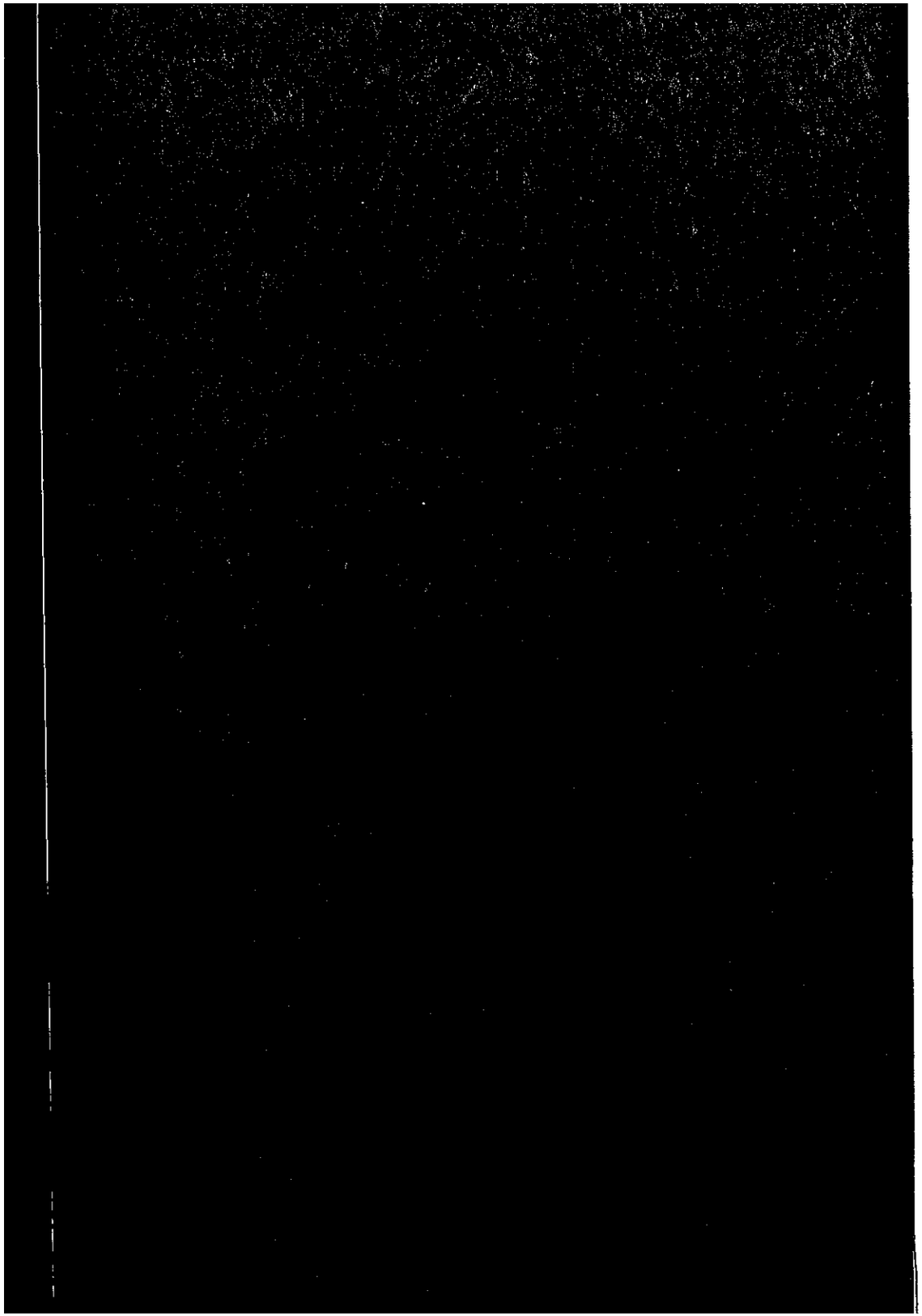

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In Honor of

ARTHUR SHUMAKER,

KENNY J. WILLIAMS,

AND

GENE H. DENT

PREFACE

The Society's Sixteenth Annual Conference, the concurrent symposium, "The Cultural Heritage of the Midwest" and the Midwest Poetry Festival, held on May 8-10, 1986, marked the inauguration of two important prize contests, The Midwest Heritage Prize and the Midwest Poetry Prize. These prizes, cash awards of $250, founded and supported by Gwendolyn Brooks, are awarded annually for the best critical paper presented at the symposium and the best poem read at the Festival.

The 1986 Poetry Prize was awarded to John Matthias for "Facts from an Aprocryphal Midwest," which appeared in *Readings from the Midwest Poetry Festival* IV(1986). The Heritage Prize essay, "Gendolyn Brooks's 'Afrika'," by Philip A. Greasley, appears in this issue of *MidAmerica*, and winning contributions will appear in future editions of the yearbook.

As the Society, the Conference, and *MidAmerica* add this important new dimension to their activities, it is fitting that this issue be dedicated to Arthur Shumaker, Gene H. Dent, and Kenny J. Williams, recipients of the MidAmerica Award and distinguished contributors to the study of Midwestern literature.

November, 1986

DAVID D. ANDERSON

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GWENDOLYN BROOKS'S "AFRIKA"

PHILIP A. GREASLEY

Few writers have immersed themselves more fully in their locale than has Gwendolyn Brooks. For over sixty-nine of her seventy years a resident of Chicago, she has consistently involved herself in the people and issues of her city, state, and nation. From teaching poetry classes to members of the Blackstone Rangers to speaking at local area schools, from creating and personally funding prizes for the best poem written at each of several ghetto elementary and high schools to serving as a spokeswoman for the grievances and aspirations of the black community—her civic involvement and commitment have been clear and consistent. Brooks's titles—poet laureate of Illinois and poetry consultant to the Library of Congress—are fitting recognitions of her consumate skill as a poet as well as of her commitment as a citizen of Chicago, Illinois, and the United States.

Given Gwendolyn Brooks's personal and poetic commitment to urban mid-America and to issues affecting Chicago's black community, it is somewhat unexpected and yet very fitting that her late poetry should return to and transform a poetic symbol first used by Brooks as a young woman with a naively trusting view of life. Brooks's rediscovered symbol is *Africa*, which she later spells Afrika. Her mature usage of African imagery makes clear the lifelong tensions experienced by blacks in white America, embodies Brooks's activist program for black poetic, political, and spiritual action, and provides a symbolic center linking much of her post-1967 poetry.

In a 1967 interview with Illinois historian, Paul M. Angle, Brooks makes clear the nature and depth of her commitment to Chicago. When asked about her life there, she responds:

> I feel now that it was better for me to have grown up in Chicago because in my writing I am proud to feature people and their concerns—their troubles as well as their joys. The city is the place to observe man en masse and in his infinite variety.
>
> Angle: And this city furnishes you an environment which you find entirely satisfactory as far as your own career is concerned. It does not impede you as a writer in any way?
>
> Brooks: It nourishes. I intend to live in Chicago for *my* forever.[1]

Despite her acceptance of the city, however, Brooks's Chicago and mid-American experiences have not all been totally satisfying. Poems like "the ballad of chocolate Mabbie," "Negro Hero," "A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon," "The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till," and "The Lovers of the Poor" make it clear that while the surfaces of Brooks's pre-1967 poetry often chronicle the unexceptional commonplaces of life in the black community, the poems seethe with the tension of themes which white America is, at the time, not ready to admit, much less address—the repression, physical violence, and psychic trauma which black Americans have been routinely subjected to, twisting their most basic values and often destroying their sense of self.

In *Report From Part One*, Brooks herself corroborates the strength and pervasiveness of racially-based humiliation and self-rejection on poetic Mabbie and personal Gwendolyn. She recalls her personal relief as an adolescent,

> "when interest in the "kissing games" finally died off. When they played "Post Office" I did not attract many letters. I was timid to the point of terror, silent, primly dressed. AND DARK. The boys did not mind telling me that *this* was the failing of failings."[2]

Similarly, Brooks's 1975 poem, "The Boy Died in My Alley," emphasizes the lifelong psychic trauma endured by blacks in facing the recurrent, randomly vindictive violence of white rule and the dehumanizing necessity of ignoring the suffering and death of blacks singled out as victims by the white community.

In this poem a black woman responds to the white policeman's interrogation, saying:

> Shots I hear and Shots I hear.
> I never see the Dead.
>
> The Shot that killed him yet I heard
> as I heard the Thousand shots before;
> careening tinnily down the nights
> across my years and arteries.
> . . . . . .
>
> I have known this Boy before.
> I have known this Boy before, who
> ornaments my alley.
> I never saw his face at all.
> I never saw his futurefall.
> But I have known this Boy.
>
> I have always heard him deal with death.
> I have always heard the shout, the volley.
> I have closed my heart-ears late and early.
> And I have killed him ever.
>
> I joined the Wild and killed him
> with knowledgeable unknowing.[3]

As in this 1975 poem, Brooks's pre-1967 writing repeatedly addresses unrelieved tensions inherent in black life in white America. Reflecting over her early views in a 1971 interview with Ida Lewis of *Essence Magazine*, Brooks comments, "I thought that integration was the solution. All we had to do was keep on appealing to the whites to help us, and they would . . ."[4]

Based upon this mindset, Brooks's pre-1967 poetry aims at the intelligence and conscience of her largely white literary audience.[5] The result is beautiful poetry delineating the black condition, yet it is written in the white European tradition. In addition to ignoring Brooks's black roots, this poetry is completely unavailing in producing beneficial change. At best, it details the psychic independence gained by blacks, like the "Negro Hero," strengthened by the terrible fires of black experience in white America. More frequently, it is the record of unrelieved black frustration and loss.

Following her 1967 awakening to the black movement in America, Brooks rejects these early values and poetic strategies, opting instead for self-definition by black writers, independent of white European-American literary norms.[6] She asserts, "It frightens me to realize that, if I had died before the age of fifty, I would have died a "Negro" fraction . . ."[7]

Against this background of strong social consciousness, of life parceled out in accommodations to an oppressive social order, the early appeal of Africa as a poetic symbol to young Gwendolyn Brooks becomes clear. Brooks's early picture of Africa portrays fertility, tribal unity, and harmony with the natural order. These romantically perceived images of pristine primitivism, community, and harmony offer psychic relief from the brutal realities of black life at the heart of white America. Idyllic references, like those of "Old Laughter," written when Brooks was nineteen,[8] portray an idealized black place of origin in ways which meet every psychic need:

> The men and women long ago
> In Africa, in Africa,
> Knew all there was of joy to know
> In sunny Africa
> The spices flew from tree to tree
> The spices trifled in the air
> That carelessly
> Fondled the twisted hair.
> The men and women richly sang
> In land of gold and green and red.
> The bells of merriment richly rang.[9]

Years later, with the recognition of the failure of the integrationist-assimilationist ideal, the appeal of African imagery again becomes strong. In poems like "Riders to the Blood-Red Wrath," Brooks returns to the theme of African harmony with

> I remember kings,
> A blossoming palace. Silver, Ivory.
> The conventional wealth of stalking Africa.
> All bright, all Bestial. Snarling marvelously.
> . . . . . .
> I remember my right to roughly run and roar.
> My right to raid the sun, consult the moon,

> Nod to my princesses or split them open,
> To flay my lions, eat blood with a spoon.
> You never saw such running and such roaring!—
> Nor sprang to such a happy rape of heaven!
> Nor sanctioned such a Kinship with the ground![10]

Following the pattern of this poem, Brooks writes other poems which move beyond presentation of idyllic images of Africa's golden age. These poems attribute favorable African characteristics to twentieth century American blacks. Thus, for example, using terms of Afrika, now spelled with a k, she describes Sammy Chester of Godspell as "body leantall rocking—/fierce innocent Afrikan rhythm . . ./Afrika laughing through clean teeth,/through open sun . . .;[11] LaBohem Brown as direct and self-accepting as a lion/in Afrikan velvet . . . . level, lean,/remote;[12] and her grandfather, then a run-away slave, as "panthering through the woods."[13]

Brooks's application to American blacks of African wild animal imagery suggestive of freedom, dignity, fertility, and harmony with the natural order asserts the possibility of black American life purged of complexity, discord, and racial humiliation. These images meet needs not often filled in contemporary mid-American black life and counter the dissention and alienation characterizing the American black community in the 1960s and 70s. Brooks's favorable presentations of notable black Americans in these poems serve as antithetical images to those of the black boy dying *alone* in a ghetto alley.

Brooks's applications of idealized African imagery are problematic, however, because, despite the emotional release they offer from constraining black American life, the African images do not convey the reality of contemporary black life in Africa. Gwendolyn Brooks recognizes this and faces it directly in her 1971 trip to East Africa. She sees African blacks serving as janitors and housemaids to rich African whites; blacks jealous of the wealth, education, and skills of black Americans coming to visit Africa, posing a threat to their jobs, languages, ways of life, and social order; blacks feeling it is bad enough to be subordinated to African whites without having encroaching American blacks adding another layer of domination.

Despite this problem, however, Brooks's African imagery is not just romanticizing nostalgia simple-mindedly creating an

idealized, if falsified, haven from real contemporary American problems. Her strategy is much more complicated. She uses these images, first, because she believes,

> people find a sense of being, a sense of worth and substance with being associated with land. Association with final roots gives us not only a history (which did not start and will not end in this country), but proclaims us heirs to a future and it is best when we, while young, find ourselves talking, acting, living, and reflecting in accordance with that future which is best understood in the context of the past.[14]

Brooks does not advocate return to Africa. Rather, she feels that American blacks in general, like the characters of her poem, "In The Mecca," need an inspiriting vision to carry them beyond their culturally induced self-doubt as well as the limitations placed on black aspiration by dominant white society.[15]

Second, Brooks's idealized African images assert black America's potential for greatness as well as the great distance blacks must travel in achieving these ideals. To this end, she creates a contrasting second set of African images with references to ignoble African animals, like those referring to the black prostitute, Hyena, of "In The Mecca."

Brooks also creates positive African images in the manner of "negritude," following the lead of President Senghor of Senegal. Thus, her African imagery often asserts black vitality, strength, and virtue in contrast to negative qualities inherent in the white community. She, like Senghor, consciously reverses the symbolic values of white and blackness presented in white European-American literature. Brooks's African images are those of sunlight, fertility, life rhythm, strength, and dignity in opposition to white pseudo-intellectualism, hypocrisy, rigidity, lifeless infertility, and disharmony with the natural order, as depicted in her poem, "Sammy Chester . . . On a Lake Forest Lawn Bringing West Afrika."

> Unhalt hands—
> body leantall rocking-
> fierce innocent Afrikan rhythm . . .
>
> West side. West AFRIKA.
> Bursting back

> free of the fiberless fury—
> free of the
> plastic platitudes—
> free of the
> strange stress, ordained ordure and high hell.
>
> Afrika laughing through clean teeth,
> through open sun, through fruit-flavored music that
> applauded out of the other.
>
> Africa denied
> Lake Forest limplush on that sunny afternoon.[16]

Clearly, Brooks's comparative black-white images are designed to counter the enervating effects of white values on black consciousness.

Finally, Brooks believes it is not necessary that her poetic images of black unity and harmony depict the current state of the black community in America. Rather, she attempts to provide positive imaging by which blacks can move toward fuller individual self-acceptance and greater communal solidarity. Thus, she cites Lerone Bennett's assertion that, "The challenge we face now, as individuals, is to internalize the black imperative and to live in the spirit of the united black community to come."[17]

Gwendolyn Brooks's campaign for black dignity goes far beyond the aesthetic realm. She recognizes that "writing is not enough for a people in a life and death struggle."[18] Therefore, she includes a legislative program which begins with black unification. She quotes from Don L. Lee's poem, "The New Integrationist," in explaining her goal:

> "I
> seek
> integration
> of negroes
> with
> black
> people."[19]

Second, Brooks provides a series of "family pictures" of major black figures like Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Paul Robeson, Sammy Chester, and Steve Biko, among others. Brooks

describes these people using positive African characteristics to underscore their worth as positive role models for the black community. These role models contrast sharply with the images of unfulfilled black potential, like Alfred, whose physical characteristics suggest royal lineage in "In the Mecca"—

"he (who might have been an architect)
. . . . . .
. . . he (who might have been a poet-king)
. . . of the line of Leopold.[20]

Finally, Gwendolyn Brooks's African images are an attempt to reach blacks themselves. She says, "My aim . . . is to write poems that will somehow successfully "call" . . . all black people. . . ."[21]

To this end, Brooks writes a series of poems, using African imagery, black idiom, jazz and oral rhythms, and direct statements aimed at producing direct action by the black community. In poems like "To Black Women," "To Prisoners," "Boys. Black: A Preachment," and "Another Preachment to Blacks," Gwendolyn Brooks uses African images as she speaks directly to the mid-American black community, urging them to actively assert and demand black goals.

Boys. Black. . . .
Be brave to battle for your breath and bread.
. . . . . .
Up, boys. . . .
Invade now where you can or can't prevail,
. . . . . .
remember Afrika. . . .
See, say, salvage.
Legislate.
Enact our inward law.[22]

Finally, Brooks's African imagery moves beyond the present generation of black adults to accomplish her social goals. She works also using playful African animal imagery, to assist young blacks in developing personal and racial pride, rather than repeating the error of defining blackness negatively as the absence of ennobling whiteness. Through parables like *The Tiger Who Wore White Gloves,* Brooks works to counter negative experiences like those of young Gwendolyn Brooks and her poetic creation "chocolate Mabbie"—who felt rejected

for their blackness. In *The Tiger Who Wore White Gloves,* Brooks tells of the tiger who foolishly rejects his natural coloration in his desire to become stylish by wearing *white* gloves. By story's end, the tiger, like Brooks herself, removes his white gloves, realizing that,

> It's nature's nice decree that tiger folk should be not dainty, but daring, and wisely wearing . . . [each tiger] satisfied with his strong striped hide."[23]

With her poem, "TO THE DIASPORA," Gwendolyn Brooks's African imagery comes full circle, making it clear that the goal informing her mature return to African imagery was neither return to continental Africa nor romanticizing abdication of her involvement in real contemporary mid-American life. Rather, the African imagery in this poem makes clear her continuing dedication to black pride and self-acceptance as well as her aggressive involvement in issues affecting black welfare. Brooks begins the poem with these lines:

When you set out for Afrika
you did not know you were going.
Because
you did not know you were Afrika.
You did not know the Black continent
that had be reached
was you.[24]

Gwendolyn Brooks's African imagery serves many poetic, social, and political purposes then. Ultimately, however, it works to strengthen black mid-America in its struggle to achieve its individual and communal goals. Here, as in the lines of Rupert Brooke's war poem, "The Soldier," where suffering and death in support of freedom and democratic values make ". . . some corner of a foreign field/ . . . forever England,[25] we can rejoice in knowing that, for Gwendolyn Brooks, immersed in a lifelong battle for black dignity and opportunity, some corner of Chicago remains forever Afrika!

University of Kentucky Center

NOTES

1. Gwendolyn Brooks, *Report From Part One,* Detroit: Broadside Press, 1973, pp. 135-136.

2. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 57.
3. Gwendolyn Brooks, "The Boy Died in My Alley," *Beckonings*, Detroit: Broadside Press, 1975, p. 5.
4. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 175.
5. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 19.
6. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 17.
7. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 45.
8. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 18.
9. Brooks, "Old Laughter," *Part One*, p. 18.
10. Brooks, "Riders of the Blood-Red Wrath," in Harry B. Shaw, *Gwendolyn Brooks*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980, p. 87.
11. Brooks, "SAMMY CHESTER LEAVES "GODSPELL" AND VISITS UPWARD BOUND ON A LAKE FOREST LAWN, BRINGING WEST AFRIKA," *to disembark*, Chicago: Third World Press, 1981, p. 58.
12. Gwendolyn Brooks, "An Aspect of Love Alive in the Ice and Fire," *to disembark*, p. 17.
13. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 50.
14. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 28.
15. Shaw, *Brooks*, pp. 86-87.
16. Brooks, "SAMMY CHESTER . . . ," *to disembark*. p. 58.
17. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 81.
18. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 29.
19. Don L. Lee, "The New Integrationist," in Brooks, *Part One*, p. 45.
20. Gwendolyn Brooks, "In the Mecca," *The World of Gwendolyn Brooks*, New York: Harper & Row, 1971, pp. 391-392.
21. Brooks, *Part One*, p. 30.
22. Brooks, "Boys. Black: A Preachment," *Beckonings*, p. 15.
23. Gwendolyn Brooks, *The Tiger Who Wore White Gloves*, Chicago: Third World Press, 1974, p. unpaginated.
24. Brooks, "TO THE DIASPORA," *to disembark*, p. 41.
25. Rupert Brooke, "The Soldier," in *A Treasury of Great Poems English and American*, ed., Louis Untermeyer, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1942, p. 1142.

CIVIL WAR POLITICS IN THE NOVELS OF DAVID ROSS LOCKE

RONALD M. GROSH

After the Civil War a host of authors, less-known and to various degrees less-proficient in fictional realism than its three best exemplars—William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, and Henry James—labored to establish the tradition of literary realism developing in the Midwest. Among these writers, most of whom wrote fiction as an avocational adjunct to busy professional careers, was David Ross Locke (1833-1888), a major national journalistic, political, and literary figure during the Civil War and Reconstruction. A printer-journalist by trade, Locke edited-published a succession of several small-town Ohio newspapers until, in 1865, he became editor and soon owner of the Toledo *Blade*. Early in the course of the Civil War he had begun to publish a series of letters under the pen-name of Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby to pillory the Southern cause and especially its Ohio Copperhead sympathizers. The humorist's vitriolic satire became such popular and effective propaganda that he received credit as a major determinant in the northern victory.[1] Lincoln, who knew Locke personally and greatly appreciated the author's work, memorizing some of it, expressed the desire to be able to write as the editor did and offered the politically astute Locke any government position in Washington he was fit to fill.[2] Also on personal terms with Presidents Johnson, Grant, Hayes, and Garfield, the editor effectively continued his villification of political and economic absurdities during the Reconstruction. Helped in part by the persistent popularity of the Nasby column, by 1884 Locke's weekly edition of the powerful *Blade* attained a circulation of over 200,000, reportedly among the three or four largest in

circulation of any contemporaneous American newspaper or magazine.[3] The Blade's mailing list included over 22,000 post offices coast-to-coast.[4]

A friend of Mark Twain, Josh Billings, and Thomas Nast, Locke had other literary aspirations than Toledo-based journalism and Reconstruction political-economic satire. Between 1871 and 1879 he lived and edited in New York City, primarily associated with the elitist New York *Evening Mail*, which participated significantly in the war on "Boss" Tweed. While retaining control of the *Blade* and continuing his popular Nasby letters, Locke wrote verses, an extensive number of sketches and short stories, two plays, two published novels, and several brief hymns. But for all Locke's versatility and his skill with satire, his novels, both written in the 1870s, have emerged as his most enduring contribution to American letters.

Neither of David Ross Locke's novels reached very closely to exhibiting the style of a mature realism of a Howells, a Twain, or a James, yet the novels do not represent failure at serious fiction on the part of Locke. Both *A Paper City* (1878) and *The Demagogue* (1891, posthumously) represent a certain calculated achievement on his part. In Locke's fiction, as in that of other early grassroots Midwestern realists of the 1860s and 1870s, "artistic value is subordinant to, or depends upon, popular effect."[5] Integrating characteristics common to local color, regionalism, realism, and journalistic satire, they often used the novel as much as or more for didactic purposes than for aesthetic. A part of that tradition, and in spite of Locke's avowals, internal to his narratives, of historical impartiality, both of his novels are reform-minded and attempt more to speak to their audiences about contemporaneous issues of economic and political moment than to chronicle the recent internecine national tragedy. As "a journalist, a gifted writer, and an able editor," Locke "wrote for his times, dealing with issues confronting the nation at the very moment when he stood at his type case or sat at his typewriter to record his comments on them."[6] As might be expected, then, Locke felt free to use events and circumstances of Civil War politics, for example, as a backdrop to enlighten as well as entertain his contemporaries.

Surprisingly enough, in spite of Locke's extensive and crucial role in the outcome of the war (as a rabid Republican supporter of Lincoln and Emancipation), he achieves a remarkable degree of concrete objectivity concerning Civil War politics. Editor of the Bucyrus *Journal* in northern central Ohio at the time the Civil War broke out, Locke accepted a second lieutenant's commission in Senator John Sherman's Brigade of Volunteer Infantry and Cavalry, which he resigned a few weeks later to become editor of the Findlay, Ohio, *Hancock Jeffersonian*. Apparently Ohio Governor William Dennison had intervened to urge the experienced Locke to remain a civilian journalist. As David Anderson notes, "In politics Locke was a strong antislavery Whig who joined forces with the Republicans as an anti-Nebraska man. A product as well as a practictioner of the no-holds-barred school of politics and journalism of the 1850s, Locke was eminently suited to satirize and berate the Democratic opposition . . . The political tradition, the result of frontier individualism and Jacksonian democracy, not only strongly influenced Locke . . . but it was also the tradition that produced the new president, Abraham Lincoln."[7] For the remainder of the war Locke reported news from Findlay while he editorialized for the Northern cause and wrote the Nasby papers, which aided the Northern morale to an inestimable degree. He used especially his exposure to the Ohio "Copperhead" Peace Democracy movement he had gained during his five years of journalism in Bucyrus to penetrate that movement's weaknesses. Crawford County and Bucyrus, its county seat, had been so Democratic in politics that they had ballotted in favor of every Democratic presidential candidate from Andrew Jackson to Stephen Douglas.[8] So effective was Locke's labor on behalf of the Northern cause that Massachusetts Congressman George S. Boutwell, who became Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury, attributed the Northern victory to the Army, the Navy, and the Nasby papers.[9] To a large degree Locke's success rested upon his devotion to Lincoln as well as to a penetration of Ohio and Midwestern politics, so crucial to Lincoln's and the Republicans' prosecution of the war both militarily and politically. Locke admired Lincoln enormously, calling him "The greatest man in some respects, who ever lived, and in all respects the most

loveable a man whose great work gave him the heart of every human being with a heart throughout the civilized world, and whose tragic death made a world sigh in pity. It was an honor to know him, and more than an honor to be approved by him."[10] All of this—his fidelity to a soon-martyred Lincoln, his active supportive role in the civilian trenches of northern and Midwestern politics, his use of Civil War events and circumstances as commentary on contemporaneous issues, and the mixture of narrative style which permeated most transitional regional progress toward realism—could easily have precluded much objectivity on Locke's part toward Northern politics of the Civil War.

In what is perhaps Locke's unique contribution to the trail of post-war literary treatments of the Civil War, however, he reveals himself through his novels as having been sufficiently an accurate and impartial journalistic observer to penetrate the hypocrisies, pragmatism, and opportunism which underlay much Northern Civil War political motive and activity. (As an aside, to his credit, some would say, Locke must also have been a sufficiently good soldier to labor journalistically during the war on behalf of the Union cause while restraining himself from exposing Union abuses where they would have aided and abetted Lincoln's opponents.) Though Locke most overtly and extensively uses his material in *A Paper City* to critique the contemporaneous scene of the middle 1870s, particularly its inflationary economy and subsequent crash, he also includes at least preliminary implications concerning the ethical milieu of the Civil War and its aftermath. Probing for the causes of America's current economic disaster, Locke mouths the bywords of the 1860s and 1870s as his major character, a dentist-turned-speculator named Charles Burt, refers grandly to "this day of enterprise and development"[11] regarding the ease with which Congressional appropriations could be obtained for construction of expensive railroads. Charles Burt himself represents the opportunist "of a type very common to the country during the last twenty-five years" (p. 14), including, of course, the war years. Locke evidently traces the roots of an overheated and over-expanded economy to the same roots which economic historian Harold Faulkner describes in a comprehensive summary of the American economic scene in the decade following the close of the Civil War:

> The feverish industrial and agricultural activity in the North during the Civil War, aided by the rising prices, had inaugurated a period of unprecedented prosperity . . . Enormous amounts of capital had been sunk in railroads to finance the 30,000 miles built between 1867 and 1873, from which small immediate returns could be expected . . . Speculation and extravagance were rampant, and the business morality of politicians and capitalists, as witnessed by the Credit Mobilier and the Black Friday scandals, left much to be desired.[12]

Locke brings together his preliminary judgments upon post-war economic abuses in the character of Magnus Plutus, the "eminent financier . . . who had successfully negotiated the bonds of the government at a time when the bonds were a great deal better than the money the people paid for them . . ." (p.399), and traces them to the Republican Unionists' decision to issue paper currency and bonds. Magnum Plutus himself is a thinly disguised figure of Jay Cooke, financial genius of the North's government bond economy during the war and owner of the nation's leading investment company, which failed and precipitated the Panic of 1873 while ostensibly building the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Locke also seems to be alluding to the heavy hand of the military upon politics following the war—the phenomenon of continued and perhaps unwarranted domination of civilian matters by returned veterans, usually officers anxious to satisfy their taste for power. As he does in *The Demagogue*, where he also mentions the matter frankly several times, Locke caricatures an officer, a Colonel Seth Peppernell, who primarily contributes to the inflationary landcompany an air of "a man of millions," being a loud, exaggerating, pompous talker, who bullied a man, if not into agreeing with him, at least into silence. He blusters weakly before the strong but often uses his oratory effectively in eloquent and florid patriotic speech. In this case, the "Colonel" has never worked in his life and has never even served in the military but has capitalized upon the Union victory by taking to himself an officer's rank and title.

