

Reading Literature

P PREDICT

R READ

O OUTLINE

V VALIDATE A THEME

E EVALUATE

Fiction Terminology

Elements

vs.

Devices/
Techniques

Setting

Temporal Setting



Physical Setting



Weather



Societal Conditions



Conflict

-struggle between two opposing forces

The individual versus:

- Self (internal conflict- present in all stories)
- Another person or a group of people
- Society (dystopian literature)
- Nature (survival stories)
- The Unknown (mystery/ghost stories)
- Machine (sci-fi)

PLOT

-series of events in a story, categorized as follows:

- Exposition- event in which the potential for conflict is presented (setting & character introduced)
- Catalyst (aka Complication)- event which initiates the conflict
(Can also be a character; not necessarily the antagonist)
- Rising Action- event(s) in which the conflict intensifies (sometimes stories start at this stage, *en media res*, and earlier stages are presented in *flashback*)
- Climax- the point at which conflict is most intense
- Resolution- point at which conflict subsides
These are not necessarily in order; e.g. some stories begin *en media res* (in the middle) and some have no resolution.

Terms to Avoid in Literary Analysis

The ~~Main~~ Character

The ~~Good~~ Guy

The ~~Hero~~

Protagonist

[proto(first)+agon(contest)+ist(one who is/does)]

The character that works to resolve the conflict; generally the focus of the story

- not always heroic
- not always the “good guy”

Antagonist

[ant(opposite)+agon(contest)+ist(one who is/does)]
i.e.- opposes the protagonist's contest (challenge)

The character that initiates,
or otherwise agitates, the
conflict.

Stories do not always have to have
antagonists (e.g. conflict with nature stories)

Other Character Types:

- Flat characters- stock or stereotypical characters; one dimensional
- Round characters- characters with depth; protagonists are always round
- Static characters- characters that do not undergo significant change
- Dynamic characters- undergo a significant, emotional or spiritual change

The perspective from which
the story is told is called

Narrative
Point of View (POV)

or simply

Narrator

Narrative modes

- First person- a character in the story is telling the story... the pronoun "I" is prominent.
- Third person- the entity telling the story is not a character in the story.

Narrative Tenses

■ Past-

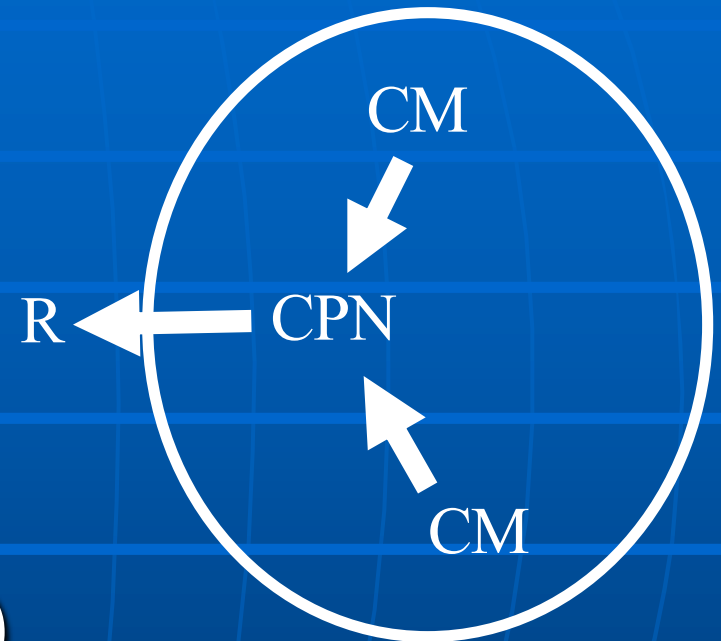
- narrator is relating events that have occurred prior to the tale's telling
- 1st person Narrator has had time to reflect over events (memoir-style)

