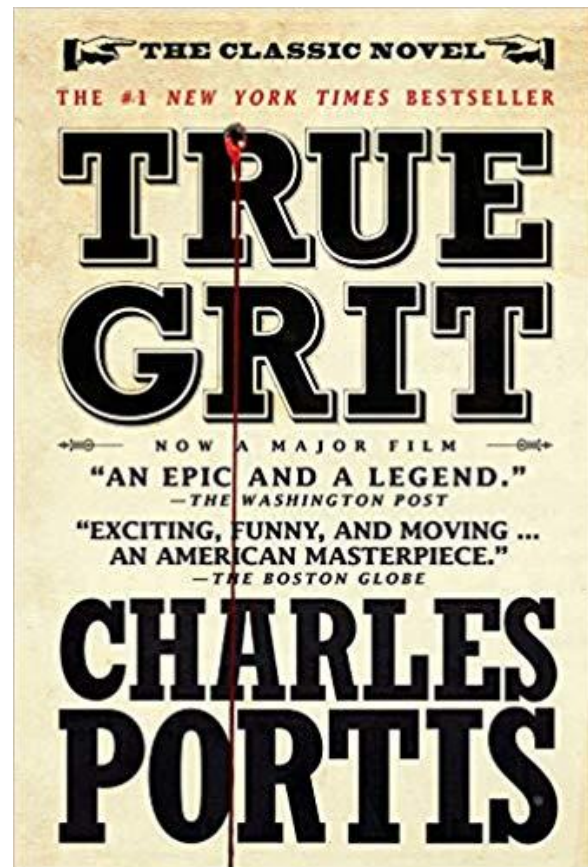


- Order *True Grit* from Amazon (\$18) or Indigo (\$22)
- Can pair with someone for free shipping. I need another copy.
- Indigo ship to store.



This and That

- October 9, November 5,
Memento
- Can read or listen to story
“Memento Mori” by
Jonathan Nolan, the
brother of Christopher
Nolan, the director of
Memento.
- Lots of great stuff on our
[Schedule](#) page and on
[Other Resources](#) page.
- “Remember that you have
to die” (Latin translation)



Scene Analysis

- Scene analysis will show up in your mailboxes within 2 weeks.
- Scene analysis #2 due Nov 12
- Dates are on your Schedule
- Descriptions are on your Assignments page

Essays

- Let's look at the [research essay](#) topics.
- Register for mylibrary.
- Register for [RefWorks](#).
- Film [database](#) in E-Resources
- I am happy to meet to discuss theses, drafts, and other ideas.
- Don't forget that I can buy us free coffee in the Level.
- Student Example

- We will then reacquaint ourselves with the two texts with these questions:
 1. Does the film capture Grant and Fiona's relationship?
 2. What are the differences and similarities between the two texts?
 3. Do you sympathize with one spouse more than the other?

Interviews with Munro

- **Most of your stories have not strayed very far from home--your native Ontario. What makes where you live such fertile ground for so many different stories?**

I don't think of myself as being in any way an interpreter of rural Ontario, where I live. I think there's perhaps an advantage living here of knowing more different sorts of people than you would know in a larger community (where you'd be shut up, mostly, in your own income or educational or professional "class"). The physical setting is perhaps "real" to me, in a way no other is. I love the landscape, not as "scenery" but as something intimately known. Also the weather, the villages and towns, not in their picturesque aspects but in all phases. Human experience though doesn't seem to me to differ, except in fairly superficial ways, no matter what the customs and surroundings.

- **What is the importance of setting to the two texts?**
- **Is setting more important in one text than the other?**

Interviews with Munro

- **Memory plays a key role in many of your stories. What is it about the power of memory and how it shapes our lives that most intrigues you?** Memory is the way we keep telling ourselves our stories--and telling other people a somewhat different version of our stories. We can hardly manage our lives without a powerful ongoing narrative. And underneath all these edited, inspired, self-serving or entertaining stories there is, we suppose, some big bulging awful mysterious entity called THE TRUTH, which our fictional stories are supposed to be poking at and grabbing pieces of. What could be more interesting as a life's occupation? One of the ways we do this, I think, is by trying to look at what memory does (different tricks at different stages of our lives) and at the way people's different memories deal with the same (shared) experience. The more disconcerting the differences are, the more the writer in me feels an odd exhilaration.
- **How does the film characters remember the past?**
- **How do the story characters remember the past?**

Flashback

- A segment of film that breaks normal chronological order by shifting directly to time past.
- Flashback may be subjective (showing the thoughts and memory of a character) or objective (returning to earlier events to show their relationship to the present).

