

A Study of Place  
in Short Fiction by  
James Joyce,  
William Faulkner and  
Sherwood Anderson



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By

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**Cambridge**  
**Scholars**  
Publishing



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This book first published 2021

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-6778-8

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-6778-8

*I dedicate this book  
to my mother and father*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	ix
Introduction .....	1
Chapter One.....	19
Dublin: A City of Dreams and Paralysis	
Chapter Two .....	43
Sherwood Anderson's <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i> : The Pastoral and the Heterotopic Spaces	
Chapter Three .....	73
Yoknapatawpha County: The Resonant Cosmos of William Faulkner	
Conclusion.....	105
Notes.....	111
Bibliography.....	133
Index.....	147



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to some of the people who contributed to the achievement of this book, directly or indirectly. Many thanks to Prof. Richard Gray and my deepest respect to Prof. Sanja Bahun for their guidance and support during my PhD at the University of Essex, which started this project. Thanks to all my wonderful friends at Essex University and elsewhere, especially at Essex Integration. These include Imad Khalaf, Elena Carruba, James Canton, Amal Oudah, Ali Keles, and many more people who played a role in achieving this book. Finally, my special appreciation for my parents for their unconditional support and love at all times. My gratitude also to Essex University and Damascus University.



## INTRODUCTION

“[W]riters have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they live really”.<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Stein’s famous statement could be interpreted in at least two ways, both of which reveal a sense of place shared by many modernist writers of her generation. On the one hand, this pronouncement suggests a latent ambivalence towards the place of one’s birth-belonging place (in her case, the USA) and exultation of a foreign, or different, place (in her case, France).<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it signals a more general unease with, even aversion to actual places. On the last reading, the first is the country to which one belongs by citizenship or dwelling, while the latter is the one that the writers make through their imagination; it is “romantic ... it is not real but is really there”.<sup>3</sup> This second place of imagination, the one she prefers, is where the writers “live really”. It is of one’s own choice and even creation. If writers are made by the first country, then they can make another. This belief in the possibility of place being created and made (that is, in the fluidity of place) is an important aspect of the modernists’ conception of place. This book, drawing on various theories of studying place, will examine how place is created and recreated through the intertwining of poetics and politics in short stories by James Joyce, Sherwood Anderson, and William Faulkner.

The three writers belong to a specific period in general and cultural history marked by a heightened engagement with the matters of space and place. The modernist era witnessed radical social and historical changes that brought about a shift in the way people viewed themselves and the world around them. Although critics differ as to when the modernist movement in literature and the arts starts and ends, they agree on the context from which it arose and the circumstances to which it responded.<sup>4</sup> The second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed an intensification of the process of industrialization, which led to drastic social and economic changes to the lives of people throughout the world but most notably, and of concern in this book, to those in Western Europe and the United States. The increasing impact of industrialization led to the dissolution of the centuries-long agricultural way of life, which, in turn, led to a migration to big cities. The mechanization of labour and mass production became the features of everyday life. The new modes of transportation brought about by industrialization, such as trains and automobiles, made

moving between places easier and faster but, more importantly, they also changed people's perceptions of time and space. New transportation opportunities and their imagining emphasized a sense of movement and flux through space and geography and engendered new perspectives: by doing so, they were also changing and reflecting the human experience of these new times.<sup>5</sup>

This spirit of change was strongly sensed and expressed in cultural texts in different fields of knowledge. Some proto-modernist and modernist thinkers and scientists forever redefined and reshaped our view of the world. Such figures include Karl Marx and his views on the economy; Charles Darwin and his views on human evolution; Friedrich Nietzsche and his ideas on truth and language; Sigmund Freud and his investigation into human interiority; and, directly relevant for the present book, Albert Einstein with his theory of relativity (around 1905), in which he proposed that space and time are not absolute and fixed but relative to motion and speed. In addition to these developments in intellectual history, the era was marked by a range of global historical commotions that, in retrospect, could be assessed as a turning point for humans' relationships with the world: most notably, the First World War (1914–1918) and the October Revolution (1917). In particular, the sheer violence and mass slaughter in the trenches of the First World War left a long-lasting trace on the consciousness and memory of the people who witnessed it or heard of it.

Marshall Berman argues that the defining characteristic of modernity is a continual feeling and experience of ambivalence.<sup>6</sup> This effect, both generated by and contributing to the substantial transformations in early twentieth-century Western society, led to many modernist writers feeling an overwhelming sense of fragmentation of experience and epistemological anxiety. This situation manifested more than anywhere else in the modernist writers' attitude towards language. Following in the footsteps of Friedrich Nietzsche's and Stéphane Mallarmé's respective doubts about the truthfulness of official language, Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) discarded the view that language is a neutral medium through which people access reality; instead, de Saussure conceived language as a system of signs. Before de Saussure, the study of language was restricted to its diachronic aspect: how words change and develop through time (philology). Probably the most important aspect of de Saussure's approach to the study of language, and that of many modernist thinkers and writers, is the shift of focus from the diachronic to the synchronic: language as used in a particular time and place. Moreover, de Saussure considers the relationship between the signifier and the signified as arbitrary and

conventional. A sign proffers meaning not because of its intrinsic characteristics but relationally within the system of language itself.

This view of language has had marked implications for our understanding of the relationship between language and reality and the way we conceptualize and represent reality, including the reality of places. It is in the wake of de Saussure (and Einstein) that many concepts and ideas started being viewed as contingent phenomena; they were seen as products of a particular time and place. Concepts such as time, space, and self, viewed as stable and universal before modernism, were now seen as unstable and contingent. In particular, the old ways of looking at place and geography formulated through what is called Euclidian absolute notions of place were gradually replaced with more fragmentary as well as more site-specific approaches to place by modernists and postmodernists.