Published in 1891, three years following Locke's death, *The Demagogue* most clearly and directly reveals the depth of Locke's penetration of opportunistic Midwestern Civil War politics. He introduces Caleb Mason, his protagonist, as an abundantly talented, energetic, and determined young man, who soon turns totally pragmatic, selfish, and unscrupulous as to both his goals and his methods of achieving them. Through Mason and the conscious use of the north-west corner of Ohio, especially Defiance County, as a political microcosm for the Midwest and the nation, Locke excoriates the hypocritical and pragmatic motives and techniques of politicians during the War. But highlighting even more strikingly his objectivity, Locke, staunch Republican reconstructionist, makes the pragmatic Mason a Republican, who scrambles agilely up through the pre-war and wartime political ranks to become, finally, the most visible and effective anti-Democratic member of the Republican party, though absolutely without integrity and quite unworthy of trust.

Using the career of Caleb Mason as an exemplum, Locke implies that even the roots of his own Republican party are of mixed idealistic and opportunistic qualities. After exploding onto the local pre-war political scene in stunning political upsets, Mason refuses the honor of a renomination, forseeing the impending organization of a new party. He recognizes that the Whigs have received their "death blow" in 1852, as Pierce defeats General Scott for the Presidency and that the victorious Democratic party's opposition is hopelessly divided as the Know-Nothing movement runs its course. But he also perceives that "the insolent slave-power which ruled the Democracy, took the step that ultimately proved its ruin. It demanded the repeal of the Missouri compromise; and the majority in Congress did this when it passed the Kansas-Nebraska bill."[13] Noting the North's moral feeling and outrage that slavery is extending itself, Mason chooses not to identify himself further with the Democratic party until he sees which way the political winds blow. To hide his lack of principle, Locke notes, once decided,

> Mason promptly pronounced for the anti-slavery side and did it so earnestly and early that no one could say he waited to see whether or not the tide turned in that direction. He did it at the first blush, when public sentiment was against it, and he did it in such a pronounced manner that he left no way of escape—no way of turning backward.
>
> It was his opportunity, for the kind of politics that was to rend the country exactly suited his turn of mind. He was a florid speaker, and emotional politics gave him precisely the field he wanted. It requires a great deal of labor and study to attack finance and questions of that kind; but any man with a fervid imagination, and a ready gift of speaking, can talk of the rights of man by the hour. The people love it, for they love emotion, and the anti-slavery struggle produced a large crop of this kind of statesman, who went down after the war as rapidly as they went up prior to it.

Not only was the formation of the Republican party partially rooted in individual political opportunism, Locke reflects, but so was the anti-slavery ferment of some northern politicians. Again he speaks of Caleb Mason:

> His was a peculiar nature. While to begin with, his espousal of the anti-slavery cause was as purely a matter of calculation as the buying of a horse or farm, or a speculation in town lots—a pure piece of cold-blooded financiering, a placing of his present in jeopardy for the brilliant future he saw behind it; he was not having any more feeling for the slave nor care for the evils that grew out of slavery, than for the serfs of Russia—he, nevertheless, after a few days' speaking upon it, became entirely enthused on the subject. He was of that nature that he could kill a widow for her property one minute, and the next could weep over the grave of a virgin who had been taken off untimely by consumption . . . And so, after a little preliminary discussion of the slavery question, he became a sincere abolitionist—one of the kind who could and did warm up on the subject to a point that affected his auditors. To impress others, one has to believe in the subject himself; and he was of the kind who can make themselves feel what they wish to, and which feeling, if not genuine at the beginning, becomes so at the end (pp.214-5).

In this fashion Mason earns the reputation of "the most conspicuous and the bitterest Republican in the House," one "so

prominent and able . . . that every Democrat in the United States took an interest in his defeat" (p.292).

Caleb Mason's political techniques represent the norm rather than the exceptional, suggests a cynical/realistic Locke, when Mason accepts $12,000 from a lobbyist for a three-minute speech favorable to a railroad bill before Congress and when he intercepts another's mail in order to gain information to buy a mortgage giving him leverage on a political enemy. Mason purchases lots in an adjacent community under another's name immediately before successfully fighting to have a county seat moved there because it has more votes than the neighboring competing village. Election manipulation, a speciality of the cynical Mason's, involves the entire gamut of "dirty tricks" available especially to the young republic's political machines. Mason and his father-in-law, the five-county congressional district political boss, buy out two rivals' candidacies, set up a straw candidate, employ political hangers-on, bribe and deceive the opposing party, promise pensions to soldiers exclusively for reasons of political loyalty and even maneuver the War Department to neutralize Mason's opponents. He repeatedly manipulates newspapers by bribery and trickery for personal and political advantage. A bribe eventually buys the Congressman a promise of an important diplomatic post, the loss of which, oblivious to the national tragedy when Lincoln falls to the assassin's bullet in plain sight of Mason, he mourns with "My plans are overthrown. I shall not succeed Langdon" (p.332).

With an intensity that is sometimes mistaken exclusively for melodrama, Locke lards Mason's political and campaigning strategy with an enormous volume of detail, quantifying an aura of authenticity to the events. In one chapter, for example, Mason, who has learned of a rival within his party for his Congressional seat, out-bribes his opponent of the only rival newspaper editor, corrupts the editor's foreman, gains information from a spy, employs his fifth-column in the Democratic party to undercut its candidate, and distributes $20,000 among self-serving henchmen. He practices his patronizing pseudo-patriotic oratory, calculatedly exploits his low social background, scatters bets at odds sufficient to recoup his campaign expenses, privately distributes new ballots during the night

before the vote, and employs his enforcers at the polls. After promising a thousand dollars to each of his hirelings for a victory, he distributes $300 for expenses to each of his poll contacts and triumphs calmly, all practices blatantly notorious to many rough-and-tumble elections of the mid-1800s.

As the novel draws toward its climax, Locke deliberately drives home the parallel between the local political scene in Pulaski and the national political scene in Washington. As opposition to Caleb Mason mounts within his own party, Locke pauses to reflect upon the fates of Seward, Chase, and Sumner, who also fell from the favor of the Republican party soon after the national peace was restored. Ambitious, they had given the best years of their early lives to the upbuilding of public sentiment against slavery . . . had kindled a fire, fed it, and fanned it, and . . . other men came and warmed themselves by its blaze." Mason has established and cultivated the party in his congressional district, and the hint of his impending fall, too, grows strong in Locke's statement that a "public man who has championed any great reform ought to die before he is fifty, that is, if he desires to save his reputation and transmit any sort of a name to posterity" (pp.392-3). Though the comparison of Mason to Seward, Chase, and Sumner rather denigrates their memories, Locke effectively again correlates the politics of the frontier Midwest with reality of national politics.

This integral relationship between national and regional political strategies for supremacy of the Union's Republican party comes to life most vividly when anti-Mason Republicans unite with the war Democrats against the demagogue. General Stillman, the political genius behind the most recent effort to unseat Mason and appointed to be the Democratic referee for Ohio's new policy of allowing soldiers to vote in the field, receives a profanity-inspiring telegram from Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War, ordering him to remain in Louisville. His massing of the Ohio troops in the field for the purpose of manipulating their voting inclinations becomes an asset for the pro-Mason forces in the General's absence. Locke goes on to elaborate:

> Had General Stillman known that the Administration considered it of importance to the great cause then trembling

> in the balance that the party should not be without the ability of Caleb Mason in Congress, he would have thought twice before he undertook to kill him off, in this way especially
>
> . . . his appointment as commissioner was precisely what Mr. Mason desired, because it put the commissioner under the control of the War Department; and Secretary Stanton having that power, that the general would never be permitted to reach the troops at all, but that they were massed by the general, the only power capable of doing it, so as to make it perfectly easy for Mason's colonels and majors and captains to work at their own sweet will. (pp.296-7).

Is *The Demagogue* a melodramatic distortion of the political scene and is Caleb Mason a caricature of the Midwestern frontier politician, or is Locke rather intensively and concretely objective concerning the political climate of the Civil War? Gordon Milne, author of *The American Political Novel,* describes Mason as "A representative figure" of the political character of reform-minded writers.[14] More to the point, however, as Henry Clyde Hubbart's classic volume *The Older Midwest: 1840-1880,* written under the auspices of the American Historical Association, soon makes apparent, the Civil War was actually two wars, both of which were in doubt until late in the course of the conflict and both of which Locke closely observed, influenced, and reported.[15] The political, economic, and ideological struggle within the Midwest itself has been by and large neglected by mainstream histories of the conflict to the degree it should have attention. Locke fully comprehends that the North would never have prosecuted the war to its conclusion of military victory had not the Midwest stood, however shakily, with Lincoln's policies. Yet the editor-turned-novelist exhibits sufficient realism to acknowledge that a high price was paid in ethical integrity of many involved, often for purely self-serving reasons. And in his dramatic reconstruction of the fray, he pursues sufficient narrative objectivity to avoid abridging actuality if not always factuality. Locke seems to want very much to remind his audience already nostalgic concerning the conflict that, even while he highlights the contemporaneous political corruption so rampant under Ulysses S. Grant's administration, in his own age, things were so even during Union

triumph of "good over evil." Coming as they do from the pen of one whose audience would immediately identify as a major spokesman for the Northern cause could only heighten the impact of such an explicit and implicit post-mortem, political and ethical, historical and contemporaneous.

Both *A Paper City* and *The Demagogue* "possess a political and social validity which the character of the author serves to vouch for; and not least interesting of all, they strongly suggest that the seemingly monstrous vulgarian Petroleum V. Nasby may be nearer to reality than his better-dressed and better-spoken, though not necessarily less morally degraded, political descendants might care to admit." They compare favorably to Twain's *The Gilded Age* and appear "hewn out with a certain rugged honesty that renders them reliable."[16] They stand as one man's amateur yet competent and serious attempt to come to candid terms with his nation's culture, his regional heritage, and his role in both.

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NOTES

1. Toledo *Daily Blade,* February 15, 1888; quoted by Clifford Ransome, "David Ross Locke: The Post-War Years," *Northwest Ohio Quarterly,* 20 (1948), pp.144-58.
2. John M. Harrison, *The Man Who Made Nasby: David Ross Locke* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 112-3.
3. Walt P. Marchman, "David Ross Locke ("Petroleum V. Nasby"), *Museum Echoes,* 30 (1957), p. 36.
4. Harrison, p. 302.
5. Jane Benardete, "Introduction" to *American Realism* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), p. 10.
6. Harrison, pp. 322-3.
7. David D. Anderson, "The Odyssey of Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby," *Ohio History,* 74 (1965), p. 233.
8. Anderson, pp. 233-4.
9. Toledo *Daily Blade,* February 15, 1888.
10. "Chapter XXV," in *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Time,* ed. Allen Thorndike Rice (New York: North American Review, 1888), pp. 440-50, cited in Harvey S. Ford, *Civil War Letters of Petroleum V. Nasby* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 4.
11. *A Paper City,* (1878; rpt. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: The Gregg Press, 1968), p. 170. All subsequent references are to this edition.
12. *American Economic History,* 8th ed. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), pp. 515-6.

13. *The Demagogue* (1891; rpt. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: The Gregg Press, 1970), p. 214.
14. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966) pp. 31-2.
15. (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936), pp. 103, ff.
16. Joseph Jones, "Petroleum V. Nasby Tries The Novel: David Ross Locke's Excursions Into Political and Social Fiction," *Texas Studies in English*, 30 (1951), p. 217.

REBORN IN BABEL: IMMIGRANT CHARACTERS AND TYPES IN EARLY CHICAGO FICTION

GUY SZUBERLA

Readers of E. P. Roe's *Barriers Burned Away*, so far as can be told from reviews and contemporary commentary, did not balk at his heroine's instant transformation from a German into "a simple American girl" (454), any more than they objected to hearing some of his German characters speak a grotesquely comic Teutonic English. That Christine Ludolph's conversion from a German to an American coincided, quite precisely, with her equally sudden conversion from atheism to Christianity seems to have fulfilled rather than broken Roe's narrative contract with his readers. Roe wrote *Barriers Burned Away* in 1872 for the New York *Evangelist*. His novel, which concluded with a series of hairbreadth escapes from the Chicago Fire, became, over the next thirty years, a commanding best-seller; its popularity lingered through 1925, when it was made into a silent film. Today, its revival-meeting rhetoric and typology of immigrant and ethnic character dates it badly.

And yet the myth of the melting pot that implicitly informs his assumptions about ethnic characters and their conversion to an American identity remains with us. To become American is to be reborn here. That myth has had a durable, if not everlasting, hold on the American imagination, from at least Crevecoeur to Superman, that "Krypto-American immigrant." This peculiar idea of rebirth, Werner Sollors has shown, "comes out of the tradition of American revivalism and awakenings." However desacralized the myth of conversion and rebirth has become since Roe's time, stories of immigrants made American—naturalized or reborn—bear traces of a primordial "relig-

ious symbolism."[1] The "rhetoric of ethnicity," in short, derives from biblical sources, from the Christian belief in regeneration.

The making of Americans and the constant remaking of Chicago's ethnic identity have engaged the imagination of the city's novelists from E. P. Roe to Saul Bellow. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, while debates over immigration restriction and assimilation flared, Chicago writers attempted to assimilate the "alien" into fiction. The stress here falls on "attempted." In many Chicago novels of the 1880s and the 1890s, the immigrant belongs to a night or nether world that genteel writers like Hobart Chatfield-Taylor view from so great a distance that ethnic figures threaten to melt into invisibility. Even the Chicago novelist Robert Herrick complained in 1914 that "except in a thin, theatrical manner, the German, the Scandinavian, the Slav,—even the sympathetic Latin,—has made no firm imprint upon our literature."[2] He silently discounted his own Chicago novels where foreign anarchists, expatriate European artists, and immigrant workers appear frequently as minor characters or as symbols of the modern American city's industrial chaos. Exemplary studies of the city's literature covering this period—Duffey's *Chicago Renaissance,* Duncan's *Culture and Democracy,* and Smith's *Chicago and the American Literary Imagination*—have, not too surprisingly, given little or no attention to fictional representations of immigrants and immigrant experience. The omission almost seems understandable.

Yet the small army of Chicago novels that appeared before World War I richly illustrates, if it does not finally define, the making of the immigrant and ethnic character. In the typology and the codes of character these novels express, we can still find, with variations, important statements of the melting pot myth: a sense of the way "partitions" between people are drawn, maintained, and transcended—the melting and fusing that images rebirth and emblemizes a new people or nation of nations. I will trace the lineaments of this myth in two Chicago novels—E. P. Roe's *Barriers Burned Away* and Fuller's *The Cliff-Dwellers*—and through two half-fictional works, Krausz's *Street Types of Chicago* and Stead's *If Christ Came to Chicago.* Roe's novel provides my initial and central focus, since he joins a

traditional "narrative of conversion" to the melting pot myth, with transparent fullness and clarity.

I.

Barriers Burned Away is a story of rebirth. Or, rather, it is a series of such stories that begins with the elder Mr. Fleet's deathbed conversion, a least-minute triumph over an "alienated heart" (17); it ends with the alien Christine Ludolph's rebirth as an American and her conversion to Christianity (the final chapter).[3] The novel also frames the conventional story of the young man from the country who has come to the city to make his fortune. During the course of his struggles upward, our Yankee hero, the young Dennis Fleet, befriends a family of poor Germans, takes over the job of a drunken Irish porter, and defends Christine from the mixed "multitudes" fleeing the Chicago Fire.

Until the Fire, we do not fear that he has, in living among Chicago's immigrants, ventured among what reformers and sensation novels then called the "dangerous classes." Roe pins his Germans and Irish to the novel's pages with well-worn epithets. The porter Pat Murphy, for example, is flattened into an pronominal figure. He is a "Paddie," a "red faced" "Hibernian," who "drowned memory and trouble in huge potations of the fiery element that was destroying him and bringing wretchedness to 'Bridget and the childer' " (70). Twice during the novel Dennis is mistaken for an Irishman; both times he must assert that he is a gentleman, not a "Paddy" (38, 142). He holds on to his identity by affirming the well-guarded boundaries that separate the native-born Yankees from the immigrant Irish.

Most of Roe's Germans and the solitary French maid in the novel are equally eponymous type-characters. "Yahcob Bunk," the German waiter Dennis befriends, is a "jolly-faced Teuton" with a "rubicund visage, surrounded by shaggy hair and a beard of yellow" (63). Bruder, the brooding but brotherly artist, Shwartz, the densely logical clerk in Ludolph's store, and Janette, Christine's treacherous and lying French maid (343-44), are all slotted into time-honored national types. Without exception, they speak a pre-processed English, blending an artificially perfect grammar with cracked tenses and comically strained inversions and pronunciations.

Against a pack of indelibly dyed foreigners, Christine Ludolph and her father seem almost true-blue Americans. If it were not for their insistence and Roe's reminders that they are Germans who refuse to become "Americanized," it would be possible to perceive them as Americans (90, 95). Christine, oddly enough, was born in America; her mother, now dead, was French. For them, being or becoming American seems a question of a consenting will, not blood or birthright. Nothing in the Ludophs' formal, metered speech marks them as German or serves to distinguish them from the novel's New Englanders, like Fleet and Susie Winthrop, who speak in the same elegant idiom. Susie Winthrop and Christine are close friends and social equals. Roe does declare that Baron Ludolph's "appearance was unmistakably that of a German of the highest and most cultivated type" and adds that "his English was so good . . . you detected only a foreign accent" (68). None of his speeches, however. betray that accent.

What brands Christine and her father as foreign is their "German scepticism," their arrogant and mocking denial of Christian beliefs. Christine's "heathen" or "pagan" qualities are projected in constant references to her cold manner (159). When Dennis Fleet envisions her in an allegorical painting, he paints her "sleeping on a couch of ice" set within "a grotto of ice." A young man in the painting gestures "as if to awaken her" (288-89).[4] Such descriptions, it turns out, write the prelude to her conversion amidst the flames of the Chicago Fire. Dennis will awaken and rescue her from death in the Fire. Roe thus clearly underlines the act of "awakening" and the melting away of her coldness with a religious significance.

But it is his invocation of the myth of the melting pot that most forcefully figures Christine's conversion and rebirth. Several chapters before the Fire, he anticipated Christine's conversion, and the necessary terms of it, in a conversation between Dennis and his mother. His mother has told Dennis that he cannot hope to marry Christine, since she has an "unchanged, unrenewed" heart. Then she says, in a long speech that outlines the spiritual meaning of the Fire, that "if He chooses that the dross in her character should be burned away, and your two lives fused, there are in His providence just the fiery trials . . .

that will bring it about . . . The crucible of affliction, the test of some great emergency, will often develop a weak . . . girl into noble life . . ." Dennis answers, taking up the crucible figure: "as you say, if the Divine Alchemist wills it, He can change even the dross to gold, and turn unbelief to faith" (323). At the moment of her conversion, Christine senses that she has been changed in "the crucible of this fire" (406). Dennis sees in the "glare of the fire . . . on her face . . . the light of heaven" (413). With an exacting typological precision, Mrs. Fleet's prophecy of "fiery trials" has been fulfilled. The image of God "the Divine Alchemist" is later carried forward in the hostler Cronk's pre-nuptial toast to Dennis and Christine: "The United States of Ameriky! . . "the two great elemental races—the sanguinary Yankee and the phlegmatic German—become one . . ." (449).

I have quoted from Roe's text generously because, however clumsy his rhetoric, it is a remarkable anticipation of the idea of racial or ethnic "fusion" that ended Zangwill's famous play, "The Melting Pot" (1908). The image of America as the Divine Alchemist's fusion of "races," the burning off of racial impurities or "dross" in rebirth, a symphonic or musical melting of individual ethnic groups, the symbolic death of the heroine's brutal old world father, the impending marriage of a young man and woman of opposed "races"—such parallels of melting and fusing might be extended and multiplied through detailed comparisons. But, at one critical point, the analogous plots and rhetoric diverge. Though Roe has his heroine speak of an end to "every barrier," his ambivalent descriptions of the Irish and his references to "Babel" and "Pandemonium" express an undefined fear of "mingling" (378, 380-1, 395). Zangwill dramatized, through the image of the "purging flame" and the "melting pot," the melting and fusing of "all races and nations" in America (185). Roe does not envision a universal end to the symbolic barriers or "partition walls" between ethnic groups, though, during the fire, it seemed to Dennis "as if the people might be gathering for the last great day" (378).

The barriers between Christine and Dennis may have been "burned away," but the barrier between them and Chicago's "heterogeneous mass of humanity" withstands the purging flames (395). When, during the Fire, Dennis unites Germans, Irish,

and Americans in hymn singing, the unified voices of the crowd seem, for a moment, to symbolize the unity of a future America and the coming of a new American race. Zangwill also was to use music, David Quixano's "American Symphony," to symbolize such a polyphonic blending of races. In the last act of his play "The Melting Pot," all the immigrants who hear the "American Symphony" understand it "with their hearts," a sign of their unity and conversion.[5] The hymn singing of the crowd in *Barriers Burned Away,* however, ends in "harshest discord"—a blasphemous and "half-drunken" Irishman rejects "Jasus" and the "singing' parson." His grating "voice" sounds an antiphonal refrain to the hymn momentarily "heard above the roar of the flames" (399). Roe's polyglot crowd, driven by the Fire to the shores of Lake Michigan, thus raises the spectre of Babel even as it prefigures the redemptive unity of "the last great day."

Christine's exultant shout, that "EVERY BARRIER IS BURNED AWAY!" (454), may proclaim a universal salvation, but the novel records only her experience of it. The burning away of barriers symbolizes her rebirth and conversion, the end to her separation from God, America, and Dennis. In the final chapter, "Every Barrier Burned Away," Christine and Dennis stand among the ruins of her father's Art Building, looking at the "ghostly" remains of the "walls" (451). Her father died there during the Fire, and his ashes lie mixed with the rubble of the building. After seeing these ruins of her past, Christine says she wishes to "take leave" of her "old life" (452). The destroyed walls, quite clearly, figure the ethnic and religious barriers—her father's beliefs—that separated her from a "new" life.

These joined images—of destroyed partition walls and a "new man"—recall specific verses from St. Paul's Epistles:

> For he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us;* Having abolished in his flesh the enmity . . . to make in himself of twain one new man . . . (Ephesians 2:14-15)

According to Sollors, these two verses shaped the late nineteenth century language of ethnicity "in numerous American texts." He cites, as capping illustration, a description of the "broken . . . wall of partition" in which Paul images a nation of

nations, where "aliens" are, in Christ, "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens" (Ephesians 2:19). Citing these and other passages from St. Paul, Sollors can show that "Zangwill's melting pot language was heavily and explicitly indebted to the New Testament."[6] Though Roe's enactment of Christine's conversion also seems dependent on St. Paul's Epistle, he evidently blots out the implications and the logic of the broken-wall imagery. Burning away the barriers in the Chicago Fire does not herald an America, or a Chicago, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:9-11). Roe's rendition of the Pauline doctrine of rebirth seems, in the end, partial; his invocation of Paul's imagery finally stands incomplete.

II.

Roe, as a Presbyterian minister, certainly knew Paul's Epistles and was privy to the American interpretation of the universal rebirth they emblemized. Still, no all-inclusive catalog of races and nationalities—no nation of nations—emerges in the particular future the ending of his book prophesies. We see, instead, a picture of Christine and Dennis climbing together toward "their heavenly home" (455). For an epic catalog of a nation of nations in Chicago fiction, we must turn to two works of the 1890s: the photographer Sigmund Krausz's *Street Types of Chicago* (1892) and Henry B. Fuller's novel *The Cliff-Dwellers* (1983).

At the core of Krausz's book are forty-five photos of "street types," ranging from a full-blooded American "Tough" to a German "Beerman" to a black "Reverend George Washington Snowball" to an Italian "Organ-grinder" to a Greek or Italian "Banana Peddler." Each of these "types" is described in a "literary sketch" by a "well-known author" (Opie Read, James Maitland, and Franklin H. Head are the best known of the eighteen journalists and dedicated amateurs that Krausz enlisted). The "sketches" are breezy or sententious; almost all are uniformly condescending, stressing the cheerfulness and self-reliance of their "subjects." Even so, within the covers of this small, "souvenir" book, Krausz created a kind of epic catalog of Chicago's races, nationalities, and types.

His book, evidently, began in 1891 as a series of mounted plates sold separately as "Street Types of Chicago—Character Studies."[7] He photographed these "types" in his Cottage Grove Avenue studio, not on the streets of Chicago—as Kogan and Wendt and others have mistakenly inferred.[8] Krausz's "city streets" are artificially staged scenes with stylized backdrops; the poses and street clothes of the subjects, in turn, are artfully tailored to meet the camera eye (Plate 1). Krausz recalled, in his introduction, that he had to appeal to "the vanity" of some subjects and had to bribe others "to visit [his] studio in the garb and equipments of their daily vocations" (1892: vi). When he first published his book in 1892, the collected "street types" were presented and sold to Chicago World's Fair visitors as "the men and women who have made and are making our Columbian Fair City what it now is" (1892: v). All such references to Chicago and to specific place and street names in the city were deleted from the 1896 version, *Street Types of America.* Stripped of local references, Krausz's revised version now focused, and sometimes forced, a typological interpretation of America as a nation of nations.

The identification of the city's diverse nationalities with America had already been asserted in Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch's introduction to the 1892 edition. There he affirmed that Chicago was "at once the typical American city and the most cosmopolitan":

> It is a monument to the thrift, the push, and the energy of its children, among whom are represented the best of all countries, races, and nations of this earth. The tower of Babel scarce exceeded it in the multiplicity of the languages that were re-echoed by its towering heights. And varied as is the polyglot population, all are united in the determination to make the Garden City . . . the focus of all that makes for the larger and better life of man . . . they are the promise of still greater achievements . . . in the near future. (1892:v)

Hirsch's rumbling train of metaphors and heavy load of rhetoric arrives at a strange set of associations. The tower of Babel, which in Genesis and in tradition typified the confused dispersal of nations, is wrenched into association with a united "polyglot population." Rabbi Hirsch, who held the chair of rabbinic

literature and philosophy at the University of Chicago and who "was one of the outstanding leaders of the Parliament of Religions" at the Columbian Exposition, must have known he was playing fast and loose with the Book of Genesis. His maneuver may have been aimed at nativists like Chatfield-Taylor who had, for some years, made Babel a symbol of the immigrant threat to America's "peace and harmony."[9] Hirsch sought, through the looping transposition, to equate Babel, Chicago, and America: to identify "cosmopolitan" with Chicago's and America's future.

That they prefigured America and its future was a critical if familiar claim. In identifying the foreign born with the promise of America, he had called them the "children . . . of all countries, races, and nations" (1892:v). According to Sollors, such assertions—that all men were God's children—frequently served orators and sermon-makers decrying slavery and racial discrimination in mid and late nineteenth-century America. Their rhetoric and imagery, like Hirsch's, ultimately rested on the words and the authority of St. Paul' "you are all the children of God . . . neither Jew nor Greek . . . all one" (Galations 3:26-28). These lines were finally read as a prophecy of America's "ultimate unity and equality in diversity."[10]

Krausz's photos flesh out this idea in the recurrent images of immigrant children (Plate 2). For example, the photo of the "Accordion Player," a picture of an Italian mother and child represents future America: "the little . . . fellow on her sturdy back may grow up to be an independent, stalwart American boy" (126). And a "self-reliant" Italian-American newsgirl is characterized as the "future mother of citizens" (70). A Russian-Jewish matchboy smiles with the pluck of a Horatio Alger here: "the future will see him a successful business man—perhaps a millionaire" (38). From this immigrant, and others like him, will come the future and typical America. In the 1890s and early 1900s this belief verged on becoming commonplace. Among social reformers, in particular, this melioristic idea emerged in iconic renderings of immigrant children, kindred to Krausz's. In 1900, the architect Lucy Fitch Perkins designed a mural for the University of Chicago Settlement House, "May-Pole Dance, Children of All Nations." There she created children in foreign

costumes who signalled ethnic diversity, even as their uniformly, stylized faces and the symmetry of their movements symbolized America's future unity (Plate 3).

Together Krausz's typed immigrants illustrated America's "promise" in yet another way: though they are all poor, they all seem to be contributing something to America. Nearly every immigrant Krausz photographed is shown carrying food or humbly offering services. They might easily be assembled into a tableau illustrating a version of the "immigrant gifts" doctrine that settlement house workers were to promote (Plate 4). Krausz shows, for example, the German "Beerman" bringing beer to "families, foreign and native"; his "Statuetti" peddler brings "art . . . to enlighten Americans"; the smiling, maternal Syrian peddler comes "from far-away Damascus" with "collar-buttons, fancy purses . . . pins and needles" (45, 57, 65). The Italian scissors-grinder, like the "swarthy banana peddler," is photographed in the posture of a gift-giver, clothed in the respectability of businessman and frequently titled "citizen" (142). However contrived the poses, these photos offered visual proof that the immigrant was being remade into an American.

