

UNPACKING THE TOOLKIT: NARRATOLOGY AND GILLIAN FLYNN'S GONE GIRL

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GILLIAN FLYNN

born Kansas City, Missouri, 1971

B.A. University of Kansas

M.A. North Western University, Chicago

1998-2008 Feature writer, TV and film critic for
Entertainment Weekly

Novels:

2006 Sharp Objects

2009 Dark Places

2012 Gone Girl (15 m. sales worldwide; 130 weeks on New York Times
Bestseller List, including 37 weeks at no. 1)

2014 Gone Girl film (screenwriter Gillian Flynn; director David Fincher;
starring Rosamund Pike, Ben Affleck; \$61m. cost, \$400m. box-office
takings)



Stills from the 2014 movie adaptation used as illustrations throughout this poster

GENRE



Crime novel?



Mystery novel?



Police procedural?



Psychological thriller?



Midwestern 'noir'?

What do readers expect from crime fiction?

What do readers expect in terms of quality from bestselling novels?

Why have readers found *Gone Girl* superior to most genre fiction?

ISSUES

Are conventions and stereotypes undermined in *Gone Girl*?

Do readers trust the narrator(s)?

Do characters change or develop?

Surface appearances vs. inner realities via topic of dysfunctional marriage?

Is the novel a typical “page-turner”?

Do readers feel empathy with the characters of the novel?

Why does the text require careful and perceptive interpretation?

NARRATIVE FORMS

Diaries

Interviews on TV / video

Dramatic format for police interview

Crime news show

Press conference

Phone calls

Verses as clues

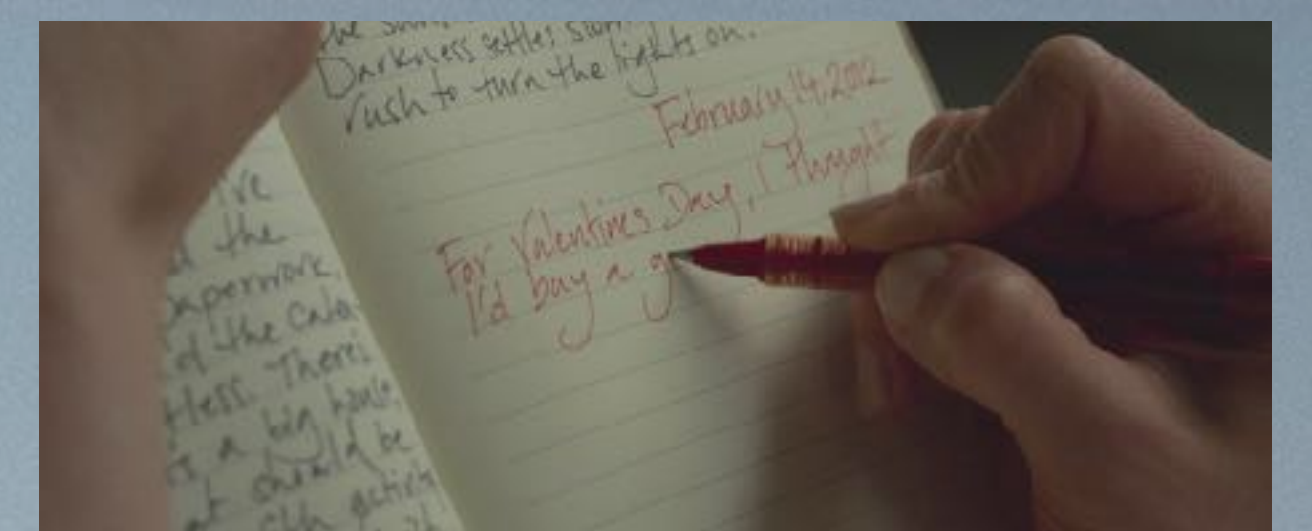
Letters

Question & Answer sessions

Bullet points

Quizzes

Reporter's account



Amy's diaries



TV interview with lawyer Tanner Bolt

HANDLING TIME

Closing the Now/Then gaps

Chapter linkages

Irregular tempi and rhythms

Parallel events on the same days

Precise notations of time

Contemporary setting 2005-2012

Cliffhanger tension

Climaxes and shock revelations

Ambivalent clues

Hypothetical future

Invented and partial biographies

Prefiguration and post-positioning

Sting in the tail



Amy watches Nick on a TV chat show



Amy kills her saviour/victim Desi

VIEWING EVENTS

Role of epigraph

Alternating first-person narrators

Unreliable misleading narrators

Fluid problematic identities

Fictions-within-fictions

Self-conscious playful author

Red herrings in plot development

Sexual politics

Imbalance of text divisions

Contrasts of characters and locations

‘Storytelling’ as invented narrative



The 'Amazing Amy' books



Nick's affair with an ex-student is revealed

LIVE FOX11
KRBK-TV
► NEWS

SEARCH FOR “AMAZING AMY” CONTINUES

► U.S. WORLD SPORT ENTERTAINMENT

2:31 PM CDT

...HUSBAND LISTED AS PRIMARY SUSPECT IN ONGOING MISSOURI MISSING-PERSON CASE

86°

► DOW J NASDAQ S&P NIKKEI

► 16,065.67 ▼ 13.26