

CONTENTS

Preface and acknowledgements	VII
I. Introduction	1
1. Central questions and aims of the study	1
2. Overview of current research	4
3. Theoretical framework and structure	6
II. The Distinctiveness of the Medium: Characteristics of Unreliable Filmic Narration	13
1. Key concepts of a cognitively oriented film narratology	13
1.1 Story, plot, text in filmic narration	13
1.2 Frames and framings	16
1.3 The problem of narrative agency	19
2. Definition of unreliable narration	25
2.1 Cognitive narratological conceptualisation of unreliable narration	25
2.2 Normative vs. factual unreliability	30
2.3 Extratextual frames of reference and textual signals for the establishment of unreliable narration	32
2.4 The default: Norms and taboos of narrative representations in Hollywood cinema	34
3. Unreliable narration on the level of the narrative microstructure (text): The filmic communication system	43
3.1 The level of action (NL1)	45
3.1.1 Dialogue-derived narrative information	45
3.1.2 Character and characterisation in the context of narrative unreliability	48
3.2 The level of explicit narrative communication (NL2)	51
3.2.1 Voice-over narration	52
3.2.2 Signals of unreliable explicit narration	54
3.3 The level of implicit narrative communication (NL3)	60
3.3.1 Non-verbal narrative information and its dependability	60
3.3.2 Techniques of focalisation: Objectivity und subjectivity in film	62
3.3.3 Signals of unreliable implicit narration	67
3.4 The level of extratextual, indirect, non-fictional communication (NL4)	75
4. Unreliable narration on the level of the narrative macrostructure (plot)	80
4.1 Perspective structure, or: An ensemble of fictional minds	80
4.2 'Possible worlds' as mental products and their narrative (un)reliability	82
5. Conclusion: Towards a typology of unreliable filmic narration	88

III. Forms of Unreliable Narration in Contemporary American Cinema	90
1. Normatively unreliable explicit narration	90
1.1 What is right? Hierarchy negotiations in the American value system I: The victory of innocence over intelligence in <i>Forrest Gump</i> (1994)	90
1.2 What is wrong? Hierarchy negotiations in the American value system II: The victory of rhetoric over righteousness in <i>Thank You for Smoking</i> (2005)	104
2. Normatively unreliable implicit narration	119
2.1 What is cool? Satirical treatment of the medial presentation of violence in <i>Natural Born Killers</i> (1994)	119
3. Factually unreliable explicit narration	136
3.1 Does the camera show The Truth? The camera as the murderer's accomplice: Departing from the veracity of filmic pictures in <i>The Usual Suspects</i> (1995)	136
3.2 What is The Truth? The narrative staging of subjective reality loss in <i>Fight Club</i> (1999)	150
4. Factually unreliable implicit narration	166
4.1 Is there a Truth? Misleading the viewer's moral judgement and epistemological indeterminacy in <i>Memento</i> (2000)	166
4.2 Is there a story? Breaking with the concept of realist worlds in <i>Mulholland Drive</i> (2001)	181
5. Conclusion: Varieties of narrative unreliability in film	196
IV. Why Movies Matter: The Social Dimension of Unreliable Filmic Narration	198
1. The generic and historical dimensions of unreliable narration in American cinema	199
2. Potential social functions of unreliable cinematic narration	211
2.1 Sociopolitical contextualisation of the subject	211
2.2 The functions of movies	213
2.3 Models of the social functions of literary texts and their transmedial applicability	216
2.4 Unreliable narration as culture-critical meta-discourse	224
2.5 Unreliable narration as imaginative counter-discourse	230
2.6 Unreliable narration as reintegrative inter-discourse	237
V. Conclusion	240
Appendix: Sequence records	251
Filmography	276
Bibliography	284