Flashback

- How is the flashback used in *Away from Her*?
- What is the effect of the grainy, light sepia footage?
- 0:44

The Short Story into Film

- We can also approach these questions by looking at the way film conveys images and ideas.
- depth of field contributes to our understanding of cinematography, how a scene is shot.

The Short Story into Film

- Notice that the film frequently places Aubrey and Fiona together in the **frame (the single image)**, thus potentially heightening Grant's sense of panic and betrayal.



The Short Story into Film

- The sequence is called a medium shot.
- The various shots are examined on pg 38
- The film is then edited and the next sequence is the close up of Grant's face as he watches the "couple."



Distance

- Notice that Grant and Fiona are close physically in frame, but distant as she begins to deteriorate.
- Can you think of other examples?



- 25:30 – 28
- Fadeout, indicating loss and absence
- “The more information that fills the framed image,” suggests Bogue, “the more it may be said to be ‘saturated’; the less information, the more ‘rarefied’ the image becomes, until it reaches the limit of the empty black or white screen” (Bogue 2003: 42).

The Short Story into Film

- The various other shots are examined on pg 38
- The long shots, for example, in which humans are dwarfed by the background.
- In this case it emphasizes the couple's separation when they are skiing (they go in different directions after first skiing together (and together entire time in opening scene)).
- 1:40



The Short Story into Film

- **Intercutting:** The alternation between actions taking place at two distinct locations to make one composite scene.
- For example, cutting between two people involved in the same telephone conversation. The distinction between this and cross cutting is one of compression of time. The intercut can be used to speed up a scene and eliminate large pieces of time that would slow a story down.
- Here, it shows distance/separateness.



The Short Story into Film

- The film is very episodic, and not necessarily working in a linear direction, much like the story.
- It jumps back and forth, often from words to blankness (emphasized by Fiona's pained expressions in **close-up**) as it follows the disintegration of Fiona's memory.



Miriam

- A great example of framing a scene with a medium shot, in which the sound from one point in time is juxtaposed with another (also called spatial editing—the time and space between shots).
- Why does she lie about cookies?



Miriam

- Why does she lie about cookies?
- **Voice-Over** - Any spoken language not seeming to come from images on the screen. 1:29
- Also a form of flashback, as it is Miriam's voice, but from earlier time.
- Alcohol signifies loneliness?
- Rae



Grief and Forgiveness

- Rae

Grief and Forgiveness

- What are we to make of the conclusions of the texts?
- Are the last words of his wife only a mirage?
- Is it genuine warmth on her part, an encounter between husband and wife, or Grant's imaginations? What he wishes it to be, as he cannot fathom or cope with the depths of her illness?

Grief and Forgiveness

- Is it genuine warmth on her part, an encounter between husband and wife, or Grant's imaginations? What he wishes it to be, as he cannot fathom or cope with the depths of her illness?
- Does their lack of children mean that their memories are lost?

Scenes for Comparison

- He keeps walking through the tunnel of natural light (which is made so much of by the staff). 22:00
- Is there a counterpart in the story to this light?

The Short Story into Film

- What makes *Away from Her* longer than the short story?
- What is your impression of the meeting with Miriam taking place throughout the film, rather than just the end?
- What would Polley do this?

The Short Story into Film

- The film becomes longer through the inclusion of landscape.
- We see them skiing, we follow the route in the truck from the house to Meadowlake and back again.
- In many ways, it changes the nature of our interpretation because we witness their time together in more detail.

The Short Story into Film

- The film also relies on **spatial editing and patterning**, presenting Fiona and Grant's world in very deliberate ways that reflect the story. The “space” between shots (can be time or distance)
- The film offers the space for the action to occur—the house, Meadowlake—and then breaks it down into components for the narrative to play out.

The Short Story into Film

- The film also relies on spatial editing and patterning, presenting Fiona and Grant's world in very deliberate ways that reflect the story:
- The film offers the space for the action to occur—the house, Meadowlake—and then breaks it down into components for the narrative to play out.
- We also see **cross-cutting** as Grant's and Fiona's worlds happen at the same time, but in different places. She finds him and returns to his world once her time with Aubrey is over, briefly, at end of story.

The Canadian Gothic

- Images of the Gothic continue in Canadian fiction, and in the works of Alice Munro.
- But before we get to that, take 5 minutes. What makes this a Canadian story and film?



The Canadian Gothic

- Images of the Gothic continue in Canadian fiction, and in the works of Alice Munro.
- But before we get to that, take 5 minutes. What makes this a Canadian story and film?