That Krausz's unnamed subjects are called types, presumably classified and controlled within some visual and social order, further demystified them and, so it would seem, made them less forbiddingly foreign. In this, *Street Types of Chicago* belongs to a literary genre at least as old as the "physiologies" first published in Paris in the 1840s. These were constructed as exhaustive listings: physiologies of social types, reviews of conjugal customs, types of work and play, and the like—all of them, products of what Walter Benjamin has called "botanizing on the asphalt." Krausz may, in fact, have been directly inspired by one such book, the photographer John Thompson's *Street Life in London* (1876-77). Such typologies, according to Benjamin, grew out of an "uneasiness of a special sort," of the reader's need to "adapt to a new and strange situation, one . . . peculiar to big cities."[11]

III.

The uneasiness, deeply buried under the abstracted urban settings and thick layers of optimism in Krausz's photography,

erupts on the surface of Henry Blake Fuller's novel, *The Cliff-Dwellers* (1893).[12] Somewhat like Krausz, Fuller constructs a catalog of the city's races and nationalities, one that far more explicitly rests upon metaphors of melting and fusing. He centers it within the mind of his New England-born hero, George Ogden. In Chicago's "swarming hordes," Ogden begins to see that:

> their varied physiognomies . . . take on a cast less comprehensively cosmopolitan. His walks . . . showed him a range of human types completely unknown to his past experience; yet it soon came to seem possible that all these different elements might be scheduled, classified, brought into a sort of *catalogue raisonne* which should give every feature its proper place—skulls, foreheads, gaits, odors . . .
>
> He disposed as readily of the Germans, and Swedes as of the negroes and the Chinese. But how to tell the Poles from the Bohemians? How to distinguish the Sicilians from the Greeks . . . (53-4)

This listing of "types" reads like a parody of Krausz's *Street Types*. Ogden's *catalog raisonne* seems more, though, like a witty imitation of the aesthetic detachment of the *flaneurs* who constructed Parisian "physiologies."

That his young hero has difficulty separating or distinguishing nationalities and races reflects, of course, his uneasiness in a new and strange city. But the fusing of particular types expresses, equally, his sense of a "confused cataract of conflicting nationalities" (54). This image, and the ensuing extensions of it in descriptions of pouring, collecting, and condensing nationalities, reifies a melting pot, without ever naming one. The image is implicit in the apprehensive Ogden's vision of a nation of nations—an image that possesses him on a rainy afternoon in Chicago's city hall, in a room crowded with immigrants (54-55).

What we are given in these passages is an elliptically written typology of immigrant character. What Fuller leaves out, that is, is almost as revealing as the bits and pieces of the melting pot rhetoric that poke through his character's consciousness. We see the moment of racial and national fusion that Ogden vaguely projects in the "cataract of nationalities" and nothing more. The Divine Alchemist, present in Roe's narrative, has disappeared,

just as surely as have the signs of the immigrant's conversion and regeneration. Fuller, through Ogden, faces with revulsion the coming "universal brotherhood of man" (55).

If Christ Came to Chicago, The Reverend William T. Stead's sociological tract, mirrors Fuller's inversions of the melting pot myth.[13] For Stead the melding and fusing of Chicago's ethnic groups symbolizes its corruption and forecasts an unnamable miscegenation. In his opening chapter, "In the Harrison Street Police Station," he deplores the conditions under which "herds" of homeless people are nightly crowded into the police station and into City Hall. He denounces the scabrous treatment of the homeless, warning darkly against "indiscriminately" mixing criminals and bums. The warning evidently applied, as well, to the mixing of different nationalities. After describing the station as "the central cesspool whither drain the poisonous drippings of the city which has become the *cloaca maxima* of the world," he justifies his use of scatological, saying that "Chicago is one of the most conglomerate of all cosmopolitan cities" (19). When he describes a similar mixing of people at City Hall, he numbers and names—much as Fuller did—the nationalities of the crowd.

Stead does individuate this immigrant mass occasionally, but the characters he draws from it—"Maggie Darling," an Irish-American prostitute; Brennan, an Irish pol and tavern tenor—seldom rise above caricatures. They are there to point a moral, much as the faceless "herds" in jail are. In a word, they are types, and they are types that usually represent the city's innate moral and political corruption.

With corruption so widespread in the city, its people so inured to it, it comes a shock to discover that "in the twentieth century" all will be well: Chicago will supplant Washington, D.C. as the capital of the United States and will stand as the "ideal city of the world" (422). Stead's change of direction in the penultimate chapter both extends and contradicts some of his early fears of melting and mixing the immigrant and ethnic population. Even as he had raised the awful spectre of the Democratic party "molding into one the heterogeneous elements of various races, nationalities, and religions," he suggested that this process, turned another way, might usher in Utopia (68). In place of precinct captains, the ideal Chicago

will have "helpers," "a Church of Chicago" whose head is "acknowledged with enthusiasm by men of all creeds and of none" (429). Though Stead's "historico-prophetico" chapter predicts the city's unity "in the twentieth century," the one unambigous reference to ethnic groups in it suggests that they will be kept happily separate: "each nationality had its own playing ground, in which it pursued its national sports" (440). Like the architecture of heaven, the style and outlines of Stead's heavenly city are clear only to its maker. The ideal Chicago will be one people in its religious belief, but still divided into a federated nation of nations. The indiscriminate mixing and "molding" of "heterogeneous elements" will have ended: in its place, a stasis that signifies perfection, emblemizes the ideal city, and heralds the coming of Christ to Chicago.

IV

Stead's typological interpretations—like those of Roe, Fuller, Krausz, and other writers in this period—simultaneously magnify the immigrant into a symbol of the future and a sign of the city's present corruption and decay. Their immigrant and ethnic characters, in different ways, embody a new Babel and prefigure a New Jerusalem. The massing of "all" nationalities, races, and religions could be used to project Chicago as either the idealized White City or its anti-type. while the precise details of their prophecies necessarily differed, That may matter less than their common tendency to focus upon the immigrant as a prefiguration of the city's and America's future. At the same time, we should not be surprised, in looking back to the 1880s and beyond, to find that the immigrant's prophetic significance came to be sentimentalized, that the myth of the melting pot was steadily being desacralized. In *The Jungle,* Upton Sinclair colored Jurgus Rudkus's irreligious conversion to socialism with melting pot language that Roe might have reverently used in *Barriers Burned Away.* George Ade, in one of his *In Babel* stories, prettified the "nation of nations" image in comic and sentimental pairings of Irish, Swedish, Italian, German, and Black boys and girls.[14] But these fictions belong to a future beyond the scope of this essay. All that needs to be said, in ending, is that Roe, Fuller, Krausz, and Stead marked a beginning. Their work prophesied the making and constant re-

making of the immigrant and ethnic character in Chicago fiction.

University of Toledo

Plate 1: Sigmund Krausz, framed photo: "Street Types of Chicago—Character Studies: From Far Away Damascus," 1891. Though Krausz's subject is a "street type," the setting is his studio at 2930 Cottage Grove Ave. (Courtesy: Chicago Historical Society)

Plate 2: The accompanying sketch for "Accordion Player" in Street Types of Chicago (1893) predicted "the little . . . fellow on her sturdy back may grow up to be an independent, stalwart American boy" (Courtesy: Chicago Historical Society).

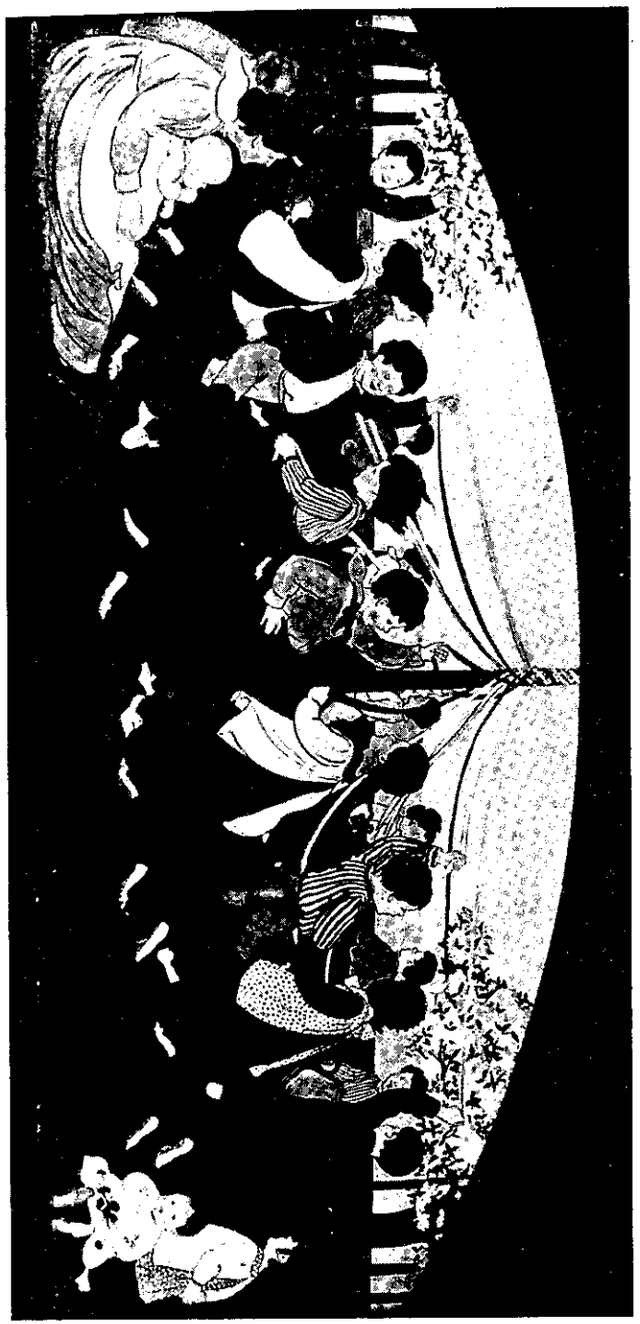

Plate 3: Lucy Fitch Perkins mural, "May-Pole Dance, Children of All Nations," University of Chicago Settlement Gymnasium. From the Annual of the Chicago Architectural Club . . . (Courtesy: Chicago Historical Society).

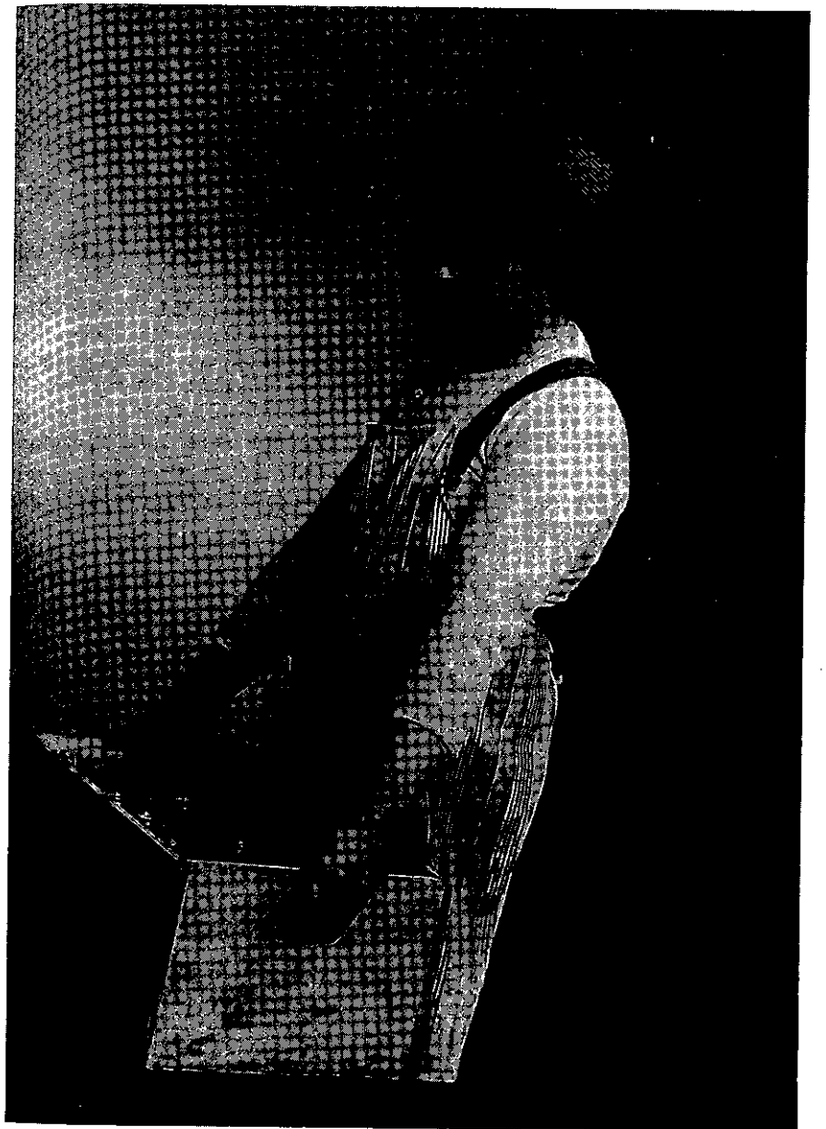

Plate 4: Sigmund Krausz photo, "Our Beerman." From "Street Types of Chicago—Character Studies," 1891. (Courtesy: Chicago Historical Society).

NOTES

1. Werner Sollors so describes Superman in *"The Rebirth of* All *Americans in the Great American Melting Pot . . ." Prospects,* 5. ed. Jack Salzman (New York: Franklin, 1980) 79-110. For a detailed comment on immigrant rebirth and conversion narratives, see his essay "Literature and Ethnicity" in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P. 1980) 649.
2. Robert Herrick, "The Background of the American Novel," *Yale Review* n.s.3 (January 1914):230.
3. I have used E. P. Roe's *Barriers Burned Away* (New York, 1872); future references to this novel will be given parenthetically in the text.
4. See Dennis E. Minor, "The New and Regenerated Adams of E. P. Roe," *The Markham Review* 6 (Winter 1977):21-6, for a detailed discussion of these allegorical paintings and their cultural significance. Minor argues, in part, that the paintings represent America as a "New Eden" set against "the cold and isolation of Europe" (22).
5. Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot: Drama in Four Acts.* (New York: Macmillan, 1916) 140-42.
6. Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986) 81-83.
7. The 1891 photos referred to may be found in the Chicago Historical Society. Citations of Krausz's *Street Types of Chicago:Character Sketches with Literary Sketches by Well-Known Authors and a Preface by Dr. Emil G. Hirsch (Chicago: Max Stern & Co., 1892)* will parenthetically note the year. References to his 1896 *Street Types of Great American Cities* (Chicago: The Werner Co.) will also be given parenthetically, but no year will be noted.
8. Herman Kogan and Lloyd Wendt, *Chicago: A Pictorial History* (New York: Bonanza, 1958) 163.
9. Hirsch (1851-1923) is so identified in the *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribner's, 1928-58).
   Hobart Chatfield-Taylor, "Babel-Tongued Communities" *America* 1.27 (4 Oct. 1888): 2.
10. Sollors, *Beyond* 83.
11. H. William Welling, *Photography in America* (New York: Crowell) connects Thompson and Krausz, suggesting a close similarity between what they "accomplished" in photographing city scenes (379).
    See Benjamin's comments on "physiologies" in *Charles Baudelaire,* trans. Harry Zohn (London: NLB, 1973) 36-7.
12. Henry B. Fuller, *The Cliff-Dwellers* (New York: Harper, 1893) will be cited parenthetically in the text.
13. William T. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago!* (Chicago, 1894) will be cited parenthetically in the text.
14. George Ade, "Willie Curtin—A Man." *In Babel: Stories of Chicago* (New York: McClure, 1903) 318.

THE JOHARI WINDOW: A PERSPECTIVE ON THE SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY

MARCIA NOE

"ALL my life I have endured loneliness; and now with all these changes come to pass I felt desolate enough," wrote Edgar Lee Masters in *Across Spoon River.* "As a boy on the Masters farm the silence of the prairie had seemed to me to be the silence of my own heart." (284).

Indeed, loneliness, alienation, and silence seem to be the enduring themes of this autobiography, as Masters complains that his parents never supported his literary endeavors, that his sister failed to live up to the ideal represented by Dorothy Wordsworth, and that his first wife was never truly his mate in any emotional, intellectual, or spiritual sense. Masters's life-long pursuit of woman after woman with whom he sought spiritual and sexual union, as well as his continual irritation at the inability of critics and the general reading public to understand and appreciate much of his work, also points to the importance of these themes in *Across Spoon River.*

It is not surprising, therefore, to find similarities in tone and theme in Masters's autobiography and in his most famous work, the *Spoon River Anthology.* In particular, the theme of suppressed, thwarted, or failed communication is especially evident, emphasized by the recurrent use of "secret" and "silent" in the poems. However, with the exception of Bruce G. Campbell's 1974 dissertation, which applies speech act theory to many of the Spoon River poems, little attention has been paid to the role communication plays in the *Anthology.* Scholars have chosen instead to focus on classical and autobiographical sources of the poems, on the *Anthology* as social

history, depicting the way life was lived in late nineteenth century Midwestern small towns, and, of course, on the *Anthology's* seminal role in American literary history, both in the poetry revolution and in the revolt from the village.

Critical commentary on the *Spoon River Anthology* has also centered on classifying the characters who speak in the poems. Evelyn Schroth notes that "inevitably the Spoon River portraits divide into groupings" (63). She cites Louis Untermeyer's system of classification for these poems (poems of plain statement, poems of disillusion, and poems of exultation), as well as that devised by Masters himself (fools, drunkards, and failures; one-birth minds; and heroes and enlightened spirits). Schroth herself classifies the women speakers as those who are fulfilled, those who compromise and sublimate, those who are defeated, and those who revolt.

The Johari Window, a model for analyzing and classifying the communication patterns of individuals and groups, can be used to establish yet another set of categories for the Spoon River monologuists, one which emphasizes the role communication plays in the poems. Developed in 1955 by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, the Johari Window illustrates the way self-disclosure and feedback function in interpersonal relations; however, it can also be used as a critical perspective from which to view a work of literature, as Luft has demonstrated in his reading of *Oedipus Rex*. (38-41)

The Johari Window consists of a square divided into four equal quadrants (See Figure 1). The square represents all that can be known about an individual. The four quadrants divide what can be known about an individual into the following categories: (1) information known both to the individual and to others (the open area); (2) information that is known to the individual but not to others (the hidden area); (3) information that is known to others but not to the individual; (4) information that is known neither to the individual nor to others (the unknown area).

The Johari Window reveals some noteworthy communication patterns among the Spoon River characters. First, the number of speakers who freely disclosed information about themselves to others throughout their lives is quite small. Dorcas Gustine is

perhaps the most extreme example of a character whose public self dominates in interpersonal relations:

> I was not beloved of the villagers,
> But all because I spoke my mind,
> And met those who transgressed against me
> With plain remonstrance, hiding nor nurturing
> Nor secret griefs nor grudges.
> That act of the Spartan boy is greatly praised,
> Who hid the wolf under his cloak,
> Letting it devour him uncomplainingly.
> It is better, I think, to snatch the wolf forth
> And fight him openly, even in the street,
> Amid dust and howls of pain.
> The tongue may be an unruly member—
> But silence poisons the soul.
> Berate me who will—I am content. (44)

Dorcas Gustine's contentment seems to be a characteristic of the open, self-disclosing person (See Figure 2). The other Spoon River monologuists who are open to others, such as Lucinda Matlock, Fiddler Jones, and Lois Spears, also reveal themselves to be satisfied with their lives.

By contrast, Mabel Osborne, both in her communication habits and in her attitude, is the direct opposite of Dorcas Gustine:

> Your red blossoms amid green leaves
> Are drooping, beautiful geranium!
> But you do not ask for water.
> You cannot speak! You do not need to speak—
> Everyone knows that you are dying of thirst,
> Yet they do not bring water!
> They pass on, saying:
> "The geranium wants water."
> And I, who had happiness to share
> And longed to share your happiness;
> I who loved you, Spoon River,
> And craved your love,
> Withered before your eyes, Spoon River—
> Thirsting, thirsting,
> Voiceless from chasteness of soul to ask you for love,
> You who knew and saw me perish before you,
> Like this geranium which someone has planted over me.
> And left to die. (222)

Frustration and bitterness, rather than contentment, are expressed in this poem. Mabel Osborne is typical of a small number of Spoon River characters whose unknown areas are dominant: they have little self-awareness, and others know them even less well than they know themselves. Mabel Osborne's monologue reveals her life to be characterized by communication paralysis: the villagers did not know of her great need for understanding and friendship because she never told anyone of this need; because she did not interact with others and share her feelings, her life became even more sterile and meaningless. Her monologue reveals that she never understood that she was trapped by this vicious circle. Self-pityingly, she compares herself to the geranium on her grave, showing she understands neither herself nor others very well. A geranium's need for water is indisputably apparent to observers, as she says; however, Mabel's need for love and sharing might not be so evident to others. People may have seen her failure to initiate relationships as motivated by shyness, animosity, superiority, contempt, an obsessive desire for privacy, or any number of other motives than the "chasteness of soul" she says prevented her from seeking out what she needed. Although her use of this phrase suggests she felt there was something wrong or sinful about reaching out to people, more plausible explanations for Mabel's inhibited and introverted behavior come to mind: an overly rigorous religious education, strict parental upbringing, natural reticence, sexual abuse in childhood, or a combination of the above could easily explain her neurotic behavior. The fact that she herself understands neither why she is reluctant to approach others nor how unreasonable her expectation is that others always perceive and meet her needs for fellowship and sharing shows that Mabel Osborne is largely a mystery—to herself, to the people of Spoon River, and to the reader (See Figure 3).

A large number of the Spoon River monologuists are people who in life were either unable or unwilling to disclose information about themselves. These are characters whose hidden areas are dominant. Constance Hately, who was perceived by the village as compassionate and self-sacrificing as she raised her deceased sister's two daughters, was actually bitter and resentful as she fulfilled her duty, constantly reminding them

that they were dependent upon her good will and obliged to her for their livelihood (See Figure 4). Deacon Taylor, a temperance leader, was actually an alcoholic who died of cirrhosis, not of eating watermelons, as the village believed. John M. Church, an insurance lawyer, became wealthy working secretly to defeat the claims of the victims of mine and railroad disasters.

This group of people includes some sympathetic characters as well as the more memorable liars, cheats, and hypocrites. Pauline Barrett began to hide her feelings from her husband after the surgery which left her, in her words, "almost the shell of a woman" (90). Pauline feels her husband of ten years no longer loves her and is only pretending to care for her, but she never explores these feelings with him. Their conversations are limited to superficial topics, "sky and water, anything, 'most, to hide our thoughts;" she never shares with him her sense of loss and devastation, and her despair ends only with her suicide. She wonders at the end of her monologue if her husband ever understood why she took her own life. Because Pauline Barrett allows her hidden area to dominate in her relationship with her husband, she dooms herself to unhappiness and despair. Had she told him of her fears that he felt only pity for her, she would have risked their estrangment. By keeping her fears to herself, she ensured it.

The characters whose hidden areas are dominant form a large group, as do the characters whose self-knowledge is so limited as to distort their lives and interpersonal relationships. Of the characters whose blind areas dominate, Margaret Fuller Slack is probably the best example (See Figure 5).

Margaret Fuller Slack's unqualified assertion, "I would have been as great as George Eliot/ But for an untoward fate" (48), is our first clue that her blind area is very large. The warrants for this claim appear to be two beliefs of questionable validity. The first is that because she was named after feminist and writer Margaret Fuller, she will become great, like her namesake. The second seems to be the pseudo-science of physiognomy:

> For look at the photograph of me made by Penniwit,
> Chin resting on hand, and deep-set eyes—
> Gray, too, and far-searching.

Because it takes more than a famous namesake and gray, deep-set, far-searching eyes to become a great writer, Margaret Fuller Slack's assessment of her literary potential seems fallacious. Her need to rationalize her failure further indicates that she is self-deceived:

> Then John Slack, the rich druggist, wooed me,
> Luring me with the promise of leisure for my novel,
> And I married him, giving birth to eight children,
> And had no time to write.

The fact that other nineteenth century wives and mothers such as Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriett Beecher Stowe, and Margaret Fuller herself became successful writers suggests that lack of talent and/or perseverence are more likely causes of Margaret Fuller Slack's failure to become a great novelist. However, her knowledge of her own deficiencies is so restricted that she presents herself as a victim of fate rather than of her own limitations.

Margaret Fuller Slack's self-deception is thrown into greater relief when her monologue is contrasted with that of Walter Simmons, a former child prodigy of whom great things were also expected. His early cleverness presaged that he would one day become a great inventor. His failure to fulfill the promise of his childhood years is attributed by the townspeople to his need to support his family by taking up the steady trade of watchmaking; however, as Walter Simmons admits at the end of his monologue, "The truth was this: I didn't have the brains" (154).

The characters whose blind areas dominate their communications form almost as large a group as those whose hidden areas are dominant. Adam Weirauch, like Margaret Fuller Slack, makes excuses for himself. Convicted of selling his vote in the legislature, Weirauch looks for someone else to blame for his disgrace. "I was caught between Altgeld and Armour," he begins (120). His political alignment with Governor Altgeld, he alleges, cost him friends, time, and money; his slaughterhouse failed because Armour began shipping meat to Spoon River. Finally, the governor failed to appoint him to the Canal Commission. With so many people working to ruin him, Weirauch, suggests, his downfall was inevitable. Because many people fail

in business without resorting to dishonesty to survive the aftermath, Weirauch's explanation of his failure seems invalid. Moreover, his contention that he lost friends because he supported Altgeld doesn't jibe with his later statement that he was elected to the legislature; surely, someone who succeeds in politics must have some friends to vote for him. The question with which Adam Weirauch ends his monologue, "Who was it, Armour, Altgeld, or myself/ That ruined me?" (120), indicates that he is beginning to become more self-aware.

Another character whose lack of self-awareness leads him to blame others for his own failures is handyman Mickey M'Grew, who fell to his death into the Spoon River water tower. Mickey blames his demise on the bad luck that he believes had plagued him all his life:

> It was just like everything else in life
> Something outside myself drew me down
> My own strength never failed me. (139)

Since Mickey never specifies what this something was, thereby failing to prove he was not at fault, the reader concludes the most probable cause of his fall was his own carelessness. Though Mickey equates his fall with his failure to attend college because he had to give his father the money he had saved, the two situations are not analagous, and Mickey is seen to be a rationalizer, like Adam Weirauch, Margaret Fuller Slack, and many of the other Spoon River monologuists.

Examining the *Spoon River Anthology* from the critical perspective of the Johari Window yields some significant insights about the role communication plays in the poems, insights that other critical approaches fail to emphasize. First, this model reveals that the largest number of the Spoon River narrators are people who hide information, either from themselves or from others. These are the characters whose blind or hidden areas are dominant; they are also the characters who are the most unhappy, while the few characters whose interpersonal relations are marked by openness, self-disclosure, and self-awareness are the happiest characters in the *Anthology*.

Second, upon examining communication patterns in the poems, the reader is impressed with the number and varieties of negative communication. Although a few of the speakers, such

as Judge Somers, Hamilton Green, and John Horace Burleson, are successful communicators who achieve self-actualization through their skillful use of language, most Spoon River characters are not so fortunate. Whether it be the communication anxiety of Zenia Witt, the mixed messages of George Trimble, the spurned communications of Zilpha Marsh, the ridiculed communications of Godwin James or Alfonso Churchill, or the slanderous tongues that destroy the reputations of Aner Clute, Nellie Clark, and Cassius Hueffer, the *Anthology* is filled with poems in which communication has a negative or negligible effect.

Especially interesting are those poems that derive their energy from the tension between openness and concealment, expression and suppression. A case in point is "Daisy Fraser," in which the openness of Daisy Fraser's transgressions are contrasted with those of her detractors, whose sins are those of omission as well as commission, as they cover up scandal and suppress information for political purposes. Compounding the irony in this poem is the result of Daisy's violation of the law against prostitution: her fine goes to the Spoon River school fund, which benefits the community. The town leaders, on the other hand, quietly but continually work their harm on the community while outwardly appearing to be among its strongest supporters.

Likewise, Minerva Jones, who dies without having published her poems, is the object of public ridicule; Elsa Wertman, the secret victim of rape, becomes the mother of an eloquent public speaker. Amos Sibley, the minister who suppressed his hatred of his wife as he preached, lectured, and campaigned for the legislature, and Editor Whedon whose decisions regarding what to publish and what to withhold are based not on what is true but what is expedient, exemplify characters whose monologues are empowered by this dynamic.

