

## Reading Questions for Bibliography of Novels

Title, Author

Plot/Setting/Time:

Briefly set forth the outline of the plot and describe the main characters. When was the action supposed to have taken place and what parts of the Twin Cities were involved in the flow of action?

1. How important is the geographical setting to this story? Could the events have taken place in Milwaukee or Des Moines instead of the Twin Cities?
2. What is the role of climate (or weather) in the story?
3. Are there passages that you think are particularly effective at evoking the look, feel or smell of the place?
4. How important are issues of class, race and ethnicity in the story? Do you think the author has accurately portrayed people of the Twin Cities? Are clichés and over-simplification used?
5. Does the author make use of special aspects of political, social or cultural issues in the Twin Cities?
6. What is the role of humor in the story? Are people portrayed as if they enjoy life in the Twin Cities? Are any interesting uses made of recreational activities or sports?
7. How does the author use transportation in the story?
8. Does the author give you an idea of how the Twin Cities are connected to the upper Midwest and the rest of the United States/World?
9. What does the "Ice Palace" represent in Fitzgerald's Story *The Ice Palace* and Millett's *Sherlock Homes and the Ice Palace Mystery*?
10. Fitzgerald gives a sense of a small town within the city. How do other writers portray St. Paul neighborhoods?
11. Compare the rendering of Macalester Park (Mac-Groveland) in West's novel with the description in Geography through Literature. Do you recognize the neighborhood as the one you knew when you were at Macalester College? Another comparison can be made between one or more of Fitzgerald's Basil Stories' portrayal of the Historic Hill District and Geography through Literature.

12. Are those novels or memoirs with a contemporary setting different in their sense of place from historical works? How do they compare with your sense of St. Paul or Minneapolis when you were at Macalester?

13. What difference, if any, is there in the sense of place in various literary genre: traditional novels, thrillers, mysteries, romance, memoirs?

14. What political/social issues contribute to the sense of place presented in the various novels?

15. The streetcar system plays an important part of West's novel. How does that compare with the description from Lanegran's book on Grand Avenue?