

SETTING FUNCTIONS IN THE ECO-FICTION NOVELS
OF AMERICAN WRITER MARY ALICE MONROE

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ANNOTATION

This article reviews that setting in a literary work can alleviate some of the writer's difficulties in describing the time and space by allowing a reader to focus on the story's plot and characters. Since the works of Mary Alice Monroe are of an environmental nature, it is explained that the author skillfully portrays real places in her works, such as an island, a beach, a mountain, a fertile plantation, and other wildlife environments. The article is aimed at to study the literary analysis of the setting and its functions in the eco-fiction novels "Time is a River", "Sweetgrass", "The Summer of Lost and Found" by American writer M.A. Monroe. We distinguish 5 functions of setting in these novels: 1) Setting as a background for action; 2) Setting as an antagonist; 3) Setting as a means of creating appropriate atmosphere; 4) Setting as a means of revealing character; 5) Setting as a means of reinforcing the theme.

Keywords: *eco-setting, antagonist, background, literary theme, characters, appropriate atmosphere, setting, eco-motives.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматривается, что сеттинг в литературном произведении может облегчить некоторые трудности писателя в описании времени и пространства, позволяя читателю сосредоточиться на сюжете и персонажах рассказа. Поскольку произведения Мэри Элис Монро носят экологический характер, поясняется, что автор умело изображает в своих работах реальные места, такие как остров, пляж, гора, плодородная плантация и другие среды живой природы. обстановка упоминается как включающая контекст, выходящий за рамки непосредственного окружения истории. Статья направлена на изучение литературоведческого анализа сеттинга и его функций в экофантастических романах «Время – река», «Свитграсс», «Лето потерянных и найденных» американского писателя М.А. Монро. Мы различаем 5 функций сеттинга в этих романах: 1) сеттинг как фон действия; 2) сеттинг в роли антагониста; 3) сеттинг как средство создания соответствующей атмосферы; 4) сеттинг как средство раскрытия характера; 5) сеттинг как средство усиления темы.

Ключевые слова: *экосеттинг, антагонист, фон, литературная тема, персонажи, соответствующая атмосфера, сеттинг, экомотивы.*

INTRODUCTION

Setting is a literary device that allows the author of the story to determine the time, place and environment of its occurrence. This is an important element of the story because space and time tell the reader when and where the events will take place.[1,276] In addition to specific geographical locations, specific types of environments are often used as settings in literary works. By setting a

story or narrative in a familiar setting, the writer can be relatively sure that the reader will have a general understanding of the characteristics of that setting, such as the terrain, climate, culture, etc. This relieves some of the writer's difficulty in describing and allows the focus to be on the story's plot and characters. [2,220]

The famous writer Mary Alice Monroe, who entered the modern American literature with her novels that uniquely describe the relationship between man and nature, showed herself in a series of novels of the eco-fiction genre with a style that combined her deep sympathy for people and a naturalistic worldview. M.A. Monroe's books on environmental topics make him known as a bestselling novelist. As a result of the writer's family's move to the Isle of Palms, a major event occurred in the Monroe's evolutionary development. Her writing began to combine feminist themes with environmental messages and metaphors, thus bridging her life as a writer and conservationist.

Mother Nature is the main theme of M.E. Monroe's "House on the Beach" series and the novels "Time is a River", "Sweetgrass", "The Summer of Lost and Found", although the author describes this theme as a family that we experience in everyday life. Monroe was able to illuminate human's complex but sacred feelings related to the environment.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The notion of a setting and its functions are studied in many prominent books and manuals related to the theory of literature such as in "Стилистика современного английского языка" (1973) by I.V. Arnold and "Stylistics" (1971) by I.R. Galperin. Chronotype – is a term coined by M.M. Bakhtin to describe the way time and space are described by language, and, in particular, how literature represents them. Functions: Realistic(to render the verisimilitude), Suggestive, Symbolic (the setting stands for smth else- idea, character, abstract notion).[2] The issue of eco-fiction genre and eco-feminism in English literature has been deeply discussed by various critics and literary scholars such Truby John, Obstfeld Raymond, Levin Donna, Lodge David, Roberts Edgar V and Zweig, Robert, Rozelle Ron. It was specially studied in the works of Russian literary scientists such as E.R. Martynova, E.S. Burmistrova and S.V. Grechishkina.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Setting is defined as a time frame or location in which a narrative takes place in literature. The 3 main types of setting are time, place and environment. A setting can show the **time period** in which a story takes place. This gives context to the social climate of a story and a background about the social cues and expectations that characters should adhere to. Place refers to a **specific place** in a **novel**. Environment (physical and social) refers to a broader geographical area or a social environment. The **social environment** is the surrounding environment that social events occur in. This also shows the culture that characters are educated in and the institutions and people they are involved with. [13,108]

Since the works of Mary Alice Monroe are of an environmental character, the author chooses real places in her works, such as an island, a beach, a mountain, a fertile plantation, and other wildlife environments. The historic city of Charleston, South Carolina and the nearby Isle of Palms were chosen as unique locations for the 7 novels in the Beach House Series. In Monroe's works, we can find the usage of the setting in the following 5 functions:

1) Setting as a background for action. To find out whether setting serves as essential elements in fiction, or whether it exists merely as a decorative and functionless backdrop, we must ask ourselves: Can the work be set in another time and place without significant harm? If the answer is "yes", then it can be said that the background image serves as a decorative background. In

M.A. Monroe's "The Summer of Lost and Found" the actions are set during the pandemic. Due to unemployment and the stay-at-home order during the pandemic, Linea and Anna have to live together in a beach house for several months:

Three days later, the weather changed again. A blustery wind rattled the windows, sending the palm fronds scratching at the windows. Both she and Anna had retired to their rooms after an early dinner of comforting lentil soup, Gouda cheese, and chunks of sourdough bread. [3,96]

In this passage, we can see that there is no artistic purpose in this passage, which depicts a typical daily life in a beach house.

