

The treatment of setting is an important tool many authors use to express critici...

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Introduction In fiction stories and movies the use of setting can be used as a style to criticize the society. This is evident as a number of authors have applied its use in their works. For instance, Fitzgerald and McCarthy have not been left behind (Mullan 67). Through their works we get to understand the nature of the society at the time that their stories were written. This paper focuses on the use of setting in the two stories; *The Great Gatsby* and *No Country for Old Men* written by Fitzgerald and McCarthy respectively.

The Great Gatsby story takes place in the 1920s in the New York. This time was associated with finance, wealth high social status and big businesses among other things. The author has staged Gatsby as being a millionaire who owns a lavish mansion in an area renown for the rich people (Mullan 79). He lived along the long island beach that was and is still home for the rich. The author brings out individuals as having a lot of leisure time to spend. The author wrote that Jay Gatsby threw extravagant parties every Saturday night. People at this time spent their time trying to conform to certain standards (Mullan 60). As it is seen Gatsby lives in the west egg an area associated with the less wealthy and the newly rich. He tries to live up to the standards of those people in the east gate. This is because he was trying to win over Daisy's heart by proving that he could offer her the life that her husband was offering her at east egg.

East egg and west egg have been used symbolically. At the time that this story took place people were so concentrated into drawing lines between the types of wealth. This clearly represents the lifestyle of individuals at that time (Mullan 43). The two areas; east egg and west egg have been used to differentiate between the types of wealth. The west egg comprises of the

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newly rich individuals whereas the east gate comprises of the extremely rich individuals. Gatsby lived in west egg despite him being a millionaire an indication that he had not fully completed his transformation so as to join the social elite class in east egg. The two areas are separated by water of the bay that signifies the difference in wealth. Individuals in east egg are known to come from old wealthy families and have maintained their status over time.

The setting of No Country for Old Men took place in the rural and wilderness areas in Texas as well as towns along the Texas-Mexico border. The story occurred during the drug wars of the 1980s. At this time the weapons in use were classier and devastating (Mullan 78). People were ruthless and the lack of respect for human life at this time is quite evident. When the sheriff was informed of the meeting that Moss was anticipating for with Chigurh, he went to the location of the meeting. On arrival, he found Moss, murdered by a band of Mexicans. On the same night that Moss was killed, Chigurh travelled to Jean's house and shot her after flipping a coin to decide on her fate. This clearly shows that Chigurh did not value human life as it is seen he did not care to spare the life Moss's wife even after he recovered what he was after. Moss and Wells were also veterans of the Vietnam War. The experience that they had during the war had made them not to fear death or the brutality of the weapons that their pursuers had.

The story of No country for Old Men started in a rural setting. Moss was out hunting in a place that was quiet with minimal disturbance and away from the city. It is at this place that he stumbled across the aftermath of a drug deal gone awry. It is quite evident that drug dealers also took advantage of

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this setting and used it for conducting undetected drug smuggling (Mullan 38). The fact that Moss was chasing an antelope indicates that this was a wilderness area and he was conducting an illegal activity. After picking the satchel containing twenty four million dollars, he was also pursued just as he had done to the antelope. Moss had found individuals at the site killed with only one of them fighting for his life but he was also seriously injured and nothing could be done to him. This shows that those behind their killings had used brutal weapons.

Conclusion

The two authors criticize the evil that took place in the society at that time that they wrote their stories. They have used the setting of their stories to enlighten individuals on the kind of brutality that existed at their time.

Through McCarthy's work one can understand the nature of drug wars at that time. Similarly through Fitzgerald, one can get to understand the effects of difference in wealth as it clearly brought out.

Work Cited

Mullan, John. *How Novels Work*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.