

# Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Om leksikonet: [https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om\\_leksikonet.pdf](https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf)

## Spenning

En fortelling bør struktureres slik at den både har en medrivende og overbevisende form (Parkinson 2012 s. 28). Konflikter skaper spenning, og spenning oppleves ofte som underholdende (Vorderer og Knobloch 2000 s. 62). Vi opplever spenning bl.a. gjennom å identifisere oss og erfare empati med hovedpersonen i en historie og konfliktene som denne personen opplever (Vorderer og Knobloch 2000 s. 64), personens “trials and tribulations” (Stokes og Maltby 1999 s. 97).

I *Poetikken* skriver den greske filosofen Aristoteles at gode fortellinger har komplikasjoner (“désis”), vendepunkter (“peripeteia”, “metábasis”) og løsninger (“lysis”).

Ordbøker definerer spenning f.eks. slik: “a state or condition of mental uncertainty or excitement, as in awaiting a decision or outcome, usually accompanied by a degree of apprehension or anxiety.”

“[A]ll of the hyperselling titles have suspense as a main component, not necessarily in the sense of a mystery or a thriller, but in anticipation of revelation and continuation. [...] Suspense has been defined as a combination of fear, hope, and uncertainty.” (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärholm og Steiner 2014 s. 48)

“Dictionaries of literary terms define suspense as “a state of uncertainty and delay that builds up anxiety as one awaits the outcome of a situation”, or “uncertainty, often characterized by anxiety”. In literary theory of drama, Hilton (1987) makes a distinction between suspense of a what and why kind: “Suspense of a ‘what happens next?’ kind may be described as primary suspense and is balanced by secondary suspense, the audience’s interest lying not with what happens, but with why” (1987: 27). Esslin (1977: 44-45), further claims that suspense may lie in a question like “I know what is going to happen, but how is it going to happen? or ... I know what is going to happen and how it is going to happen, but how is X going to react to it?”” (Minet de Wied i <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0304422X9400007S>; lesedato 03.11.22)

Det oppstår “gaps in knowledge between characters on screen and between characters and spectator – and therefore suspense. [...] Suspense is created when we

know something that a character does not know.” (Gillespie og Toynbee 2006 s. 103-104)

Tzvetan Todorov, en fransk-bulgarsk litteraturforsker, hevder at nysgjerrighet gjelder retningen fra effekt til årsak, mens spenning gjelder retningen fra årsak til effekt. I spenningshistorier opplever vi først årsaker og så oppstår det spenning om hva som blir effekter/konsekvenser (gjengitt fra <https://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/7570>; lesedato 29.08.24). “Suspense is a future-oriented emotion. [...] The emotion of suspense takes as its object some future event whose desired outcome is improbable, or, at least, no more probable than the undesired outcome; indeed, with suspense, the undesired outcome is characteristically much more probable than the desired outcome.” (Noël Carroll i Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 43)

Hovedpersonen/protagonisten konfronteres med et dilemma; dilemmaet utvikler seg til en konflikt; konflikten tilspisser seg på grunn av en rekke komplikasjoner helt til konflikten når et høydepunkt for så å bli løst (James N. Frey gjengitt fra Ott og Wrobel 2018 s. 330).

Spenning finnes på mange nivåer og kan skapes på ulike måter. En relativt stillestående ytre handling med få personer som befinner seg i et lukket rom, kan være intenst spennende. Men historien må uansett ha en “konfliktstruktur” (Schroer 2007 s. 243) for å unngå leser- eller seerflukt, selv om konfliktnivået kan variere gjennom historien. “As everyone from Aristotle to Kenneth Burke has noted, the impetus to narrative is expectation gone awry – peripeteia as the former called it, Trouble with a capital T as the latter did. [...] Narrative is a recounting of human plans gone off the track, expectations gone awry.” (Bruner 2002 s. 28 og 31) En forfatter bør lage “en felle som leserens nysgjerrighet faller i” (Raimond 2002 s. 108).

“At the heart of drama lies conflict: conflict between individuals, conflict within societies, conflict with the external world, conflict within the heart. All these forms of conflict, in one way or another, are driven by conflicts of moral values, and thus ethical conflict is at the very center of the driving impulse behind all the narrative art forms.” (Hrezo og Parrish 2010 s. 1)

“Ifølge psykologiprofessorene Ortney, Clore og Collins består spenning av tre essensielle komponenter: frykt, håp og usikkerhet. Frykt for fare eller et negativt utfall, håp om at narrativet vil utvikle seg den veien tilskueren ønsker, og intensitet som øker jo større usikkerhet det er om hva som kommer til å skje. Intensiteten øker også jo mer tilskueren bryr seg om utfallet (Collins 1988: 131). Hvordan tilskuere forholder seg til og reagerer på spenning i filmscener eller -sekvenser avhenger av hva de vet om situasjonen og hvilke mulige avslutninger situasjonen kan få. Robert Yanal understreker at det er viktig at situasjonen har et fåtall mulige utfall, helst to tydelige muligheter hvor det tilskueren håper vil skje virker minst sannsynlig, og hva tilskueren ikke ønsker skal skje virker mest sannsynlig. Selv om

den minst ønskelige løsningen virker mest sannsynlig er usikkerheten rundt hva som kommer til å skje det som skaper spenning (Yanal 1996: 1).” (Stapnes 2010 s. 30)

“An oft quoted necessary condition for suspenseful drama is a lack of important information. As Hitchcock says, “The audience knows that a given piece of information is missing, but does not know what it is.” This feature would, however, perhaps be better described as triggering curiosity, rather than suspense. Of course, as most suspenseful narratives also seem to use in one way or another the notion of missing information, it does indeed seem that the notions of curiosity and suspense are strongly linked. In this regard, White in 1938 [i *The Psychology of Making Life Interesting*] had already claimed that suspense is ‘prolonged curiosity’ [...]. Hitchcock’s view of suspense as lack of information highlights once more the difficulty of distinguishing these concepts and in making clear how they work together in narrative.” (en forskergruppe ved Richard Doust Department of Computing, Open University; <http://www.richarddoust.eu/suspense/sqdfch2.html#x6-100002.2>; lesedato 14.11.19)

“Suspense teams up with curiosity and surprise to form the dynamo that powers a well-told story. [...] Think about the etymology of the word suspense. It literally ties into something that is hanging, suspended, with an uncertain future. [...] the stakes need to be high and the reader needs to be able to clearly identify what the protagonist stands to gain or lose.” (Joslyn Chase i <https://thewritepractice.com/what-is-suspense/>; lesedato 24.09.21)

“Tension might be the mother of fiction, but problems are the mother of tension. In fiction, those problems are called conflict. More precisely, *conflict means thwarted, endangered, or opposing desire*. It’s basically when a character wants something but something else gets in the way. Maybe the character wants a thing but can’t get it. Maybe the character has something but is in danger of losing it. Maybe the character wants two things that are incompatible.” (J. T. Bushnell i <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/wlf/what-conflict>; lesedato 08.08.22)

“In all genres, misunderstandings create suspense” (Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 61).

Hovedpersonen må overvinne et problem eller takle en utfordring som kan synes for stor og overveldende. Vi antar at helten vil lykkes til slutt på en eller annen måte, og spenningen ligger i hvordan denne overvinnelsen av barrierene skal skje.

Ofte vil helten prøve å oppnå noe som er “against his fortune – and we as viewers cannot inform him.” (Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 61)

“Kenneth Burke proposed [...] that, at a minimum, a story (fictional or actual) requires an Agent who performs an Action to achieve a Goal in a recognizable Setting by the use of certain Means – his dramatic Pentad, as he called his

grammar. What drives a story is a misfit between the elements of the Pentad: Trouble. It can be a misfit between Agent and Action, Goal and Setting, any of the five elements of the Pentad. [...] It is the conversion of private Trouble (in Burke's sense) into public plight that makes well-wrought narrative so powerful, so comforting, so dangerous, so culturally essential." (Bruner 2002 s. 34-35)

Tittelen kan være svært spenningskapende, slik som med dokudrama-filmserien *I Shouldn't Be Alive* (2005 og senere), der hver episode handler om en ulykke som det er nesten utrolig at noen overlevde. Hovedpersonene i serien har på en hårsbredd overlevd dramatiske begivenheter.

"Four factors are necessary for suspense – reader empathy, reader concern, impending danger and escalating tension. [...] make clear: 1) What your character desires (love, freedom, adventure, forgiveness, etc.); 2) what is keeping him from getting it; and 3) what terrible consequences will result if he doesn't get it. Suspense builds as danger approaches. Readers experience apprehension when a character they care about is in peril. This doesn't have to be a life-and-death situation. Depending on your genre, the threat may involve the character's physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual or relational well-being. Whatever your genre, show that something terrible is about to happen – then postpone the resolution to sustain the suspense. [...] Raise the stakes by making the danger more imminent, intimate, personal and devastating. [...] It's like inflating a balloon – you can't let the air out of your story; instead, you keep blowing more in, tightening the tension until it looks like the balloon is going to pop at any second.

Then blow in more.

And more.

Until the reader can hardly stand it.

[...] If readers complain that "nothing is happening" in a story, they don't typically mean that no action is occurring, but rather that no promises are being made. Contrary to what you may have heard, the problem of readers being bored isn't solved by adding action but instead by adding apprehension. Suspense is anticipation; action is payoff. You don't increase suspense by "making things happen," but by promising that they will. Instead of asking, "What needs to happen?" ask, "What can I promise will go wrong?" [...] Readers want to predict what will happen, but they want to be wrong. They're only satisfied when the writer gives them more than they anticipate, not less." (Steven James i <https://www.writersdigest.com/write-better-fiction/6-secrets-to-creating-and-sustaining-suspense>; lesedato 16.12.21)

Alle fortellinger rommer en overtredelse (Tzvetan Todorov gjengitt fra Rogé 1976 s. 159). Denne overtredelsen, dette norm- eller lovbruddet osv. skaper spenning. Ofte oppstår historien ut fra motsetningen mellom Loven og Begjæret, og dialektikken mellom dem, med overraskende vendinger (Aumont, Bergala m.fl.

2004 s. 84). Det kan være en intern konflikt i en person og/eller en ekstern konflikt mellom personer. Hindringer fører til konflikter.

“The more likely a negative outcome is anticipated for the protagonist and a positive outcome for the antagonist, the greater the empathic distress and suspense that are felt.” (Vorderer og Knobloch 2000 s. 65)

“The suspenseful question therefore is “What will happen?” [...] This leads to emotional arousal experienced as suspense.” (Vorderer og Knobloch 2000 s. 61 og 63) “Escalating conflict creates tension, and in most stories, the tension in a story gets worse before it gets better, resulting in a classical dramatic arc.” (Tracy Fullerton sitert fra Rauscher 2012 s. 213). En av personene kan være en typisk forviklingskaper, eventuelt på en komisk måte.