■ Present-

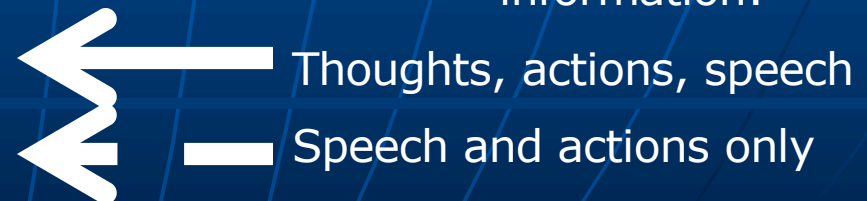
- narrator is relating information as it happens- no time has transpired between the events and the story's telling
- this does not require the narration to use only past tense verbs

Narrative Voice: Primary Character (1st person)

- Reader (R) receives all thoughts of primary character narrator (CPN)
- Actions & dialogue of minor characters (CM) are revealed only through CPN

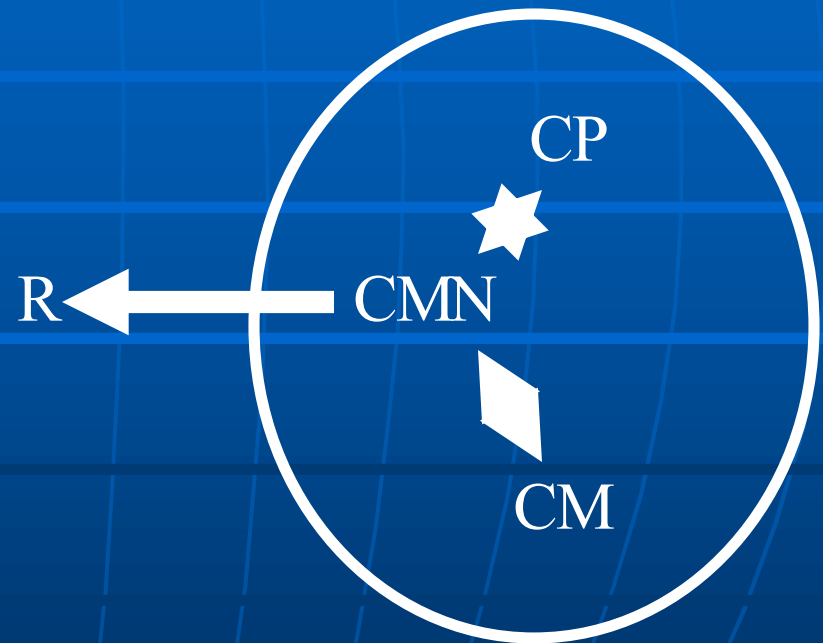


Lines represent flow of
information:



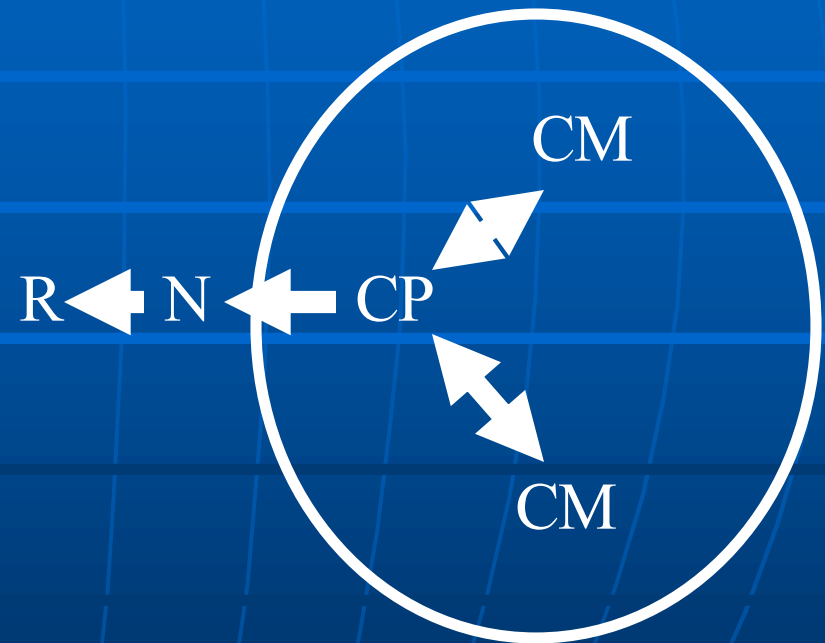
Narrative Voice: Ancillary Character (1st person)

