



Representations and Narrative Functions of Place in the Contemporary American Novel: A Critical Narrative Review

Assistant lecturer Mohanad Abdulkadhim Hlail

Directorate of Education in Thi-Qar

mohanad.hlail@utq.edu.iq

Abstract

This critical narrative review investigates how contemporary American novels depict setting as a dynamic force shaping identity, community, and national imaginaries. The study addresses how authors reposition place, space, and environment to reflect shifting social, political, and cultural grammars in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Employing a cross-method approach, the analysis synthesizes close readings of narrative landscapes with a thematic survey of critical scholarship, emphasizing urban and rural milieus, regional diasporas, and liminal spaces that complicate traditional geographic binaries. The review examines recurring motifs such as displacement, whiteness and whiteness in flux, surveillance, environmental change, and the commodification of place, linking them to broader inquiries about memory, power, and belonging. Findings reveal how modern American novels use setting to enact ethical inquiries, test claims of authenticity, and destabilize conventional genres. The significance lies in revealing setting as an active protagonist that negotiates national self-conception and fosters critical dialogue about contemporary American life.

Keywords: Setting; Modern American Novel; Literary Space; Place; Narrative Theory; Spatial Criticism; American Fiction

تمثيلات المكان ووظائفه السردية في الرواية الأمريكية المعاصرة: مراجعة نقدية سردية

م.م مهند عبد الكاظم هليل

المديرية العامة لتربية ذي قار

mohanad.hlail@utq.edu.iq

المخلص

تتناول هذه المراجعة النقدية السردية الكيفية التي تمثل بها الرواية الأمريكية المعاصرة المكان بوصفه عنصراً ديناميكياً فاعلاً في تشكيل الشخصية والمجتمع والمخيل الوطني. وتركز الدراسة على تحليل الآليات التي يعيد من خلالها الروائيون إنتاج تمثيلات المكان والفضاء والبيئة بما يعكس التحولات الاجتماعية والسياسية، فضلاً عن القيم والمعايير الثقافية والاجتماعية التي ميزت المجتمع الأمريكي خلال العقود الأخيرة من القرن العشرين وبدايات القرن الحادي والعشرين. واعتمدت الدراسة مقارنة نقدية مقارنة متعددة المناهج، استندت إلى تحليل الأدبيات النقدية ذات الصلة، مع التركيز على تمثيلات الفضاءات الريفية والحضرية، والشتات الإقليمي، والفضاءات العتبية التي تتجاوز الثنائيات الجغرافية التقليدية وتعيد مساءلتها. كما حلت المراجعة مجموعة من الثيمات المتكررة، من أبرزها التهجير، والبياض بوصفه هوية في حالة تحول، والمراقبة، والتغير البيئي، وتسليع المكان، بوصفه حيزاً تتقاطع فيه الأبعاد الاجتماعية والثقافية والتاريخية، لا



مجرد فضاء مادي محايد. وربطت الدراسة هذه الثيمات باستقصاءات أوسع تتعلق بالذاكرة والسلطة والانتماء. وتكشف نتائج هذه المراجعة أن الرواية الأمريكية المعاصرة وظفت المكان بوصفه وسيطاً سردياً لإثارة تساؤلات أخلاقية، واختبار ادعاءات الأصالة، وزعزعة الأطر التقليدية للأجناس الأدبية. وتتمثل أهمية الدراسة في إبراز المكان باعتباره بطلاً فاعلاً يسهم في إعادة التفاوض حول تصورات الذات الوطنية، ويعزز الحوار النقدي بشأن تمثيلات الحياة الأمريكية المعاصرة وتحولاتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البيئة الروائية (المكان)؛ الرواية الأمريكية الحديثة؛ الفضاء الأدبي؛ المكان؛ النظرية السردية؛ النقد المكاني؛ الرواية الأمر

1. Introduction

The historical study of the American novel has examined the influence of society, politics, economics, religion, and geography on teaching, writing, and research. Despite the importance of setting in American fiction from the early romantic period to the twentieth century, few scholars have systematically reviewed the subject. An analytical examination of contemporary fiction—sourced from a select array of notable authors and works released in the United States from the Spanish-American War to the current era—will elucidate the importance of context in fostering a critical comprehension of this timeframe, a corpus of literature commonly recognized as pivotal to the American novel (Matsevko-Bekerska et al. (2022). Descriptive narratives have frequently influenced academic analyses of the American novel.