“[T]ension will build from the reader’s self-imposed fears of knowing that the hero is on a collision course with disaster. [...] Another key way to build suspense is through the use of time. The protagonist should be working against the clock, and the clock should be working for the bad guys. [...] The antagonist, by his nature, will cross lines without a second’s thought, while fully conscious of his actions. But the protagonist is a different breed – as a hero, he can’t let innocent people die without a fight, or stray from his morals or promises. The great thing about dilemmas is that they need time to be solved, and with the pressure of time constraints, the tension can only build. So test, tease and tempt the protagonist. [...] The hero shouldn’t be able to rely on anything going right for her, and any step forward should come at a price. The antagonist shouldn’t go unscathed, either. [...] Suspense writing is all about creating a pressure cooker with no relief valve. You have to keep turning up the heat using multiple burners. Employ these techniques and your reader will never come off the boil.” (Simon Wood i <https://www.writersdigest.com/improve-my-writing/nine-tricks-to-writing-suspense-fiction>; lesedato 24.09.21)

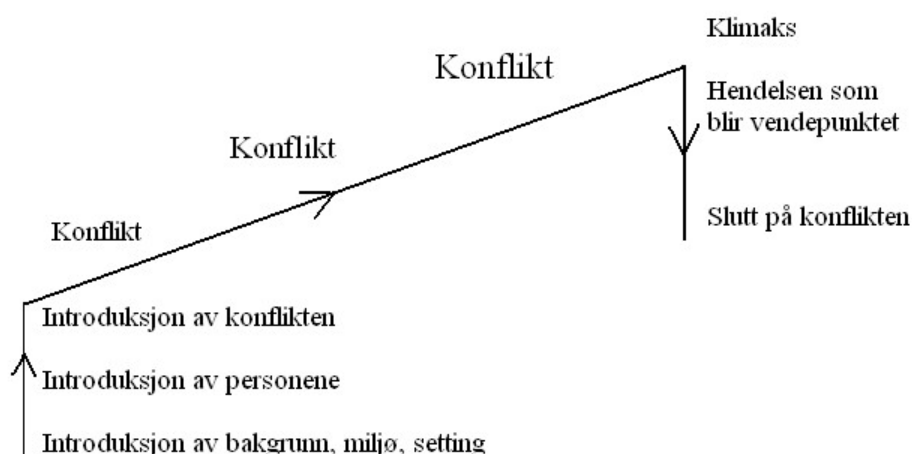
“Force Your Character Into a Corner. Don’t give him an easy out. Don’t give him any wiggle room. Force him to make a choice, to act. He cannot abstain. Take him through the process of dilemma, choice, action and consequence:

- (1) Something that matters must be at stake.
  - (2) There’s no easy solution, no easy way out.
  - (3) Your character must make a choice. He must act.
  - (4) That choice deepens the tension and propels the story forward.
  - (5) The character must live with the consequences of his decisions and actions.”
- (Steven James i <https://www.writersdigest.com/write-better-fiction/5-moral-dilemmas-that-make-characters-stories-better>; lesedato 24.09.21)

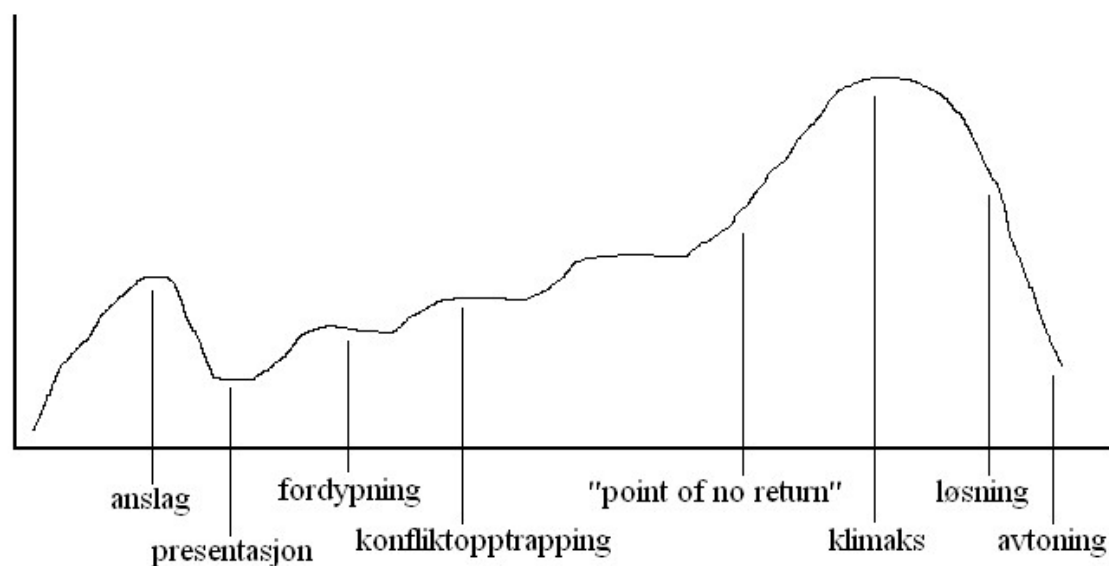
Det kan skilles mellom *åpen* og *lukket* spenning. I det første tilfellet er det usikkert i hvilken retning hendelsene går, og man må være forberedt på store overraskelser.

Ved lukket spenning er det allerede tidlig klart i hvilken retning hendelsene går, og til slutt finnes det kun to alternativer: enten katastrofe eller redning (Koebner og Wulff 2013 s. 10-11). Åpen spenning har noe uavklart ved seg, mens derimot lukket spenning gjelder en mer forutsigbar historie og spiller på kontrasten mellom enten-eller.

Gode historier har en spenningskurve som får vår spenning, interesse og forventning til å stige gjennom store deler av fortellingen:



(figuren over er basert på Norton 2001 s. 291)



(figuren over er fra Hauge 2001 s. 41)

En annen måte å framstille det på er å plassere historiens forskjellige “punkter”, f.eks. slik:



Basert på Aristoteles er det vanlig med en tre-akt-struktur:

#### “THREE ACTS

In many plots, each of the three phases (beginning, middle, and end) closes with a surprise or REVERSAL (*peripeteia*): a turning point of grave danger for the protagonist, which leads to a discovery or RECOGNITION (*anagnorisis*), a new path, and the next phase of the story. To model these reversals and mirror the dialectic model (*thesis-antithesis-synthesis*), plots are commonly divided into three acts. Acts are then themselves comprised of scenes, mini-stories that lead like a trail of breadcrumbs through the acts. Stories unfold in a setting or arena, populated by a supporting cast of characters, a community that changes with the protagonist.

#### BEGINNING

After introducing the characters and the setting, a problem pushes the protagonist into action (Frodo must destroy the ring, Alice/Gulliver must find their way home, Miss Marple must solve the crime). This reversal tends to occur towards the end of Act I, and is known as the *inciting incident*. It is the initial catalyst that forces the hero onwards, by revealing their problem.

#### MIDDLE

As the protagonist pursues their goal, they begin to recognize that what they *want* may not be enough, that to reach resolution and defeat the antagonists's forces, their desire must become subsidiary to their *need*. This need is in direct relation to their flaw (if they are scared they need courage, if selfish they need compassion, if naive they need maturity etc). Towards the end of Act II the reversal takes the form of a *Crisis*, the lowest point of the story, where the hero appears to have failed (or in a tragedy where they appear to have triumphed).

#### END

In Act III the reversal is the *Climax*, the point of greatest stress for the hero which then leads to the climax and the resolution.

## ACT I - EXPOSITION/THESIS

Set up  
Flaw or need  
Inciting incident  
Second thoughts

## ACT II - OBSTACLES/ANTITHESIS

Obstacles & Complications  
Confrontation  
Midpoint of journey  
Disaster  
Crisis

## ACT III - RESOLUTION/SYNTHESIS

Climax  
Final struggle  
Resolution” (Michell, Holley m.fl. 2016 s. 360)

Det er også vanlig med en fem-akt-struktur:

### “MIDPOINT

The five act model emphasizes the midpoint as the fulcrum or crux of the story (Hamlet proves his uncle’s guilt, Cinderella meets her prince). The midpoint is the ‘supreme ordeal’ for the protagonists, the point where they gain an important, often dangerous, revelation. The remainder of the story describes the struggle to change, to be able to use this new knowledge.

### SYMMETRY

Stories are symmetrical. In the first half, the protagonists journeys towards some transformative knowledge/event; in the second, they integrate this and return. Symmetry assert itself with earlier acts being the opposite of later ones. A five act model shows this most clearly [...]: Act I: no knowledge, Act V: full knowledge. Act II: doubting the need for change, Act IV: doubting the capacity to change. Act III itself divides into two, before and after the midpoint revelation.

### SCENES

The structural principles of story repeat themselves fractally in the scene, a story’s unit of action. Each scene is itself a mini story, containing its own set-up, conflict, crisis, climax, and resolution. In practice, however, the setup, climax and resolution are often omitted, leaving the majority of scenes as pure conflict and crisis with other elements implied, as in the screenwriting adage ‘*arrive late, leave early*’.

## ACT I - EXPOSITION/ANTECEDENTS

No knowledge of problem  
Early awakening, limited knowledge



Awake to knowledge of problem

ACT II - COMPLICATION/RISING ACTION

Doubts new knowledge, refuses problem

Begins to overcome reluctance

Accepts there is a problem

ACT III - ORDEAL/HIGH POINT

Experiments with knowledge of problem

MIDPOINT: Key knowledge/breakthrough

Experiments with key knowledge

ACT IV - FALLING ACTION/REVERSALS

Doubt, consequences of new knowledge

Growing fear and reluctance

Crisis, regression, worst point

ACT V - DENOUEMENT/RESOLUTION

Final choice; reawakening

Final battle; reacceptance

Complete mastery; resolution” (Michell, Holley m.fl. 2016 s. 361)

Mange filmer følger fem-akt-strukturen på denne måten:

- Problem utvikling, bl.a. gjennom å innføre noen personer, et miljø, et motiv
  - Spenningsutvikling, med skjerping av en konflikt, problemer som dukker opp, økende kompleksitet
  - Krise og vendepunkt (peripeti), f.eks. ved at den tilsynelatende siste utveien blir sperret
  - Retardering, eller forsinkelse av det som synes uunngåelig
  - Happy end eller katastrofe
- (Faulstich 2008 s. 84)

“Peripety is a sudden reversal which comes with the effect of shock.” (Leech 1969 s. 61) Et effektivt middel for å unngå at leseren eller seeren kjeder seg, er opphopning av dramatiske vendepunkter (Raimond 2002 s. 29).