In what follows I will provide an overview of some twentieth-century theories of place of immediate relevance for this book and adumbrate the ways in which this book will use each of these conceptualizations. These different theories, which are in turn informed by different philosophies and rationales, will serve to highlight the various aspects of place in the stories of the three authors.

In a lecture entitled “Of Other Spaces” (1967), Michael Foucault says “[t]he great obsession of the nineteenth century, as we know, was history: with its themes of development and suspension, of crisis, and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past”. However, according to Foucault, “[t]he present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space”.<sup>7</sup> Foucault dates this change to the post-Second World War period, but it is arguable that this epistemological dominant started being active earlier. More recent scholars of modernism, like Susan Stanford Friedman, argue that literary critics should move beyond over-emphasizing the issues of time in modernism and towards the consideration of space and place in modernist practices.<sup>8</sup> The term “space” and its frequent counterpoint “place” are everything but unproblematic; they continue to be the source of debates. For the purpose of this book, I adopt human geographer Yi-fu Tuan’s general division between space as abstract, a general category, and place as the field of human experience.<sup>9</sup> Other thinkers, like John Agnew, define this difference in less orthodox terms. In the introduction to his book, *American Space/American Place: Geographies of the United States*, John Agnew says

Space signifies a field of practice or area in which a group of people or organization (such as state) operates, held together in popular consciousness by a map-image and a narrative or a story that represents it as a meaningful whole. Place represents the encounter of people with other people and things in space. It refers to how everyday life is inscribed in space and takes on

meaning for specified groups of people and organizations. Space can be considered as “top-down”, defined by powerful actors imposing their control and stories on others. Place can be considered as “bottom-up”, representing the outlooks and actions of more typical people.<sup>10</sup>

Agnew’s specific reflections inform some of my discussion of *place* in the following chapters insofar as place will be seen as the site that hosts both top-bottom (mapping, a narrative) and bottom-top (human reaction) actions.

This general distinction between place and space is useful for exploring the narratives of place represented by imagined communities or national/regional identity in the stories of the three writers. It fruitfully points to the overarching division in the works of these writers between narratives told and shared about place (space in Agnew’s terms) and the lived place itself (place). For example, the stories of the three writers reveal places in terms that are close to those identified by Agnew; the contradiction between place as imagined and place as it actually is. By making the city the locale of his short story cycle, Joyce is engaged with the abstract ideal image of Ireland with the countryside in Irish culture. Anderson reveals contradictions between the myth of the Midwest as a pastoral place and the experience and the sense of place his characters, as well as his textual spaces, show. Faulkner, in turn, never ceases to dramatize, question, and investigate the Southerners’ shared image of their region and strong sense of history.

Irrespective of the general debate about the differences between space and place, many theorists would agree on the importance of place in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. However, when it comes to the definition of place and the ways of studying it, differences among theorists surface. In what follows, this introduction will present a literature review of some of the important trends in twentieth-century and contemporary studies of place. It should be noted, by way of a preliminary disclaimer, that these theorists have many concepts that will remain untouched and that I will present here and use subsequently only what serves the purposes of this book. Generally, one can group the studies of place under two (to three) approaches: the phenomenological humanistic approach and its extension and recalibration in the discipline of human geography, and the critical materialist approach, which draws on human geography but most emphatically engages socially active approaches such as Marxism, feminism, and the like. According to Phil Hubbard, while humanistic approaches “tend to focus on place understood as a distinctive (and bounded) location defined by the lived experience of people”, socially critical humanist geography approaches “emphasise the importance of space as socially produced and consumed”.<sup>11</sup>

The humanistic approach is principally informed and inspired by the philosophies of phenomenology and existentialism,<sup>12</sup> in particular, the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger influentially shed light on the importance of dwelling places. Scholars like Jeff Malpas argue that, prior to Heidegger, the places we live in were considered neutral containers. In this case, the relationship between people and the places they inhabit were not viewed in terms of mutual influence; only people were given importance while the places were neglected. Essential to Heidegger's reconceptualization of place were, however, his notions of "dasein" (dwelling) and "being" (as being in/at a place). For Heidegger, being and place are inextricably bound, indeed inseparable; place is essential for the very idea of experience and consciousness. Our experience and our consciousness of the world we live in are only possible through our existence in a place. In other words, consciousness is not possible without a place to live in. Heidegger articulates this dynamic interaction as "situatedness". To be "situated" means to be placed in relation to other things in that place; it is a temporal dwelling in a site. To be in a place thus is a "happening". Therefore, to be is to be within a structure of belonging that is already in a certain place. It is through "situatedness" or placedness that our existence has its origins and grounds. According to Heidegger, people are characterized through their "being in the world". In his perspective, the notions of space and place, while abstract categories, seem to be closely and causally related: space becomes a place by virtue of a person existing in it.<sup>13</sup>

Such focus on subjectivity and one's experiences of space is also characteristic of Gaston Bachelard's thought on space/place. In *The Poetics of Space* (1958), Bachelard presents a phenomenological and psychoanalytic approach to the meaning of spaces, or, rather, *places*, that preoccupy poetry. Like Heidegger before him, Bachelard emphasizes the importance of a dwelling place; home in this case. For him, home is an intimate place within which our psyche and the life of the mind are first given form. Home and other emotionally shaped places influence our thoughts, memories, and feelings. Bachelard proposes "topo-analysis" as the "systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives".<sup>14</sup> A "topo-analytic" examination of the relationship of individuals to home informs this reading of the three authors. This is particularly the case in Joyce's cogitations on the home place in "The Dead" and "Eveline", which reveal that even the home we are born and brought up in could be alienating and, more generally, that we feel displaced in our childhood homes.<sup>15</sup> Anderson's final story "Departure" centres on the main character's ambivalence towards home and his eventual leaving of his town in search of another place. Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" underlines a disturbed relationship to home, both the family home

and in the larger sense of the main character's town and the South, using the gothic and the grotesque.