The Gothic

- Let's remind ourselves of the gothic and its literary tradition.
- Traditionally, a story of terror, horror, or romance, usually set in a gloomy castle or monastery. The castles were usually surrounded by dark forests and overgrown vegetation.
- Inside, there were countless rooms and strange sounds. In addition, there is a forlorn character who is mysterious and melancholy. Supernatural occurrences frequently happen, such as ghosts and apparitions. Such novels were popular in the late 18th Century.

The Gothic

- Southern Gothic meshes the moodiness of Gothic novels with the American South's sense of its own traditions and ideals that were separate from the rest of the America. The South's wealth and living based on manual labour and farming was in stark contrast to the North's increasing urbanization and values of capitalism.
- Horror (like in *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*) is often replaced by the **grotesque**, which reflects the South's decaying way of life. Images of disease, violence, and the ugly are prevalent.
- Think of Boo Radley, or Ewell's attempt to murder Jem.
- However, the texts are not strictly a Southern Gothic; they simply contains elements of this GENRE.

Depictions of Nature

- The Canadian landscape features predominately in this text.
- Canada's vast distances, natural barriers, diverse patterns of settlement, and locally specific histories have led many commentators to see regionalism as a defining feature of Canadian culture.
- Canadian critic George Woodcock articulated a widely held view when he asserted that Canadian literary traditions have always been fundamentally regional, developing differently in different parts of the country.

Depictions of Nature and the Canadian Bush Myth

- Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972) carries on this theme, only she calls it the **bush myth**. We define ourselves in relation to the wilderness that is Canada.

Depictions of Nature and the Canadian Bush Myth

- As a variation on the bush myth, Atwood developed a theory of Canadians as, basically and eternally, victims.
- The world is cold and big and bleak and out to get us, and we are little and weak. We internalize this, Atwood suggests, and believe that everyone and everything is out to get us.
- We see ourselves as victims, little people in the control of vast forces. We tend to be depressed about it all, and unconvinced of our general ability to control anything or anyone.

Depictions of Nature and the Canadian Bush Myth

- We see ourselves as victims, little people in the control of vast forces. We tend to be depressed about it all, and unconvinced of our general ability to control anything or anyone.
- Fiona follows the fence when lost.
- Does Iceland myth figure into this?
- It is a place of European imagination, like Canada, it is a young country.

Depictions of Nature and the Canadian Bush Myth

- Does Iceland myth figure into this?
- It is a place of European imagination, like Canada, it is a young country.
- We see the Canadian landscape at the beginning of the movie as a site of togetherness, where they live on the idyllic lake shores.
- Then the wilderness becomes symbolic of her illness, and their impending separation as a couple. 56:00-60:00

Depictions of Nature and the Canadian Bush Myth

- Then the wilderness becomes symbolic of her illness, and their impending separation as a couple. 56:00-60:00
- 43:00 he skis back and forth by himself, and the lights go out in his home.
- What do lights symbolize?
- How is winter a metaphor for Alzheimer's?

Depictions of Nature and the Canadian Bush Myth

- In the film, where does Fiona finally succumb to the ravages of Alzheimer's?
-

Depictions of Nature and the Canadian Bush Myth

- In the film, where does Fiona finally succumb to the ravages of Alzheimer's?
- 15:15-18:20
- She is alone in the wilderness, and she takes off her skis.
- She returns to the city, but has lost her connection to the community.
- What about in story? (278 supermarket)

Depictions of Nature and the Canadian Gothic

- Within this cloistered, remote geographical setting arrives the Canadian take on the gothic genre.
- The gloomy castles and their dark secrets, where characters find or lose their identities, is replaced by a gloomy, harsh landscape, and the small towns and cities where we huddle for protection.
- The home becomes a site of uncertainty and claustrophobia, a domestic space of supposed bliss, but harboring instead psychological instability.

- What is the weather like for most of the film? Do we know the season?
- Does the past, and its graininess, have a certain moodiness, gothic feel to it? The past is not happy and ok?
- 44—confronted by girls



- Did anyone notice that the weather changes when Grant picks up Marian for their date?

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- It is warm outside.
- It is Fiona who is always warm, always starting fires, frying pans, snuggling with him while he reads. She has the “spark of life.” Has Grant “warmed” to Marian?

- Did anyone notice that the weather when Grant picks up Marian for their date?
- It is warm outside.
- It is Fiona who is always warm, always starting fires, frying pans, snuggling with him while he reads. She has the “spark of life.” Has Grant “warmed” to Marian?

Canadian Gothic

- In relation to the Southern Gothic, we have these image of darkness that permeate Grant and Fiona's relationship.
- There is a secret that belies their comfortable, loving lives.
- The affair is not an image of violence, like Ewell's attack on Jem and Scout, but it is still a secret and grotesque one, as we are prompted to both sympathize and pity Grant.

