

Field and Value Definitions for the Genre Evolution Project Text Database

This list evolved from the discussions of the Genre Evolution Project Research Team as a guide to coding key characteristics of 20th Century American Science Fiction short stories.
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Outcome: The effect the narrative has on the implied reader just at the end of reading (the "outcome moment").

(Note: The implied reader is the reader implied by the text and may be quite different from the actual reader. For example, Hardy Boys mysteries imply a reader who is a pre-adolescent boy. To read those works properly, actual readers, through an act of imagination, construct that implied reader within themselves. Before coding for outcome, decide who the implied reader is.)

DEFINITIONS:

Ambiguous: the ending does not offer closure but rather leaves the reader in some state of structural undecidability.

Comic: the story ends with an establishment or a reestablishment of a social order that the reader understands is supposed to be taken as good, such as a wedding in a Victorian novel like Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Dickens' *Bleak House*, or the establishment of an independent lunar nation in Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*.

Didactic: the outcome is meant to teach a lesson. Aesop's fables.

Happy: the most important things work out for the best, and, in extreme cases, they live happily ever after. See Note below.

Romantic: the outcome of the story fulfills its own ideals. For example, at the beginning of the narration, the author implies that two characters would make a good couple, and at the end, the pair are romantically involved. Or, to balance this, the story opens by suggesting human nature is depraved, and ends by revealing depravity. Happy and Sad may be distinguished from Romantic by the relation of the outcome to the overall structure, Happy and Sad referring to an outcome that was in some doubt, Romantic to an outcome that was not. See Note below.

Sad: the most important things work out badly, and, in extreme cases, they are irreparable. See Note below.

Tragic: the story ends with a break-down of social order, typically reflected in the fate of the hero. That fate may arise from a flaw within the protagonist (as is the case with King Lear who foolishly abandons his monarchical responsibilities) or by a mere "missing of the mark" (as Aristotle says of Oedipus who simply didn't know that the man he killed was his father and the woman he married was his mother). The misfit between social reality and the protagonist's beliefs and/or actions leads to socially and individually destructive consequences.

Tragicomic: the story ends with a (re) establishment of social order, as a comedy does, but to do so requires the sort of socially representative catastrophe that we associate with

tragedy; e.g., the hero has to die to bring about the comic ending, as in Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* or the film *Independence Day*.

(Note: Comic, Tragic, and Tragicomic are terms for outcomes in which our main interest has been in characters who represent their societies, stand for them, and in some sense have fates that indicate how their societies will progress. Happy and Sad are terms for outcomes in which our main interest has been in characters who merely inhabit rather than represent their societies. The outcome of Bonnie and Clyde is sad but is not tragic, comic, or tragicomic. We feel sad when the title characters are killed but we recognize that society will go on unaffected.)

DECISION TREE:

Q1: At the outcome moment, is the implied reader's reaction most characterized by a sense of **structural ambiguity**?

(Note: Structural ambiguity is not simply synonymous with "confusion" or "vagueness" but is a type of undecidability that arises from the very structure of the story, typically from the grammar or plot. For more on this, see further note below the decision tree.)

If yes, code the outcome as "Ambiguous."

If no, go to Q2.

Q2: At the outcome moment, is the main interest of the implied reader in the **lesson** of the story?

If yes, code the outcome as "Didactic."

If no, go to Q3.

Q3: At the outcome moment, has the implied reader been primarily interested in **characters that represent their societies**, stand for them, or in some broadly representative sense have fates that indicate how their societies will progress?

If yes, go to Q4.

If no (that is, if our main interest has been in **characters that merely inhabit** rather than represent **their societies**), go to Q6.

Q4: Does the story end with a **breakdown of social order** (typically reflected in the fate of the hero)?

If yes, code the outcome as "Tragic."

If no, go to Q5.

Q5: If the story ends with the **establishment** or reestablishment of **social order** and
a) the reader understands that this is supposed to be taken as good (such as a wedding in a Victorian novel like Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Dickens' *Bleak House*, or the establishment of an independent lunar nation in Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*), code the outcome as "Comic."

b) the reader understands that establishment of social order requires the sort of socially representative catastrophe that we associate with tragedy (for example, a hero has to die to bring about the comic ending, as in Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* or the film *Independence Day*), code the outcome as "Tragicomic."

Q6: Is the outcome a confirmation of a narrative structure in which the **story fulfills its own ideals**?

If yes, code the outcome as "Romantic."

If no, go to Q7.

Q7:

a) If, from the viewpoint of the implied reader, the important things **work out well** at the

end, code the outcome as "Happy."

b) If, from the viewpoint of the implied reader, the important things **work out badly** (in extreme cases, irreparably), code the outcome as "Sad."

(Further note on ambiguity: In grammar, sentences such as "Flying planes can be dangerous" have multiple [in this case two] meanings that are equally valid but not necessarily complementary. This "flying planes" sentence exemplifies the technical meaning of the term "ambiguity" in linguistics and semantics. If an additional sentence [for example, "So, don't take flying lessons" or "So, keep your eyes on the sky when you go for a walk"] makes clear which meaning was intended, that additional sentence is said to "disambiguate" the meaning. In plot, too, we can also find this situation of structural ambiguity. At the end of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice observes to her kitten that the Red King "was part of my dream, of course—but then I was part of his dream, too!" The question made pressing at the outcome is, whose world would disappear—and hence which of them would cease to exist—if one of them were to awaken? The plot never offers an answer and so we never know what the ultimate structure of the narrative world is, which level of the narrative world is fundamental. Consider, too, the example of Robert Heinlein's "'All You Zombies....'" The whole story works toward the viewpoint character's realization that, through events dependent on medical intervention and time travel, he is apparently both his own grandfather and his own grandmother and his equally strong realization that, of course, this is impossible. This paradoxical outcome clearly leaves the viewpoint character confused and self-doubtful; we readers are not undecided about that confusion. However, the character's confusion does not dominate our reaction; rather, the revealed structure of the story leaves us most concerned with our own inability to disambiguate the story. Since this fundamental undecidability dominates our reading at the outcome moment, the story should be coded as "ambiguous.")

DISTINGUISHING Genre Content, Genre Form, and Theme:

1) Genre Content codes the elements the existence of which in the story tend to make us recognize that the story is SF. If one or more aliens are the most prominent science fictional element in the story, we would code Genre Content as Alien.

2) Genre Form codes the dramatic shape of the story. If one or a group of characters, typically human, is grappling with contact with the alien, we would code the Genre Form as Alien Contact. On the other hand, if the aliens and humans deal together with a crisis, as happens often in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, we would code the Genre Form as Crisis Escape.

3) Theme refers to the subject of the story. The theme Alienness/Difference codes stories that explore the subject of dealing with the alien. On the other hand, if the Genre Form is Alien Contact but the subject being explored is the heroism of the individual in dealing with the threat that the alien poses, as is often the case with episodes focusing on the Capt. Kirk in the original *Star Trek* series, the Theme would be Heroism.

Genre Content: The element in the story that would make most readers recognize the story as Science Fiction and without which the story might not be generally considered to be science fiction by ordinary readers.

(N.B.: The term "genre" traditionally points to types of works, sometimes highlighting aspects of content and sometimes highlighting aspects of form. Genre Content and Genre Form are studied and coded separately to disentangle these two approaches and more clearly and fully characterize a given work. Genre Content is theoretically independent of Genre Form even if there may tend to be strong associations between particular Genre Contents and particular Genre Forms.)

DEFINITIONS:

Alien: relating to things not from the social world of the protagonist, e.g., alien civilizations, explorations by aliens, etc. The defining content of the story is the alienness of at least some of the characters. A story with Alien Genre Content does not necessarily have a Genre Form of Alien Contact or a Theme of Alienness/Difference.

Alternate History: considers what *could* have been, or could be, e.g., alternate universes in which history develops slightly differently. Treats the *narrative* history as if it were in the past.

Capability Shift - Mental: stories in which an invention or mutation has caused a character or characters to become more intelligent/less intelligent, or to become psychic, etc. e.g., Flowers for Alg. Must be a significant deviation from the understood mental capacity of the character.

Capability Shift - Physical: stories in which an invention or mutation has caused a character or characters to become stronger/weaker, or to develop a new physical ability, like flight. Must be a significant deviation from the understood physical capacity of the character.

Dystopia: the organization of society is such that the presentation of it in the narrative conveys a sense of oppression. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Eutopia: a society presented as highly desirable.

Utopia: an ambiguous presentation of society which focuses on the organization of that society as a whole.

Exploration: characters explore a domain where their fellows do not have complete knowledge with the express purpose of learning more.

Invention: a new technique or discovery is the *novum* in the story. An innovation that changes the direction of the field or the dramatic situation in which the invention was created. The realm of the invention are to be codified in the Dominant Science field.

Mad Scientist: someone obsessed with a dangerous goal he or she is pursuing through the development and use of scientific or technological power.

Monster: a new and unknown creature, not necessarily extraterrestrial. The monster can be seen as a warning or a promise, the result of the crossing of some boundary, of upsetting the natural order of things.

Post-Apocalypse: events take place after nuclear war, a global plague, etc., that destroyed much or all of civilization.

Psi Powers: dealing with the external manifestation of powers of the mind. Telepathy, telekinesis, etc.

Surreal Novum: the "new" (*novum*) in the story defies logic; events do not follow familiar perceptions of reality.

Sword & Sorcery: heroes, damsels in distress, wizards, kings, dragons, whether pseudo-medieval or far future. Magic may be, but does not have to be, rationalized as advanced science.

