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PREFACE

When *Midwestern Miscellany I* appeared in 1973, a mimeographed occasional publication of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, it contained six lively essays by members of the Society, each too long for the *Newsletter*, too early for *MidAmerica I*, a year in the future, and too good for the editor to miss the opportunity of publishing. As the *Miscellany* begins its second decade, like *MidAmerica* an annual firmly entrenched in the index and bibliography hierarchy of critical and historical literary study, it is widely read and quoted, and its essays are frequently reprinted.

Yet the tradition established ten years ago continues. The essays in this issue reflect the diverse interests, the clear thinking, and the good writing that the members of the Society bring to its meetings and its journals. Ranging in setting from pioneer Illinois and nineteenth century small-town Ohio to mid-twentieth century Chicago and the gothic wilderness of Northern Michigan, the essays treat authors that cover the spectrum from obscurity to Nobel Prize celebration. More than a century ago Abraham Lincoln called the Midwest "the great body of the republic." In future years the *Miscellany*, the Society, its members, and their work will continue to illuminate the many dimensions of that great body.

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MORIS BIRKBECK'S
NOTES ON A JOURNEY IN AMERICA

JOHN E. HALLWAS

Morris Birkbeck (1764-1825), the co-founder and chief promoter of the famous English Settlement in Illinois near the Wabash River, has received considerable attention from historians but none from literary scholars.¹ The only modern assessment of his writing is Charles Boewe's comment that Birkbeck's prose is different from, and inferior to, that of his young partner, George Flower (1787-1862): "Birkbeck's writing, much admired by his contemporaries (even his enemies contended that his honeyed pen had seduced honest Englishmen away from hearth and home), stands up less well today than Flower's, for it veers from the sketchy and inadequate to the flaccid and orotund."² However, this is the opinion of an historian who is comparing a journal and series of letters by Birkbeck to a substantial historical volume, Flower's *History of the English Settlement in Edwards County* (1882). Hence, it is not surprising that Boewe holds this view or that he finds Birkbeck's writing to be generally less detailed and deliberate than Flower's. But this is not an adequate assessment of the man's achievement as an author, for he did produce a fine volume of travel writing.

Birkbeck wrote four books that relate to his Illinois experience. The first two were by far his most well-known publications—both going through several editions in a very short time: *Notes on a Journey in America* (1817) and *Letters from Illinois* (1818). Not long afterward, he wrote the two other titles—perhaps better termed pamphlets than books—which included replies to his detractors: *Extracts from a Supplementary Letter from the Illinois* (1819) and *An Address to the Farmers of Great Britain* (1822).

From a literary standpoint, all of these publications are inconsequential except *Notes on a Journey in America*, which is a well written and even unique piece of Midwestern travel literature.

In regard to style, the book contains much terse, energetic writing, and Birkbeck's journal format and frequent use of present tense increase the immediacy of his descriptions. For example, a tavern kitchen in Virginia is quickly sketched as "a dark and sooty hole, where the idea of cleanliness never entered, swarming with Negroes of all sexes and ages, who seem as though they were bred there: without floor, except the rude stones that support a raging fire of pine logs, extending across the entire place."³ Likewise, early morning activity in Cincinnati is depicted as follows: "*June 27. Cincinnati.*—All is alive here as soon as the day breaks. The stores are open, the markets thronged, and business is in full career by five o'clock in the morning . . ." (p. 81). This display of enterprise must have been admired by the ambitious Birkbeck, who felt that Cincinnati—and all of America—allowed the kind of economic opportunity which was denied to the majority of Englishmen.

Along with such description, the author's attitudes, opinions, and emotions are often vividly conveyed, which helps to make the volume both interesting and unique. His dislike of slavery is especially evident. For instance, he gives his reaction to a slave auction—which was surely one experience that promoted the composition of his anti-slavery newspaper articles (under the pseudonym Jonathan Freeman) several years later:

May 10. I saw two female slaves and their children sold by auction in the street,—an incident of common occurrence here, though horrifying to myself and many other strangers. I could hardly bear to see them handled and examined like cattle; and when I heard their sobs, and saw the big tears roll down their cheeks at the thought of being separated, I could not refrain from weeping with them. (p. 20)

At the same time, he recognizes that the evils of slavery extend beyond whatever inhumanity may be practiced by slave owners, for he asserts that the institution also had an enormous negative effect on American society:

Perhaps it is in its depraving influence on the moral sense of both slave and master that slavery is most deplorable. Brutal cruelty, we may hope, is a rare and transient mischief; but the degradation of soul is universal, and as it should seem from the general character of free negroes, indelible.

All America is now suffering in morals through the baneful influence of negro slavery. . . . (p. 23)

But in spite of this conviction about slavery, he leaves Virginia hating the institution, not the slave owners themselves, and admitting that the Virginians he encountered were a challenge to his notion about the "depraving influence": "I depart confirmed in my detestation of slavery, in principle and practice; but with esteem for the general character of the Virginians" (pp. 26-27).

Birkbeck did not subscribe to the conventional Christian view of man as an inveterate sinner. On the contrary, he was a rationalist, convinced of man's essential goodness and his ability to improve his condition. Hence, early in *Notes on a Journey in America*, he is critical of his native land, where the majority of people are prevented from contributing to the improvement of society: "An English farmer . . . is in the possession of the same rights and privileges with the *Villeins* of the old time, and exhibits for the most part, a suitable political character. He has no voice in the appointment of the legislature unless he happen to possess a freehold of forty shilling a year . . . he has no concern with public affairs excepting as a taxpayer, a parish officer, or a militia man" (p. 8). The economic situation fostered by such a repressive political system finds even those of moderate means (like himself) "submitting to privations under the name of economy" and "denying themselves the very comforts of life" until "the resources fail on which they had relied for the further establishment of their families" (p. 8). From such a society, where "anarchy or despotism" may be fast approaching, Birkbeck feels that "it is quite reasonable and just to secure a timely retreat" (p. 8).

As an emigrant with that perspective, he is anxious to see America refrain from adopting values and practices associated with the aristocratic Old World. For example, while still in Rich-

mond, he comments on the growing interest in building a monument to Washington:

May 13. Here is a grand stir about a monument to the memory of General Washington, and about transferring his remains from their own appropriate abode to the city of Richmond; as though Washington could be forgotten whilst America retains her independence! Let republicans leave bones, and relics, and costly monuments to monks and kings; free America is the masoleum of its deliverers. . . . (p. 23)

Likewise, he dislikes the importation of "marble capitals" from Italy to crown the columns of the capitol building, referring to the matter as an "affectation of splendor" which is "un-American" (p. 28). More importantly, he notes a similarity in political outlook between wealthy eastern Federalists and "the loyal anti-reformists of Great Britain," which prompts him to remark that "Federalism seems to favor a sort of whiggish aristocracy" that is opposed to "the spirit of the people at large" (p. 24).

Beyond the unity provided through the projection of a personality with consistent and well-developed views, *Notes on a Journey in America* also has a certain narrative wholeness. One main reason for this is that it records the journey of Birkbeck's group from the East to the West, and hence, from an older, highly civilized America to the very different, more unrestrained and undeveloped society of the frontier. For the idealistic Englishman, it is a journey between two worlds—"Eastern and Western America" (p. 40)—the one already tainted by slavery and the subtle encroachment of European values, as indicated above; the other beckoning to those who, like himself, have the vision and energy to construct a better society.

Because the emigrants proceeded overland, instead of down the Ohio River, the journal gives a running commentary on the state of development in the country from the eastern states to the western wilderness. Places like Richmond, Washington, and Pittsburgh give way to Cincinnati, Vincennes, and Shawneetown. Moreover, the author views their trek westward as part of the cultural pattern of the times, as indicated by his remark as they cross the Allegheny Ridge: "We have now fairly turned our back on the old world, and find ourselves in the very stream of emigra-

tion. Old America seems to be breaking up, and moving westward" (p. 30). Thus he experiences one of the essential nineteenth-century meanings of America: the place of unlimited new beginnings.

But even more important to the impact of the volume is another, closely related factor: the journey of Birkbeck and his companions is portrayed as a "search" (p. 7) rather than simply a trip to some predetermined location. In cultural terms, it is a search for a better society, which they must create, and which Birkbeck envisions as "a flourishing, public-spirited, energetic community, where the insolence of wealth, and the servility of pauperism, between which in England there is scarcely an interval remaining, are alike unknown" (p. 9). On a more practical level, it is a search for the right place to settle. They are looking for a location suitable for a colony, and such a place—so they think at the beginning—might be anywhere in the West outside of slave territory (p. 7). However, their search is conditioned by the availability and price of good land, as Birkbeck indicates: "we must pass on, until we reach the country where good land is to be purchased at the government price of two dollars per acre . . ." (p. 50). For this reason, the author pays close attention to the landscape that they travel through, as exemplified by the following description of a region near Vincennes:

The road from Sholt's Tavern to this place, thirty-six miles, is partly across "barrens," that is, land of middling quality, thinly set with timber, or covered with long grass and shrubby underwood, generally level and dry, and gaudy with marigolds, sunflowers, martagon lilies, and many other brilliant flowers; small "prairies," which are grass lands, free from underwood, and generally somewhat marshy; and rich bottom land. On the whole, the country is tame, poorly watered, and not a desirable place of settlement. . . . (p. 94)

Because of the search motif, the reader's interest is engaged by the purpose of their journey as well as by their progress.

The author and his company slowly realize that they must reach the very edge of the frontier before they will be at a place where their community can be established—and in 1817 the Illinois Territory was that edge:

July 20. The object of our pursuit, like the visions of fancy, has hitherto seemed to recede from our approach: we are, however, at length, arrived at the point where reality is likely to reward our labours.

Twenty or thirty miles west of this place, in the Illinois territory, is a large country where settlements are just now beginning. . . . (p. 104)

Finally, on August 1, after traveling north from Shawneetown, they arrive at a region where there is no question about the availability of sufficient unsettled land, for as Birkbeck states, "Our journey across the Little Wabash was a complete departure from all mark of civilization" (p. 115).

Thus, in the process of seeking a suitable location for their colony, they came to an area which was not just an extension of eastern America—because it was not even a settled part of western America; it was "a new country" (p. 115). Perhaps the author's best brief description of the Illinois region where they finally settled is the following, written shortly after their arrival: "We are on the confines of society, among the true backwoods men. We have been much among them—have lodged in their cabins, and partaken of their wretched and scanty fare; they have been our pilots to explore situations still more remote, and which only hunters visit" (p. 164). More importantly, Birkbeck viewed the Illinois Territory as a place where the American experiment in freedom and self-government was being reborn and, hopefully, could avoid the oppression of the individual—whether by slave owner, self-interested aristocrat, or privileged clergyman. As he comments after buying land for their colony,

The social compact here is not the confederacy of a few to reduce the many to subjection, but is indeed, and in truth, among these simple republicans, a combination of talents, moral and physical, by which the good of all is promoted and in perfect accord with individual interest. It is in fact, a better, because a more simple state than was ever portrayed by a Utopian theorist. (p. 109)

He later says the same thing even more succinctly in *Letters from Illinois*: "Liberty is no subject of dispute or speculation among us backwoods men; it is the very atmosphere we breathe."⁴ (By

that time, one year later, he had come to regard himself as part of the "social compact" that he so admired.) And so, for Birkbeck, the Illinois Territory offered not only the opportunity to acquire good land for an extensive colony, but also the excitement of helping to establish a free and open society in an unsettled section of America—"a new country."