Fidelity

- In this story we have various narratives, including Grant's narrative of loss and memory.
- Grant loses his wife to illness, but he also loses his wife to Aubrey, and is reminded of painful moments of his own infidelities.
- Yet Fiona seems perfectly happy in her new life and identity with Aubrey, and is living apparently without guilt.
- Is it implied that her only escape from the past and Grant's affairs is through her own illness, through Alzheimer's?

Fidelity

- What does Grant hope to accomplish by his affair with Marian?
- What happens when he confronts Fiona about Aubrey in his presence?
- Is it a crossing of narratives, of misunderstandings?
- He confronts her but gets no answers? 1:01-1:04

Fidelity

- Is it a crossing of narratives, of misunderstandings?
- Is he imposing the old narrative of his relationship on one that no longer exists?
- Is he trapped in a masculine discourse, one that he once imposed on his students, then with Fiona, and later with Marian?
- It seems he can't help himself (which, of course, he can).

Fidelity

- Is he trapped in a masculine discourse, one that he once imposed on his students, then with Fiona, and later with Marian?
- Or, does he adapt to his changing love by attempting to procure Aubrey for her?
- Or, is he proving his own fidelity by facilitating her infidelity?
- Is infidelity necessary for happiness for these lonely people?

Fidelity and the Text

- Does director Sarah Polley have an obligation to be faithful to Munro's story?
- Are there issues of fidelity in adaptation?
- Polley says that she “honoured the story that she loves.”
- Do you believe the film honours the story?

Fidelity and the Text

- Does director Sarah Polley have an obligation to be faithful to Munro's story?
- Are there issues of fidelity in adaptation?
- Polley makes it very clear that her story is rooted in words, and in story.
- There is the note Fiona gives Grant saying, "Go Now. I love you. Go now."
- The most intimate moments in the story are when Grant is reading to Fiona (and all Canadian texts, by the way).

Fidelity and the Text

- Does director Sarah Polley have an obligation to be faithful to Munro's story?
- Are there issues of fidelity in adaptation?
- Is the issue of fidelity where Polley makes the story her own? In other words, she explores much further the nature of infidelity among the characters as the necessary pursuit of some form of happiness?

Fidelity and the Text

- Is the setting decidedly Canadian, and is this part of authenticity?
- Could the story take place in the US, the place where so many Canadian texts shift when they become films?
- I love Grant trudging through Meadowlake in his Sears jacket and boots.

Memory, the Gothic, and Secrets

- Is Grant being punished by Fiona, or is it his own ego that assumes as much?
- Is Aubrey the embodiment of an affair that Fiona had in the past?
- Is this what we are to make of the story about Aubrey once working in a hardware store, or is he the embodiment of a memory of a happier time?

Memory, the Gothic, and Secrets

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- Has she created new narratives in which he is not included?

Aged and Nursing Homes

- Holly

Aged and Nursing Homes

- What is symbolized by the second floor?

Aged and Nursing Homes

- What is symbolized by the second floor?
- 23:45
- How is Meadowlake depicted in the story?
In the film?

Ageing, Illness and Nursing Homes

- What is symbolized by the second floor?
- How is the Meadowlake depicted in the story? In the film? Are you familiar with these places?
- The tour of the facilities: 21:00-28:00
- The film methods are called panning and traveling
- Everyone is alone—relatives disappear, leaving the residents by themselves.
- It takes the story outside the relationship between Grant and Fiona to something larger.

Polley on Nursing Homes

- “Anyone who has ever put someone in a retirement home feels conflicted about it,” says Polley. “On one hand, the frequency of people going into those places has everything to do with women not wanting to be domestic slaves. With women working, there’s no longer the infrastructure in the family home to keep people at home like we used to, and yet of course there’s something so difficult about putting someone you love into a place like that. Very often, people don’t want to go. We all struggle with it in North American culture.”

Polley on Nursing Homes

- The euphemistically titled “retirement home” setting reminded Polley of tours she took through old-age facilities when her own grandmother was admitted to one near the end of her life. In *Away From Her*, the sometimes funny, wistful tone that keeps the film afloat is established in the corridors of one such place. A camera follows Grant, childlike in giant boots and a winter coat, through hallway after hallway while he watches the infantilizing of the patients, and the relentlessly upbeat nature of a sincere staff, all the while facing the realization that this place of both cheer and abandonment is where the woman he has been married to for more than 40 years will live out her days.

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- **What is the role of Kristy, Grant’s confidant?**

What does the title mean?

- It is a children's rhyme.
- What do you see when you get to the other side of the mountain? You see the other side of the mountain. What else would you see?
- Grant and Fiona know what's coming, and there's nothing they can do about it.
- [Song](#)