Time Travel: story involves a character, characters, a thing, or things travelling back or forward through time. When time travel changes the reader's vantage point within the story, time travel can be thought of as a salient treatment of setting.

Not Applicable: None of the above elements is central in the story.

(N.B.: The Genre Evolution Project uses a social rather than a characteristic definition in selecting works as SF; for the GEP, if a work is narrative, under 12,000 words, and appears in a self-described American science fiction magazine, we take it to be part of our study population regardless of its Genre Content. Thus, we would expect to encounter stories that are SF by virtue of the way they were published but not SF by virtue of some particular element within the story. These stories are coded "Not Applicable.")

[DECISION TREE](#) for Genre Content

[DISTINGUISHING Genre Content, Genre Form, and Theme](#)

Genre Form: The basic form, or skeleton, on which the story is built. Genre Form does not necessarily make a story science fiction. Thus the content of a story may be interchangeable with other types of content without altering the form. For example, if a story's Genre Form is "Crisis Escape," and involves a man, a spaceship, and a bomb, the Genre Form would not change if a woman, a boat, and a missile were substituted into the story. Thus, Genre Form does not mandate a particular Genre Content.

(N.B.: The term "genre" traditionally points to types of works, sometimes highlighting aspects of form and sometimes highlighting aspects of content. Genre Form and Genre Content are studied and coded separately to disentangle these two approaches and more clearly and fully characterize a given work.)

DEFINITIONS:

Adventure: involves striving against significant difficulty to achieve a set goal. The characters have a choice of the circumstances of their adventure, i.e., they choose to participate, they choose to pursue the set goal. Additionally, the goal is not to gain information, as in Exploration.

Alien Contact: characters meet aliens, or detect evidence of alien presence. This is sometimes the first occasion of interaction with an alien species, but can also be a later interaction when the alien nature of the other is crucial to the form of the narrative. The "other" is typically marked by a difference in species, but other differences, such as those of race, nationality, or sex, may sometimes be used to mark the fundamentally alien and thus make Alien Contact a possible Genre Form even when there is no alien species.

Bildungsroman: "novel of education." The coming to a new, expected stage of life for a character, such as an adolescent becoming an adult.

Crisis Escape: form in which the characters are stuck in a dangerous situation and must remove themselves from it, e.g., a bomb will explode after a certain amount of time and the characters must defuse it to survive; a colony is attacked and characters must defend it.

Detective: a form in which some deed has been done and the major characters are attempting to discover who had done it (typically before the main action--detection--of

the work begins) and for what reason s/he had done it. The work typically includes a trail of clues and reasoning and a reconstruction of the thing done. The work attends at least as much to the past as to the present and future. To quote Robert Champigny, we seek to discover "what will have happened." By contrast, see "Puzzle."

Domestic: a character-centered story treating ordinary circumstances in the narrative world, e.g., life at home, life in the work force.

Exploration: characters have express purpose of uncovering information about the domain they are exploring.

Philosophical Tale: arranged to explore some truth about existence. SciFi is often the vehicle for philosophy regarding the repercussions incurred by crossing boundaries.

Political: the form of stories having to do with contested power relations, such as bids for power or new arrangements for ruling a people.

Romance: in the contemporary sense. A love story.

Puzzle: the characters are presented with a puzzle which they must solve, and which the reader is invited to solve as well. The work attends primarily to the present and future. We seek to discover "what will happen." By contrast, see "Detective." (Note: The following set of distinctions may be useful. We can consider a "situation" to be a condition that seems to the individual in it or reading about it just to exist, whether or not that condition is taken as desirable. Most people take human mortality to be an undesirable situation: we're stuck with it. A "problem" is a situation, for example, ignorance or personal poverty, that one feels it is worth trying to change. Some scientists may feel that human mortality is not merely just a situation but a problem, a condition they can work to change. A "puzzle" is a problem that one believes has a guaranteed solution, whether or not one is able or even tries to discover that solution. We believe that when we open the box containing a jigsaw puzzle we will find all and only the pieces necessary to solve it. If one says that human mortality is a puzzle rather than a problem, that suggests that one has faith that the problem has a guaranteed solution and that therefore the situation, that humans are mortal, can be changed. Situation, problem, and puzzle are all terms for conditions but reflect different beliefs about those conditions.)

Parody: a conscious emulation of another story or style with the intent of commenting on the parodied work.

Satire: a sustained attack on an aspect of society, or a school of thought, or a character type, etc. where the attack is central to the form of the story, that is to say, where the satirical components of the story could not be removed without making the story feel fundamentally different and where the satire results from something more than the tone of the writing. Humor is not necessarily an element of satire, and satiric elements in a story do not necessarily mean that the form of the story is satire..

War: a large-scale conflict. The characters are brought together or driven apart by this conflict or the expectation of the conflict. The characters have no choice regarding their involvement, as they do in the form Adventure.

[DECISION TREE](#) for Genre Form

[DISTINGUISHING Genre Content, Genre Form, and Theme](#)

Theme Content: According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "theme" is "the subject of discourse, discussion, conversation, meditation, or composition; a topic."

(Note: Whenever possible, try to code a narrative with a single theme. If this is

impossible, and if Theme Development is Stable and there appears to be more than one theme, Theme A may be considered the more important theme, and Theme B the lesser, though the two may be of equal importance, in which case a remark may be made in the Reader's Notes field. Theme Developments of Evolving and Surprise are coded chronologically, Theme A the theme that appears first in the story, and Theme B the second.)

Alienness/Difference: the story is concerned with the relationship between two or more groups that are perceived as different from or alien to each other. This may still be the theme even if one or more of the groups is not represented by multiple (or even any) characters and even if the relationship in question is potential rather than actual.

Love: above all else, the story is concerned with the effects or the constitution of love. This includes romantic love but also may include other types of love, such as filial love. It does not include "love" used metaphorically, as in "love of country" (patriotism) or "love of money" (greed). In addition to works that show love in a positive light, this theme also includes works that explore the dark sides of love and/or the ups and downs love often causes.

Science: above all, the story is concerned with science, the disciplined inquiry into observable phenomena. Science is particularly concerned with: the concepts and methods behind such an inquiry, the observed facts or general laws that contribute to or grow out of such an inquiry, and the implications and applications of such an inquiry.

The Arts: above all else, the story is concerned with the arts.

Escapism: the story is concerned with an individual's or humanity's desire to *evade*, whether it be through entertainment or another vehicle.

Individual & Society: the story is concerned with the position of the individual in society, or the effects of society on the individual, or the conflict between the two.

Coming of Age: the story is concerned with a character's ascension and entrance into adult responsibility and/or maturity. If the character gains knowledge, it must lead the character to this new sense of responsibility and/or maturity.

Individual Education: the story is concerned primarily with a character gaining knowledge and changing the character's personal understanding of a subject. The knowledge gained does not change the level of maturity of the character.

Philosophy: the story is concerned with philosophy, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "the love, study, or pursuit of wisdom, or of knowledge of things and their causes, whether theoretical or practical." This includes knowledge of ethics and of the processes of understanding. When the subject matter is "natural philosophy," we code the theme as "science."

Progress: the story is concerned with *development*, generally the improvement of society.

The Sacred: the story is concerned with persons, behaviors, places, or things made special as by some association with a god, typically as an effort to distinguish the sacred from the secular (meaning of this world rather than of a spiritually higher world) or from the profane (meaning that which violates the sacred). Thus tales thematically centered on salvation or on religious taboos would be coded as "the sacred." Tales thematically centered on "magic" might be coded as "the sacred" but might be coded otherwise, for example, as "science" if "magic" is simply a metaphoric stand-in for science in a given narrative world and thus that magic is not a behavior made special by association with a

god.

Evolution/Pattern: the story is concerned with patterns of evolution; patterns in society.

Homo re Nature: the story is concerned with how man interacts with nature. (In fantasy and science fiction, the nature with which the characters interact sometimes may be artificial, as is the case with the greenhouse spaceship setting in the 1971 film *Silent Running*.)

Heroism: the story is concerned with what it means to be a hero.

Power Struggle: the story is concerned with the conflict over dominance between two or more entities or ideals of more or less comparable power. Normally, this would be manifest in a struggle between social groups, as between the Lunar Authority and the Revolutionaries in Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*. Normally, this would not be a struggle between individuals unless those individuals are substantially representative of entities or ideals. Thus, the First Expedition of Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* would not be coded as struggle even though the Martian husband and wife are in strong disagreement about how to proceed when Earthmen arrive in the neighborhood. On the other hand, many critics take the vampire in Stoker's *Dracula* to represent the upper classes and the last generation while the individuals struggling against him represent modern, middle-class democrats, so this might well be coded as Power Struggle.

Communication: the story is concerned with the problems of communicating.

Other: See Note at the beginning of this section.

[DECISION TREE](#) for Theme Content

[DISTINGUISHING Genre Content, Genre Form, and Theme](#)

Theme Development: The manner in which the reader comes to understand the theme of the work.

Stable: the theme is apparent from beginning to end, e.g., the theme at the beginning is love, and the theme remains love for the rest of the story.

Evolving: the theme at first appears to be one thing, but over the course of the story, you realize that the theme is actually something else.

Surprise: the theme seems to be stable for nearly the whole of the story, but some information is given right at the end which reveals that the theme was something else all along.