After Birkbeck describes the selection of a suitable location, he reveals his plan for the colony, which is set forth in the final pages of the book. Quite simply, it is both capitalistic and socially responsible, for he invites wealthy Englishmen to settle with them (p. 134), whose farms or estates would "afford immediate protection and employment to poor emigrants" (p. 155), who would then be able to develop their own homesteads. Birkbeck even reveals his intention of providing the poor with a decent start: "It is a material part of our plan to have in readiness for every poor family, a cabin, an inclosed garden, a cow, and a hog, with an appropriation of land . . ." (pp. 153-54). He recognized that money and people were both needed to create a prosperous colony, and he was anxious to prove "that capital, skill, and industry are capable of changing 'a wilderness into a fruitful field,' without the stimulus of fanaticism or the restraints of [religious] superstition" (p. 134). Nor would he restrain others with "laws or regulations" of his own: "We would not bind others, nor be ourselves bound by any ties but those of mutual interest . . ." (p. 154). In this way, Birkbeck—an "Utopian theorist" and a practical community developer at the same time—displayed his confidence in man's ability to create a society that would benefit all of its members, if unhampered by established regulations that favored one social class.

As this demonstrates, *Notes on a Journey in America* is more than just a compilation of vivid descriptions and interesting comments made during a trip through several states to Illinois Territory. It is a unique travel book because it presents the quest of a perceptive and intelligent English colonizer for a location where his community could be developed; and that was, in a larger sense, a quest for a better society, devoted to political freedom and economic prosperity for all. In short, *Notes on a Journey in America* very effectively depicts the emigration to the West

of Morris Birkbeck, who articulated the American Dream through this report of his experience, and who became, with its publication, the first noted man of letters from Illinois.

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NOTES

1. Studies that discuss Birkbeck include Solon J. Buck, *Illinois in 1818* (Springfield: Illinois Centennial Commission, 1917), pp.103-12; Theodore Calvin Pease, *The Frontier State: 1818-1848* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1919), pp. 12-17, 87-91; Jane Rodman, "The English Settlement in Southern Illinois, 1815-1825," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 43 (1974), 329-62; Gladys Scott Thomson, *A Pioneer Family: The Birkbecks in Illinois 1818-1827* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), and Walter Havighurst, "The Way to Future City," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 69 (1976), 226-30.
2. *Prairie Albion: An English Settlement in Pioneer Illinois* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), p. 14. Boewe prints selections from Birkbeck, Flower, and other residents of and visitors to the English Settlement—arranged so as to tell the story of the colony.
3. *Notes on a Journey in America*, 4th ed. (London: James Ridgway, 1818), p. 37. Hereafter, all references to the book are to this edition.
4. "Letter XVI," *Letters from Illinois* (London: Taylor and Henry, 1818), p. 70.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR'S CIVIL WAR VERSE

BERNARD F. ENGEL

Since racism is as universal as death, and, indeed, frequently leads to it, it is not surprising that in the 1890s and early 1900s Midwesterners were still reviewing the causes, conduct, and consequences of the Civil War—that war of which, as Lincoln put it, "the peculiar and powerful interest" of slaves "was, somehow, the cause." The continuing domination of whites meant that blacks had to be circumspect in speaking of their situation. The first black poet to win a national reputation, Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906), of Ohio, nevertheless in his few pages of verse on the war was sometimes prompted to statement more direct than diplomacy before white publishers and readers commonly allowed.

The bulk of Dunbar's work shows him to be a participant in the esthetic school that included Richard Henry Stoddard, Bayard Taylor, George H. Boker, Edmund Clarence Stedman, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and others. Dunbar's situation as a black man did not give him magical ability to break through the confines these men and other late Romantics established: it seems likely, indeed, that his isolation on the margins of the prevailing culture made him especially likely to avoid singularity.

Though he took part in the use of dialect verse—a device of the Romantics that became increasingly popular late in the century—much of his production appears to be a representation of white rather than black speakers. Most of his verse is songs of that idealized love that can be experienced only in never-never land. Yet Dunbar does at times break away from the commonplace. Occasionally—as in "We Wear the Mask"—he lets strong feeling result in a touch of bitterness not usually found in conventional verse of the unhappy singer; and in his dialect poems

he sometimes relaxes enough to escape banal conceptions and diction.

Dunbar's Civil War verse includes short narratives in which black speakers address their fellows, accounts of the effect of the war on black domestic life, salutes to the black troops who fought for the Union, and distressed observations on the results for blacks of the war experience. He also contributed his mite to the glorification of the wartime president, speaking of him in "Lincoln" as "the mighty Homer of the lyre of war."

The speaker of "An Ante-Bellum Sermon" is an engaging preacher who, with necessary discretion, encourages his fellow slaves by telling them that the Moses who will free them is on the way. Dunbar lets strong feeling override demands of polish in diction as he sets down the preacher's assurances and suggests that his hearers draw an analogy between their situation and God's warning that Pharoah must set Moses' people free:

'An' ef he refuse to do it,
I will make him rue de houah,
Fu' I'll empty down on Egypt
All de vials of my powah.'

Several poems are in the domestic sentimental vein exploited by hundreds of white poets. "Whistlin' Sam" tells of a black soldier whose whistling cheers his fellow troops and causes him on his return home to be recognized from afar. "When Dey 'Listed Colored Soldiers" pictures a black woman who manages to feel sorry for her old master, who is "broken" in the war, and for his son, who is killed in it, though both are Confederates. When her own man Elias is killed serving the Union, she reflects "I reckon dat's what Gawd had called him for."

Two pieces use the meter and stanza form of Oliver Wendell Holmes's "The Last Leaf." "Dirge for a Soldier" gives a tear-inducing picture of the burial of a man killed in the fighting, and "The Veteran" portrays the anxiety of an aged man to take part in a memorial parade he is too feeble to enter. These pieces are among the thousands that kept alive the sentimental vision of the Civil War soldier. That vision also appears in "The Unsung Heroes," a poem that in idea and meter imitates "Tommy" though its execution is closer to Robert Service than to Kipling.

The most interesting of Dunbar's pieces associated with the Civil War are four that question purposes and outcome. "The Colored Soldiers" reports the early determination to keep the war a white man's fight, the eventual decision to call on black men, the prowess of the blacks "From the blazing breach of Wagner / To the plains of Olustee," and, observing that "they were comrades then and brothers," asks "Are they more or less today?" The writing is only that of the editorial in verse, but Dunbar is urging the point that Frederick Douglass had asked Lincoln to acknowledge, and that the president did eventually recognize when he wrote that black troops had "heroically vindicated their manhood on the battle-field" and thereby had "demonstrated in blood their right to the ballot"—and added that the restoration of the union "must rest upon the principle of civil and political equality of both races . . ." (letter to James S. Wadsworth, probably in January 1864).

In "Speakin' at de Cou'thouse" a black man hears a white politician, advertised as a "conkerin' hero" of the Civil War, re-fight the war in a speech and then, after talking of money and the tariff, say:

. . . . de colah question,
Hit was ovah, solved, an' done,
Dat de dahky was his brothah,
Each blessed mothah's son.

Discretion keeps Dunbar from the sharply satirical. But though it is his practice to use "ah" for "r" in his dialect poems, the emphasis in the quoted lines on words ending in "ah" seems intended to suggest the braying of a jackass. The poem ends, however, with only the mild observation that there is another side to the story.

The poem "To the South on Its New Slavery" is a troubled, almost embittered questioning: why doesn't the South, acting out of legitimate pride in its "loyal dead," recognize that blacks raised white children and toiled in the fields that made the region prosperous, and acknowledge this contribution by abandoning the hatred that is worse now than it was before the war? The speaker warns that while indulging in this hatred "A slumbering nation takes its dangerous ease."

The most outright bitterness appears in "Robert Gould Shaw," speaking of the white colonel (1837-1863) who died while leading a black regiment in the assault on Fort Wagner, S.C. The speaker asks why Shaw left his studies "to lead th' unlettered and despised droves." It would have been far better for him to have stayed with his books, "Since thou and those who with thee died for right / Have died, the Present teaches, but in vain!" (The Shaw statue has led several to ponder the uses of war. Among Dunbar's contemporaries, William Vaughn Moody made it the focus of his anti-imperialist "An Ode in Time of Hesitation." Two generations later, the speaker in Robert Lowell's "For the Union Dead"—originally titled "Colonel Shaw and the Massachusetts 54th"—declares that the colonel and his soldiers died for nothing because America still is bound by racism and materialism.)

Lincoln's suggested equality, indeed, was a greater advance than America has yet achieved. It was greater, too, than Dunbar allows his verse to hope for. But at least Dunbar does in a few poems reflecting on the Civil War speak out more strongly than the "mask" imposed by the late Romantic mode and pervasive racism ordinarily allowed.

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THE "OLD HANDS" OF WINESBURG

ROGER J. BRESNAHAN

In the prologomena to *Winesburg, Ohio* Sherwood Anderson describes an unpublished manuscript he alleges to have seen called "The Book of the Grotesque." That book, he tells us, "made an indelible impression" on his mind. He goes on to state that remembering the central thought of that "book" enabled him to understand many things. This was that each person adopts whatever truths he or she needs, and that these truths "made the people grotesque."

Of course, there was no "Book of the Grotesque" except *Winesburg, Ohio* itself. Indeed, Anderson's original title for the novel was *The Book of the Grotesque*. It was at the suggestion of his publisher, B. W. Huebsch, that he agreed to title the book *Winesburg, Ohio*.¹ Thus, the first sketch of the book is not about Winesburg at all but is a prologue to the book, one which David D. Anderson has observed constitutes a statement of purpose for the novel, showing that the characters "have each been twisted into psychological shapes" and that "this distortion results from both the narrowness of their vision and that of others. . . ."²

Because of this narrowness of their own vision, many of the characters of the novel become grotesques. Sherwood Anderson conveys this sense of the grotesque in various ways—Alice Hindman running naked into the rainy night to touch another human being, the obese and ugly Wash Williams, the obsession for Kate Swift conceived in the frigid mind of the Reverend Curtis Hartman, the arrogance of George Willard who expects to comprehend the complexity of the townspeople as if they were only news items for his country newspaper.

