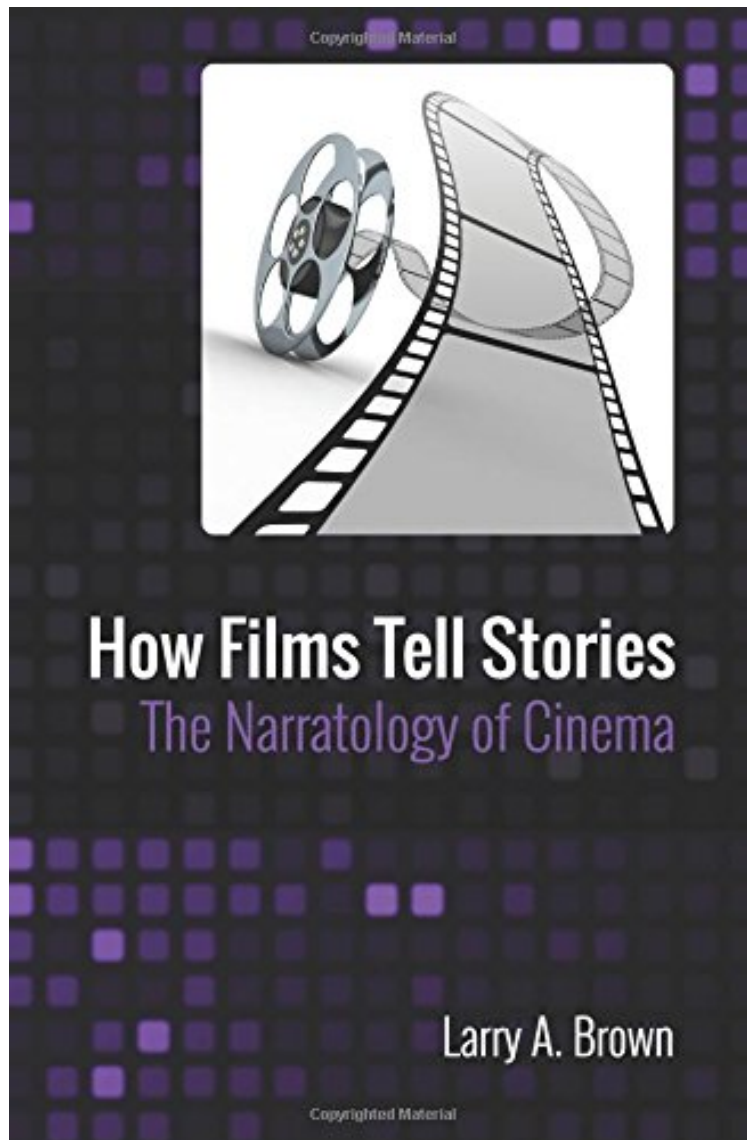


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# How Films Tell Stories: The Narratology of Cinema

*Larry A. Brown*

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**Larry A. Brown : How Films Tell Stories: The Narratology of Cinema** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How Films Tell Stories: The Narratology of Cinema:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Far too much written about Narratology is opaque and academic ...By Gregory Alan Tidwell Far too much written about Narratology is opaque and academic. This ambiguity is unfortunate. An understanding of narrative is an understanding of life, for as Jaques observed, All the worlds a stage and all the men and women merely players. Thankfully, Larry A. Brown has provided an assessable resource to begin