A fourth service that the Johari Window performs is to direct the reader's attention to the relationships between speakers and auditors in the dramatic monologues that comprise the *Spoon River Anthology.* In *The Audience and the Poem: Five Victorian Poets,* Dorothy Mermin comments that "poems with auditors are about communication, regarding the individual as

part of society and speech in terms of its effect on an audience, and mimicking, in the relation of speaker to auditor, the ambivalence with which Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold regarded their prospective readers" (8). Looking at the speakers and auditors in the *Spoon River Anthology,* the reader finds that hostility and antagonism, rather than harmony, nostalgia, or some other positive emotion, tend to characterize their relations. This pattern suggests that Masters, like the Victorian poets in Mermin's study, is expressing his feelings about his audience through the poems, revealing, through the negative relation of speaker to auditor, his frustration at being unable to adequately and persuasively convey his vision to others.

Finally, the Johari Window reveals that many of the characters who present themselves as victims, or who are widely perceived to be victims, whether of fate, industrialization, corrupt politics, or some other external factor, are persons whose blind areas are so large that they fail to perceive that the actual cause of their problems can be found in themselves. The source of their unhappiness is to be found in their own warped psyches rather than in the stultifying quality of small-town life. Thus, the Johari Window can be an especially useful tool in examining the *Spoon River Anthology* because it helps to focus the reader's attention on the psychological, rather than on the sociological or autobiographical aspects of the poems, especially on the relationship between personality and communication. And it points up the warning of Dorcas Gustine that might be seen as the hallmark of the *Spoon River Anthology:* "Silence poisons the soul."

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

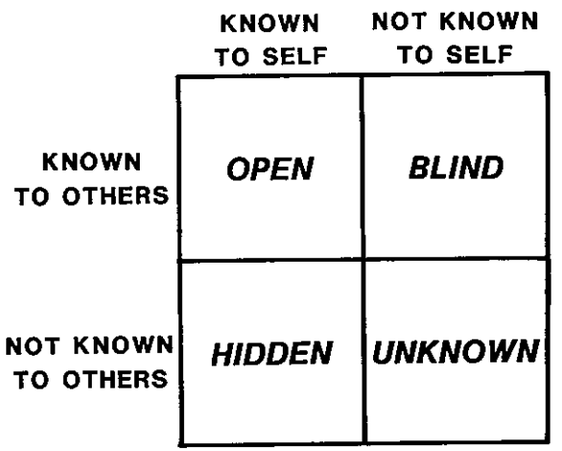

FIGURE 1: **The Johari Window**

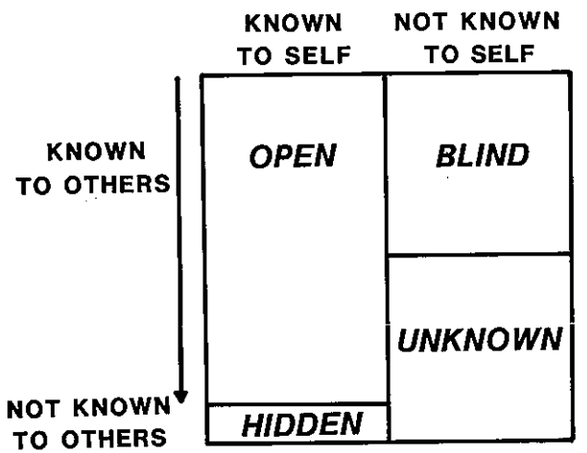

FIGURE 2: **Dorcas Gustine**

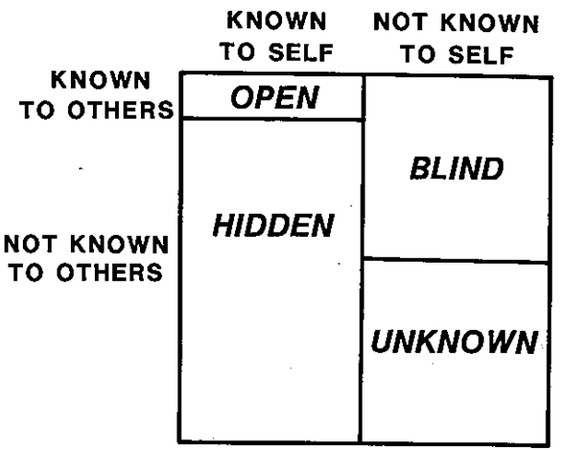

FIGURE 3: **Constance Hately**

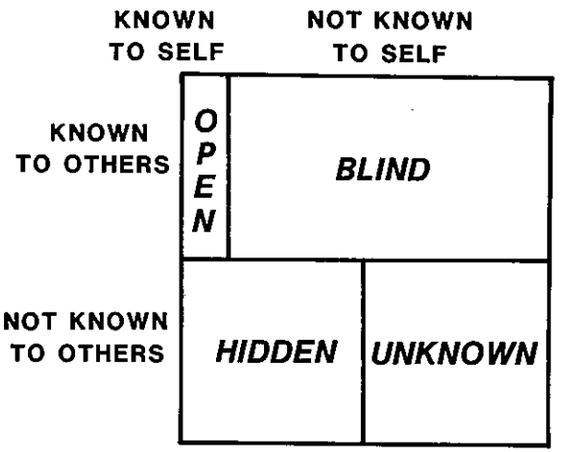

FIGURE 4: **Margaret Fuller Slack**

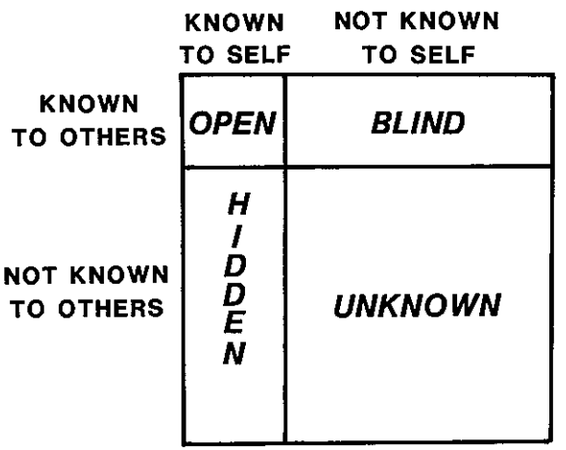

FIGURE 5: **Mabel Osborne**

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FROM REGION TO THE WORLD: TWO ALLUSIONS IN CATHER'S *A LOST LADY*

BRUCE BAKER

Although Sinclair Lewis in 1921 insisted that Willa Cather had made the world know Nebraska better than anyone else (Bennett 26), literary critics have more recently observed that Cather's work, though often set in particular regions, does in fact transcend provinciality: "The Nebraska regionalism in the works of Willa Cather is, in short, not provincial, but universal" (French 181). To be sure, numerous scholars, following the lead of Mildred Bennett's 1952 *The World of Willa Cather*, have often and quite naturally turned to Cather's use of her Nebraska material, that part of the "cremated youth" she herself observed was the very well-spring of artistic creation,. Too often, however, elucidation of autobiographical and historical parallels has obscured those very dimensions of Cather's art through which she is able to create universality, to go from region to the world. To know that Marian Forrester, the lost lady of Cather's title, was in fact based on Cather's childhood memories of Lyra Garber, wife of an early governor of Nebraska, is but a starting point in discovering the subtleties and richness of what Lionel Trilling long ago called "the central work of her career" (50) and Brent Bohlke has recently judged "one of her finest novels" (37).

A Lost Lady is "fine," I would suggest, partly because of an unobtrusive but nevertheless significant pattern of allusions throughout the novel. If Cather were to succeed in conveying more than was actually said on the page, a goal she specifically espoused in her essay "The Novel Démeublé" and elsewhere, then allusions, both overt and subtle, could function significant-

ly in her art. It is with two patterns of those allusions that the remainder of this paper is concerned.

Although it is, as I've already noted, commonplace to associate Cather with Nebraska, it is less common to note that she was a classics major during her time at the state university there. Cather had long read the classics and had absorbed many of the ancient myths and tales as she grew up in Red Cloud. Thus in a very real sense, the "world of Willa Cather" (Mildred Bennett's title) embraced not only the American Midwest but also the world of the classics, including, of course, Shakespeare. Indeed, at a national Cather conference as early as 1972, the late Bernice Slote called attention to what she called "The Secret Web" in Cather's art, a web that underlay and often tied together various themes and motifs. Miss Slote traced only a few strands of the web, intending her remarks to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, and it is only recently that such articles as John J. Murphy's "Euripides' Hippolytus and Cather's *A Lost Lady*" have begun to elucidate that portion of the secret web derived from classical sources. But it was not only in such extensive ways that Cather utilized her knowledge of the classics; it was also in brief moments of alliterative reference, often concealed by the conscious simplicity of her style, that Cather conveys "more than is actually said" and thus amplifies her meaning, creating overtones and undertones of symbolic connotation.

One such allusion seems to me to be contained in what would appear to be merely passing references to narcissus and hyacinths at the beginning of chapter seven, that winter in which Niel Herbert prepares to leave his nineteenth year and become twenty in the spring (69). It is at this very point in the book—and in Niel's life—that he will discover beautiful Marian's affair with Frank Ellinger and experience the beginning of his disillusionment. In the opening paragraphs describing Niel's frequent visits to the "comforts of the Forrester's well-conducted House," Cather briefly observes:

> Captain Forrester was experimenting with bulbs that winter, and had built a little glass conservatory on the south side of the house, off the back parlour. Through January and February the house was full of narcissus and Roman hyacinths, and their heavy, spring-like odour made a part of the enticing comfort of the fireside there. (70)

Both David Stouck and Edward Piacentino have suggested that these flowers, particularly the narcissus, are suggestive of "self-love" (Stouck, 63), an indication of Mrs. Forrester's "self-absorbed concern over the prospects of having to stay in the bleak, provincial environs of Sweet Water for another winter" (Piacentino, 68). The allusion is, of course, to Narcissus, the handsome Greek youth who was so preoccupied by his own beauty that he was unable to reciprocate the love of the nymph Echo and pined away while viewing his own image in a pool. The flower thus not only suggests selfishness, a characteristic of Marian Forrester of which young Niel is as yet unaware, but also serves as symbolic foreboding of change and death, the death of something beautiful but selfish—that very realization that is soon to confront Niel Herbert. Just as in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the myth of Narcissus is included, transformation is soon to be a reality as Niel perceives more and more the flaws in his idealized lady.

Moreover, the Captain's own association of the hyacinths with his wife furthers the underlying mythic allusions in the passage: " 'The Roman hyacinths, I say, are Mrs. Forrester's. They seem to suit her' " (72). The Captain's remark is a graphic instance of how Cather is once again able to communicate in these pages much more than she actually says. The hyacinths, on the one hand, are suggestive of the beauty which Marian embodies. As such they are part of the many references to flowers which recur throughout the book, usually in association with Mrs. Forrester. Like Paul's red carnation in the short story "Paul's Case," Marian's flowers are suggestive of vitality in the midst of a drab world. "Niel went to the door and looked with keen pleasure at the fresh, watery blossoms. 'I was afraid you might lose them this bitter weather, Captain.' 'No, these things can stand a good deal of cold' (72-73). In this scene, however, the Captain's remark that hyacinths are *particularly* appropriate for his wife suggests, I believe, yet another allusion to classical myth, that of the legend by which the hyacinth got its name: a Greek youth was accidentally killed by Apollo, who in mourning had created from the blood of Hyacinth the lovely flower

inscribed with the letters "AI," meaning woe. What Milton calls "that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe" ("Lycidas," 1.106) is associated in this scene with the lost lady, perhaps in an attempt to suggest not only beauty and vitality but also the impending woe which will come to both her and her husband—and to the young idealist whose image of beauty is soon to be shattered. The hyacinths so "appropriate" for Marian can and will survive the cold of winter, just as the lost lady will survive in the ugly present of a world of Ivy Peters, but the fragile flower of Niel's idealism, so suggestively symbolized by the wild roses in the later climactic scene, will not survive the coming of another winter. Woe is soon to enter the world of beauty and innocence.

It is on a fresh June morning, when Niel decides to take a bouquet of wild roses to his lovely lady, that his initiation takes place. Upon hearing a man's laughter coming from Marian's bedroom window, Niel retreats to the foot of the hill, throws the bouquet "into a mudhole," and realizes that "[i]n that instant between stooping to the window-sill and rising, he had lost one of the most beautiful things in his life" (86). The scene closes with his muttering to himself, " 'Lilies that fester, lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds' " (87). The climactic line is yet another significant allusion, this time not to Greek and Roman myth but to Shakespeare. The lines are enclosed in quotation marks not only because Niel is muttering them, but also because they are in fact the exact words of line 14 of Shakespeare's Sonnet 94. Being the final line of the sonnet's concluding couplet serves to emphasize the importance and significance of Shakespeare's observation; in it he sums up and comments on the content conveyed in the preceding thirteen lines:

> They that have power to hurt and will do none,
> That do not do the thing they most do show.
> Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
> Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow;
> They rightly do inherit heaven's graces (5)
> And husband nature's riches from expense;
> They are the lords and owners of their faces,
> Others but stewards of their excellence.
> The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
> Though to itself it only live and die, (10)

> But if that flower with base infection meet,
> The basest weed outbraves his dignity
> For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
> Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

Moreover, the sonnet opens by calling attention to those "that have power to hurt," the very power that Marian Forrester holds over one who idealizes and idolizes her. Phillip Martin has argued that the "they" in line 1 is plural rather than singular "partly, at least, [as] a resort from an all-too-particular instance, too close and too painful to be expressed in the singular [she, he]" (Martin 42). The sixteenth-century sonneteer Thomas Wyatt did the same thing, Martin observes, writing " 'they,' but [meaning] above all the *she*" who has inflicted the pain (Martin 42). Moreover, line 2 characterizes the "they's" of line 1 as capable of such hurt partly because of the discrepancy between what they *seem* to be and what they in fact *are:* such people "do not *do* the thing they most do *show*" (emphasis mine). That dilemma is, of course, precisely what young Niel is confronted with on this crucial morning: the sudden realization that Marian, who because of her position, her beauty, and his idealization of her, holds such power over him, is in fact not what she has seemed to be. As lines 4-5 of the sonnet suggest, such people have the capacity to move others immensely, but they themselves may remain "[u]unmoved, cold" even though they have been the inheritors of "heaven's graces" and "nature's riches" (11s. 5-6). The octave of the sonnet concludes with lines 7 and 8 introducing contrasting images of the "lords and owners" with the "stewards of their excellence"; again the images of the sonnet are appropriate to the relationship between Marian and Niel: she is the lady, he the steward.[1]

The first line of the sestet introduces the image of a "summer's flower" that in its proper time and season is appropriately "sweet." As numerous critics have observed, flowers are associated with Marian Forrester from her first appearance in *A Lost Lady,*[2] and we have already examined above the subtlety with which Cather uses the hyacinths and narcissus in association with Marian Forrester. The irony in Shakespear's final lines turns on the abrupt transformation of that "summer flower" into something that is suddenly displaced by the "basest weed." The

change is linguistically intensified by the opening of line 11 with the coordinate conjunction of reversal "But"—a crucial and sudden turning from the beautiful image of a sweet summer flower to one that is in fact afflicted with a "base infection." Indeed, Shakespeare repeats the image of the blighted rose in Sonnet 95, the one immediately following in the sonnet sequence:

> How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
> Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
> Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!

In the sonnets and in Cather's allusion, the appeal is to smell as well as to sight; the sweet fragrance of the once beautiful is suddenly surpassed by the rank odor of weeds and intensified even further by the smell of rotting lilies.

Both in Shakespeare's sonnet and in this climactic scene in *A Lost Lady,* line 14 embodies in its imagery the sudden reversal and revulsion of the moment. Niel's discovery is more than a mere "awakening," however, as Stephen Booth has called the last line of Sonnet 94; rather, this is for Niel a devastating revelation, a sudden confrontal of reality and appearance, an abrupt corruption of his idealized world. Not for naught did Cather earlier describe this morning of Niel's initiation with images of purity and innocence:

> "There was an almost religious purity about the fresh morning air, the tender sky, the grass and flowers with the sheen of early dew upon them. There was in all living things something limpid and joyous—like the wet, morning call of the birds, flying through the unstained atmosphere . . . Niel wondered why he did not often come over like this, to see the day before men and their activities had spoiled it, while the morning was still unsullied, like a gift handed down from the heroic ages" (84-85).

The "purity" of the air, the "unstained atmosphere," and the "unsullied" morning all suggest Niel's role as the uninitiated, one who has idealized Marian Forrester as did the "heroic" past idealize its heroes, Cather thus uses this physical description of the morning as a symbolic parallel with Niel's character and his idealization of the lovely Marian. The scene is set for the initiation which he is to experience; in Cather's suggestive words, he at this point "sees the day before men and their

activities had spoiled it . . ." And now, as Niel retreats from the window and quotes the final line of Sonnet 94, the sudden reversal and tragic contradiction explored in the poem and experienced in this moment are emotionally and symbolically conveyed. The concluding image of the rotting lily is stark and unforgetable—Niel can no longer return to the world of innocence, that Garden of Eden with its sweet and beautiful flowers, without recalling the rankness of the festering flower.

It is, then, partly by means of a network of allusions, both subtle and overt, that Cather conveys in perhaps this finest example of the novel démeublé, those levels of emotional and symbolic meaning that transcend the language on the written page. As Cather herself said:

> Whatever is felt upon the page without being named there—that, one might say, is created. It is the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to poetry itself. ("The Novel Démeublé," 41-42)

In *A Lost Lady* the references to narcissis, hyacinths, and lilies help create that "emotional aura," serve to enhance the mood of loveliness and impending doom, and perhaps more importantly, mirror the movement from a beautiful past to an inferior present that is central to the novel's thematic meaning. The allusions are, in short, part of that "secret web" that Bernice Slote posited, a web we are just beginning to uncover as we discern the subtlety and elusiveness of Will Cather's art.

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NOTES

1. Evelyn Helmick in "The Broken World: Medievalism in *A Lost Lady*" explores in detail the medieval relationships and parallesl in the novel.
2. See Susan Rosowski's "Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady:* Art Versus the Closing Frontier," Edward Piacentino's "Flower Imagery in a Willa Cather Novel," and L. Brent Bohlke's "Cutting and Planting—Cather's *A Lost Lady*" for the most recent and most extensive discussions of flower imagery in the novel.

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RUTH SUCKOW'S IOWA "NICE GIRLS"

MARY JEAN DEMARR

Ruth Suckow has generally been thought of primarily as a local colorist whose pictures of rural and small-town Iowa in the early years of this century are unmatched for their realism, for their impeccable attention to the minutiae of daily life, and for their honest depiction of the restrictions and disappointments of that life. Her characters, deeply rooted in their Iowa backgrounds, reveal much that is good as well as limiting about their social, intellectual, and spiritual assumptions. Suckow herself, however, protested regularly against being typed as a regionalist; in her introduction to *Carry-Over* (1936), her selection of two novels and a group of short stories for reprinting, she wrote,

> Their purpose was frequently mistaken for an "indictment" of American rural and small town life, particularly in the Middlewest, or for a sort of exposition on the general futility of human existence. Obviously, the books are neither indictment nor celebration. The writer has always believed that the matter of locality has been overemphasized in estimations of her fiction . . . If the stories did not throw a shadow beyond locality, she would never have gone to the trouble of writing them.[1]

Suckow, of course, was right; her novels and stories retain their compelling interest today not merely because of their sensitive evocation of a dead past (though they *do* sensitively recreate that past), but also because of their creation of living characters who struggle with problems as meaningful and difficult now as they were then. The local habitation given by Suckow's careful descriptions of her Iowa locales helps us see the inescapable influence of environment and makes the worlds of the characters believable and compelling—but it does not

limit her characters and the significance of their struggles to that particular place or time.

All of Suckow's novels deal importantly with families undergoing change, often dissolution. In some novels, the family is the central subject—the very titles of *The Bonney Family* (1926) and *The Folks* (1934) as well as, perhaps a bit less obviously, *The Kramer Girls* (1930) stress this central concern. Others, using a single protagonist, *The Odyssey of a Nice Girl* (1925) and *Cora* (1929), also strongly emphasize the importance of the family in the life of the individual. All of these except *The Folks* will be examined here. Published during the middle of her career, after the apprenticeship represented by *Country People* and before the somewhat more limited and specialized studies of *New Hope* and *The John Wood Case* (her final two novels), they prepared her to write her masterpiece, *The Folks*, her longest and most complex work. They include some of her most interesting studies of young women changing from childhood into maturity and learning to cope with the limitations of twentieth-century Iowa and of the human condition.

Marjorie Schoessel, the title character and protagonist of *The Odyssey of a Nice Girl* (1925), is the pampered daughter of middle-class parents (her father runs a furniture store and serves the community of Buena Vista as undertaker). She is talented and her parents try to give her every advantage, although at the same time they consistently discourage her from taking risks. She has drive and ambition enough to break away briefly, going to Boston for two years to a school of expression, and integrity enough to refuse to compromise what she learns there by "working up a repertoire" of showy "pieces" with which she might easily impress her home town and make her parents proud of what she has accomplished. But her "odyssey" does not actually take her very far—geographically beginning in Iowa, it takes her to Boston, to Chicago, and finally to Colorado. Professionally, it takes her from public education, through her course in expression, to clerical work as she refuses to teach or perform, and, finally and ironically to becoming a housewife. Her marriage may remove her geographically from Iowa, for her husband is involved in ranching in Colorado, but surely ranch life in Colorado is not far different from farm life in

Iowa—and our first glimpse of her had been as a little girl, whining about spending a brief holiday with her paternal grandparents on their farm: the farm seemed so crude, so uncultured, so deprived compared to the activities with her girlfriends that she was missing in Buena Vista. So if her horizons widen on a literal level, she finally constricts them once again, as she chooses to marry and never really uses her talent and training. Her mother, who has never understood Marjorie's yearnings, seems correct, when she puzzles over that odyssey's meaning:

> In spite of her satisfaction and pride in coming back to tell the ladies about her married daughter, some of the old puzzling questions came back. Marjorie had always been so "particular," she had wanted this and she had wanted that. Etta thought of the sacrifices that she and Ed had made. But if it was all to come to this in the end, anyway, why couldn't Margie have been content to marry Chub Patterson and let them all stay in Buena Vista?[2]

Marjorie's failure to make more of herself can be blamed on several influences: a social structure which discourages young women from striving, a family which always wishes to keep her near home, and her own lack of drive the (latter two seem partly caused by the first two). Her girlish dreams are shallow: she romantically idealizes the "Little Colonel" of the sentimental books by Annie Fellows Johnson, and her brief fling at the piano seems little more important than the secret club she and several classmates form and their discussions of which furniture from her father's store they would choose for their own. She, like her classmates, never questions the social structure in which a boy is automatically chosen class president while a much more competent girl can aim only at the vice presidency (pp. 90-3), and the editor of the school newspaper, likewise, must be a boy while the workers under him are largely female (p. 104). Thus she early accepts limitations on her ambitions, and her tendency to aimlessness is encouraged.

Suckow in all these novels makes use either of some central moment that epitomizes the dreams or beauty of life that her characters strive for or, as in the case of *Odyssey*, symbols that stand for the conflicting forces in her protagonist's life. The two crucial symbols for Marjorie are her tree-house and the family

dog, Buster. The tree-house is a place where from girlhood she goes to dream, to be alone, to concentrate on her yearnings. Buster, for whom her love can be uncomplicated and unchanging, is associated with her ties to home and family. The novel takes place almost entirely within his lifetime, for he is a young dog, just adopted, when the book opens, and at the end we learn that, old and lame, he has been put to sleep. Early in the novel, the two symbols are often associated with each other, as Marjorie several times forces a nervous Buster to scramble up the steps into the tree-house with her.

Whenever either Marjorie or the family leaves Buena Vista, whether briefly or for longer periods (as when Marjorie goes off to Boston), she worries about Buster and feels guilty for leaving him alone. Although he is technically her brother's dog, she is always the one who cares about him. And thus her final ironic discarding of home and dreams is almost wrenchingly demonstrated near the end of the novel. First she leaves Buena Vista for Colorado without even saying good-bye to Buster: "He was out in the back yard—she saw him . . . limping slowly across the wintry garden. She did not call him. She scarcely looked at the house as she went" (p. 358; ellipses Suckow's). This is a real betrayal, for Marjorie had been his champion and he had been for her a symbol of all that was dearest, simplest, and most secure in her home. And in the brief concluding section of the novel, we learn that both tree-house and Buster are gone. It is not certain that Marjorie knows about their loss, or even that she would be interested. We are told that her younger brother, now living in the family home and the only one of the Schoessels left in Buena Vista, has had the tree holding the tree-house cut down and has "put old Buster out of the way" (p. 363). Thus Marjorie's summer dreams, in her retreat with the faithful, uncritical dog, representative of the support given by family and home, have been surrendered for a very ordinary marriage to a young man who her mother admits to herself is not outstanding in any way.

Marjorie and her family are quite ordinary, and their lives, their town, their frustrations, their intellectual limitations, their language and customs are all clearly and believably depicted. Indeed, the banality of their lives as well as their solidity is made

clear. Ultimately it seems all to come to not very much. Marjorie, shallow though she may be, does maintain her integrity, does grow in intellect and understanding, but she lacks the drive and perhaps the talent to assert herself sufficiently and to risk enough to break away from the sometimes suffocating background she tries to reject. But at the same time she both accepts and values the solid virtues of that background even while ultimately refusing to remain loyal to it. Thus her trading of Buena Vista for Colorado seems like a gesture with no real meaning.

Unlike *Odyssey, The Bonney Family* (1928) is centered around the family itself rather than around a single protagonist. The family consists of six individuals: the parents and their two sons and two daughters. The novel's opening makes it quite clear that Mrs. Bonney, a strangely detached and objective yet maternal woman is the true center of the family. Mr. Bonney is a small-town Congregational minister who moves to a larger city as he takes a position with a denominational college. Of the four children, the two oldest, Warren and Sarah, are each given sections of their own, while the younger twins, Wilma and Wilfred, are characterized in passing and never become central to any extended sections of the book. In setting, the novel oscillates between Morning Sun, the village of Mr. Bonney's pastorate as it opens, and Frampton, the city to which they move. Morning Sun, significantly named,[3] remains symbolic of all that is best and most hopeful in their lives, a kind of golden age to which they always yearn to return.

Socially and materially, the Bonneys are quite similar to the Schoessels of *Odyssey*. They are more intellectually inclined, however, and Mrs. Bonney particularly is determined to give her children (especially Warren) an opportunity to develop beyond what Morning Sun can offer. Warren's section of the novel covers his high school and college years, as he grows from a gangling, shy youth with musical talent to a confident young man who settles for a very ordinary but secure career as a college professor—a disappointment to his mother who had wanted him to reach his potential and regrets his willingness to avoid risk and to sink into mediocrity.

Sarah's section is in some ways similar. She too feels like an outsider, but in her college years (her high school experience is passed over), she develops a competence and force that rather surprise at the same time that they almost frighten her.

> She was more and more conscious of a strength that demanded to be used; and at the same time of a new, treacherous, bewildering softness and hunger springing up from somewhere, working against and defeating her strength. She used to be different—all of a piece. She could look back with incredulous envy and contempt at that past self, that old Sarah—calm, clear-headed, happy—but simply a child.[4]

Unhappy that she can never be, like the other girls, "cute," she is delighted when she receives an unwanted proposal from an even more clumsy young man (p. 195), for it seems to validate her femininity and frees her to go on to make her own life. After college, she teaches and coaches girls' basketball (a motif that could be used in this period only in a novel set in Iowa!) for two years, but this brief period of her life seems unimportant and is passed over in a sentence or two. Idealistically, she goes to Chicago, and unlike Marjorie who found only dreary clerical work there, she becomes involved in settlement house work. Her heroines are Jane Addams, Clara Barton, and Olive Schreiner (p. 200), and she seems to be finding a productive life for herself when she is called home by her mother's illness and the family's need that she take over the direction of their affairs.

> She was just starting! . . . What kind of person was she, to think of all that when her mother was ill? She couldn't wait to get home, but she couldn't bear to leave all this. It was as if there had been a bright pathway opening up before her, broadening and getting brighter—today at its most golden!—and then abruptly the movement had changed, something had forced her about, she was going into darkness. (P. 205)

Not surprisingly, she manages the family quite efficiently, and when her mother dies, quite suddenly after an operation that had seemed successful, she replaces her mother as the hard, secure center of the family. She finds purpose and to some extent even fulfillment in this new life. But when her father remarries, she is freed to take up again her own life and

purpose. Deciding to enter a nursing course, she revisits Morning Sun for one last time, and this visit serves as a transition from the old life of the now dissolved family to her new, independent life. To an old friend of her mother's, she states her new comprehension of her mother's life and her own purposes:

> "Yes, I guess it was a job to bring through our family . . . But nothing she did lasted. That's the awful part . . . Things work out just the wrong way. It's so crazy. I mean—well, you take our family, Mrs. Paulson. I don't see how mother could have done any better than she did, but just *because* of that, it seems to me, everything's worked out so kind of queer . . . Mother worked so hard to help Warren—but it seems as if just because he was so different before, he settled down all the harder. He's just a regular college professor, Mrs. Paulson. You ought to see him. He's the *most* regular kind. And it seems as if Wilma's all the more crazy over clothes and things like that than if mother hadn't been so sensible. (pp. 292-3)

And so she leaves the past and sets out to make her own way, on her own terms.