Den amerikanske filmforskeren Kristin Thompsons “fire-akts-struktur” er: “setup” (= eksposisjon), “complicating action”, “development” og “climax” (i tillegg kommer en kort “epilogue”) (gjengitt fra Ritzer og Schulze 2016 s. 409).

Den amerikanske forfatteren Erle Stanley Gardner reflekterte mye om sine egne krimplott: “The plot had to proceed on the basis of the “overlapping power pulse.” This was accomplished by having the first plot situation lead to the second, with new actors, and the second lead to the third – but all were tied together. The first

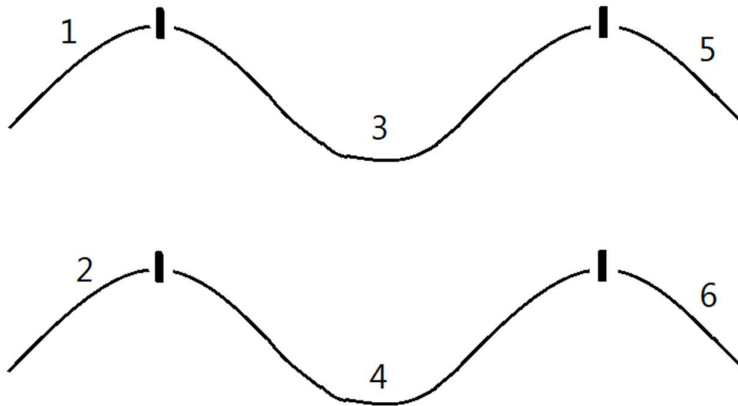
situation had to lead to the second before the initial situation was resolved, thus allowing no place for a let-down of reader interest.” (Fugate og Fugate 1980 s. 216)

For å skape umiddelbar action og spenning, kan en historie begynne “in medias res”, dvs. midt i en handling, ofte med stor dramatik. Det gjør f.eks. action- og fantasyfilmen *Kong: Skull Island* (2017; regissert av Jordan Vogt-Roberts). Det har blitt omtalt som “the traditional pre-title action sequence” (Ben Radatz i <https://www.artofthetitle.com/feature/james-bond-50-years-of-main-title-design/>; lesedato 18.03.21). *Kong: Skull Island* begynner med at to fiendesoldater må hoppe ut av hvert sitt styrtende fly, og deretter prøver de å drepe hverandre på bakken. Mens de slåss, dukker det opp en kolossal gorilla. Denne innledende sekvensen varer et par minutter og går direkte over i tittelsekvensen med navn på film, regissør osv. Spenningskurven i *Kong: Skull Island* ser omtrent slik ut:



Den dramatiske begynnelsen på filmen fungerer som en forhistorie og som et varsel om at gorillaen vil dukke opp igjen og skape spenningsbølger. Filmens premiss blir antydning, og i de litt mindre spennende sekvensene som følger etter tittelsekvensen, skjønner vi at dramatikken snart vil bli stor igjen.

Når det er to (eventuelt flere) handlingstråder, kan spenningen opprettholdes blant annet ved å avbryte handlingen på en spenningstopp. Tegningen nedenfor skal illustrere to handlingstråder med hver sine spenningskurver. Handlingen følger først sekvens 1 til den når en spenningstopp. Så kuttet det brått til sekvens 2, som også følges til en spenningstopp. Neste sekvens er 3, som igjen følges til en spenningstopp før det kuttet til 4, osv. Dermed vil seeren eller leseren alltid ønske å vite fortsettelsen, fordi historien blir avbrutt på svært spennende steder og fortsettelsen vil komme senere i historien.



En historie er vanligvis preget av “action, suspense, and delay” (Rauscher 2012 s. 220). Det kan være tilbakeslag (“setbacks”) i det som driver handlingen framover. Sluttene kan være åpen/uavsluttet eller virke svært avsluttet (en oppfølgerhistorie virker i så fall ikke som en opplagt mulighet). Det kan være “happy end” eller det motsatte. Sluttsituasjonen kan oppstå som et resultat av en “last minute rescue” (i teaterkunsten ofte kalt “deus ex machina”: en gud som ble heist inn på scenen og som sørget for en overraskende/usannsynlig løsning på hovedkonflikten).

“Paul Comisky and Jennings Bryant varied the subjective probability of the favored outcome [...] They found that the level of suspense was highest when this probability was almost nil, and lowest when the favorite outcome was almost certain.” (Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 59)

“[M]ost of the time astute filmmakers wait until near the end of the film to kill their villains off. If the characters that we love to hate die too soon, there may be little left onscreen to hold our interest.” (Nöel Carroll i Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 23)

Den britiske filmregissøren Alfred Hitchcock forklarte forskjellen mellom spenning og overraskelse slik: En bombe som eksploderer uten at publikum visste at det var noen bombe i rommet, er en overraskelse, mens hvis det er spenning, vet publikum f.eks. at det er en bombe under bordet der to personer sitter, og publikum vet at den kommer til å eksplodere om få minutter (gjengitt fra Fuxjäger 2007 s. 30) “As in Hitchcock’s anecdote, our superior range of knowledge creates suspense because we can anticipate events that the character cannot” (David Bordwell og Kristin Thompson sitert fra Fuxjäger 2007 s. 30). Det kalles dramatisk ironi når det er et ironisk forhold mellom publikums og de fiktive personenes innsiktsnivå eller kunnskaper. Tilskuerne vet noe avgjørende viktig som en sentral person i filmen eller på scenen ikke (ennå) vet.

“Incongruous or unexpected events suggest that information is missing. [...] for example, a face that doesn’t smile in an otherwise happy crowd, or a sudden gasp of surprise when a particular name is pronounced. This suggests two things at the

same time: that information is missing, and that the information is important. Incongruity of scale or viewpoint: This can be achieved in film for example by close-ups which concentrate on a normally insignificant detail. [...] The use of spatial story-world techniques in suspenseful narrative appears to be based on the frustration of the spectator's desire for clarity and predictability. Decreased spatial visibility: Chaotic and concealing places such as marketplaces, crowds, gatherings, meetings with a lot of people are used. The desire to follow exactly what is unfolding is frustrated. The frustration occurs both for the spectator and the protagonist. High spatial convergence: Different people with different motives converge on a particular place or building. This process is analogous to the different open leads in a story coming together and increases the number of expectations that new events will arise to resolve these open leads. The convergence also increases the number of twists and turns in the narrative that are possible, frustrating the desire for clarity of outcome." (<http://www.richarddoust.eu/suspense/sqdfch4.html#x8-250004.1>; lesedato 14.11.19)

En plottvending ("plot twist") innebærer at handlingen tar en uventet, ny retning. "R. L. Stine once said, "Every story ever told can be broken down into three parts. The beginning. The middle. And the plot twist." The legendary plot twist is a staple in almost every genre and medium of storytelling [...] A plot twist is a story development that readers do not expect in which either something shocking happens or something shocking is revealed. Generally, the storyteller will set up expectations and then "twist" those expectations by revealing new information through subsequent plot points. The criteria for a plot twist tends to be made up of the following:

It *must* be narratively sound,  
It *must* be unexpected, and  
It *might* be foreshadowed.

To no-one's surprise, plot twists are particularly prevalent in mysteries, thrillers, and suspense fiction." (<https://blog.reedsy.com/plot-twist-ideas-examples/>; lesedato 22.04.20)

Mieke Bal og Edward Branigan "from the field of aesthetics and literature theory, formalised in 1996 a typology of possible relationships between the reader and characters in narratives [...] How can 'character suspense', that is the suspense that we interpret a character as feeling, be formally linked to 'spectator suspense'? [...] The 4 different cases they came up with can be resumed as follows:

1. spectator does not know & character does not know ⇒ riddles, detective stories: suspense is present
2. spectator knows & character does not know ⇒ thriller stories: suspense is present

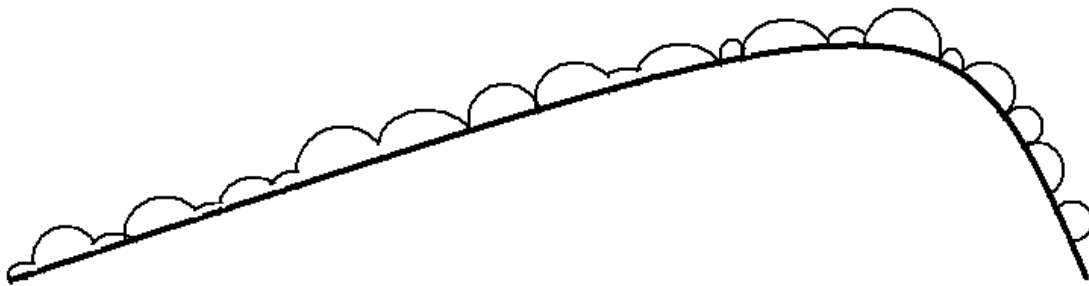
3. spectator does not know & character knows  $\Rightarrow$  ‘secret’ stories: suspense is present

4. spectator knows & character knows  $\Rightarrow$  no suspense is present

We can see that at least three structurally different ways to produce suspense can be distinguished. [...] Whereas for suspense, the reader often knows more than the characters, in the case of surprise the reader knows less than (at least) one of the characters.” (<http://www.richarddoust.eu/suspense/sqdfch2.html#x6-100002.2>; lesedato 14.11.19)

Vi kan ikke underveis vite helt hva som skal skje videre. Ellers forsvinner spenningen. I gode historier er det innslag “creating enigmas and affording a dramatic atmosphere of uncertainty” (Harrigan og Wardrip-Fruin 2009 s. 391). I en godt lagd spenningskurve kommer leseren eller seeren til et punkt der hun eller han ikke frivillig klarer å avbryte lesingen av teksten eller avbryte å se filmen.

Både makro- og mikrokomponentene skaper spenning. Samtidig som hele historien utgjør en kurve, har hver del (f.eks. hvert kapittel i en bok eller hver scene i en film) sin egen spenningskurve. Disse små spenningskurvene kommer i tillegg til den store spenningskurven:



De små spenningskurvene er “many small moments of suspense that the narration creates” (Bordwell og Thompson 2007 s. 299). I en dialogscene i en film kan spenningen være knyttet til om personene blir venner eller uvenner, om de forstår hverandre og hva som blir neste replikk.

