



Media Language

You will need to consider:

- The different elements of media language, including technical, visual and audio codes.
- Moving image media language such as camerawork (distance, angle, movement), mise-en-scène (settings, locations, costume, props), editing (continuity editing) and sound (diegetic, non-diegetic and post-production sound).
- How the different elements of media language and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate multiple meanings.
- Genre codes, conventions and iconography.
- Principles of repetition and variation of a repertoire of elements.
- Hybridity and intertextuality.
- The significance of challenging and/or subverting genre conventions.
- How genres reflect their social and historical contexts.
- The dynamic nature of genre.
- The significance of genre to the television industry and television audiences.
- Narrative construction, structures, techniques and conventions.
- How media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies.

Theories

- Narratology – Tzvetan Todorov
- Genre theory – Steve Neale
- Semiotics – Roland Barthes
- Structuralism – Claude Levi-Strauss
- Postmodernism – Jean Baudrillard





Analytical Toolkit For Television

You will need to analyse television texts in terms of media language.

This will include:

- Technical Codes - camera: angles, shots, movement, focus; lighting: position, key, contrast; audio codes; editing; FX.
- Visual Codes - costume, setting, colour palette, framing & proxemics - (mise-en-scène); performance and NVC.
- Genre - what type of programme it is, setting, characters, repeated situations.
- Narrative - the story, flashbacks, narration.

Mindshower – what would you expect to include for each of these headings Use the digital resource to compare your ideas.

Technical Codes Recap Quiz

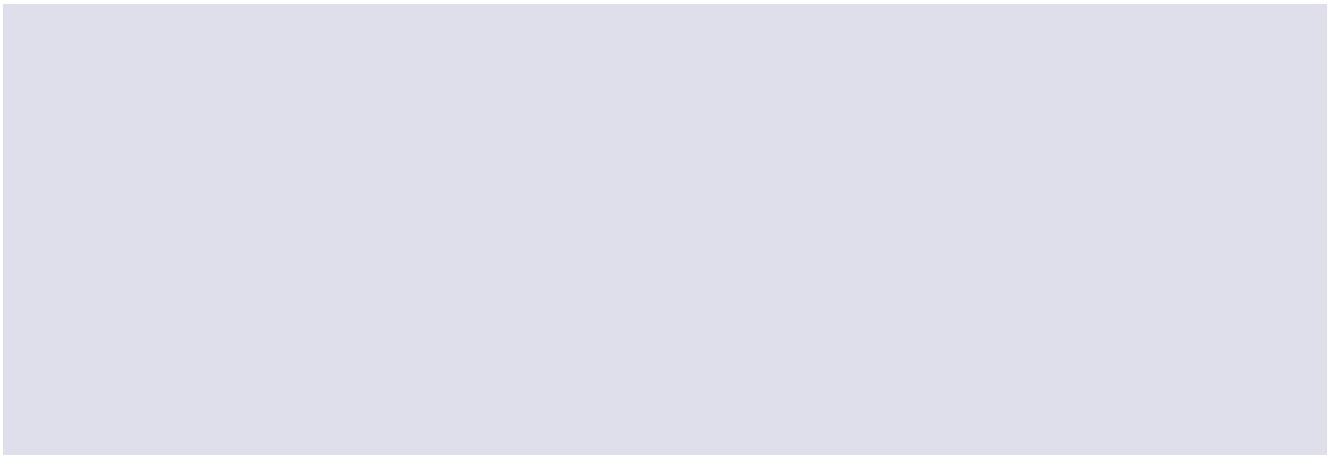
Use the digital resource to recap technical codes





Analysing the Opening

Watch the first 4 minutes of the text. Analyse this in terms of visual codes and media language. How do these elements combine to create meaning? Make notes below and then use the digital resource to compare your ideas with those suggested.