> Morning Sun was left behind. She wanted to leave it. She wanted to have a chance really to turn herself into that self of whose possibility she had had just a glimpse that autumn in Chicago—that wouldn't be so bad in its own way, even if it wasn't just the Vincent Park and Morning Sun way, if she couldn't be a "cute girl." There she would find something to do. Her strength had been accumulating within her, almost untouched, the strength it was of no use trying to down or to deny, or even to try to throw away upon other people, on her own family. Only it must be something that would—she tried to make it plain in her own mind through the weight of her inarticulateness—well, benefit people. Now it seemed to her that she had got that strength free at last, with pain and blind struggle and outward necessity, from the something narrow and concentrated that most women had—even Mrs. Paulson, even mother . . . something hidden and poignant and intimate . . . for what was wide and overflowing and unbounded. Her own loneliness—the least loved of all the children—had both driven her out and set her free. (P. 196; Suckow's ellipses.)

But this passage is not quite the end of the novel. Even while Sarah looks forward to a purposeful, meaningful life, she yet has some backward yearnings. Unlike Marjorie, who leaves her treehouse and Buster without a backward glance for a life that is not a free and challenging one, she "doubted if she could ever love any other place as she had loved Morning Sun" (p. 296).

Perhaps Sarah was fortunate in being less pampered and loved than Marjorie. Perhaps she was equally fortunate in not being conventionally pretty. And perhaps she simply had more courage and determination, if not more talent. Their experiences are in some ways parallel, even to the brief stays in Chicago which are ended when they are called home by their mothers' illnesses, but Sarah manages both to remain true to her family's values and to insist on her need to make a life of her own, not someone else's.

Having dealt with middle-class, reasonably prosperous families in *Odyssey* and *The Bonney Family,* Suckow turned her attention to less favored Iowans in her next two novels. *Cora* (1929) is the story of a family as well as of its protagonist. Cora Schwietert is the daughter of an immigrant German father who is charming, loving, warm-hearted—but incapable of providing more than a bare subsistence for his family. Cora's mother, a born American, is somewhat more worldly than her husband, but she is mild and supportive of him and his values. Only Cora of the large family is practical and yearns for stability and security.

As the chimera of betterment repeatedly beckons, the Schwieterts move from town to town. Always their home is the center of children's activities, for the mother's cooking and warm hospitality and the father's entertaining stories and teasing make the Schwietert home, despite its poverty, more attractive to youngsters than other, more prosperous but less loving households. When the novel opens, they are living in a small Iowa town, Warwick, where Cora, for the first time, has had the feeling of belonging. She has friends and is becoming a part of the activities at school. Her best friend, Evelyn Anderson, comes from a leading local family, and when the Schwieterts uproot themselves again, to move west to Onawa, Cora is broken-hearted at leaving Evelyn and their comradery as well

as all the activities, including even budding youthful romances, that had seemed opening before her. All the rest of her life, she looks back to Warwick and her few moments of joy and expectation there as a time of delight against which everything else must be judged—always falling short. Thus, for Cora, Warwick fills the same functions as Morning Sun does for the various members of the Bonney family.

Cora is faithful to her memories of Warwick, keeping in touch with Evelyn and her family, as the paths and experiences of the two young women diverge dramatically and in unexpected ways. Cora develops a grim determination to force her family to settle down, to achieve some stability and prosperity. Through her clerical work she becomes a successful businesswomen, meanwhile hearing about Evelyn—her apparently idyllic marriage and children, her music, her social affairs. Evelyn seems to have it all, while Cora is still struggling to keep her family going.

Then comes a crucial moment: tired almost to exhaustion, Cora plans a vacation. This uncharacteristic self-indulgence reveals clearly how overburdened and desperate she feels. But just then, she is given a great opportunity; her firm is expanding and she may become manager of her present office. Concurrently, she learns that Evelyn has had a breakdown and been institutionalized. According to Evelyn's father,

> "The trouble was, she tried to do too much at once. That was it. Music, and the house, and the children, and all these social affairs people wouldn't let her out of . . . that was the trouble. That husband of hers ought to have . . . Well, mother and I ought to have seen it ourselves. I blame myself for ever letting her take up music."[5]

The fortunate one has tried to become a superwoman, and her need for perfection has proven too much for her. The contrast with Cora's situation is obvious—but Cora, through her competence and hard work has made a place for herself in the business world, at great psychic and physical cost, perhaps, but at least without the self-destruction Evelyn has suffered. And she still lacks what Evelyn has, in husband and children if not in material prosperity. She can, however, seize a few brief moments of pleasure. She takes her vacation trip to Yellowstone, meanwhile

putting out of her mind the promotion and all that it may mean to her, in terms of money and status as well as of work.

The trip, her first period of pleasure since childhood in Warwick with Evelyn, takes her into another world. The places are magical, and the people on her tour and her relationships with them become crucial. The freedom, the contact with nature, the lack of responsibility for anything other than having a good time, are liberating, and she becomes a new person, a joyous, frivolous woman. Most important is her attraction to a handsome young man, Gerald Matthews. Their flirtation seems the final touch needed to make her vacation perfect. Then when the time comes to part, she realizes that the interlude has been so important to her that she cannot bear to leave it all behind:

> In the Park . . . [t]here was only the present. Only the bright delight of moment to moment, which the restless gleam of his eyes, the touch of his hands and his lips, had heightened to rapture. For six days, she had promised herself, she would think of nothing, forget everything, have all the life that she could. Well, it had happened—more gloriously, more amazingly, than she could ever have imagined it. But the six days of free, full happiness had changed her. The thought of the office was a dark horror. Her mind seemed to cringe away from the old stern force of her will . . . Why should she work forever? Why couldn't she have her happiness, like other people?—like Evelyn . . . even if she paid for it, as Evelyn was doing now. She couldn't just put it out of her hands again, at the very moment of promise and completion. (Pp. 212-12; final ellipsis is Suckow's.)

And so, impulsively, she marries Gerald and enters a new but ultimately disillusioning stage of her life.

Suckow has dropped sufficient hints to prepare the reader for the discovery that Gerald, for all his charm, is no more dependable than her equally charming father had been. Her brief married life is sometimes passionate and ecstatic, more often frustrating and frightening. She is humiliated and angered when she discovers that Gerald has not paid their bills, when they must move because of debts or because Gerald lost a job. In reaching for joy, she has found only the same old insecurity and instability. When she becomes pregnant, Gerald deserts her—and so she returns to her old home and family and again

takes up the struggle, now with a baby to support as well. And again she succeeds: by the end of the novel she has become a successful, admired businesswoman, with a network of other successful women as friends, able to pamper herself somewhat as a result of the prosperity she has earned at such great cost. The news of Evelyn's death is a bitter blow, but one she recovers from. And she manages to put her love and anger for Gerald behind her.

Near the end of the novel, she finds an old picture of Evelyn as she had looked in college, "slim and eager, with her radiant eyes and her fuzz of fly-away hair."

> The Evelyn of that age, for long pushed out of her mind and only a dim dream to her—and the tragic Evelyn of later years dimmer still—was suddenly vivid and real again. In all her old eager brightness, she blotted out, for the moment, the bitter resignation that Cora had learned. Cora stared at the photograph with an ache of hunger. (Pp. 327-8)

And now she becomes conscious of the contrasts between their two destinies. "She had been scornful of Evelyn's eager trustfulness. The world was not like that! And she had been proud of her own determined hardness that had enabled her to get through a more difficult existence than Evelyn's" (p. 328). Cora is, then, a survivor. And she finally achieves an equilibrium, even a satisfaction in what she has accomplished.

> People really did get what they were after—only in such queer, unrealized ways, changed and unrecognizable, and, perhaps, at the price of everything else. She did not know that she would really change what she had . . . (P. 332; ellipsis Suckow's.)

The last of the four books to be examined here, *The Kramer Girls* (1930), is like *The Bonney Family* in being ostensibly centered around a family rather than around a single character and like *Cora* in studying people whose problems are at least partially caused by economic conditions beyond their control. This family is unconventional and incomplete, however. The Kramer girls are three sisters, daughters of a mother bedridden and only partially conscious and of an absent father. Two sisters are already old maids when the novel opens; they largely support their mother and younger sister, and they care tenderly

for both. Georgie and Annie are characterized by their names. While Annie is soft and feminine and weak, Georgie is strong, purposeful, assertive—and entirely admirable. Both, but especially Georgie, are determined that the youngest sister, Rose, will have a chance to make something of herself. Perhaps they idealize her, but she is a delightful and talented young person. Through their sacrifices and hard work, they manage to send Rose away to college—where she repays their faith by being popular and by being elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

But there is always a flighty, shallow side to Rose—she lacks the grim seriousness of her sister Georgie (or, indeed, of either Sarah Bonney or Cora Schwietert), and she resembles more clearly Marjorie Schoessel in her weaknesses. The moment she always remembers is a childish adventure, when she and a boy she has admired, Hammie, plus another young couple, leave a church supper in the evening snow and steal into the school to ring the bell. The daring and sense of freedom as well as of the companionship and of being liked by a desirable boy make that moment precious; all the rest of her life she recalls Hammie, probably because of that night, as somehow a touchstone against which to judge others. Nothing again ever comes up to that experience.

After her graduation from college, Rose becomes a teacher, to her sisters' delight. She is apparently a successful one, and she does well as a coach of the girls' basketball team. But the novel pays greatest attention to her social life during her brief teaching career, for her relationships with male teachers seem of more importance to Rose than does any sense of accomplishment to be gained from her work.

She soon marries a young man from her home town. Archie Carpenter has ambitions to be a building contractor, but he lacks drive and a clear understanding of business ethics; as a result his actual work is usually that which his name implies. From rapturous beginnings, the marriage goes through a very difficult period as Rose is disappointed and disillusioned in the man she has married. She returns to work and becomes the force stabilizing the family economically as well as emotionally. But unlike Cora's husband, Archie does love her and he stays with her. And ultimately, after a bad period of frustration,

almost despair, Rose accepts her situation, even finds happiness in it. Rose, then, like Marjorie, eventually seems to find her vocation in marriage, though the marriage itself is clearly flawed. But that life is suitable for her.

Recognizing this is hardest for Georgie. Like Marjorie's mother, Georgie cannot help but wonder what all the sacrifice was for. Georgie herself, in fact, is the one with the strongest will in this novel. When released by the death of the invalid mother, Georgie makes a new life for herself. To everyone's surprise, she goes into training and becomes a chiropractor. She moves to a larger city where she serves a number of patients who trust her greatly. Tragically, however, Georgie is forced to recognize that there is too much that she cannot do for her patients, that she came to the work too late to learn all she needs to know. And her career—and her life—are cut short by cancer. Meanwhile, Annie has found a niche for herself as clerk in a store, and her world, never large, contracts to the store and her friends and neighbors. Within this small compass, she seems content.

Rose, like Cora, has had a friend whose destiny took her in a different direction. Jane, a college chum, becomes a successful actress. When the two meet after a long hiatus, they are surprised to recapture almost immediately the sense of comradeship they had once known:

> All these years, she [Rose] had been picturing Jane as cold, ruthless, scornfully successful; all these years been slowly recovering from the cruelty and necessity of their estrangement. But now they had been apart for so long, that they were free, each of them, of the encroachments of the other's personality—there was even a delight and excitement in realizing how far each had gone in her own direction—and their coming together was a gloriously refreshed renewal. And how unjust her remembrance of Jane had been! How she had discounted Jane's magnificence, her splendid extravagance.[6]

Rose learns that Jane's life has had its problems too, and that her most successful play is the one she is most ashamed of (pp. 249). Thus Suckow's theme of disappointed dreams is reemphasized by Jane's experiences.

This novel's story is of a woman of truly domestic and nurturing character. The opportunities she is given are not right for her, and her observations of the disappointments of women of achievement in such very different worlds as the theater and chiropractic help her resign herself to the frustrations of her own restricted life. Ultimately, in managing home and family and work, Rose becomes a strong, capable woman. Perhaps she does repay Georgie's sacrifice, although not as Georgie had wished. But her strength and her appreciation for those she loves—her dead sister Georgie, her weak, dependent husband, her glittering old friend—seem finally most important. As the novel ends, we see her studying two pictures which form great contrasts: one of Jane, who now feels more at ease in the home created by Rose than her own glamorous world, and one of Georgie, an unsung heroine who had given her life for others and in the process had somehow given her strength into Rose.

Suckow's novels strongly emphasize the twin themes of woman's centrality in family and home and the yearnings of some women for achievement on a broader stage. Her female characters, however, are far from puppets set up to illustrate these themes, and they vary in their responses to their ambitions and the social forces and expectations that impinge upon them. All of them, however, attempt to behave with integrity; for each there is some principle she will not betray. Even Marjorie, the shallowest of the lot, is more willing to give up her elocutionary art than to use it cheaply in an attempt to impress others. Marjorie and Sarah, who represent opposite extremes in terms of their professional drive and sense of purpose, and Cora and Rose, who balance work and home, are all in their varying ways "nice girls"; not only in the middle-class social and sexual terms connoted by the title of *Odyssey,* but also in their attempts to find satisfaction and joy in their lives. Lacking great depths, they also fail to attain great heights, but ultimately each is able to accept her disappointments and lead a solid, productive middle-class life.

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NOTES

1. Ruth Suckow, *Carry-Over* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Incorporated, 1936), p. vii.
2. Ruth Suckow, *The Odyssey of a Nice Girl* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), p. 362. Further citations will be made parenthetically in the text.
3. Compare Marjorie's refusal, in *Odyssey,* to accept a teaching position that she sees as a dead end leading to mediocrity and artistic dishonesty, in the obversely named Evening Shade, Mississippi.
4. Ruth Suckow, *The Bonney Family* (rpt. in *Carry-Over* p. 184). Subsequent citations will be made parenthetically in the text.
5. Ruth Suckow, *Cora* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1929), p. 145. (Ellipses are Suckow's.) Subsequent citations will be made parenthetically in the text.
6. Ruth Suckow, *The Kramer Girls* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), pp. 242-3.

PARIS OF THE 1920s
THROUGH MIDWESTERN NOVELISTS' EYES

PAUL W. MILLER

According to Sinclair Lewis, writing in the October, 1925 issue of the *American Mercury*, American writers of his day were divided between those who felt a solemn duty to go to Paris to absorb the spiritual influences of French life, and those who felt an equal obligation *not* to stay in Paris except for "the refreshment of six weeks . . . every two years, providing that the only purpose of such a sojourn shall be a perception of how much better and sweeter and less expensive America is than these dying and neurotic countries." Rejecting both the solemnity of the expatriate movement and of the chauvinistic countermovement to it, Lewis allies himself with those who simply go to Paris "because the wine is cheap, the girls pretty, the crepe Suzette exalted, [and] the Place de la Concorde beautiful" (VI). Probably he exaggerated the importance of the countermovement to expatriation in order to heighten the opposite but equal absurdity of the Montparnasse crowd he had in 1923 suspiciously observed and been observed by, on his second visit to Paris following publication of *Main Street* in 1920.

But whether or not American writers of the 1920s can be accurately divided into two conflicting schools of thought concerning Paris, as Lewis maintains, the following selection of well-known Midwestern novelists who went to Paris from 1921 to 1931 - Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and James T. Farrell - certainly cannot. Though these novelists went to Paris for varying periods of time either as tourists or expatriates, and had varying responses to their experience there, all of them were caught up

in the city's mystique. And though Anderson and Lewis were too old and Farrell was too young to experience Paris as a popular initiation rite of the post-war literary generation, all three of them shared with Hemingway and Fitzgerald in the excitement generated by the "city of light"in that era. Indeed Paris became ever more popular with American writers as well as other Americans at least till 1928, by which time Montparnasse had become a gloatingly commercial tourist attraction. By then, in the words of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "with each new shipment of Americans spewed up by the boom the quality fell off, until toward the end there was something sinister about the crazy boatloads" (20). The Great Depression of 1929 of course signalled the end of the expatriate movement, and by 1931 even the reverse flow of expatriates returning to America had dwindled to a trickle.

Though Leon Edel's interpretation of this "exile" to Paris as "the rite of passage of an entire generation" probably exaggerates the importance of their Paris experience to most Midwestern writers, if not to American writers generally, it nevertheless calls to mind the solemn claims concerning the duty of staying in Paris that Lewis had mocked (Cowley XX). But if going there may for many not have been freighted with such deep significance as Cowley and Edel suggest, Paris was for many American writers, Midwesterners included, a most important place of pilgrimage. (One must recognize, however, as Chaucer did, that there are many reasons for going on a pilgrimage, not all of them virtuous, noble, or even serious.)

In the remainder of this paper I will try to look at Paris through the eyes of the five Midwestern novelists mentioned above, focusing special attention on their Paris experience. I shall use Anderson as an outstanding example of the many Midwestern writers who visited Paris comparatively briefly to acquaint themselves with traditional European culture, to gain a fresh perspective on themselves and on America, or, in defiance of the Nineteenth Amendment, to enjoy the pleasures of legal alcohol abroad that were denied them at home. I shall use Hemingway as a nonpareil example of a Midwestern expatriate who, influenced by the estheticism of Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and James Joyce, so radically transformed his journ-

alistic style in Paris that it became a hallmark of his generation. Most of the other Midwestern expatriates, while drawing upon Paris for some of their subject matter, seem to have been almost untouched stylistically or philosophically by their years abroad.

In spite of the good notices Anderson's novel *Poor White* had received on publication in 1920, it did not bring in enough money to allow him to give up his advertising job in Chicago, or to travel. Thus when in January, 1921 his friend and patron Paul Rosenfeld invited Sherwood to accompany him to Europe and offered to pay his passage both ways, he accepted with alacrity, determined to make the most of his unexpected role as an American writer abroad.[1] What he hoped to find in Paris, the center of Europe so far as Sherwood was concerned, was a city as romantic and melodramatic as his imagination could conjure up. His image of the city seems ultimately to have been derived from Eugène Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris*, a book Anderson had bought in a Chicago second-hand bookstore for ten cents.

> "Say," he said [to his friend Lewis Galantière], Paris must be a marvelous place. I imagine it full of great wide avenues, and palaces, and beautiful women, and then, right alongside the palaces and the avenues, streets filled with dark tenements, strangled women, men with knives, poor dirty children, thousands of simple people wondering what it's all about and not realizing at all that they're living in a place most of us would give our eye-teeth to get to."
>
> (Quoted by Fanning 8-9 from Galantière 64)

What Anderson found in Paris on his arrival was all that he had dreamed of, and more. On June 6, 1921 he reported, "I find myself loving Paris wholeheartedly and without reservation" (Fanning 7).

Besides the extremes of wealth and poverty, beauty and ugliness that he had imagined, he found congenial cafès and bistros, bookstores as numerous as saloons in Chicago before prohibition, and draft horses that were not castrated, unlike their American counterparts. He also met such writers as Pound, Joyce, and Gertrude Stein; with Stein he struck up a close and enduring friendship. Like other Americans he was attracted to a continent and a country with more history than America could boast, setting aside the history of the Indians. "What attracts us to this place is Old France. The streets here are haunted by

memories. To stand for an hour in the great open square facing the . . . Louvre is worth the trip across the Atlantic" (Schevill 137).

But most important of all, in terms of its long-term meaning for him, was his epiphany in contemplating the paintings of the Louvre:

> What happiness. In the work of every great man, long dead, I found what seemed to me greatness. In the vast forest of painting in the Louvre . . . trickery has always been defeated by time. The work of the tricksters, the pretty painting hangs neglected and forgotten. The great are great because of simplicity, directness, wholeness. (Fanning 29)

Anderson's instructive exposure to the history of European art in the Louvre helped him overcome his personal temptation to settle for less than the best in his writing, and helped him rationalize the endless, arduous hours he had spent in pursuit of immortality as a literary artist.

As suggested above, Anderson benefited greatly from his Parisian experience, perhaps because he brought so much enthusiasm and vitality to it. Besides immersing himself in the ancient culture of the French capital, he enjoyed exploring the city on foot: "Almost every day I go off somewhere on an adventure. I put a few francs in my pocket and just plunge into the city to find what I can" (July 6, 1921: Fanning 9). He also used Paris as a base from which to take several side-trips to the countryside around Paris, the most rhapsodic being his visit to the stained-glass splendors of Chartres.

In contrast to Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, first visiting Paris as a tourist a few months after Anderson, seems to have enjoyed the city's endless flow of alcohol more than its monuments of culture. The climax of his 1921 whirlwind tour of Paris, after a morning and early afternoon of heavy drinking, came as he triumphantly whipped off the disguise with which he had convinced two distinguished French visitors to his hotel apartment that the old, white-haired man who tottered out of the bedroom was Dr. E. J. Lewis, Sinclair's father, come to Paris to visit his son the novelist. According to Lewis's biographer, "The guests were not amused and, after a chilly interview, departed" (Schorer 320). Despite his cool reception in Paris, reinforced on

successive visits by the Montparnasse crowd's rejection of the bumptious, arrogant, insecure author of *Main Street,* Lewis found he could not resist the city's siren call. Returning for brief visits throughout the decade, and indeed throughout his life, he found, as Hemingway once observed, that "there is never any ending to Paris" (211).

It is something of a relief to turn from Lewis's revels in Paris to consider Ernest Hemingway's disciplined, calculating approach to the city, whose pleasures he used exiguously to reward his most recent, and to stimulate his next projected, literary accomplishment. As might be expected, Hemingway had nothing but contempt for the lazy, self-indulgent "American Bohemians" who by 1922 were already flooding Montparnasse. As he wrote in *The Toronto Star Weekly,* "The scum of Greenwich Village, New York, has been skimmed off and deposited in large ladlesful on that section of Paris adjacent to the cafè Rotonde . . . You can find anything you are looking for at the Rotonde—except serious artists . . . They are nearly all loafers expending the energy that an artist puts into his creative work in talking about what they are going to do . . ." and never do (Asselineau 18, quoted from *By-line: Ernest Hemingway,* ed. William White 23-25).

It was Sherwood Anderson, recently returned from Paris, who had persuaded Ernest and his new bride to go there rather than to Italy, Hadley's preference. According to Sherwood, Italy was all right for tourists, but if you wanted to develop as an artist, Paris was the place to go, brilliantly illuminated at the moment by such celebrated authors as Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound, to whom Anderson generously offered to write - and actually did write - letters introducing Hemingway as "an American writer instinctively in touch with everything worthwhile going on here" (Meyers 76). In drawing the almost outdated conclusion that Paris was the center of twentieth century literary art, Anderson was doubtless influenced by his new friend Gertrude Stein, who years later was to describe Paris as the right place to be from 1900 to 1939. Portraying England as refusing to leave the nineteenth century, and America as "overwhelmed by the technology of the twentieth century," Stein viewed France as both modern and traditional, accepting

change but not changing radically. Moreover, Paris "provided a background of cultural stability conducive to the arts." "So Paris was the place that suited those of us that were to create the twentieth century art and literature, naturally enough" (Wickes 3, quoting Stein in *Paris, France*).

What Hemingway gained as an artist from his expatriate years abroad (1921-28 but with only a little more than two years actually spent in Paris), and what constituted the principal influences on his style there, have been subjects of endless debate (Asselineau 29). Suffice it to say that the contrast between his Michigan style of 1919, as illustrated by a Chicago gangland story he attempted to compose that year, and the mature style of *Big Two-Hearted River,* written at the end of his literary apprenticeship in 1924, is nothing short of astonishing. Beginning in January, 1922 "to write one true sentence," he succeeded by the end of May in writing six, "declarative, straightforward, and forceful as a right to the jaw" (Baker 91). From that point on he attempted to write larger and larger units of flawless prose, moving from paragraphs, to sketches, to short stories, with the long, two-part *Big Two-Hearted River* probably conceived as an important way-station on the road to the novel he knew he had to write in order to establish his reputation as a major writer. Although Hemingway himself was fond of describing Cézanne, conveniently dead and hence no rival, as his primary influence, it is more probable that Stein, Pound, Joyce in Paris, and Anderson back in the U.S., were his largely unacknowledged mentors.

Regardless of the precise nature of Hemingway's formative influences in Paris, they appear to have been most powerful in the years from 1922 to 1924. Most of these influences led him in the direction of artistic compression to a kind of literary minimalism, as described by Hemingway himself: "I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn't show" (Meyers 139, quoted from "The Art of Fiction," *Paris Review* 84). To point up the contrast, finally, between Hemingway's turgid apprentice work and his mature telegraphic prose, I quote from the stories referred to above.

(The setting of the first unpublished fragment is a gangster's restaurant in Chicago, of the second story, the vicinity of the Big Two-Hearted River near Seney, Michigan.)

> When you enter the room, and you have no more chance than the zoological entrant in the famous camel-needle's eye gymkana of entering the room unless you are approved . . . a varying number of eyes will look you over with that detached intensity that comes of a periodic contemplation of death." (Ferrell 92 quoted from "Wolves and Doughnuts" in Baker 65-66)

> Nick was happy as he crawled inside the tent. He had not been unhappy all day. This was different though. Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now it was done. He had made his camp. He was settled. Nothing could touch him. It was a good place to camp. He was there, in the good place. He was in his home where he had made it. (Ferrell 114)

In this passage Nick begins to come to terms with something which is troubling him, something never mentioned in the story, indeed something very like Hemingway's own experience of war (Ferrell 114).

Unlike Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald was already an established author when he first visited Paris in May, 1921, having published his successful *This Side of Paradise* the previous year. Between his first visit in 1921 and his last visit in 1931, he spent four and one-half years abroad, three years of that in France, and twenty-two months of that in Paris, about the same number of months as Hemingway (Le Vot 49). Presenting a sharp contrast to Fitzgerald in his social and economic background as well as his early literary fortunes, James T. Farrell came to Paris in April, 1931, at the end of the expatriate era, desperately poor and hoping at age 27 that residence abroad would help him get his first book published; accepted in June that year, *Young Lonigan* was published by Vanguard Press the following April, the month of Farrell's return from Paris after a productive year of writing. Still desperately poor, his prospects were nevertheless brightening.

In contrast to Hemingway, neither Fitzgerald nor Farrell was much influenced by the cosmopolitan literary culture of Paris. What Paris did for them, besides providing some memorable subject matter for their art, was to give them a better perspective on themselves and on America, and an opportunity either to dissipate or develop their talents. Yet regardless of what Paris did or failed to do for them, they found it to be, as Hemingway did, a magic place.

What André Le Vot, Fitzgerald's French biographer, asserted concerning the role of Paris in the novelist's life, applies with some necessary qualification to Farrell's as well: "This city might just as well have been London or Rome, a mere backdrop for [his] imagination, a stimulus for his sensibility, playing the role New York had played from 1922 to 1924 before he came to France. With the difference perhaps that, just as was the case for some other exiles, it possessed some quality of freedom and excitement which had been blunted in the native country" (66). In both cases, and despite extreme differences in the two authors, Paris heightened the sense of their true personal and national identities.

What was different about Paris from a novelist's viewpoint in 1921 and in 1931 had much to do with Paris itself but more with America. In the interim the United States had become recognized as a world power, the cultural supremacy of Paris was being challenged by New York and even Chicago, and the affluence of the jazz age had given way to world-wide depression, with social concerns replacing purely esthetic considerations in art. Fitzgerald's sympathetic view of expatriates in Paris before the fall is perhaps best summed up in a story published in 1924: "No Americans have any imagination - Paris is the only place where a civilized [person] can breathe" (Le Vot 51 quoted from "Rags Martin-Jones and the Pr_nce of W_les," *McCall's*, LI [July 1924]). By way of the sharpest possible contrast in 1931, Farrell in his short story "Scrambled Eggs and Toast" portrays the latest expatriate to arrive in Paris as a rich, vulgar American dowager requiring her poodle Ruffles to be seated beside her in an exclusive cafè restaurant and served a generous portion of scrambled eggs and toast on the finest china; in the course of her meal she rebuffs two street beggars who approach her, complains loudly to the management at their violation of her sacred rights to privacy, and, after leaving the waiter a one-franc tip, departs in high dudgeon (Farrell 76-82).

Between Fitzgerald's Paris of 1924 and Farrell's of 1931, there is a rapidly widening gulf, as the artist of exquisite sensibility gives way to the artist of social conscience and protest. In spite of his animadversions against the remaining expatriates in Parisian cafés, where "everyone talks and little is said," Farrell, like one of his autobiographical characters, must have "felt that no one could leave Paris without a feeling of sadness and regret" (Branch 25; "After the Sun Has Risen" in *An Omnibus of Short Stories 86*). But perhaps we should leave the last word on Paris to Hemingway, himself an apt symbol of the city's glorious heyday in the twenties: "If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast" (Epigraph to *A Moveable Feast*).

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NOTE

1. Anderson's and his wife Tennessee's expenses abroad were further subsidized by Bab's (Marietta D. Finley's) purchase of two of his paintings for $200.00 each. One of these paintings is now owned by The Newberry Library, the other by David D. Anderson, to whom I am indebted for this information. The painting in David D. Anderson's possession is a study of a log, with the color yellow predominant. For Sherwood Anderson's letters to Mrs. Finley while abroad, see *Letters to Bab/ Sherwood Anderson to Marietta D. Finley 1916-33*, ed. William A. Sutton: Urbana and Chicago, U. of Illinois P., 1985:157-65.

