

Prose

Lecture 6

SETTINGS: THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTINGS; SETTING AND THE MOOD OF CHARACTERS; SETTING AND THE SITUATION OF CHARACTERS; SETTING AND THE PERSONALITY OF CHARACTERS; SETTING AND THEME: THE AUTHOR' S VIEW; SETTING AND THEME: DISTINCTIVE WORLDS; SETTING AND THEME: THE CENTRAL FEATURE

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What do you remember?

- Places
- Location
- Setting
- Or?



Scene



They have an
impact.

“Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening.” -***Great Expectations*** by **Charles Dickens (1860)**

(SparkNotes Editors, n.d.)



How do you enjoy settings?

- **Fiction**
- The settings **engage** readers.
- **The imaginative presentation** delights readers

(Gill, R., 2006, p.55-56).



Think about this!

Does the setting of your story contribute effectively to **present** of the narrative?





Think about this!

Does it help you in **drawing out** the plot
and **developing** the characters?



Think about this!

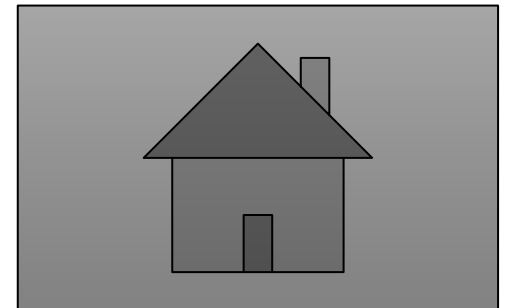
Can the setting help you increase the reader's **interest**, help build **atmosphere**, and strengthen **emotional bonds** with the characters?



SETTINGS

- **Memorable** aspects
- **Engaging**
- Have a **link** with characters

(Gill, R., 2006, p.55-56).





The Function and Importance of Settings

Setting- a verbal description of a place.

A character **appears and moves** through a landscape or townscape.

(Klarer, M., 2013, p. 25-27).



Readers are invited to consider the **significance** of the meaning generated by this setting





A 'setting' can be used to cover:

The **places** in which
characters **appear**

(Gill, R., 1995, p.148).

A 'setting' can be used to cover:

The **social context**
of characters, such
as **their families,**
friends and class

(Gill, R., 1995, p.148).

A 'setting' can be used to cover:

The customs , beliefs
and rules of
behaviour that give
identity to a **society**

(Gill, R., 1995, p.148).

A 'setting' can be used to cover:

The particular
**locations of
events**

(Gill, R., 1995, p.148).

A 'setting' can be used to cover:

The **atmosphere,**
mood and feel that
all the above
elements create

(Gill, R., 1995, p.148).

SETTINGS

The location, historical period, and social surroundings

- Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford (1954)* is concerned with village community
- Edmund Blunden's record of the first world war, *Undertones of War (1828)*

(Klarer, M., 2013, p. 25-27).

WHY?

A place or setting is memorable because the atmosphere is **attractive, striking and beautiful.**

(Gill, R., 1995, p.148).





HOW?

In describing the setting, the author simply uses **his own writing** to convey a picture of how beautiful the view is.

Thomas Hardy's The Woodlanders


Spring weather came on rather suddenly, the unsealing of buds that had long been swollen accomplishing itself in the space of one warm night. The rush of sap in the veins of the trees could almost be heard.

The flowers of late April took up a position unseen, and looked as if they had been blooming a long while, though there had been no trace of them the day before yesterday; birds began not to mind getting wet. (In Gill, R., 1995, p. 148-149)

The setting can reflect a character's **mood** so that it can reflect the character's feelings.


(Gill, R., 1995, p. 149)





The settings are so enjoyable that they often have a **striking correspondence** with other elements in the novel.

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 149)

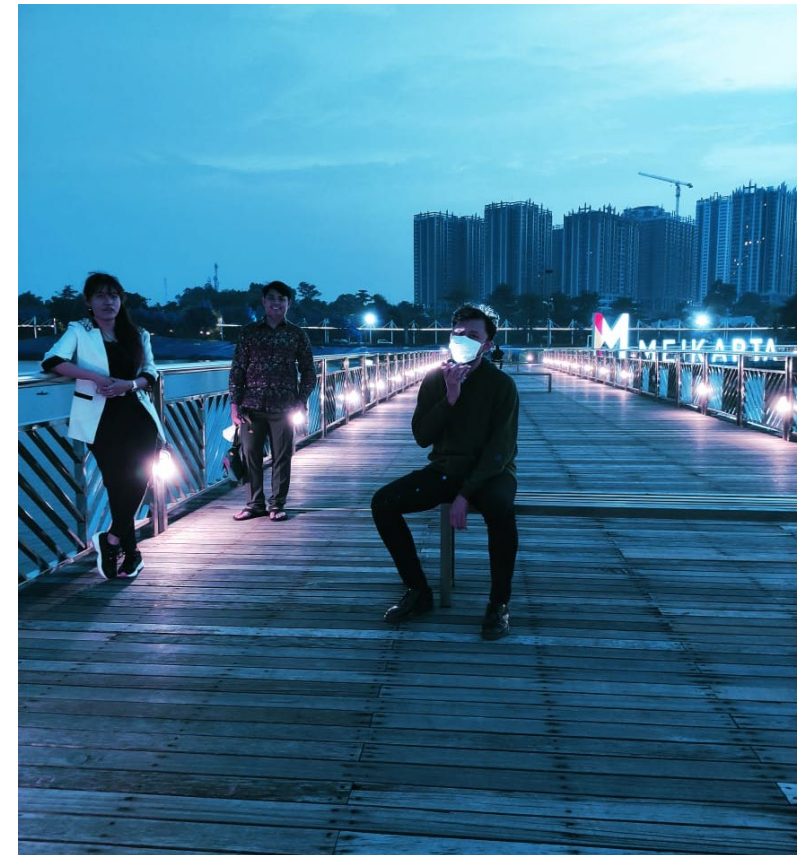


“They can also **reveal the situation** of a character and, by working **symbolically**, they can **express personality.**”