“Tendencies” or Functions of Documentary

Michael Renov suggests these tendencies are:

- To record, reveal, or preserve
- To persuade or promote
- To analyse or interrogate
- To express



Look at a week’s TV schedules. Identify documentaries which fulfil each of these functions and complete the chart on page 7.

(*Toward a Poetics of Documentary* in *Theorizing Documentary* AFI Film Readers 1993 p21)

Function	Documentary Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To record, reveal, or preserve 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To persuade or promote 	



Function	Documentary Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To analyse or interrogate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To express	

The Documentary

Is documentary a genre? A style? A form? A movement? There have been a number of attempts to define it:

“Kino-Pravda” – cinema as truth – Dziga Vertov

“The creative treatment of actuality” – John Grierson

“Representing reality” – Bill Nichols

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF AND TYPES OF DOCUMENTARY.

Directed Study Task: Henrik Juel: Defining Documentary Film makes some interesting points about defining documentary. Read the article and highlight the key points made.

http://pov.imv.au.dk/Issue_22/section_1/artc1A.html

Modes of Documentary (Bill Nichols)

Bill Nichols also categorises documentary by mode.

Use the digital resource to match the term with the definition and then fill in the definitions below.

- Observational
- Expository
- Reflexive
- Poetic
- Participatory
- Performative



Modes of Documentary

Documentary	Documentary Mode

Go back to your initial chart of television documentaries and their functions on page 7. What mode do they use? Complete this chart.

Documentary History: Suggestions

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/docexhibit/docuchron.htm> - The following extracts convey a range of documentary modes and topics, some of which include sensitive subjects.

1895 Lumiere brothers – *Arrival of a train at La Ciotat station* - actuality (0'40")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dgLEDdFddk>

1922 Robert Flaherty – *Nanook of the North* – romanticism (5')

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEajMPZy_0Q

1928 *Man With a Movie Camera* - Dziga Vertov – 'kino-pravda' and the city symphony BFI trailer (1'04")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtTlgxtoqhg>

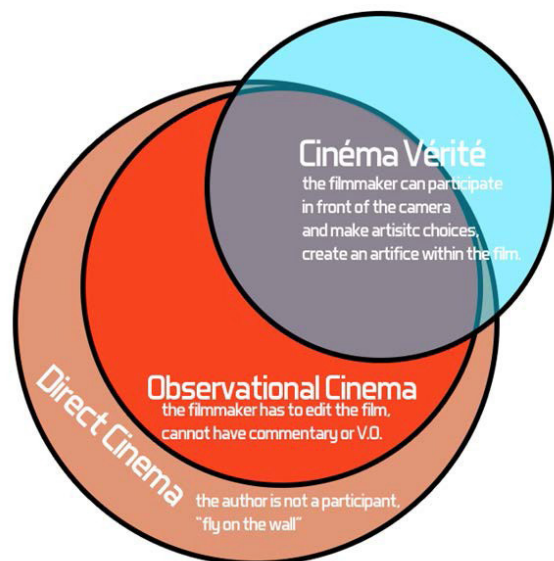
1929 *Drifters* – John Grierson - creative actuality (5')

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZpd4oV4ucU&list=PLPuEJuyAtM3vuF-mVCHm_VpKATPKrAaDI

1933 *Housing Problems* - Elton & Anstey- social impact (14')

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tphbEpVfv24>

1940 *London Can Take It* – Jennings & Watt – propaganda. GPO Film Unit (8'55")





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLgfSDtHFt8>

1953 Free Cinema – Lindsay Anderson *O Dreamland*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLIKR1x1oWY>

1966 *Titicut Follies* trailer– Frederick Wiseman – cinéma vérité (0'55")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuAGuf-QhAQ>

1966 Versus: The Life and Films of Ken Loach - *Cathy Come Home* clip (2'24")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xky8ZqhNAIo>

1975 *Grey Gardens* 2015 trailer - direct cinema - Alfred & David Maysles (2'05")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZI1IJLTMXM>

