

The Creative Writer

White County Creative Writers

www.whitecountyc creativewriters.org

Group discusses selecting genres

A good place to start your story is by selecting the genre it best fits. In the January meeting, an open discussion revealed there are many genres from which to choose: Traditional ones include mystery, romance, western, science fiction; but a common trend among publishers is to mix the genres. That's understandable since the stories are about people and people are complicated.

Jason Glass asked, "What is a mystery?"

Gary Breezeal answered, "Mostly a murder." That is a common theme in a police procedure genre; however, Del Garrett pointed out that while the old private investigator or police detective stories are still around, the trend today is to write an ensemble cast. "CSI, NCIS, Dangerous Minds are examples," he said.

The group also discussed mixing genres. Jim Grobelhausen noted that some books mix romance with ghosts.

Glass mentioned that by breaking down the genres, publishers can create more defined categories for bookstores and libraries. Amanda Partridge and Kim Vernon both mentioned that even romances have differences within its categories.

Essentially, though, as Glass noted it, in romances boy meets girl, they have problems, but they find a way to make it work in the end.

Other traditional genres include horror, westerns, or science-fiction, non-genres are called mainstream.



Photo by Del Garrett

Jason Glass emphasizes the need to define the genres so readers, publishers, bookstores and libraries can recognize categories better.



See Amanda Partridge

The Creative Writer

is a monthly newsletter for the White County Creative Writers group of Searcy, Ark.

If you have news stories or photos to share, send them to buddy.garrett@netzero.net.

Deadline for reader submission is seven days prior to each month's meeting. WCCW reserves the right to edit all submissions.

President

Rhonda Roberts

Vice President

Jason Glass

Secretary/Press Agent/Editor

Del Garrett

Treasurer

Amanda Partridge

Conference Chair

Kim Vernon

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Next meeting

Feb. 20, 2017

6:30 p.m. at Simmons

First Bank,

401 South Main

Street in Searcy.



The Plot Thickens

Now that the club has explored different genres, the next meeting will be an open discussion on how to plot your stories. If you bring in something to read, you may be asked to describe your approach to how you structured it.

Plot Example

Source: The Writer's Journey by Christopher Vogler
With Stars Wars comments by Del Garrett

1.) The hero is introduced in his/her ORDINARY WORLD.

Most stories ultimately take us to a special world, a world that is new and alien to its hero. If you're going to tell a story about a fish out of his customary element, you first have to create a contrast by showing him in his mundane, ordinary world. In WITNESS you see both the Amish boy and the policeman in their ordinary worlds before they are thrust into alien worlds – the farm boy into the city, and the city cop into the unfamiliar countryside. In STAR WARS you see Luke Skywalker being bored to death as a farm boy before he tackles the universe.

2.) The CALL TO ADVENTURE.

The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure. Maybe the land is dying, as in the King Arthur stories about the search for the Grail. In STAR WARS, it's Princess Leia's holographic message to Obi Wan Kenobi, who then asks Luke to join the quest. In detective stories, it's the hero being offered a new case. In romantic comedies it could be the first sight of that special but annoying someone the hero or heroine will be pursuing/sparring with.

3.) The hero is reluctant at first. (REFUSAL OF THE CALL.)

Often at this point the hero balks at the threshold of adventure. After all, he or she is facing the greatest of all fears – fear of the unknown. At this point Luke refuses Obi Wan's call to adventure, and returns to his aunt and uncle's farmhouse, only to find they have been barbecued by the Emperor's storm troopers. Suddenly Luke is no longer reluctant, and is eager to undertake the adventure. He is motivated.

4.) The hero is encouraged by the Wise Old Man or Woman. (MEETING WITH THE MENTOR.)

By this time many stories will have introduced a Merlin-like character who is the hero's mentor. In JAWS it's the crusty Robert Shaw character who knows all about sharks; in the mythology of the Mary Tyler Moore Show, it's Lou Grant. The mentor gives advice and sometimes magical weapons. This is Obi Wan giving Luke his father's light saber.

The mentor can go so far with the hero. Eventually the hero must face the unknown by himself. Sometimes the Wise Old Man/Woman is required to give the hero a swift kick in the pants to get the adventure going.

5.) The hero passes the first threshold. (CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.)

The hero fully enters the special world of the story for the first time. This is the moment at which the story takes off and the adventure gets going. The balloon goes up, the romance begins, the spaceship blasts off, the wagon train gets rolling. Dorothy sets out on the Yellow Brick Road. The hero is now committed to his/her journey and there's no turning back.

6.) The hero encounters tests and helpers. (TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES.)

The hero is forced to make allies and enemies in the special world, and to pass certain tests and challenges that are part of his/her training. In STAR WARS the cantina is the setting for the forging of an important alliance with Han Solo and the start of an important enmity with Jabba the Hutt. In CASABLANCA Rick's Café is the setting for the "alliances and enmities" phase and in many Westerns it's the saloon where these relationships are tested.

7.) The hero reaches the innermost cave. (APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE.)