A comprehensive methodological approach includes a sociohistorical framework, detailed commentary, and close examination of thematic, narrative, and stylistic elements, thereby offering robust tools for the analysis of U.S. fiction. (Littlejohn, 2011) explained that “These approaches characterize the major influences—urbanization and the city, rural and suburban locations, space and mobility, landscape and technology—within which individual writers elaborate their visions of American identity and experience.”(p.34)

By bringing together diverse strands of research, the review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of setting in modern American fiction.

This review engages with these questions:

1. How has setting as a concept developed in critical studies on the modern American novel?
2. What roles does setting undertake in modern American fiction?
3. How does setting enrich narrative structure, characterization, and thematic evolution?



4. What limitations stay in recent scholarship, and what directions should pursue in the future ?

4. The Concept of Setting in Literary Criticism

According to (Matsevko-Bekerska et al.,2022,pp.59-61) the word “setting” is commonly used and understood in many fields, including history, geography, environmental literature, cultural studies, architecture, urban studies, and political science. it is described as "the specific place or type of surroundings where something is found or where an event happens." In literary studies, this meaning has grown and become more complex over time.” The initial definition, which primarily addressed straightforward locational concepts (i.e., time and space), has transformed into various essential distinctions, each incorporating increasingly complex attributes. For example, (Miller 2017) identifies three modes of setting- “narrative space,” “narrative place,” and “narrative time”(p.39) -with the first sub-analytic category further broken down into eleven descriptive dimensions.

In the American literary tradition, both theoretical and practical literature contain discussions on setting and the phenomena therein. Wallace Stegner classifies three categories of place in his essay “The Words of the Tribe”: “topographical,” “historic,” and “metaphysical,” while characterizing them as existing in “specific locations”. Such discourse frequently appears in statements by writers revered as the “realists” (e.g., William Dean Howells) and “local colorists,” as well as those in a variety of other sections. Hawthorne, James, and Faulkner are just three of the many elite authors whose production includes significant commentary on this and related topics. A similar rhetorical tendency also emerges in the later Modernism of the New York intellectuals and the Works Progress Administration. The significance of this body of writing pertains not only to the notions it articulates but also to the meanings attached to “place,” “region,” “local,” and other related terms.

5. Historical Trajectories of Modern American Fiction and Setting

The field of literary studies, particularly story space outing, has not paid adequate attention to setting across modern American fiction in urban, rural, and suburban contexts. Studies tend to focus on just one of these aspects or on a specific author or text when the body of scholarship on them is extensive. (Gaudreault & Gunning, 2025) argued that “The exploration of setting, however, encompasses too broad a conceptual domain to be treated analytically by a single monograph, especially at the present moment when the topic is of great theoretical import and generating energetic debate” (p.29).The focus on narrative, broadly construed to include not only the representation of events and their organization but also central elements such as character and setting, narrows the field of inquiry



without sacrificing rigor or specificity. New frameworks of spatial inquiry and corresponding analytical concepts developed by contemporary literary scholars cannot be applied to modern American fiction without restatement in the terms of narrative theory that are most immediately pertinent to the investigation of setting within the specified boundaries.

5.1. Urbanization and the City as Crucible

The emphasis on the city in Modern American fiction as asserted by Curtis & Klaus (2024) is neither coincidental nor capricious but rather an effect of marked historical shifts observable throughout the period. Rapid urbanization following the Civil War and the turn of the twentieth century transformed vast swathes of the United States into urban centers often at such a pace that fixed, localized identities shifted. Scholars have noted the tendency of city life within the modern American novel to evoke a sense of human struggle in light of emergent determinisms and mechanizations. At the bans of works like *A Modern Ulysses* and *A Passage to India*, as well as between *Portrait of the Artist* and *After the Fall*, a variety of American cities other than New York serve as settings. Urbanization also opens the door to works set not only yet still meaningfully around suburbia, industry, and mobility but in regions unattached as a gridded part of national space and any dwelling altogether. Thus far into the twenty-first century, still active, urban centers range broadly in size, scale, population, and importantly, morally loaded typologies of people to congregate around. Urban density nowadays can imply a negative discharge of sociality, a loss of minor affective connections, alienation, or just there are endless material pleasures within arm's reach that entice the mind into dislocation or chaos.