- Reader receives all thoughts of minor character narrator (CMN) only
- Actions and dialogue are revealed through CMN



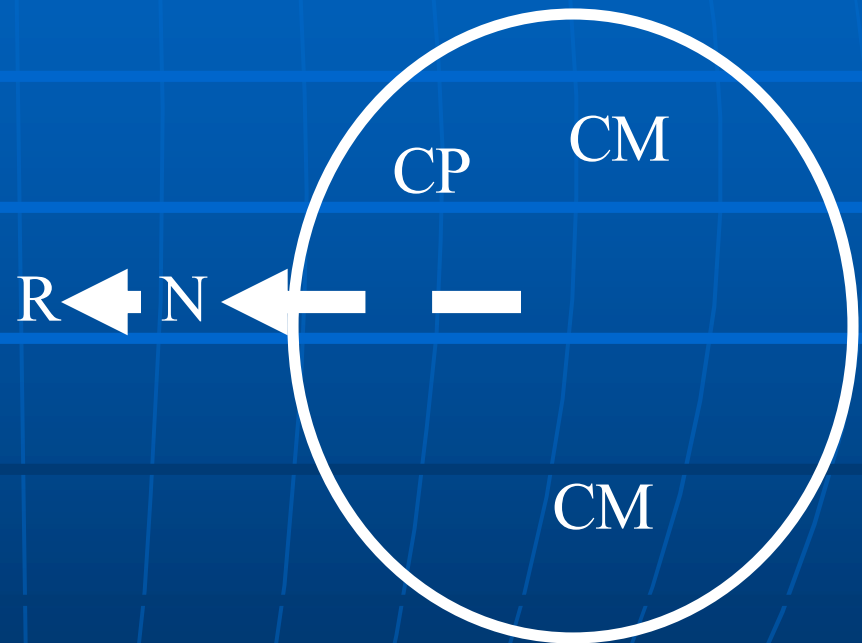
Narrative Voice: Limited (3rd Person)

- Narrator is removed from story and focuses on thoughts and experiences and of one or two characters only



Narrative Voice: Objective (3rd Person)

- Narration reveals only actions and dialogue in the story
- Often referred to as “fly on the wall” POV

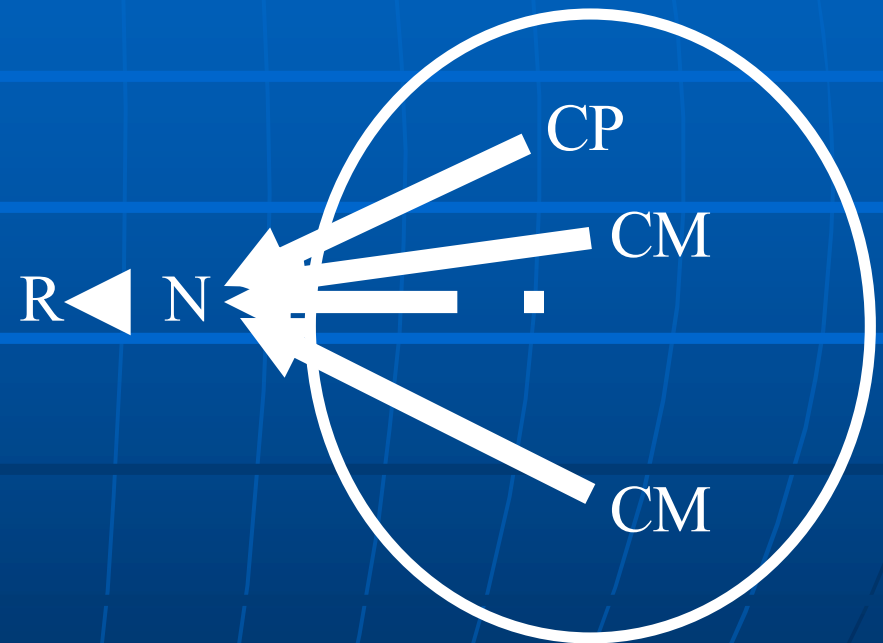


Narrative Voice:

Omniscient (3rd person)

omni (all) + scient (knowledge)

- Narration reveals actions and dialogue in the story, as well as thoughts of all characters



POV Exercise

Provide a brief (under 50 words) narrative of one of the following situations, from one of the five narrative voices:

- Two students are caught cheating on a test
- A motorist is pulled over for speeding
- A lover makes an accusation of infidelity
- Two athletes are engaged in direct competition
- An argument develops between friends
- A parent scolds a child

Add whatever details to the narrative that you wish, but be sure to stay in voice:

1st Person: Primary, Ancillary

3rd Person: Limited, Objective, Omniscient

The following terms are often misapplied in literary analysis:

- Tone- the attitude the speaker/narrator has
- Atmosphere- attitude established by descriptions of setting
- Mood- emotions built upon, usually as a result of the interaction of TONE and ATMOSPHERE

Characterization-

The methods by which an author develops characters in a story

- Direct characterization, (telling) the narrator states explicitly the traits and behaviors of a character, and provides an explicit judgment
- Indirect characterization, (showing) narrator's judgment is implied, reserved, or left up to the reader entirely

Indirect Characterization- an author's STEALTH mission

Authors, through their narrators,
develop a character through a variety
of STEALTHy means:

Speech- by *what* is said by or about the character

Tone- by *how* it is said (diction, syntax, tempo, etc.)

Effects- the effect the character has on others, revealed by
their behavior toward the character

Actions- by what the character does or does not do

Looks- by a character's clothes or other physical description

Thoughts- by what the character thinks

Flashback

An interruption of
the plot to reveal
events occurring
in the past

Foreshadowing

The use of clues in the development of the story that hint at later plot events

Suspense

- Uncertainty or anxiety created by an author as to what will happen next in the story
- Created when moments of rising action, coupled with tone, atmosphere and mood, prolong the conflict

Symbolism

The use of objects, animals, even colors to represent a higher idea in the story

Heart = love

Snake = evil

Red = passion

Symbols

- The “Pit and the Pendulum”
 - the scythe,
 - the hand of General LaSalle
- The quilts in “Everyday Use”
- The dog in “Liberty”

Short Stories Quiz 1

- 1-5: multiple choice- elements of stories
- 6-10: short answer- elements of stories
- 10-20: vocabulary- check QUIZLET: quizlet.com/toconnorredhook
- Paragraph response- use correct story title and author (last name)

- Title & Author (last name)
- Characters (protagonist & antagonist)
- Conflict (internal, or individual vs.....)
- Plot stages: rising action, climax, resolution
- Symbols, if any
- Prominent devices used

"The Pedestrian" "The Book of Sand"

"The Pit and the Pendulum"

"The Bass, the River, and Sheila Mant" "Liberty"

"The Cold Equations"

"Everyday Use"

"The Appointment in Samarra" as retold by W. Somerset Maugham

The speaker is Death:

There was a merchant in Bagdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions. In a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, "Master, just now when I was in the marketplace I was jostled by a woman in the crowd, and when I turned I saw it was Death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture! Now, lend me your horse, and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra and there Death will not find me."

The merchant lent him his horse, and the servant mounted it, dug his spurs in its flanks, and as fast as the horse could gallop he went. Then the merchant went down to the marketplace and he saw me standing in the crowd, and he came to me and said, "Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning?"

“That was not a threatening gesture,” I said, “it was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Bagdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra.”