The hero comes at last to a dangerous place, often deep underground, where the object of the quest is hidden. In the Arthurian stories the Chapel Perilous is the dangerous chamber where the seeker finds the Grail. In many myths the hero has to descend into hell to retrieve a loved one, or into a cave to fight a dragon and gain a treasure. It's Theseus going to the Labyrinth to face the Minotaur. In STAR WARS it's Luke and company being sucked into the Death Star where they will rescue Princess Leia. Sometimes it's just the hero going into his/her own dream world to confront fears and overcome them.

8.) The hero endures the supreme ORDEAL.

This is the moment at which the hero touches bottom. He/she faces the possibility of death, brought to the brink in a fight with a mythical beast. For us, the audience standing outside the cave waiting for the victor to emerge, it's a black moment. In STAR WARS, it's the harrowing moment in the bowels of the Death Star, where Luke, Leia and company are trapped in the giant trash-masher. Luke is pulled under by the tentacled monster that lives in the sewage and is held down so long that the audience begins to wonder if he's dead. IN E.T., THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL, E. T. momentarily appears to die on the operating table.

This is a critical moment in any story, an ordeal in which the hero appears to die and be born again. It's a major source of the magic of the hero myth. What happens is that the audience has been led to identify with the hero. We are encouraged to experience the brink-of-death feeling with the hero. We are temporarily depressed, and then we are revived by the hero's return from death.

This is the magic of any well-designed amusement park thrill ride. Space Mountain or the Great Whiteknuckler make the passengers feel like they're going to die, and there's a great thrill that comes with surviving a moment like that. This is also the trick of rites of passage and rites of initiation into fraternities and secret societies. The initiate is forced to taste death and experience resurrection. You're never more alive than when you think you're going to die.

9.) The hero seizes the sword. (SEIZING THE SWORD, REWARD)

Having survived death, beaten the dragon, slain the Minotaur, her hero now takes possession of the treasure he's come seeking. Sometimes it's a special weapon like a magic sword or it may be a token like the Grail or some elixir which can heal the wounded land.

The hero may settle a conflict with his father or with his shadowy nemesis. In RETURN OF THE JEDI, Luke is reconciled with both, as he discovers that the dying Darth Vader is his father, and not such a bad guy after all.

The hero may also be reconciled with a woman. Often she is the treasure he's come to win or rescue, and there is often a love scene or sacred marriage at this point. Women in these stories (or men if the

hero is female) tend to be shape-shifters. They appear to change in form or age, reflecting the confusing and constantly changing aspects of the opposite sex as seen from the hero's point of view. The hero's supreme ordeal may grant him a better understanding of women, leading to a reconciliation with the opposite sex.

10.) THE ROAD BACK.

The hero's not out of the woods yet. Some of the best chase scenes come at this point, as the hero is pursued by the vengeful forces from whom he has stolen the elixir or the treasure.. This is the chase as Luke and friends are escaping from the Death Star, with Princess Leia and the plans that will bring down Darth Vader.

If the hero has not yet managed to reconcile with his father or the gods, they may come raging after him at this point. This is the moonlight bicycle flight of Elliott and E. T. as they escape from "Keys" (Peter Coyote), a force representing governmental authority. By the end of the movie Keys and Elliott have been reconciled and it even looks like Keys will end up as Elliott's step-father.

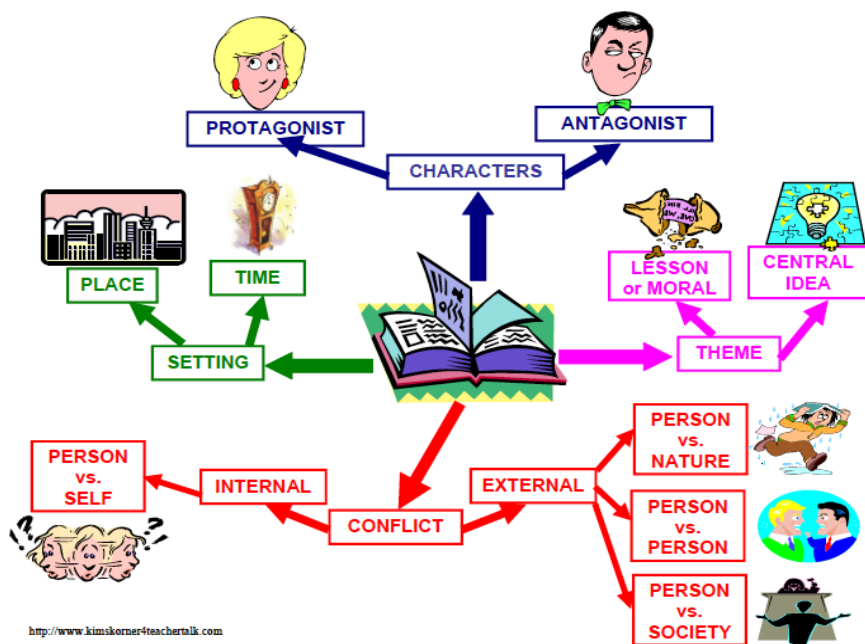
11.) RESURRECTION.

