The Middle--Narrative Spine--the \textit{Train}

- What moves the story forward
- Sometimes called “the Train”
  - move train forward and then detour for
    - further exposition
    - characters
    - explanation/understanding
The Train

Compelling Characters and Story Development in The Killer Within

Monday, April 23, 12
The Killer Within

• Journey to tell family and university
  • this is the narrative spine
• we learn about his story
• we see reactions
• we begin to see behind his exterior
  • flat
  • hiding
• Storyteller gradually reveals.................
the most important element?

Characters
Ramsley

- strong, engaging, and believable characters
- we will come to care about, root for, despise, or even hate.
Inglorious Basterds
opening scene
Character Development
Ramsley

- we see the story as characters who show up and do things
- characters best reveal themselves through the course of events
- what they do more than what they say
- “business”
- how they say what they say............
- Some exceptions--The Fog of War (Robert McNamara--mostly talk
The End
Resolution

• Second most important element (beginning)
• Should be compelling
• makes sense-understandable
• feels like a conclusion
• what makes a good ending in music?
  • slows down, or speeds up
  • resolves--harmonically
  • crescendo, or decrescendo
• Similar in Film--you can feel it
Good Endings

Casablanca
Casablanca Ending

- Endings are difficult
- Even in professional world
- Moment of Inspiration
- Several versions often the case....... 
- reprise the music
- Rick makes the noble choice
- add in “beautiful friendship”
How to tell it

• "When we tell a story in cinema, we should resort to dialogue only when it's impossible to do otherwise. I always try first to tell a story in the cinematic way, through a succession of shots and bits of film in between"

  - Alfred Hitchcock
How to tell it

• Begin strong/powerfully/interestingly
• Showing is preferable to telling
• unfold events
  – reflect the plot and the theme
• through behavior reveal the character and conflict
• Keep it simple
Theme

What the story is about
abstract--not enough by itself for a strong story
but all good stories have a theme
be about something
use oblique approach
Great themes
Great Themes

Love
Death
Self awareness
Limitations
Envy
War
Power
The Philips Parallel Lines: Tell It Your Way film contest invited people to make a short film, no longer than three minutes, that contained these lines as its dialogue:

What’s That?
It’s a Unicorn
Never seen one up close before
Beautiful
Get away, get away
I’m sorry.

The winner, as judged by acclaimed director Ridley Scott, was Porcelain Unicorn.
The Porcelain Unicorn