Situational Irony

a contradiction
between what
might naturally be
expected and what
actually occurs

Not to be confused with the other ironies:

- **Dramatic irony** – Occurs when the reader or audience understands more about the events of a story than a character
- **Verbal irony** – A character says one thing but obviously means the opposite (aka sarcasm)
- **Socratic irony** - Assuming a pretense of ignorance in an argument

Situational Irony

The firehouse burned down.

The police station was robbed.

The airline pilot is afraid of heights.

Britain's biggest dog was named Tiny

As attorney general, Eliot Spitzer initiated a crackdown on prostitution, then as governor was compelled to resign after patronizing a prostitute.

Allusion

A reference to something outside of the context of the story, like history, mythology, religion, art, etc.

Allusion

Allusions are
sometimes crucial in
establishing the setting
or developing a
character

Allusion

“By the waters of Babylon,
There we sat down and wept
For the memory of Zion”

-Psalm 137



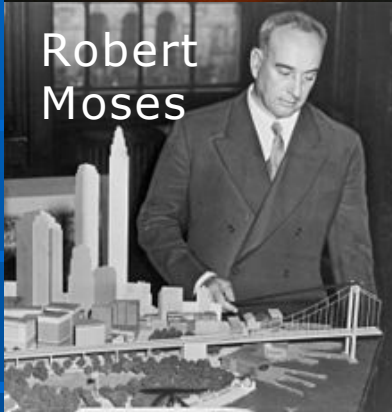
Great Burning



Ou-dis-sun
(The Great River)



Palisades



Robert
Moses



Federal Hall, formerly

THE SUBTREASURY
BUILDING



AGENTS



Lincoln Center



Biltmore
Hotel



Grand Central Station



"Temple" with the sky on the ceiling

Narrator's love of David Hume (philosopher) develops character in "Book of Sand"

David Hume ([/ˈhjuːm/](#); born **David Home**; 7 May 1711 **NS** (26 April 1711 **OS**) – 25 August 1776) was a Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist, who is best known today for his highly influential system of philosophical **empiricism**, **skepticism**, and **naturalism**. Hume's **empiricist** approach to philosophy places him

David Hume





Dartmouth Crew Team



Allusion in "The Bass, the River, and Sheila Mant"



Ann-Margaret & Bob Hope at USO show in Vietnam





Wangero
greeting Mama
with
“asalamalakim” in
“Everyday Use”

Imagery

The use of sensory*
words to illustrate a
“mental image” for the
reader

* Referring to the five senses:

Sight, Sound, Touch, Taste, Smell

Theme

The central idea
or insight
revealed by a
work of literature

Theme, continued

- In novels and dramas, there are usually many themes throughout
- In a short story, there is usually one central theme, which is supported by everything that occurs in the story, symbols that appear in the story, etc...

Thematic Statement

Controlling Idea

- Is not the same as the theme of a work; instead, it is a statement about that theme
 - Theme = love
 - Thematic statement = love is often fleeting
- Is a universally applicable statement, independent of the work of literature...

Thematic Statement a.k.a. Controlling Idea

Example from *Fahrenheit 451*---

Theme: TECHNOLOGY

Thematic Statement: Technology can become an overpowering factor in our lives, causing us to become disconnected with the very things that make us human.

Ex: Mildred is addicted to TV- neglects marriage;
Paramedics are merely machine technicians;
Teenagers run down Montag with fast cars

Writing about theme: planning

Story/Author	Controlling Idea	Support
In "The Pedestrian" by Ray Bradbury...	...technology, specifically television, has made people neglect the more simple and enjoyable things in life.	<p>For example, the image of the "buckling concrete walk" <u>foreshadows</u> the fact that that no one in this fictional society cares to repair sidewalks, since no one takes walks anymore because they're busy watching TV</p> <p>Likewise, the "metallic voice" that the protagonist hears earlier <u>foreshadows</u> the fact that the police car is a robot; and even the personal interaction between people has been lost.</p>

(Conclusion): This addiction to technology strips us of our humanity.