1998 *Kurt & Courtney* trailer Nick Broomfield – self-reflexive (2'02")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA8DHLrjjRg>

2002 *Bowling for Columbine* Michael Moore - performative/participatory/Les Nouvelles Egotistes (2'03")

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH0mSAjp_Jw

2006 Nick Broomfield – *Ghosts* - direct cinema (2'47")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSbqcrVnjNw>

Renov and the “fictive”

Non-fiction also contains “fictive” elements – i.e. documentary uses many of the methods of the non-fiction text, particularly mainstream cinema, in the way in which it constructs meaning.

Read the extract from Michael Renov’s *Introduction: The Truth about Non-Fiction* and identify what he thinks are the “fictive” elements of documentary.

Michael Renov *Introduction: The Truth about Non-Fiction* pp2-3 in Theorizing Documentary AFI Film



Readers 1993

https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=8gYz6tIVdRAC&pg=PR7&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=t rue

Use the digital resource to compare your ideas.

Romanticism and Documentary

In order for stories to be told “romantically” and “authentically”, the truth actually had to be constructed. For example, Robert Flaherty’s 1922 film *Nanook of The North* features scenes in which the Inuit family hunt and catch a walrus with harpoons. Flaherty had them re-enact this although they had not used this method for many years, preferring guns. A special igloo also had to be built with a wall removed so that interiors could be shot. In the same way, the cabins on herring boats had to be re-designed to accommodate the equipment in John Grierson’s “Drifters”.



The Kuleshov Effect

Lev Kuleshov attempted to illustrate the power of editing in the creation of meaning through an experiment in which he intercut an actor’s blank face with several other images. Audiences believed the actor was expressing a different emotion dependent on what he was looking at – although the shot was identical.

Alfred Hitchcock explains this in his own way here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG0V7EVFZt4>
(7)

Students at the University of North Carolina tried to re-create this experiment in 2009

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQNpHELKjn0>

Now create your own Kuleshov effect using the digital resource.

