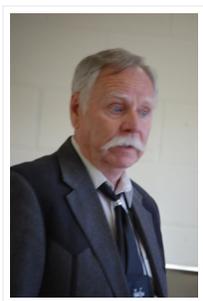




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Thursday, March 19, 2015

Understanding POV by Terry Burns



I thought I understood it perfectly.

I had been writing a while and I couldn't understand what all the fuss was about. Point of view or POV was just the person that was talking, or thinking. Why were people always talking about POV violations?

Then someone mentioned POV as a camera and it suddenly made sense. Of course it was the person talking or thinking and if that person never changed there were no problems. It is when the viewpoint shifts that there can be problems, and

they occur when it is done in such a way that the reader does not follow the transition.

"View it as a camera," I was told, as if the viewpoint character had a camera that was filming the scene. If we are going to start being privy to someone else's thoughts or viewpoint that means the camera has changed. How do we let the reader know someone else now has the camera? Readers are accustomed to looking for such a POV shift when there is a section break and or a new chapter. We can't film with multiple cameras in the same scene, readers can't follow the transitions.

Nothing pushes a reader out of the story quite like getting lost in the POV changes. If they have to back up to figure out who is talking and whose thoughts they are privy to, chances are they'll just put it down. So how do we know whether a section break or a chapter is called for? There doesn't have to be a chapter change every time the POV changes. Readers are accustomed to scene breaks within a chapter if the setting or scene is continuing but we are becoming privy to the thoughts of a different character. Continuing the movie example I guess we could say a section break is a small change to give a different point of view, and a chapter break is a major blocking of cameras for a new setting or story shift.

Maybe you don't have a problem handling the various points of view in a story, but for me the visualization of the moving of the camera made it much clearer for me.

Posted by Terry Burns at 6:00 AM

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3 comments:



Jenny McLeod Carlisle said...

Thanks for this post, Terry. I need to be reminded that just because I am clear on who is holding the camera doesn't mean the reader has followed along.



MEET THE HARTLINE AGENTS

[note - please check the submission guidelines on the Submissions tab above!]

Joyce Hart, Owner and principal agent



Joyce Hart, owner and principal agent of Hartline Literary Agency has been a literary agent for more than a decade. She was formerly the vice president of marketing of an inspirational publishing company and as the president of Hartline Marketing has nearly thirty-two years of successful experience marketing and promoting books. Joyce has been a pioneer in selling high-quality fiction to the inspirational market and has built an excellent rapport with leading inspirational publishers. A member of ACFW, and the National Association of Professional Women, Joyce is a graduate of Open Bible College, Des Moines, IA now merged with Eugene Bible College in Eugene, Oregon. Joyce is based at Hartline Literary's Pittsburgh headquarters.

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March 19, 2015 at 7:53 AM

<http://www.hartlineliterary.com>



Linda Glaz said...

I especially dislike in a suspense when the author takes over the POV. "And he had no way of knowing, this would be his last breath." Well, if he didn't know, then how can we still be in his POV? That just sends me over the edge. It is the author intruding on the character's POV. I probably dislike it because I wrote that way in the beginning.

March 19, 2015 at 9:46 AM



Terry Burns said...

Good point, Linda, known as "author intrusion." We aren't supposed to talk directly to the reader in fiction, although it is all right in nonfiction. This is especially true in Christian fiction as such passages tend to be where an author gets "preachy." Even in nonfiction it is much better if we avoid the deadly "I" and instead opt for the more inclusive "we."

March 19, 2015 at 10:19 AM

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Diana Flegal, Agent



Diana currently lives in Asheville NC. A Bible College major in Missions and Anthropology, Diana has been a medical missionary to Haiti, a women's speaker and bible study leader. One of her life's highlights has been teaching apologetics to high school students as preparatory for college. Avid reader and intuitive editor, Diana's represents nonfiction and well written fiction. She has a passion for getting great writers published.

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Jim Hart, Agent



Jim Hart is looking for authors who can write unique and engaging fictional suspense, romance, women's fiction, historical fiction and some sci-fi. Jim is also interested in non-fiction regarding church growth, Christian living, and self-help. Keep in mind that non-fiction topics require a certain level of credentials, experience and expertise. The author will need an appropriate platform to present a non-fiction proposal.

Currently Jim is not looking at children's, young adult or Biblical fiction proposals.

He holds a degree in Production Journalism and worked for twenty years in direct mail advertising before taking a job with an urban social services agency, where he worked for twelve years. All during his professional career, Jim has served with the local church doing youth ministry and music/worship ministry. He is a credentialed minister with the Assemblies of God, and serves part-time as Worship Pastor in his local church in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Linda Glaz, Agent

Linda is an experienced editor, reviewer and writer, and for a couple of years was a final reader for Wild Rose Press, then for White Rose Publishing and

she worked as an editorial assistant for Hartline Agent Terry Burns. She has judged for numerous contests including the Genesis for the American Christian Fiction Writers, as well as the Emily Award for the West Houston Chapter of the Romance Writers of America. She has been on the faculty for Faithwriters.com annual conference, Maranatha, and is slated for numerous others in 2013. Linda understands writers because she's a writer herself with 4 books releasing in 2013.
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<http://lindaglaz.blogspot.com/>

Andy Scheer, Agent

Andy has a wealth of experience as a publishing professional with over 18 years as the managing editor of Moody Magazine, 8 years as the managing editor for the Christian Writer's Guild, and as a free-lance writer and editor. He is a frequent instructor at writing conferences around the country. A journalism graduate from Colorado State University, he also attended Denver Seminary. Andy is a consummate professional and will be a great addition to the Hartline team.

andy@andyscheer.com

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Blog Archive

▶ [2016 \(37\)](#)

▼ [2015 \(203\)](#)

▶ [December \(15\)](#)

▶ [November \(16\)](#)

▶ [October \(14\)](#)

▶ [September \(18\)](#)

▶ [August \(14\)](#)

▶ [July \(15\)](#)

▶ [June \(18\)](#)

▶ [May \(19\)](#)

▶ [April \(21\)](#)

▼ [March \(21\)](#)

[Give a Child a Book by Andy Scheer](#)

[Instead of Minutiae by Linda S. Glaz](#)

[Politics and the Christian Writer by Terry Burns](#)

[Going After the Book Pirates by Diana Flegal](#)

[Enriching Your Plot by Andy Scheer](#)

[A Plate of Spaghetti by Linda S. Glaz](#)

[The Book was Better by Jim Hart](#)

[Understanding POV by Terry Burns](#)

[Are You Hitting Your Target Audience? By Diana Fle...](#)

[Learning from Critiquing by Andy Scheer](#)

[Returning the Favor by Linda S.](#)

- [Glaz](#)
- [Editing Gone Wild by Jim Hart](#)
- [Can we write ourselves into our fiction? by Terry ...](#)
- [Can We Judge a Book by Its Cover? By Diana Flegal...](#)
- [Where Do You Get Your Ideas? by Andy Scheer](#)
- [Why Are There Submission Instructions? by Linda S....](#)
- [Patience and a Plan, by Jim Hart](#)
- [How do you define success? by Terry Burns](#)
- [Grieve Those Rejections by Diana Flegal](#)
- [Start Small by Andy Scheer](#)
- [A Long Time From Those First Words by Linda S. Gla...](#)

▶ [February \(16\)](#)

▶ [January \(16\)](#)

▶ [2014 \(205\)](#)

▶ [2013 \(217\)](#)

▶ [2012 \(250\)](#)

▶ [2011 \(200\)](#)

▶ [2010 \(173\)](#)

▶ [2009 \(77\)](#)

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