Artistic time and space cover all elements of the work. In particular, it is impossible to show the moods and experiences of the characters without the depiction of the artistic time and space. Also, the depiction of the mental state of the hero in parallel with the space and time determines the author's style. Setting gives context to the characters' actions in a story line. It can also create the mood (how the reader or viewer feels). It's easier to understand why the characters in the story are doing what they're doing when we know where they are. The time of day, time of year, and ages of the characters will also affect how they act and what they say.

2)Setting as a means of creating appropriate atmosphere. Many authors use their portrayal of the setting as a means of raising the reader's expectations and setting the appropriate state of mind for what is to come. In "Sweetgrass", when Mary June tells her husband Preston that despite the bitter truth that her husband is leaving, she finally finds courage and is happy about it, the author uses the image of thunder and storm to describe Preston's state of mind:

Around them the storm broke. Fat drops of rain splattered loudly on the dry ground in gaining crescendo. With each gust of wind the grasses swayed and shook, rattling like castanets. Then the sky opened up and the heavens cried. The roof provided no shelter from the torrents of rain, and both felt the lash of water that whipped through the air.[5,12]

3)Setting as an antagonist. In Monroe's works, the setting appear as antagonists in the following cases:

- In the novel "Time is a river", when the main character Mia Landan starts to live in the cabin in "Watkins Cove", it is described by such adjectives as "*creaking floor, old wood stove, rustling hoots and snaps outside, the wind gusted, windows rattled, cobwebbed and filthy cabin*" the desolation of the cabin and the terrible weather outside cause Mia to hesitate about her decision to live in the mountains.

- In the novel "The Summer of Lost and Found", Linea Rutledge describes the environment during the pandemic and her temporary unemployment ("The aquarium was closing its doors to the public because of the pandemic"), making the character of Linea, who strives for new things and striving for new things, depressed ("bidding teary fairywells to every fellows").

4)Setting as a means of revealing character. The ratio of the place and time in the work often shapes the personality and fate of the characters: it is a direct cause of what qualities people have. A person who grew up in a small, cozy house in the city may have a different outlook and approach to life than someone who grew up in the vast countryside, in close contact with nature. Stories sometimes show us characters who are direct products of their environment, reflecting its moods and values. Often, however, the stories depict characters who rebel against their restrictive environment of space and time and struggle to break free from the suffocating environment. Mary Alice Monroe also shows how in her novels she uses symbolic representation of real space to reveal the inner world of the character.

In Monroe's "Time is a river" Mia Landan, the protagonist of the play, found a chest in a shack on Wetkins Mile, where she is now living, a picture of valuables belonging to the original owner of the abandoned shack: "priceless tire plate hand painted with a different wildflower", "heavy sterling silver tableware, each piece engraved with a bold KW ", "vintage evening gown of royal blue taffeta", "white silk scarf", "two bamboo fishing rods" indicates that the owner's lineage goes back to a noble family. The author does not directly convey the portrait of Kate Watkins in the novel to the reader, but through his personal diary, which contains the letters of Kate Watkins and his valuable advice on fishing, as well as messages and news from old newspapers found in the archive, Kate's appearance and inner character are understood.

5)Setting as a means of reinforcing the theme. In a literary work, the author's skillful use of time and place can emphasize the theme of a novel or short story, in which the physical environment in which the action takes place can symbolize the central ideas of the work. In almost all of Monroe's nature-oriented novels, the harmony of man with nature is expressed as the main theme.

In the following passage from M.A. Monroe's novel "Sweetgrass" serves to emphasize the fact that wild animals are left homeless due to the construction of new structures in the urbanizing desert area: *The lizards, snakes and few birds of prey that survived in this area were compelled to fight fiercely for the scarce bits of habitat.* [5,155]

CONCLUSION

The setting is generally a physical location that shapes a story's mood, its emotional aura and quality. Real or imaginary, concrete or symbolic setting is the dramatic backdrop for a story. In the in the eco-fiction novels "Time is a River", "Sweetgrass", "The Summer of Lost and Found" by American writer M.A.Monroe the setting reveals prevailing atmosphere or mood of the story, shows internal and external conflicts, highlights potential contrasts between characters or ideas.

All forms of literature will have some form of setting; even backdrop settings have an age range of the characters, which is part of time, and a location, either indoors or out, for example. Without a setting, readers and viewers cannot follow a story plot. M.A.Monroe's analysis of artistic space and time plays an important role in the work because it enhances the storyline, characters, themes, and even the mood of the novel. Since the works of Mary Alice Monroe are of an environmental character, the author's works show that real places, such as an island, a beach, a mountain, a fertile plantation, are embodied as a place of wildlife.

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