Edit your own Documentary

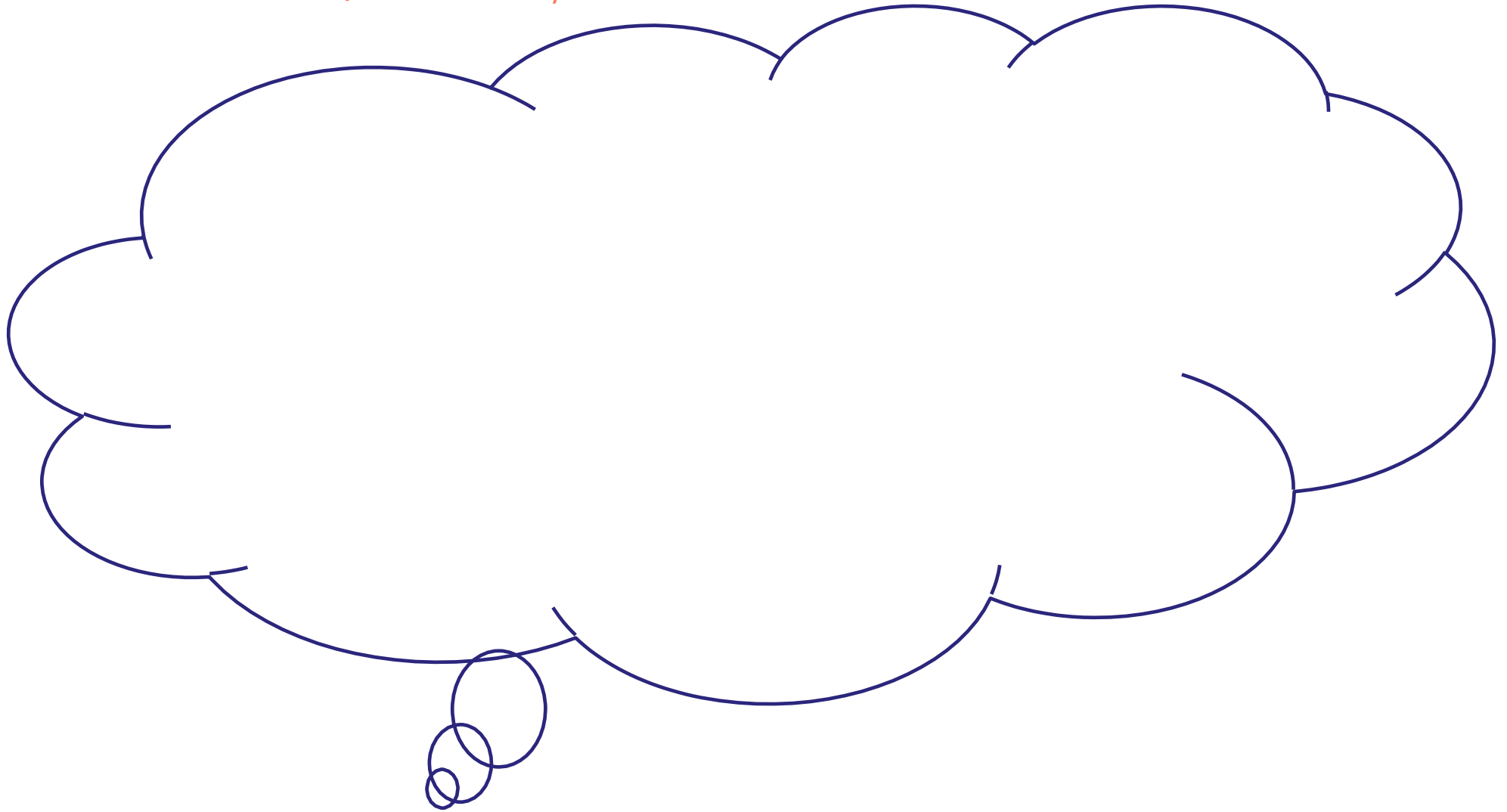
Cut your own documentary using the BFI’s tool

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/education/thecuttingroom/index.html>





Create a Word Cloud of Documentary Codes and Conventions





- Observational: documentary as truth – the filmmaker simply observes the action
- Use of fly-on-the-wall camera
- Long takes, lack of editing and audience manipulation
- Direct cinema
- Actuality
- Cinema vérité
- Interviews
- Talking heads
- Hand-held camera
- Cutaways
- Sound bridges
- Verisimilitude
- Social realism
- OS shots
- ES
- Captions

Which of These Conventions are Evident in *No Burqas Behind Bars*?

Genre Task – The Development and Context of Documentary (Neale)

BFI's Screen Online - DOCUMENTARY

'Not so much a single genre as an umbrella of related programme types, each seeking to represent versions of reality. Documentary forms have evolved from the beginnings of cinema to contemporary so-called docu-soaps, which some people might not see as being 'documentary' at all. They are characterised by relatively "high modality".

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/education/glossary.html>

Steve Neale suggests that genres exist within particular contexts and develop through borrowing from other texts. What evidence is there for this?

How does *No Burqas Behind Bars* reflect contemporary ideologies and concerns? Give examples.

Modality

MODALITY (Screen Online) <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/education/glossary.html>

A term coined to unpack the notion of 'realism'. Modality refers to how close to reality the producer intends a particular text to be. For example, the makers of *Tom and Jerry* obviously intended their animation to be some distance from realistic - to have 'low modality'. Some documentary makers,

on the other hand, especially observational documentaries - would like to persuade us that they are capturing a version of reality i.e. 'high modality'. Each text will include clues as to how high or low the modality is. 'Modality markers' might include whether there is music on a soundtrack, whether the editing is stylised, or shots are long and static.