DISTINGUISHING Story and Plot:

In the technical sense, as introduced by the Russian Formalist critics, "story" is the chronological sequence of events that are retold in a narrative; "plot" is the sequence in which the events are retold in a narrative. Thus, story form is always, by definition, linear, while [Plot Form](#) can vary. Duration, too, regardless of Plot Form, depends on whether one considers the [Plot Duration](#) or the [Story Duration](#). For example, the story can be that of a person's life, covering eighty years, while the plot—if the narrative is basically a conversation in which the eighty-year-old is talking to a reporter about his life—can be hours. Note that it is sometimes difficult to decide whether or not an event is actually narrated as opposed to merely mentioned, whether it is part of the story or in a sense merely material for narrating the story, for turning it into plot. For example, "As my father used to say when I was growing up in Indiana," doesn't necessarily extend the narrative back to the speaker's childhood and certainly not to the birth of the speaker's

father. However, if the speaker makes an episode of his life as a child part of the narrative that engages our interest in plot, a matter we often can judge in part by its figuring in our feelings related to suspense, then that episode told within the conversation with the reporter becomes part of the plot and thus also, of course, part of the story.

Plot Form: The structure organizing the narration of events of the story.

Epistolary: The narrative is made up of a series of letters or another series of documents, e.g., "Flowers for Algernon."

Linear - Episodic: Events are narrated in chronological order, laid out in several discrete episodes, a few of which could be added or deleted without altering the overall form of the plot.

Linear - Integrated: Each scene is necessarily connected to the ones immediately before and after it.

Nested: one or more narratives within the outside narrative, e.g., *Frankenstein*, wherein there is the outside story of the man sailing for Hyperborea, and within that the narrative of Victor Frankenstein, and within that the narrative of the monster.

Circular: Events of the story follow a circular pattern; the end is the beginning.

Architectonic: The narration requires that the reader consider events synchronically. Does not follow events in chronological order. Reader must piece together the story from the information given, for example, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*.

[DISTINGUISHING Story and Plot](#)

Plot Duration: The actual amount of time that passes from the beginning of the narration to the conclusion. May be shorter than the story duration, e.g., if the plot includes characters recounting earlier adventures, the story duration will be as long as the amount of time referred to, while the plot will be only as long as the amount of time that passes during the retelling of the tale.

Hours: the length of time that passes is less than two days (unless the passage of time is more than a day and is significantly interrupted, as by the main character sleeping, in which case the duration is one of the larger values below).

Days: the length of time that passes is more than hours but less than two weeks.

Weeks: the length of time that passes is more than days but less than two months.

Months: the length of time that passes is more than two months but less than two years.

Years: the length of time that passes is more than two years, but does not encompass the lifetime of a character during the unfolding of the plot.

Lifetime: the plot covers the essential episodes in the whole of the main character's life. This code takes the notion of life to include some significant development. (Thus Lifetime typically would not apply to a story ending with the the death of an infant main character.) Use this code when there is no likelihood of unexpected further development for the main character. (Thus, even though the main character may not be dead at the end of the story, if s/he is unlikely ever to change in a significant way again, use Lifetime.)

Generations: several generations are born during the plot. This is intended to code a longer duration than Lifetime.

Race: an entire race is born during the plot. This is intended to code a longer duration than Generations.

Other: used only when other categories do not fit.

[DISTINGUISHING Story and Plot](#)

Story Duration: The amount of time that passes during the story. May be longer than the plot duration, e.g., the plot involves a pair of characters meeting at a bar for a couple hours. One tells the other of an experience he had, like a two-week hiking trip in the Rockies. The plot duration would then be just hours; but the story duration would be weeks.

Hours: (See [Plot Duration](#) for divisions of time.)

Days:

Weeks:

Months:

Years:

Lifetime:

Generations:

Race:

[DISTINGUISHING Story and Plot](#)

Hard SF: The story gives the sense that the scientific theories on which it is based (which may or may not include actual mathematical formulas) would work in the narrative world (whether or not they could work in our known world) and the story prototypically presents those theories in such a way that the reader may want to--or at least believe one could given a bit more detailed information, skill, and desire--test the validity of the working out of these theories as features of the story. A classic, prototypical example is Hal Clement's *Mission of Gravity* (serial publication in ASF 1953) set on a disc-shaped world. The huge differential of surface gravity from pole to equator explains the evolution of different species in different locales, striking differences in geology, and so on. Thus the plot and the character relations, which involve a trans-planetary quest, are shaped by physics, biology, geography, and ethology all in accord with the disc-shaped world as setting. The fact that no planet has ever been discovered or material found that could maintain such a shape against centrifugal force does not prevent the novel from being Hard SF.

Dominant Science: The science whose workings are central to creating the narrative world and/or dramatic problem(s); always applicable when Hard SF is Yes, often not applicable when Hard SF is No.

Anthropology: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Anthropology. Anthropology considers society as a whole as related to the individual.

(Note: we recognize that standard definitions suggest some confusion in deciding among the terms "anthropology," "sociology," and "psychology" For our coding purposes, we apply two discriminators. (1) If the dominant science [not necessarily the plot but the science somehow deployed in the plot and/or in narrative discussions] seems to focus on the individual, we see that as psychology; if on group processes, either anthropology or sociology. (2) If the rhetorical stance seems to be analysis from within a society, we see

that as sociology; if from without, as it were bringing news from a society elsewhere in time or space, we see that as anthropology.)

Astronomy: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Astronomy.

Biology: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Biology.

Chemistry: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Chemistry.

Computer Science: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Computer and Information Science, e.g., Neuromancer.

Ecology: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Ecology.

Economics: the story is primarily influenced by theories or new information in the field of Economics.

Engineering: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Engineering.

History: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of History.

Linguistics: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Linguistics.

Mathematics: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Mathematics.

Medicine: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Medicine.

Pedagogy: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Pedagogy.

Physics: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Physics.

Political Science: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Political Science.

Psychology: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Psychology. (See note under Anthropology above.)

Sociology: the story is primarily influenced by theories from or new information in the field of Sociology. Sociology tends to study the individual relative to the society in which that individual lives. (The difference between Psychology and Sociology is defined, by a sort of unspoken agreement, as the former being the study of the psyche of individuals, and the latter being the study of the psyche of a group of people. See also the Note under Anthropology above.)

Recurring Elements?: If the narrative implies that an element in it is being reused from another narrative, this field should be marked Yes. For example, Harry Harrison's tales of Bill, the Galactic Hero, make clear, even on one's first reading of one of these, that the protagonist is a recurring element we would find (or so it is implied) in other narratives. Stories set in Shangri-La may do the same, although if the narrative describes Shangri-La as though one had never been there before, even though the actual reader knows that this is a recurring element, since the implied reader is supposed to treat

the element as new, this field should be marked No. If the element that recurs is obviously treated as expectably rather than importantly recurring, like using New York City or the dusty surface of the Moon, as an element of the setting, this field should be marked No. However, if the description suggests that this is a special use of this locale, yet is recurring, as with many Hollow Earth stories, this field should be marked Yes. Similarly, just another narrative with a time machine should be marked No, but a narrative that explicitly revisits Wells's Time Machine should be marked Yes.

Character: the most prominent aspect of recurrence is a character (e.g., another Nemo story).

Setting: the most prominent aspect of recurrence is the setting (e.g., another Barsoom story).

Novum: the most prominent aspect of recurrence is the new thing that defines the work as science fiction (e.g., another Wellsian Time Machine story).

Sequel: the most prominent aspect of recurrence is the feeling the implied reader gets that this work is another in a series (e.g., a Ferdinand Feghoot story).

Not Applicable : the most prominent aspect of recurrence is none of the above but nonetheless the narrative implied that it is borrowing ostentatiously from other narratives. If a narrative is coded Recurring Elements? Yes and N.A., a note about the basis for felt recurrence should be entered in the Notes field..

Main Character Type: If applicable, choose one main character, even if you believe there are more than one. (Should you run across a story containing characters of seeming equal importance, the point of view may be considered to help determine which of them deserves the label "Main.") The main character may be a blend of a few of these types. A cyborg, for example, would be both human and robot.

Human: character is a member of a human race.

Animal: character is part of an animal kingdom.

Alien: character is of non-earthly origins.

Robot: character is not a biological being, but is animate, mechanized, computerized.

Metamorph: character has or had the capacity to assume other physical forms at will.

Main Character Dimensions: *Character dimensionality*, both for main characters and for all characters, is the degree to which the character is fully developed as an individual.

Note: Put briefly, 3-dimensional (3D) characters are drawn with many and typically diverse details of description, narration, and/or action; 2-dimensional (2D) characters are drawn with few and often repetitive details; 1-dimensional (1D) characters are often drawn with minimal detail. 1D characters, as opposed to 2D and 3D characters, can be thought of as active parts of the setting rather than as full-fledged characters in their own right. 2D and 3D characters can be distinguished from each other by their degree of complexity. For more on making these distinctions and how to code them, see the following paragraphs.

3D: the story presents the main character--via description, narration, or action--in enough detail that the reader feels the character could be recognized and the character's behaviors and/or thoughts predicted in some hypothetical situation not involving the

narrative world in which the character was first encountered. This quality of predictability is true for 2D characters as well. The distinction between 3D and 2D characters is made on the basis of complexity of characterization. A 2D character can be thought of as comparatively stereotypical, for example, the villain who is unalloyedly malicious or the kind-hearted ditz who is always amiably befuddled. A 3D character might be villainous or ditz, but the villainy might have complex motivations or there might be variable manifestations of malice depending on situation and the ditz might have areas of native wisdom or unexpected strengths or weaknesses beyond intellectual capacity. Although complexity of character can often be revealed in action, complexity of character does not necessarily depend on complexity of action. Thus, a bedridden character whose rich mental life is available to the reader and whose individual (not stereotypical) view of the world one could imagine encountering in other worlds, perhaps even in the reader's own world, would be coded 3D.