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HABITS OF THE HEART IN *RAINTREE COUNTY*

PARK DIXON GOIST

Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (1985), a widely discussed work by Robert Bellah and a team of social scientists, has once again reiterated the importance and urgency of understanding the tension between individualism and community in America.[1] This provocative work also provides a challenging framework for better understanding our culture, and I would like to use it as a model for analyzing one of the most ambitious novels ever written about life in the Midwest, Ross Lockridge Jr.'s *Raintree County* (1948). Lockridge's mammoth novel particularly lends itself to this approach because the tension between individualism and commitment to community forms a major conflict at the very heart of the book.

I

In their study of contemporary American life, Robert Bellah and his colleagues borrow the first part of their title from a phrase used by Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830s to describe the morés which he felt were helping shape the character of the young republic. Tocqueville found such "habits of the heart" as family life, religious traditions and participation in local politics among Americans as vital elements in helping to create the kind of person who, by maintaining connections to the wider political community, formed the bulwark of free institutions. He warned, however, that another characteristic, which he was one of the first to call "individualism," could potentially isolate Americans one from another, thus ironically undermining the conditions of social institutions based on freedom.

Habits of the Heart is motivated by the same concern that Tocqueville called attention to in the nineteenth century. The individualism which the Frenchman simultaneously admired and feared is, according to Bellah *et al.*, a threat to freedom in the twentieth century. That potentiality was already apparent to Tocqueville, who found that:

> Individualism is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the greater society to look after itself. . . . Such folk owe no man anything and hardly expect anything from anybody. They form the habit of thinking of themselves in isolation and imagine that their whole destiny is in their hands.[2]

Bellah believes that this observation, made about the threat of individualism to community life in the largely agrarian setting of early nineteenth century America, is even more true in the complex and fragmented urban America of the late twentieth century.

According to Bellah and his colleagues, individualism so dominates contemporary American life that we find it difficult to discuss or even talk meaningfully about community. This is due, in part at least, to the fact that we do not have a vocabulary for such a discussion. Further, we have become so individualistic that we find it difficult to think about commitment to anything outside of ourselves and a small circle of family and friends. Bellah and his co-authors want to provide contemporary Americans a means of transforming this largely inner moral debate into public discourse. By so doing they hope it will be possible to develop ways of talking about the relationship between private and public life and of thinking about alternative ways to live.

Habits of the Heart identifies three cultural traditions that can provide a context within which the debate can take place—the biblical, the republican, and the modern individualist. The biblical and republican traditions, embodied in the representative figures of John Winthrop and Thomas Jefferson respectively, represent the major ways in which Americans have thought about and organized community. Winthrop's Puritanism emphasized a utopian community where success was measured in how well an ethical and spiritual life was provided for and

where freedom meant a moral freedon—based on a covenant between God and man—to do "that only which is good, just and honest." Jefferson's republicanism sought to found a community of equality and justice among men based on an educated citizen who participated freely in politics and government. Bellah points out that neither the biblical nor the republican tradition of community entertained a notion of freedom which merely allowed people to do whatever they pleased.

It is the third cultural strand, that of the modern individualist, which has emphasized the freedom of the individual to act independently in his own self interest. This individualism exists in two different forms, "utilitarian" and "expressive." The first form of individualism is best exemplified in the life of Benjamin Franklin, whose rise from obscurity to wealth and power emphasizes the notion that what is most important about America is the opportunity of the individual to get ahead and achieve success on his own initiative. Many have found in his example justification for the idea that in a society where everyone freely pursues his own self interest the good of the larger society is best served.

In the second form of individualism, "expressive individualism," devotion is not to the material success valued by the utilitarian, but to a life rich in sensual and intellectual experience, marked by strong feelings and a love of variety. Walt Whitman represents this individualism, which finds true freedom in the cultivation and expression of oneself against social restrictions of any kind.

Habits of the Heart thus suggests a dramatic way of thinking about culture, as a dialogue or conversation among the representatives of opposing values which matter to a particular society. This is an approach which marks the work of such American Studies scholars as R. W. B. Lewis, particularly in his study of *The American Adam* (1955).[3] I have chosen to analyze *Raintree County* within this context partly because it is a way of thinking compatible with my own interests and previous work.[4]

II

Raintree County is a novel which dramatizes the dichotomy and harmony between individualism and commitment. It suggests that there can exist a compatibility between an extreme "expressive individualism," on the one hand, and commitment to a particular place and people on the other. This perspective distinguishes Lockridge's novel from much of American literature which is so often characterized by the flight of main characters from the entanglements of community.

Raintree County tells the story of a single day in the life of John Wickliff Shawnessy, a modest, fifty-three year old small town teacher and poet. The day is July 4, 1892 and the town of Waycross, Raintree County, Indiana is holding its annual fourth of July celebration. As John Shawnessy takes part in the various occurances of the day he also lives in a series of flashbacks which heip reconstruct the major events in the fifty years of his life before 1892. We thus learn that throughout his life there has been a constant struggle between two parts of John Shawnessy's personality: the proper upper case Mr. Shawnessy, a staunch member of the community, responsible, involved, upright, commited; and the sensual lower case mr. shawnessy, individualist, heedless, wandering, suspect, often lonely.

A number of dream sequences and the reminiscences of three boyhood friends, who have returned to the county for the day, aid in the recreation of Shawnessy's double life. A stream of consciousness technique connects the flashbacks, dreams and reminiscences. Each scene flows into the next because the last word of one is linked to the first word in the one following with no punctuation marks to interrupt the narrative. The following is an example of how two scenes are thus connected:

> Mr. Shawnessy wondered then if it was still possible to walk through the late afternoon . . . and find strong love and a great wisdom among the faces of
>
> WAYCROSS STATION
>
> Were the words painted on the building by the tracks.[5]

Nor are the fifty-two flashbacks, though each is dated, arranged in chronological order, reflecting the fact that in real life our thoughts are seldom ordered in a logical and linear fashion.

John Shawnessy's life is revealed by these various methods, which also provide a richly detailed portrait of small town life as well as an epic panorama of American history in the nineteenth century. The intertwining of personal experience and historical

fact, whereby the occurrences of John's life are often counterpointed in time with major historical events, is one way Lockridge links his protagonist to American culture. Analogies are also drawn between both Shawnessy's life and American history, on the one hand, and a variety of Greek and Judaic-Christian myths of creation and the search for life's meaning on the other. So not only is Johnny meant to reflect the root American experience, but readers are to understand that in his quest he also stands as a universal "everyman." As Delia Clarke has noted, "In his reliance on mythic archetypes and psychlogical symbolism, Lockridge raises an American story to the mythic level; it becomes a universal portrait, a story in which one man is all men, and one country is all earth and life."[6] This effort makes Lockridge's book unique among American historical romances.

Born in 1839, Johnny Shawnessy is destined to spend his divided days trying to make sense of life, first as he comes to know it in Raintree County and then as it is shaped by the events of his nation's history. In John's first flashback it is election day, 1844, he is five years old and stands beside the National Road waving to a pig-tailed little girl in a covered wagon heading West. He too dreams of going West, to the Lone Star Republic or out to Oregon to help build the future, But he doesn't go; he only dreams of going:

> A small boy had wandered out into the morning of America and down far ways seeking the Lone Star Republic and the Oregon Trail. A small boy had dreamed forever westward, and the dream had drawn a visible mark across the earth. But the boy had never gone that way. He had only dreamed it. He saw the face of a girl fading among the vehicular tangle of the years. All the evenings of a life in the West dyed the sunset peaks with purple—the lost years ebbed with waning voices in the cuts where the little trains passed, crying. Yes, he had been fated to stay after all, chosen for a task that called for more than ordinary strength. (21)

This early scene, where Johnny has a strong urge to leave but instead stays, sets the tone and pattern for the rest of his life.

Johnny spends the long summer days of his youth wandering the county and musing by the banks of the Shawmucky River. He ponders the larger meaning of his life and that of his community as they are related to the mythical Asian tree which

has given its name to the county. That original tree, symbolic of the divided origins and character of Raintree County, is said to still exist somewhere near where the Shawmucky flows into Paradise Lake, forming the Great Swamp. Johnny dreams of finding that tree and thus solving the mystery of existence:

> Someday, perhaps he would find that tree and thus become the hero of the county, the Alexander who cut the Gordian knot, the Hercules who obtained the Golden Apples of the Hesperides, the Oedipus who solved the Riddle of the Sphinx. The secret of the tree was blended strangely with the whole secret of his life and the mystery from which he had sprung. (46)

But like so many of his quests, the one time Johnny sets out to actually find the famous Raintree he gets lost, almost drowns in the muck of the Great Swamp, earning for his effort only the laughter of his friends.

Johnny is also a voracious reader, always seeking the connection between the world's great poems to his life in Indiana and the American Republic:

> Johnny Shawnessy didn't so much read Shakespeare as he read a vaguely imagined book of himself. In Shakespeare's luxuriant language, strong rhythms, terrific metaphors, Johnny was groping toward a new language of himself, a vocabulary equal to the dramas, characters, ideas, events that only America could produce. (99)

Like Longfellow and Shakespeare, he would write an epic of his people steeped in the knowledge of the ancient and fruitful land from which they sprang. Here then is the mighty chore to complete by which he is destined to remain in Raintree County.

As he grows older, Johnny enters more fully into the life of his community. County fairs, temperance plays, election campaigns, Fourth of July celebrations, camp meetings, newspaper rivalries—Johnny participates in all of the activities which make up the vibrant life of Raintree County. Johnny also attends and graduates from Pedee Academy, "An Institution Of Higher Learning" founded in the county in 1857, the creation of Jerusalem Webster Stiles, Johnny's close confidant and alter ego. As wordly wise and cynical as Johnny is shy and naive, the "Perfesser" pokes gentle fun at the pretentions of young Shaw-

nessy who, for all his outward shyness, often fancies himself as a young Greek God accomplishing heroic deeds.

Johnny writes a column in the county Republican newspaper under the name of Will Westward who reports on the weekly doings and contemplations of Seth Twigs, a fictitious rustic philosopher and amateur politician known for his earthy wisdom. In this writing venture Johnny faces a friendly rival, Garwood B. Jones, who writes for the Democratic weekly under the name of Dan Populus, another backwoods raconteur creation.

Garwood Jones is also a rival for the attentions of the beautiful Nell Gaither who Johnny, in his shyness, can only admire from afar. One day Johnny sees Nell bathing nude in the Shawmucky, and he forever after envisions her as a Grecian-like river nymph. But in her elusiveness Nell also becomes a symbol, like the mythical Raintree, of the young American Republic. As county maps represent man's effort to impose a linear regularity on the sensuous and undulating earth of Raintree County, so Johnny sees in Nell a mingling of the area's inherited Puritanism spread thinly over an exciting erotic potentiality. On the brink of realizing the sexual fulfillment of that potentiality on the day of their graduation from Pedee Academy, Nell and Johnny are interrupted by the commotion caused when Perfesser Stiles's indiscretion with a minister's young wife is discovered.

This latter episode, with its threat of violence, takes place in the year prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, and foreshadows external events which are starting to crowd in upon Johnny's existence and upon life in Raintree County. But just before his youthful and innocent days in rural Indiana come to an end, Johnny achieves his greatest individual success; he wins the Glorious Fourth of July foot race in 1859. On the same day, and drunk with the taste of competitive victory (aided by the influence of too much hard cider following the race), he seduces/is seduced by Susannah Drake, a dark haired Southern beauty. Symbolically the seduction takes place in the Great Swamp of Lake Paradise.

Does Johnny's loss of innocence take place under the branches of the long sought Raintree? Johnny is too muddled and excited to be sure. But there is no doubt that this is a crucial turning point

in his life, for Susannah soon claims she is pregnant and Johnny dutifully marries her.

One of the most revealing examples of Johnny's desire, but ultimate ambiguity about leaving the county takes place shortly after Susannah Drake tells him she is pregnant. He tries to get away from what seems to him an unjust entrapment (indeed, Susannah later tells him she lied about the pregnancy). Running along the railroad embankment on the night after John Brown's sentencing, Johnny reaches out to grab onto the last car of a train headed for California. He is ready to become "One of that restless, messianic seed," pushing on, leaving the past behind, saying good-bye to the new complications in his life in Raintree County. He will try a new life in the Golden West. But as he takes a last look backward, remembering all that life in the county has meant to him, Johnny slips, becomes entangled in the vines, withering grasses and weeds of the Shawmucky River. He then realizes "that he could no more uproot himself from this memory haunted earth than he could pluck body from soul." (291)

When Johnny becomes involved with Susannah, he is saying good-bye to an older, sunnier, more simple county, the days of his innocence and youth, just as America, in approaching the Civil War, was being forced to abandon its dreams of a united and just republic based on freedom for all men. Like the nation, which had tried to ignore the slave, John realizes that whatever secret there was to learn of Raintree County "was also to learn duty and hot tears." And in leaving Nell, he has also lost his own private republic. "To him, Nell Gaither was an entire republic of beauty and nostalgic memory, which now he had to relinquish." (327) No longer will his identity be defined so completely by the people and concerns of the relative innocence of these early years in Raintree County. He is involved in one of the processes which *Habits of the Heart* has identified as an element in the creation of the self-reliant individual—leaving home.

With his symbolic fall from grace and break with community, there begins for Johnny a long exile, marked by a continual leave-taking and returning to the county, connected in his mind with the arrival and departure of trains:

> Where had the long days gone? It had seemed that they would be forever. But the train passing behind the land at evening had been calling him all the time, calling him beyond the private square or young illusion. Awaken, it had said. Did you think that you could be a child forever on the breast of the maternal and sustaining earth? . . . Farewell to that more innocent and youthful Raintree County. And to its lost hero. For he is there—he haunts the shape of beauty by the river, ignorant of defeat and death. (604-605)

First he and his new bride go on a long honeymoon to New Orleans in the days just prior to the firing on Fort Sumter. Johnny is shocked by the treatment of slaves in the South and by the decadance of the Southern aristocrats. They return to Raintree County, where Susannah is soon driven insane by her moral and racial ambiguity, for it is revealed that she is the daughter of her father and his mulatto mistress. In a desperate act of insanity she sets fire to their Raintree home, killing their three year old son, and then disappears, the "lost child of a stained republic."

Devastated by the loss of his son and wife, Johnny leaves the county again, volunteering for duty in the Civil War as a common foot soldier. He fights at Chickamauga and then is wounded while marching with Sherman's troops after the destruction of Atlanta. Recovering in a Washington hospital, Johnny learns that he has been reported killed in action back in Raintree County. When he does return home, it is to discover that Nell has recently died in child birth. Thinking Johnny dead, she had married Garwood Jones.

Johnny's return to the county is a symbolic rebirth. But he is, to an extent, a different person from the youthful dreamer of pre-Civil War America, and he is returning to a rapidly changing world which he only vaguely understands. His personal confusion about the meaning of his life after the war is meant to reflect the social disruptions caused by the emergence of a new, industralized society. "These post-War years were the saddest and loneliest he would ever have." (772) Both the Republic and Johnny have been transformed by war and industrialization:

> This was the period of awakening into a new age, and a new light was on the land. He thought then of railroads, the newspapers, the speculators, the builders, miners, exploiters of the earth. He thought of the cities crammed with new people. Did they still wait the coming of a young Shakespeare, a hero from the West? Was there still a passionate lover waiting for him somewhere, the incarnation of all beauty he had ever seen and coveted? (772)

Johnny becomes a school teacher, then enters an ill-fated compaign for political office against Garwood Jones, who did not fight in the war but has nonetheless garnered a commission. An example of the self-made political opportunist, Jones has lauched a successful political career, resulting in his election to the United States Senate and in becoming a contender for nomination to the Presidency. Johnny's campaign reflects his continued commitment to the community, but his rejection in favor of such an only half honest "utilitarian individualist" leads him to the obvious conclusion that if he has a contribution to make in Raintree County it will surely not be in the realm of elected political office. The compromises with the integrity of self that are required of a politician like Garwood Jones are simply impossible for Johnny to accept in his own life.

Still unsettled by the upheavals in his life, Johnny goes to New York to try his hand as a playwright, seeking in the theatre the meaning of post-war America. Here he meets another of his boyhood friends, Cassius P. "Cash" Carney, a successful but lonely financier. He is also the epitome of the self-made man, the utilitarian individualist who has succeeded largely by his own efforts. In so doing Cash has developed a philosophy that if each individual pursues his own self interest the larger good of society will automatically be served. "Money makes money, not just for the capitalist, but for everybody," he tells Johnny. "That's the American secret as I see it." (828) Looking down on the smoldering yards during the great 1877 railway strike in Pittsburgh, Cash extols the sacred rights of the individual to own property, to invest capital and to use his wealth however he sees fit. Johnny can no more accept this view of life than he can that of Garwood Jones.

In New York Johnny also meets Cash Carney's mistress, Laura Golden, a famous actress who represents the glitter and artificiality of the city. Johnny is attracted to her, but ultimately disillusioned by her city values. Laura, like the city, has some-

thing forbidden to teach Johnny, and this makes him uncomfortable. Just as Laura is on the verge of revealing herself and her meaning to him, in the mysterious mirror-lined upstairs room of her elaborate city dwelling, Johnny is called home because of his mother's death. Headed back to Raintree County, his education of the new urban America complete, the questing hero is ready to resume his life among more compatible surroundings.

Back in Raintree County, Johnny meets Esther Root, a former student, now also a teacher, some fourteen years his junior, and after a troubled public courtship, which brings him into conflict with Esther's father, they are married in 1878. They have three children, including Eva who is a reader and dreamer like her father. He becomes principal of the local school and, though the differences between him and his father-in-law are never reconciled, Johnny settles into the rather quiet pattern of life in Raintree County. But the lower case mr. shawnessy still struggles inside of him, and Johnny is still searching for the meaning of life. He resumes work on his American epic, convinced after his stay in New York that he must continue even though he senses it will never be completed because epics such as his may no longer be possible in the new America of industrialism and cities.

Yet Johnny never gives up his dream of understanding the meaning of his life as it is connected to that of his country and his community. He has, through the years, come to know himself. He understands that whatever successes he may have in life, his real "victory is not in consummations but in quests." (1059) The novel ends on midnight of the Fourth of July, 1892, with Johnny much as has always been, "a dreamer, dreaming dreams in an upstairs bedroom of a little town beside a road in America." (1060) Like Nathaniel Hawthorne's patient hero, Ernest, in the short story "The Great Stone Face," Johnny has achieved a rooted dignity through maintaining his hopes and his commitment to the people and events of his "home place."

Thus Johnny Shawnessy, the forever young hero (even at fifty-three he appears youthful) is engaged throughout the years of his life in a quest for personal identity and meaning. But in contrast to other restless, mobile and lonely figures which dominate American culture, Johnny's search is enmeshed within

the lives and events, past and present, of the place in which he lives and the nation of which he and his home are so much a part. As Johnny says at one point, "Here where the two roads cross [the County Road and the National Road] I study and study the riddle of the Sphinx, the intersection of my life with the Republic." (273) In this he is unlike such uprooted and isolated figures as Captain Ahab and Jay Gatsby, or Jack Kerouac's Sal Paradise and Dean Morarity, or any of the lonely movie cowboys and tough T.V. cops. Yet he is in some ways as lonely and at times as isolated as these cultural figures, the difference being that Johnny finally remains rooted in a place, or enters into leave-takings like other ritual questing heroes who return home after their wanderings.

Johnny Shawnessy's life can be seen, then, in terms of the individualism/community dialogue which forms so integral a part of American culture, and which has recently been emphasized by the authors of *Habits of the Heart*. At the core of Shawnessy's being is the struggle of what Bellah and his colleagues call an "expressive" individualist to understand his relationship, and thus maintain his commitment, to both the local community and the larger society. As this dichotomy between modern individualism and a commitment to community is at the center of Bellah's concerns so is it the main source of tension in *Raintree County*. The resolution of that tension in the novel is an uneasy one, for while Mr. Shawnessy is outwardly a respected member of the community, the lower case mr. shawnessy continues to live in a vivid imagination which struggles against all social restrictions.

It is only in an ironic sense that Mr. John Shawnessy, a middle-aged, small town Hoosier school teacher can be considered heroic—an irony not lost on his alter ego, "Perfesser" Jerusalem Webster Stiles, Yet Johnny Shawnessy, whose individualism borders at times on narcissism, is the real hero of Raintree County. Like Ernest in Hawthorne's story, Johnny is a true hero not because he returns as a rich and famous politician (like Garwood Jones) or industrialist (like Cash Carney), but because in rejecting the kinds of successes and utilitarian individualism they represent he finds his commitment and contentment among his own people in his own home place. In Johnny's

life, then, the conflict between individualism and commitment, first observed by Tocqueville and recently restated by Robert Bellah and his colleagues, has achieved an uneasy truce. Individualism and commitment are not, finally, at odds in *Raintree County,* but rather exist in a troubled harmony.

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NOTES

1. Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sulivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
2. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* ed. by Richard D. Heffner (New York: New American Library, 1956), p. 193. Cited by Bellah, et al., p. 37.
3. Lewis notes, "Eevry culture seems, as it advances toward maturity, to produce its own determining debate over the idesa that preoccupy it. . . . The debate, indeed, may said to *be* the culture . . . for a culture achieves identity not so much through the ascendency of one particular set of convictions as through the emergence of its peculiar and distinctive dialogue." R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 1-2.
4. Park Dixon Goist, *From Main Street to State Street: Town, City and Community in America* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1977).
5. Ross Lockridge, Jr., *Raintree County* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), pp. 752-53. All further citations will be made parenthetically in the text.
6. Delia Clarke, "*Raintree County:* Psychological Symbolism, Archetype, and Myth," *Thoth: Syracuse University Graduate Studies in English,* II, i (1970), p. 38.

THE ORIENTAL CONNECTION: ZEN AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE MIDWEST IN THE COLLECTED POEMS OF LUCIEN STRYK

DANIEL L. GUILLORY

In 1967 Lucien Stryk edited *Heartland: Poets of the Midwest,* and in his Introduction to that anthology he underscores the aesthetic and poetic possibilities inherent in the Midwestern experience. Although many critics have denigrated the region for being flat and "colorless," Stryk insists that the Midwest can be "rich, complicated, thrilling" (*Heartland* xiv). In the poetry he chooses for that anthology and, more importantly, in his own work, Stryk dramatizes again and again that the Midwest is

> made up of the stuff of poetry. And once those living in it begin to see its details—cornfields, skyscrapers, small-town streets, whatever—with the help of their poets, they will find it not only more possible to live with some measure of contentment among its particulars but even, miraculously, begin to love them and the poems they fill. (*Heartland* xiv)

After this aesthetic manifesto, it is not surprising to discover that the opening poem in Stryk's *Collected Poems,* 1953-1983, is "Farmer," a powerful evocation of the agrarian life that typifies the region. Without rancor or sentimentality, the farmer beholds the landscape purely, observing a world "bound tight as wheat, packed / hard as dirt." His life and even his dwelling place are subsumed by the larger reality of the prairie:

> While night-fields quicken,
> shadows slanting right, then left
> across the moonlit furrows,
> he shelters in the farmhouse
> merged with trees, a skin of wood,
> as much the earth's as his. (*CP* 2)

In "Old Folks Home," a later and more meditative poem, Stryk imagines such a farmer at the end of his days, useless and unproductive but still tied to the fields by plangent memories and subtleties of perception. From his prison-like cell in the rest home, he follows the "empty path" to "fields pulsing / gold, green under / vapors, rain-fresh / furrows stretching / miles" (*CP* 192). Then he is overcome by memories of his lost farm and long-dead wife:

> he stands hours, keen
> to the cool scent
> of fullness—now
> without purpose where
> corn-tassels blow.
> Returns to the bare
> room, high above cedars
> gathering gold and green. (*CP* 193)

The "corn-tassels" are just one of the constituent Midwestern "details" that Stryk invokes in his Introduction to *Heartland;* earlier, in *Notes for a Guidebook* (1965), he refers to the importance of "small particulars" (*CP* 22), and in a recent interview with this author, Stryk insists on the primacy of the finely perceived detail. He explains that some years ago, after returning from one of his many trips to Japan, he determined "to make a minute inspection of my own world in DeKalb, Illinois . . . You see the smallest things become important as a source of revelation" (Guillory 6). This emphasis on the "small particulars" is a stylistic hallmark of Lucien Stryk's work. He rarely paints with a broad brush; his method is to focus on single objects, moments, and scenes. In his long poem, "A Sheaf for Chicago'" Stryk reduces Sandburgs comprehensive "city of the big shoulders" to particular scenes. Stryk's own childhood in Chicago is suggested by a catalogue of details, including discarded automobile parts and Christmas trees:

> We gathered fenders, axles, blasted hoods
> To build Cockaigne and Never-never Land,
> Then beat for dragons in the oily weeds.
> That cindered lot and twisted auto mound,
> That realm to be defended with the blood,
> Became, as New Year swung around,
> A scene of holocaust, where pile on pile

> Of Christmas trees would char the heavens
> And robe us demon-wild and genie-tall
> To swirl the hell of 63rd Place . . . (*CP*) 23-24)

Another poem dealing with the theme of childhood is "Rites of Passage," a much later work in which Stryk, the former Chicago street urchin, has become a kind of Wordsworthian man, wandering through a rural corn field with his own son. The poet is even more aware of the importance of details and the intensity of childhood moments, here glimpsed through the eyes of his own son. The poem turns into a kind of incantation in which human language is replaced by the altogether more powerful language of nature itself:

> soybeans, corn, cicadas. Stone rings
> touch the bank, ripple up my arm.
> In the grass
> a worm twists in the webbed air (how things
> absorb each other)—on a branch
> a sparrow
> tenses, gray. As grass stirs it bursts
> from leaves, devouring. I close my book.
> With so much
> doing everywhere, words swimming green,
> why read? I see and taste silence. (*CP* 153)

In "Rites of Passage" the words become living entities, as if Stryk short-circuits the linguistic process and returns to an earlier time in pre-history when every word was the actual *name* of a living entity—a development described exhaustively by Ernst Cassirer in his classic work, *Language and Myth* (48-55).

Not all Midwestern moments, however, are the basis for transcendent experiences; many characteristic events inspire anxiety or outright terror. The region is visited by every meteorological curse imaginable, including freezing rain, dust storms, ice storms, hail, tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes. These natural disasters occur as background or foreground in many of Lucien Stryk's poems, although he gives each terrifying event a peculiarly personal stamp. In "The Quake," for example, the poet and his wife are thrown out of bed by the mysterious rumbling underground. Their love-making is interrupted by a natural occurrence that shatters their tender inter-

lude of shared intimacy. At first, they view the event as comic:

We laughed when the bed
Heaved twice then threw
Us to the floor. When all
Was calm again, you said
It took an earthquake
To untwine us. Then I
Stopped your shaking
With my mouth.

The "shaking" persists, however, as doubts and fears open in their psyches, fault-lines of a deeper and more sinister kind:

Then why should dream
Return us to that fragile
Shelf of land? And why,
Our bodies twined upon
This couch of stone,
Should we be listening,
Like dead sinners, for the quake? (*CP* 48)

The most terrifying of all the natural disasters is the tornado—deadly, unmerciful, and always unpredictable. In "Twister" the poet and his family wait out the storm in their basement after the tornado has already "touched down / a county north, leveled a swath / of homes, taking twenty lives." Like countless others, they study the "piled up junk" while wondering "what's ahead":

We listen, ever
silent, for the roar out of the west,
whatever's zeroing in with terror
in its wake. The all clear sounds,
a pop song hits above. Made it
once again. We shove the chairs
against the wall, climb into the light. (*CP* 115)

Like the earthquake in "Quake," the tornado in "Twister" breaks the numbing routine of ordinary existence and, hence, provides an opportunity for spiritual insight. By placing the poet (and his family) on the edge of death, such disasters force an instantaneous awareness of—and appreciation for—the mysterious and fragile life force. Paradoxically, the poet transforms such potential disasters into positive aesthetic triumphs. Speaking of all the possible setbacks to be encountered in writing poetry about the Midwest, Stryk remarks that "if the poet is worth his salt he is certain to get as much out of it as those who live elsewhere . . ." (*Heartland* xv).

