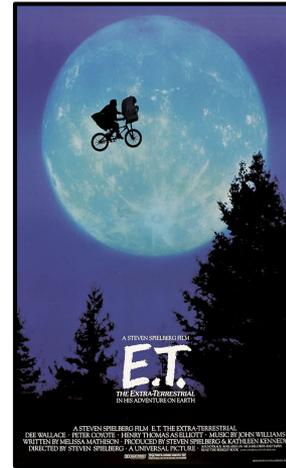
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Comparison study of 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' (Siegel, 1956) and 'E.T, the Extra-Terrestrial' (Spielberg, 1982)

Module 2: US Comparison Study

Subject-specific Vocabulary	Definition
Character	The role played by an actor in a film
Representation	How films portray different aspects of society by exploring age, gender, ethnicity and authority
Sub-Genre	An identifiable sub-category of a larger category of main film genres
Context (Cultural, Social, Political, Historical, Institutional and Technological)	The setting and time period in which the film takes place or was made — how real events have inspired the director.
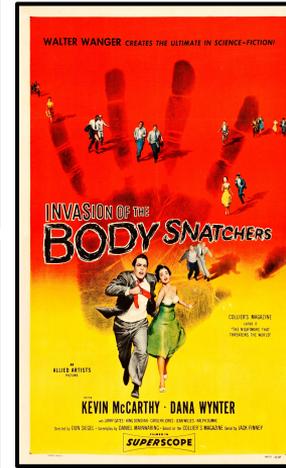
Science Fiction Genre Conventions:

- Character types — aliens, humans, robots, etc.

- Settings — Earth, outer-space, parallel universes, etc.

- Big 'what if?' questions

- Advanced technology
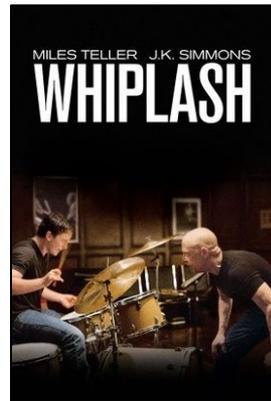
- Themes of good vs. evil

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Module 5: US Independent Film

Introduction to Independent Film

Exploration of Specialist Writing

Key Themes:

Masculinity
Toxic masculinity
Mental Health
Success vs. Failure
Idolisation

Subject-specific Vocabulary	Definition
Independent Film	An independent ("indie") film is a film produced outside of the major studio systems, e.g. Hollywood, Bollywood and Pinewood. They are often, though not always, created with a similar budget and their films often premiere at a variety of film festivals (local, national or international).

Whiplash, Men and Masculinity by Tom Beasley from ThePopcornMuncher.com, January 2015

Fletcher is 'stripped down' in appearance whereas Andrew is a 'baby-faced youngster'

Nicole in an 'underwritten' character and only shown through her interactions with Andrew

Andrew idolises Fletcher to the extent that he will do just about anything for his approval

By the end of the film, Andrew and Fletcher are equals, sharing a 'masculine utopia'

Exploration of 'District 9'
(Blomkamp, 2009)
FOCUS: Narrative

Module 7: Global Film – Narrative

Subject-specific Vocabulary	Definition
Apartheid	A policy of system of institutionalised racism, with segregation and discrimination enforced on the grounds of race
Institutionalised Racism	Racism that has become part of the normal behaviour of people with an organisation, e.g. the government, school, etc.
Segregation	The institutional separation of an ethnic, racial, religious, or other minority group from the dominant majority
Discrimination	Treating different categories of people differently, especially on the grounds of race, age or gender

Narrative Structures:

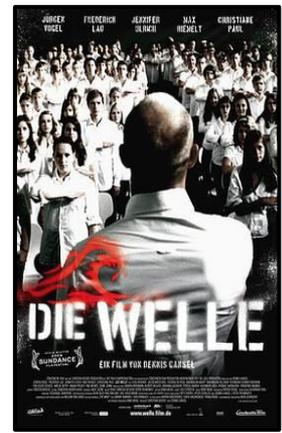**Linear:** the storyline unfolds in chronological order

Non-Linear: the storyline jumps around in time through the use of flashback and flashforward

Circular: the storyline ends where it began with the events at the beginning of film tying into the end of the narrative

Module 8: Global Film – Representation

Exploration of 'The Wave' (Gansel, 2008)
FOCUS:
Representation

Subject-specific Vocabulary	Definition
Representation	How films portray different aspects of society by exploring age, gender, ethnicity and authority
Ethnicity	Belonging to a specific social group that has a common national or cultural tradition
Authority	How much power a character has in film and how they respond to other characters with power
Sub-Genre	An identifiable sub-category of a larger category of main film genres

Based on Ron Jones' social experiment 'The Third Wave' and Todd Strasser's novel *The Wave*.

Post Second-World War Germany
- The country is scarred by its past
- Adults are much more liberal; fearful of being 'too authoritative'
- The students embrace Wenger's authority and discipline as reassuring; a direct contrast to Hollywood's depiction of rebellious teenagers
- The students begin by believing that a dictatorship could never be established in modern Germany

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Subject-specific Vocabulary	Definition
Aesthetics	The way a film's visual and aural features are used to create essentially non-narrative dimensions of the film, including the film's 'look'
Iconography	The visual images and symbols that carry meaning from film to film
Social Realism	The realistic depiction of contemporary life, as a means of social or political comment

Film Style

What makes the film 'look' like a Sci-Fi?	What makes the film 'look' like a UK Contemporary Film?
- Humans vs. Aliens - Alien invasion - Themes of good vs. evil - Exploration of big 'what if?' questions - Military-style floodlights on the block	- Set on Guy Fawkes/Bonfire Night - British Iconography – London Underground, ambulance, police, etc. - British actors