The hero emerges from the special world, transformed by his/her experience. There is often a replay here of the mock death-and-rebirth of Stage 8, as the hero once again faces death and survives. The Star Wars movies play with this theme constantly – all three of the films to date feature a final battle scene in which Luke is almost killed, appears to be dead for a moment, and then miraculously survives. He is transformed into a new being by his experience.

12.) RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR

The hero comes back to the ordinary world, but the adventure would be meaningless unless he/she brought back the elixir, treasure, or some lesson from the special world. Sometimes it's just knowledge or experience, but unless he comes back with the elixir or some boon to mankind, he's doomed to repeat the adventure until he does. Many comedies use this ending, as a foolish character refuses to learn his lesson and embarks on the same folly that got him in trouble in the first place.

Sometimes the boon is treasure won on the quest, or love, or just the knowledge that the special world exists and can be survived. Sometimes it's just coming home with a good story to tell.





2017 Arkansas Writers' Contests

1. Carl J Iannacone Memorial Award (\$100/\$60/\$40) Essay on What Family Means to Me and Why. 1500-2000 words max. Chair: Brenda Iannacone
 2. The Erdel Family Memorial Award. (\$50/\$30/\$20) Mystery short story. Solve the mystery with a twist at the end. Chair: Ellen Withers.
 3. Mistletoe Award. (\$50/\$30/\$20) Fantasy Short Story About an Animal. Subject: Living the Good Life, Write from the animal's POV. 1500 words max. Chair: Brenda Iannacone
- Contests OPEN TO ALL. Cash Awards for contests 4-13 vary.*
4. David Goodgame Memorial Award (\$100/\$60/\$40). Free verse poem. 40 line limit. Chair: Rita Goodgame
 5. Fiction Who-Dunnit Award. (\$50/\$30/\$20). Short Mystery Story. The Case of the Lost Family Heirloom. 1500 words. Chair: Brenda Iannacone
 6. AR Pioneer Branch NLAPW Prose Award. (\$50/\$30/\$20) Humorous short story about humorous marriage proposal. 1000 words Chair: Brenda Iannacone
 7. WOW! Press Award. (\$50/\$30/\$20) Personal memoir_story. Subject: Life changes- A personal reflection. "My How Things Have Changed." 1000 wd. max. Chair: Janis F. Kearney
 8. AR Pioneer Branch NLAPW Poetry Award. (\$50/\$30/\$20) Free Verse. Any subject. 24 line limit. Chair: Brenda Iannacone

9. LaViness Award for Living Mystery, (\$25/\$15/\$10) Mystery Short Story, Not a murder mystery, No deaths allowed., 3000 words max. Chair: Renee LaViness

10. Scott Plantation Settlement Award. (\$25/\$15/\$10) Memoir. Feature a Country Church. 2500 word limit.

www.scottconnections.org. Chair: Sara Gipson

11. LIGHTS OUT! (\$25/\$15/\$10) Fantasy Short Story. Humorous fantasy whose protagonist is afraid of the dark. 2500 word limit. Brief critique given if requested on top of page one of submission. Chair: Carol Hodges

12. Penpoint Writers Group Contest. (\$25/\$15/\$10) Fiction Any Genre, Subject: "Summertime", 3 page limit. NO poems or porn. Must include "summertime" somewhere in body of the written prose. Chair: Pinpoint Writers Group

13. South Arkansas Poets of the Pines Poetry Contest. (\$25/\$15/\$10) Form: RONDELET, 7 lines, Syllables: 4-8-4-8-8-8-4; Rhyme: a-b+R-a-b-b-R, R=refrain. Chair: South Arkansas Poets of the Pines

Contests 14-18 LIMITED TO ARKANSAS RESIDENTS. Cash Awards for contests vary.

14. Lucille R. Longstreth Memorial Award. (\$25/\$15/\$10) Short Short Story, Subject: It's a Mystery, 500 word limit. Chair: Barbara Longstreth Mulkey

15. Village Writers Club of Hot Springs Village Award. (\$50/\$30/\$20) Fiction, Any Holiday Story, 1500 words max. Chair: HSV Writers Club

16. Youth Poetry, Subject: Farming. (\$25/\$15/\$10) 20-40 lines. Open only to Arkansas residents, age 11-17 Chair: Sara Gipson

17. Del Garrett's Gimme The Creeps. (\$25/15/\$10)
Psychological Horror. Twilight Zone short story. 1500
words max. Indicate if you agree to being published. (no
extra pay) Chair: Del Garrett

18. Moral Dilemma Award. (\$25/15/\$10) Short Story that
spotlights a situation that reveals a right from wrong
decision that could save another person. 1500 word maz.
Chair: Brenda Iannacone

SPECIAL MEMORIAL AWARD CONTEST (Open to All)

19. Henry & Betty Heidelberger Memorial Poetry Award.
(\$25/\$15/\$10) Subject: Farming, Any form, 32 lines. Chair:
Brenda Iannacone

20. Dorothy Truex Memorial Prose Award. (\$25/\$15/\$10)
Romance Short Story that involves dance. 1500 words.
Chair: Ellen Withers

For specific details about the 2017 Arkansas
Writers' Conference and to obtain entry form
and registration, please visit their web site:
<http://www.arkansaswritersconference.org>

Good Luck To Everyone!