

HELLO EVERYONE!

Answering a question about plot, the instructor said:

We said that the novels are reflective of real life. Some of the motifs in the plot itself might be that in the characters wanting to do or not to do something. So the motif itself can be from the characters. Other motifs are search, conflict, journey, adventure, etc.

So we have two kinds of the plot:

- Either built on the base of the human nature itself that is reflected through the character
- Or the other motifs like journey, mystery, search, etc.

- What is the definition of the plot?

It is a series of events that are organized chronologically in which the emphasis is based on causality السببية

- What does causality mean?

It means the connection between one event and another.

We differentiated between story and plot. We said that plot is the connection between events; it is an organization of these events.

The story is related to time. Today I woke up, took a means of transportation, went to university, and gave lectures. This is a story. In plot, I might not go through this sequence of time; it may be another chronological but it is absolutely a logical one. I might begin my novel by saying:

It was a very nice day in the university. But waking up today with the glaze of light on my eyes was very different for me as I prepared myself to go and give lectures.

Notice how I began by being at the university. Then I had a flashback to what happened in the morning. Then I turned back to continue my story.

The plot is the organization of the story.

The structure is an organization of the plot and other elements. The plot is the organization of the story and the events that are arranged in a chronological way. The structure is a larger element that includes other main components of the novel.

- What are the main components of the novel?

Characters, plot, theme, dialog, and setting.

We will find out that the structure is the larger element that includes all of these components in a kind of organization. It organizes the plot itself.

- What is larger, the plot or the structure?

The structure is larger and broader.

Again:

- Plot organizes story.
- Structure organizes plot.

As we said earlier, the story is a collection of episodes according to time sequence. The structure is broader than all of the other elements because it organizes the elements of the novel.

- What is structure in Arabic?

It is البنية

We will learn that there is a difference between structure and form.

Form is الشكل

Structure is different from the form. The form, the plot, and the thematics are the three elements that are very important in the organization of the structure.

- If I have a novel without a plot, what would happen?

The events will be scattered meaninglessly.

We said that an arrangement should be present in the novel even if we have analepsis which is a flashback.

- Analepsis: flashback
- Prolepsis: flashforward
- Ellipses (Omission): when we have something deleted

Ellipses have two kinds:

Marked ellipsis: we have dots

Unmarked ellipsis: we don't have dots, but we might have "two weeks later" or a date that is written to indicate a new section or a new episode.

Here is when the structure plays an important role because a novel might have a successful plot, characters, and narrative techniques, but this novel is divided into sections and episodes (chapters). Structure is represented through these divisions of chapters or sections or episodes.

We will learn that the novel might not be sectioned or divided at first when the writer is still writing it. Actually, novelists follow the same steps: they plan for their characters, name them, what they do, how they would die, etc. The last step is writing the novel itself.

We are going to learn how the writer chooses the suitable setting in order to be able to write a successful piece of writing.

The first version of a novel is called a manuscript. A manuscript is the novel as a whole from beginning to end. Then before publishing, the writer tends to section the novel. The purpose of this process is that the reader needs some time to pause and reflect on what he has read and he is about to read.

These stops and pauses are found at the end of a chapter or the end of a section. This is the structure of the novel.

This division is done in order for the reader to take a rest. This shouldn't take place in the middle of an event. Usually at the beginning of each chapter you'll find a subtitle or a certain line that gives you a hint about what you are about to read.

The structure is what gives the novel a form *الشكل*

There is a big difference between form and structure. Structure is manifested through dividing the novel into chapters and divisions (sections). Some writers may divide the book into scenes. Some may divide the same book into two books, each book into chapters, and each chapter into scenes. This makes it easier for the reader.

Both plot and structure are used for organization and arrangement.

The question that we answer when we talk about setting is when (temporal, time) and where (spatial and space).

The question that we answer when we talk about structure is how we organize the novel.