Noël Carroll skiller i artikkelen “The Power of Movies” (1985) mellom “mikro-spørsmål” and “makro-spørsmål” i fortellinger. De første blir raskt besvart, f.eks. i neste scene i en film, mens makro-spørsmålene gjelder det vi håper at hele fortellingen og kanskje spesielt slutten skal gi svar på. “A scene or an event may raise a question that is immediately answered in the succeeding scene or by the succeeding event, or by a scene or event temporally proximate to the questioning scene. For example, some burglars trigger an alarm. This raises the question of

whether the authorities will hear it. Next, there is a scene of two policemen reading magazines in their squad car; they look up and switch on their siren, raising the question of whether they will arrive at the scene of the crime on time, and so on. Such localized networks of questions and answers are “micro” in nature. They connect two individual scenes or a limited series of scenes and sequences. But movies are also generally animated by macro-questions, ones for which we await answers throughout most of the film, and which may be thought of as organizing the bulk of significant action in the movie – indeed, the micro-questions are generally hierarchically subordinate to the macro-questions. For an example of a macro-question, consider *Wargames*; at a certain point most of the action is devoted to answering the question of whether nuclear destruction can be averted. Of course, movies often have more than one macro-question. *Into the Night* asks both whether the romantic leads can escape the Middle Eastern villains and whether this couple will become lovers. Both macro-questions are answered by means of roughly the same sequences of action, and the micro questions and answers that structure those sequences tend, finally, to dovetail with the answers to these presiding macro-questions.” (Carroll i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20025011.pdf>; lesedato 10.06.22)

Mange filmer er mer karakterdrevet enn handlingsdrevet, og da skapes spenningen via det sosiale samspillet med ansiktsmimikk osv. Men hver scene må ha en viss spenning. Hver scene må bidra med noe – men hva? Hver scene må ses i sammenheng med helheten. Én scene kan f.eks. bidra til å skape mistanke om en persons ærlighet, som får betydning for hele handlingen i filmen. En annen scene kan vise oss seere at en usympatisk person likevel er i stand til være sympatisk, og dette skaper forventning om at vi skal få ser mer av denne personens sympatiske side.

I spillefilmen *The Highwaymen* (2019; regissert av John Lee Hancock), som handler om politiets jakt på morderne Bonnie and Clyde i USA på 1930-tallet, er det kun helt mot slutten vi får se Bonnies ansikt. Tidlig i filmen får vi se detaljer av klærne hennes, vi får se henne skrått bakfra, på lang avstand osv., men ikke ansiktet forfra. Dette skaper spenning og forventning. Når kommer vi til å få vi se ansiktet (skuespillerens ansikt) og hvordan ser ansiktet til gangster-kvinnen Bonnie ut? I filmen blir det sagt at hun knapt kan kalles et menneske lenger, fordi hun har utført så forferdelige drap (filmen viser at hun skyter en liggende, skadet politimann i ansiktet på nært hold). Heller ikke Clydes ansikt vises tydelig før på slutten, så mye av den samme spenningen gjelder hans utseende. I løpet av filmhandlingen er det som om gangster-kjæresteparet er to unnvikende skapninger som ikke lar seg fange, verken av politiet eller visuelt av seerne av filmen.

Den amerikanske filmeksperten Noël Carroll har blant annet skrevet boka *Engaging the Moving Image* (2003). Han kobler “spenningsoppbygging opp mot *moral*. Hvis det moralsk beste utfallet presenteres som minst sannsynlig, oppstår spenning, forutsatt at tilskueren bryr seg om karakterene og ønsker at den moralsk

overlegne skal seire (Carroll 2001: 259). Carroll hevder at sjangerfilm, og spenningsfilm spesielt, kan kokes ned til å handle om moralske verdier og sannsynlighet (Carroll 2003: 84ff). Gjennom filmens tematiske og stilistiske valg får tilskueren beskjed om hvilke karakterer som er moralsk gode og onde, og dermed hvem de bør følge med på. Dette er med på å motivere tilskueren til å ønske seg et utfall fremfor et annet. For å oppnå en spenningsoppbygging må tilskueren ønske at protagonisten skal seire, men samtidig møte motstand i plottet så det ser ut som det er marginalt mer sannsynlig at antagonistten vinner – helt frem mot filmens klimaks (Carroll 2003: 85). I filmer om kriminelle miljøer har den kriminelle protagonisten gjerne noen edle egenskaper som gjør at tilskueren kan knytte en moralsk allianse med ham. Eventuelt tydeliggjøres motstanderens (i noen tilfeller loven, politi, detektiver eller statlige instanser) korrupthet eller mangel på moral, som igjen knytter tilskueren sterkere til protagonisten. Protagonistens moral stadfestes ofte gjennom hvordan han behandler sine medkarakterer, særlig fattige, svake, gamle, hjelpeløse, kvinner, barn og dyr (Carroll 2001: 261).” (Stapnes 2010 s. 34-35)

Historien bør relativt tidlig inneholde en “hook”. “One sign of a good opener is that it makes the reader want to continue with the story. Using a fishing metaphor, a good opener “hooks” the reader. Writers who catch the reader have employed a successful narrative hook. A narrative hook involves dangling elements of the story before the reader so he can’t help but bite. This is done by making the reader want to know more – the who, what, where, when, how and why of the story.” (<http://inventingreality.4t.com/narrativehook.html>; lesedato 04.05.16)

“The hook comes in many forms, but stripped down to its lowest common denominator, the hook is nothing more or less than a question. [...] The beginning of every story should present character, setting, and conflict. But, in themselves, none of these represent a hook. We’ve created a hook only when we’ve convinced readers to ask the general question, “What’s going to happen?” because we’ve also convinced them to ask a more specific question, such as “What scary reptilian monster killed the worker?” (*Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton) or “How does a city hunt?” (*Mortal Engines* by Philip Reeve).” (K. M. Weiland i <https://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com/secrets-of-story-structure-pt-2-hook/>; lesedato 03.06.22)

Den amerikanske filmforskeren David Bordwell “argues that a movie creates “gaps,” putting a protagonist into a clear predicament but holding back information about possible solutions or likely reactions, forcing the spectator to make guesses or hypotheses about what will happen next. Because the questions posed by the plot of the classical Hollywood film overwhelmingly concern protagonists’ likely reactions to the predicaments in which they find themselves, they can be reduced to just one: “What is this character going to do now?” Generally, viewers are permitted to correctly predict the general course of protagonists’ actions (because it is “logical”), even though the action is fleshed out in unanticipated and

occasionally surprising ways. The spectators are caught up in the process of guesswork, anticipation, and partial satisfaction. This “game” is the glue that holds the classical entertainment film together. Bordwell is cautious about ascribing all of the emotional power of movies to this game of anticipation and guesswork. Still, he writes, the pattern of response that is typical of the classical fiction film is most compatible with a theory of pleasure in which affect is bound up with expectation and its delayed fulfillment.” (Dirk Eitzen i Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 87)

“When we bet on a hypothesis, especially under the pressure of time, confirmation can carry an emotional kick; the organism enjoys creating unity. When the narrative delays satisfying an expectation, the withholding of knowledge can arouse keener interest. When a hypothesis is disconfirmed, the setback can spur the viewer to new bursts of activity. The mixture of anticipation, fulfillment, and blocked or retarded or twisted consequences can exercise great emotional power.” (David Bordwell sitert fra s. 87-88)

“As a film unfolds in time, it offers a developing pattern that encourages us to ask why things are happening and to wonder what will happen next.” (Bordwell og Thompson 2007 s. 7)

“[T]he principal pleasure of mainstream movies is in solving story problems.” (Dirk Eitzen i Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 88)

En “inciting incident [is] usually a dramatic event that triggers the story to come, that promises problems, that sets in motion the forces that will involve your protagonist in a gathering storm. An inciting incident usually occurs within a screenplay’s first ten pages. [...] something, some event, needs to start the story. I call this particular event the catalyst. The catalyst begins the action of the story. Something happens – an explosion, a murder, a letter arrives, perhaps Aunt Mary appears on the doorstep – and from that moment on the story is defined. We now know what the story is about – what the spine of the story will be. The catalyst is the first main ‘push’ that gets the plot moving. Something happens, or someone makes a decision. The main character is set in motion. The story has begun.” (Linda Seger i Fuxjäger 2007 s. 35)

“The lifeline is a skill, a tool, a weapon, an ally, or whatever the hero uses to solve the dramatic problem of the story. The lifeline is the hero’s (and the screenwriter’s) ace in the hole. It is what the hero latches onto at the last moment of the climactic scene to defeat the villain and/or to solve the problem. [...] a lifeline can come into play when the hero seems about to be defeated in the climactic scene. Then, when all seems lost, the hero uses, seizes, or discovers an action, a tool, a device, or information that solves the problem. [...] The lifeline should be believable and logical. It should be planted earlier in the story so the audience is aware of its presence. Do not make the device so obvious that the audience anticipates its purpose. Similarly, avoid lifelines that suddenly appear when needed, for this



smacks of the deus ex machina solution.” (Paul Lucey sitert fra Fuxjäger 2007 s. 37)

Den franske litteraturforskeren Roland Barthes' bok *S/Z* (1970) innfører en rekke distinksjoner: “Only when a problem is maintained does it become a significant structuring force, making the reader organize the text in relation to it and read sequences in the light of the question which he is attempting to answer. We have, first, the *promesse de réponse*, when the narrator or a character indicates that a reply will be given or that the problem is not insoluble; *le leurre*, a reply which may be strictly true but which is designed to mislead; *l'équivoque*, an ambiguous reply, thickening the mystery and emphasizing its interest; *le blocage*, an admission of defeat, a claim that the mystery is insoluble; *la réponse suspendue*, in which something interrupts a moment of discovery; *la réponse partielle*, in which some truth is learned but mystery remains; and finally *le dévoilement*, which narrator, character or reader accepts as a satisfactory solution (*S/Z*, pp. 91-2 and 215-16).” (Culler 1986 s. 212)

Dramatisk, ytre handling er ikke alltid nødvendig for å skape spenning. Stillhet og taushet kan fungere dramatisk (Liptay og Bauer 2013 s. 284). Taushet er i mange situasjoner en påfallende måte å kommunisere på. Noen historier er snarere karakterdrevet enn handlingsdrevet. Taktisk heving og senkning av handlings-tempoet kan også bidra til spenningen. Mye spenning er knyttet til hendelser der helten er under sterkt tidspress.

“[T]emporal gaps are common for dramatic intensification.” (Staiger 2000 s. 193) Noe viktig er utelatt som kanskje blir fortalt eller vist senere.

“Plotpoints” er nøkkelscener i handlingen i en film, og markerer tydelige vendinger i handlingen, og disse vendingene gir nye perspektiver på hendelser og personer (Peltzer 2011 s. 107). Et antiklimaks er et sted i en tekst eller film “where the action should peak and the audience feel a dramatic high point, but where, instead, there is an emotional letdown as action resolves in a disappointing and ineffective manner.” (Ira Königsbergs *The Complete Film Dictionary* sitert fra Fuxjäger 2007 s. 38) Et klimaks er en tydelig, framtrepende spenningstopp.