The key representative of the humanistic approach to the study of place is the Chinese-American theorist Yi-fu Tuan. Tuan elaborated his ideas about place and space in the influential book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977). Tuan first specifies the comparison/contrast between place and space. Space is abstract while place is the field of experience. For Tuan, place is a lived experience to its social extreme; places do not have properties of their own but are rather created through people's experiences, such as the emotional attachment to places. Therefore, the vital component in thinking about place is the "sense of place".<sup>16</sup> Tuan writes extensively about the way people feel and think about place and space and how they form attachments to places such as home, country, and neighbourhood. Furthermore, Tuan termed the affective bond between people and place "topophilia" and reflected on it extensively in his 1974 book *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perceptions, Attitudes and Values*. In this book, Tuan examines places such as the beach and the desert and examines what they mean for people. Tuan's ideas are particularly useful for the study of places in the stories of Joyce, Anderson, and Faulkner as the writerly imagination of all three authors explores the affective attachments to and emotional metabolizing of particular (real or imagined) places.

Another approach to the study of place and space that has recently gained prominence is the materialist approach or critical human geography.<sup>17</sup> Informed by Marxism, feminism, and post-structuralism, the main assumption of this approach is that places are socially constructed. As Paul Adams elaborates, critical human geographers pursue what could be termed "a contextualist approach" which "pays explicit attention to place and language" and how these are marked by differences in class, race, gender, sexuality, and nationality.<sup>18</sup> A seminal work that belongs to this approach is *The Production of Space* by French philosopher Henry Lefebvre. According to Lefebvre, in Western thought there has long been a separation between a few interrelated conceptualizations of space: "physical space" or the space of nature, the Cosmos; "mental space" or the space of formal abstraction about space (similar to Agnew's notion of space as opposed to place); and, thirdly, "social space" or the space of social interaction. Challenging this artificial separation, Lefebvre argues that these are all facets of "social space" or what, in Tuan's view and within the parameters of this study, would be more properly termed "place". In this sense, space is no longer a passive surface, a tabula rasa; space is itself produced. To study its production, Lefebvre suggests a hermeneutic triad through which to

approach space/place: “spatial practice”, “representations of space”, and “representational space”. “Spatial practice” is the perceived space of everyday ordinariness, space that structures lived reality. It includes routes and networks, patterns, and interactions that connect places with people, images with reality, and work with leisure. “Representations of space” refers to the conceptualized or “conceived” space constructed by scientists, urbanists, geographers, and social engineers, a domain where ideology, power, knowledge, signs, and codes interact. “Intimately tied to relations of production”, representations of space manifest through monuments and towers, in factories and office blocks; their objective expression is “architecture, conceived of not as building of a particular structure, a palace or monument, but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which calls for representations that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realm”.<sup>19</sup> It is this aspect of space that decides the meaning of a place through implementing knowledge and ideology. This space is abstract and absolute. “Representational space”, by contrast, is “lived through its associated [mostly non-verbal] images and symbols”. This space may be likened to the underground and clandestine aspects of life and it does not obey rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Art belongs to this space. This is the space imagination seeks to change and appropriate while making symbolic use of its physical parameters. This space, Lefebvre argues, “is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre: square, bedroom, dwelling, house, or: square, church, graveyard”.<sup>20</sup>

It is these last two terms of this triad – “representations of space” (referred to in subsequent chapters as conceived space) and “representational space” (referred to as lived space) – that interest me most in this book, but I also take on Lefebvre’s lesson that space cannot be conceived without investigating the production of the other, third, aspect of social space. Space is not a dead object but rather an organic, alive, and “hyper-complex” entity as it embraces myriad currents – “individual entities and particularities, relatively fixed points, movements and flows and waves- some interpenetrating, others in conflict and so on”.<sup>21</sup> The relationship between the perceived-conceived-lived spaces is thus neither stable nor should they be grasped linearly. This book draws substantively upon these conceptualizations of Lefebvre to study the construction of space/place and division of place in Joyce’s, Anderson’s, and Faulkner’s short stories. His concepts of perceived, conceived, and lived space are crucial for unravelling the contradictions the three writers disclose within the allegedly homogenous narratives of place. Joyce, Anderson, and Faulkner are preoccupied with the national or regional narratives of place (“the collective world-view of a society, a composite of the legendary, religious, political even economic

concepts a society shares”<sup>22</sup>) and the contradictions that lie at the core of these narratives while simultaneously representing them and reconfiguring them in representation. They differentiate between what is imagined and believed (absolute space), what is perceived (lived on a daily basis), and “lived” (experienced and represented in art). One more term that Lefebvre mentions of interest for this book and the discussion of place is “abstract space”. This kind of space was connected to modernist space at the turn of the century. Lefebvre argues that capitalism has produced “abstract space” and that this space “includes the ‘world of commodities’, its ‘logic’... as well as the power of money and that of the political state”.<sup>23</sup> What is also important about this kind of space is that from the eighteenth century onwards, it tried to homogenize social space. This term informs the reading of the new status of homogenization created by capitalism in the stories of Sherwood Anderson and the common abstract space of the town of Jefferson in this discussion.