For many of the characters of *Winesburg, Ohio* the course of the novel serves to lead them through a compounded experience of perceiving their own grotesqueness and at the same time perceiving that of others. Ultimately and mysteriously, that compound perception constitutes for each of them a sense of salvation. For Alice Hindman, for Kate Swift, for Curtis Hartman that salvation will still be characterized by their own grotesqueness. They will come to accept that as well as the necessary narrowness of their own vision. For others, like George Willard, their own vision may be broadened as a result of their pilgrimage through the grotesque lands of Winesburg, but at the novel's close we cannot know whether the future that the author projects will also be characterized by the grotesque. The novel ends on a tentative note, with George Willard leaving Winesburg on the train, seen off by many of the townspeople shaking his hand and waving goodbye.

Anderson has shown us this town in the grotesqueness of its people, a grotesqueness viewed largely through the eyes of George Willard, who is now settling his vision on other prospects. Thus, George's departure closes off our limited vision. Of all the grotesque characteristics projected by the inhabitants of Winesburg, none are so frequently noted as their hands:

WING BIDDLEBAUM³

"... whose nervous little hands fiddled about the bare white forehead as though arranging a mass of tangled locks." (27)

"... the old man walked up and down the veranda, his hands moving nervously about. . . ." (28)

"Wing Biddlebaum talked much with his hands. The slender, expressive fingers, forever active, forever trying to conceal themselves in his pockets or behind his back, came forth and became the piston rods of his machinery of expression." (28)

"The story of Wing Biddlebaum is the story of his hands. Their restless activity, like unto the beating of the wings of an imprisoned bird, had given him his name. . . . The hands alarmed their owner. He wanted to keep them hid-

den away and looked with amazement at the quiet inexpressive hands of other men who worked beside him in the fields, or passed, driving sleepy teams on country roads." (28-29)
"The story of Wing Biddlebaum's hands is worth a book in itself." (29)

"In Winesburg the hands had attracted attention merely because of their activity. With them Wing Biddlebaum had picked as high as a hundred and forty quarts of strawberries in a day. They became his distinguishing feature, the source of his fame. Also they made more grotesque an already grotesque and elusive individuality." (29)

"The nervous expressive fingers, flashing in and out of the light, might well have been mistaken for the fingers of the devotee going swiftly through decade after decade of his rosary." (34)

DOCTOR REEFY

"He was an old man with a white beard and huge nose and hands." (35)

"The knuckles of the doctor's hands were extraordinarily large. When the hands were closed they looked like clusters of unpainted wooden balls as large as walnuts fastened together by steel rods." (35)

"The story of Doctor Reefy and his courtship of the tall dark girl. . . . is delicious like the twisted little apples that grow in the orchards of Winesburg. . . . On the trees are only a few gnarled apples that the pickers have rejected. They look like the knuckles of Doctor Reefy's hands. One nibbles at them and they are delicious. . . ." (36)

ELIZABETH WILLARD

"By the window sat the sick woman, perfectly still, listless. Her long hands, white and bloodless, could be seen drooping over the arms of the chair." (42)

TOM WILLY

"The saloon keeper was a short, broad-shouldered man with peculiarly marked hands. That flaming kind of birthmark that sometimes paints with red the faces of men and women had touched with red Tom Willy's fingers and the backs of

his hands. . . . It was as though his hands had been dipped in blood that had dried and faded." (49-50)

WASH WILLIAMS

"Wash Williams, the telegraph operator of Winesburg, was the ugliest thing in town. His girth was immense, his neck thin, his legs feeble. Everything about him was unclean. Even the whites of his eyes looked soiled. . . . Not everything about Wash was unclean. He took care of his hands. His fingers were fat, but there was something sensitive and shapely in the hand that lay on the table by the instrument in the telegraph office." (121)

What these characters have in common, except possibly for Tom Willy, whom Anderson has neglected to develop, and for Elizabeth Willard, is that they are the older residents of the town. Elizabeth Willard is old before her time for, as Anderson tells us, she is "tall and gaunt and her face was marked with smallpox scars. Although she was but forty-five, some obscure disease had taken the fire out of her figure." (39) Their hands are grotesques, except for those of Wash Williams who is grotesque in every way other than his well-kept hands.

The grotesqueness of their characters does not only come from the fact that their hands are ugly, however. In a larger sense, they are grotesques because they should have been the town's leading citizens—its old hands. Elizabeth Willard's hands are grotesque—not from ugliness but because they are lifeless. She could have given life to the old hotel by her presence, but she prefers to slink along the corridors unseen. When she could have used the eight hundred dollars secretly received from her father to help Tom Willard give life to the old hotel or to escape from Tom and Winesburg as her father wanted, Elizabeth hid the money behind a wall. In the end she is not even able to reveal the money's presence to her son before she dies.

Doctor Reefy, with whom Elizabeth had a half-satisfying symbiotic relationship, is similarly unable to affect the life of the town. Although he practices medicine in a desultory way, his chief activity is rolling bits of paper into little balls and periodically dumping the little balls out of his pocket and onto the floor of his filthy office. "Winesburg had forgotten the old man," we

are told, "but in Doctor Reefy there were the seeds of something very fine." (35) Yet these seeds never came to fruition for we are told cryptically that he sat in his musty office all day where "he worked ceaselessly, building up something that he himself destroyed. Little pyramids of truth he erected and after erecting knocked them down again that he might have truths to erect other pyramids." (35)

As telegraph operator, Wash Williams might have been expected to be at the heart of a small town like Winesburg. But he, too, is ineffectual, the filth amid which he lived and which characterized his person being only the outward manifestation of his grotesqueness. The fact that he takes care of the hands which operate the telegraph key only accentuates his grotesqueness. He is clearly aware that his hands are the link between Winesburg and the rest of the world, but he knows the telegraph company will keep him there forever. Just as Wash is ineffectual in the life of the town, his personal life is a failure. He is a wounded man whose wife betrayed him. When Wash went to seek reconciliation she appeared before him, at her mother's insistence, completely naked and thus completed the circle of grotesqueness around him. The resulting misogyny causes him to regard women as those creatures "sent to prevent men making the world worth while." (124)

The hands that may be most readily recalled by the reader of *Winesburg, Ohio* are those of Wing Biddlebaum, for they are the hands which got him into trouble in his Pennsylvania town. There he was at the center of the life of his town as a gifted teacher of young boys. But the suspicion of the parents of the boys whose tousled heads and shoulders the schoolteacher's hands had fondly caressed nearly got him lynched. The saloon keeper came to the schoolhouse and beat him nearly senseless with his fists. Later the men of the town came to hang him. In a moment of pity which they later regretted, they let him escape. And so, like Wash Williams, Wing Biddlebaum is another of Winesburg's wounded. He is not bitter like Wash, but rather he is confused and frightened. Though his fluttering hands have made him a legend around Winesburg as a berry picker, his life is external to that of the town.

There are other old hands in Winesburg who are similarly ineffectual. Jesse Bentley, as the most successful farmer of those parts, should have assumed a key role in the life of the town. But the narrowness of his vision has made him grotesque. The four-part narrative, "Godliness," features Jesse's patriarchal excursion into the wilderness to offer a lamb as a burnt offering. This attempt to wrest from God with his own hands a sign is frustrated by his grandson who, having attended too closely to the Bible, imagines the old man will sacrifice him. Similarly, Enoch Robinson should have been able as an artist to give meaning to the town. But he has returned from his years in Greenwich Village a failure. "Nothing ever turned out for Enoch Robinson," we are told. (167) In a novel filled with references to other people's hands there is not one reference to the hands of this artist.

If the old hands around Winesburg are ineffectual, what can be said of the young ones? In his assignation with Louise Trunnion, George Willard finds her hands rough in his. This discovery brings out his animal rather than his human instincts and he becomes "wholly the male, bold and aggressive." (61) The most disagreeable characteristic of George's personality surfaces when he returns to town: "'She hasn't got anything on me. Nobody knows,' he muttered doggedly and went on his way." (62) When George sets out to make love to Belle Carpenter he declares that he has become a man, "thrusting his hands into his pockets and looking boldly into her eyes." (187) But declaration is not action, as George discovers when Belle's lover, Ed Hanby, catches them slipping off into the bushes. Ed hurls George aside. When George lunges back at him from his hands and knees, Ed hurls him back again.

George receives his final lesson on the ineffectiveness of hands which seek only sensual gratification in his confrontation with Kate Swift. The schoolteacher has come to George's office at the newspaper to teach him that he must start to live life and not just fool with words. Distracted for a moment from her mission, she seemed to offer herself to George. When he takes her into his arms and puts a hand on her shoulder, she realizes he is only fooling with her as he has fooled with words. She responds as the Pennsylvania saloon keeper had responded to Wing Biddle-

baum, beating his face with her fists before escaping to become, unwittingly, Curtis Hartman's salvation.

Having spent his writing apprenticeship fooling with words on the *Winesburg Eagle*, having fooled with empty gestures of animal passion toward Louise Trunnion, Belle Carpenter, and Kate Swift, and having observed with little understanding the ineffectual posturing of the old hands of the town, George Willard finally receives his strength from the unselfish hands of Helen White. His intention at first is to fool with her, too. Since George has been trying to write a love story, he imagines that falling in love with Helen will help him write convincingly.

Seth Richmond, to whom George has declared this intention, is amazed, for he, too, has intentions toward Helen. Seth rushes off to inform Helen of George's foolishness. As he walks with Helen, Seth's own vague longings to leave Winesburg are given voice. He feels her warm hand in his "and a strange dizzy feeling crept over him." (139) In an action reminiscent of George Willard's advance on the vulnerable Kate Swift, Helen put "her hand on Seth's shoulder, she started to draw his face down toward her own upturned face." (142) But unlike George, who must be fought off, Helen sacrifices her own need for companionship to Seth's decision to leave Winesburg. "'I think I'd better be going along,' she said, letting her hand fall heavily on her side." (142)

When George finally determines to do something deliberate instead of merely observing life, he strides up to Helen's veranda, stares stupidly for a moment, and then takes her hand boldly. As they sit in the grandstand of the deserted country fair, Helen's hand in George's gives him strength as it did Seth. "It was as though her woman's hand was assisting him to make some minute readjustment in the machinery of his life." (241)

George is now sure of himself, having shed the pose of defensive arrogance, but, paradoxically, George now "felt very keenly his own insignificance in the scheme of things." (241) Though they kissed and tumbled about on the ground, "mutual respect grew big in them." (242) Although the people of "The Book of the Grotesque" took whatever truth they required and so became grotesque, George and Helen "had both got from their silent eve-

ning together the thing needed. . . . They had for a moment taken hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible." (243)

As the young hands of Helen White pass strength to Seth Richmond and George Willard, sending both to a place where they may not be grotesque, Curtis Hartman by a courageous act of his own hands delivers himself from the passivity which has made him grotesque in his own eyes. The design of the church window through which Hartman did his forbidden peeping at Kate Swift featured the hand of Christ. As long as Hartman relied on this image for salvation from his own weakness, his lurid imagination caused him to return again and again to the scene of temptation. Only when he got up the courage to break the window pane with his fist was he freed. Storming into the newspaper office and raising his bloody fist, he declares to an amazed George Willard that Kate Swift kneeling naked upon her bed has saved him. In fact, it was an act of his own hands that did so.