2D: the character is not so deeply explored as is a 3D character, or seems to have a flat character; the character seems reducible to some small, simple set of rules, as is the case with a stereotyped character, such as Superman in the 1950s, whose psyche was left relatively untouched, and who was only two-sided: mild-mannered Clark Kent, or the superhero. 2D is a wide category. For the distinction between 3D and 2D characters, see the discussion of 3D characters above.

1D: the characters are in some sense functioning like *active* parts of the setting (human equivalents of a threatening dog), such as a voice in the crowd, or the crowd itself; a scowling face across the room; we count them as characters only when something in the story (such as their action) distinguishes them from being mere background. That distinguishing something may be speech, but it need not be speech. However, to count as a character at all, readers of the story must infer that the narrative element under consideration is capable of exercising free will. We typically count humans as characters, but not comatose humans; we typically do not count threatening dogs as characters, but we do count Lassie. When counting 1D characters, we count not their absolute number (we are not concerned with the exact population of a crowd) but rather the number of *instances* of 1-dimensional characters (we are concerned to note reliance on the use of 1D characters as a way of story telling). An instance is a scene in which 1D characters function. Each such scene counts as a single instance regardless of the number of 1D characters involved in that scene. (More [on one-dimensional characters](#); more on [how to count scenes](#); more on [the nature of character in narrative](#))

Main Character Sex: The biological sex of the character.

Male: character is male.

Female: character is female.

Other: includes all sexes neither male nor female, such as androgynous, asexual, or hermaphroditic characters.

Main Character Age: These distinctions are for humans, and should be adapted for other species, including more evolved humans, taking the mentality of the characters into consideration.

Child: character who still depends on adults for survival.

Teen: character who is separating from or is usually separate from dependence on adults without having the full, usual autonomy of adults.

Young Adult: character who is beginning to function in terms of autonomous social identity.

Middle Adult: character who functions with an autonomous social identity.

Old Adult: character who has moved beyond their social identity, out of desire or necessity from age.

Timeless: character has either no definable age, or is immortal.

Sentence Style: The dominant stylistic form of the sentences in the story.

Propositional: the sentences are pragmatic, straightforward; use of either metaphor or irony is rare. The language is rhetorically neutral.

Metaphorical: the sentences tend to run heavy with metaphor. The language is rhetorically rich, and accords with the reality being discussed.

Ironic: the language is rhetorically rich, and discords with the reality being discussed.

Overall Style: The style of the story taken as a whole.

Propositional: the story is a story for story's sake told in a more or less straightforward way.

Metaphorical: the story itself is a metaphor for something else. *Moby Dick*, for example, is not just a story about a whale but one in which the confrontation with the whale stands for many things, such as the confrontation with implacable Nature. The final image of Ishmael floating on Queequeg's coffin suggests, among other things, that we survive--albeit alone--by depending on the lives of others. The narrative can, in part, be seen as a novel of education for Ishmael who acquires a more profound understanding of the world.

Ironic: incongruity between what was expected of the story and what it ends up doing. *Candide*, for example, seems to be a story about an innocent character but in fact is a story about the world the innocent character visits and offers an ironic redefinition of the value of innocence. The final advice to "tend one's own garden" may be in some sense fine, but in context it is ironic because it leaves the world, which clearly needs changing, unchanged. The narrative can, in large measure, be seen as a novel of anti-education for Candide who comes away with an ironic re-education about the world.

Paradigm Shift?: A paradigm shift occurs when a narrative offers new possibilities for narration. Those possibilities may be new subjects of discourse (patterns) or new approaches for discussing a subject (procedures). The reader of the story need not know whether this new narrative possibility is actually the first of its kind to appear in literature. The implied reader is clearly supposed to believe that this story initiates or extinguishes a narrative possibility. That is what matters.

Examples: *The Time Machine*, by H.G. Wells, provides a paradigm shift. Because this narrator must explain in detail to his friends (and thus the reader) what a time machine does and how it functions, we infer that the implied reader is not expected to have encountered a time machine before. Thus, the time machine is revealed as a new element for narrative use. Since this element is not a mere variation on an existing element (e.g.,

yet another undiscovered island or a mere faster airplane) but something fundamentally new, it introduces new narrative possibilities that change the implied reader's knowledge of what narratives can include (time machines, objects that do not display ordinary temporally persistence in a given narrative present) and how they can function (characters and objects traveling back and forth through time).

Neuromancer, by William Gibson, does not provide a paradigm shift. A definitive work in Cyberpunk SF, *Neuromancer* tells of a future with cyborgs, artificial intelligences, and dehumanizing political/economic developments using a fast-driving style characterized by metaphors based on clashing epistemological categories ("The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel"). However, the narrative treats all its tropes and subjects as nothing new to the implied reader. *Neuromancer* is credited for having helped spawn a whole category of science fiction, but because the book itself is not told as though these elements were new, it is not a paradigm shift. Indeed, once *Neuromancer* (1984) was recognized as the reference work for defining Cyberpunk, the lineage of the subgenre, for example, the film *Blade Runner* (1982), was immediately clear. That is, the subgenre of Cyberpunk was not initiated by a paradigm-shifting work but by an accumulation of features (tropes, theme, style, and so on) over time. ([More on paradigm shift.](#))

Setting Categories Text Entry Notes

1. Select the dominant setting in each category. Dominant means the setting that prevails over others and/or describes the actual function of the setting in that category. For example, if a story were set in a prison library, the dominant use would be segregation even if education occurs.
 2. If two settings have equal dominance, select two settings.
 3. If there are more than two important settings, select Mixed.
 4. Enter notes concerning setting in the Setting Locale text box.
-

Setting Mode: The way in which the reader comes to understand the nature of the setting.

Realistic: a stable narrative world that is consistent with, but not necessarily the same as, our shared reality.

Fairy Tale: a stable narrative world characterized by arbitrary relations with our shared reality.

Fantasy: a narrative world susceptible to arbitrary changes in its own ground rules. ([More on setting mode.](#))

Setting Literary Use: The literary use to which the setting is put in the overall narration.

In virtually all narratives, the setting makes some difference in how the story is told. In coding the use of the setting, we need to distinguish among

Background Use: the setting provides a place for the plot to unfold and also may embellish our understanding of the plot and/or the characters. (See notes below.)

Thematic Use: the setting is central to the exposition of the theme. (See notes below.)

Character Use: the setting takes an active role in the story, as in Ray Bradbury's "The

City." (See notes below.)

Notes on each of the above options:

—*BACKGROUND USE* covers a range of uses from the practical to the rhetorical, from the setting merely as a necessity since characters have to be somewhere to setting as a means for embellishing the story. At the practical end of this range, we find, for example, Aesop's fable of "The Fox and the Grapes." In this story, we know that the title character is in a rural environment since a fox can roam freely and in a temperate or tropical zone since grapes grow there. The story is about a change of attitude that may arise when something is out of reach, that is, the story is about the malleability of personal desire, which we would code as the theme of Individual Education. From a thematic standpoint, the story just as well could have been told about a mouse unable to reach some cheese on display in a restaurant in a city, but it is not. The setting provides a background for the Aesop's fable but is not central to the exposition of its theme. At the rhetorical end of this range, we find the television series called *The Fugitive*. In each episode, the protagonist, whom we viewers believe to be wrongly accused of the murder of his wife, must elude the police while he searches for the real murderer whose discovery is essential for achieving justice and the protagonist's freedom. In each episode, the protagonist, a morally engaged person who is also a physician, becomes involved in the lives of people he encounters and is therefore torn on one hand between his general desire to be law-abiding and his specific desires to do good and on the other his need to conceal his identity from people who trust him and disappear from their lives to continue his search. Some episodes are set in a city, others in the country, and so on. In each episode, the relationships the protagonist forms with the local characters are embellished by their location (city people tend to be middle-class and distrustful or lower-class and trustful, country people tend to be wary but helpful, and so on) but the main story of the wrongly accused protagonist's conflicting impulses is not dependent on the setting. The setting is used to provide a background but is not central to the exposition of the theme, here the theme of Individual & Society.

—*THEMATIC USE*, in which the setting is central to the exposition of theme, covers the range between background use and use of the setting as character. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel called *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator moves from the Midwest to the New York City area seeking wealth in the finance industry. The central image in the novel is the car, which suggests the industrialized separation of people from each other and from the land. New York, as America's unique financial capital, is thematically important because just as the finance industry is separated from actual production and consumption, this setting seems to the protagonist separated from the world in which he grew up, the setting providing an economic and existential separation parallel to the social separation created by automobile culture. Also, within the New York City area, the more urban the locale, the more we see wealth masking the underlying abuse of individuals, as in a violent confrontation in a fancy hotel room in Manhattan between supposed lovers, as opposed to the true protestation of love Gatsby makes on his Long Island estate. At the end, shocked by his experiences in the East, the narrator retreats to the less urbanized Midwest much as Europeans once headed west to the New World seeking a fresh start. Thus, the setting is central to the exposition of the theme and we would code the setting as Thematic.