The permanent potential for change and creativity in place is most notably argued by French scholar Michel de Certeau. He writes about practice in relation to place and space. The practices de Certeau is particularly keen to highlight include walking and journeying through the city. In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau distinguishes between two contrasting views of the city: one is the panoptic god-like perspective from above, such as looking at New York City from the top of the World Trade Centre – monolithic, hegemonic, presumptuously comprehensive, and self-assured – and the other is the street-level perspective of the pedestrian walking the streets.<sup>24</sup> Through walking, argues de Certeau, we defy place and challenge it; we actively participate in modifying and rewriting places and consequently make them our own. Due to these spatial practices, place is in a continuous state of becoming. De Certeau’s ideas of spatial practicing are useful for exploring this trend, especially in Joyce’s stories. However, the Joycean walker does not always succeed in defying and rewriting the city and could be actually consumed by the city, as I shall elaborate in chapter one.

This overview of theories of place began with Michel Foucault’s article or lecture “Of Other Spaces”. Foucault’s article blends the visions of space and place, effectively arguing that we live in an interiorly differentiated space, made up of different places: he argues that we do not live in a void (abstract space) but in a range of diverse emplacements. Thus, “space” for Foucault is not “homogeneous and empty”; it is rather a “heterogeneous space” where “we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another”.<sup>25</sup> Alongside specific sites, such as those of transportation (train,

the street), relaxation (the cafe, the cinema), and rest (the house, the bedroom), Foucault singles out two spatial constellations of interest for him above all other spaces: utopias and heterotopias. These two types of sites are related to other sites “but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect”. The first of these two spaces, utopias, are “sites with no real place”. Through these spaces people try to represent society in a perfect way; in this world everything is in order. In heterotopias, a concept of more use for the purposes of this book, real sites or places are “simultaneously represented, contested and inverted.” Heterotopias could apply to creative practices and their products – works of art.<sup>26</sup> These insights will be relevant for the discussion of the short story cycle as a form/genre and, in particular, the interrogation of Sherwood Anderson’s short fiction.

These approaches offer varied perspectives on studying place. This book makes use of these theories to highlight place and space in the stories of three writers. The insights of phenomenologists and humanistic geographers are useful for exploring the phenomenon of place, the way we perceive or experience it, and, more generally, the interaction between subjectivity and place. Through this set of approaches, this book examines the meaning of place. Critical human geographers provide insights into the meaning of place as socially constructed and relatable to each specific context from which and about which Joyce, Anderson, and Faulkner wrote.

In addition to this diversified framework, this book will make use of some specific conceptualizations that bridge the reflections on place and issues of literary representation. The most significant of these is Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope (space-time). Bakhtin argues that space and time are inseparable in both everyday life and literary representation. He uses the term “chronotope” to express this combination of space-time in fiction as well as to acknowledge an indirect link between the chronotope in fiction and our historically moulded attitudes towards the twining of space and time. I use this concept to examine the various configurations and reconfigurations of space-time in the stories and fictional spaces of the three writers. The concept is especially useful in the exploration of the existence of and relationship between various chronotopes (time-space configurations) within the same story or a collection of stories. Such interaction of chronotopes, as we shall see, sheds special light on the meaning and sense of place as it is re-imagined and recreated in Joyce’s, Anderson’s, and Faulkner’s collections of stories. There are various chronotopes, according to Bakhtin. In Joyce’s stories, the chronotope is used to compress the present and past of Irish politics (as we will see in “Ivy Day in the Committee Room”) into one new fictional chronotope that reveals the emotions and

affects of characters in this story. In Anderson, the chronotope of the pastoral is used to explore both imagined and lived notions of place. In Faulkner, the chronotope is used to examine configurations of time and space in relation to imagining history. It is also used in Faulkner to highlight the chronotopic nature of certain public as well as private places such as the square and the saloon.

There are other important concepts that Bakhtin uses in his analysis of fiction (in his case, primarily the genre of the novel) and which are directly or indirectly linked to the investigation of place. One of these concepts I find particularly serviceable for my analysis of modernist short fiction is the category of polyphony. Bakhtin's description of polyphony as the in-text co-existence of many "voices" – existential-ideological positions – with equal rights is especially useful in the discussion in the first chapter of modern experience as flux in Joyce's city, a flux that characterizes both the city (its polyphonic nature) and the (reflecting and thinking, polyphonic) consciousness of the flâneur that meanders its streets. The idea of polyphony is placed onto another, related, Bakhtin concept, that of heteroglossia. This term, also referred to as "differentiated speech", is often seen as "Bakhtin's key term for describing the complex stratification of language into genre, gender, register, sociolect, dialect and the mutual inter-animation of these forms".<sup>27</sup> This concept is used in this book to discuss the existence of various discourses or languages (voices) that exist in a certain place and make it what it is. This (heteroglossic) place could be the space/place of one story or of a collection of stories (*Winesburg, Ohio*) or, by implication, a fictional place that stretches across a writer's oeuvre, such as Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha. Closely connected to these concepts is the overarching category of dialogism, which, according to Bakhtin, is the vital component of the genre of a novel but could also be found in short fiction, and which refers to the interaction between the diverse languages or discourses (heteroglossia) within a certain place as well as the interaction of different ideological-axiological-epistemological positions within the text as embodied different characters (polyphony). This dialogic reshaping of fictional place also makes the meaning of place and its creation a shared work between the reader and the text, as we will see in the third chapter.