The old hands of Winesburg, its leading citizens, should have given direction to the town. But the only truly independent act of those who should have been the town's leading citizens—its old hands—was that of the Presbyterian minister who broke with his hand the image of "Christ laying his hand upon the head of a child." (148) As Seth Richmond and Helen White sat together she imagined she saw before them "a garden that had become so mysterious and vast, a place that with Seth beside her might have become the background for strange and wonderful adventures. . . ." (141) But then she saw that it was "no more than an ordinary Winesburg back yard, quite definite and limited in its outlines." (141)

Our final picture of Seth Richmond is one of a young man who is half-determined to leave Winesburg, but still he has misgivings. If he leaves, it will be on account of the strength Helen White has given him, or perhaps only because she has dismissed him and there is nothing else to do. George Willard also receives strength from the unselfish hands of Helen White. On the station platform before George boarded the train "everyone shook the young man's hand." (245) Even Gertrude Wilmot, whom George hardly knew, "stopped and put out her hand. In two words she

voiced what everyone felt. 'Good luck,' she said sharply and then turning went on her way." (246)

The narrowness of vision which characterized Winesburg and the twisted psychological shapes it produced disappear for George. Shortly after he has boarded the train he looks up and discovers the town has disappeared. Neither he nor Helen White is even aware that her hands have released him from the grotesque town. Though at the last minute she had come "running along Main Street hoping to have a parting word with him," (246) Helen loses her chance. Perhaps it is just as well, for anything she might have said or done on the railway platform could only bind him again to the town. George will never be one of Winesburg's old hands. Whether he will be more effective elsewhere we do not discover, but Winesburg and "his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood." (247)

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NOTES

1. William L. Phillips, "How Sherwood Anderson Wrote *Winesburg, Ohio*," in *The Achievement of Sherwood Anderson: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1966), p. 84.
2. David D. Anderson, "Sherwood Anderson's Moments of Insight," *Critical Essays on Sherwood Anderson*, ed. David D. Anderson (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), p. 158.
3. Page references here and subsequently are made to the Viking Critical Library edition of *Winesburg, Ohio* edited by John H. Ferres (New York, 1966).

FUN IN WINESBURG

THADDEUS B. HURD

For the past year and a half, I have been writing the "100 Years Ago" column for *The Clyde Enterprise*, the weekly newspaper in Clyde, Ohio. From the century-old pages of the *Enterprise* comes a vivid picture of life in this small, thriving Midwestern town. It was truly another world, and the pages of the *Enterprise* give us a glimpse of our Midwestern cultural roots as they grew in that time and place.

Clyde, where I grew up, and where I now live, is a good place to study life in Midwest America a hundred years ago. The files of *The Clyde Enterprise*, founded March 21, 1878, and still published, are almost complete. Further, in 1884 a young boy of seven named Sherwood Anderson moved with his parents to Clyde. Here he spent his boyhood days, and in later years wove his memories of the town and its people into his writings, especially in his books, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), *Poor White* (1920), and his posthumous *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs* (1942).

The *Enterprise* chronicled the outer life of the town, Sherwood's writings the inner life of its people. Together, a Midwestern town of a hundred years ago is well portrayed. Reading Sherwood, one may feel that life in the town, his fictional Winesburg or Bidwell and the real Clyde, was only frustration and tragedy. The *Enterprise*, however, tells of many happy things, of "Fun In Winesburg," events that brought pleasure to the daily lives of the townspeople. Our commercialized entertainment of today was unknown. People enjoyed doing things together. My dad, Herman Hurd, who lived to see television, often used to say, "We made our own good times."

Clyde a hundred years ago was a growing village of about 2500 souls. Two railroads, completed in 1852, crossed here, one east-west and one north-south, and a village was growing up at their crossing. A third one opened in 1882, bringing coal from West Virginia to Lake Erie. Their passenger and freight depots were soon the hub of village life, so well portrayed in *Winesburg, Ohio*, and *Poor White*. New brick store buildings, called "blocks," began to line Main street, and more were building. The adjoining residential streets, laid out in the 1850's, had been planted with maple trees, now reaching full height of 50 to 60 feet. Comfortable homes of white wood or red brick, each surrounded with broad lawns, many with white wood picket fences, now lined these tree shaded streets, where the fictional George Willard walked with the banker's daughter Helen White.

A rich agricultural countryside, a Main Street of busy retail stores, and small but prosperous industry were bringing a new comfort and leisure to this Midwestern American town. The pioneer residents who had lived in log cabins now liked to boast of their elegant new homes with carpets on the floors, homes warm and cozy in winter with coal fired parlor stoves, cool in summer with high ceilings and open windows now barred to insects with the newly available wire screening. Kitchens were bursting with food from gardens and nearby farms, and my dad used to tell how the aroma of sizzling steaks was wafted from kitchens as he and my grandfather Hurd walked home to noon-day dinner from Hurd's Grocery on South Main street. It was a life of abundance, comfort, and leisure never before known.

Clyde had a strong New England background, and churches loomed large in the town's life. The Protestant churches were Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, United Brethren, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Universalist and a new Episcopal Society. A Roman Catholic church, ministering to the recent German and Irish immigrants, was growing. All had lay activities, often to raise money for church support.

Leading in the secular social life of the town were the fraternal organizations, the lodges. These were men's organizations, some with women's auxiliaries. Each had its lodge hall, on the upper

floor of a Main Street business block. Some were purely social. Others offered insurance benefits to members.

Also prominent in the social life of the town were the literary and educational groups. The town's young people were now getting a fairly good education, eight years of elementary school and four years of high school. Their parents had not been so fortunate. They felt their lack of education and made efforts to fill the void by participation in these literary and educational clubs and societies, which met regularly to share knowledge their members were garnering from reading and study.

Commercial entertainment in this world without movies, radio, or television was limited to stage performances, both theatrical and musical, and lectures. They included both traveling professionals and amateur home talent. Clyde had a large public hall where these events took place. It was called Terry's Opera Hall, or the Opera House, though to my knowledge real opera never graced its shallow stage. It was located on the third floor of Will Terry's block, over his first floor furniture and undertaking business, on South Main Street, eastside. Professional events were brought to town by a business organization called the Clyde Opera Company. Amateur events were produced by local groups. During fall, winter, and spring there were usually two or three events each week in the hall, most of them well patronized.

Also prominent in Clyde activities was the McPherson Guard, the local unit of the Ohio National Guard. It occupied a large hall, called The Armory, or Armory Hall, on the third floor of Kline's Block, directly across South Main Street from Terry's Opera Hall. Here the Guard drilled and held its meetings and social events. Though the hall had no stage, it was also used by outside groups for various activities.

Both Terry's Opera Hall and Armory Hall were busy with many locally produced events other than theatricals and musicals. Clubs and church groups held fairs, carnivals, and socials. Dancing clubs and other local groups held frequent dances. A popular local orchestra frequently put on public dances on Saturday nights.

Another popular event was the birthday or wedding anniversary party. These were usually in the homes. Crowds of friends and relatives would descend unannounced on the hapless birthday victim for a surprise party, bringing food and presents. Wedding anniversary parties were usually given by the couple themselves and were highlights of the social season.

In a quieter vein was visiting. Afternoons and evenings were the popular times. An evening every week at grandma's was mandatory, and to neglect it made for hard feelings. Also, with the new mobility of train travel, visits running for days or weeks by friends and relatives from distant places were much enjoyed.

With no radio or television, the quiet evening at home was often spent in reading. Clyde did not yet have a public library, but Main Street stores sold books which people bought and loaned to each other. Newspapers and magazines came into the homes, and the *Enterprise* regularly reported on the stories and articles to be found in national magazines each month.

Not everyone went in for church socials and literary societies. Another element had fun at the seventeen local saloons. These were an anathema to the church people, who actively opposed them. Clyde ladies had marched on the saloons during the statewide Temperance fervor in 1874. In 1882 they formed a Clyde unit of the Women's Christian Temperance Union which worked to counteract the saloons' evil influence. News of the saloons is hard to come by, since the editor was a strong Temperance man and suppressed mention of them in his paper. Only rarely did they break into print, a burglary or a shooting. Yet seventeen saloons in a town of 2500 indicates that what they offered had a large appeal.

Strictly hush-hush was another social activity, prostitution. Again, information is hard to come by. It broke into print only when it tangled with the law. So far, I have documented only two houses in Clyde, though by tradition there were more.

Now I want to give you a sampling from *The Clyde Enterprise* of 1882 of Fun In Winesburg, news items that portray pleasurable aspects of life in Clyde a hundred years ago. I have rephrased

them for brevity and added a few words to clarify what was unsaid but understood by Clyde readers.

JANUARY 1882

Clyde Lodge, Knights of Honor, will elect officers next Tuesday evening.

The Episcopal ladies' entertainment at Terry's Opera Hall Tuesday netted \$46.88 for the church.

A paper titled, "Crimes, The Responsibility and The Remedy," was read at a meeting of the Delfan-Telian Club December 19.

"Hazel Kirke," a comedy drama from Madison Square Theatre, New York, will be presented January 24 at the Opera House. Admission is 50 cents.

Net Dennis put a revolver ball through his hand Monday evening while shooting rats at Guisbert's saloon.

The Knights of Pythias ball is tomorrow evening at Armory Hall. Lodges from Sandusky, Toledo and Cleveland will attend as bodies, accompanied by their ladies.

The Presbyterian Church is sponsoring a concert by the Slave Cabin Jubilee Singers Wednesday evening in Terry's Opera Hall.

A "sheet and pillow case" dance is planned for the Opera House January 31. Each guest is to be dressed in two sheets, a pillow case and a masque. Gould and Cleveland will furnish the music.

The Clyde Political Senate, for political and general discussion, was organized last Friday in Armory Hall.

FEBRUARY 1882

Homer Smallets, 18, whose mother keeps a saloon near the cemetery, had a foot cut off by an I.B.&W. freight train yesterday near Lawrence's Mill.

"East Lynne" plays at the Opera House Friday evening. Admission is 50 cents, reserved seats 75 cents.

St. Mary's Catholic Fair is in progress in Terry's Hall. Proceeds are to pay off a small church debt and benefit a fund for a new church to be built this summer.

MARCH 1882

The Delfan-Telian Club will celebrate its first anniversary March 6 in Terry's Opera Hall. Addresses, essays, declamations and music are on the program, also a debate on the application to American politics of the old maxim, "To The Victor Belong The Spoils." Admission is 10 cents to all.

The Clyde Fire Department celebrates its ninth anniversary tomorrow evening with a ball at Terry's Opera Hall.

