

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Writing Prompt: Point of View

Charity Hume · Wednesday, January 29th, 2014

This week's writing prompt from Charity Hume:

The meaning of any event alters with the perspective or point of view of the story teller. In *The Wide Sargossa Sea*, Jean Rhys took a minor character from *Jane Eyre* and wrote a novella from the perspective of Rochester's first wife. John Gardner did the same in *Grendel*, when he retold *Beowulf* from the monster's perspective. This week's exercise will give writers practice in establishing a consistent character point of view for the reader. It is a key tool in crafting stories. Create two stories using the elements of the events below:

A child returns home from school, but no one is home. It is getting dark. Exiting the house, the child begins to follow a trail along a river. When the child reaches a bend in the river, he can see a woman in the distance standing on a bridge overlooking a waterfall. Something drops from the woman's hand into the water.

Write for 20 minutes and tell this story from the child's point of view. When you finish, take another 20 minutes and write the story again from the woman's point of view. Remember, you can only say, touch, see, hear, or experience reality through the medium of the character you've chosen, start to finish.

Once you have tried out this exercise, consider taking a minor character from a novel you loved, and trying on that character's point of view. Write a monologue, poem, or "missing chapter" that explores his or her perspective. See where the writing leads you, and open up the doors in the narrative you never knew were there.



Man at the Window, (1875), by Gustave Caillebotte

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