—*CHARACTER USE* arises when the setting acts as a character. In Ray Bradbury's story called "The City," an automated city which has waited through eons for living creatures

to penetrate it methodically kills one explorer after the other in revenge against the last creatures to penetrate, invaders who caused the death of the city's original builder-inhabitants. The entire story is set within the city and we are privy to the city's thoughts about revenge and the execution of its plans. (More on [the nature of character in narrative.](#))

Setting Medium: Describes the physical nature of the setting.

Aboveground: a setting on the surface of a landmass.

Underground: a setting beneath the surface of a landmass.

Liquid: a setting in a liquid environment.

Gaseous: a setting in a gaseous environment.

Vacuum: a setting in a vacuum (typically outer space).

Artificial: a setting as presented by the author as not one that does not occur naturally in the narrative world. *Notes:* (1) Use "artificial" only if no other option is appropriate. For example, a story set in a traditional steel and brick prison would have the Setting Medium "Aboveground" even though the prison itself is artificial; however, a story set in a space ship would be "Artificial" if the story is set primarily within the ship.

(2) "Artificial" is a check-box option that can be used alone or in conjunction with one of the other Setting Medium values. Thus if a story had two dominant settings, one for action in the space ship and one for action in space suits outside the ship, "artificial" and "vacuum" should both be chosen.

Setting Physical Geography: Identifies the physical location of the setting.

Earth: taking place on Earth. See Setting Political Geography.

Solar System: includes the planets, except Earth, natural and artificial satellites, and asteroids orbiting Sol. If the locale is named, enter the name in the Setting Locale box.

Extrasolar: indicates settings outside Earth's solar system.

Abstract: indicates any non-physical "space" or a setting that defies traditional logic.

Other: requires notes in the Setting Locale box.

Mixed: requires notes in the Setting Locale box.

Setting Political Geography: Identifies the political location of the setting.

Notes: (1) If a dominant setting of the narrative is not Earth, use Not Applicable.

(2) If the non-Earth political locale is named (e.g., Karhide, a country on Gethen, which is a planet on which Ursula K. LeGuin sets more than one narrative), indicate the name and brief description of the political locale in the Setting Locale box.

(3) If a dominant setting of the narrative is Earth, select the appropriate option and, if more specific information is available, include that information in the Setting Locale box.

United States/Canada: any setting in the United States or Canada.

Europe/UK: any setting in Iceland, Russia west of the Ural Mountains, and in Europe and Eastern Europe as far east as the Black Sea, including Armenia and Georgia but not Turkey.

South-Central America/Mexico: any setting in a country in the Americas south of and

including Mexico.

Middle East: any setting on the Arabian Peninsula, as far north as Turkey and Azerbaijan, as far east as Iran, as far west as Egypt and including Israel.

Asia/Far East: any setting in Asia, as far east as Japan, as far south as Indonesia, as far west as India, and including Russia east of the Ural Mountains.

Africa: any setting in the countries of Africa excluding Egypt.

Oceania: any setting in Pacific Ocean nations including Micronesia, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand but excluding countries, such as Japan and the U.S., covered by other codes.

Other: requires notes in the Setting Locale box (e.g., set in a future country made of artificial islands in the Atlantic).

Mixed: requires notes in the Setting Locale box.

Not Applicable: setting is not on Earth or, if on Earth, without any suggested political geography (e.g., set in an unspecified locale during the Jurassic).

Setting Urbanization: The degree to which the setting has been shaped for communal habitation.

Urban: a setting in a city.

Suburban: a setting in the areas around cities that serve as residential satellites to cities.

Rural: a setting in the country, a small town, or an agricultural area.

Wasteland: a setting that once did but can no longer support human habitation.

Untouched: a setting in which humans (or their equivalents) have had minimal impact and which continues to function as it did before the intrusion of intelligent life.

Other: requires notes in the Setting Locale box.

Mixed: requires notes in the Setting Locale box.

Not Applicable: requires notes in the Setting Locale box.

Setting Dominant Social Use: Indicates, from the viewpoint of normal inhabitants of the narrative world, the kind of place, taken as a social locale, in which the narrative is set.

Note: In many instances, one will want to add a note about Dominant Social Use in the Setting Locale box, for example, to distinguish a maternity ward from a hospice or a gun factory from a farm.

Education: the main purpose of the setting is the pursuit of knowledge.

Government: the main purpose of the setting is the regulation of people's lives through the establishment and maintenance of laws.

Habitation: the setting is an area the primary purpose of which is to provide a place for people to live.

Production: the main purpose of the setting is the production of goods for capital.

Recreation: the main purpose of the setting is to allow people to engage in activities that help one relax and/or escape from everyday life.

Religion: the main purpose of the setting is the pursuit of religious activity.

Segregation: the main purpose of the setting is the separation of people (e.g., the deviant or sick) from their larger society).

Service: the main purpose of the setting is to provide services in exchange for capital.

Stronghold: the main purpose of the setting is to provide offensive or defensive security.

Transportation: the main purpose of the setting is to move physically from one place to another.

Other: requires notes in the Setting Locale box.

Not Applicable: Requires notes in the Setting Locale box.

Setting Time: The location in time at which the story primarily takes place.

Geological Past: the story occurs during pre-historical time period, such as the Cretaceous period or even the creation of the universe.

Historical Past: the story is felt to be set far enough in the implied reader's past that key technological and social conditions are felt to be radically different from those in the implied reader's present. (The Crusades, and the American Revolutionary War would usually qualify here.)

Near Past: the story is set far enough in the past that technological and social conditions are felt to be importantly different from those in the implied reading present, but the period is still felt to have a continuous relationship to the present. (Most of the twentieth century would usually qualify here.)

Approximate Present: the story seems to occur in the present, meaning the era of the implied reader. (The present is often more or less the time of publication.)

Near Future: the story is seen as foreseeably connected to the present through conceivable and/or putative elements such as attainable technologies, foreseeable social arrangements, or natural change.

Far Future: the story is disconnected from the present, containing elements such as fundamentally new technologies or social realities that cannot be seen as expectable developments from the present day.

Out of Time: the story is obviously set outside of any time that is connected or connectable with the reader's flow of time (for example, an SF fairy tale such as *Star Wars* which happens "long, long ago" in what is nonetheless an obviously futuristic narrative universe) or the story is told in such a way that its setting is felt to be inherently timeless (like Aesop's *Fables*).

[TIMELINE](#) for Setting Time

Setting Locale: Text entry box for reporting setting information more clearly and/or specifically than can be accommodated by the other setting fields.

Salient Features: The word salient is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as an adjective meaning "most noticeable or important." When we refer to a narrative's salient features, we are referring to the features in the narrative that strike us as prominent and, in some sense, unusual. The terraforming of Mars is the most prominent aspect of Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy and should be noted in this field. However, if the most prominent aspect of the narrative could be coded in other fields, it should not be coded here. For example, a narrative with a very unusual recurring character like Isaac Asimov's Daneel Olivaw would not on the basis of the detective robot's salience warrant information under Salient Features. That should be noted under Recurring Elements? | Character. If Olivaw were to solve a mystery, as he always does, the specific mystery

probably should not be recored as a salient feature since the nature of the mystery and its solution would be in the synopsis. However, if the story used Olivaw to raise philosophical questions about morality or the nature of humanity, as sometimes happens, these would not be recurring, would not be part of the synopsis, and, while the reader would certainly think of them, they would be expectable thoughts of any reader. Therefore, these uses of Olivaw might well be salient features.

This place in the coding sheet is where, after coding the story from the point of view of the “implied reader” viewed in the abstract, we can rely more heavily on a subjectivity informed by our knowledge of the story's external context, such as historical events, people, places, public concerns, and so on. For example, the movie *King Kong* (1933) has strong undercurrents of racial fear running through it that require no great leap of imagination to realize if you consider the traditional white fear of black male sexuality's power over white women. “A survey of the post World War I period in the United States or, for our purposes, the fifteen years between the end of the war and the release of *King Kong* in 1933, reveals a period of increasing racial and social tension.”

Critics such as Gerald Peary also read the movie as the giant ape Kong embodying RKO's (Radio-Keith-Orpheum, the film studio) very skeptical symbolic assessment of the New Deal, with the adventurer-promoter character Denham representing Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The salient features found in this movie would certainly be racism and sexism, and in order to recognize these, a reader's knowledge of the time period and racial tensions in American culture are required. The notion that the story is also RKO's cryptic commentary on the New Deal probably should be reserved for Reader's Thoughts.

Coding Difficulty: The values below refer to quality and quantity of coding difficulty simultaneously. The *quality* "substantial" indicates not merely that the coder needed to consult a decision tree or definitions to arrive at a determination but that the coder felt important indecision about the determination even after such consultation. (Note: indecision, rather than disagreement, is the matter at hand. If the coding seems clearly to conform to our definitions yet the code itself somehow seems wrong, that is a matter for general discussion rather than coding difficulty.) The *quantity* refers to the number of significant fields in which one might have had substantial coding difficulty. The significance of a field depends on the text. In virtually all texts, Genre Form, for example, would be significant. However, Instances of 1D Characters may not be significant if the indecision is between counting six or seven scenes, while it would be significant if one viewed much of whole story either as a flashback or as a straight telling so that the indecision is between two or seven scenes. (Note: in counting the number of fields about which one might have coding difficulty, Coding Difficulty itself should never be counted.)

