

# Prose

## Lecture 9

### **Characters & Characterization**

Understand the character through how characters speak; How characters think; The appearance of characters; How characters dress; The social standing of characters; The names of characters; The company of characters; What characters do

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- Characters & Characterization
- How characters speak;
- How characters think;
- The appearance of characters;
- How characters dress;
- The social standing of characters;
- The names of characters;
- The company of characters;
- What characters do

# Character & Characterization

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Are they different?

What is character?

What is characterization?

# What character

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- A character is someone in a literary work
- He has some sort of identity (it needn't be a strong one),
- An identity which is made up by appearance, conversation, action, name and (possibly) thoughts going on in the head.

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 127)

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The specific ways in which the author has chosen to characterize his or her characters include the types of **conversations they have, the actions they take, their appearances, and so on.**

# Flat and Round

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- E. M. Forster's 1927 book "Aspects of the Novel" explores two categories of characters: round characters and flat characters. Round characters depicted as well-developed and vital to the plot, as they have depth and respond to events as they unfold. They are complex characters. Flat characters, on the other hand, are less fully portrayed and may exhibit stereotypical characteristics. They are simple characters (Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007, p. 125-126).

# Round characters

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In fiction, round characters are ones that have been fully developed and have depth. They are real, distinctive, and true to life. Most stories center on these personalities, who captivate our attention. Their uniqueness and unpredictable nature define their roundness. Round characters, like real people, have interior qualities that emerge from the story's events. These characters' complete development is closely related to the stories in which they appear (Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 160-162).

# Dynamic Characters

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- Dynamic traits (recognize, change with, or adjust to circumstances) are usually possessed by round characters.
  - (1) an action or actions,
  - (2) the realization of new strength and therefore the affirmation of previous decisions,
  - (3) the acceptance of new conditions and the need for making changes,
  - (4) the discovery of unrecognized truths, or
  - (5) the reconciliation of the character to adverse conditions.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 160-162)

# Hero or Heroine

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Round characters → the hero or heroine = a significant role in the plot.

# Protagonist x Antagonist

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- The term **protagonist** as the "first actor",
- A round character is not very heroic.
- The protagonist plays a key role in the action, engaging in conflict.
- **Antagonist** “opponent actor”

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 160-162)

# Major Characters

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- Major characters → multi-dimensional and dynamic

# Flat Characters

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- Flat character X round character
- One dimensional and simple.
- Playing one role in a plot

# Static Characters

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Since most flat characters end almost exactly where they started, they have come to be called static. They experience less development or progress because they act out ignorance, misunderstanding, or even stupidity or insensitivity. However, flat characters are not completely useless in fiction because they emphasize the growth of rounded characters.

# Minor characters

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- Flat characters are USUALLY minor (Relatives, Spouse)
- Sometimes flat characters are prominent in certain types of literature, such as cowboy, police, and detective stories, where the focus is less on character than on performance. Such characters might be lively and engaging, even though they do not undergo significant change and development. They must be strong, tough, and clever enough to perform recurring tasks such as solving a crime, boxing with the major character, overcoming a villain, or finding a treasure (Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 160-162).

# Stock Characters

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- Stock characters are indicative of their class or group to the extent that they share a number of characteristics.
- They are Flat characters
- Some regular stock or representative characters are the insensitive father, the interfering mother, the sassy younger sister or brother, the greedy politician, the harassed boss, the resourceful cowboy or detective, the overbearing or henpecked husband, the submissive or nagging wife, the absent-minded professor, the angry police captain, the lovable drunk, and the town do-gooder (Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 160-162).

# Stereotypical Characters

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- Because they possess no attitudes except those of their class, they are often called stereotype characters, or characters who all seem to have been cast in the same mold (Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 160-162).

# Wrap up!

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- We can infer that these events actually contributed to the adaptation and character development that have shaped her into the writer she is today. In conclusion, characters become rounded and dynamic when they have the capacity to change, evolve, and adapt to new situations. Characters become bland and static when they lack these characteristics.

# The range of characters

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- What makes characters different from each other is the range and richness of their lives.
- Some characters are lightly sketched in, while others are very detailed.
- No reader can intelligently respond to the first kind in the same way as the second.
- How the character is created controls how we respond.

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 128 – 129)

# Writing about characters

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- Simple characters can be called 'closed' and complex ones 'open'.
- Closed → Unchanged
- Open → Change

# Common terms

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- Inflexible or flexible
- Surface and depth
- One-sided or multi-faceted

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 130 – 133)

# Writing about characters

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- It's a mistake to think that even apparently closed characters have a fixed range throughout a novel.
- A simple character can be as interesting and effective as a complex one.
- Not all the characters in a book have a similar range.

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 130 – 133)

# Writing about characters

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- Different range.
- Different styles and genre in single works
- Comparing and contrasting characters

# How to present characters?

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- Telling and showing
- A novelist can both tell and show.
- How do they think?
- Respond?
- Act?
- Other's responses?

# Telling

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- When do we need to tell about the character?
- Why do we need to tell the readers about characters?
- Telling is the most efficient way?

# Showing

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- Why do we need to show them instead of telling?
- Is it effective to showing the readers instead of telling them?

# How Authors Disclose Character in Literature

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- a. How character speaks
- b. How character think
- c. The appearance of characters
- d. How characters dress
- e. The social standing of characters
- f. The names of characters
- g. The company of characters
- h. What characters do

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 135 – 145)

# How characters speak

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- Characters will have different way of speaking
- It describes who they are
- Do they speak to hide their motives from others?

# How characters think

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Undeclared thought can be displayed by the author.

What → How

# The appearance of characters

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- What the author informs and demonstrates is crucial.
- The way a person looks speaks much especially inner world of the character's personality (healthy-looking).

# How characters dress

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- The way a person looks and is in their environment can tell us a lot about their social and economic standing as well as about their personality (Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012, p. 159). Clothes as an expression of personality; Clothes can also help to create the atmosphere of a book; Clothes can sometimes be an essential element in the development of the plot (Gill, R., 1995, p. 139-140)

# The social standing of characters

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- Class → Rank in society
- How to measure it?

# The names of characters

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- Does a character's name have any special meaning?
- Mr Rushworth in Mansfield Park
- In 1984 the central character is Winston Smith
- The name Wayan in Balinese society

# The company of characters

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- How your environment treats you?
- You can better understand both the character being discussed and the character(s) conducting the talking by paying attention to what the characters are saying to one another.

# What characters do

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- The same challenge but different way to respond it, right?

# Let's conclude

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- What have we learnt?
- Why do we need this?

# References

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- Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R. (2007). *Portable literature: Reading, reacting, writing.* (6th) Ed.
- Gill, R. (1995). *Mastering english literature* (2nd edition). Palgrave.
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Thank you

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**See you in the next meeting!**