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 149)

The author sets the story in the context of a specific time and place **to support** high-level action, character, and narrative.

(Klarer, M., 2013, p. 25-27).



Setting and the mood of characters

Settings also reveal a great deal about **feelings**.



SETTING AND THE MOOD OF CHARACTERS

Author makes the landscape and the seasons appropriate to **the mood**.



On a thyme-scented, bird-hatching morning in May, between two and three years after the return from Tantridge – silent reconstructive years for Tess Durbeyfield – she left her home for the second time.

These words are full of hope; there are sweet smells in the air, and new life is appearing. The words carry the reader on in **hopeful expectation**.

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 149-151)

Setting and the situation of characters

... that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.

In *Great Expectations* Dickens also uses landscape to bring over the situation of Pip. Setting used to show how a character is situated.

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 151)



In Hard Times by Charles Dickens

Before them, at their very feet, was the brink of a black ragged chasm hidden by the thick grass.

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 151)

Setting and the personality of characters

Revealing personality?

- *Jane Eyre*

Novel by Charlotte Brontë



Let's try this!

No nook in the grounds more sheltered and more Eden-like; a very high wall shut it out from the court on one side; on the other a beech avenue screened it from the lawn. At the bottom was a sunk fence, its sole separation from the lonely fields: a winding walk, bordered with laurels and terminating in a giant horse-chestnut, circled at the base by the seat, led down to the fence. Here one could wander unseen. While such honeydew fell, such silence reigned, such gloaming gathered, I felt as if I could haunt such shade for ever.

(in Gill, R., 1995, p. 152)

Setting and the personality of characters

- **Revealing personality?**



Compare
to this!

'We reached the first stragglers of the battalion of rocks, guarding a sort of pass, beyond which the beck rushed down a waterfall'

'No more of a husband's heart for me than that frowning giant of a rock, down which the stream is foaming in yonder gorge '.

(in Gill, R., 1995, p. 153)

SETTING AND THEME: THE AUTHOR'S VIEW

Does the setting reveal anything about the author's **views**?

Settings for the purpose of giving their views about **the world**.

SETTING AND THEME: THE AUTHOR'S VIEW

Landscapes, townscapes, interiors of houses and the weather are used to convey his or her particular feelings and views **about life.**

(in Gill, R., 1995, p. 153)


Setting and theme: the author's view

Graham Greene is an example how he views the world.

No matter whether the setting is, as in *Brighton Rock* (England), *The Heart of the Matter* (Africa), *The Power and the Glory* (Latin America), an atmosphere of seedy corruption prevails

In the great institutional hall from which the corridors led off to deaths and births there was a smell of disinfectant. The walls were tiled like a public lavatory ... They sat down. A mop leant in a corner against a tiled wall. The footsteps of a clerk squealed on the icy paving down another passage. Presently a big brown door opened; they saw a row of clerks inside who didn't look up; a man and wife came out into the corridor. A woman followed them and took the mop. [Brighton Rock by Graham Greene](#)

(in Gill, R., 1995, p. 153)



It is not limited only a
religious view of the
world



Setting and theme: distinctive worlds

Creating a distinctive world.

Setting and theme: distinctive worlds

Creating a distinctive world.

Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. -*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

(in Gill, R., 1995, p. 155)

Setting and theme: distinctive worlds

Creating a distinctive world.

**Aldous Huxley in Brave New World,
George Orwell in 1984**

Margaret Atwood in The Handmaid's Tale

Setting and theme: distinctive worlds

Plots and characters are often less interesting
Setting, as the background, is in fact in the **foreground**

Setting and theme: the central feature

Cider with Rosie
by Laurie Lee

Then suddenly the whole picture would break into pieces, would be smashed like a molten mirror and run amok in tiny globules of gold, frantic and shivering; and I would hear the great slapping of wings on water, building up a steady crescendo, while across the ceiling passed the shadows of swans taking off into the heavy morning. I would hear the cries pass over the house and watch the chaos of light above me, till it slowly settled and re-collected its stars and resumed the lake's still image.

Watching swans take off from my bedroom window was a regular summer awakening. So I woke and looked out through the open window to a morning of crows and cockerels. The beech trees framing the lake and valley seemed to call for a Royal Hunt; but they served equally well for climbing into, and even in June you could still eat their leaves, a tight-folded salad of juices.

(in Gill, R., 1995, p. 156-157)

Remember this!

Settings are not incidental but are a significant part of the novel as a whole.

(in Gill, R., 1995, p. 157)



So, what have we learnt?

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A WARM
THANK YOU
TO ALL OF YOU!