thinking about the form and structure of narrative. *How Films Tell Stories: The Narratology of Cinema*, offers the reader an insight into the craft of story-telling and our power to appropriately receive the narrative. Cinema presents specific qualifications for our consideration. As its technical constraints have only existed for about a century, the differential of cinema from classical drama is new. But, in its newness rests its relevance. Obviously, anyone wanting to discuss the importance of cinema should read Brown's book. But, I would contend, everyone who wants to engage modern culture at any level should read this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This summer we attended a series of public presentations called ...By Tom Feller This summer we attended a series of public presentations called *How Films Tell Stories* by Professor Brown, who teaches at David Lipscomb University here in Nashville, at one of the branches of the public library. He was also selling his book on the subject, and I bought a copy. In his book, he breaks the subject down into plot, character, fictional worlds, time, perspective, editing, and sounds. He uses a minimum of academic jargon and explains what the terms mean when he has to use them. Brown also uses a lot of examples, the vast majority of which I was familiar with. The SF and fantasy films he mentions included *12 Monkey*, *2001, A Clockwork Orange*, *Back to the Future*, *The Planet of the Apes*, *Blade Runner*, *District 9*, *Enchanted*, *George of the Jungle*, *Groundhog Day*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Jurassic Park*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Mary Poppins*, *Pleasantville*, *Spaceballs*, *Spiderman*, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Terminator*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Dark Knight*, *The Matrix*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, *The Ring*, *The Road Warrior*, *The Sixth Sense*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Total Recall*, *War of the Worlds*, *Westworld*, and *X-Men*. It was an enjoyable read, and I learned a lot.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a fantastic overview of the elements of film narrative. By Customer This is a fantastic overview of the elements of film narrative; breaking it down into two essential, related components: story and discourse. I was particularly interested in the discussion of film discourse; it very much deepened my understanding of storytelling and made it easier to conceptualize how extra-lingual devices add to story, structure and meaning. The text is clear and concise, unpretentious and jargon-free. Relevant examples are interspersed throughout the book which help illustrate concepts and provide a wealth of material to check out for anyone with a deep interest in film and storytelling. This book will be of great help for anyone who wishes to tell stories in visual media, or any media for that matter, or for those pursuing critical writing.

*How Films Tell Stories* presents a concise and engaging introduction to the often complex study of narrative theory. In part one, *Aspects of Story*, theories of plot structure, character, and fictional worlds are applied to cinema. Part two, *Aspects of Discourse*, discusses how the story is communicated, examining techniques of cinematic narration such as time manipulation, perspective, editing, and sound. Each chapter concludes with questions encouraging readers to produce their own analyses of the narrative strategies of films. A supplemental website with video links accompanies the book.

"As a long-time Hollywood film editor, I've seldom had the inclination to return to the academic evaluation of filmmaking that I left behind at UCLA nearly 40 years ago. But when Professor Brown asked me to look at his new book *How Films Tell Stories*, I found myself fascinated by his dissection of ideas I'd either taken for granted or never really analyzed in the day-to-day application of editing. Dr. Brown's presentation is not only scholarly; it turns academic analysis into a great read for anyone interested in storytelling." -- Robert Gordon, film editor of *The Blue Lagoon* (1980) and *Toy Story* (1995)

"Larry A. Brown's *How Films Tell Stories* is a highly readable introduction to film narratology. The book is designed for students who are interested in the question of how to apply narratology in the context of the analysis of movies. *How Films Tell Stories* covers all the important meaning-making elements of film: individual events, plot structures, the characters, the represented worlds, issues of chronology, the film's overall perspective (including captions, voice-over narration, the so-called 'cinematic narrator,' focalization, and unreliable narration), the process of editing, and also does justice to the active role of the reader or viewer. Brown is particularly good at illustrating the usefulness of narratology on the basis of examples of well-known Hollywood movies." -- Jan Alber, Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies and author of *Unnatural Narrative: Impossible Worlds in Fiction and Drama* (2016)

"In this much needed teaching tool, Larry Brown distills the best of narratology, strips it of jargon, overcomes its polemics, and shows how exciting an approach it can provide to film. But film in return has a lot to teach narratology, as the second part demonstrates. Far from reducing filmic discourse to the categories defined for written narrative fiction, this study eloquently demonstrates its medium-specific properties. ... Reading this book was pure pleasure." -- Marie-Laure Ryan, author/editor of *Storyworlds across Media* (2014)

About the Author Larry A. Brown is a professor of film theory in the Department of Cinematic Arts at Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tennessee.