

Point of view and Plot in fiction

Point of view: Refers to the location of the “voice” telling the story to the reader.

There are two main categories: first person and third person.

First Person

The narrator is one of the characters. In first person, the narrator interacts with other characters as well as the reader and addresses the story to the reader using first-person pronouns (I, me, etc.). Both “Araby” and “A Bird in the House” are first person, with the boy and Vanessa serving as narrators, respectively.

Third Person

The narrator is not a character but uses third person (he, she, they, etc.) to refer to all characters. Omniscient third person accesses the minds of all characters; limited omniscient accesses the minds of one or more, but not all characters.

Plot in short fiction

Plot is the pattern of events in a story. Two standard plot patterns are the *traditional* and the *epiphanic*.

- Traditional

A traditional plot is normally characterized by a growing conflict which is resolved for better or worse at the end. The basic plot pattern has 3 (or 4) sections: exposition, rising action, resolution, (denouement).

1. Exposition. Establishes the background to make the story intelligible: setting time and place), characters, subject. Precedes the beginning of the stories chain of events.
2. Rising action. Introduces the middle action. Some precipitating detail starts the conflict. Conflict can take several forms in a story: interpersonal, natural, social, abstract (ex. fate), internal. More than one form may be present, but one form is usually the main conflict.
3. Resolution. In fiction it is the last event in the chain of events in the plot. It is the point of highest suspense and a release from that suspense in which the main conflict is resolved one way or another and no suspense remains.
4. Dénouement. An optional story part. Some stories do not have it. It is the explanation or outcome following the resolution. It can answer any remaining questions the reader might have. It is the reestablishment of equilibrium.

- Epiphanic [formed from the noun “epiphany]

This pattern typically has two parts, which seem disjointed:

1. Exposition and subjective experience—a description of an episode or series of episodes coloured by the values and biases of the narrator
2. Epiphany—a kind of emotional shock that creates an awakening or sudden realization. This realization can be pleasant or painful but is usually rewarding as it is a step toward maturity or a greater knowledge of self and others.