Kommer helten til å overleve? Den franske filosofen Vladimir Jankélévitch hevdet at “døden er spenningens utsøkte krydder” (her sitert fra <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/etudlitt/2013-v44-n1-etudlitt0825/1018464ar.pdf>; lesedato 29.08.22).

En “deathtrap” er et plott-innslag der helten er fanget av skurken, og skurken er i ferd med å ta livet av helten på en utspekulert, pinefull, langvarig og tilsynelatende uunngåelig dødelig måte. Fordi skurken er sikker på at helten kommer til å dø, avslører skurken vital informasjon. Helten overlever, og beviser dermed sin intelligens, utholdenhet og sitt hell, og kan bruke den informasjonen som skurken har gitt han til å gå seirende ut av hendelsene, med en relativt lykkelig slutt. Det er

ofte et voldsomt tidspress når helten skal forhindre katastrofen som skurken har planlagt.

Den amerikanske regissøren David Wark Griffith brukte en spesiell filmatisk teknikk når handlingen i en film nærmer seg en katastrofe: Tempoet i handlingen senkes til nesten stillstand, mens bildene kommer i stadig raskere tempo og i korte kutt. Slik skaper han en “åndeløs tilstand” som kan vare lenge og er sterkt spenningsskapende, for publikum har sett at en lunte er tent eller en øks er hevet (Diederichs 2004 s. 254).

“I film brukes planting og høsting av scener. Det vil si at det tidlig i filmen legges inn scener som vi kanskje ikke der og da skjønner betydningen av, men som får sin forklaring senere.” (<http://www.filmweb.no/skolekino/incoming/article1012280>. ece; lesedato 02.01.15)

En film inneholder en “dramaturgisk relevant frist” hvis seeren føler en spenning knyttet til om “kan X nås før Y skjer?” (Fuxjäger 2007 s. 41)

“[A]ccelerated montage[:] Rapid cutting from shot to shot to increase the pacing and rhythm of action as it appears on the screen. The length of the individual shots becomes shorter as we see different views of the same action or views of different but related actions. An example of accelerated shots of the same action is the famous shower sequence in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960) [...] Notable accelerated montages of related actions appear at the end of several films by D. W. Griffith to increase suspense as rescuer rushes to potential victim.” (Ira Konigsbergs *The Complete Film Dictionary* sitert fra Fuxjäger 2007 s. 42-43)

“Karakteren må ha et *want*. Det kan oppstå underveis, det kan forandres, men det må ha trøkk. Jo mer intenst et want er, desto mer engasjerer vi oss som lyttere [av radioteater]. Poenget er ikke om hennes want er moralsk eller umoralsk, generøst eller selvopptatt eller kriminelt. Det er styrken på want som avgjør vår emosjonelle tilknytning til henne. Hva er et want? “A clear simple ego-driven goal. It is a physical embodiment for the character’s selfish or self-centered objective. This is an objective or object that is real, concrete and graspable. It is an objective or object that must eventually be surrendered.” Laurie H. Hutzler. [...] I ethvert want er det smerte. Fordi drivkraften i å forfølge want er å dekke over en smerte som er uutholdelig og slår ut dersom hun ikke oppnår want. Denne smerten hindrer henne i å fatte hennes underliggende need. Dramatikken oppstår fordi karakterens want er i konflikt med hennes need. Dette er den indre kampen. Hva er et need? “A deep inner longing of which the character is unaware, denies or ignores. This longing represents the true values that are buried deep inside the character. The need requires a set of authentic traits which will make the character feel whole, complete and healed. The need is a deeper human longing for what is good and true.” (Carl Henrik Grøndahl i [http://www.nrk.no/contentfile/file/1.4269526!SkriVeFOR\\_Radioteatret.pdf](http://www.nrk.no/contentfile/file/1.4269526!SkriVeFOR_Radioteatret.pdf); lesedato 20.03.13)

“Protagonisten og hindringene må være harmoniske, det vil si likeverdige. Hindringen må ikke være så veik at protagonisten overvinner den med lillefingeren. Hindringen må ikke være så totalt overveldende at protagonisten ikke har en sjanse i havet. Og er den det allikevel (sjølve eksistensen, for eksempel), er det protagonistens håp eller lengsel eller faenskap som driver fortellingen.” (Carl Henrik Grøndahl i [http://www.nrk.no/contentfile/file/1.4269526!SkriveFOR\\_Radioteatret.pdf](http://www.nrk.no/contentfile/file/1.4269526!SkriveFOR_Radioteatret.pdf); lesedato 20.03.13)

I begynnelsen av bøker og filmer stilles det ofte et “spørsmål”, kommer en utfordring eller antydes noe som i leserens/seerens bevissthet skaper spenning og krever et “svar”. I Harald Hamrells film *Beck: Levande begravd* (2009) blir en politimann ertet fordi han ikke tør å slåss. På slutten av filmen må denne politimannen takle en vanskelig situasjon helt alene, og bruker vold i selvforsvar.

Spenningslementer kan varsles og skape forventning, f.eks. hvis en person i en rolig filmscene åpner en skuff og vi ser at det ligger en pistol der. Dette skaper spenning om hva som vil skje hvis (eller når) harmonien blir brutt. Pistolen kan oppfattes som et frampek etter ha blitt “plantet” i seerens hukommelse.

En “lull” kan på engelsk bety en pause eller stille periode, og “the plot lull creates the belief that change is imminent. The spectator starts to believe that something highly important must be about to happen. This ‘empty time’ may also have the function of giving the spectator more time to imagine different outcomes, thus increasing the number of predictions she makes and therefore the suspense she feels. This technique is therefore one of many that creators of narratives have at their disposal to increase suspense by heightening expectation and prediction” (<http://www.richarddoust.eu/suspense/sqdfch4.html#x8-250004.1>; lesedato 14.11.19).

Regissøren Robert Bresson har uttalt dette om hvordan spenning kan skapes med å holde tilbake visuell eller lydlig informasjon i en film: “The eye solicited alone makes the ear impatient, the ear solicited alone makes the eye impatient. Use these impatiences.” (sitert fra Bordwell og Thompson 2007 s. 294) Alfred Hitchcock ønsket å forby alle som kom litt for sent til kinoen å slippe inn, så strengt oppbygd var hans spenningsfilmer (gjengitt fra Vandendorpe 1999 s. 184).

I boka *Secret Agents in Fiction: Ian Fleming, John le Carré and Len Deighton* (1984) bruker Lars Ove Sauerberg begrepene “*concealment* og *protraction*, skjuling og uthaling, som han bruker for å beskrive hvordan spenning bygges i litterære thrillere. Fortellerteknikken går ut på å skjule relevant informasjon så lenge som mulig og å hale ut poenger eller episoder så mye som mulig (Sauerberg 1984: 83).” (Stapnes 2010 s. 32)

“Hitchcock hadde stor respekt for den tysk-amerikanske regissøren Ernst Lubitsch, som var kjent for sin Lubitsch-tøtsj. [...] [D]et som forårsaker et tragisk utslag i

begynnelsen av handlingen, kommer tilbake på slutten av filmen, men da har det blitt til noe morsomt og helt ufarlig.” (Tito Pannaggi i tidsskriftet *Cinematket* nr. 6 i 2012 s. 11)

Etter at Marion i Alfred Hitchcocks skrekkfilm *Psycho* (1960) har blitt myrdet relativt tidlig i filmen, blir det mindre og mindre reell, synlig vold. Minnet om det blodige drapet på Marion er likevel nok til å holde spenningen og frykten for hva som kan skje ved like (Hahn og Jansen 1985 s. 226). I *Psycho* blir den antatte hovedpersonen drept før filmen er halvferdig, og publikum i 1960 skjønnte at hvis noe slikt kunne skje, kunne alt skje – og en enda mer intens spenning oppstod.

Utsettelse/retardasjon innebærer ofte at vi får se personene prøve nye, håpefulle muligheter eller alternativer, som viser seg ikke å kunne oppnås. Det kan også være å trekke ut avgjørelser. Vergil utsetter i det romerske eposet *Aeneiden* stadig den uunngåelige direkte konfrontasjonen mellom motstanderne Aeneas og Turnus. Dette gjøres gjennom “et kunstferdig flettverk av retardasjoner” (Giebel 1986 s. 82). Et ekstremt eksempel på slike utsettelse finnes i 1. sesong av den amerikanske TV-serien *Prison Break* (2005; skapt av Paul Scheuring m.fl.). Den første sesongen av denne serien varer i over 900 minutter, og handler om en gruppe fanger som skal bryte seg ut av et fengsel. Selv om fluktruten er klar tidlig i sesongen, skjer rømningen helt på slutten av sesongen. Imellom er det en lang rekke uhell og andre uforutsette hendelser som forsinker og hindrer rømningen.

“We know a movie is over when there is no longer any imminent danger of embarrassment or pain. We get pleasure from happy endings, of course, but we do not go to movies just for the endings; we go for the process of getting there. The classical Hollywood cinema is not defined by happy endings, it is defined by deferred happy endings or sustained emotional high points. It is primarily about seeing characters squirm in dangerous, painful, or embarrassing situations.” (Dirk Eitzen i Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 98)

I TV-serier foregår handlingsforløpet ofte svært langsomt, med mange forgreninger som hver følges med sine “forsinkelser” (Lüdeke 2011 s. 180).

“Time-based story-world techniques: Here a real or virtual object in the story world which has some kind of temporal structure is used to shape the narrative. We have found it insightful to classify these objects into two sorts: Bounded and Iterative. The important difference is that for iterative temporal objects there is a possibility of resolution or arrival of significant new information at every iteration step, whereas for bounded-duration objects, all the attention, and therefore all the predictive processes, are focused on what will happen at one particular moment in time, the end-point of the process. Here are some examples:

Iterative temporal objects: Turning the pages in a book, Going through a list of names, Someone moving through a queue of people looking for someone...

Bounded temporal objects: Music with a known ending, A ticking bomb, A train arriving at a certain point on the track, Water rising...