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7. Structure

Structure and plot are closely related to each other, and it might have made sense to include this section as a sub-section of 'Plot'. But the term 'structure' does, properly, refer to something rather different from plot. If we can think of the plot of a novel as the way in which its story is arranged, its structure involves more than its story, encompassing the work's total organization as a piece of literature, a work of art.

Plot and structure are both used for organization so they are meant to be together. Structure is a subsection of plot.

We said that plot is an arrangement or organization of events in a chronological order in which the emphasis is on causality. The structure is the arrangement of the components of a novel (characters, dialogs, theme, setting, etc).

We also differentiated between plot and story: the story is the series of events arranged in a time sequence.

The total organization that makes the piece of literature successful is the structure.

Nor are the terms 'structure' and 'form' to be confused; the latter term does not normally include thematic elements in the work (see my comments later on concerning 'theme') whereas these are involved in a novel's structure. Structure involves plot, thematics, and form: it refers to our sense of a novel's overall organization and patterning, the way in which its component parts fit

together to produce a totality, a satisfying whole - or, of course, the way in which they fail so to do.

- What does a novel's structure involve?

Write with me please:

إذا كنا نعتقد أن الحكمة هي الطريقة التي نظمت فيها الرواية فإن بنية الرواية تتجاوز القصة
أي أن البنية structure تحتوي على التنظيم الكلي للعمل أو للرواية وهي التي تجعل العمل فناً
أي أن البنية structure تحتوي على التنظيم الكلي للعمل أو للرواية وهي التي تجعل العمل فناً

We said that the plot organizes the story

أي أن البنية structure تحتوي على التنظيم الكلي للعمل أو للرواية وهي التي تجعل العمل فناً

- Plot organizes the story.
- Structure organizes the plot and the other elements of the novel.
- Structure is different from form.
- Structure البنية
- Form الشكل
- Plot الحكمة

Structure involves plot, theme, and form. This means that the purpose of the structure is to connect between plot, theme, and form.

Structure isn't only an element of the novel but it is the broader element in novels. It is the element that organizes the novel.

- In the book they're saying: Structure involves plot, thematics, and form. What is thematics?

When I talk about **A Tale of Two Cities** by Charles Dickens, I say the main themes in the novel are love and sacrifice.

Thematics means موضوع العمل الأدبي

This is very important; the structure involves plot, thematics, and form.

Keep this sentence in mind.

- What does patterning mean?

Patterning means structuring.

The novel's overall organization: التنظيم الكلي للرواية

Write please:

Without the structure, we don't have a pattern and we don't have an organization at all.

The definition of the overall organization of the novel: the way in which its component parts fit together to produce a totality, a satisfying whole - or, of course, the way in which they fail so to do.

Write please:

الطريقة التي تتناغم فيها تلك الأجزاء المكونة للرواية لإنتاج كلية متكاملة. أي أن البنية structure هي تلك الخاصة في الرواية التي تبتكر تنظيماً فناً تتناغم فيه الأجزاء المكونة للرواية لإنتاج totality

ما هو الشيء الذي يدلنا على وجود فكرة structure في الرواية؟

The divisions. The structure itself is reflected through the chapters.
حين نجد الرواية مقسمة إلى فصول chapters فإن هذه الفصول هي التي تمنح العمل هذا
الشعور بالبنية structure

So far we have talked about how the structure is connected to the plot but is a broader element than the plot. We also talked about how the plot organizes the story, and how the structure organizes plot, theme, and form. We also talked about the definition of structure which is a sense of overall organization of the novel.

Very often the chapter and section divisions made by the author impose a structure upon a work - or bring out one that is implicit but not overt in it already.

Write please:

أي أن الكاتب يقسم روايته إلى فصول وأقسام ويفرض بنية على العمل.

Here we are talking about the physical image of structure. What gives the work structure is the divisions that writers make on it.

أي أن البنية تتجلى في التقسيمات التي يقوم بها الكاتب في الرواية.

