Setting, Structure and Character
Setting

- **Period:** a story’s place in time
- **Duration:** a story’s length through time (years, months, days)
- **Location:** The story’s physical dimension (geography, town, street, room, building)
- **Level of Conflict:** The story’s position in the hierarchy of human struggle

The Raven
http://player.vimeo.com/video/11099712
Story and Setting

• Setting defines the boundaries of your story, not everything that comes to mind will be allowed to happen
• A story must obey its own internal laws of probability. The writer’s choices are limited to possibilities and probabilities of the created world.
• Stories do not materialize from a void but grow out of materials already in human history and human experience.
Principle of Creative Limitation

- First step towards a well-told story is to create a small, knowable world
- Separating one tiny piece from the rest of the universe and holding it up as most fascinating thing at the moment
- The larger the world, the more diluted the knowledge of the writer, fewer creative choices and more clichéd the story
- Notte  http://vimeo.com/2078991
Research

- Memory: What you know from personal experience. Explore your past, relive it and write it down.
- Imagination: creatively sketch how your character would live life day by day and hour by hour.
- Fact: The ignorant can’t write, when blocked seek inspiration in information
- From memory, imagination and research, characters suddenly spring to life
Character vs. Characterization

- Characterization: observable qualities of a human being knowable through careful observation (age, IQ, sex, style, personality, occupation, education)
- Character: revealed in the choices a human makes under pressure, greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation, the truer the choice to the character’s essential nature
Dimensions of a Character

• Revelation: true character in contrast or contradiction to characterization
• Arc: in the process of the story, the inner nature of the true character changes—for better or worse

Thrush
http://player.vimeo.com/video/4131811
Functions of Character & Structure

- Function of structure is to provide progressively building pressure that forces characters into more difficult dilemmas (risk taking actions that reveal human nature)
- Function of character is to bring story qualities necessary to act out choices. Character must be credible (strong/weak, worldly/naïve, etc). Audience must believe the character could and would do what it does.