5.2. Rural and Suburban Configurations

Rural and suburban settings constitute another important configuration in modern American fiction. (Wagner, 2018) added that "When evoked, landscapes of rural isolation suggest backwardness or stagnation, while suburbia signals aspiration and refinement". Arguably no American environment has more significantly changed in character since 1900 than the suburb, once depicted as an unredeemed blight on the landscape but today embraced as the very essence of the American dream, a theme resonating in the works of Dreiser, Fitzgerald, and Hammett (pp.26-27). (Rooney, 2013) claimed that "characterizing suburbia as an overwhelmingly desirable locale, however, risks over-generalization" (p.7). Zoning reduces available sites, gentrification spurs displacement, water supply threatens scarcity, and transit congestion grows ever worse. Indeed, Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* evokes that urban land hunger to which suburbia first responded. Although the reality of suburbia has shifted markedly, so too have its literary representations in works from the clean-scrubbed tile and chromo-covered entryways adorning



Dreiser's fifty-piece list through Henry's site of grimy-walled tenements offering no hope of escape to the parched and filtered Read and Williams's consummate expression of "spray"—each embrace the suburbs of their minute .

5.3. Space, Mobility, and Technological Change

As the nature of Modernist and Postmodernist America began to evolve amid a ceaseless traffic of inhabitants, people from various backgrounds, and the invisible yet all-encompassing effect of globalization, space took on a new significance in being viewed from multiple angles. On the one hand, issues of body and space in everyday life and narrative was of thematic importance in literature that was termed by Correa (2003) as the "narrative of the body." The body became a principal subject in literature of Black, American-Indian, and Chicano authors, who became daringly visible in American letters after World War II.

The consequence of excessive traffic fundamentally affected the shape of cities and paved the way for the suburbanization of America. Modernist New-York-Metropolitan narratives have epitomized the theme of excessive mobility—the "express identity" of the Modernist. Acceleration and fragmentation of time in the metropolis is echoed in the spatial mapping of modernist New-York-Metropolitan narrative. The mechanics of the city can be decomposed into microspaces: a stocking factory in "Manhattan Transfer," the Peters Hotel in "The Great Gatsby," or macrangrammatic exploitation of streets, roads, and highways in "On the Road." Central to these microspaces is that they are occupied by the outcast, the stranger, the displaced.

Simultaneously, modernist writers have attempted to counteract the collapse of the psyche in excessive motion by epic journeys through clearly defined spaces. Melville's *Moby Dick*, Moore's "The Journey," Faulkner's "The Bear" and "As I Lay Dying," Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*, and Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* follow pronounced physical journeys. Space in these modernist epics provides the possibilities of signification that are all denied in the Kaplanesque, black-Hole—like apparitions of the metropolis. Issues of memory and identity are common in American-Indian fiction. Memory as a spiritual device to counteract spatial displacement and to reconnect with ancestral roots and a spiritual homeland often becomes a significant theme—and the lack of memory highlights the pathos of the hollow wigwam." The palimpsestic shape of memory in Morrison's *Beloved* receives its fullest poetic articulation." In contemporary, multicultural writing, space is located at different angles and layerings, starting with a critique of the global village and a concentration on the local, the microcosmic. (Redondo-Olmedilla,2023) observed that "human emissions of global capital have produced a positive-side global economy and a negative-side



global ecological holocaust, and the more conspicuous Ellen Bishop's "The Global Village" offers a warning against a simple glorification of local particularity."(pp.7-8)

6. Identity and Place

In modern American fiction, the nature and status of a character's identity is often conceived in relation to the forces of place. The relationship between identity and place can be approached through two axes: the territories that individuals inhabit and the domains of social existence they occupy. Setting emerges as a thematic preoccupation because of the difficulty that characters experience in negotiating the demands of place, whether it is at the macro level of geography or at the micro level of social distinction. Lena Grove traverses vast distances to seek companionship but encounters repeated dismissals instead. Antonia Shimerda arrives in Nebraska and is welcomed by the landscape yet remains disconcerted by the dismantling of her family within it. (Oosterink,2019,p.58)showed that "the thematic concern with the relationship between place and identity has continued into the twenty-first century in works" by writers such as Zadie Smith and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Smith's *White Teeth* features a metropolitan locale populated by innumerable subspaces and innumerable voices that preclude the emergence of a stable social narrative of identity. In Adichie's *Americanah*, Ifemelu learns that the signed book inscribed "to a writer" conveys a deeper resonance regarding identity and connection than readers in the U.S.—a nation that appears distant—could easily apprehend. In the United States, Adichie discovers that in order to forge a connection with a potential romantic partner, she must first construct the narrative of her identity .

