Introducing the Genre: Fiction

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**Genre**: a category of literature, a way to **organize and define various types of fiction**; notably the lines of genre are blurry, as many genres borrow from one another, leading to the creation of new categories and subgenres.

Example: Western (John Wayne), SyFy

**Convention**: those **aspects of a narrative that are typical of a certain genre**, guiding the reader's expectations

Example: Cowboy is a convention of a Western

* Contemporary literature is dominated by the *novel* form and *short stories*
* Fiction has its roots in oral cultures; early genres contribute conventions to these two forms

**Fables**: brief, often humorous narrative told to illustrate a moral

*Conventions*:

Characters are typically animals with human traits (anthropomorphized) or supernatural entities

Brief

Moralizing

Pithy/witty

Example: Fox and the Grapes, The Appointment in Samarra

**Parable**: brief, usually allegorical narrative that teaches a moral

*Conventions*:

Meaning is usually implicit, rather than overt; open to interpretation

Characters tend to be more realistic, human, yet not fully detailed

**Tale**: short narrative without a complex plot

*Conventions*:

Typically emerge from oral tradition: folklore

Less developed, complex characters

Typically linear plotting

\***subgenre**: categories within a larger genre, that share conventions, but have unique aspects that separate them

Example: "tall" tales vs. "fairy" tales

**Fairy Tale/folktale**:

*Conventions*:

Supernatural characters

Hero/heroine working towards a goal

**Short Story/prose narrative**:

*Conventions*:

Brief (a page to several pages)

Emerge for a desire for realism in the Victorian period, though not all are purely realistic

Few characters

Focused on one/two compelling actions/moments

\*realism: in response to romanticism; reflecting reality in stories

**Elements of Plot**

* As readers, *we should pay attention to how a writer manipulates information in order to create a certain effect* by studying the structure of the text which is called the plot

**Plot**: the author's arrangements of incidents in a story; an organizing principle that controls the order of events

**Character**: an imagined person/subject in the story, who is confronted with a problem that leads in a climactic struggle, which is then followed by a resolution of the issue

**Exposition**: the background information the reader needs to make sense of the situation in which the characters are involved

**Rising Action**: a complication that intensifies the situation

**Conflict**: the central struggle of the story or scene; can be a result of internal or external forces

**Foreshadowing**: a suggestion of what is yet to come; those details which hint at future events

**Protagonist** ("hero"): central character who is engaged in the story's conflict. Hopefully, this figure engages the reader's interest and, more importantly, empathy. In other words, readers are interpreting the events through this figure's point of view

**Antagonist**: any character/subject/force that stands in opposition of the protagonist's goals

**Climax**: the moment of greatest emotional tension. More importantly, this is the moment of "No Return." There is no going back for the protagonist after the climax. This can be an epic battle or difficult decision

**Resolution/Denouement**: the conclusion of a particular problem or the central issue; *tying up loose ends*

**Narrative Techniques**

**In media res**: "in the middle of things," in the middle of the action. Events that will be central to the story's conflict have already been in progress when the reader enters the story

**Flashback**: a literary technique that shows readers events that have occurred before the opening of the story

**Epiphany**: a moment of revelation or insight that alters a character