Joyce, Anderson, and Faulkner are important contributors to the short story genre and are selected here not only because of their intricate representation of place but also as they are masters and innovators of short fiction in particular. Joyce's *Dubliners* marks a new era in short fiction writing and his influence on the development of the genre in the twentieth century is widely acknowledged by critics. Anderson, Faulkner himself intimates, is the "father" of his generation of writers in America and

invented a new concept of the short story form in America early in the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> Faulkner's stories rank among the best of the kind.<sup>29</sup> This is an appropriate place to contextualize the high assessment of the writers' respective achievements in the context of the history of the genre.

The short story was recognized as a distinct literary genre only in the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> The earliest reference to the term "short story" dates back to 1877.<sup>31</sup> However, the form itself is much older. These origins can be sought, some short story critics argue, in the era and imaginative expression "as old as the primitive realm of myths".<sup>32</sup> The origin of the modern short story can thus be found in the old tale and its various subgenres of the fable, parable, the Creation myth, novella, fairy tale, and art-tale.<sup>33</sup> Rolf Lundén argues furthermore that the short story as we know it today, as well as its variations, such the short story composite or cycle, is not a completely modern form. It is an ancient form that has been in use for a very long time and its prime examples include texts such as the Arabian *A Thousand and One Nights*, the Indian *Panchatantra* (*Kalilah and Dimnah*), and Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron*.<sup>34</sup> One of the earliest *theorists* of the short story genre, however, was Edgar Allan Poe. Poe distinguishes the short story from other longer genres by its length as well as its presentation and writing techniques. He presents what he calls the "single effect" doctrine in which the short story should be arranged around a single impression or effect. Then, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the short story took another turning point with Anton Chekhov, whose innovative realistic and impressionistic style influenced much subsequent short story writing – including that of Joyce and Anderson. With Chekhov, the plot (what "actually happens" in a story) became of secondary importance and the focus shifted onto "slices of life" or fragments of everyday reality instead, sometimes lengthily explored, sometimes briefly sketched. He focused less on the development of action and more on mood and psychological states. Chekhov's transformation of the genre was vital for what was to become the modernist short story. Adrian Hunter, arguing for a connection between the formal and generic properties of the short story and the ways in which writers portray their world, writes that "the short story became a fixture of literary avant-gardism in the 1890s as writers began to explore the aesthetic possibilities of 'shortness,' turning away from the plot-oriented populism of detective fiction and the imperial adventure romance to produce disturbingly irresolute, 'plotless', open-ended narrative structures".<sup>35</sup> It is in the further evolution of this particular tradition that we can situate the three writers discussed in this book. It should be noted, however, that the modernist short story more generally and the short story specifically practised by Joyce, Anderson, and Faulkner have further

particularities; they are inextricably linked to the increased visibility of the genre on the literary marketplace. In a world that was becoming increasingly self-conscious and almost painfully aware of language and its capacities and incapacities, the use of genre, particularly the short story, came under on a new guise and gained new significance. With the rise of literary modernism, the short story gained more and more importance. This is exemplified by its proliferation during the 1880s and 1890s and subsequently in the twentieth century. In 1937, Elizabeth Bowen judged the short story as “the child of this century”.<sup>36</sup> More recently, Heather Ingman writes that “the short story, perhaps more than any other form, has been associated with modernity, both in terms of experimentation and theme”.<sup>37</sup>

The reasons for the short story genre receiving more attention in modernist literary writings could be related to, among other things, people’s changing relationship to the world, to place.<sup>38</sup> As explained earlier in this introduction, the modernist era witnessed drastic change and the transformation of our relationship to the world and reality. Commenting more specifically on the relationship between formal experimentation in modernist literature and place, Andrew Thacker argues that “the formal practices and spatial forms of the modernist text should be read in conjunction with a wider understanding of the historical geography of modernity”.<sup>39</sup> In other words, there is a connection between text and context; between these “formal practices”, including the use of genre such as short story, and place. The short story, Dominic Head argues, was a remarkably suitable means “to capture the episodic nature of twentieth-century experience”.<sup>40</sup> Form, in the context of this project, became a means for the expression of place as lived, experienced, and imagined. One mode of writing short fiction that served this purpose particularly well is the short story cycle (or sequence, or composite), a text which consists of autonomous but interrelated short stories that interconnect and join to make a larger whole. The short story cycle offered writers a fertile ground on which to portray (real and imagined) place across a few narratives that, together, would then produce a richly textured picture of a place. This is especially true when it comes to the ability of the short story cycle to depict an uncertain relationship to place by presenting short narratives that provide diverse angles and perspectives. The latter purpose is a common denominator of Joyce’s, Anderson’s, and Faulkner’s short fiction practices.