[...] we will usually be able to describe these temporal objects as progressive states with a possible culmination point. [...] These two types of temporally structured object have in common that they involve a monotonic decrease in the number of available possibilities for resolution as time goes on. In some sense, these temporal objects can be seen as ‘exhausting time’ and it may be useful to use the concept of exhaustion to characterise them. [...] In some cases, it is also possible that the predicted point of resolution does not exist in the story world, that is, that a resolution, at that particular moment in the story, cannot actually occur. Of course, to evoke suspense, it is enough that the viewer be induced into predicting an end-point. Again, the concept of exhaustion which emphasises the process and not the end-point may be useful in such cases. A common feature of all these techniques is to create a feeling of powerlessness in the protagonists. A similar feeling is also evoked in the spectator by both maintaining and frustrating the desire for resolution. These techniques underline that the resolution can only come at a moment in time which ‘lies ahead’.” (<http://www.richarddoust.eu/suspense/sqdfch4.html#x8-250004.1>; lesedato 14.11.19)

Don Carson beskriver i artikkelen “Environmental Storytelling: Creating Immersive 3D Worlds Using Lessons Learned From the Theme Park Industry” (2000) noen spesielle “narrative devices as “following Saknussem,” referring to the ways that the protagonists of Jules Verne’s *Journey to The Center of the Earth*, keep stumbling across clues and artifacts left behind by a sixteenth Century Icelandic scientist/explorer Arne Saknussem, and readers become fascinated to see what they can learn about his ultimate fate as the travelers come closer to reaching their intended destination. [...] Such an embedded narrative doesn’t require a branching story structure but rather depends on scrambling the pieces of a linear story and allowing us to reconstruct the plot through our acts of detection, speculation, exploration, and decryption. Not surprisingly, most embedded narratives, at present, take the form of detective or conspiracy stories, since these genres help to motivate the player’s active examination of clues and exploration of spaces and provide a rationale for our efforts to reconstruct the narrative of past events.” (Henry Jenkins i <http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/lazzi-fair>; lesedato 12.10.10)

Den franske regissøren Robert Bresson brukte ofte en effekt kalt “resultatet før årsaken”, dvs. at noe skjer uten at vi skjønner hvorfor. Årsaken blir først klarlagt senere (Boneva 2015 s. 38-39). Slik skapes det mysterier og en spennende usikkerhet.

Fortellestrategier som f.eks. å forandre på hendelsers kronologi slik at virkninger vises før årsaker, fører til at leseren eller seeren stiller seg en rekke spørsmål som hun ønsker svar på: Hvem er den personen som dukket opp nå? Hva har skjedd

tidligere? Hva vil han? Hva gjør hun? osv. Vanligvis gis det svar, men forsinket og andre svar enn de mest sannsynlige (Raphaël Baroni i <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/pr/1900-v1-n1-pr1451/014274ar/>; lesedato 27.04.20).

“It can also be argued, as H. Porter Abbott does, that the narrative drive actually works both ways. For him, suspense, “the engine of narrative”, is “the pleasing ache of wanting to know *what has happened* or *what will happen next*, and has the audience straining to look *back* or *ahead*”. Moreover, as pointed out by Raphaël Baroni amongst others, suspense can be effective even if one knows the end of the story because of the reader’s emotional involvement and identification. Finally, there is obviously pleasure to be derived from a form of retrospection: understanding how things came to be the way they are.” (Parey 2019)

“Et av kjennetegnene ved en såpeopera er at de vakre hovedpersonene lever i en slags parallell, konstant høydramatisk sfære. Alle samtaler er konfrontasjoner der liv, død eller, som regel, kjærlighet står på spill. Vi tas fra høydepunkt til høydepunkt der alt er utvendig og uttalt, der hat og kjærlighet stadig slynges i ansiktet på andre.” (*Dagbladet* 9. september 2010 s. 54)

“Begrepet “meet cute” er et narrativt grep man finner ofte i genrer som komedier og romantiske filmer, og er i bunn og grunn et tilfeldig møte mellom to personer som umiddelbart forelsker seg i hverandre. I nesten alle tilfeller av meet cute er det narrative hindringer i veien som gjør at de to forelskede ikke kan få hverandre med en gang. Hindringene kan eksempelvis være klasse- eller sosiale skiller, de skal reise fra hverandre, de har en partner fra før o.l. Hele filmen vies til disse narrative hindringene før de to personene kan vie sine liv til hverandres kjærlighet. [...] Man finner få filmer som har hindringer i form av raseskille, homofili eller fattigdom.” (Sivert Almvik i <http://montages.no/2010/09/begrepet-meet-cute/>; lesedato 23.02.12)

“Buss-effekten” som betegnelse “stammer fra en amerikansk film, og det har blitt et meget populært grep særlig innen skrekkfilmen. Det hele går ut på å bygge opp spenningen i en scene for å så forløse denne på en helt annen måte enn hva publikum forventer. I filmen *Cat People* fra 1942 ser vi en scene der en ung kvinne tilsynelatende blir jaget nedover en gate, og hun ser hele tiden bak seg for å se om noen følger etter henne. Dette gjentar seg helt til scenen brytes med en skarp lyd og vi ser en buss stoppe foran henne. Som regel forventer publikum et utfall som er i et direkte årsaksforhold til hvordan scenen utvikler seg, og det naturlig her ville vært at den personen som fulgte etter henne klarte å ta henne igjen, men alt som skjer er at det kommer en buss. Effekten av grepet er at publikum alltid sitter ytterst på kanten siden man aldri vet hva som er utfallet i disse scenene. Man opplever også utvilsomt en lettelse siden det viste seg å være noe annet enn det man kanskje fryktet mest. Buss-effekten ble brukt i tilnærmet tro kopi i *Alien*. Etter at det ukjente vesenet har sprengt seg ut fra John Hurts bryst, begynner mannskapet å lete etter det med en sensor som piper kjappere og kjappere når noe er i nærheten.

Sensoren begynner kjapt å eskalere, og mannskapet forbereder seg på å fange monstret. Scenen får en forløsning på samme måte som i *Cat People* ved at skipskatten freser stygt mot dem.” (Sivert Almvik i <http://montages.no/2010/09/begrepet-buss-effekten/>; lesedato 23.02.12)

“A plot device is an object or character in the story whose purpose is purely to drive the Plot, maintain its flow, or resolve situations within it. It could be something everybody wants to obtain, a device that must be destroyed, or an annoying teenager who must be protected at all costs. It may also be an object or gadget introduced early in the story for the sole purpose of solving a sticky situation later on. The term is commonly used in a derisory manner, on the grounds that the best stories are character driven, and using an object to make things happen is thus seen as a sign of bad writing. However, there are plenty of good stories which do indeed revolve around a plot device; equally, a plot device can very easily be used to generate conflict and thus spark a character-driven story.” (<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/PlotDevice>; lesedato 06.01.15)

Alfred Hitchcocks “description of his obsession with the “double chase motif”: “In the ideal chase structure, the tempo and complexity of the chase will be an accurate reflection of the intensity of the relations between the characters. ... [den amerikanske regissøren David Wark] Griffith was the first to exploit the possibilities of a physical chase, but I tend to multiple chases and a lot of psychology.”” (Seltzer 2007 s. 138) “Once Hitchcock began creating suspenseful thrillers the obsessive themes for which he is most famous began to appear. These include the transference of guilt from a guilty to an innocent person; the police pursuit of the wrong (innocent) man; the double-chase motif in which an innocent man pursues the real culprit while he himself is being pursued by the police; the deceptiveness of appearances; and the sudden outburst of violence and absurdity in the midst of the most mundane everyday activities.” (Marilyn Fabe i <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1525/9780520959019-011/html>; lesedato 23.04.24)

“Hitchcock coined the term ‘MacGuffin’ when discussing the suspense techniques in his films. [...] The definition of MacGuffin can be boiled down to one thing – nothing. Hitchcock over the years described the MacGuffin as a plot device, or gimmick, on which to hang the tension in a film, ‘the key element of any suspense story’ (Gottlieb). Because Hitchcock lured the audience to such a high degree of sympathy for the characters through cinematic means, the reason behind their plight became irrelevant for the viewer. Something bad is happening to them and it doesn’t matter what. The only reason for the MacGuffin is to serve as a pivotal reason for the suspense to occur. The MacGuffin is like a wild card which can be inserted to stand for anything. It could be something as vague as the “government secrets” in [Hitchcocks film] *North by Northwest* (1959), or the long detailed weapons plans of Mr. Memory in *The 39 Steps* (1935). Or, it could be something simple like the dog blocking the stairway in *Strangers on a Train* (1951). Nobody

cares about the dog. It's only there for one reason – suspense. It could have just as easily been a person, an alarm, a talking parrot, or a MacGuffin!” (<http://borgus.com/hitch/macguffins.htm>; lesedato 12.04.12)

“MacGuffin (a.k.a. McGuffin or maguffin) is a term for a motivating element in a story that is used to drive the plot. It actually serves no further purpose. It won't pop up again later, it won't explain the ending, it won't actually do anything except possibly distract you while you try to figure out its significance. In some cases, it won't even be shown. It is usually a mysterious package/artifact/superweapon that everyone in the story is chasing. To determine if a thing is a MacGuffin, check to see if it is interchangeable. For example, in a caper story the MacGuffin could be either the Mona Lisa or the Hope diamond, it makes no difference which. The rest of the story (i.e. it being stolen) would be exactly the same. It doesn't matter which it is, it is only necessary for the characters to want it. A common MacGuffin story setup can be summarized as “Quickly! We must find X before they do!”. The term was popularized by Alfred Hitchcock, who actually credited one of his screenwriters, Angus McPhail, with the creation of this concept and the name for it” (<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/MacGuffin>; lesedato 15.02.13).

En MacGuffin gir dynamikk til handlingen, uten at den trenger å være spesielt troverdig (Alladaye 2006 s. 112). En MacGuffin kan være en gjenstand, en informasjon, en egenskap m.m. som utløser handlingen, men i liten grad influerer på hva som konkret skjer i handlingen. Det er dermed lett å tenke seg den byttet ut med et annet element som kunne ha samme funksjon. Det kan derfor kalles et “påskudd”, en “gimmick” og en “finte”. Hvis for eksempel to menn kjemper og slåss gjennom store deler av en film, kan kampen være ganske lik uansett om de slåss om penger, en kvinne eller noe annet (Fuxjäger 2007 s. 40).

Et annet eksempel på en MacGuffin er jakten på betydningen av ordet “Rosebud” i amerikaneren Orson Welles' film *Citizen Kane* (1941) (Hahn og Jansen 1985 s. 218). Journalister, tjenere hos Kane, hans kolleger osv. har ulike antakelser om hva dette siste ordet Kane hadde på leppene da han døde kan bety, og oppsporingen bygger opp spenningen om hva svaret på gåten skal bli. Bare vi seere (ingen av de levende personene i filmer) skjønner helt til slutt at Rosebud var navnet på hans barndoms kjelke. “Actually, as it turns out, “Rosebud” is the trade name of a cheap little sled on which Kane was playing on the day he was taken away from his home and his mother. In his subconscious it represented the simplicity, the comfort, above all the lack of responsibility in his home, and also it stood for his mother's love which Kane never lost. In his waking hours, Kane had certainly forgotten the sled and the name which was painted on it. Casebooks of psychiatrists are full of these stories. It was important for me in the picture to tell the audience as effectively as possible what this really meant. Clearly it would be undramatic and disappointing if an arbitrary character in the story popped up with the information.” (Welles sitert fra <http://www.wellesnet.com/>; lesedato 12.04.12)



Også pengene som Marion i Hitchcocks *Psycho* (1960) har stjålet fra sin arbeidsgiver, er en MacGuffin som knapt har noe med at hun blir myrdet å gjøre (Hahn og Jansen 1985 s. 224).

