**Analysis of Setting**

Overview

Setting, in the broadest sense, encompasses both the physical locale that frames the action *and* the time of day or year, the climatic conditions, and the historical period in which the actions occurs. It allows the reader to visualize the action of the work, thus making the story more interesting and meaningful.

The Function of Setting:

1. **Setting as a background for the action**: In this, the setting plays no particular part in the story; it simply exists largely for its own sake, without relation to the characters or the action.
2. **Setting as antagonist**: Often, the forces of nature act against the protagonist, thus introducing conflict to the story and leading the reader to the conclusion.
3. **Setting as a means of creating appropriate atmosphere**: Many authors manipulate their settings as a way of arousing the reader’s expectations and establishing an appropriate state of mind for the events to come.
4. **Setting as a means of explicating character**: Quite often the way a character perceives and reacts to his setting will show the reader elements of his character, such as state of mind. In addition, an author can make the setting a metaphor or symbolic extension of a character, as in Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher.*
5. **Setting as a means of reinforcing theme**: Setting can also be used as a means of reinforcing and clarifying the theme of a novel or short story.

Questions for Analysis of Setting:

1. What is the work’s setting in space and time?
2. How does the author go about establishing setting? Does the author want the reader to see or feel the setting; or does the author want the reader to both see and feel it? What details of setting does the author isolate and describe?
3. Is the setting important? If so, what is its function? Is it used to reveal, reinforce, or influence character, plot, or theme?
4. Is the setting appropriate?