We said that the structure might be implicit or explicit (overt).

The opposite of explicit is implicit.

Now we are going to talk about the manuscript which is before dividing the novel into sections. Let's read

It is interesting to read Conrad's *The Shadow Line* in his manuscript version, in which there are no section divisions, and then to see how differently the published text of the novel reads with these divisions included. Very often such divisions perform the useful *function* of telling the reader when he or she can pause and put the book down for a bit, and as it is at these points of time that we think backwards over what we have read and forwards to what we hope for or expect, such divisions can be very significant.

The first manuscript version of the novel might be different from the sectioned and divided version.

المخطوط الأولي للرواية الذي لا يوجد له بنية أي أنه غير مقسم إلى أقسام وفصول

The purpose of these divisions is:

1. You can pause and put the book away
2. You can reflect upon either what you have read or what you are expecting to read

The practical benefits of the structure: it gives a kind of organization and it gives the reader time to pause.

Write with me please:

فالرواية ليست فقط أفكار، وإنما هي أيضاً طريقة تنظيم هذه الأفكار ضمن أشكال وتقسيمات محددة.

*

Actually, reading a novel without a structure is like going to a forest without having a guide with you. The sections and the titles and the subtitles are like guidelines.

*

Order and chronology - issues upon which we touched when talking of plot - can be crucial to the matter of structure.

The difference between a novel's 'story and its plot can tell us much about its structure.

We talked about order and said it is related to plot and to chronology.

Chronology التسلسل الزمني أو الإطار الزمني للرواية

Order and chronology are part of the plot; they are NOT part of the structure.

We said that the structure is manifested through the sections or the chapters of the novel. Do you think there are a specific number of pages for a chapter? Are there any guidelines to sectioning the novel?

The number of pages of a chapter is not fixed.

Quick revision:

- What connects the elements of the novel?

The Structure

- What does the structure connect?

Plot, theme, and form

- Can we say that what differentiates a certain writer from another is the structure?

The successful structure makes a writer different from other writers that are not very successful in dividing their novels.

An important factor in deciding whether the writer is successful or not is the structure of the novel because the organization of all the components is done through the structure itself.

Now let's move to setting. The setting is the time and the place. We will find out that the setting might be another word for the context. The context is not only the temporal (time) context or the spatial (space) context; it might be the historical context, the geographical context which is related to the spatial context, or the social context.

We will find out that the writer finds himself writing about what he is familiar with. For example, **Hanna Mena** is very interested in the sea and sailors because it is the place that he is well-acquainted with; he knows the

sea and the life of the sailors. Naguib Mahfouz wrote so many works about Cairo and life in it because he knows what it is like to live in Cairo.

In addition, to write about the lower classes is different from writing about the upper classes and different from writing about the middle classes that lived in Egypt until the 1980s. A writer who knows about the life in Egypt would know the time and the place and also the social context.

Sometimes a writer might be able to write about issues in older times because writing about the present might cause him problems with the government or with the three taboos (religion, politics, and sex). So as a writer, I go to a setting in the past and talk about issues that are still happening now.

Why would it be easy for me to talk about Damascus in a novel?

Because I know the time and the place. We also can have a parallel between rich neighborhoods side by side with poor neighborhoods; this is a very interesting variation that others outside Syria wouldn't be acquainted with. So my power as a writer lies in my background information about the setting of my novel.

The book introduces us to Charles Dickens who is the writer of many novels, the majority of which are set in London because he is well-aware of what's happening in London and of the down world there. The down world is the world of the poor and the criminals. In Arabic it is عالم الرذيلة والإجرام

We will know that there are three reasons why Charles Dickens chose London. At certain times, the setting is not only the place; it is about being able to understand relationships and social life.

When a writer chooses to write about the future, he must imagine how the communication between people will be. He is choosing a place and a time in the future and he must choose a futuristic way of communication and human relationships.