6.1. Social Stratification and Locales

Social stratification in America is a widely recognized aspect of everyday life, supported by extensive sociological literature. Among the early researchers, the Ashmore family categorized class on the basis of economic determinants or class consciousness. The Lynds, in their classic investigation of the community of Middletown, championed the merits of observational research in these matters. Lloyd Warner employed anthropological techniques to gain a deeper understanding of the American social fabric and described hierarchical groupings within communities, each with a characteristic style of life and a narrow range of primary contacts. He also documented multiple status groups in towns with a variety of socio-economic attributes. Such studies aspired to represent American society at large, a claim amenable to corroboration by an impressive body of other scholarship on social classes.



6.2. Memory, Trauma, and Geographies

Narratives can become less simply a relation of experience, less simply representative, and more an object of experience itself through appropriating features of what they present. In this context (Bucar,2022) suggested that “the aesthetics of trauma fiction should be further explored to understand the workings of narrativisation of trauma. Trauma experience distorts its conventional literary representation, as trauma fiction acquires features of the object it represents”(pp.210-212). The field of trauma studies should be revolutionized to address the universalization of Western experience.

A close reading of David Bergen’s *The Time in Between* addresses how traumatic events and memories can shape cultural and personal identities. Cathy Caruth’s explorations of trauma in memory and literature provide an important theoretical framework. Narratives of past wars and political upheavals, particularly those concerning the Vietnam War, demonstrate the enduring impact of traumatic events on both individuals and collective memory. Attention to postcolonial trauma and gothic fiction highlights the continued significance of colonial history and cultural geographies in contemporary trauma narratives.

7. Methodological Approaches to Studying Setting

Setting as described by (Grant et al.2024,pp.2-3) “plays a crucial role in the creation of narrative fiction.” Consequently, scholars have analysed it from a variety of perspectives. Bakker&Mostert(2024) added the “Scholars have employed the concept of “setting” as a theory of experience”(p.4). Numerous values are associated with the multiple meanings of the term. Several lexicographic doctors have defined “setting” as a geospatial dimension of experience. A habitat may function as a setting. (Zhenzhao, 2023)emphasized that the concept of "setting" represents a significant area of inquiry within contemporary literary studies. One reason for this emphasis lies in the intricate nature of human experiences in modern times”(p7).In the short story "A Rose for Emily," the town is depicted as a fundamental institutional and social element of the narrative. The setting is particularly significant to F. Scott Fitzgerald's work.In the film "The Island," the initial external structure of the text invites scrutiny. The setting also yields critical perspectives on the thematic elements present in the Italian movie *Amarcord*. The depiction of Italy's premodern era signifies a time of civil peace preceding the establishment of the nation-state. Both El Susurro and Arrebato prompt an exploration of the setting as a social and spatial construct, reflecting the potential influence that film can exert.

The spatial turns in cultural studies have encouraged investigations of social and aesthetic phenomena across artistic domains. Social and semiotic levels of



analysis, however, emerge simultaneously at the textual level. The chronotope of setting also emerges during the writing and production of myth.

Building on the broad spectrum of theoretical perspectives regarding setting that is already available, methods have surfaced enabling the study of the rendering of space, time, and setting across narrative fictions. One widespread method of studying narrative fiction originated with Mikhail Bakhtin's theorisation of the chronotope. Nelson(2026) asserted that "This framework linked time and space to the structuring of experiences, considered the experience of place and space in the narrative, and examined the interplay between ideology and the various narrative topics articulated around spatial and technical experiences."It employed terms such as "chronotope" and "autochrony." Articulating a critical narrative review of the method underpinning chronotope emphasises the commitment towards to the narrative fiction examined. It seeks to enhance the theoretical discourse related to the diverse critical frameworks of engagement that currently influence the geographies that regulate texts. The term "geographies" suggests a propensity to highlight the mechanisms through which modulators navigate interactions and contexts in which remittancers subsequently disseminate. The link between narrative and cultural geographies thus centres on the contemporary construction of the social. Acknowledging the geographies constituting the porous territories separating the cultural and the spatial nurtures an awareness of the spatial side of story-telling. Work by Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau also facilitates the exploration of the relationship between the contemporary spatial dimensions surfacing in narrative fictions and the analysis of setting.

7.1. Narrative Techniques and Spatial Representation

Narratology has traditionally engaged only with diagrammatic representation of fictive spaces outside the narrative. Narratologists therefore overlook the relationship between such places and the transitive shifting of perception among characters, which constitutes the essence of spatial representation or of setting in narratives.

