

# Narrative analysis practical

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A narrative is concerned with the human means of making sense of an ever-changing world. It is through narrative that we can bring a sense of an ever-changing world. It is through a narrative that we can bring sense of order to the seeming disorder in our world, and it is through narrative that we can begin to define ourselves as having some sense of temporal continuity and as being distinct from others. It is basically an organized interpretation of a sequence of events, which involves;

- \* Attributing agency to the characters in the events.

\* Inferring causal links between the events. Three basic components of present in narrative are a beginning, middle and end. Narratives are not always a conscious process, because we may use established social narratives to explain an event or to complete a story. Functions of Narratives Some of the basic functions of narratives are;

1. A narrative offers an integrated account of the event.
- 2.

It has a finished structure that is the person is aware about the end even before he starts narrating.

3. restoring a sense of order – it restores order in the everyday disruptions like personal problems, family problems etc.,
4. Heider and Simmel's experiment (1944) reveals that, when people are exposed to pictograms they explain those pictograms in the form of stories that have definite beginning, middle and end.

5. Humans as agencies – humans strive within bonds to create their own world; they provide narrative account of their experiences that imply their role or lack of role in shaping these events. When we are denied the opportunity to express our agency, we experience suffering. Also social

oppression can deny the opportunity of true agency. 6. Employment – the central process of bringing order or organizing a sequence of events is the central function of a narrative.

7. A narrative is like a recollection – the common theme gives the events a narrative shape, there is an interconnected sequence that leads from start to finish. We are aware of the ending before we start the story. Methodology We were asked to interpret the movie “ El Arbole Seco” meaning The Dry/Withered Tree, to help us understand narrative analysis. For this purpose the class was divided into groups of three, four or five.

There were four people in my group-1) Mridul Kataria2) Poorti Srivastav3) Prakriti Gupta4) Shweta Sharma Procedure After the team was formed every member was asked to watch the movie individually. After that we all saw the movie individually and came up with relevant themes and the predominant emotions from it. Themes and emotions that we thought were most prominently depicted in the movie were selected to form the Common Themes and those that were seen individually by group members and were not agreed upon were made the Unique Themes. These themes and emotions were then interpreted through the process of narrative analysis.

Narrative Analysis of – EL ARBOL SECO Title EL ARBOL SECO Directors Olmo Figueredo Gonzi½lez-Quevedo, Manuel Hidalgo Writers Olmo Figueredo Gonzi½lez-Quevedo (screenplay) Manuel Hidalgo (screenplay) Genre Drama Synopsis A five-year-old boy lives with his parents in a shack that will be evicted soon. The boy discovers a dry tree near to his home and, when he tries to bring it back the life, he achieves to escape to the dramatic situation around him.

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Narrative Analysis of Movie Step 1 SCRIPTA 5 year old boy lives in a shanty settlement with his parents. La familia tendrá que desalojar la zona donde próximamente se construirá un gran bloque de pisos. to leave the area soon because a large block of flats will be built there . This Su familia será la última en abandonar la zona, puesto que sus vecinos se van a marchar. This This family will be the last to leave the area because its last neighbours have already gone. Una vez se han ido, el niño descubre una regadera olvidada en el traslado de los antiguos compañeros. the mother of the child discovers a forgotten watering can in the transfer of former neighbours.

She takes the same can and waters a dry plant at home. Through the same spray of water the boy sees, A varios metros de su chabola, en un amplio y desértico descampado, hay un viejo manzano seco que conserva una rama en flor. dry tree which retains only a branch in bloom.

El chico decide comenzar a regarlo. The boy decides to get the tree to life. He makes many attempts for the same and some or the other way those get foiled. But the niño vive al margen de lo que ocurre. child keeps on trying, no matter what happens.

