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WHAT IS FICTION?

When it comes to the differences between fiction and nonfiction, Joseph Salvatore, Associate Professor of Writing & Literature at The New School in New York City, says,

"I teach a course on the craft, theory, and practice of fiction writing, and in it, we discuss this topic all the time. Although all of the ideas and theories...are disputed and challenged by writers and critics alike (not only as to what fiction is but as to what it is in relation to other genres, e.g., creative nonfiction), I'd say there are some basic components of fiction."

Fiction is fabricated and based on the author's imagination. Short stories, novels, myths, legends, and fairy tales are all considered fiction. While settings, plot points, and characters in fiction are sometimes based on real-life events or people, writers use such things as jumping off points for their stories.

For instance, Stephen King sets many of his stories and novels in the fictional town of Derry, Maine. While Derry is not a real place, it is based on King's actual hometown of Bangor. King has even created an entire topography for Derry that resembles the actual topography of Bangor.

Additionally, science fiction and fantasy books placed in imaginary worlds often take inspiration from the real world. A recent example of this is N.K. Jemisin's The Broken Earth trilogy, in which she uses actual science and geological research to make her world believable.

Fiction often uses specific narrative techniques to heighten its impact. Salvatore says that some examples of these components are:

"The use of rich, evocative sensory detail; the different pacing tempos of dramatic and non-dramatic events; the juxtaposition of summarized narrative and dramatized scenes; the temporary delay and withholding of story information, to heighten suspense and complicate plot; the use of different points of view to narrate, including stark objective effacement and deep subjective interiority; and the stylized use of language to narrate events and render human consciousness."

WHAT IS NONFICTION?

Nonfiction, by contrast, is factual and reports on true events. Histories, biographies, journalism, and essays are all considered nonfiction. Usually, nonfiction has a higher standard to uphold than fiction. A few smatterings of fact in a work of fiction does not make it true, while a few fabrications in a nonfiction work can force that story to lose all credibility.

An example is when James Frey, author of A Million Little Pieces, was kicked out of Oprah's Book Club in 2006 when it came to light that he had fabricated most of his memoir.

However, nonfiction often uses many of the techniques of fiction to make it more appealing. In Cold Blood is widely

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