“Angus McPhail, who may have been the first to coin the term [MacGuffin], explained its meaning with a nonsense story. Two men were travelling on a train from London to Scotland. An odd shaped package sat on the luggage rack above their seat.

“What have you there?” asked one of the men.

“Oh, that’s a MacGuffin,” replied his companion.

“What’s a MacGuffin?”

“It’s a device for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands.”

“But there aren’t any lions in the Scottish Highlands!”

“Well, then, I guess that’s no MacGuffin!”

The MacGuffin is the engine that sets the story in motion. [...] Hitchcock didn’t invent the MacGuffin, but he made it his own, employing it time and again throughout his career. Nowadays, it is so closely associated with him that when it is used by others, as for example in Roman Polanski’s very Hitchcockian *Frantic* (1988), it is often seen as either homage to, or a theft from, Hitchcock.” (<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/hitch/tour6.html>; lesedato 09.08.13)

“Phlebotinum is the versatile substance that may be rubbed on almost anything to cause an effect needed by a plot. Some examples: nanotechnology, magic crystal emanations, pixie dust, a sonic screwdriver, or even just some Green Rocks. In essence, it is plot fuel. Without it, the story would grind to an abrupt halt. It’s science, it’s magic, it’s strange things unknown to science or magic. The reader does not know how Phlebotinum would work and the creators hope nobody cares.

According to Joss Whedon, during the DVD commentary for the pilot episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the term “phlebotinum” originates from *Buffy* writer (and *Angel* co-creator) David Greenwalt’s sudden outburst: “Don’t touch the phlebotinum!” apropos of nothing. If the phlebotinum in question is simply a physical substance with unusual/extreme properties you are almost certainly dealing with the element Unobtainium. A.K.A. Handwavium. Compare MacGuffin, A Wizard Did It, Hand Wave, and Deus ex Machina.” (<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/AppliedPhlebotinum>; lesedato 15.02.13)

“Det finnes et punkt mot slutten av de fleste kriminalromaner der man innser at uansett hvilke avsløringer de resterende sidene har å by på, så vil de aldri kunne tilfredsstille forventningene som har bygget seg opp underveis.” (Aksel Kielland i *Morgenbladet* 13.–19. juli 2018 s. 39)

Den amerikanske filosofen Aaron Smuts sin “desire-frustration theory of suspense claims that: “when we know something that could help a character that we care

about stay alive, and we are unable to relay the information, we feel suspense. Our desire to make use of the information is frustrated – that is, we want to help, but there is nothing we can do.” [...] In this view, powerlessness is a necessary condition for suspense and suspense is based on a series of frustrated desires. As we are mere onlookers of the unfolding drama, we have no means to intervene in the story. Our situation is similar to real world situations where there is nothing we can do to affect a result: waiting for an exam result perhaps. According to Smuts, as soon as we act to satisfy our desire and resolve the predicament then suspense disappears. Smuts aims with this model to solve the suspense paradox: we still want the victim in a narrative to escape in a given episode, even though we know from previous viewings that he does not. [...] We can resume the suspense (or repeater’s) paradox by the following question: “If a necessary condition for suspense is not knowing the outcome of a narrative, how can a spectator who already knows the outcome feel suspense on repeated viewings?” ” (en forskergruppe ved Richard Doust Department of Computing, Open University; <http://www.richarddoust.eu/suspense/sqdfch2.html#x6-100002.2>; lesedato 14.11.19)

Det som har blitt kalt “Titanic-effekten” gjelder historier der “the outcome is told beforehand, either by the title, the introduction or just by the fact that a myth, event or story familiar to the reader is mentioned.” (Pirjo Lyytikäinen i <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783839437933-014/html>; lesedato 04.03.22) Nesten alle vet at Titanic gikk ned og de fleste på skipet døde (men vi kan ikke vite om en fiktiv hovedperson vi følger i en Titanic-film overlever eller drukner).

Aaron Smuts skriver om spenningsparadokset: “Although it is something of a received dogma in philosophy and psychology that suspense requires uncertainty, many of the biggest box office successes are action movies that fans claim to find suspenseful on repeated viewings. The conflict between the theory of suspense and the accounts of viewers generates a problem known as the *paradox of suspense*, which we can boil down to a simple question: If suspense requires uncertainty, how can a viewer who knows the outcome still feel suspense? [...] The *thought theory of entertained uncertainty* explains the paradox by denying that actual uncertainty is necessary for suspense; instead, all that is required is for viewers to engage the fiction as they normally would – entertaining thoughts of the story as if they were undecided. The *desire-frustration* theory holds that uncertainty, entertained or actual, is not necessary for suspense. To create suspense, one merely needs to frustrate a desire to affect the outcome of an imminent event. The *moment-by-moment forgetting* view is the position that while viewers are immersed in a fictional scenario, they effectively cannot remember the outcome. The *emotional misidentification* view holds that it is impossible for viewers who know the outcome to feel suspense, and the best explanation of the claims of audiences to the contrary is that viewers must be confusing their actual fear and anxiety with what they take to be suspense.” (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-suspense/>; lesedato 14.11.19)

“There are numerous cases where knowledge of the outcome can make a narrative more, not less suspenseful. For instance, the first time one watches Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960), one may feel mild fear for Marion Crane as she chats with Norman Bates in the hotel office. Filled with stuffed, menacing birds, the office creates an aura of danger, but viewers have no reason to suspect that in the next couple of minutes Norman will bury a carving knife in Marion’s chest as she showers. However, on a second viewing, one feels a great deal more suspense during the office scene. Norman’s disturbance seems obvious on repeated viewings. How could Marion fail to see it? One wants to scream “Get out of there!” The reason why the office scene in *Psycho* is more suspenseful on subsequent viewings cannot be that audiences are entertaining the idea that the outcome is as uncertain as it was on their first viewing, since the first viewing is not as suspenseful as the second. This objection rests on the claim that normal people do indeed feel suspense on the second viewing of *Psycho*, but one might simply deny this claim. Perhaps audiences merely feel tension or anticipation, but not suspense. [...] this is precisely what defenders of the *emotional misidentification* view say in response to all reports of recidivist [gjentagende] suspense.” (Aaron Smuts i <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-suspense/>; lesedato 14.11.19)

“Harald Zwarts *Den 12. mann* følger de senere års suksessoppskrift for norsk film: Nasjonale myter i Hollywood-formel, *Max Manus*, *Birkebeinerne* og *Kon-Tiki*. Man tar en ekte norsk helt av hankjønn og sørger for at han er lytefri og alltid på den rette siden. Så utstyres han med en antagonist, en slemming som lager trøbbel for helten og skaper drama i manuset. Siden virkeligheten ikke er svart-hvitt, må slemmingen i praksis diktes frem. To “birkebeinere” som ser ut som vestkant-hipstere på pappaperm, jages med kongsbarnet i armene over Dovrefjell av dansktalende baglere i *Star Wars*-kostymer. Å lage film om Kon-Tiki var ikke lett, forteller filmskaperen. Ekspedisjonen forløp for harmonisk, i en film må det skje noe på flåten. Løsningen blir å fremstille nestlederen Herman Watzinger som en puslete og tykkfalle liten nervebunt som ikke tror at flåten holder, og som vil sikre den med stålvaiere. En kontrast etableres, slik at storheten til nasjonalhelten Thor Heyerdahl kan fremheves. La gå at etterkommerne klager og at den historiske Watzinger var en høyreist idrettsmann, norgesmester på hundremeter, motstandshelt og at det var han som konstruerte flåten. Spenningsformelen må følges. [...] Løgn om historie er norsk films nye suksessformel. I forsvaret for disse filmene vises det til den kunstneriske friheten. Realiteten er det motsatte. Det er mangelen på kunstnerisk frihet som setter historieforfalskningen i system. Filmene lages i tråd med konvensjoner for underholdningsfilm som er for trange og formelpregede til at man kan yte virkelighetens mennesker rettferdighet.” (historieprofessor Kjetil Jakobsen i *Morgenbladet* 2.–8. februar 2018 s. 20-21)

TV-serien *24* (2001-14; skapt av Joel Surnow m.fl.) bruker et spesielt virkemiddel for å skape spenning: “[The r]eal-time nature of the show is emphasised by an on-screen digital clock that intermittently appears on screen, with a harsh and distinctive ticking noise accompanying each second as the digits dramatically count

down. [...] alerts viewers to exactly how much time Jack has left to achieve a crucial task; thereby heightening the show's ongoing levels of suspense." (Glen Creeber i Creeber 2008 s. 27)

### **Å henge over kanten av stupet**

Engelsk: "cliffhanger": "en person som henger over et stup" – og som vi derfor ønsker å vite om overlever den farefulle situasjonen eller ikke. Det engelske ordet "cliffhanger" henspiller på en filmscene fra en tidlig Hollywood-film "der helten henger i én hånd utfor et stup. Skurken står på oversida og flirer ondt, mens han bredbeint skritter stadig nærmere heltens fingre." (Naper 2007 s. 71)

"En cliff-hanger fik navn fra Arthur Conan Doyle, der efter en lang række romaner om Sherlock Holmes blev træt af at skrive om ham og derfor lod ham falde ud over en klippe til sidst i en roman. Men Conan Doyles publikum protesterede, og efter flere år genoptog Doyle serien af romaner om detektiven. Fiktionen var, at Sherlock Holmes havde grebet fast i klippen og var blevet reddet i stedet for at styrte i afgrunden. I dag bruges begrebet cliff-hanger om den suspenseopbygning, som sker før et reklameindslag i en tv-fiktion eller før slutningen i en føljetonepisode." (Povlsen 1999 s. 45)

"Cliffhanger is a narrative technique based on the interruption of a narrative when a tension is created, calling for urgent resolution. It involves a desynchronization of textual closure and of resolution of plot. This paroxysmal suspension can be based on the arousal of suspense or curiosity and it is often accompanied by an explicit presentation of unresolved uncertainties [...] inviting the receiver to wait for the next developments of the story. The break is usually associated with a periodical publication, but one can find traces of it in chapters of a novel or in the succession of pages in comics previously published in a serialized form. There are also cliffhangers in folktales, as evidenced by the suspenseful stories of Scheherazade in *The 1001 Nights*." (Raphaël Baroni i <https://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/7570>; lesedato 29.08.24)