This connection between short story genre (and any literary genre for that matter) and place is more visible if we look at the properties of a certain genre through Bakhtin’s notion of chronotope. Bakhtin uses chronotope (space-time) to distinguish genres; every genre has its own space-time configurations. As such, the short story proffers a particular image of space-

time through which place is depicted, and one could further argue that genres, including the short story, are a means of mapping place.<sup>41</sup> The modernist short story also marks and expresses the transition from a literary model in which time was dominant to one in which more emphasis was laid on place. This does not mean that place was not the subject of literature before modernism or that modernism completely gave up on time (if anything, modernists, including the three writers under consideration here, were obsessed with time). The modernist innovation resides, instead, in the different use of time and place and their interaction in literary text. One could argue, together with Joseph Frank, that in its preoccupation with time, modernist literature presents another notion of time which draws attention to spatiality.<sup>42</sup> While time remains a central preoccupation of modernist literature, it is mostly to be explored and studied as personal time, or as abstracted history, or fragmented interaction between chronological time and interior duration. Place is supposed to be a uniting factor in such organization of chronotope but the fragmentation of time affects the representation of space and its specific figuration as a place. This novel interaction of time and space seems to have found particularly good expression in the fragmented and short narratives of the short story cycle/collection.

For a long time, short story criticism was dominated by certain definitions of the genre. An example of this is Edgar Allan Poe's "single effect" doctrine, which informed short story interpretations well into the twentieth century. Poe's ideas concerning the short story invite a reading of the short story genre that seeks unifying aspects or elements of the stories. As we will see later in this introduction, early readings of Joyce's *Dubliners* and Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* looked for themes and motifs that unified these short story cycles. Such readings tended to ignore some aspects of the short story, such as their deliberate use of ellipsis and ambiguity embodied in the narrative modes and the interrelationship between various stories of the same cycle/collection. In this book I shed more light on these potentials of the short story as practised by Joyce, Anderson, and Faulkner; for example, their deliberate use of the disunifying effects such as ellipsis and ambiguity. Such narrative strategies of disruption create a special connection between text and context, between genre and place, which will be elaborated on in the following chapters.

While studying place in the short stories of these three writers, this book takes into consideration the already existing criticism on them in general, and their short stories and the topic of place in particular. Joyce's fiction has attracted an immense amount of scholarship that, in turn, provided a wide range of perspectives on the religious, feminist, historical, sexual and socio-

political aspects of his writing. *Dubliners* is Joyce's first major literary work. Some of the early approaches were built on Joyce's comments on *Dubliners* in his letters to his publishers over ten years when they rejected the book. Some of Joyce's comments include his emphasis on the theme of paralysis, the image of the collection as a unified work, his description of the style as "scrupulous meanness", and his assertion that the book belongs to the tradition of realism.<sup>43</sup> Criticism of *Dubliners* passed through some periods in which the emphasis was, in its early stages, on naturalism and symbolism<sup>44</sup> and the interrelationship between style and theme<sup>45</sup>, and others as in Hugh Kenner's famous assertion that Joyce's real subject in *Dubliners* was "language, the protean empty language of the dead city".<sup>46</sup> It is in line with the formalist approach that early studies of *Dubliners* focused not only on the language but also on the form of the collection and tried to read it as a unified sequence of stories informed by a consistent and recurrent series of symbols or themes. This is also true in early approaches to Joyce's stories in terms of the short story cycle.<sup>47</sup> After the 1970s and 1980s, however, Joyce scholarship became informed by feminist, postcolonial, and poststructuralist theories, which noticeably focused on style, the relationship between language and reality, and issues of gender, narration, and subjectivity.<sup>48</sup>

There has been interest in the topic of place in Joyce's fiction since its beginning; however, this interest was limited to one aspect of place or another. It is only in the last decade or two that some book-length studies or collections of articles were published, dedicated to examining space and place in Joyce's fiction. *Joyce and the City: The Significance of Place* (2002) is an edited collection of essays that explores urban space in Joyce's works, including the chapters on the city in *Dubliners* and some feminist readings that concentrate on Joyce's use of interior spaces (as female) and exterior spaces (as male).<sup>49</sup> Desmond Harding's *Writing the City: Urban Visions and Literary Modernism* (2003) compares the treatment of the modernist city in Joyce and in John Dos Passos.<sup>50</sup> Another collection of essays written by different authors, entitled *Making Space in the Works of James Joyce* (2011), focuses on urban space as alienating.<sup>51</sup> It explores spatiality and urban politics as well as the relationship between language and space, and investigates spatiality in relation to language. While my approach to examining place in Joyce is inspired by some of the insights and views expressed in these scholarly contributions, it also moves beyond them, specifically informed by theories of place and paying particular attention to the importance of the short story form for the creation of Joyce's fictional place in *Dubliners*.

Unlike both Joyce and Faulkner, who are mainly known as novelists, Anderson is known chiefly as a short story writer. Anderson's criticism

started and was later shaped by major contributions from critics like Walter B. Rideout,<sup>52</sup> Charles E. Modlin,<sup>53</sup> John Crowley,<sup>54</sup> and Robert Allan Papinchak.<sup>55</sup> Like Joyce, Anderson's scholarship witnessed different phases that coincided with general currents in literary scholarship. Anderson's fiction is mostly centred on the Midwest and its rural and small-town parts. Earlier critics of Anderson focus on his treatment of small Midwest towns and the themes of industrialization and isolation.<sup>56</sup> Later critics, drawing from poststructuralist theories, explored the relationship between form and content, between Anderson's use of the short story cycle and issues of race, male gender identity, and American identity in general.<sup>57</sup> The shifts in literary criticism vogues are also noticeable in the treatment of short fiction as the genre in the scholarship of Anderson. Early formalist/New Criticism approaches to Anderson's short stories, especially to *Winesburg, Ohio*, focus on issues of the unity of form through common settings, mood, feeling, or the motivic occurrence of irony.<sup>58</sup> Later studies of *Winesburg, Ohio*, like Ingram Forrest's discussion, present insightful views, especially in regard to the interconnectedness and interrelations between the stories within the collection, yet they also continue the earlier formalist preoccupation with unity.<sup>59</sup> Forrest, in particular, seems preoccupied more with what united this book into a short story cycle than with Anderson's strategic positioning of stories as contrastive or mutually commenting. Recent Anderson criticism, however, focuses on other aspects of *Winesburg, Ohio*, such as its forceful move towards disruption and critique. Thus, Gerald Kennedy explores the resemblance between its fragmentary form and the disappearance and disintegration of tradition and community in Anderson's town of Winesburg.<sup>60</sup> Rolf Lundén, focusing on the centrifugal and centripetal forces within the fragmentary narrative of the short story cycle, offers yet new insights into *Winesburg, Ohio*.<sup>61</sup> It is in line with this more recent approach that I examine Anderson's short story cycle in relation to place.

