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**successful stories
revolve around
characters that are not
overly sympathetic,
because of some of their
thoughts or actions, yet
characters the audience
still finds compelling.**

said to be about a character with whom the audience has some measure of sympathy, who strongly wants something that is very difficult, yet possible, to achieve.

are: 1. the story is about somebody with whom we have some empathy, 2. this somebody wants something very badly, 3. this something is difficult, but possible to do, get, or achieve

**maximum emotional
impact and audience
participation in the
proceedings, 5. the story
must come to a
satisfactory ending (which
does not necessarily
mean a happy ending).**

middle, and end, and the reason we employ a three act structure is that it is the simplest to understand and it most closely adheres to the phases of an audience's experience of a story.

The first act gets the audience involved with the characters and the story.

**The second act keeps
it involved and
heightens its
emotional
commitment to the
story.**

**The third act wraps up
the story and brings
the audience's
involvement to a
satisfactory end.**

**something that
viewers are
consciously aware of,
though they feel the
emotional shifts that
come with pivotal
changes in the story.**

film and no clear-cut changes of act, as there are in most plays. This enables a film story to be told as a continuum, on and on until the end, without stopping, without looking back.

The first act introduces the audience to the world of the story and its principal characters. It also sets up the main conflict around which the story will be built.

**elaborates in ever
greater detail and
intensity on those
difficulties, the
obstacles to the
character achieving
the goal.**

**Subplots in the story
are developed largely
in the second act.**

In the third act, the main story (the central character's story), and the subplots are all resolved in differing ways, but all with some sense of finality, and that the conflict is over).

**world of a story
derives from two
sources: the nature of
the central character
(in most films) and the
nature of the
storyteller.**

around a single central

character, the protagonist. The antagonist of a story is the opposing force, the “difficulty” that actively resists the protagonist’s efforts to achieve the goal. These two opposing forces form the conflict(s) of the story.

**a story with an
outside antagonist
helps make the
protagonist a more
complex and
interesting human
being.**

An external source of conflict in a story where the main conflict is essentially internal helps make the two sides of the character visible, palpable, and with lives of their own.

**It is far better to give
the audience a peek
at the inner life of a
character through his
or her actions.**

present in both scenes, is really unnecessary for our understanding of the actions, the characters, and the outcome.

**Reliance on
objective drama
usually leaves the
audience bored
and uninterested
within a short
time.**

A film that relies on subjective drama can also lull the audience with a dearth of identifiable and anticipatable danger, a sense of uneventful safety.

For most stories, a combination of objective and subjective drama is most effective.

There are three kinds of time in a film story: real time, screen time, and time frame.

**Real time is the time
an action actually
takes – the four
minutes it takes a
world-class runner
to run a mile.**

Screen time is the time the depiction of an action takes up on screen – perhaps the first thirty seconds, another ten seconds in the middle of the race, and the last fifteen seconds of it, edited together with shots of a significant sheering fan in between for a total of about a minute.

The time frame is a deadline or an end to an action that the audience can anticipate, in the race it is the finish line, the moment the audience knows the race is leading up to and when the action is over.

Most scenes take place in real time which is the actions we see on screen taking the same amount of time as those same actions would take in real life.

An ellipsis is the skipping over of time without shocking the audience.

**Prolonging the
time beyond what
it would
realistically take to
do something is
called elaboration.**

Real time has been elaborated upon for dramatic impact. Slow motion is sometimes used for the same reason, to prolong our experience of an important moment.

**Most major
ellipses are
done between
scenes.**

Time frame is a device the storyteller uses to help the audience store up its emotional energy for the important moments by letting them know there is a deadline or some moment when a crucial action must be completed.

Some films have a time frame set from their title on, others are only established within the story, often at the end of the first act, and still others never have an overall time frame, no deadline.

For a filmmaker to achieve his or her goals with a narrative film, one essential ingredient is to keep the audience members in their seats, paying attention to the story and caring about the outcome and characters, and this is all called participation.

**Drama requires
an emotional
response from
audience
members in
order to exist.**

The key to keeping the audience from guessing ahead is not to keep members in the dark about what might happen, but to make it believe that maybe their hopes will come about, but that fears are just as likely to happen.

Creating Characters

Character development requires a character arc as a tool audience members can reflect upon to determine the maturation of the character(s) as the story progresses.

Characters define themselves through actions, dialogue, deeds, and intentions. Keep in mind that characters may say something and do other things, and their needs may be contradictory or conflict with each other.

**character whose specific desire
drives the story.**

**An antagonist is the human
obstacle for the protagonist who
must be as strong, if not stronger,
than the protagonist to pose a
viable threat.**

When creating a character, the first consideration is to construct a feasible biography.

INTERVIEWING

Name

Where he/she is from

What he/she does professionally

Physicality

Demographics

Psychological Make-Up

Idiosyncrasies

Unique Qualities

Background

Likes / Dislikes

Present Circumstances

Goals

(AVOID STEREOTYPES)