C. E. Ellis has been manager of the series of "Old Folks Club Dances" at Terry's Opera Hall this winter. At the closing dance last Wednesday evening he was presented with a gold watch inscribed with his birth date, March 8, 1832.

Capt. Charles L. Dirlam and wife celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary Friday evening at their home. The carpets were taken up and there was dancing to Bullard's Orchestra. They received many gifts.

Gould and Cleveland's orchestra will give another of their Saturday Night Dances at the Opera House this Saturday evening. Admission is 25 cents.

APRIL 1882

A sociable at the Methodist Church Wednesday evening netted \$39.20.

The entertainment put on by the ladies of the Baptist Church at Terry's Opera Hall last Friday evening had a record attendance. Admission was 15 cents. There was a variety of performances to please everyone, including fine music. The program ended with several tableaux.

Dr. F. Brown was given a surprise party by his friends last Thursday evening on his birthday. Gifts included a hanging lamp, a chromo and other items.

The new Smith Law closing saloons on Sunday was rigidly observed in Clyde last Sunday.

MAY 1882

Charles E. Perry, 26, died May 7 of quick consumption. He was manager of the Clyde Opera Company since its organization 4½ years ago, and brought high class entertainment to Clyde.

Cases in Mayor's court include the village vs. Mary Hunter, Lizzie Wilson and Kate Bartow—living in a house of ill repute for unlawful purposes.

Memorial Day will be Tuesday May 30. Eaton Post, Grand Army of the Republic, is in charge. Order of the procession to McPherson Cemetery at 2 p.m. is: McPherson Guard, Knights of Pythias, Knights of Honor, Odd Fellows, American Legion of Honor, the Mayor and village council, Fire Department, Eaton Post G.A.R., old soldiers of the Mexican War and the War of 1812, superintendent and teachers of the public schools followed by school children with flowers for veterans' graves, and citizens on foot.

The Eighth Annual Commencement of Clyde High School will be Thursday June 8 in Terry's Opera Hall. There are 10 in this year's class, 2 gentlemen and 8 young ladies. An admission of 15 cents will be charged to keep away the noisy element. The Alumni Banquet will be Friday June 9.

The editor recommends W. A. Hunter's Turkish Baths in the rear of Hunter's Elevator. Turkish baths are 75 cents for gentlemen, 50 cents for ladies. Common tub baths are 25 cents.

JUNE 1882

H. E. Southland's hardware store has screen doors and window screens for sale, something entirely new.

About 70 friends visited Mrs. Anna Lemmon at her home on Cherry street last Wednesday evening on her 67th birthday. They brought and served a bountiful supper and gave her an elegant easy chair for her declining years.

Clyde Methodists will hold their Summer Festival next Wednesday evening in the lecture room of the church. Strawberries and ice cream will be served.

The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle of Clyde met Friday evening June 30 at the home of Dr. J. T. Everett. Mrs. Everett read a long poem she had composed titled "McPherson."

JULY 1882

The ladies of the Baptist Church will hold a raspberry and ice cream festival in Terry's Opera Hall tomorrow evening.

Monticello Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, worked in the third degree Monday night with visiting brethren from Fremont and elsewhere. Refreshments were served afterwards in the waiting room. The lodge is in a very prosperous condition.

A. G. Soden of Toledo sent a telegram to M. Kiefer here saying to meet him with Stricker, a mutual friend, at the noon train Sunday. The telegraph operator garbled the message and it came out "stretcher." Kiefer contacted undertaker W. C. Terry who met him at the station with a comfortable stretcher, and also called Dr. Griffin to meet him at the train. To their surprise and relief, Mr. Soden and Mr. Stricker stepped briskly from the train in the best of health. The telegraph operator has an account to settle with the doctor and the undertaker.

AUGUST 1882

The new Clyde Baseball Club plays Bellevue there next Monday, and Norwalk plays here next Wednesday.

The Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist Sunday Schools are holding a picnic tomorrow at the Fair Grounds.

SEPTEMBER 1882

Forty-six veterans of the Eighth Ohio Regiment, Civil War, held a reunion here last Friday at the Armory. Noon dinner was served at the Nichols House hotel. To their surprise, the veterans found that the citizens of Clyde had quietly paid for all their expenses here.

"The Blue and The Gray," the best American military drama ever produced, will play here next week at Terry's Opera Hall under auspices of Eaton Post. G.A.R. Local talent will fill a number of roles in the cast. Admission is 25 cents, reserved seats 35 cents, at Tiffany's drug store.

OCTOBER 1882

The Ladies Shakespearian Club of Clyde will meet next Monday evening with Mrs. R. B. Alexander on Cherry street.

The Clyde Fair opened Tuesday, October 3, with splendid weather. All available space on the grounds is filled with exhibits. A feature this year is Professor Frank Stockey, the rope walking hero of Niagara Falls. In 1879 he walked over the Falls for 27 consecutive days. He ends his act by sliding down an inclined rope on his head.

Gould and Cleveland's dances at the Opera House during the Fair had a very large attendance, taking in \$120 Thursday and \$100 Friday.

A house of bad repute in the west part of town was raided a week ago Saturday night by the Marshal and special deputies. It had been operating less than a week. In Mayor's court, one man was fined \$10, another and a boy let go. The women were let off on payment of costs, on condition that they leave the county. No names were made public. The Mayor felt it was best for the village to handle the case quietly.

NOVEMBER 1882

The mammoth jaw of a whale will be shown here Saturday. It is 22 feet long and has 44 teeth. Admission is 10 cents, in the vacant store room first door south of E. D. Harkness's store, North Main street.

The Clyde Local Music Circle meets tomorrow evening in Delfan-Telian Hall over A. M. Clark's grocery.

The Townsend Players will present "Othello" at the Opera House tomorrow night.

At the free birthday party dance that Erastus Gould, the famous Clyde fiddler, gave for himself Monday evening at Armory Hall, his friends surprised him with the gift of a handsome upholstered patent rocker.

Miss Alice Nettleton of Medina is here visiting her sister, Mrs. H. T. Wilder.

Rip Van Winkle will play Clyde Opera House November 29.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union of Clyde was organized last Friday afternoon at the Methodist Church. All protestant churches of Clyde are represented: Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, United Brethren, Universalist and Grace Episcopal Society. They plan to establish a free public reading room here where young men and boys may pass their leisure time without the contaminating influence of the saloons.

John B. Bush, Justice of the Peace, was 61 last Thursday. Friends and relatives gave him a surprise party at his residence on Duane street. They brought and served a bountiful dinner and presented him with an easy chair.

DECEMBER 1882

Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Stark returned Monday from Hudson, Michigan, where they spent Thanksgiving with their daughter, Mrs. Hattie S. Russell and family.

Professor Wm. H. Sprague, of Sprague's Law and Business College, will give a course on "Commercial Paper." Lectures are Tuesday and Thursday evenings at College Hall in the Squire Block, South Main street.

Last Friday evening, about 20 uniformed members of Eden Encampment, I.O.O.F., of Bellevue, visited Earl Encampment of Clyde, traveling in sleighs. After lodge work, they gave an exhibition drill. All then enjoyed a bountiful supper in the waiting room.

The 15th or crystal wedding anniversary of A. D. Ames and wife, the former Maud Holgate, was celebrated last Thursday evening at their home on East Buckeye street. About 100 guests,

some from Shelby, her home, attended. The Ames orchestra played. Dinner was served at 10. The Enterprise is pleased to print here a list of all presents received and their donors.

Ladies intending to receive callers on New Years Day are asked to notify the Enterprise of the place and who will be receiving. The Enterprise has New Years Day calling cards for sale.

Clyde ladies are holding a grand charity ball in Terry's Opera Hall Friday evening, December 29, with music by the Fremont Reed Band. The proceeds are for relief of the poor this winter. Tickets are \$1.50 per couple.

Christmas Tree Sunday School programs at the churches are: Methodist Episcopal Saturday evening at 7 o'clock; Grace Episcopal Sunday evening; Baptist Monday evening, Christmas Day.



In closing these notes from 1882 *Clyde Enterprise*, mention should be made of its editor and publisher, Henry F. Paden. He was born in 1835 in Fairfield county, Ohio. When only 12, he began working in a print shop in Findlay, Ohio. Three years later, he got a job on *The Register*, Sandusky, Ohio, and advanced to the position of city editor. He then attended Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, and in 1856 went to work for the Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark Railroad, later the B. & O. For 15 years he was a conductor, and for five years a superintendent. In 1877 he moved to Clyde, his wife's home area, and in March 1878 started *The Clyde Enterprise*. He was elected mayor of Clyde in May 1882 and in June 1884 sold *The Enterprise* to the Jackson brothers, whose descendants still publish it.

Henry lived next door to my grandfather, T. P. Hurd. Dad remembered him as a small gentleman with a twinkle in his eye, who used to say, "Good morning, Herman," as he shook dad's hand and squeezed it so hard it hurt. Henry and his wife, the former Mary Almond of rural Clyde, had five children: Alexander, Carrie, Frederick, Jeanette and Clifton. Dad and Jeanette never married. I remember Jeanette as a buxom, matronly lady prominent in Clyde social and church affairs. Cliff, who studied for the Episcopal ministry and then went into the movies, changed

his name to John Emerson and married Anita Loos, author of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. Cliff for many years was president of Actor's Equity Association. He befriended his former Clyde neighbor, Sherwood Anderson, in both Chicago and New York.

Henry was active in organizing the Episcopal Church in Clyde and in building the church edifice on West Buckeye street. He was a member of Perseverance Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, Sandusky, Ohio, and active in the affairs of Monticello Lodge in Clyde. He was a strong Temperance man. His church, lodge, and temperance views were prominently reflected in his paper.

Henry died March 1, 1889, while still mayor of Clyde, and is buried in the town's McPherson Cemetery. The following December, a beautiful stained glass window in his memory was unveiled in the chancel of Grace Episcopal Church, 124 West Buckeye street, Clyde, by his widow Mary. It cost \$300 and was the gift of his many friends in Clyde and other places. In later years, the church building was abandoned for services and fell into disrepair. In 1974 it was purchased by E. Arthur Fiser of Clyde who has beautifully restored it and is using it as a custom jewelry shop. Here you may still see this memorial to Henry Paden, who in the pages of *The Enterprise* so faithfully chronicled Fun in Winesburg, the happy times in Clyde, the Ohio town immortalized by Sherwood Anderson in his book, *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Clyde, Ohio

THE EVIL IN MICHIGAN'S NORTHERN FORESTS

THOMAS P. LINKFIELD

Since dictionaries list *terror* and *horror* as synonyms of the word *fear*, the casual and unsuspecting reader of fiction that evokes these emotional responses might use the words interchangeably and categorize such fiction in the same genre. Such a mistake is natural since even experts cannot agree on what the words mean precisely.¹ H. P. Lovecraft maintained that the word *horror* applied only to the story of the supernatural. Boris Karloff, on the other hand, insisted that terror resulted from supernatural events, while horror resulted from actual physical events.² The key to this dilemma is the usage of the word *supernatural*, and whether to classify the supernatural story as one suggesting terror or horror. This is especially important today given the current popularity in this country of novels and movies designed to produce terror or horror for readers and viewers. A clear distinction between the two words, therefore, is both convenient and necessary. The word *terror* can apply to fiction that produces intense fear of some acceptable form of reality or systematic violence, while the word *horror* can apply to fiction that produces an extreme, irrational fear of the supernatural or of something utterly unpredictable.³ With that distinction made, stories about mad bombers or deranged snipers are clearly stories of terror, and stories about vampires, werewolves, wandering corpses, or floating spirits are definitely stories of horror.