Read the quote above and think about your own understanding of *No Burqas Behind Bars*. What is constructed in *No Burqas Behind Bars*?

Postmodernism & No Burqas Behind Bars

Baudrillard argues that the media create hyperrealities based on a continuous process of mediation. What is encoded as 'real' (and what we decode through media products) is not 'real' but instead a 'simulacrum' which offers us a hyperreality ("A real without origin or reality" – Jean Baudrillard) that we accept as real because we are so consistently exposed to it.

Thus media images have come to seem more "real" than the reality they supposedly represent.

'Our mental pictures of the perfect body, house, meal and sexual relationship have been created through exposure to constantly recycled media depictions that have no basis in fact – but it is these images that create our expectations' (Em Griffen (2012) *A First Look at Communication Theory*, p319)

Lévi-Strauss suggested that media texts are now made up of "debris" that we recognise from other texts and these are combined – "bricolage". This may be heard in e.g. a musical "mash-up" or remix.



Post-Modernism

Some features of a postmodern text:

- Intertextuality – acknowledgement of existing media texts
- References to popular culture
- Bricolage
- Self-reflexive
- Parody/Pastiche ("pasted")/Homage
- Irony



- Ambiguity
- Narrative fragmentation or temporal distortion
- Anti-realist

Give examples of these features in *No Burqas Behind Bars*.

Post-Modernism & No Burqas Behind Bars

How far is *No Burqas Behind Bars* a postmodern text?

How could we apply the concept of “simulacra” to *No Burqas Behind Bars*? Is what we are seeing hyperreal?

Use the digital resource to compare your ideas.

Extended writing task

How far can *No Burqas Behind Bars* illustrate Steve Neale’s concept of repetition and difference? Give reasons for your answer and refer to detailed examples from the text.

Can you identify the various stages of the narrative in *No Burqas Behind Bars*?

- EQUILIBRIUM
- DISRUPTION
- RECOGNITION
- RESOLUTION
- EQUILIBRIUM
- Are all these stages realised in *No Burqas Behind Bars*? Why?
- The Todorovian narrative model is linear. Is this the case here?
- There should be cause/effect links throughout the narrative. Can you identify these?

Use the digital resource to compare your ideas with those suggested.

TODOROVIAN STRUCTURE –

- EQUILIBRIUM – Perhaps the lives of the women before they arrived
- DISRUPTION – Their “moral crimes”
- RECOGNITION – Arrival at prison
- RESOLUTION – The women serve their sentences



- EQUILIBRIUM – Sara leaves – but is let down by Javid. Is it even now fully resolved? Sequel – *Prison Sisters* 2016
- Are there non-linear elements within the documentary? There aren't any obvious ones although there may have been some manipulation. What we see is a linear journey from arrival to departure.
- Are there obvious cause/effect links set up through e.g. Barthesian action or enigma codes?
Yes

Binary Opposites (Lévi-Strauss)

Binary Opposition (defined by Lévi- Strauss) – many oppositions are set up to drive the narrative and we watch to discover which side “triumphs” in the end.

What is ideologically important about the resolution of these oppositions?

Can you identify what is in “opposition” to the first word within the text?