1: No substantial difficulty

2: Some substantial difficulty (involving one or two significant fields)

3: Much substantial difficulty (involving three or more significant fields)

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More on one-dimensional characters:

In counting one-dimensional characters, count the NUMBER OF SCENES in which one-dimensional characters appear, not the number of characters. An instance of use of one-dimensional characters occurs when the narrative notices one or more characters ("the crowd roared," "a man opened his umbrella") but doesn't develop that character. A scene is defined as a UNIT OF STORY (as opposed to plot), that is, a unit in the chronological sequence of events that may be separated from other such units by, say, time, location, emotion, or function in the plot. A happy wedding could be narrated as one scene. A drive-by shooting that erupts at that happy wedding would be a separate scene even though the time and place of the shooting and the wedding are the same. The shooting is considered a second UNIT OF STORY because the tone and function have changed dramatically. However, if a scene is interrupted in a minor way and then resumed (a guy in a bar is telling a tale, the scene shifts to the tale he is telling, the scene returns to the bar), the two parts of the interrupted scene often may still be considered one scene. Thus, in the hypothetical bar plot, there could be two scenes: the bar (although it appears twice) and the scene in tale being told by the guy. Each of these two scenes might have one or more one-dimensional characters, yet the maximum number of instances of one-dimensional characters, would be two, even if the bar were crowded before and after the guy tells his tale. However, if the bar is jovial and crowded before the telling and sparsely populated with a single sad-sack (plus the guy, his listener, and the bartender) after the telling, we have three scenes and hence three possible instances of one-dimensional characters. If the sad-sack were mentioned in the first half of the telling of the scene but now enters the conversation, he may become a two-dimensional character. In that instance, if the guy, the listener, and the bartender were already two-dimensional, then the third scene (bar part two, now depressed) would have only two-dimensional characters and this hypothetical narrative would have three scenes, two instances of one-dimensional characters (bar part one and scene the guy tells), and four two-dimensional characters (bartender, listener, sad-sack, and the main character who tells the inner tale).

More on the nature of character in narrative:

In general, a character is an abstraction we make from a text about which we infer two features: (a) the abstraction is capable of significant but inessential change (like a river flooding or a dog growing) and (b) it is capable of the exercise of free will (like the Delphic oracle); however, while neither feature is sufficient, both are necessary. Human beings typically are taken to have both these features, so human beings represented in narratives are typically characters, but dead or comatose human beings are not taken to have these features (cannot change and cannot exercise free will respectively). When a human character is killed, it ceases to be a character. Conversely, when the setting is seen as capable not only of change but of free will, as with Bradbury's city, it, like an active human, is a character.

More on setting mode:

Hal Clement's *Mission of Gravity* is "realistic." In this novel, the viewpoint characters travel across a disc-shaped planet that has an enormous gravity gradient from the pole to the equator. The fact that we know of no material that would make such a planet possible does not undercut the realism, and the stable rules of physics, that characterize the

narration of the journey across this internally consistent landscape. In fact, this novel is actually Hard SF, the rules of gravity here being completely consistent with those in our shared reality. A tale like the Grimms' version of "Sleeping Beauty" is a fairy tale. It, too, presents a stable narrative world but that world has arbitrary relations with our shared reality. For example, "although [the last old woman guest] could not undo the curse [of the party-crashing witch], she could soften it." Why not undo? Why merely soften? Just because. This is an arbitrary rule in the narrative world; however, within that narrative world, the rule is stable. According to J.R.R. Tolkien in "On Fairy Stories," in a fairy story (tale), the fundamental nature of the setting (as "enchanted" in his terms) must never be called into question; that is, fairy tale worlds, although including arbitrary rules, should be stable in the reader's mind. That "just because" is never questioned. But a tale like Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*, in which we turn the page to suddenly find a quiz about our reading experience (Example: "Are the seven men, in your view, adequately characterized as individuals? Yes () No ()") does call the rules of the narrative world into question and makes the tale more fantastic than a fairy tale.

More on how to count scenes:

In counting scenes in a short story, it is best to look for the scene boundaries dividing one scene from another. A scene boundary typically can be recognized, as in a play, by one or more of three features. One: there is a significant *change of locale*. Two: there is a significant *change of cast*. Three: there is a significant *change of action*. If in one paragraph we see two characters arguing at home and in the next we see one of those characters engaged in pleasant water-cooler conversation with coworkers at a downtown office, we've crossed a scene boundary; we've had significant change of locale, cast, and action.

What do we do, however, if we do not have so clear-cut a change in locale, cast, and action? Here the criterion of significance is crucial; that is, the change must feel to the reader to signify something comparatively important and different from what came before. This yardstick of significance is an inexact measure, but one that should be discussable and then applicable with a high degree of intercoder reliability. It may clarify this definition to consider each of these types of change—locale, cast, and action—separately.

Change of locale. If we have first two characters arguing at home and then the same two characters arguing in an airplane as they leave for what was supposed to be a happy vacation, we may well have crossed a scene boundary. The change of locale may show something significantly new about how persistent and destructive the disagreement is; it certainly changes the potential audience of characters who can overhear or interrupt the argument; it may even provide ironic commentary on where the characters' relationship is going. Thus, the change of locale alone may indicate that a scene boundary has been crossed. On the other hand, if two characters are arguing at the rail of a cruise ship and during their argument the visual background first contains an island and then only open sea, that change, while indicating the duration of the argument and perhaps providing a metaphor (they are now "all at sea"), probably does not indicate a scene boundary because the significant locale is not the ship in the water but the cruise ship deck itself.

Thus, there has been no significant change of locale just as there has been no significant change of cast or action. In other words, a change in locale alone may or may not signal a scene boundary depending on the felt significance of the change.

Change of cast. If in one paragraph we see two characters arguing at home and in the next we see them interrupted by a child who bursts crying into the room, we may well have crossed a scene boundary. Suppose we now we see the first two characters continue their argument in double-entendre so as to hide their disagreement from the child. We have shifted from a private scene to a more public one, one engaging an additional aspects of the characters' lives. The entrance not only changes the cast but one might consider that it also changes the action by making it significantly different and/or more complex. This would be crossing a scene boundary. However, suppose the two originally arguing characters are interrupted by a phone call that they do not answer but which stops their talking while an answering machine picks up a message that they and we hear. Another character has now entered the scene. But if that message merely provides grist for the argumentative mill of the first two characters who resume their argument once the message ends, that entrance and exit of another character would not signal any scene shift. In the same way, a waiter interrupting a couple arguing in a restaurant might well be insignificant from this standpoint of noticing scene boundaries. In other words, a change in cast alone may or may not signal a scene boundary depending on the felt significance of the change.

Change of action. If in one paragraph we see two characters arguing at home and in the next they are interrupted by a phone call that they do not answer but which stops their talking while an answering machine picks up a message, we may well have crossed a scene boundary if that overheard message suddenly motivates the originally arguing characters to significant new action. For example, the message may be news of a sibling's having been arrested, which impels the original two characters instantly to lay aside their argument and begin deciding together how to respond to this new, more pressing need.. Another character has now entered and left the scene, and the scene has changed significantly, as shown by the significant change of action, even without change of locale or cast. But if the new information merely provides another subject about which the original two characters continue their combative dialogue, no scene boundary has been crossed. In other words, a change in action alone may or may not signal a scene boundary depending on the felt significance of the change.

More on paradigm shift:

(a) The field of Paradigm Shift was created to replace a Story Birth Order field. (Please see definition below.) It was found that while it was often easy to agree that a given narrative presented what the implied reader was to view as a unique type of story, it was not always clear whether that uniqueness arose from initiating a new story type or culminating and thus obviating an existing story type. What was clear, however, was that uniqueness was involved. Hence the replacement of fields.

"Story Birth Order: Some works announce themselves as being the first of their kind (whether or not they actually are). Wells's *The Time Machine*, for example, opens with a chapter explaining what a time machine is. Other works, the vast majority, seem to be

from the middle of a lineage (whether or not they actually are); they might simply assume time machines (or any other feature of content or style) and use them. *Neuromancer*, although it struck its first readers as the first of its kind, is written as if it were the middle of a lineage. And some works, a very few, seem to be the last of their kind (whether or not they actually are); they might show how time machines are finally impossible. The third (and initially last) volume of Asimov's Foundation Trilogy reads as if with its publication the trilogy's design had been fulfilled, even though in fact years later Asimov wrote further books set in the universe of that trilogy. It is possible to propose a work for which Story Birth Order is simply not available as a category, but it is hard to imagine such a work existing in fact, so "n.a." is not a likely choice."

(b) If a narrative seems at one level to present a fundamentally new narrative possibility but an expectably knowledgeable reader would know that this possibility already exists, that narrative move is not a paradigm shift but an example of irony.

Setting Times

Out Of Time

Geological Past
Historical Past
Near Past
Approximate present
Near Future
Far Future



GENRE CONTENT DECISION TREE

(Note: At each level, the “yes” response leads to the next level in; the “no” response to the next level down.)