At first glance the forests of Michigan might seem unsuitable as the proper setting for novels of terror and horror. The thickly forested and sparsely populated areas of the northern lower peninsula and the entire upper peninsula seem more suited for idyllic stories about nature, nostalgic romances, or rugged adventure

stories. Michigan's cedar and pine forests and the cool, rippling waters of its northern lakes and streams can indeed evoke feelings of harmony and serenity. The forest can be paradise for hunters and campers or even a land of enchantment for the more imaginative.

But Michigan's forested wonderland can also provide the ideal setting for events and ideas that are mysterious, terrifying, and even horrifying. In *Open Season*, David Osborn utilizes the isolated forests of Schoolcraft County as the setting for a terrifying novel of three hunters from Ann Arbor who pursue the ultimate and forbidden thrill.⁴ *Crooked Tree*, a novel by Robert C. Wilson, exploits an old Ottawa Indian legend about an evil shaman whose spirit rises from its grave to commit acts of unspeakable horror in a wild state forest between Petoskey and Mackinaw City.⁵ While Osborn's novel emphasizes the perverted violence of real humans, Wilson's book transcends reality into an unnatural world of spirits, old legends, and macabre horror. Both novels make skillful use of irony and fear in developing their plots, and both novels also demonstrate that Michigan's northern woodlands can acquire an evil, sinister connotation.

In Osborn's *Open Season*, Ken Frazer, Greg Anderson, and Art Wallace appear as respectable models for middle-class behavior. All three are graduates of the University of Michigan and successful businessmen in Ann Arbor. They served together in Viet Nam and appear to have adjusted perfectly to a suburban, domesticated lifestyle. They host outdoor barbecues and play strenuous games of touch football. They typify the best in America's white upper-middle class. They also liked good, clean fun, and for two weeks each November they escaped the pressures of a middle-class existence by retreating to their hunting lodge in the primeval forests of Schoolcraft County. There in God's country, free of society's rules and restrictions, they shot animals by day and drank bourbon by night. This is the type of pleasure and ecstasy only a rugged male can understand. They appeared to be devoted family men and respectable citizens in their late thirties.

Ken, Greg, and Art, however, were not as typical as they might seem, for they perpetuate a unique brand of grisly terror in re-

remote Schoolcraft County. They discovered that killing four-legged animals was not a great enough challenge. They needed new and different heights of pleasure and excitement to satisfy them. Since their college days at Ann Arbor, they had enjoyed a perverse thrill in brutalizing and killing human beings. In college they gang-raped university coeds. But it was their experience in Viet Nam that instructed them in the exquisite thrills of hunting and killing humans. Deprived of their thrills in peacetime by a society that demands conformity to its rules and standards, these three hunters sought escape and freedom in the isolated forests of the upper peninsula. Each November on their hunting excursions, they would kidnap two unsuspecting humans, one of each gender, torment them at their hunting lodge, and then hunt them like animals in the forest. The thrill came from doing what society forbids, and their pleasure in brutalizing and killing humans in the wilderness bordered on sexual ecstasy.

By transporting their twisted violence to remote Schoolcraft County, Ken, Greg, and Art transformed the peaceful, primeval wilderness into a scene of death, carnage, and terrifying perversion. Each hunting spree began with the senseless slaughter of dozens of animals, ranging in type from large deer to small birds. They did not eat the game animals they butchered; they killed them for the sheer pleasure the hunt provided them. Nancy, one of their current kidnapping victims, was outraged and sickened by the carnage. But Ken explained carefully for her the significance of this ritual:

There's nothing like hunting. . . . It's natural to man. That's what's wrong with half the world today. Man is a hunting, killing animal, and he never gets a chance to fulfill himself.⁹

Total fulfillment for Ken and his two friends came each November when they hunted their human prey after graciously giving them a twenty-minute head start. The forested wilderness, usually symbolic of freedom and peaceful serenity, then became a death trap for two innocent people. The forest became a terrifying prison for the victims because Ken, Greg, and Art were experienced trackers and killers, whereas the victims were amateurs. When the inevitable kill finally occurred, the scenic wilderness surround-

ing the lodge became the setting for bloody death, described in graphic and terrifying detail.

The imagery of primitive bestiality is very prevalent in *Open Season*. Ken, though calm and polished on the surface, becomes a cold, ruthless predator when he hunts. He secretly yearns to escalate the nature of the yearly ritual by moving it to the suburbs and by introducing more sophisticated sexual perversions and psychological terror. Like a thirst-crazed animal, his appetite for forbidden thrills is nearly insatiable. Greg, on the other hand, is basically a primitive animal obsessed with bestial sex and hunting. Art, twisted and perverted, enjoys killing humans, but he derives his greatest thrill from viewing the bloody carnage after the kill. Animals in the forest kill to survive; these three human animals kill for sick thrills. Their wild sexual orgy with Nancy the night before the hunt further reveals their animalistic natures. Even Nancy, hoping to purchase her freedom with her body, enjoyed the sex on a wild, primitive level. They honored Nancy by labeling her a lioness, while Martin, the other victim, earned the dubious label of rabbit. But even Martin, the quivering rabbit, became a beast after the hunt began, as he demonstrated by beating Nancy savagely in a futile attempt to gain his freedom. Whether predator or quarry, the humans in *Open Season* shed their human traits and sink to the level of savage animals.

A totally unforeseen factor enters this season's hunt to spoil Ken, Greg, and Art's fun and pleasure. They become the quarry and victims of an even more savage and ruthless hunter, a shadowy, relentless figure who stalks them in the wilderness. His name is Wolkowski, and he seeks revenge for his wife's insanity and suicide, events triggered by her brutal rape nearly twenty years previously by Ken, Greg, and Art. Wolkowski has carefully planned his revenge for five years, and he orchestrates their deaths with the artistic finesse of a skilled craftsman. He dispatches Greg and Art quickly, killing Art on the same spot where he had slaughtered Martin. Wolkowski, a cold-blooded executioner and hunting machine, then pursues Ken with a methodical cunning that reduces Ken to a quivering rabbit. The great hunter becomes the scared quarry. After failing to match wits and tactics with his phantom pursurer, Ken panics and breaks completely. Wol-

kowski teaches Ken a new level of pain and agony before finally killing him.

The final terrifying irony in *Open Season* is not evident until the end of the novel. Wolkowski had cold-bloodedly hunted and killed three men who deserved to die. This vigilante's rationale for his actions was simple yet brutal:

He thought of Ken and Greg and Art and the sheer pleasure of hunting them down and killing them, the sense of achievement. He'd had a better hunt, ironically, than any of them had ever had. And he'd given to them the punishment the state could no longer give, death.⁷

Not only was his revenge complete, but Wolkowski had committed the perfect murder. No trace of the carnage in the wilderness survived, for he had dumped the bloody remains into a bottomless swamp. But the image of Wolkowski as the deadly hunter and grim executioner is both fitting and ironic, given the fact that he is a captain in Michigan's state police. Wolkowski is confident that not a shred of evidence will emerge from Schoolcraft County to link him to the bizarre disappearance of three hunters from Ann Arbor because, ironically, he is in charge of the investigation.

Because Robert Wilson's *Crooked Tree* deals with the supernatural, the novel's horror is more gruesome and fear-inspiring than the human terror in *Open Season*. Supernatural occurrences defy rational solutions or logical explanations and, therefore, inspire reactions that transcend the frightening and become truly monstrous and even gorgonesque. The horror starts when individuals begin disappearing in and near Crooked Tree State Forest, a beautiful wilderness area of second-growth timber in Michigan's northwestern lower peninsula. First a lawyer, then two campers, then a mother and her small child disappear mysteriously, all victims of something lurking in the peaceful forest. Their bodies are discovered, clawed and mangled almost beyond recognition, mutilated and dismembered by some fearsome animal. The authorities decide that black bears are the villains, although this seems far-fetched because black bears, though awesomely powerful, are normally shy and timid of humans. What is painfully clear to the reader is not as clear or obvious to the novel's characters at first.

Black bears, somehow transformed into abnormal beasts, are killing intruders in Crooked Tree State Forest. Adding to the horror is the fact that some person or thing accompanies the marauding bears and neatly slices out each victim's tongue with a knife. This grisly detail compounds the mystery and intensifies the novel's horror because it is totally irrational and defies any logical explanation.

Whites in the area attempt various solutions to the mystery they hope will be logical and effective. The police bring in an expert on bears from Michigan State University. This professor, who is a cross between Mort Neff and Marlin Perkins, intends to trap and tranquilize the rampaging beasts, thereby utilizing reason and science to solve the horrifying mystery. His faith rests in the ability of modern science to explain everything. A few white vigilantes form a bear posse and are intent on slaughtering every bear in the forest, small cubs included. They sneer at conservationists whose policies have protected bears and allowed their population to increase in recent years. Axel Michelson, the novel's main character, is an educated lawyer and friend to the area's Indians. He also believes that some rational explanation should exist for circumstances that defy logical solutions. Most of the area's whites understandably avoid the forest. Those who do confront the horrifying mystery do so on a rational basis, seeking a solution to a problem they assume originates in their natural world.

Some of the area's Ottawa Indians, however, suspect the horrible truth—that the answer lies in the realm of legend and supernatural spirits. Old Charley Wolfe and Leon Moozganse fear that a two hundred year-old legend has returned to haunt the forest. The dreaded bearwalk has begun. According to the legend, a powerful and evil shaman named Shawonabe had perfected the sinister art of projecting his spirit into the bodies of black bears, the animals that Ottawas most respected. While controlling the bears, this wicked medicine man slaughtered an entire tribe of Indians. He then cut out his victims' tongues, carefully preserving them in a deerskin pouch, to protect himself from retaliation by their spirits and to intensify and expand his own dark powers. His ambition was a malignancy that grew within him, and before

the Ottawas stopped him, Shawonabe was reaching for the ultimate evil—controlling Indians the way he controlled bears. The Ottawas executed him and imprisoned his body and spirit somewhere in Crooked Tree Forest. Two hundred years later not many Indians believe or even remember the old legend. Charley and Leon, however, know that an evil force, almost beyond human comprehension, confronts both whites and Indians in the forest. Somehow Shawonabe's spirit has escaped its prison and is controlling the black bears in Crooked Tree. But even more horrible is the inescapable fact that his spirit is manipulating the human who is removing tongues from the victims whom the bears slaughter. Shawonabe has returned from the grave and has mastered the ultimate evil.