- Setting in Arabic is الزمان والمكان والسياق but in our case it is الزمان والمكان العام

8. Setting

'Setting' is one of those terms about which recent literary critics have felt increasingly uneasy. Does the term not suggest a perhaps too-simple relationship between characters and action on the one hand and the context within which these take place on the other? Doesn't it sound rather unsatisfactory to talk about the Nottinghamshire 'setting' of D.R. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* or the Yorkshire 'setting' of *Wuthering Heights*, as if the same actions might conceivably have taken place elsewhere - in Tunbridge Wells or Minnesota? The fact that so many characters in Emily Bronte's novel have names that are also the placenames of towns and villages around her native

Haworth suggests a relationship between character and environment too organic, we feel, to be described with the term 'setting'.

In structure we answered the question "how": how to organize a novel. In theme we answer the question "when and where": when and where is the novel taking place?

There is a relationship between characters and action because when we decide the time and the place and social context, we have to decide how the characters look like and how they live. For example, if I want to use a mobile phone in the 1980s, it is not correct because we have to go through all the details of the time and place when we form our novel. That is why the book is talking about a relationship between characters and action under the umbrella of setting.

☞ Nottinghamshire is a place. D.H Lawrence is a writer. Sons and Lovers is the title of a novel.

☞ Yorkshire is a place (a town). Wuthering Heights is a novel by Emily Bronte.

The book is talking about the fact that these novels would have been different if the events took place in other places. To happen in Britain is different from happening in the USA. This is because in the USA there were all sorts of people but in Britain there were upper and lower classes. In the USA there is a division between white and black people. If Catherine was black in Wuthering Heights for example, she would have run after Heathcliff.

Actually, **Emily Bronte** did not choose names for her characters arbitrarily; she chose them as related to names of places that she is familiar with around the town that she lived in. This is the element of familiarity that we talked about; the writer chooses from what he is well-acquainted with. There is even a more organic relationship between the characters and environment in Bronte's novel because their names are taken from the names of places and towns.

But it is important to be aware of the context within which the action of a novel takes place - and this does not just mean its geographical setting; social and historical factors are also important.

So we have geographical setting, social and historical factors, and time and place. All of these elements are related to setting and to context itself.

Sometime the choice of a suitable setting helps an author to avoid the need to write about things that he or she is not good at, or interested in, writing about. It was convenient for Conrad, for instance, that his ships often contained no women.

Joseph Conrad is the author of the novella **Heart of Darkness**. He was a sailor. At that time sailors were only men because ships used to go into the

sea for months. He is well-acquainted with sailors and with life at the sea. He didn't include women in the majority of his novels.

A setting in the historical past can often help an author to avoid contemporary issues about which he or she feels confused; the setting that E.M. Forster chooses for Howards End enabled him to avoid writing about the very poor. It is generally agreed that Jane Austen chose settings for her novels which allowed her to exercise and conceal her weaknesses so far as her knowledge of different sorts of people and of human experiences was concerned.

Talking about something in the past helps the author avoid some problems. This may be applied to political and social issues.

The author E.M. Forster in his novel **Howards End** chose not to write about poor people because he lived as a rich man.

There is a novel entitled **In the Eye of the Sun** in which the events take place in Egypt from 1965 to 1980. This novel is a good example of going back and forth in time (flashback and flash-forward). It is filled with analepsis and prolepsis to the extent that you get lost in it sometimes. The writer herself is from the upper-middle class. She talks in her novel about her own background living at that time because she is well familiar with the middle classes. One of the characters is so similar to her father that we think he is really her father. So she chose the setting of the class with which she is acquainted; she didn't choose a setting related to poor people because she didn't know them in real life.

The same applies to Jane Austen. Also Hanna Mena chose to write about the life of the sailors.

We can say here that the writer is being selective; he selects what to write about: the characters, the place, the time, the action, the social context, etc and overlooks the settings and characters that he is not familiar with.