Like Joyce, Faulkner's scholarship is vast and passed through a variety of stages, from the New Criticism approach<sup>62</sup> in its early stages to the poststructuralist and later post-poststructuralist historicist approaches in which particular issues such as gender and race are explored.<sup>63</sup> Some recent criticism concentrates on the relationship between language/discourse and history/region. In particular, Richard Gray's investigation of the relationship between language and history in Faulkner inspired my approach to this aspect of Faulkner's fiction.<sup>64</sup> In fact, much of the Faulkner scholarship that focused on place did so by way of comparison/contrast between the real South (Lafayette County, Mississippi, or the South) with the fictional Yoknapatawpha County.<sup>65</sup> In a conference held in 1976, the proceeds of

which were later published in a book, participants sought to study the writer in relation with his native place and context and the ways in which he incorporated the available historical material into his fiction.<sup>66</sup> In a similar vein, Don Doyle chronicles around four centuries of local Southern history, which comprise the material from which Faulkner created Yoknapatawpha.<sup>67</sup> Charles Shelton Aiken, himself a Southerner, makes a comparison between Faulkner's fictional county of Yoknapatawpha and his home county of Lafayette.<sup>68</sup>

Faulkner's short fiction received critical attention much later than his long fiction, and most often alongside, even peripheral to, chapters dedicated to his major novels.<sup>69</sup> The first book-length study of Faulkner's short stories appeared in 1981, authored by Hans Skei.<sup>70</sup> Skei, who believes that Faulkner is first a long fiction writer, explores the possibilities that the brevity of the short story offers and points out that Faulkner's short fiction is distinctively appropriate for the treatment of some existential issues and a focus on character, especially marginalized figures of young men and women. Hans Skei and, following him, James Carothers<sup>71</sup> and James Ferguson<sup>72</sup> argue that Faulkner's short stories should be studied on their own as an important part of Faulkner's oeuvre. It is with this argument that my research pursues Faulkner's short stories and the topic of place. While there is much criticism about both the short stories (individual stories) and the topic of place in general, Faulkner's scholarship needs a more studied approach of the conjunction of the two, as well as the specific merits of the short story collection(s) in developing the readerly vision of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha.

This book explores Joyce's only short story cycle, *Dubliners*. Both Anderson and Faulkner were prolific short story writers, but due to lack of space, I have chosen one collection from Anderson and one from Faulkner and make references to other works when relevant. *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson's collection of short stories, is considered his finest use of the short story genre. It is the engagement of this short story cycle with place (as the title indicates) that makes it most useful for the purpose of this book. Faulkner also wrote several collections of stories, some of which were revised for later collections or modified for inclusion in novels.<sup>73</sup> This book focuses on the *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*. Diane Brown Jones calls Faulkner's *Collected Stories*, with good reason, "the most significant gathering of Faulkner's short pieces."<sup>74</sup> This collection includes the final versions of many stories. More importantly for my present discussion, Faulkner's involvement in the editing of this collection was more direct and stronger than in other cases, and it included his "geographical" division of stories.

The first chapter of this book examines the politics and poetics of place in James Joyce's *Dubliners*. It focuses on Joyce's perception and depiction of the modernist city and the Irish experience of being caught, or, as Joyce puts it, "paralyzed" between past, present, and modernity. The chapter starts by exploring the interior spaces of houses. These spaces are mainly in a constant process of recreation and reimagining. We enter the consciousness of characters as they recreate interior spaces through their personal narratives and memories. A projected background, Joyce's city also serves as a means to explore modern urban life and experience it through the figure of the flâneur strolling the streets of Dublin. Traditionally, flânerie is seen positively to underscore the momentary, fleeting, and polyphonic modern world. However, Joyce's place is one of paralysis and dreams of escape. The modern practice of flânerie, meant to liberate the flâneur from everyday city life, is chastised in Joyce's vision. Likewise, the wanderer's dreams of escape are never realized. This chapter also focuses on the slippage of the notion of home to that of country and nation, showing how, in Joyce's texts, the idea of home is measured against other open places. Joyce's place, based on a real city and a real country with its physical geography portrayed through realistic details, is represented as a projection of desires and imagination and, therefore, as the stories proceed, this world is increasingly perceived as vague and unreal. What at first gives the sense of a complete and whole place (such as, deceptively, the title of the collection *Dubliners*) is gradually eroded and undermined through the fragmentary form of the short story cycle that unveils the city from diverse perspectives.