Once again a beautiful forested area in Michigan becomes a tainted, infected place. The serene wilderness of Crooked Tree State Forest, disturbed by an occasional hunter or camper, becomes a dark, foreboding place—a place where corrupt evil dwells. Natural innocence leaves the forest as it becomes the scene for hideous and appalling deaths. Axel experienced the unforgettable horror of finding one of the bloody victims in the forest:

He saw her blue eyes staring blankly under unblinking lids.
He saw the blood dripping down her neck from her mouth,
pried grotesquely open.⁸

The trees acquire an ominous and threatening appearance. As long as Shawonabe controls the evil bearwalk, Crooked Tree Forest will continue to shelter this grim horror. But because this evil is supernatural in origin, it is more horrifying than any depravity that humans could ever construct. While Crooked Tree remains in the grip of the malign and perverse Shawonabe, the forest will be the habitat for a debasing and corrupting power. Because horror results from the supernatural event or circumstance, Crooked Tree's acquired supernatural force transforms the peaceful wilderness into a horrible, infamous netherworld.

Axel Michelson, who first dismissed the legend as silly and irrational, becomes a firm believer when he makes some frightening discoveries in his home. While searching his wife's closet, he discovers a deerskin pouch containing the putrid, rotting tongues

of five human beings. He also discovers a missing paring knife, crusty with dried blood. As a lawyer Axel cannot deny what this evidence means; his wife Janis, who is a full-blooded Indian and the daughter of a chief, is the human Shawonabe controls to collect his tongues. That she must be doing it against her will does not lessen the horrible shock for Axel. The gruesome nightmare comes to a shattering climax when he discovers he is not alone:

A scream pierced Axel's tortured thoughts. It was more than a scream, something less than human. . . . He twisted sideways and looked up with horror. The growl was ceaseless. Janis' voice . . . was deafening. It shook the sanity from his mind. . . . She hovered above him, standing on the bed. Her nude body rippled with the shrieks. Her face was twisted wildly, almost beyond recognition. Her eyes glowed! They were not human, but the eyes of an animal. They shone like white-hot glass in the darkened room. She raised her head toward the ceiling and thrashed it from side to side. Her mouth was open in a chilling snarl.⁹

Janis, now half human and half evil beast, collects Shawonabe's precious tongues and returns to the forest.

Once he admits he is dealing with the supernatural, Axel realizes he must resort to extraordinary measures to free Janis from Shawonabe's evil spirit. Utilizing the counsel of Charley and Leon, Axel frantically researches Ottawa history and legends. At a small library in the upper peninsula, he discovers the long-forgotten but authentic chant for the Ottawa Feast of the Dead, a ritual denied the shaman when he died. Armed with this knowledge, Axel intends to perform the ritual over Shawonabe's grave, if he can locate it, to free his wife from her horrible curse. Racing against time and against the shaman's increasing power, Axel stumbles upon the grave, which has literally been at his feet from the start. The Ottawas had imprisoned Shawonabe in a giant earthen mound, shaped like a bear. The land containing the forgotten mound was part of Janis' inheritance as an Ottawa chief's daughter. They had unknowingly built their house atop Shawonabe's prison-grave, thus allowing the shaman's spirit to escape and possess Janis' body. Digging in the dark and in pelting rain, Axel unearths the withered corpse of Shawonabe. While Axel

stands over the body and chants the ritual, the shaman's evil spirit summons Janis and several bears to kill Axel:

"Ee-ah!" The shriek drowned his chants. Axel spun around. It was her! Shawonabe's servant! Her scream tore his swelling confidence. His eyes grew wide with horror.¹⁰

Struggling against suffocating fatigue and agonizing pain, Axel finishes the chant and collapses upon the soulless, taunting corpse of Shawonabe. But he defeats the monstrously evil power that had possessed his wife.

Both David Osborn and Robert Wilson demonstrate skillfully in their novels how wilderness areas in Michigan can become the scene for grisly terror or gruesome horror. In *Open Season* hunters pollute and defile the forest by turning it into a battleground either for sick thrills or for revenge. In *Crooked Tree* a wicked power transforms a beautiful state forest into a place of monstrous evil and grotesque horror. In each novel the forest sheds its primeval innocence and acquires a sinister connotation. The evil in the woodlands, whether created by perverse humans or by a dark supernatural power, has a distinct corrupting effect upon the setting. Nature itself becomes tainted by the impact of evil. The changing seasons may eventually wash away the blood and gore, and the relentless passage of time may erase the final vestige of sin. But as long as humans exist, the potential for evil will survive to despoil a peaceful, idyllic forest.

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NOTES

1. Both words came to English from Latin by way of Old French.
2. Peter Penzoldt, *The Supernatural in Fiction* (New York: Humanities Press, 1965), p. 9.
3. Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula* (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1922), p. 161.
4. David Osborn, *Open Season* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1974).
5. Robert C. Wilson, *Crooked Tree* (New York: Berkley Publishing Company, 1981).
6. Osborn, *Open Season*, p. 112.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
8. Wilson, *Crooked Tree*, p. 187.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 315.

THE ROOM, THE CITY, AND THE WAR: SAUL BELLOW'S *DANGLING MAN*

DAVID D. ANDERSON

In 1944, after having published two earlier short stories, "Two Morning Monologues" (*Partisan Review*, VIII, May-June, 1941) and "The Mexican General" (*Partisan Review*, IX, May-June, 1942), Saul Bellow at twenty-nine published his first novel, *Dangling Man*.¹ Written in diary form covering the period between December 15, 1942, and April 9, 1943, the novel recounts the life of Joseph, a twenty-seven-year-old man who lives in a South Side Chicago rooming house with his wife Iva while waiting, resentful but resigned, for his draft board to induct him into the army. Iva is a librarian at the main Chicago Public Library; Joseph is unemployed. Trained as a historian, he had quit his job at a travel agency the previous May in anticipation of a call that has not yet come, and that complications of his status continue to delay—like Bellow, he is an alien, having been born in Montreal although he has lived in Chicago since childhood.

During the delay, which extends into weeks and months, Joseph is isolated in space and time, a man in but not of the room and the city in which he lives nor the war of which he is not yet a part. But these three dimensions of his reality provide both background and metaphor for what is at once freedom from an identity and enslavement by a search for it. Bellow had first used this structural technique of suspension in time and place in "Two Morning Monologues," in the first part of which a young man, suspended between college and work, deliberately prolongs his freedom, and in the second of which a gambler, free in the mornings, ponders his mortality. Joseph, however, is suspended in time and place not through choice but through circumstance.

As time goes on, he continues to dangle. Neither the hanging man of the tarot nor Robert Frost's swinger of birches, he is caught, not between heaven and hell nor heaven and earth, but, as most of his American male contemporaries have experienced, in that peculiar no-man's-land between civilian life and military service. Simultaneously free—in the eyes of his family, his friends, his wife—and imprisoned—in the room, on the streets, with friends, strangers, family—Joseph records, sometimes at length, sometimes briefly, the encounters—with Iva, with the other roomers, with family, friends, strangers, but above all, with himself—that fill his days and nights during the brief interlude in his life that threatens to become his eternity.

Joseph is in but not of time, place, family, society; his reality is his condition. In the peculiar transition not only between civilian life and the army but between rejection and acceptance, he moves from resenting the draft to eagerly embracing it. He moves, too, toward an identity that transcends time and circumstance and permits a spiritual freedom beyond isolation and alienation, the two undeniable facts of his dangling existence.

The novel is, consequently, both chronological and progressive. It is set in an environment of unmitigated gloom—the room, the rooming house, the city, the season, the paradox of communal and family celebration and personal torment, all of which reflect and intensify Joseph's condition. In its fragmented but cumulative notes, the novel moves from present to past, from observation to introspection, as Joseph awaits one future, ultimately to embrace it, and seeks another condition that remains out of reach. "Now each of us is responsible for his own salvation, which is his greatness," Joseph reflects. "And that, that greatness, is the rock our hearts are abraded on."²

In his dangling and his simultaneous search, Joseph's life is circumscribed, routine, aloof, and by preference alone. He sleeps; he goes out for breakfast; he returns; he reads the paper; he goes out to lunch; he returns, tries to read, listens to the radio and to the life around him in the rooming house, particularly that of the grotesque Mr. Vanaker in a house and a city full of grotesques. He meets Iva at six for supper, spends a short, inarticulate evening with her, and goes to bed by midnight to rise at eight and repeat

the routine. The room is simultaneously his prison, from which he seeks every excuse to escape, and his refuge from those through whom he is tormented: the idle curious, strangers in restaurants, in the rooming house, and in the street, who may wonder about him, able-bodied and idle; the friends and acquaintances whose questions, real or implied or imagined, inhibit him as he senses their secure self-knowledge; the well-meaning families, Iva's and his own, whose reaching out he rejects; his temporary mistress, Kitty, whom he sought as one to whom to talk, and by whom he found himself seduced; even Iva, as the gulf between them grows.

The rooming house is for Joseph the metaphor of his time and place, inhabited by grotesques, who, like the people of *Winesburg, Ohio*,³ are isolated and alone: Mr. Vanaker, like Wash Williams, "a queer, annoying creature" (12); Mrs. Kiefer, the landlady, dying downstairs, near ninety, blind and nearly bald; Mrs. Briggs, her daughter, the arbiter of order; her husband, older, near fifty, a Quartermaster Corps captain, who goes off daily to mysterious military duties; Marie, the black maid, silently disapproving of all of them; the others, shadows who come and go. But Joseph seeks no community with his fellow roomers, nor does he show Anderson's compassion for them as fellow human beings; they exist for him only as they annoy him.

Nevertheless, Joseph's external life is dominated by those people whom he seeks to avoid. Mr. Vanaker's continual coughing and eccentric bathroom behavior Joseph knows is a reaching out, and yet he despises the old man, unable to admit that Vanaker's place in the rooming house parallels his own. Functioning as a chorus, often unseen but always heard, making his presence known by acts of secret and trivial pilfering of old socks and half-empty perfume bottles, by drinking alone in his room and throwing the bottle into the yard, and finally by setting a small fire in his room, Vanaker, an urban Wing Biddlebaum, like the people of *Winesburg*, reaches out in the only way he can. But Joseph is no George Willard; a devotee of *le genre humain*, as he insists he is, trying, as he asserts to himself, "continually to find clear signs of their common humanity" (18), he, conversely, rejects the presence the old man continually tries to assert, ultimately provoking a confrontation with him.