A setting in the historical past can often help an author to avoid contemporary issues about which he or she feels confused; the setting that E.M. Forster chooses for Howards End enabled him to avoid writing about the very poor.

Write please:

يلجأ المؤلف أو الكاتب إلى الحبكة التاريخية ولكن بإسقاطات على الحاضر لتجنب الخوض في أمور وقضايا معاصرة.

We said the Forster chose to write about the rich because he doesn't really know anything about the poor people.

It is generally agreed that Jane Austen chose settings for her novels which allowed her to exercise and conceal her weaknesses so far as her knowledge of different sorts of people and of human experiences was concerned.

Write with me:

فهي تحاول أن تخفي ضعفها ولا تكتب عن المجرمين بل تتكلم عن شخصيات تتحرك ضمن نطاق محدود جداً فهي عكس تشارلز ديكنز الذي كتب روايات عن الفقراء والمشردين مثل رواية أوليفر تويست.

Moreover, Dickens's frequent choice of London as setting for his novels was convenient in other ways: the mass of concealed relationships, indirect forms of human communication, and innumerable secrets to be found in London offered a perfect opportunity to a novelist whose plots contain all of these elements in like abundance.

❖ The example of Dickens and his choice of London is very important for the exam.

Dickens's frequent choice of London as a setting for his novels was convenient in other ways:

1. The mass of concealed relationships
2. Indirect forms of human communication
3. Innumerable secrets to be found in London

(These three elements) offered a perfect opportunity to a novelist whose plots contain all of these elements in like abundance.

Here they are talking about the three reasons that made Dickens choose London in all of his novels.

Write please:

The reasons of choosing London as the setting of most of Dickens's novels:

١. كتلة هائلة من العلاقات المتشابكة والخبيثة أو السرية في المدينة أو ما يسمى The city underworld حيث أن وظيفة الكاتب تكمن في إظهار الجوانب المهمشة والمنسية من الحياة.

٢. أشكال مختلفة من التواصل البشري (أشكال تكون عادة غير مباشرة)

Example of an exam question:

Why did Charles Dickens choose London as a setting to his novels?

The city of London gives Dickens an opportunity to get in touch with:

- 1. The mass of concealed relationships*
- 2. Indirect forms of human communication*
- 3. Innumerable secrets to be found in London*

Dickens understood that human values and experiences could be displayed in the physical environment; a novel such as Bleak House sees the physical state of the London streets to mirror and to announce the values and inner lives of the people and institutions to be found on and around them.

Write please:

كان ديكنز يعتقد -وكان محقاً بذلك- أن قيم ومثل وتجارب البشر تنجلي بالمكان الذي يعيشون فيه.
الحالة المادية لشوارع لندن تعكس القيم والحيوات الداخلية للناس والمؤسسات المحيطة بهم. فحياة البشر التي صورها تشارلز ديكنز عكست الوصف المحسوس والملموس لشوارع لندن.

The author of the book is talking about the relationship between setting and characters. A person is a product of the environment he lives in.

❖ You need to remember all the examples in the book.

Bleak House is a great novel by Charles Dickens. Bleak means gloomy or sad. The title itself reflects what the environment of London at the time looked like.

A classic example of this vision is to be found in this novel's opening, one that has been analysed so many times that further discussion of it is probably unnecessary.

"This vision" is mirrored in the title itself, in the setting of the novel, and in the values and experiences found in the novel.

Write please:

Sometimes novelists develop different things from their visions, especially those who speak about cities. For example, writers introduced a different Paris, a different Moscow, a different London, etc.

The narrative action is always included within a framework which refers to the environment which can be either physical or social.

I'm saying this because the time and place and social context have a great influence on the characters and on the novel itself. The environment drives the action of the novel itself.

We talked about setting. We focused on the relationship between characters and setting. I explained how authors choose appropriate setting. We said that they have to be well-acquainted with the setting that they are writing within.

Thank You

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