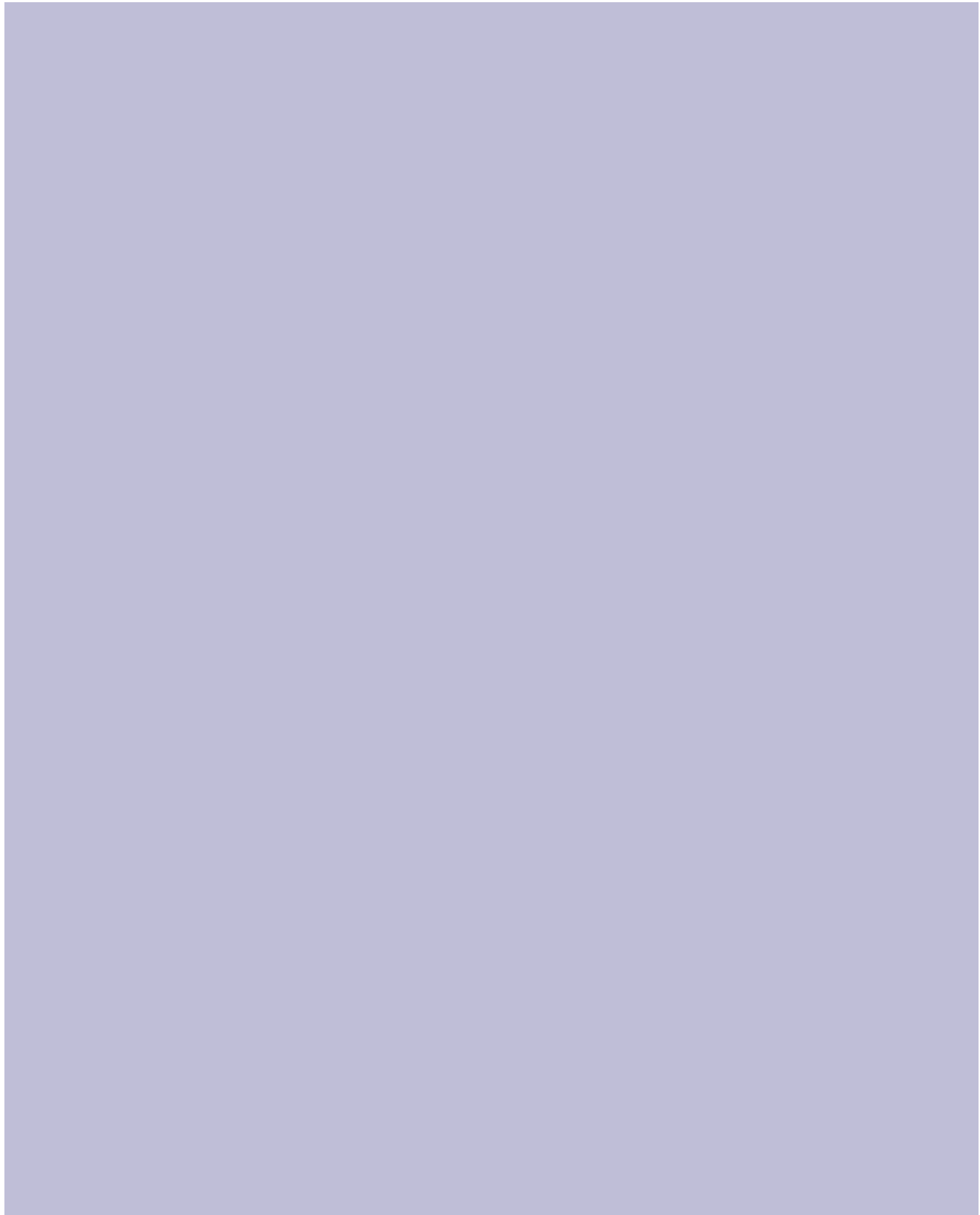
- Male v
- Outside v
- Prisoners v
- Freedom v
- Danger v
- Individual v
- Reality v
- Civilisation v
- Old traditions v
- Rebellion v
- Father v
- Husband v
- Courage v
- Education v
- Isolation v
- Honour v



Story Arcs/Character Arcs

There are several story arcs and narrative strands – can you identify them?

Use the digital resource to compare your ideas





Narrative – No Burqas Behind Bars

- Key Questions for Class Discussion:
- Is the narrative entirely linear? If not, why not? Give examples
- Does the documentary have a flexi-narrative?
- Are there story arcs that run across the documentary?
- Are there obvious codes (Barthes) around which the narrative is structured? Give examples
- Is it realist?
- How are time and space manipulated within the narrative?