One day, he decides to stop at el camino y entonces un coche que pasaba a gran velocidad destroza su regadera. the road and then a car passing at high speed destroys his shower. Cuando llega a su chabola, con los pocos trozos que quedan de su regadera, ve que sus When he comes to his hut, with the

few remaining pieces of his shower, he sees his padres esperan fuera de la casa. parents waiting outside the house Mientras sus padres se ocupan por recoger las and collecting the pocas pertenencias que tienen, ante el inminente desalojo, el hijo piensa exclusivamente en su few belongings they have, they are at the threshold of their imminent eviction, the child thinks exclusively of the tree. When the heavy machines to destroy the shacks arrive, accidentally La línea tubería de agua del asentamiento está estropeada, por lo que el niño debe dar the only settlement's water line is broken, the jet of water that emerges leaves the apple tree dripping and suddenly there blooms a fruit-the apple. Step 2 The major themes and emotions were identified as the common themes and the themes that were not agreed upon were identified as the unique themes.

The common Themes are as follows-1) Poverty 2) Patriarchy 3) Nurturing Behaviour of Mother 4) Indifference of Father 5) Observational Learning 6) Dejection and Upset 7) Happiness 8) Bond with the Tree 9) Surprise 10) Hope and Persistence The unique Themes are as follows-1) Power Play 2) Stress between family members 3) Struggle to Fix 4) Comedy 5) Race Against time 6) Differing Degrees of Attachment 7) Unsocial Parents Step – 3 The next step after identification and consolidation of the major themes and emotions in the movie these themes and emotions were then analyzed and evidences from the movie were noted in order to support a particular emerging theme. Common Themes\* Poverty: Poverty is the lack of basic human needs, such as clean water, nutrition, care, education, clothing and shelter, because of the inability to afford them. There are instances where it is clear that this is movie is centred around a poor or rather poverty stricken family. Evidence

from the Movie: 1. In the very first scene where the damaged car, slum with no family around and child is playing alone with pebbles lying on road. 2.

In other scene where a family is shown leaving the slum and while they were going, a shower falls down from their van and the child takes that for himself.\* Patriarchy: Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of the father is central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children and property. This aspect of social system is also clearly visible in the given instance. Evidence from the Movie: 1. In the scene where the father is having lion share of melon and the lady does not ask for any share.

\* Nurturing behaviour of mother: This means that mother has an unconditional care for child and the mother usually takes care of her child's need which is also shown in the movie. Evidence from the Movie: 1. In the above mentioned scene (instances of patriarchy), mother ask for a share of melon and gives the bigger share to the child and keeps smaller piece for herself. 2. In the scene when demolition of slums takes place and his family packs their belongings and was leaving, mother keep calling him from car.\*

Indifferent behaviour of father: Fathers are also usually caring for the child but here the father has indifferent behaviour towards his child.

He shows no care and responsibility for the child which is clear from the instance noted below. Evidence from the Movie: 1. In the above mentioned scene (second instance of category" nurturing behaviour of mother), father does not call the child once and after some time he is busy in lighting his cigarette.\* Observational learning: It is a type of learning that occurs as a

function of observing, retaining and replicating novel behaviour executed by others. Here the child observes and replicates the behaviour shown by his mother which can be seen in given instance.

Evidence from the Movie: 1. In one scene child observes his mother watering a small plant pot and then following this scene the child goes to water the dried tree.\* Dejection and upset: When we want to achieve something in life we work hard towards getting it. But we don't always get it. Times when we don't get it makes us feel sad or upset or even dejected.

In other words, we start underestimating ourselves. Evidence from the Movie: 1. When the boy tries to water the tree for the very first time, but unfortunately the water finishes in the watering pot and he does not know what to do and sits there till dusk. 2. When he tries to fill more water from the tap in the watering pot but what comes out is only a little black dirty water.

3. After he is unable to get any water, he goes for the nature's call and then it clicks to him suddenly that he could 'naturally' water the plant that way hence he tries to control but by the time he reaches the tree, it's too late. 4. While going back home, when the boy is sitting beside the road with the watering pot and suddenly a car comes and drives over it and it gets crushed.\* Happiness: It is a positive emotion which we all like to experience lot many times during a single day.

Happiness is to be able to be joyous. Evidence from the Movie: 1. Towards the ending where the tree is getting watered by the pipeline that gets burst because of the bull-dozer. 2. The last scene where an apple, a flower grows  
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on the tree and the apple falls in his hands.\* Bonding with the tree- The child in this movie seemed to share a special bond with the tree next to his house.