Natural disasters are not the only kinds of setbacks that figure prominently in the poetry of Lucien Stryk; he gives a good deal of attention to the "Babbitry" (*Heartland* xix) that often typifies small-town life in the Midwest. Social disasters seem to occur just as often as natural ones. Every town has its share of malingers and ne'er-do-wells, like the "toughs" and dropouts" described in "The Park":

All summer long rednecks,
high-school dropouts rev
motorbikes and souped-up
cars across the isle of
grass, jeer at cops cruising
as the horseshoes fly.
Strollers, joggers, children
traipsing to the city pool
flinch at hoots and whistles,
radio blasts recoiling from
the trees. (*CP* 190)

The sociology of prejudice and ostracism is the ugly core at the center of "The Cannery," another poem about malaise in the small midland town. Local residents resent—and fear—the annual influx of migrant workers, especially poor Southern whites and illegal Mexicans who form a cheap labor pool for the local cannery:

In summer this town is full of rebels
Come up from Tennessee to shell the peas.
And wetbacks roam the supermarkets, making
A Tijuana of the drab main street.
The Swedes and Poles who work at Wurlitzer,
And can't stand music, are all dug in:
Doors are bolted, their pretty children warned,
Where they wait for the autumnal peace. (*CP* 74)

Some of the "disasters" may seem minor to someone who has never attempted the supremely difficult task of poetic composition, a process that requires intense powers of concentration. The poet's frustration in "Here and Now" is more than un-

derstandable: a poem has been scuttled by the importunate knocking of an Alcoa salesman. The poet's indignation turns on itself again and becomes the catalyst for a poem about not being able to write a poem in peace:

Hear a knocking
at the front. No muse,
a salesman
from the Alcoa
Aluminum Company
inspired by the siding
of our rented house. (*CP* 117)

The greatest disaster, perhaps, is to fall victim to the sameness and plainness that, at least on first sight, characterize the Midwestern scene. "And if the poets of the heartland," asks Stryk, "see their territory as often luminous and wild, are we to conclude that the weary passer-through who views it as a terrible sameness may, in fact, be seeing nothing other than himself" (*Heartland* xix)? In point of fact, seeing things in a new way is one of the primary results of Zen training, and while it is true that good artists acquire this trait in many ways—not merely from Zen—it is also true that Lucien Stryk's work bears an especially strong affinity to Zen. For years he has translated Zen poetry and taught Asian literature; he has actually lived in Japan for a number of years. His most recent books are eloquent examples of his life-long attention to this meditative and aesthetic discipline: *On Love and Barley: Haiku of Basho* (Penguin, 1985) and *Triumph of the Sparrow: Zen Poems of Shinkichi Takahashi* (University of Illinois Press, 1986). "I think my life has been profoundly affected by Zen and by meditation, reading, and translating," Stryk observes. "I think about Zen constantly; I believe I'm easier to live with, more able to handle life. And I take joy in reality of a kind that I could not have taken without such Zen training" (Guillory 13). The kind of joy Stryk means in this remark is well illustrated by the little poem "Constellation," a kind of poetic diary-entry in which the poet records the surprising discovery of beautiful sunflowers in a most unlikely setting:

Behind the super-
market where we
forage for our

lives, beyond the
parking lot, crammed
garbage bins—
thick heads of
bee-swarmed
seed-choked
sunflowers blaze
down on me through
fogged noon air. (*CP* 178)

Stryk is quite conscious of his unique way of looking at ordinary Midwestern artifacts: he describes himself as "someone whose experiences have all the limitations and, of course, all the possibilities of this particular corner of the universe" (Guillory 6).

Elm trees, to cite one example, represent one of the many "possibilities" for the poet. Once so numerous that their leafy branches were a trademark of every small town in the Midwest and now virtually extinct because of Dutch elm disease, the elm is a kind of totem for the region. In "Elm" the poet mourns the loss of his elm, a personal favorite destroyed by "beetles smaller than / rice grains." Then the season changed and frost "spiked"

the twigless air. Soon
snow filled emptiness
between the shrubs. I
fed my elm-logs to the
fire, sending ghost-
blossoms to the sky. (*CP* 156)

Those "ghost blossoms" are an unexpected and wholly Zen-inspired touch, as are the novel ways of seeing clothes hanging on a clothesline in "Words on a Windy Day":

I watch in wonder
  As the wind fills
    Trouserlegs and sweaters,
Whips them light and dark.
  In that frayed coat
    I courted her a year,
      . . . . . .
    These mildewed ghosts of love
That life, for lack of something
  Simple as a clothespin,
    Let fall, one by one. (*CP* 38)

Even more inventive is "Storm," a kind of extended metaphor:

> The green horse of the tree
> bucks in the wind
> as lightning hits beyond.
> We will ride it out together
> Or together fall. (*CP* 114)

But the poem that best illustrates the Zen method is "Willows," the final selection in *Collected Poems*. Stryk describes the poem as a" embodiment of Zen learning," explaining that it is "based on an old Zen exercise known as 'mind pointing'." Mind pointing involves focusing

> on some everyday scene or object, something you encounter but take for granted. It could be anything . . . there's a stand of willows near the lagoon on the campus of Northern Illinois University, and my self-imposed exercise was to go by the willows, seeing whether in fact I could really look at them without thinking of what happened yesterday, what will happen tomorrow, problems or whatever. And the finished poem is a detailing of that experience." (Guillory 10)

At one level, "Willows" is a kind of journal of a great experiment that fails, because Stryk never fully succeeds at ridding his mind of distractions. At another level, however, "Willows" is a magnificent accomplishment because it dramatizes the great Zen notion that the search and the thing sought are one and the same. Perhaps the poet does not fully apprehend all twenty-seven of the willows, but he does perceive them in a new way as they become "delicate / tents of greens and browns." Although he once makes it to the seventeenth tree, his trials are marked with various gestures of frustration, wrung hands and clenched teeth. But even his distractions are valuable. Shifting his focus from the nearest tree to the farthest one in the row, he beholds a shower" of leaves. In his passionate attention to the trees, the whole world becomes intense and vivid, and even the distractions are raised to the level of pure comprehension. The poet may not be granted perfect awareness of all twenty-seven trees, but he *does* receive unmediated impressions of reality as if the world around him were suddenly and magically translated into haiku-like imagery:

> the flap of duck, goose, a limping
> footstep on the path behind,
> sun-flash on the pond. (*CP* 198)

"Willows" concludes with the poet still "practicing" on the trees "over, over again" because in each failure lies the magnificent gift of incidental poetry.

Like Japanese art, the poetry of Lucien Stryk is spare, compressed, and simple—minimalist art at its very best. But Stryk is no Japanese, and his representations of tornadoes, elm trees, willows, and farms revitalize these primary images of midland America. Without them there could be no Midwest; and Stryk deserves the gratitude of his readers for helping to rescue this precious world from oblivion. In "Awakening" Stryk reminds his readers that poetry is the greatest form of awareness; to be fully alive is to participate in the fundamental joy of seeing and, even, of *not* seeing, as in the final moments of every sunset on the prairie:

> and what I love about
> this hour is the way the trees
> are taken, one by one,
> into the great wash of darkness.
> At this hour I am always happy,
> ready to be taken myself
> fully aware. (*CP* 108)

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MARK TWAIN, SHERWOOD ANDERSON, SAUL BELLOW, AND THE TERRITORIES OF THE SPIRIT

DAVID D. ANDERSON

Two decades before the Civil War a pre-adolescent boy ponders his fate on an Arkansas farm and concludes that "I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before."

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, as American innocence became empire, a young man not yet twenty-one boards a train in a Midwestern village, and his creator tells us that "The young man's mind was carried away by his growing passion for dreams. . . . With the recollection of little things occupying his mind he closed his eyes and leaned back in the car seat. He stayed that way for a long time and when he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood."

Nearly half a century later another young man, nearly thirty, driving alone by night through the wreckage of war on the Belgian coast, proclaims exhuberantly to himself, ". . . Look at me, going everywhere! Why, I am a sort of Columbus of those near-at-hand and believe you can come to them in this immediate *terra incognita* that spreads out in every gaze. I may well be a flop at this line of endeavor. Columbus too thought he was a flop, probably, when they sent him back in chains. Which didn't prove there was no America."

The first incident is the final scene in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn;* the second, the final scene in

Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio;* the third, the final scene in Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March.* But that final scene does not suggest a conclusion in any of the novels; rather, it suggests in each the continuation of what had gone before, with, at most, a turn in physical or geographical direction. In each case, the goal or the objective of each is seen to himself as neither material success nor spiritual fulfillment; it is, in simplest terms, the continuation of the movement that had given substance and purpose to his life.

Thus, Huckleberry Finn, the frontier pre-adolescent, having run out of frontier river, the road of destiny in pre-Civil War America, finds it necessary to turn West, the only path away from a society at once civilized and corrupt in spite of its romantic and moral self-image. For Huck, the continued journey, as was the earlier, is not toward something; it is away from that which threatens to mould him in its own image.

George Willard, approaching manhood in an age that saw its destiny in the cities, moves simultaneously West toward the setting sun and to the great city that had become the new Queen City of the new Midwest, having replaced Cincinnati as royal city and as Porkopolis. But George's journey has overtones of the pure poetry of American myth. He has learned all that the village had to teach him; he has gained the sophistication that transcends the flesh in the moments that permit it; he has learned the secret of the twisted apples, and, unlike his predecessor Sam McPherson, he seeks those moments in which he can know truth in communion with another human being.

The third young man is Augie March, older than the others, but no less innocent, an expatriate living in Paris with his actress wife. Having learned all that Chicago—his Near-North Side Chicago—had to teach him, having eluded "adoption" and civilizing by a rich woman, having served his country and drifted in mid-ocean, Augie is embarked on the search that began in Chicago: to find "a good enough fate" by which he can live. Augie drives on through the night, renewed, as he pursues whatever fate he can find.

Each of the novels is a novel of movement—for Huck down the river on the raft with Jim; for George, the spiritual journey into the hearts of the people of Winesburg; for Augie, a journey

both literal and metaphorical as he moves from Chicago to Mexico to war to Paris, and as he learns the ultimate ambiguity of modern experience, he drives on, recognizing "the *animal ridens* in me, the laughing creature, forever rising up," and nearly finding a way beyond the impossible opposites of love and independence.

Central to each of the novels is, literally and metaphorically, the American faith in movement, in transcending space, not aimlessly but deliberately, as movement is elevated into the myth of progress as change becomes fulfillment. Consequently, as each young man pauses in mid-journey, however briefly, his confidence in his search is clear: he *can* escape into the territory; he *can* appease his "hunger to see beneath the surface of lives;" he *can* evade those dimensions of life that would deny him his freedom, his individuality, his selfhood.

As each of them ponders the continuation of the journey become search, each transcends—or ignores—or refuses to consider—the deterministic evidence that threatens their continued journey, their progress toward fulfillment. Each has learned from the people in his life that the search interrupted is the search threatened, that permanence in place or in spirit is the frustration of final defeat.

These people—in St. Petersburg, in Winesburg, in Chicago—are those who cannot flee, who cannot search, who cannot know, even for a moment, the freedom of the raft, the fairgrounds, the open road, or even that of the lifeboat adrift. Fixed in space and time by circumstances beyond their control, by elements of society and biology that inhibit their growth and limit the perimeters of their lives, these are the people who know, as Huck, as George, as Augie do not, the flip side of the American myth, of regression, of stagnation, of ignominious defeat.

These are the people, too, whom Anderson called "grotesques," those who, however twisted physically or spiritually or both, seek to make sons—surrogate or real—out of the young men. In their efforts to provide the young men with direction, with understanding, with faith, they instead try to recreate the protagonists in their own image. Thus, although each grotesque gives something of himself or herself to the young man, each, too, provides him with part of the impetus to flee, to begin the search for fulfillment. And ultimately, as the search continues, each of the young men finds the equilibrium that enables him to go on, that holds out the promise of fulfillment.

Thus, those who would recreate Huck Finn in their own images are as sharply contrasted as are the twin images of God, that of Miss Watson, with its overtones of Jonathan Edwards, and that of the Widow Douglas, with whom "a poor chap would stand considerable show." In the background is the image of Pap Finn, who has neither a God nor the moral nature of a noble savage, but shares instead the manners and morals of the hogs with whom he often sleeps.

As Huck and Jim push off on the raft, it becomes evident that both share an innocence tempered by faith—that they will go South to Cairo, Illinois, sell the raft, and go up the Ohio to a legalistic freedom for Jim, an abstract freedom for Huck—that combine to prevent the grotesqueness of those they leave behind as well as many of those they encounter each time they re-join, however briefly, American civilization in the nineteenth century.

Their innocence and faith are betrayed by chance—or the vagaries of determinism—as they pass Cairo in the fog, but neither knows that faith and innocence are also betrayed as they continue South, ironically deeper into the slave country in search of the freedom that never comes—except in moments on the raft in the middle of the river at night. "There warn't no home like a raft," Huck says—but one must keep a sharp lookout for skiffs, rafts, steamboats, sand bars, and debris—and the cross-section of American types—American grotesques—they encounter ashore.

Each of those shore-bound grotesques, with the exception of the innocent Wilks girls who share Huck's faith, has, in Anderson's terms, seized a fact become truth and in living by it had made it a falsehood and had consequently become a grotesque. Thus the Grangerfords and Shepherdsons turn courage and honor into horror and death; old Boggs turns bravado into suicide; Colonel Sherburn's courage reflects not human warmth but its opposite; the King and the Duke have a shrewd understanding of human nature—up to a point. As Jim and Huck come to journey's end—or more properly its interruption—as Jim

finally finds freedom, virtue momentarily triumphs over greed. But Huck learns that "Human beings *can* be awful cruel to one another," and he learns, too, that hell may be preferable to respectability. As Huck loses his innocence if not his faith, both Huck and Jim find through cosmic coincidence that Pikesville, Arkansas, and St. Petersburg, Missouri, are one.

At this point Huck determines to turn West as Americans continue to do, but his journey becomes a projected flight from the civilizing influences of grotesqueness rather than a search for freedom. And behind him, he knows, is Tom Sawyer, with an "outfit," and the trappings of romance in search of "Howling adventures." As Huck might again say, "I been there before."

Huck's journey—his search and his proposed flight—become increasingly metaphorical and his decisions conscious rather than accidental. But his decision to turn West—away from the river and into Indian Territory—does not imply that he will indeed go; more likely is the suggestion implied by the conflict betweeen determinism and romance—in fact, the river itself is as much or more deterministic than it is romantic—that Huck will remain where he is, with Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas and that, as he attains and moves through adolescence, whatever flight is possible remains inward, forever at war with the deterministic forces of civilization.

Consequently, in many respects, Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* takes up where Huck Finn's potential and probable domestic fate threatens. Not only is George Willard a late adolescent on the verge of going out into the world, but the time of the novel is the late nineteenth century, and chattel slavery is ended, but urbanism and industrialism, echoes of which filter down into the village, impose a new kind of economic and social slavery on the people. The village of Winesburg is itself poised on the verge of industrial growth, and George, as reporter on the *Winesburg Eagle*, is attuned as much to the greater world beyond as he is to the events of the village as Anderson records the circumstances of his last year there.

That last year in the village marks George's metaphorical journey into adulthood at the same time that he learns to penetrate the appearance of human reality and comes to know, in revealing moments of insight, the esential worth of each

human being as he or she cries out for compassion and love. Consequently, just as Huck Finn's literal journey is peopled with those grotesques who try to shape him into images of themselves, Winesburg is full of those who seek not only to direct George, but to find vicariously in him the understanding and fulfillment that has eluded them. But the secret knowledge that they ultimately teach George is not that of human cruelty nor is it that of the dehumanizing effects of human society; it is, rather, the truth of human nature, that, in the words of Dr. Parcival, who pleads with George to write the book that he cannot, "that everyone is Christ and they are all crucified."

Each of the grotesques who seeks out George, and whom, in turn, George learns to seek out, leaves something of himself or herself with him; thus, each teaches George more about the secret of the people who, physically or spiritually or both, are like the twisted apples in the orchards outside of Winesburg. Ultimately he learns to transcend the barriers of appearance, whether of eccentricity or repulsiveness at one extreme or of sex at the other, and to find those moments of complete acceptance and love, those moments when, in Anderson's words, he discovers "the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible."

Interestingly, although many of the people of Winesburg have known fear, hate, and even cruelty, and some of them respond in kind to the world around them, George's innocence, unlike Huck's, remains intact at the end, even as his metaphorical journey into the essence of human lives turns literal, and, like Huck's proposed journey, George's actual journey is to the West and to the City, combining the old American path of empire and success and the new. And yet the metaphorical dimension remains: "I just want to go away and look at people and think," he had told his mother, whose death ultimately freed him to go. George appears to be one of thousands of young men who went out of the towns into the city in the fading years of the nineteenth century, and yet is not one of them. As the train pulls out, he dreams not of success but understanding, of remembering and recreating the lives of those who had touched his in those moments of meaning.

Mark Twain's America is clearly adolescent and Anderson's has come of age, but Saul Bellow's America is America's maturity; its reality is the city—"that somber city," Chicago, and its time that of prohibition and depression and war and its aftermath, through all of which Augie March moves, like his predecessors, in innocence, with all the dignity and courage and purpose he can muster. His journey is at once flight and search, at once metaphorical and real.

As the novel told by Augie opens, Augie, pre-adolescent, is a streetwise rather than river-wise Huck Finn; like Huck, he is being simultaneously civilized and corrupted—or taught to play the urban angles—by Grandma Lausch, the March boarder and surrogate mother to Augie, to his older brother Simon, destined to be rich at any cost, to his feeble-minded younger brother Georgie, destined for an institution, and even to his ineffectual, deserted, passive mother.

Just as the grotesques of Winesburg attempted to shape and direct George Willard's destiny, so do those of Chicago and beyond attempt to do the same with Augie March. Through the three decades of the American reality and Augie's life—the twenties, in which Augie becomes streetwise, the thirties, in which he explores the world beyond Chicago, in geographic rather than intellectual or emotional terms, and the forties, that take him to war and to Europe, again essentially in geographic terms, Augie carries Chicago with him, as George Willard two generations earlier had carried Winesburg into the larger world, and as Huck had carried with him the village and the river and the raft in a younger but no less complex or threatening age.

Like both Huck and George before him, Augie takes what life and people have to teach him; thus, at eight he learns from Grandma Lausch how to con free eyeglasses for his mother from the city; at twelve, on his own, he turns employment as an elf working with a department store Santa into a lucrative con—and takes his lumps when it fails—but he cannot and will not become the respectable and soulless exploiter into which Grandma Lausch successfully turns Simon.

In adolescence Augie runs errands for the crippled operator William Einhorn; from him Augie learns not to be intimidated by physical limitations or even by circumstance as Einhorn is wiped

out but not destroyed by the stock market crash. Nor is Einhorn repulsed by Augie's brief, unsuccessful venture into crime. "You've got *opposition* in you," he tells Augie; "You don't slide through life." For a high school graduation present, Einhorn takes Augie to a brothel. But Augie will not become the operator Einhorn wants him to become.

Nor will he become "civilized" for the wealthy Renlings who want to "adopt" him so that he may become a suitable companion; Augie flees as had Huck, having picked up a few pointers and having met and fled also from the rich and beautiful Fenchel sisters, Esther and Thea. Briefly and unsuccessfully he joins his old companion in crime in smuggling aliens from Canada; he narrowly escapes arrest in Buffalo and Erie and rides the rods back to Chicago. Simon marries well and begins his rise; Augie steals textbooks to order for graduate students, reading them before delivery, to satisfy his curiosity, while he mover easily through the complicated lives of his contemporaries and humiliates Simon, who wants his brother to marry as well as he had.

Augie moves to Mexico with Thea Fenchel, to hunt iguana with her eagle, which he helps train—unsuccessfully—and Augie, nearly in love, finds a curious kinship with the bird, nearly succumbing as well to the drinking, gambling, and sexual preoccupations of the expatriate community. Escaping the increasingly surrealistic relationship, society escapades, and landscape, Augie returns to Chicago. Refusing "to lead a disappointed life," he decides he has been "a runner after good things, servant of love, embarker on schemes, recruit of sublime ideas, and Good Time Charlie." As research assistant for an eccentric millionaire historian, Augie determines that he must simplify his life, that there is nothing in life that he wants to prove to anyone.

But complications ensue. With the coming of the war Augie, after an operation for a hernia brought on by the strenuous life in Mexico, joins the merchant marine; in training he meets once more a young actress, Stella Chesney, whom he had known in Mexico; they fall in love, marry, and Augie, rejecting the cynical advice of Harold Metouchian, ships out, while his new wife goes to Alaska with a USO troupe. In mid-Atlantic, Augie's ship is torpedoed, and he finds himself adrift in a lifeboat with the

ship's carpenter, a mad genius. After rescue and hospitalization he returns home. At war's end, he and Stella move to Paris where she can pursue her career, while Augie, still in pursuit of the simplicity that eludes him, drives on through the night.

In each of the three decades of Augie's life that the novel covers, he rejects that pressure or advice or temptation that promises him meaning and success, and at each critical moment he flees in a new direction, determined to escape not only the promise but the promiser, each of whom is as truly grotesque as the people in Winesburg. But, unlike Huck Finn, who hopes to escape civilizing—and adulthood—and George Willard, who hopes to understand people and life, Augie searches for a simplification that precludes the psychic destruction of his brother Simon, the passive destruction of his mother, the insanity of his brother, the grotesque limitations of the others. Truly the comic hero, as Huck Finn very nearly was, still as innocent as Huck or George, Augie goes on into night, destined perhaps to suffer but in the meantime to live.

Each of the novels, in covering part of the emerging literary and social maturity of America, reflects clearly both the movement and the search at the heart of each of them. And each of the novels is as episodic, as fragmented as American experience in each protagonist's own time, and each protagonist flirts, however briefly, with the madness of his age and his people, often, in both Bellow and Twain, of bachanalian if not gargantuan proportions.

Both Huck and Augie are comic narrators, the comedy a veneer that hides tragedy, and both seek an external fulfillment in time and space. George Willard, conversely, is written about—Anderson rarely wrote comedy or used first person—and George seeks a human but elusive truth. But as the three young men move through time and space, confident in their innocence, certain in their faith, in spite of the darkness of experience, each reflects, for his time and ours, the limitless dimensions of a promise and a search at once American, mythic, and immortal.

Michigan State University

FAREWELL TO THE REGIONAL COLUMNIST: THE MEANING OF BOB GREENE'S SUCCESS

Richard Shereikis

Over the past hundred years, Chicago has spawned a remarkable number of newspapermen whose distinctly regional voices have won them national fame. Early signs appeared in the 1880s, when Eugene Field's "Sharps and Flats" column was first published in the Chicago *Daily News*: and by the 1890s, when Finley Peter Dunne and George Ade recorded their witty and worldly observations in the Chicago *Post* and Chicago *Record*, the tradition was firmly established. Ring Lardner kept it alive with his urbane humor in the *Tribune*'s "In the Wake of the News" column, and writers like Ben Hecht, Carl Sandburg, and Floyd Dell have brought distinction to Chicago's reputation with their columns, reviews, and features in the city's many newspapers. More recently, Mike Royko has assumed the role of quintessential Chicago columnist—street smart, tough, and ready to flay corruption or take up the cudgels for the common man.

As varied as these many writers have been, they all, in their best work, have had a distinctly Chicago flavor. Much of the time, their subjects are Chicago subjects: the life and drama of ethnic neighborhoods, the perennial chicanery at City Hall, the tales and tribulations of newcomers learning to cope with strange and puzzling ways. Their roots are deep in the city, and, as James DeMuth points out in *Small Town Chicago*, the early columnists played an especially important role in helping the city's many recent arrivals adjust to life in "the abbatoir by the lake": ". . . [T]hey reduced the chaos and complexity of Chicago to the familiar routines, modest ambitions, and homely virtues of its ordinary citizens. They demonstrated, with brief stories of the

familiar domestic circumstances in which working-class and middle-class people lived, that Chicago could be understood and that one might find satisfaction and humor in being a Chicagoan."

Even when their subjects weren't distinctly Chicagoan, the attitudes and values of the best of the columnists had a Windy City edge. Mr. Dooley's clear-eyed assessments of Teddy Roosevelt's ego, Ade's ironic fables about the booby traps of upward mobility, and Royko's recent critiques of the character of international terrorists all emerged from what might be called a Chicago sensibility. Tempered by the facts of life in the sprawling, dirty, crooked, but lively city, writers like these brought no-nonsense judgments, caustic humor, and straightforward styles to their observations of contemporary life.

Eventually, many of these distinctly regional voices captured national attention, and, for good or ill, the best of the Chicago columnists became national figures, writing for syndication or, like Ade, branching into other fields. While confining himself mostly to Chicago topics from 1893 to 1898, for example, Dunne broadened his range in the late 1890s, and, by 1900, he had moved to New York, from where he wrote a nationally syndicated column. By 1900, too, George Ade had given up his column to devote himself to fables and pieces for the operatic and legitimate stages. And Mike Royko, while still working from Chicago, has taken on more national subjects because of his syndication.

But however widely they roamed, however varied their material became, there was never any mistaking the Chicago point of view in the best of the city's columnists. In fact it is this regional quality which, paradoxically, gives the best work of writers like Dunne, Ade, and Royko its wide appeal: it is the Chicago flavor—funny, critical, contentious, and full of wisdom and distinctive insights—which makes this work memorable.

Now, inexorable, the city's voice is growing less distinct, muffled by mass communications and technology. Speech becomes standardized, experience is homogenized, and values are softened into a kind of Buscaglian (as in Leo) pulp as we move closer to McLuhan's global village. And one clear sign of that movement is the fame and fortune of Bob Greene, the syndicated *Tribune* and *Esquire* columnist and media personality. His popularity signals a loss of regional character in our journalism, and his success is an alarming omen in our progress—read *decline*—toward a bland and innocuous national character.

Before we examine the implications of Greene's fame, however, let us first remind ourselves of what is at stake when writers lose their regional identities and values. Let us look at the things which make a Dunne or a Royko distinctive so we can appreciate what the popularity of a Bob Greene means. Let us remind ourselves of what a scholar named John T. Frederick said in 1944 about the importance of regional writing:

> A good regional writer is a good writer who uses regional materials. His regionalism is an incident and condition, not a purpose or motive. It means simply that he uses the literary substance which he knows best . . . the material about which he is most likely to be able to write with meaning. His work has literary importance only in so far as it meets the standards of good writing . . . Yet in a country so vast and varied as ours the regional writer gives special service to the nation as a whole by revealing and interpreting the people of his own region to those of other regions. He serves most significantly if he can reveal and interpret the people of his region to themselves.

Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Dooley is perhaps the greatest single creation of any of the Chicago columnists. Mr. Dooley, the Irish bartender/philosopher from "Archey Road" in Bridgeport, held forth in over 700 dialect essays, mostly in the 1890s, and people from coast to coast were familiar with his worldly observations. When Dunne put together the first authorized collection of Dooley pieces in 1898, under the title *Mr. Dooley in Peace and War*, the volumes sold at a rate of 10,000 copies a month, and pirated versions appeared in England. But the volume had a strong Chicago flavor, as witness the presence of a piece like "On Oratory in Politics," which contains Dooley's analysis of the aldermanic election between the incumbent, William J. O'Brien (who was, in fact, an alderman from Bridgeport at that time), and a young reformer by the name of Smith O'Brien Dorgan.

Dorgan, says Dooley, "was wan iv th' most iloquint young la-ads that ever made a speakin' thrumpet iv his face. He cud

holler like th' impire iv a baseball game." And young Dorgan had high ideals, according to Mr. Doley:

> "He planned the campaign himsilf. 'I'll not re-sort,' says he, 'to th' ordin'ry methods,' he says. 'Th' thing to do,' he says, 'is to prisint th' issues iv th' day to th' voters,' he says. 'I'll burn up ivry precin't in th' ward with me illoquince,' he says. an' he bought a long black coat, an' wint out to spread th' light.
>
> "He talked ivrywhere. Th' people jammed Finucane's Hall, an' he tol' thim th' time had come f'r th' masses to r-rise. 'Raymimber,' says he, 'th' idees iv Novimb'r,' he says. 'Raymimber Demosthens an' Cicero an' Oak Park,' he says. 'Raymimber th' thraditions ov ye'er fathers, iv Washin'ton an' Jefferson an' Andhrew Jackson an' John L. Sullivan,' he says . . ."

But this is Chicago—the future neighborhood of Richard J. Daley, in fact—and Dorgan is doomed, because the incumbent O'Brien runs a classic Chicago campaign:

> "Now all this time Bill O'Brien was campaignin' in his own way. He niver med wan speech. No wan knew whether he was f'r a tariff or again wan, or whether he sthud be Jefferson or was knockin' him, or whether he had th' inthrests iv th' toilin' masses at hear-rt or whether he wint to mass at all, at all. But he got th' superintendent iv th' rollin' mills with him; an' he put three or four good fam'lies to wurruk in th' gas-house where he knew th'main guy, an' he made reg'lar calls on the bar-rn boss iv th' streetcaars. He wint to th' picnics, an' hired th' orchesthry f'r th' dances, an' voted himself th' most pop'lar man at the church fair at an expinse ov at laste five hundherd dollars. No wan that come near him wanted f'r money. He had headquarters in ivry saloon fr'm wan end ov th' ward to th' other. All the paapers printed his pitcher, an' sthud by him as th'frind iv th' poor."

When O'Brien commiserates with Dorgan on the challenger's humiliating loss, Dunne dramatizes, for all the world to see, some fundamental facts about Chicago politics:

> . . . 'Well,' says O'Brien, 'how does it suit ye?' he says. 'It's sthrange,.' says Dorgan. 'Not strange at all,' says Willum J. O'Brien. 'Whin ye've been in politics as long as I have, ye'll know,' he says, 'that the rolyboly is th' gr-reatest or-rator on earth.' he says. 'Th' American nation in th' Sixth Ward is a fine people,' he says. 'They love th' eagle,' he says, 'on th' back ov a dollar,' he says. 'Well,' says Dorgan, 'I can't undherstand it,' he says. 'I med as manny as three thousan' speeches,' he says. 'Well,' says Willum J. O'Brien,' that was my majority,' he says. 'Have a dhrink,' he says.