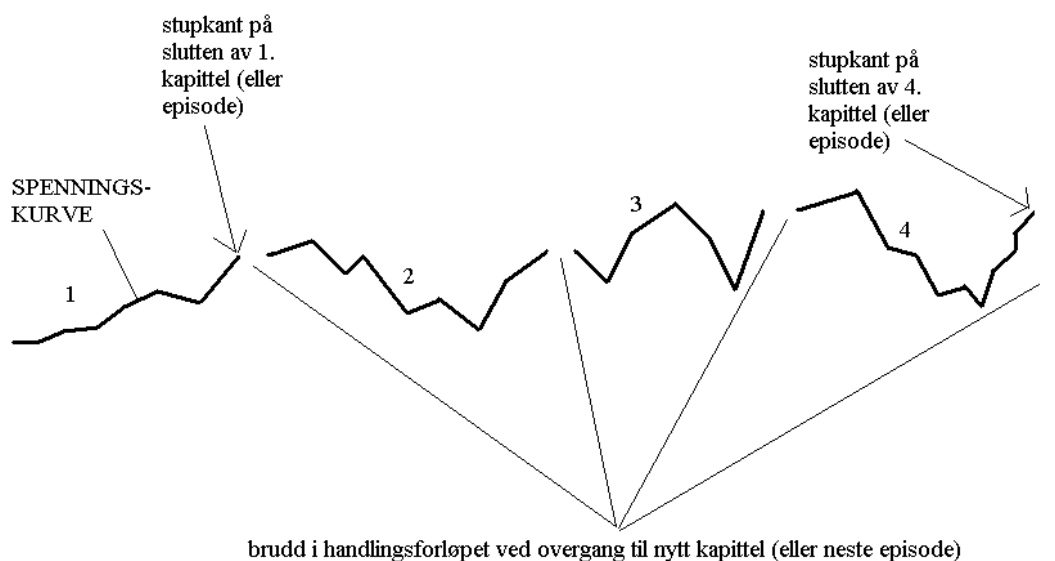
"They're page-turning. They're nail-biting. They're infuriating. They're everywhere. Cliffhangers, those endings to scenes, chapters, or whole works that create anticipation in the audience, sometimes feel like the bread and butter of modern storytelling televised and written, and as a literary tool they have a long history. [...] Cliffhangers were central tools of the early television era. As with the serialized fiction magazines, the episodic nature of television made cliffhangers at the ends of episodes or even just before a commercial break indispensable to writers and directors, the continued production and broadcasting of whose work depended on a growing number of viewers. [...] A cliffhanger at the end of a sequel jump-starts the action and can be an effective way of signaling to readers that conflict is returning. [...] The hook is the cliffhanger itself: the clue writers insert at the end of the scene/sequel that suggests what is coming next. The hook can take

many forms: an unexpected challenge, a question, a forgotten bit of foreshadowing finally rearing up – whatever it is, an effective hook must be believable and relevant to the story at hand (random catastrophes usually come across as canned). Additionally, and this can be a bit trickier, the hook should signal some shift in the story.” (Jimmy Kindree i <https://wordsliketrees.wordpress.com/2019/04/07/anatomy-of-a-cliffhanger/>; lesedato 14.12.22)

Den engelske forfatteren Thomas Hardy “var god til å konstruere dramatiske intriger og skal på et tidlig tidspunkt ha gitt opphavet til begrepet “cliffhanger”. Et av kapitlene i en avisføljetong han fikk på trykk i 1872, skal ha endt med at en av hovedpersonene bokstavelig talt hang etter armene på kanten av et stup.” (Dagbladet 27. desember 2014 s. 58)

Det dreier seg her i overført betydning om slutten av en føljetongdel, et romankapittel, en filmepisode eller lignende, der spenningen er så stor at leseren/seeren sterkt ønsker å lese/se fortsettelsen.

Såkalte “sidevendere” er bokmediets parallell til TV-seriers cliffhangere. Bildebøker og tegneserier kan ha visuelle sidevendere, der noe beveger seg i retning neste oppslag og dermed “peker” mot fortsettelsen og oppfordrer til å bla om.



En cliffhanger-effekt kan også skapes ved at handlingen skifter til en parallell handling. I det øyeblikk skurken sikter med sin pistol på stakkars lille Marie, sier fortelleren f.eks.: “Samtidig et annet sted i jungelen, gikk en leopard på jakt” eller “Hjemme i landsbyen hadde Maries flukt blitt oppdaget”. Fortelleren kan altså skifte mellom parallelle handlingstråder.

“An unexpected or complicated danger is the most common (or at least the most recognizable) cliffhanger hook. It effectively galvanizes characters to action, gets the reader turning pages (if, at least, the reader cares enough about the characters by this point – this is why a Scare cliffhanger is a bad idea in Chapter 1: the reader isn’t yet invested enough), and propels the conflict of the story forward. Scare cliffhangers are the most dramatic type, and they’re at the greatest risk of creating “cliffhanger fatigue,” in which readers are so inundated with action that they lose investment in the story. [...] A cliffhanger needn’t involve immediate danger: asking a big question can be enough to propel a reader forward. Mystery cliffhangers tend to work well earlier in a story as they can gesture at larger issues rather than the more situation-specific expectations that Scare cliffhangers create. Mystery cliffhangers are quieter than their frightening counterparts, and they draw less attention to themselves as cliffhangers. At the same time, of course, they are often less powerful in drawing the reader on.” (Jimmy Kindree i <https://wordsliketrees.wordpress.com/2019/04/07/anatomy-of-a-cliffhanger/>; lesedato 14.12.22)

“Sometimes, we talk about cliffhangers as if they must involve a surprise. I think that actually, the best cliffhangers have been built up all along. [...] When a reader knows a particular scene has been coming for a long time, it works well to break the chapter just before. This allows the reader to mentally prepare, to not be hurled into the scene unexpected (which ends up feeling like rushed pacing), and to foreground the promised scene in its own section of the text. The Promise cliffhanger is really the idea that a cliffhanger should fit the larger flow of the story taken to its logical extreme. We aren’t playing cheap tricks on our readers here. We have promised tension, and we are about to deliver. [...] A final, oft forgotten cliffhanger is one that comes to us from theater. Due to the challenge of staging, many of the high-action battles, murders, sexual assaults, and other pivotal moments in Shakespearean and other plays take place offstage. We see the characters marching towards the battle, and in a modern production we might even hear a series of suggestive sound effects, but then the characters reemerge to show us the aftermath. In modern fiction, we may omit these action scenes to suggest, perhaps, that they are too painful to describe, or that their outcome is inevitable. There is often an aura of the predetermined about them, made powerful by their very absence from the text. This type of cliffhanger is the only type that can lower tension, because it creates in its place a kind of catharsis, a kind of playing-out of the action in the reader’s mind, yet a knowledge that we will never know the precise truth of what occurred.” (Jimmy Kindree i <https://wordsliketrees.wordpress.com/2019/04/07/anatomy-of-a-cliffhanger/>; lesedato 14.12.22)

“[T]he cliffhanger at the end of a chapter puts pressure on that chapter break. Just as we are telling the reader explicitly that they might stop, the cliffhanger implies that they must not. [...] An interesting type of cliffhanger can emerge in a text that follows two (or more) alternating storylines. Cliffhangers in Story A are followed by a section of Story B. This section may also end in a cliffhanger, leading us back into Story A, where the anticipation of the first cliffhanger is resolved. This means

that, short of skipping ahead, readers cannot satisfy the tension of the cliffhanger immediately. They just have to wait!” (Jimmy Kindree i <https://wordsliketrees.wordpress.com/2019/04/07/anatomy-of-a-cliffhanger/>; lesedato 14.12.22)

Den tyske forfatteren Hans Fallada hadde denne barndomserindringsen: “– og når det gjelder den livsfaren som heltene stadig svevet i, så hadde min far kurert meg grundig for all frykt. For en gang jeg skalv for en av heltene og ba om bare fem minutters utsettelse med å måtte legge meg, for å få vite om helten kom til å leve eller dø – da tok min far boka smilende i hånden, pekte på de mange uleste siden i boka, og sa: “Ennå to hundre og femti sider igjen – og helten skulle dø allerede nå? Hva skal da forfatteren fortelle om på de siste to hundre og femti sidene? Om begravelsen?” Dette ga meg en aha-opplevelse, slik at jeg deretter når mitt hjerte banket i deltakelse, vurderte mengden gjenværende sider, og straks var hjertet rolig igjen.” (sitert fra Gross 1994 s. 63)

“Føljetongen var en film, vanligvis et actioneventyr, med flere episoder. Den ble vist på kinoer i ukentlige avsnitt, og hver del sluttet med en dramatisk situasjon. Dette er den eneste kinofilmsjangeren som ikke finnes lenger, selv om såpeoperaer og miniserier på TV likner litt.” (Bergan m.fl. 2007 s. 164)

“[T]he cliffhanger, inspired by the success of Dallas’s “Who Shot J.R.?” episode in 1980, became a stock device for ensuring that audiences returned after the non-ratings period. Dramas such as HBO’s True Blood have ramped up the cycle of unresolved cliffhangers, with each episode leaving a compelling question unanswered, or a central character lying prostrate with fangs pressed at his throat.” (Michelle Smith i <http://theconversation.com/will-tv-series-go-the-way-of-charles-dickens-21705>; lesedato 08.07.16)

“Sammen med regissøren David Fincher, presenterte Kevin Spacey [TV-serien] “House of Cards” for samtlige amerikanske TV-stasjoner. Alle var interesserte, men ville ikke investere i prosjektet før det ble laget en såkalt pilot – en første episode der alle karakterene og plottet beskrives. En pilot er dyr og krevende, den skal helst slutte med en *cliffhanger* som åpner TV-stasjonenes lommebøker.” (Dagbladet 19. januar 2014 s. 50)

“Advertising breaks also affect the pacing of the show – with high points preceding breaks to encourage the return of viewers (the break points are most apparent when the show is watched on DVD).” (Harrigan og Wardrip-Fruin 2009 s. 394)

Noen tegneserieskapere lager en ekstra spenning i siste rute nederst til høyre på et oppslag, slik at leseren må bla om for å få svaret på f.eks. hvorfor protagonisten ser forferdet ut. Det har også hendt at taleboblen er på siste rute på et oppslag, og personen som taler vises på neste.

En cliffhanger kan også betegne “a whole film that depends heavily on suspense for its effects” (Fuxjäger 2007 s. 39).

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