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***Conventions of Fiction***

**Point of View –** The perspective a writer determines for the reader. This is probably the most significant choice a writer makes; it influences directly how the reader perceives the text. How much does the writer want to reveal or conceal? Presenting material from the third-person point of view can allow readers some distance, while the first-person pulls the reader in. Exercise 1

* **Diegetic Narrator** 
  + First-person
  + Major or minor character
* **Non-diegetic Narrator** 
  + Third-person omniscient (editorial or objective)
  + Third-person limited (selective) omniscient
    - Free-indirect discourse
  + Objective (Camera, Fly-on-the-wall)
* **Second-person Narrator**
* **Stream of consciousness vs. interior monologue**

**Voice and Tone –** Narrative voice cannot be distinguished from the narrator;when we determine voice, we embody the narrator. The only narrative voice that is not embodied, is not biased, does not judge, is the ***objective*** *narrator.* Try to determine the bias of the narrative voice. Exercise 2

* Subjective/Objective
* Reliable/Unreliable
  + Naïve Narrator
* Self-assured/tentative
* Ironic

**Characterization –** “Roselily”

* Direct – relies on narrator
* Indirect – Relies on other characters and reader observation
* Dynamic/Static
* Round/Flat

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**Plot** – The artistic arrangement of events. According to Aristotle, plot is the “imitation of an action’ and “the arrangement of the incidents.” This arrangement is unified — it has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and each part exists within a chain of causality, otherwise known as cause and effect. Is story the same as plot? According to E. M. Forster, story is “a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence.” Plot is also a narrative of events, but the emphasis falls on causality.

Story - “The king died and then the queen died.”

Plot - “The king died and then the queen died of grief.”

To reiterate, in plot, time sequence is secondary to cause and effect.

* Dramatic Situation – a person is involved in a conflict
* Conflict
  + Antagonist/Protagonist
    - Character vs. character
    - Character vs. Society
    - Character vs. natural force
    - Character vs. supernatural force
* Beginning, middle, end
* Exposition – backround information
* Complication – new conflict
* Suspense
* Foreshadowing
* Flashback – what is the effect?
* Crisis – moment of high tension
* Climax
  + Turning point
  + Moment of greatest tension and reader engagement
* Conclusion/Resolution/Denouement

**Sub-plot** – There may be more than one plot in a novel. Sub-plots may have different functions.

* Deepen suspense
* Ironic contrast
* Emphasize theme
* Develop character
* Relief from main plot

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**Setting in time and place** \_ includes geographical, historical, and social backround in which the action takes place. In some fiction, setting can take on the significance of character, or even theme. It comprises the fictional world in which the characters reside. Even if the author chooses a familiar, present-day setting, it is still a fictional setting in that the author chooses and manipulates it.

**Time**

The passing of time within a work of fiction is relative to all the other conventions of fiction. The characters, the plot, the setting, revelation of theme, structure of the text — all relate to how time unfolds in the novel. Some texts may be chronological, others may be non-sequential (in medias res, circular, episodic, flashbacks). All of these techniques inform the reader’s understanding of some aspect of the novel’s ‘present’.

**Style** – is determined by the author’s use of language and syntax; is the language literal or figurative?

* Imagery
* Symbol
* Simile
* Metaphor
* Personification
* Understatement/Overstatement
* Syntactic patterns – complex or simple sentences, fragments, prose rhythm

**Structure** – Narrative strategy + unfolding of time + setting + physical properties of text Look at everything! “Roselily”

**Tone and Mood** – Tone is determined by the author’s or the narrator’s attitude toward the subject. THEY ARE NOT ALWAYS THE SAME! When they are different, IRONY rears its fascinating head. A writer’s tone is her emotional and intellectual perspective on her characters, their actions, and the ensuing situations. The tone of the author directly affects the reader’s perception (mood) of the work

**Theme** – An observation about human nature that emerges from the text. Theme may be simple or complex, explicit or implicit. Complex themes will need explanation.

* Explicit – Narrator or character states the theme.
* Implicit – Inferred by reader over time as text unfolds, from character interactions.

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