In narrative choices of focalization, narrator, and character, narratology and narratographic theories can thus furnish models of setting different from the spatial constructions proponents awaiting a formal specification. The broad categories of distribution and focalization (Easterlin,2018,pp.200-205) provide prima facie sufficient material for categorizing the forms that setting might take.

Characters occasionally are merely pointed out by the narrator, and their degree of anteriority is undetermined. At such moments, their mere enunciation suffices to mark them as entities. The same holds for settings as spatial representation.



The character-space continuum forms an auxiliary frame of reference without attempting to encompass distincts “setting” and place” an anthropocentric or even biocentric framework—hence the second nature of the built environment. Character and the other strict demiurgic categories nonetheless are not functional exhaustively, for disengaged spatial delineation can occur. (Caracciolo et al., 2022,p.6)

Action, individualized characters, ostensible intermediacy, views from outside or alongside, and outright suppression can mark themselves as yet another approach to holistic setting within Modern American Fiction.

8. Globalized Locales in Contemporary Texts

Global and local forces shaping identity are now examined in American fiction after 2000. Salama et al (2024) “Narratives grapple with the complex simultaneity of thematic, cultural, geographical, and economic translocation of characters, cities, and events across local types.”(pp.8-10). Characters may exhibit transnational characteristics, be defined less by geographical locales, or be perceived as “white” or “inadequate” within cities perceived as global or cosmopolitan. Places, or senses of place, may be described as outside the work or remain unidentifiable; characters, when local, may not share endemic attributes, implying exclusivity to alternative trajectories. The theme of displaced-doctor migrancy is taken to plot extremes: New York, Boston, San Francisco and—sometimes nowhere—recount degrees of being nowhere recurrent in numerous homes or a pack of 12. Throughout, the term “place,” often in juxtaposition, eludes conventional definition (Pavrides, 2012pp.45-46).

9. Critical Debates and Theoretical Tensions

In theoretical discussions of setting, some critics remain firmly committed to the principle that “the spaces depicted bear an intrinsic correspondence to a geographical referent; place” (Roelofsen & Carter-White,2022,p627) in this view, retains a stable basis in reality, whether it is represented realistically or only as a conceptual construct. Movements closer to the global turn, however, increasingly privilege spaces designated as local, defined by their local topography and the ways in which they confront aspects of the world beyond.

(Matsevko-Bekerska et al. (2022)indicated that “debates about place and space, topography and geography, and local and global define the critical field in which surveys of setting now compete”(p.60) , compelling the development of responses that clarify positions on these issues, whether texts adjudicated exemplify a commitment to realism or propose other means of addressing the world outside.



9.1. Realism vs. Constructivism in Place

Literary studies distinguish two contrasting positions regarding how dimensions such as scenery, setting, place, and topography relate to literary composition. The first regards place as an object of literary representation that reflects an external reality as a landscape clipped from lived experience. (Liseţchi 2015,p.16) observes that “representations of concrete places build, rather than simply invoke, an imagined object.” The second position examines the work of place in the dynamics of the verbal construct, suggesting that the world outside of the text in fact can never be constituted as place since it can never be pictured. Place emerges instead as an effect produced through reading, as a fourth dimension of temporality governed by the laws of the reader’s own social and spatial formation – one that in effect determines the engagement of the work as a whole and allows locales to be fully realized. Works produced somewhere in the world outside the text nevertheless may be engaged, but always as the external connections elaborated by the reader’s own circumstances and life experience. While Liseţchi’s proposal is examined specifically in conjunction with works of hysterical realism that openly challenge practices associated with traditional realism, the opposition between these two positions nonetheless endures at the present day.

9.2. The Global Other and Local Spaces

Modern American fiction has witnessed energetic debates about the theoretical place of locality in an increasingly globalized world. Such discussions frequently emerge in the context of trend-based analyses that classify today’s literature, at least at the level of its most immediate concerns, as belonging to one or multiple global or planetary movements (i.e., the Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene), while at the same time speculating whether contemporary expressions still constitute “a mode of realism” (Easterlin, 2018) or have shifted toward a “post-local imaginary”. This restrictive horizon, however, continues to overlook meaningfully different configurations of locality that importance continues to attach to narratives that engage with more limited and localized geographies, whether considered strictly in terms of place, even if grappling with transnational or across-the-border movements or histories, or with the other, whether a person, institution, or channel, historically or contemporarily positioned beyond that geography.