- I. The narrative has at least one central, salient SF element
 - A. The narrative world displays logic consistent with the reader’s
 1. The salient SF content is one or more individual characters
 - a) The story depends on the persistent nature of the SF character
 - (1) The character is fundamentally like those in the text’s normative social world (e.g., of the same species)
 - (a) The character is separated from society by its commitment to science
 - (i) MAD SCIENTIST
 - (ii) PSI POWERS
 - (2) The characters are fundamentally unlike those in the text’s normative social world
 - (a) The character by its nature transgresses some natural boundary
 - (i) MONSTER
 - (ii) ALIEN
 - b) The story depends on the changed or changing nature of the SF characters
 - (1) The change is in the physical capability of the characters
 - (a) CAPABILITY SHIFT – PHYSICAL
 - (b) CAPABILITY SHIFT – MENTAL
 2. The salient SF content is one or more social systems
 - a) The social system or systems reflect the near-term consequences of an apparently ubiquitous disaster
 - (1) POST-APOCALYPSE
 - b) The social system or systems reflect some more or less steady state alternative to that of the implied reader
 - (1) The reader clearly is intended to endorse the system
 - (a) EUTOPIA
 - (2) The reader clearly is intended to reject the system
 - (a) DYSTOPIA
 - (3) The reader is not clearly intended to endorse or reject the system
 - (a) UTOPIA
 3. The salient SF content is the setting or the treatment of setting
 - a) The principle use of the setting is as a domain for exploration
 - (1) EXPLORATION
 - b) The principle use of the setting is to present one or more alternatives to the reader’s world or expected world
 - (1) The narrative world is based on an extrapolative alternative
 - (a) One or more characters has the ability to move voluntarily through time
 - (i) TIME TRAVEL
 - (b) Characters cannot voluntarily move through time
 - (i) ALTERNATE HISTORY
 - (2) The narrative world is based on the literary model of pseudo-medieval, often magical adventure
 - (a) SWORD & SORCERY
 4. The salient SF content is an invention
 - a) INVENTION
 - B. The narrative defies logic consistent with the reader’s
 1. SURREAL NOVUM
 - II. NOT APPLICABLE (The narrative does not have at least one central, salient SF element)

GENRE FORM DECISION TREE

(Note: At each level, the “yes” response leads to the next level in; the “no” response to the next level down.)

(Note: Both before and after using the Genre Form decision tree to arrive at a coding, the reader may want to reconsider main categories I-IV to test whether a good argument could be made for another decision path leading to an alternative coding of the Genre Form. Depending on the strength of the argument, the reader should consider the option of making a note to that effect on the coding sheet.)

Main categories (choose one of the four following and then proceed to the dyadic tree below):

I. The genre form is dominated by a challenge to the **reader's intellect**

II The form is dominated by the **relation of the main characters to the larger physical or social environment**

III The form is dominated by the **relation of the main characters to other individual characters**

IV Bildungsroman (“novel [or story] of education”)

I. The genre form is dominated more by a challenge or stimulation to the reader's intellect than by the relationships or development of the main characters.

A. The reader's intellectual processes are concerned with an abstract issue

1. PHILOSOPHICAL TALE

B. The reader's intellectual processes are concerned with solving a specific problem

1. The intellectual processes are aimed at discovering what has already happened

A) DETECTIVE

b) PUZZLE

C. The intellectual processes are dominated by reflection on a known phenomenon

1. The phenomenon is literary

A) PARODY

B) SATIRE

II. The form is dominated by the relation of the main characters to the larger physical or social environment

A. The characters are primarily concerned with uncovering information about the environment

1. EXPLORATION

B. The characters are primarily concerned with accomplishing a set goal within the environment

1. The characters have a choice of the circumstances of their actions

A) ADVENTURE

B) CRISIS ESCAPE

III. The form is dominated by the relation of the main characters to other individual characters

A. The other characters are fundamentally alien to at least one of the main characters

1. ALIEN CONTACT

B. The form is dominated by the relation of the individual characters to each other

1. The dramatic situation is dominated by the possibility of establishing and/or disestablishing a romantic relationship

A) ROMANCE

B) DOMESTIC

C. The form is dominated by the relation of the main characters to their specific social situation

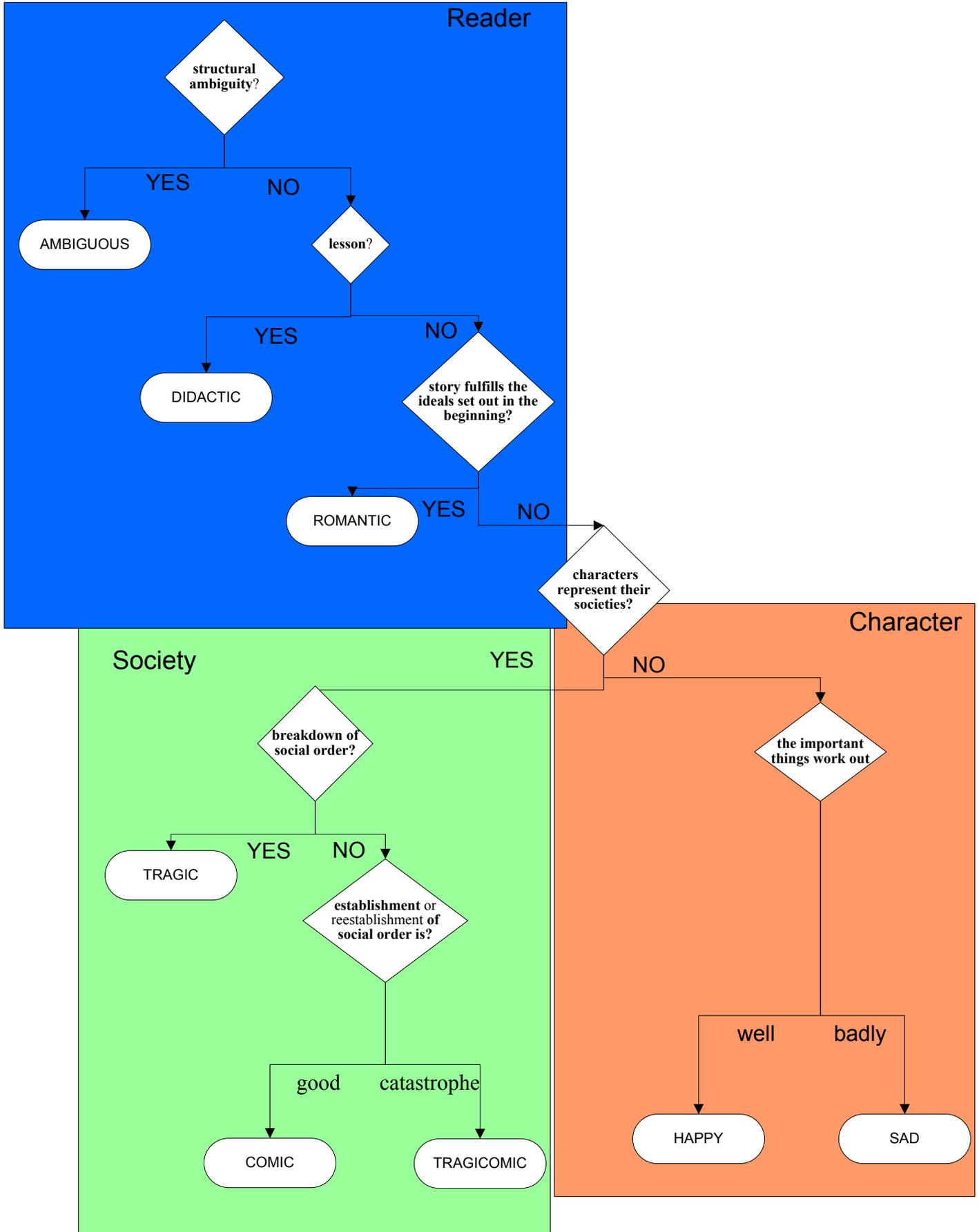
1. The current situation is dominated by violence and/or by the threat of violence.

A) WAR

B) POLITICAL

IV. BILDUNGSROMAN (“novel [or story] of education”)

Outcome Decision Tree

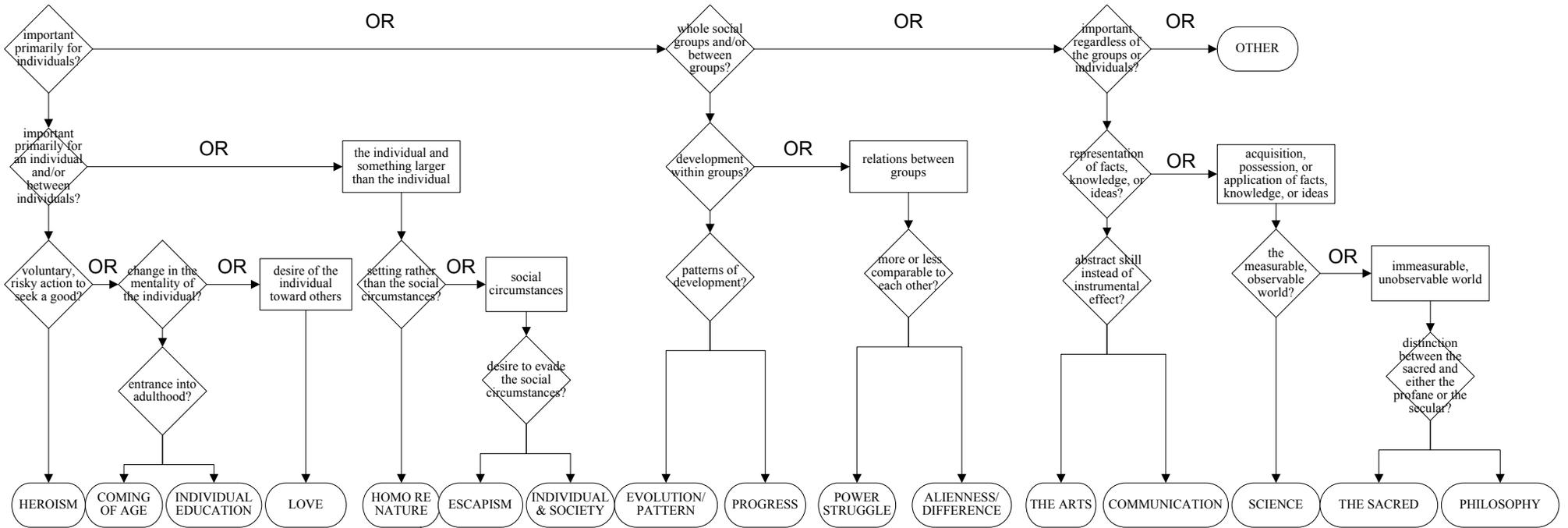


THEME CONTENT DECISION TREE

(Note: At each level, the “yes” response leads to the next level in; the “no” response to the next level down.)