The second chapter centres on place in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. Anderson's fictional place is a small Midwestern town in the United States. His portrayal of his small town is characterized by contradiction: he establishes a contrast between the mythical nature of the narratives of place such as the (unified and homogenous) image of the pastoral America, on the one hand, and the fragmentary form of the short story cycle, on the other. This aspect of Anderson's text is explored in terms of Lefebvre's conceived and lived space as well as Foucault's concept of heterotopias. As in Joyce's case, what starts as a seemingly realistic depiction of a place, here the small Midwestern town of Winesburg, is gradually revealed to be a clash-point of desires and unstable discourses. Anderson's use of the short story cycle, as that form which contains narratives independent of each other but interrelated in a way that draws attention to their interaction, serves as a means to disrupt the possibility of a stable and fixed place.

The third chapter studies place in the short stories of William Faulkner. This chapter studies Faulkner's exploration of place through his creation of the fictional county of Yoknapatawpha, deceptively based on his region in

the South. This chapter further explores place-as-history and the characters' engagement with the recreation of an image of the past. It moves to argue for Faulkner's treatment of place as an imagined community and details the strategies for the construction of place through language. There is another kind of community (one that is directly connected to the meaning of place) in Faulkner's world, however: the readers. In closure, the third chapter highlights that Faulkner's heteroglossic text, through the interaction between the reader and the text, becomes a dialogized heteroglossia in which place is constantly created. As such, Faulkner's place, less real than the places of both Anderson and Joyce, is at the utmost end of abstractions of spatio-temporal planes and yet it most compellingly invites its own dialogic completion in readerly experience.

The conclusion brings the three writers together and looks at their notions and treatments of place in their short fiction in a comparative way, in turn suggesting some points for future inquiries.

## CHAPTER ONE

### DUBLIN: A CITY OF DREAMS AND PARALYSIS

#### I

When in 1902 Joyce met George Russel, a leading figure in the Irish Cultural Revival, Russel asked him if he could write short stories for the *Irish Homestead*, “something ‘simple, rural? livemaking? pathos? [pathetic] which would not shock the readers ... it is easily earned money if you can write fluently and don’t mind playing to the common understanding and liking for once in a way’”.<sup>75</sup> What Russel was asking Joyce was to write in the tradition of the Irish Revival. This group of Irish writers was preoccupied with foregrounding an idea of Ireland as a country/nation with its own heritage and traditions. They found in rural Ireland an aesthetics through which they could express what they believed was the unique national and ethnic nature of Ireland. That they turned their thoughts to rural Ireland is not surprising; for one, Malcolm Bradbury highlighted that “the forms and stabilities of culture itself have often seemed to belong, finally, outside the urban order”.<sup>76</sup> Raymond Williams, in his book *The Country and the City*, writes that in English literature, there is a conspicuous notion of rural life as natural, simple, and untainted by the sophistication and complexities of modern life. In other words, rural life represents a golden age. This way, rural life, according to Raymond Williams, is a “myth functioning as a memory”<sup>77</sup> that disguises and veils the diversity and tensions of real life and offers instead a romanticized and sentimentalized image of reality. Although Joyce took the opportunity to publish three of his stories in the *Irish Homestead* under the pseudonym of Stephen Dædalous, the decision was purely pragmatic and, from the very start, had a shadow of doubt about it for Joyce’s approach to representing Ireland was different from that propounded by the *Irish Homestead*. When his fourth story was rejected, he decided to stay away from the publication, to which he later referred in *Ulysses* as “the pig’s paper”.<sup>78</sup> In a letter to his brother Stanislaus, James Joyce expresses the reasons for his refusal to write in the Irish Revival

mode in ethical terms: “I am nauseated by their lying drivel about pure men and pure women and spiritual love and love for ever; blatant lying in the face of truth”.<sup>79</sup> Joyce also questions the simplistic view of home conceived by the Revivalists. In “Eveline”, one of the passages goes as follows

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from... And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall...<sup>80</sup>

This passage portrays a troubled relationship to place. It conveys a sense of place that is far from the easy and simple notions promoted by the Revivalists. It shows that Eveline is surrounded by objects that are “familiar” (she sees them and cleans them every day) yet they are also unfathomable to her. The use of words such as “wondering”, “perhaps”, “never”, and “yet” to describe her relationship to home and the homely possessions that purportedly encapsulate it only further intensifies the sense of unhomeliness. Eveline, like many other Dubliners, feels as if she is a stranger in the house in which she has lived all her life. Joyce questions any fixed and final ideas of the relationship to home – the precise notion that served as a rallying cry for the Revivalists. The present chapter concerns itself with the place and mode of imagining space that Joyce chose to employ instead of the “simple” and the “rural” – namely, contemporary Dublin – and the reasons, artistic and ideological, for this choice. It focuses on the collection of stories that Joyce would begin to write mere two years after Russel’s proposition, *The Dubliners* (written from August 1904–1907, published in 1914).

*Dubliners* was published (though written earlier) two years before the Easter Rising in 1916 against British rule in Ireland. This uprising, which had been brewing during the gestation and production of Joyce’s collection of stories, aimed to end British rule in Ireland and achieve the secession of Ireland from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in order to establish an independent Irish republic. But this turbulent situation was not new to Ireland.<sup>81</sup> In 1801, the Act of Union annexed Ireland into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, a situation which would last until 1921. During this time, Ireland experienced an economic, cultural, and political stasis that was seen by the Irish as a direct result of the English rule. The deteriorating economic state of early twentieth-century Ireland that Joyce subtly captures in his stories was not unlike, and may have been caused by, the economic hardships that had hit Ireland earlier in the nineteenth century. For that reason, events like the 1845–51 Great Famine, when an estimated one million people died and a substantial portion of Irish