Evidence from the Movie: 1. The initial scene where the boy is shown playing under the tree; the focus of the frame for the shot was also on the tree and the boy. 2. When the boy tries to water the tree for the very first time, but unfortunately the water finishes in the watering pot and he does not know what to do and sits there under the tree till dusk. 3. After the watering pot gets crushed, he sits under the tree with the crushed watering pot beside him.

4. Also in the scene where the builders have come to destroy their houses, the boy seems to be more worried of not being able to water the tree rather than losing a house and is sitting under the tree.\* Surprise: It is when we are taken aback because we experience something that we were not expecting. Surprises can be pleasant and unpleasant both. Evidence from the Movie: 1.

The ending scene where the tree is getting watered by the pipeline that gets burst because of the bull-dozer. 2. One another scene showing surprise is one in which the mom is surprised to see a flower and an apple grow on the withered tree and she comes out of the car.\* Hope and persistence: hope is being optimistic, keeping a positive approach to something. Believing that if something has ended badly, then, it is not the end.

Persistence is the consistency in the hard work towards a goal. It can vary in degree of intensity. Eventually the movie shows that persistence pays off in a fruitful manner. Evidence from the Movie: 1. When he walks far away from home alone, to a well, to fetch some water for the tree. 2.

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After he is unable to get any water, he goes for the nature's call and then it clicks to him suddenly that he could 'naturally' water the plant that way hence he tries to control but by the time he reaches the tree, it's too late.

Unique Themes\* Power play: Power-play involves the interplay of different kinds of power relationships between the powerful and the oppressed and the extent to which power resides in individuals. Evidence from the Movie: 1. In a scene, when a person with authority gives a notice to the child's father to vacate that place. 2. In the scene following the above scene, where the bulldozer is shown demolishing the slum settlement.

\* Stress between the family members Evidence from the Movie: 1. One of the preliminary scenes shows the father eating a fruit, though the mother is sitting next to him, he does not offer her. But when the boy comes, he gives a piece to him on being signalled to give and it is from that very piece that the mother takes a small bite. 2. Also in one of the ending scenes, the mother out of surprise comes out of the car to see the apple grow on the barren tree. The father does too but is indifferent and rather being surprised just burns a cigarette.

\* Struggling to fix Evidence from the Movie: 1. In one of the scene the mother and the father both are shown doing constructive things. Mother is watering a small plant, father is fixing a television. Both are trying to revive things that have stopped working or are almost on the verge of dying.\* Irony: It is the expression of meaning through words or actions that convey the opposite.

Evidence from the Movie: 1. The only scene which shows it quiet aptly is the scene in which the boy and the mother are both overlooking at an advertisement hoarding of the apartments that were going to be built on the piece of land the family like few more other families were living. Irony, because families were being replaced or asked to shift because the site was chosen for building family apartments!\* Comedy: An act of comedy is that which makes people laugh. A hilarious act or comedy is not supposed to be taken seriously. Evidence from the Movie: 1.

The only scene which I thought that was a little hilarious was when the boy is walking back after filling his watering pot but forgets his half-pants on the well and that is thrown by the old man on his face.\* Race Against Time- To be in a “ race against time” means to have a great deal to do before the arrival of a rapidly approaching deadline. Evidence from the Movie: 1. When the construction company puts up a board of the upcoming construction, the boy is reminded of his imminent eviction from there. He must do something for the tree as soon as possible so that at least he can see it bloom before departure.

Thus his desperate measures to revive the tree, start soon after.\* Differing degrees of Attachment- Attachment has varied meanings but here it strictly refers to the degree of affection that the little boy has for the tree that binds him to the tree. Evidence from the Movie: 1. When the construction machines arrive, the boy is shown sitting under the tree. He sits still and unperturbed at the sight of his own house getting demolished and his parents packing away the last of their belongings.

The level of attachment that this boy has with nature is unmatched in comparison to any other materialistic pleasures in life. The boy is not at all bothered about the departure from his own home.\* Unsocial Parents- Certain people do not believe in keeping close contacts with the outside world and can be called as unsocial. They have no concern regarding the business of others. Evidence from the Movie: 1.

