

Creative Writing II

with Johnny Worthen



Week 4 - Supports

Today's Plan

- Workshop/Critique
- Symbolism
- Support Characters
- Subplots
- Twists
- Epistolary



"THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS"



By: Ray Bradbury

Workshop Homework



Symbolism



- **Symbol:** *something that represents something else*
 - Something that encapsulates, informs, and reflects a greater thing (or at least longer to write).
 - Borrowed - culturally defined (color black, heart)
 - Constructed - textually defined (mockingjay, one ring)
- Powerful tool - condensed meaning — poetry
- Thematic (optional)

EXERCISE: Symbols

- **Think of a symbol that suggests these sets:**
 - *Unseen power*
 - *Apparent but empty value*
 - *The weakness of patriotism*
 - *Enduring and broken*

Secondary Characters

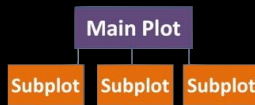
- More than a walk-on/Less than a main character
- Serve different **FUNCTIONS**
 - *Sidekick* - sounding board, narrative device (Watson, Sherlock Holmes)
 - *Armorer* - get the good stuff before going in ("Q", Bond)
 - *Computer Tech* - researcher (Woodstock, Ace Ventura)
 - *Main evil henchman* - surrogate to main villain (Mirage, Incredibles)
 - etc.
- Don't need arcs, but do need "character" - quirks, flaws, strengths etc

Subplot

- A **SUBPLOT** is a secondary plot/story interwoven around the **main plot** and story. In best situations a subplot will be a reflection of the main plot and inform it.
 - Stories can have several subplots
 - Character level / Plot level / Thematic Level
 - Subplots follow the same format as regular plots: beginnings, action and resolution*
 - Subplots can extend beyond single story**

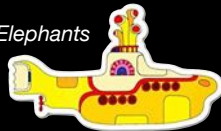
**Beware Soap opera stringing
e.g. - Stephanie Plum's
romance in
Janet Evanovich*

*** Linking series books*



Using Subplots

- The length and complexity of your work will be a key factor in how many and how involved your subplots can be
 - *Game of Thrones* vs. *Hills Like White Elephants*
- Subplots can be used to add spice and facets to story
 - love interest, family issues, haunted past, comic relief, etc.
- Subplots can be used to create suspense and tension in the main plot by diverting attention away from it for a while



Twists

- A sudden and unexpected event
 - Interesting, exciting
 - **NOT** for every story
- Surprising but **NOT unrealistic**
- Characters should be **consistent** or we we lose sympathy for them
- Situations should be **“grounded”** or we lose our suspension of disbelief



Plot Twist Worksheet

PLOT TWIST	
BRAINSTORM...	
SOMEONE'S IDENTITY IS MISTAKEN:	SOMEONE HAS ANOTHER MOTIVATION:
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
AN EVENT IS MISINTERPRETED:	INFORMATION IS MISSING:
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
HOW DOES THE TWIST SURPRISE THE READER?	HOW DOES THE TWIST SURPRISE THE CHARACTER?
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
HOW DOES IT CHANGE CHARACTERS:	HOW DOES IT CHANGE THE STORY?
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
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PLOT TWIST		
GO THROUGH EACH OF YOUR PLOT POINTS:		
I assume _____ (what?) does _____ (what?) at _____ (where?) because _____ (why?)	_____	
...but what if _____ (what if those is not what it seems?) _____ (do the opposite?) _____ (what if things? before what information is being withheld?) _____	_____	
I ASSUME _____ BUT WHAT IF ... _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
I ASSUME _____ BUT WHAT IF ... _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
I ASSUME _____ BUT WHAT IF ... _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
CHARACTER _____	_____	
IF ALL ELSE FAILS: Resurrect a character Bring in help from an unexpected source. Give them a method to a major character.		_____
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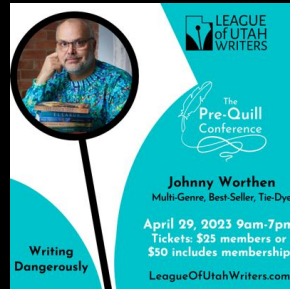
Not mine but looks useful

EXERCISE: Twists

- What twists were there? What could have been?
 - Star Wars
 - Harry Potter
 - Sixth Sense
 - Arrival
 - Usual Suspects
 - Fight Club

Pre-Quill Next Month

- League of Utah Writers
- Month long virtual conference
 - 27 hours of classes
- One day in-person with keynote and workshops (UofU Marriott)
- <https://www.leagueofutahwriters.com/pre-quill-conference>



INFINITE MONKEYS

Epistolary

- Like a dialog but written
 - Journals, diaries, letters, texts, etc...
- Some famous Epistolary stories
 - Alice Walker: *The Color Purple*
 - Bram Stoker: *Dracula*
 - Anne Frank: *Diary of a Young Girl*

Homework for Week 5

- Read *The Storm*, Kate Chopin
- Write for Critique:
 - ≈300 word **EPISTOLARY** story (story told through correspondences alone)
 - *letters, journal entries, texts...*
 - *Bonus: include **symbol** and **twist***