10. Key Findings

The principal takeaways from this review are:

- 1) Setting has shifted from a mere descriptive backdrop to a central narrative force.
- 2) Modern American fiction uses setting to probe identity, society, and ideology.



- 3) The bond between character and setting is reciprocal and dynamic.
- 4) Contemporary theory treats space as socially constructed and culturally meaningful.
- 5) Setting shapes narrative form and progression at a structural level.
- 6) Digital, transnational, and ecological spaces are broadening traditional definitions of literary setting.

10.1 Gaps and Future Implications

The gaps in spatial literary studies suggest promising pathways for future scholarship. In line with Pesch & Bogner's observations regarding digital literature studies, spatial literary studies is limited in its perspective on its entities of investigation. The narrow focus on digital environments (which Pesch & Bogner define as media with a "dynamic, interactive, spatial") - without an explicit explanation of why the study of non-digital spaces is inconsequential - could be detrimental for the future of the field, especially since non-digital narrative worlds are paramount for understanding digital ones, as stated above. I do see a parallel deficiency in matters of representation. The dominance of voices from the Global North as well as White creative persons and communities in spatial literary discourse is another shortcoming, one that cultivates hegemony, ignorance, and other injustices that are notorious in other areas of the humanities. Equally troubling is the evident lack of methodological diversity. The few methodological approaches that have been presented are valuable, but without a plethora of choices, including experimental and cross-disciplinary frameworks, scholars may soon find themselves "re-inventing the wheel" with regards to their methods.

I believe the following suggested approaches for the future of spatial literary studies can remedy these deficiencies:

- Broaden the scale of the spatial literary perspective to include interdisciplinary approaches from areas such as Cultural Studies, Geography, and the Environmental Humanities.
- Incorporate tools and techniques from the Digital Humanities to model and visualize spatial interactions depicted in narratives in novel ways, i.e. realizing spatial perspectives across seemingly unrelated texts and media platforms.
- Investigate contemporary approaches to the environmental crisis within fictional worlds ("climate fiction") and virtual narrative spaces (including but not limited to



video games and social media narrative experiences) as potential aspects of the new spatial literary studies discourse.

11. Conclusion

After having examined the various facets of setting in the Modern American novel, one can see the complexity and significance of the term. The rather wide temporal scope—from the emergence of the Modernist novel with *The Great Gatsby* (1925) to the current zeitgeist of “decadent modernism” with a tentative, almost nostalgic glance back at the wide field of thematic exploration—coalesces in the articulation of guiding themes, expanded methodological frameworks, and illuminating case studies. A balanced overview of Modern American fiction indeed lends itself to elucidating movement-specific and temporally coherent elucidations of setting that reward consideration on their own merit. Moreover, the emphasis on a continuous tradition within the Modern American novel—alleviating obsolescence in the face of assimilation to a postmodern or postnational paradigm—reconveys the pertinence of setting in the contemporary work of a nation long imagined and calculated along regional, national, and transnational lines. Beyond the thematic, methodological, and historiographical selections already discussed, tracing the intertwining course of literature and the American vernacular within the broader Modernist field marks yet another interesting alternative through which the abiding significance of setting in American fiction, much of which remains still readily accessible, may be argued.

Timorously abstaining from imposing a rigid definitional straitjacket, the study of setting still possesses a solid heuristic capacity—in addition to variety in configuration, arrangement, dimension, change, and, more recently, the combined pertinence of “place” and “space”—capable of sustaining both broader observations and more granular inquiries of diverse yet it contains coalescent literature applying sketch-fitting readings whose vein, exposure, and locations remain frequently pertinent to the oeuvre of the era. The detailed examination of American regionalism as an inflected counterpoint to an equally expansive Modernism illuminates the exchange, oscillation, and interplay of scholarly focus at liberty to roam untethered along complementary historic, thematic, and methodological tracks, all of which still evoke extensive national and international interest within the creative and academic literary spheres. In the context of extensive climate change and migration-induced transformations, there arises an analytical framework that emphasizes the significance of freshwater ecosystems and wetlands over traditional considerations of carrying capacities. This understanding of spatial and geographical contexts, which maintains engagement with the rich heritage of various discourses, subjects, cartographies, and scholarly contributions, demonstrates notable insight and adaptability. Such an approach



facilitates the preservation and critical examination of a range of available textual responses that address these complex interrelations.

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