Each of Joseph's other encounters, whether planned or not, significant or incidental, becomes an embarrassment, often resulting in a scene that leaves the others baffled and drives Joseph deeper into himself: tactlessly, thoughtlessly, he reveals to his father-in-law his contempt for his innocuous, shallow mother-in-law, Mrs. Olmstadt, provoking the anger of the old man who accepts and tolerates what he cannot change; at lunch with an old friend who had offered him temporary work as a telephone poll taker, he provokes a scene when a former fellow Communist, also in the restaurant, refuses to speak to him. Offending and baffling his friend, he refuses the job. At a party, which he reluctantly attends with Iva, he is shocked at the emotional conflicts he sees underlying what pretends to be fun. At Christmas dinner at his prosperous brother's, he withdraws from what he sees as greed in the discussion of rationing problems, refuses a gift of a hundred dollars from his brother, quarrels violently and pointlessly with his spoiled sixteen-year-old niece, who, ironically, looks more like him than either of her parents, and goes home angry, with an equally angry, embarrassed Iva. The new year is observed quietly in the room, punctuated only by Mr. Vanaker's fire on New Year's Day and the ensuing excitement. "Trouble, like physical pain," Joseph ruminates as the new year begins, "makes us actively aware that we are living, and when there is little in the life we lead to hold and draw and stir us, we seek and cherish it, preferring embarrassment or pain to indifference" (55). But he thinks only of himself; Vanaker is a nuisance or worse.

The city and its people exist for him as abstractions from reality: he looks out a third-floor window in the Olmstadt's house:

. . . I could see a long way. . . . Not far off there were chimneys, their smoke a lighter gray than the gray of the sky; and, straight before me, ranges of poor dwellings, warehouses, billboards, culverts, electric signs blankly burning, parked cars and moving cars, and the occasional bare plan of a tree. These I surveyed, pressing my forehead on the glass. It was my painful obligation to look and to submit to myself the invariable question: Where was there a particle of what, elsewhere, or in the past, had spoken in man's favor? There could be no doubt that these billboards, streets, tracks, houses, ugly and blind, were related to in-

terior life. And yet, I told myself, there had to be a doubt. . . . (17)

Yet the city and its people are, he tells himself, analogous, and, "whether I liked it or not, they were my generation, my society, my world. We were figures in the same plot, eternally fixed together." (18)

With the coming of the new year, a brief illness and a single bright winter day provide for Joseph not a respite but a redirection and a recognition as he turns increasingly into himself, as he tells himself that "I must know what I am" (80) yet asks "Who can be the earnest huntsman of himself when he knows he is in turn a quarry?" (79)

As winter turns toward spring social and family relationships deteriorate, contacts with others become increasingly casual—visits from Joseph's old friend Alf Steidler, con man and bon vivant, with whom Joseph feels dissipated and degraded; casual meetings with an old woman who sells Christian Science literature in the neighborhood; encounters with Sam Pearson, Iva's cousin, whom he deliberately insults, with Mike Adler, the outsider and newcomer—six years in Chicago—among their friends, with Mr. Fanzel, the tailor, who hoards scarce thread, who now charges fifteen cents to sew on a button he formerly sewed on "out of kindness." But, Joseph concludes, "Mr. Fanzel is innocent. I blame the spiritual climate." (73) None of these meetings, as winter eases, is crisis inducing; Joseph avoids those that may become so.

His significant encounters during these last weeks are in the room, alone in his dialogues with *Tu As Raison Aussi*, the Spirit of Alternatives, or "But on the other hand," dialogues with himself in which he begins to learn to articulate what he has learned about himself, about the war, the world, the grotesques whom he despises: "that you can't banish the world by decree if it's in you" (91), that "The failing may be in us, in me. A weakness of vision" (91), that in quarrels with others, we have no right to "make a doctrine of our feelings" (92), that, finally, "we need to give ourselves some exclusive focus, passionate and engulfing" (93), that, however, "the gap between the ideal construction and

the real world, the truth" (93) exists, but that unfortunately our obsession to bridge it, our focus, exhausts us, becomes our enemy, has, perhaps, become us.

Finally, in his introspection, Joseph turns to the issue of his time and condition, anticipating both the end of the novel and the end of his freedom, his dangling, his pursuit while being pursued:

... There are moments when I feel it would be wise to go to my draft board and ask to have my number called at once. . . .

I would be denying my innermost feelings if I said I wanted to be bypassed and spared from knowing what the rest of my generation is undergoing. . . . (110)

Spinoza, he remembers, had written that no virtue can be greater than that of self-preservation, but, he concludes, Spinoza's self did not mean the animal but the mind, "the self that we must govern." He records:

Chance must not govern it, incident must not govern it. It is our humanity that we are responsible for it, our dignity, our freedom. . . . I have to take my risks for survival as I did, formerly, against childhood diseases and all the dangers and accidents through which I nevertheless managed to become Joseph. . . . (111)

The war, he concludes, is such an incident, perhaps the most important in human history, but nevertheless no more than an incident that will change neither the nature nor conditions of existence. At that point he knows what he must do if he is to survive his freedom.

In spite of misgivings, of the first green shoots of spring warning him to "Go back, you don't know what you're getting into" (112), of a curious sense of isolation from the war and of the debris and filth left behind by winter, Joseph feels, for the first time "an atmosphere . . . of an impossible hope, of an impossible rejuvenation." (114)

For the ten days that remain before he is driven to act, Joseph is once more harrassed by the elements—the people—who pursue

him. Mrs. Kiefer, dying downstairs, forces an unnatural quiet on the house. Iva, working evenings at the reference desk and reluctant to carry cash home at night, asks him to cash her check. Remembering the humiliation of earlier unsuccessful attempts at the bank, once refused for lack of sufficient identification and again when a vice president, looking at the required cards, demands "How do I know you're this person?" provoking Joseph's outspoken indignation, he refuses to try again or to take it to a currency exchange. As they quarrel, Mr. Vanaker coughs repeatedly in the next room and then goes to the bathroom loudly, the door open. Joseph explodes at the old man as he corners him in the bath:

"... You damned old whiskey-head. By God, I've had more than I can stand. . . . Do you think you can get away with it forever?" I shouted at him. "Kicking up a racket in the middle of the night, hoicking, forcing us to listen to you when you make your business, you crowbait? (119)

The house is aroused, Joseph comes near to apology, and then, annoyed by Captain Brigg's officiousness and the near violence that results, Joseph goes off into the night to do what he must do. In an old-fashioned hotel lobby he writes

"I hereby request to be taken at the earliest possible moment into the armed services."

To this I added my full name and call number, and across the bottom:

"I am available at any time."

After I posted this, I stopped at a tavern and spent my last forty cents on a drink. (122)

The rest is quiet anti-climax. Iva accepts his decision; Mrs. Kiefer dies quietly; Mr. Vanaker moves in hasty disgrace, leaving behind the debris of an empty life; father and father-in-law philosophically accept his decision as the best thing to do; brother, sister-in-law, niece make an elaborate farewell; in his old room Joseph reflects on the transience of time and reality; and the machinery of government moves swiftly. On April 9, Joseph writes his last entry:

This is my last civilian day. Iva has packed my things. It is plain that she would like to see me show a little more grief at leaving. For her sake I would like to. And I am sorry to leave her, but I am not at all sorry to part with the rest of it. I am no longer to be held accountable for myself; I am grateful for that. I am in other hands, relieved of self-determination, freedom canceled.

Hurray for regular hours!
And for the supervision of the spirit!
Long live regimentation! (126)

Unlike the protagonists of Sherwood Anderson and the Midwestern writers to whom Bellow is indebted, Joseph is not escaping to something; he is fleeing from something—the city and its values, and the people who make up his world, all of whom are grotesquely confident, arrogant, secure, in and of the city and its values, as Joseph sees them. The army, with its promise of anonymity, of violence, of conscience and individualism suspended for the duration, has become for Joseph the ultimate refuge, not only from the things and people that pursue him, but from himself, his own pursuit, the anonymous room, the freedom that is denied him.

Caught between the modernity of materialism and the spiritual traditions of a vague past as well as between civilian life and the army, Joseph is caught, too, in the midst of the structural technique that Bellow has employed, as he had in "Two Morning Monologues." As Joseph dangles he foreshadows the plight of the protagonist in most of Bellow's later fiction, of Asa Leventhal of *The Victim*, Henderson, Tommy Wilhelm, Mr. Sammler, Herzog, Charlie Citrine, the more muted Albert Corde of *The Dean's December*, and of Dr. Shawmut of the recent novella "Him With His Foot in His Mouth." Joseph, like most of his successors, is a grotesque in the *Winesburg, Ohio* manner, reaching out of fact for a truth that distorts him and inhibits when it does not destroy him. A romantic, an idealist, a visionary, a puritan in mid-twentieth century America, Joseph is a grotesque, too, in the dark tradition that has dominated American literature from its New England beginnings and that, through Dreiser and Anderson, two writers to whom Bellow is deeply indebted, has come to dom-

inate American literature in our own time. Joseph, intelligent, moving toward sophistication as well as intellectualism, is, however, an authentic American innocent, a man who wants desperately to believe; yet he can find no permanence or value in an age that pursues the ephemeral, that seeks only the distorted fulfillment promised by a perverted American dream.

Thus the army becomes for Joseph not surrender but a refuge as the ironic freedom of the room gives way to the literal enslavement of military routine and discipline. In perhaps the oldest of traditions Joseph finds a temporary hope. No longer dangling, his life reduced to the fundamentals of duty and survival, Joseph looks to the army for neither freedom nor fulfillment but for the foundation upon which he may, if he survives, be able to build an identity.

The war had been for Joseph the immediate if not the major cause of his dangling throughout the novel and it becomes the means by which he resolves his practical dilemma, but it is more than a structural device. It provides background reality in time and experience, and it becomes a metaphor of the human condition in the twentieth century. A topic of occasional conversation, a measure of change as the tide of war ebbs and flows, and as friends disappear into it, an opportunity for profit or an intensification of the democratic open society as it provides opportunity for obscure individuals to rise—significantly Joseph refuses to consider a commission—it is also, in Joseph's dreams, the ultimate horror, the ultimate manifestation of modern values, the ultimate denial of human dignity. But it is also the persistent inarticulate demand that he commit himself. "I would rather be a victim than a beneficiary," Joseph tells himself. "Alternatives, and particularly desirable alternatives, grow only on imaginary trees." (56) His final commitment is not to the means of war but to its end and his own as he makes what is perhaps the only human choice possible among the alternatives available in our time.

NOTES

1. New York: Vanguard, 1944. An excerpt, "Notes of a Dangling Man," was published in *Partisan Review* (September-October, 1943) and reprinted in *Best American Short Stories, 1944*, ed. by Martha Foley, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1944.
2. Saul Bellow, *Dangling Man* (New York: The New American Library, 1965). All quotations are from this edition. Page citations follow each in the text.
3. Perhaps Bellow found inspiration for both character types and setting in Sherwood Anderson's comment that many of the characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* were inspired by residents of his Chicago rooming house.