When the last of their neighbours are leaving , the parents of the boy are not shown to make any contact with them or any attempts at bidding them Farewell or a few words of good wishes. They all behave as strangers to their neighbours.\* Escapism- this movie within its story shows a classic example of can be called escapism, though the mental diversion in this movie is not recreational. By simply creating this mental diversion he was able to escape the dramatised situation around him. Evidence from the Movie: 1. He pays more attention to the tree, trying to infuse more life in it.

He is more upset about the tree not getting water rather than him having to leave his house. Epilogue That day the boy learnt that anything can be achieved but for that one only needs simple things like persistence and a heart dedicated towards it. After trying all that he could, when nothing seemed to help him move closer to his dream, he was almost on the verge to give up, almost on the verge to believe that probably certain things are just not suppose to happen, when finally it did happen, though by accident or maybe it was suppose to just happen that way! This incident left a huge impact on the boy. It became one of his fondest memories. The boy was growing into a young handsome man. He had decided to become a landscaper.

He had some way with the plants and flowers. Working with them gave him utmost happiness and satisfaction. Thus, even though he never got a formal education in this direction, through practise and working with well-established landscapers he sharpened his skills and acquired a lot of knowledge. Whenever he got stuck with anything, he just remembered that incidence and that gave him the strength and courage to continue his endeavours without being afraid to fail. But unfortunately, the boy was not earning as much as he would want to, to buy basic luxuries for his mother.

The mother was also growing old. She had divorced her husband when the boy was 16 years old. She had learnt to sustain herself and her boy by selling baked cookies and cakes. The mother was and still is the biggest bolster of the boy's life. Hence, he only hoped to become very famous one day to see his mother play in the riches.

And so that day did come in his life. Like the barren tree with a single green leaf was able to provide a flower and an apple, the boy with no formal, proper education because of penury was able to reproduce riches.

Epilogue Soon after the family and the construction workers see that the tree which was almost dead has come back to life, the latter go back and in a few days come back with the notice that the flats built would be given to the boy's family for making such a huge contribution towards a green earth.

Although by accident, Society and people can't help praising the young boy who did not leave any stone unturned in reviving the lifeless tree. The family gets a new and better life all thanks to the young boy and his father starts taking care of him in a more open and loving way. They live happily ever after

Epilogue The day the family shifted the boy learnt something, something

that others usually take a years of greying and wisdom to understand- Persistence is the key to success.

This interaction left a huge impact on the young child who based he rest of his life on this learning; he learned how to spot the silver ray behind the darkest of clouds. He is currently pursuing his degree in Environmental Studies from a Community College; a field he is deeply passionate about. The withered tree instils within him the hope to carry on and face every difficulty that comes his way. Failure is something he refuses to recognise as he knows or has learnt that what you sow is what you eventually reap. He does re-visit the tree every now and then, to go back in time and re-live the moment that changed his life. The withered tree now stands tall with a lush cover of green leaves and an odd apple or two for more little boys who need the hope and will to carry on.

Epiloguel could actually relate to this movie which revolves around a 5 year old boy. It talks about hope, efforts, obstacles, disappointments, persistence and finally achieving your aim. It is a happy story which is woven in thread of optimism. According to me, it says that it is your hard work which gets paid off which matters actually in the end. It is not the obstacle, problems, disappointments which matters it is your hard word, your persistence that matters.

Different episodes of this movie symbolize these aspects. The aspect of emptiness in movie showcases the difficult moments of life. I could recall the darkness that I had gone through after completing bachelor degree. Here in the movie the ray of hope was the only green leaf on the dried apple tree. It

is the hope that forces a person to make efforts so as to make situations better and favourable. Through that moment, the ray of hope that I experience was given by my teacher.

But as it shown that once the child thought to water the plant, he confronts many problems in his way and similarly following this hope was difficult for me as it was not a cake walk to get admission into a course of one's choice. When you confronts obstacle, it is very much possible that you fail but at this moment it is important to persist you efforts. In the movie also child fails many a times in watering the tree but he made efforts persistently. And finally in the end, he gets rewarded by the tree in a form of apple. Similarly I got through the course of my choice and felt rewarded after making my lot of efforts to get in. So in the end I would say that it is important to be optimistic enough to see and follow the ray of hope but it is your hard work and continuous efforts that make you an achiever. And without it, you can't even get an apple!!