Roland Barthes

Concluded that a text has many meanings, or is like 'a galaxy of signifiers' which can be interpreted in many ways. The simile he used suggests that a text is like a ball of threads, waiting to be unravelled. You can either pull on one obvious thread (closed meaning) or several (open) hence, a text can have many narrative threads/strands.

Barthes defined several types of narrative codes, the most relevant being action and enigma codes.

Enigma Code – this code refers to mystery within a text. Clues are dropped, but no clear answer are given. Enigmas within the narrative make the audience want to know more. Unanswered enigmas tend to frustrate the audience.

Action Code – This code contains sequential elements of action in the text. Action elements add suspense to the text and allow audiences to interpret and identify what is to come.

Semantic Code – This code refers to parts within the text that suggests or refers to additional meanings. Elements of the semantic code are called semes. The seme has a connotative function in the text. It has an extra layer of meaning in addition to its literal meaning.

Angela McRobbie's Post-Feminist Icon Theory:

"Lara Croft, Lady Gaga, Madonna and Taylor Swift for example could be identified as post-feminist icons as they exhibit the stereotypical characteristics of both the male and female – strength, courage, control and logic but also are willing to be sexualized for the male gaze.

This **control element** of their own representation is crucial in understanding the theory".

Propp Theory

At the most basic level, he suggested that narrative generally follows a "quest" structure, following the hero's journey.

Propp's "character types" are:

- **the hero** – the person on a quest to solve the problems or resolve disruption
- **the villain** – the person who tries to block the hero's progress in their quest
- **the dispatcher** – the person who sends the hero on their quest
- **the helper** – the person who helps the hero during their quest
- **the donor** – the person who helps the hero by sacrificing something on the hero's behalf.
- **the damsel in distress** – the person who needs saving to help resolve the disruption
- narrative
- **the princess** – the person who becomes a prize for the hero.

Characters can sometimes change roles, depending upon how the narrative develops.

Todorov's Narrative Theory

"Todorov's Theory" suggests that narratives follow a typical route of five stages. These are defined as:

1. State of **equilibrium.**
2. Equilibrium is **disrupted.**
3. Characters recognise the **disruption** and seek to find a way of restoring the equilibrium.
4. Complications occur preventing the characters from achieving this easily until a **climax** is reached.
5. The action is **resolved** and either the equilibrium is restored or a **new equilibrium** is created [closure].

We don't necessarily see all of these stages and in some media forms we would not want to (for example, a trailer is unlikely to present the final stage of equilibrium). The end of the episode of Doctor Who similarly ends on a climactic cliff-hanger [enigma] in order to bring viewers back the following week. In some cases, we can only assume what the state of equilibrium is. Todorov's theory suggests that closure (the satisfactory end of a narrative, at least from an audience perspective) does not necessarily mean that things will go back to the way that they were at the start. It may be that there is no closure, either for narrative or practical reasons (for example, an on-going newspaper story, a drama serial with several episodes, a movie trailer).