- I. The theme (concerning action, thought, or emotion) is one that is usually taken to be important primarily for **individuals** (whether or not the theme is embodied in individual characters in the narrative)
 - A. The theme is one that is usually taken to be *important primarily for an individual and/or between individuals*
 1. The theme centers on taking voluntary, risky action to seek a good (*action*)
 - a) HEROISM
 2. The theme centers on a change in the mentality of the individual (*thought*)
 - a) The change represents entrance into adulthood
 - (1) COMING OF AGE
 - (2) INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION
 3. The theme centers on the desire of the individual toward others (*emotion*)
 - a) LOVE
 - B. The theme is one that is usually taken to be *important primarily between the individual and something larger than the individual*
 1. The larger something is the setting rather than the social circumstances
 - a) HOMO RE NATURE
 2. The larger something is the social circumstances
 - a) The theme concerns the desire to evade the social circumstances
 - (1) ESCAPISM
 - (2) INDIVIDUAL & SOCIETY
- II. The theme is one that is usually taken to be important primarily for whole social **groups** and/or between groups
 - A. The theme concerns development within groups
 1. The theme focuses on the patterns of development
 - a) EVOLUTION/PATTERN
 - b) PROGRESS
 - B. The theme concerns relations between groups
 1. The groups are more or less comparable to each other
 - a) POWER STRUGGLE
 - b) ALIENNESS/DIFFERENCE
- III. The theme is one that is usually taken to be **important regardless of the groups or individuals** that may be concerned with or embody it
 - A. The theme concerns the representation of facts, knowledge, or ideas
 1. The representation is evaluated primarily by the abstract skill with which it is accomplished rather than by its instrumental effect
 - a) THE ARTS
 - b) COMMUNICATION
 - B. The theme concerns the acquisition, possession, or application of facts, knowledge, or ideas
 1. The facts, knowledge or ideas concern the measurable, observable world
 - a) SCIENCE
 2. The facts, knowledge or ideas concern the immeasurable, unobservable world
 - a) The knowledge depends on employing a distinction between the sacred and either the profane or the secular.
 - (1) THE SACRED
 - (2) PHILOSOPHY
- IV. OTHER (if this code must be used, describe the Theme Content in the Notes field)

Genre Evolution Project Theme Decision Tree



Headings/categories that terminate at a "no" decision are represented by rectangles. ("Terminate" meaning the decision process restarts at a higher level at a "no" decision at a heading/category with no succeeding heading at the same level.) Heading/category levels are horizontally aligned with a "no"=right and "yes"=down orientation when a "no" decision leads to a heading/category on the same level of its predecessor (or a termination).

Genre Evolution Database Fields and Values

Text Title**Publication Date****Reprint**

- Yes
- No

Author First Name**Author Last Name****Length In Words****OUTCOME**

(effect on implied reader at end of story)

Structural ambiguity

- AMBIGUOUS

Lesson taught

- DIDACTIC

Story fulfills ideals set out at start

- ROMANTIC

Characters Represent their Society

Breakdown of Social Order

- TRAGIC

(Re-)Establishment of Social Order

- COMIC (establishment is good)
- TRAGICOMIC

Characters Do Not Represent their society

- HAPPY (things work out well)
- SAD

None of the Above

- NOT APPLICABLE

GENRE CONTENT

(what makes the story science fiction (SF))

One or More Individual Characters Make Story SF

Characters are like those in text's normative social world

- MAD SCIENTIST
- PSI POWERS

Characters unlike those in text's normative social world

- MONSTER
- ALIEN

Characters change nature

- CAPABILITY SHIFT - PHYSICAL
- CAPABILITY SHIFT - MENTAL

Social System Makes Story SF

Consequences of disaster

- POST-APOCALYPSE

Steady state system

- EUTOPIA (reader expected to endorse)
- DYSTOPIA (reader expected to reject)
- UTOPIA

Setting Or Its Treatment Makes Story SF

- EXPLORATION

Alternative setting to expected world

- SWORD AND SORCERY
- TIME TRAVEL
- ALTERNATE HISTORY

The salient SF content is an invention

- INVENTION

The narrative defies logic consistent with the reader's

- SURREAL NOVUM

The narrative has no central, salient SF element

- NOT APPLICABLE

GENRE FORM

(Form on which story is built)

Challenge to Reader's Intellect

Abstract issue

- PHILOSOPHICAL TALE

Solve a problem

- DETECTIVE (discover what had happened)
- PUZZLE

Reflect on Known Phenomenon

- PARODY (literary phenomenon)
- SATIRE

Main Characters' Relation to Other Individual Characters

Others are alien

- ALIEN CONTACT

Others not alien

- ROMANTIC
- DOMESTIC

Main Characters' Relationship to Others Via Societal Situation

- WAR (violence or its threat)
- POLITICAL

Main Characters' Relationship to Their World At Large

- EXPLORATION (uncover information)
- ADVENTURE (accomplish a goal with some choice over actions)
- CRISIS ESCAPE (...with no such choice)

Novel or Story of Education

- BILDUNGSROMAN

None of the Above

- NOT APPLICABLE

THEME CONTENT

(what the story is about)

An Individual or Between Individuals

- HEROISM (voluntary action)
- COMING OF AGE (entrance to adulthood)
- INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION (other change in mentality)
- LOVE

Individual vs. Something Larger (SL)

SL is "setting"

- HOMO RE NATURE

SL is "social circumstance"

- ESCAPISM
- INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Group-Group Interaction

Relation between groups

- POWER STRUGGLE
- ALIENNESS/DIFFERENCE

Development of groups

- PROGRESS
- EVOLUTION/PATTERN

Larger Than Group (important regardless of individuals or groups)

Abstract skill

- ARTS
- COMMUNICATION

Facts, knowledge, ideas

- SCIENCE (observable world)
- SACRED
- PHILOSOPHY

None of the above

- OTHER
- NOT APPLICABLE

Theme Development

- Stable
- Evolving
- Surprise

Plot Form

- Epistolary
- Linear—Episodic
- Linear—Integrated
- Nested
- Circular
- Architectonic
- Other

Plot Duration

- Hours
- Days
- Weeks
- Months
- Years
- Lifetime
- Generations
- Race
- Other

Story Duration

- Hours
- Days
- Weeks
- Months
- Years
- Lifetime
- Generations
- Race
- Other

Hard Science Fiction

- Yes
- No

Dominant Science

- Anthropology
- Astronomy
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Ecology
- Economics
- Engineering
- Geology
- History
- Linguistics
- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Pedagogy
- Physics
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Not Applicable

Recurring Elements?

- Yes
- No

_Character _Setting _Novum _Sequel
_n.a.

Main Character Number

- Zero
- One
- Two
- Three
- Many

Main Character Type

- Human
- Animal
- Alien
- Robot
- Metamorph
- Not Applicable

Main Character Dimensions

- Three
- Two
- One

Main Character Sex

- Male
- Female
- Other

Main Character Age

- Child
- Teen
- Young Adult
- Middle Adult
- Old Adult
- Timeless
- Not Applicable

Number Of 3D Characters

Number Of 2D Characters

Instances Of 1D Characters

Narrative Person

- Third
- Second
- First

Narrative Tense

- Past
- Present
- Future
- Other

Sentence Style

- Propositional
- Metaphorical
- Ironic
- Not Applicable

Overall Style

- Propositional
- Metaphorical
- Ironic
- Not Applicable

Story Birth Order

- First
- Middle
- Last
- Not Applicable

Setting Mode

- Realistic
- Fairy Tale
- Fantasy

Setting Literary Use

- Background
- Thematic
- Character
- Not Applicable

Setting Medium

- Aboveground
- Underground
- Liquid
- Gaseous
- Vacuum
- Artificial

Setting Physical Geography

- Earth
- Solar System
- Extrasolar
- Abstract
- Other
- Mixed

Setting Political Geography

- U.S./Canada
- Europe/U.K
- South-Central America/Mexico
- Middle East
- Asia/Far East
- Africa
- Oceania
- Other
- Mixed
- Not Applicable

Setting Urbanization

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Wasteland
- Untouched
- Other
- Mixed
- Not Applicable

Setting Dominant Social Use

- Education
- Government
- Habitation
- Production
- Recreation
- Religion
- Segregation
- Service
- Stronghold
- Transportation
- Other
- Not Applicable

Setting Time

- Approximate Present
- Near Future
- Near Past
- Far Future
- Historical Past
- Geological Past
- Out Of Time

Setting Locale

Coding Difficulty (Overall; if 2 or 3 here, also mark up to three fields D2 or D3)

- 1 No substantial difficulty
- 2 Some substantial difficulty
- 3 Much substantial difficulty