The point, I hope, is clear. What gave Finley Peter Dunne his unique identity and, paradoxically, his national fame, were his talent for "revealing and interpreting the people of his own region to those of other regions," and his ability to "reveal and interpret the people of his region to themselves."

Mike Royko's abilities at those kinds of revelations and interpretations are fresher in our minds and so need less detailed summary. Anyone who reads him with any regularity knows that his is a classic Chicago personna: tough, caustic, contentious, cynical about people in power. Whether he's tweaking a corrupt alderman, panning the pretensions of foreign movies, celebrating a little guy who won or lost a bout with some bully, cutting a cowardly terrorist down for sending his pregnant girlfriend onto a plane with a bomb, or attacking Indiana for being—well, for being Indiana, Royko's values and perspectives are as Chicago as Maxwell Street, and his work is the richer for it. You learn from Royko how the Slats Grobniks of the city see things; and you get a sense of what it's like to live in a neighborhood, to be a regular in a neighborhood bar, to mix it up in the alleys or on the playing fields with a bunch of your buddies and rivals. It feels like city life, in short—gritty and real and interesting.

But to move from Royko's world to Bob Greene's is like moving from Bridgeport to a bland and sterile lake-front high-rise. There's no edge to anything in Greene's work, no distinct flavor to the courses he serves, no strong prejudices or beliefs that you can challenge or accept. (It's significant, I think, that Royko will occasionally print some of the more colorful hate mail he gets, while Greene only tells you of his fawning and supportive letters. And I suspect that the mail which Royko and Greene share with us is representative, too, since Royko makes you take a position while Greene does little more than celebrate the banal in American life.)

A look at *Cheeseburgers*, Greens's most recent collection of pieces from the *Tribune* and *Esquire*, suggests how radically

Greene departs from the most important figures in the Chicago tradition of columnists. *Cheeseburgers* (which is sub-titled *The Best of Bob Greene,* by the way), reveals the alarming degree to which regional differences are becoming blurred in the face of mass communications, standardized speech, sanitized values, and the "neutrality" of contemporary journalists.

In his introduction to *Cheeseburgers,* Greene tells us of his intentions: "I'd like to think of my stories as snapshots of life in America in the Eighties—snapshots taken as I wander around the country seeing what turns up." What he strives for, he says, is "to tell the same story in the newspaper that I would tell my firends later in the bar."

These are decent goals, of course, but the 72 pieces in *Cheeseburgers* leave the impression that Greene hangs out mostly in luxury hotel bars and the kinds of suburban places that feature hanging plants and wicker furniture. There's nothing here for the denizens of a real Chicago bar—nothing to argue about, nothing to fight over, nothing to laugh at. His "snapshots," for the most part, are taken from a bland, narrowly middle-class point of view, and they lack the punch or grit that have been the staples of the best Chicago columnists from Dunne to Royko.

The collection includes the normal fare of a regular columnist, broadend by Greene's celebrity connections and his unlimited travel and telephone budgets. They range from interviews with public figures like Richard Nixon and Meryl Streep; to nostalgic or sentimental examinations of icons of popular culture like View Masters and the Playboy Mansion; to clumsy attempts at humor (his grandmother's membership in the Playboy Club, for example); to sentimental personal reminiscences about being cut from his junior high basketball team in Bexley, Ohio, and about working in the shoe-bronzing business which his father owned (which may explain everything).

As a "newspaperman" trained in a journalism school, Greene believes that simply trotting out these stories and snapshots is enough. But Greene is a columnist, and what we usually want from a columnist—what we've always got from the great Chicago ones—is some evidence of a core of values, a set of beliefs, some healthy prejudices to enliven the writer's reporting. Think of Royko's street-smart judgments about the shenanigans

at City Hall; then think of Bob Greene celebrating the complacency and comfort of Bexley. Dunne gave us Mr. Dooley; Royko gives us Slats Grobnik. Bob Greene gives us the journalistic equivalent of the Pillsbury Dough Boy.

He tells us of crises, sometimes, but they're the kinds that only a yuppie could care about. He tells us about the tribulations of going on book tours as a successful writer. He tells us what to look for in luxury hotels—in case we're ever on a book tour, presumably. He tells us of the guilt and torment a funeral director feels when he gets himself a platinum credit card. He gives us first-person testimonials about how hard it is to be Alice Cooper, the washed-up rock personality, or Richard Nixon, the washed-up national disgrace. But what does it all mean? What, if anything, does Bob Greene think or feel about it all? We don't need sermons, of course, but we could use some idea of what the writer makes of all the cultural flotsam which clutters our country and dominates his columns. Dunne and Royko take their stands on a strong foundation of values, beliefs, and prejudices; Greene takes his on the shifting sands of popular tastes and fads.

Greene does on occasion allow an opinion to seep out, and a few examples suggest the banality of his rare explicit judgments: "All of a sudden, people seem to be in an insane hurry to get too much done in too little time," he tells us, portentously (in "The Twitching of America"); "[I]t's becoming increasingly hard to make sense of these times," he tells us earnestly (in "A Stranger in the House"); and, about 15 pages into his vacuous interview with Richard Nixon, he offers this astonishing appraisal: "I was getting the impression that some of his days were emptier than he would like." That would be a great line, delivered ironically, of course; but Greene seems to mean it as a serious insight.

Green's account of his relationship with Alice Cooper provides the best implicit revelation of his values. Greene, a personal friend of Cooper's, admits that Cooper's acts were "leering incitements of his young audiences," ". . . a forerunner of today's fascination with violence, harsh sexuality, and androgyny." Greene "can't exactly" disagree with a characterization of Cooper as someone who is "deliberately trying to involve these kids in sadomasochism," and "peddling the culture of the concentration camp" through his "anthems of necrophelia." Yet

Greene clearly takes pride in his friendship with Cooper, calling him "one of the brightest, funniest people I ever met." As for Cooper's harmful effects on the kids who paid millions to watch his lurid spectacles? "[H]e was selling his young audiences what they were eager to buy," Greene blandly admits. But that was OK, by Greene's lights, because Cooper "was full of a sense of irony about it." Why mess with regret or embarrassment or guilt when you can feel ironic?

But Cooper had more than irony going for him, according to Greene: "He was as appalled by [his fans'] acceptance of his show's bloodlust as was the most conservative fundamentalist minister; the difference was, even though he was appalled, he was becoming wealthy from it." If you can't be ironic, you can at least be rich (which seemed to have been Nixon's saving grace, in Greene's opinion).

So Bob Greene's appeal isn't hard to explain. His columns are, in fact, "snapshots of life in America in the Eighties," from a point of view which millions, unfortunately, share. His points of reference are rock music (especially the Beatles), network television and the celebrities spawned by the popular press (especially *Time*). His "neighborhoods" are luxury hotels, suburban shopping malls, and fern bars, safe and sterile, alike in every region of the country. His reminiscences tell us much about what it was like watching TV and listening to the Beatles in Bexley, Ohio, but little about the life and texture of the streets and alleys or people in the town. He owes less to Bexley than he does to the electronic global village. Whether or not he coined the term, he's the ultimate yuppie, in short,—rootless, shallow, bland, and complacent—traits, by the way, which are reinforced by his innocuous style.

That's what makes his popularity so frightening and what bodes so ill for regional writing in general and for the rich tradition of Chicago columnists in particular. It's not that Greene is the latest in the long, unruly line that extends from Dunne to Royko. It's that Greene may be the first in a new line that is smooth, inoffensive and predictable, a breed whose beat is not precise and local, who have no region to reveal and interpret for the people in or out of it. Greene calls his *Esquire* column "American Beat," and, unfortunately, the title is all too accurate.

Thomas Boswell, a fine contemporary writer whose beat is the baseball park, has, in another context, aptly described the world that Bob Greene inhabits and documents:

> We live in a time when one of the most common experiences of American travelers is a sense that urban life is acquiring a deadly, homogenous dreariness. Our sense of place, of region and accent and local tradition, is ground down in the face of identical, toneless, expressionless Eyewitness Anchorpersons whose duty it is to make Cincinnati or Oakland the identical bland equal to Chicago or New York. From the airport to the shopping mall, from the neon gas-and-gulp thoroughfares to the gaudiest clerestory lobby of the ritziest hundred-dollar-a-day hotel in town, the distinctions between one city and another, between one region and another, are disappearing.
>
> The more you travel, the harder it is to remember where you are. (*Why Time Begins on Opening Day*, p. 19)

What we lose, on Bob Greene's sanitized American Beat, is the feel and flavor and values of a special place, the accents and rhythms of distinctive speech. We lose that sense of "the near, the low, the common," which Emerson embraced as part of his belief that "the near explains the far." We lose, in short, that sense of ourselves which can only come form a chorus of regional voices. Whether Bob Grene is a cause or only a symptom, the illness is debilitating.

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CAN THESE, TOO, BE MIDWESTERN? STUDIES OF TWO FILIPINO WRITERS

ROGER J. BRESNAHAN

The larger purpose of these studies is to test the resiliency of the borders of what we call the Midwest. In this sense, they are explorations of a territory. The thesis being worked out is that to be a regional writer is to want to be part of a community that is very much attached to the land. John T. Frederick, in the introduction to his 1944 anthology, *Out of the Midwest,* observed that "the regional writer gives special service to the nation as a whole by revealing and interpreting the people of his own region to those of other regions. He serves most significantly if he can reveal and interpret the people of his region to themselves." The farthest reaches of this intellectual geography are "local color," which David D. Anderson has consistently shown to be a trivialization of regionalism, and the notion that Bienvenido N. Santos discredits: *el sitio nada importa*—place doesn't matter, quoted, out of context, from "Ultimo Adios," the poem penned by Filipino patriot José Rizal the night before he was executed in 1896.

I. *El sitio nada importa:* The Midwest of Bienvenido N. Santos

Bienvenido N. Santos is arguably the most Midwestern—in theme, in mentality, and in style—of the dozen or so Filipino writers who have written or sojourned in America. Now retired from Wichita State University, Santos became a U.S. citizen during the Marcos years. He now spends winters in the Philippines and summers with his son in Greeley, Colorado. His 1983 novel, *The Man Who (Thought He) Looked Like Robert Taylor,*

is a work of great complexity clothed in apparent simplicity. Through shifts in frames of perception and planes of action, through flashbacks, montage, and a disjunctive reshuffling of time frames, Santos forces us as readers to consider the issue of alienation through face-saving and face-losing and to speculate on the function of place in the definition of identity. Its plot is deceptive in its apparent simplicity. In brief, an aging Filipino who has worked in America since the '30s becomes aware of the sterility of his life and sets out from Chicago to visit the places of his past in America. His earlier belief, that *"el sitio nada importa,"* gives way to a desire not just to revisit, but even to savor, the places and people of his younger days. The overriding humor of this potentially melodramatic situation is conveyed by the title. Solomon King has always thought he looked like Robert Taylor—the perfect profile—and thus formed a false identity. When newspapers had reported Bob was a three-pack-a-day smoker, Sol wrote him a letter begging him to quit, vaguely believing that Taylor's fate somehow conditions his own. It is when he reads in the newspaper that the actor has finally died that Sol is provoked to take up his retrospective quest.

That no one has ever noticed the supposed facial similarity between the white actor and the brown immigrant does more to embitter Sol against the perceptions of others than it does to awaken him to his own alienation. Often, he has suffered the exquisite pain of near recognition. People have seemed on the verge of observing that he looked like someone but then were distracted. Or thay have said he reminded them of "that actor" but couldn't remember the actor's name. Thus, Ben Santos's wry humor comes into play because no one has accorded Solomon King the face he covets, and Sol neither perceives the face that others see nor accepts the only identity which can be his. In a very real sense, therefore, this novel is about a person who regains his own face after years of losing face by failing to be recognized for another's face.

The bulk of the novel forms a series of flashbacks in the life of Solomon King in Chicago where he has risen to the position of supervisor in stockyards which are themselves on the verge of closing. Much of the action of this part of the novel occurs in King's mind, interspersed with flashbacks to the Philippines and

to long-ago conversations with other o.t.'s (old timers, a common term for Filipinos working in America since before Philippine independence). This part of the novel also demonstrates Sol's alienation from everything and everyone around him. Most obvious is his unlikely first name, coupled with the strange desire to be mistaken for Robert Taylor. His office in the stockyards insulates him from the stench of Bubbly Creek. His apartment in the midst of a huge Polish neighborhood separates him from other Filipinos. He meets them only in his flashbacks to social gatherings of earlier years at the office of the Philippine Commonwealth in Washington or at the Philippine Consulate in Chicago. When he meets other Filipinos on the street he hesitates to acknowledge them or even greet them in the native language, so great is his withdrawal.

Each year Sol has come back to the stockyards from his annual vacation to describe the places all over America that he has visited. Those vacations are actually spent in his apartment poring over travel brochures and cataloguing pictures of American places not visited and Philippine places nearly forgotten. Until he shelters Blanche Hardman and her baby boy, Jerry, from a raging Chicago snowstorm, his relations with women are entirely sexual. His two longest affairs were with a much older American wonan named Barbara, whom he visits at the very end of the novel, and a much younger one named Ursula—just as Robert Taylor had been married to Barbara Stanwyck and Ursula Theiss.

Upon hearing of the death of Robert Taylor, Sol begins his final vacation and retirement. Oblivious to the raging snowstorm, he drives to the Greyhound bus depot at Clark and Randolph to obtain schedules. There he finds the young woman and her baby returning to Dowagiac, Michigan, after visiting the child's father at the Illinois State Penitentiary in Joliet. As Blanche Hardman is ill-prepared for the cold weather, Sol provides her with an extra coat he keeps in his car and buys food for her and milk for Jerry. When it appears no busses will move at least until the next day, he takes the two to his apartment. Blanche and Jerry remain there for several days after the snowstorm and Sol showers them with presents—new clothes, food for the rest of their trip, toys for Jerry.

By the time Blanche and Jerry finally board a bus to resume their journey, Sol has begun to get in touch with himself and his own past. He boards a bus for Washington, leaving the cold and isolation of Chicago and abandoning his putative likeness for Robert Taylor. In Washington he confronts his own past with an old roommate, Noli, visits Barbara in her nursing home, and has visions of his dead parents in the Philippines. As the novel ends, we do not know whether Sol will continue to pursue this trip into the past. But we are fairly certain he will not return to the cultural isolation which Chicago represents.

In the course of this novel, Sol discovers himself and his roots. In doing that, he erases the colonial past that Chicago imposes on the Filipino. Indeed, in much of Santos's fiction, Chicago represents a tentative refuge and flickering warmth against a world of loneliness and cold far from home and the extended family basic to Philippine culture. For the o.t.'s whom Santos has so sensitively portrayed in his fiction, Chicago is the quintessential American city in that it spiritually embodies the isolation of American individualism against the Filipino cultural value of togetherness, as it physically embodies the bone-chilling cold of America against the warmth of the tropical homeland. That Chicago is the place of alienation is not because there aren't other Filipinos there. Rather, Sol has invented a Chicago without Filipinos as an actualization of his own alienation. And this invention requires that he live in a part of Chicago where all his neighbors are Polish and therefore as alienated from mainstream America as he is, despite his attempts to identify with a movie hero.

In one of Santos's earliest Chicago stories, "My Most Memorable Christmas in America," the narrator, who is named Ben, is a Filipino student at the University of Illinois. After the capitulation to the Japanese at Bataan, his letters to his family in the Philippines have come back marked "Service Suspended." Ben is brought to the Chicago YMCA near Hyde Park by friends who are going home to Muncie, Indiana. Significantly the friends do not bring him to the human warmth of their families in Muncie. Instead, they circle far out of their way to bring him from one isolation to another. Though at the Y, "there were always a few men in the lobby warming themselves by the fire," by Christmas

the place was practically deserted. The holiday is spent eating canned foods with other isolates—the Negro janitor of the Y and a Jew from Boston about to be drafted.

The other memorable story of Chicago is Santos's widely anthologized, "The Day the Dancers Came." In that story an o.t., Fil Acayan, rushes down to the Hamilton Hotel to invite a travelling Philippine dance troupe to tour the city in his car and eat Filipino food in his apartment. The shabby old man is scorned by the elegant, young dancers. Still, he gets front-row, reserved seats and tape-records the dancers' performance. The tape is to be a memento connecting him to the homeland he cannot return to. When Fil offers hospitality to the young people, he finds they are "always moving away. As if by common consent, they had decided to avoid him, ignore his presence." In the end Fil loses the dancers, the tape, and his dying roommate, Tony. For as he ministers to Tony, the tape is accidentally erased. That could happen anywhere, of course, though the snow and the ever-present cold of Santos's Chicago are prominent in the story. Solomon King's belief that *el sitio nada importa* is, in fact, true in Chicago where the loneliness and the cold are so alien—whether to Fil Acayan in "The Day the Dancers Came," or to Ben in "My Most Memorable Christmas in America," or to Solomon King in *The Man Who (Thought He) Looked Like Robert Taylor*.

Solomon King's interlude with Blanche Hardman and little Jerry is the fulfillment, at a remove of many years, of Fil Acayan's dream of showing Filipino hospitality to the dancers. Fil had explained to Tony:

> "All I wanted was to talk to them, guide them around Chicago, spend money on them so that they would have something special to remember about us when they return to our country. They would tell their folks: We met a kind, old man who took us to his apartment. It was not much of a place. It was old—like him. When we sat on the sofa in the living room, the bottom sank heavily, the broken springs touching the floor. But what a cook that man was! And how kind!"

That was his hope. "But, Tony, they would not come. They thanked me, but they said they had no time. Others said nothing.

They looked through me. I didn't exist. Or worse, I was unclean. *Basura*. Garbage. They were ashamed of me. How could I be Filipino?"

Immediately before the episode with Blanche and Jerry, Santos inserts two stories as flashbacks in Solomon King's imagination. One was published separately as "Immigration Blues," the first story in Santos's collection, *Scent of Apples*. There Alipio Palma, a widowed o.t. living in San Francisco, is visited by the wife of a friend and her younger sister. Through typically Filipino strategies of indirection, the older woman suggests Alipio marry her sister from the Philippines so that the young woman can remain in the United States. This stratagem for outwitting the immigration authorities is a common one: it was under identical circumstances that Alipio had met his first wife, Seniang. The older sister goes to the grocery store, leaving the two alone for a long time. Returning, she asks in their dialect, *Kumusta?*, which Santos coyly translates as "much more that 'how are you' or 'how has it been?' " The story ends with Alipio's eyes following the young woman's legs, speculating whether she will lose her way to the kitchen and end up in the bedroom.

As with the leering of Alipio, who thinks gleefully to himself that lightning has struck twice, Sol's affairs are less of the heart and more of the body. In *The Man Who (Thought He) Looked Like Robert Taylor*,"Immigration Blues" is placed between Sol's recollection of two torrid but self-centered affairs, his first and his last in Chicago. The first was with Morningstar, whom Sol had visited every morning, from seven until quarter of eight, on his way to work. The last was Ursula. Both women complained that Sol only wanted sex, and both dropped him before he knew the affair was over:

> There were times when he felt like calling up the one man in the world with whom he felt a kinship not easily explained, much less understood. It did not surprise him to read somewhere in a signed article by a well-known reporter who had covered Hollywood during the golden era of the 30's and 40's, how Robert Taylor was kicked around by women. First Greta, who gave him the cold shoulder without explanation after what appeared to be a promising relationship during the filming of "Camille." And there was Barbara who, in Bob's own words, treated him as

"nothing more than a toy, someone to have around the house like a dog or a cat." Poor Bob! Poor Sol!

Blanche and Jerry repair Solomon King's human isolation. But they also allow him to become a Filipino once again as they allow him to show hospitality, perhaps the most important Philippine cultural value. In the flashback which follows the breakup with Morningstar, Sol is telling another Filipino that they should help each other in America. His companion knows Sol's isolation well, for he retorts: "Look who's talking. You the guy who run away when you see an old Pinoy approach you. . . . But what's the use, my smartaleck *paisano*, you won't recognize loneliness even when it's served you on a bamboo tray."

After Blanche and Jerry, Sol need no longer live wholly in the land of the colonial masters, his Filipino identity masked by the white face of Robert Taylor. He goes to Washington to find Noli and Barbara and tell them what they have really meant to him. The flood of memories provoked by the bus trip to Washington results in "a cameraman's error of a dream, the same film used twice, slides of scenes and events superimposed twice over . . . a weird combination of places and differing times and people out of the present and the past." In one such montage: "along the bridle paths in Rock Creek Park little brown farmer boys led their carabaos to graze at will. They stared in amazement at the tall red-faced Americans walking by." Mount Mayon, a volcano visible from the house Santos built for himself in his native province of Albay, is superimposed over the cemetery in Arlington. And the sound of the bus engine and the wheels on the highway seem to him the muffled sound of a flag-draped caisson. Flashback: driving a cab in Washington as a young man, Sol takes an old couple to see the White House, but the street becomes a cobblestone road in Manila as Sol glimpses his dead parents in the rear-view mirror.

Finally, Sol can safely recollect old times in conversation with Noli. He no longer needs his pictures, his travel brochures, or his hardened isolation. With Noli he can recollect the old times of Benny's barbershop at Fourth and F, the center of Philippine life in Washington during the years of the Commonwealth, and the yo-yo contest Noli had entered, coached by Sol, where he was chosen winner though he was the clumsiest,

because the company wanted not an artist but a clown in a zoot-suit short enough to stand in the store's windows. Through Noli he finds Barbara, now living in a nursing home in the Virginia suburbs. Their interview is inconclusive, but Sol brings her a blanket to keep her warm. As he leaves the nursing home at the novel's end, Barbara unintentionally reminds him, and us, that Filipinos are at risk in the land of the colonizer where there is neither warmth nor identity. She calls out: "Be sure you don't catch your death out in that cold."

II. Arrivals and Departures: Paul Stephen Lim

Born into a Manila Chinese family in 1944, Paul Stephen Lim came to the United States in 1968. He teaches in the English Department at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, where two of the stories are set that will be considered here. To date, he has published one collection of stories. Several of Lim's plays and stories have won the prestigious Palanca Awards in the Philippines. In 1979 he received a summer fellowship from the Midwest Playwrights Laboratory. His play, "Woeman," was produced in New York in 1982. A collection of Lim's plays is to be brought out next year by a publisher in the Philippines. The same house, New Day, brought out Lim's collection of short stories in 1982, entitled *Some Arrivals, But Mostly Departures.* Of the eight stories in that collection, three indicate Lim's yearning for community in the Midwestern landscape: "Flight," "The Third and Final Dream of Samuel Toeppffer," and "Dots and Dashes."

"Flight," the first story in the collection, comprises the diary of Wing, a 24-year-old Chinese Filipino going to Kansas to study English literature. The early diary entries are made on the plane as Wing crosses the Pacific to find the America he had read about in *Time* and *Newsweek*. He puns on his name: "he who 'slouches toward Bethlehem to be born' is not so fortunate as he who wings his way to California to be reborn." Seventeen months later Wing finds the diary and begins to write in it again. His first entry of this phase notes a bumper sticker he has seen: "Committing Suicide in Kansas is Redundant." Wing's is a bifurcated identity. Though his parents can identify with Amoy

and Chungking where they had grown up, Wing has never been to mainland China, or even to Taiwan, under whose passport he travels as an Overseas Chinese. Thus, Wing's status as a Filipino is one of regret and denial:

> "I am Chinese and yet I do not sympathize with Chiang Kaishek. . . . I do not sympathize with Mao Tsetung. . . . I am Chinese and yet my roots are Philippine. So why is it that I have never identified (and continue to feel that I never will identify) *completely* with the Filipinos?"

Brought up a Protestant after his mother converted from Buddhism, and educated by the Jesuits, Wing's alienation ironically echoes the moment in the Catholic ritual when Christ is most closely identified with humanity: "I know only one thing, that every day I feel the alienation growing—what is it the priest says at Mass?—*through* me, *with* me, *in* me."

Through Wing's diary run verses of "Moon River," a melancholy song that is all the more suggestive in the context of the Overseas Chinese. Later, as the diary goes into a series of reminiscences on Wing's father, the verses of "Moon River" are replaced by those of Joan Baez's "Baby Blue." A customs agent at Honolulu triggers a different set of associations and another aspect of Wing's alienation when she asks how much money he is bringing "to the mainland." In his family's set of cultural associations the mainland can only be China.

Wing suffers the alienation that all immigrants and sojourners ultimately suffer when loved ones die back home. His mother telephones from Manila and, speaking Fukienese, tells Wing that his father has died. With only his father's amethyst ring and calendar watch as mementoes, Wing recalls his father's parting words at the Manila airport: "Don't forget to reset the calendar date on the watch when you get to America! Be sure to turn the hands back! You gain a full day when you cross the International Date Line!" Realizing the bizarre connotations, Wing imagines that "technically speaking, as of that moment my father was not yet dead. . . . My father was going to die all over again, for my benefit—in Kansas!"

The last story in *Some Arrivals, But Mostly Departures* is "Dots and Dashes." An unnamed Chinese Filipino (Wing at a later date?) has finished his English language studies in Kansas

and is working in Tokyo. He decides to return to Manila aboard the President Wilson for a vacation by way of Taipei and Hong Kong. For an Overseas Chinese to visit Hong Kong requires considerable logistics. Visiting Taiwan is a nightmare of red tape. Though travelling on a Taiwanese passport, a visa is still required. As if this formality did not sufficiently describe the young man's alienation, he must admit to the Taiwan consular officer in Tokyo that though well ecucated and working on a Japanese edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica,* he cannot fill out the forms unaided because he cannot speak Mandarin or even read and write kanji. His job, reducing the encyclopedia's articles to one-third their original length so that a Japanese edition will have no more volumes than the English one, results in the following comic response from the Taiwanese consular official:

> "Ah, so! You born in Philippines, but you carry Chinese passport. You study in America, but you work in Japan. You make people buy *Encyclopedia Britannica,* but it is not really *Encyclopedia Britannica.* . . . You cut down *Britannica* article on Taiwan? How you do it? How you cut down Taiwan three times?"

Aboard the President Wilson, the young man, now finally on his journey, overhears a bejewelled American dowager bemoaning the fact that the ship will be "anchoring in Keelung for only less than 24 hours, because she absolutely *adored* Taipei—the jades were *so* exquisite, the silks *so* delicate, the food *so* divine, the prices *so* cheap, the people *so* quaint." The young man turns to speak to her but is severly rebuked for his presumption. As the woman ostentatiously swings her diamond-studded evening bag and denounces the implication that she's a racist, he addresses her in a Charlie Chan imitation. The question is who knows the Chinese better. The young man insists on his superior claim: "You're not Chinese. I am. And I *know.*" Yet later, as he tours the National Palace Museum in Taipei, he confronts his alienation:

> I really don't know what I'm looking at when I look at Asian art objects. . . . While the National Palace Museum makes me feel proud to be part of such an ancient race of cultured and sophisticated people, it also makes me feel superbly ignorant of my own heritage, my own origin, my own roots.

The principal character of "The Third and Final Dream of Samuel Toeppffer" is an instructor at the University of Kansas who is powerfully impelled to immerse himself, for an evening, in the low-life of Kansas City. Fed up with reading freshman themes, he bolts out of the student union, rushes to the bus station, and boards a bus which becomes a sort of a ship of fools as Samuel muses about "his travelling companions for the next 55 or 60 miles." The brunette next to him brushes her leg against his whenever she shifts position, but there is no real contact. The woman in the seat ahead falls asleep and the earpiece of her portable radio falls over the back of the seat to dangle before Samuel, enabling him to catch strains of love songs that cry out for human contact:

> Barbara Streisand confesses how she trembled with fear and ecstasy when "He Touched Me." Frank Sinatra bull-shitting some girl with how "I Only Have Eyes For You" and how "I've Got You Under My Skin" and then begging the same girl to "Take All of Me," Elvis Presley bemoaning the fate of his "Wooden Heart," Peter and Gordon explaining why "I Go To Pieces," *ad misericordiam.*

When he gets off the bus at the filthy station in Kansas City, Samuel walks along seedy 13th Street to 13th and Baltimore, imagining that "Theodore Dreiser must have stood on the same spot, many times." Another block, at 13th and Wyandotte, stands "the back entrance to the world-famous Muehlebach Hotel, which Ernest Hemingway once said had the widest beds in Kansas City." Two more blocks and he finds himself outside the Old Chelsea Theatre where two violent and degrading "Super SeXX" films are playing. On impulse, Samuel ducks in, pays the exorbitant admission, and is "at once confronted with the most confusing and most tedious parade of anatomical images. . . ." He sits through the three-hour ordeal where "his eyes were being forced by the camera to focus only on disjointed parts (or sometimes even sub-parts, and sub-parts of sub-parts) of the human anatomy," interrupting his "entertainment" only once to use the men's room where he finds graffiti so unlike those of the campus: "entirely without wit or humor, filled only with dark despair, with awful unfulfillment, with vulgar imitation." Whipping out the red ballpoint he uses to grade his freshman themes, Samuel adds his own not very clever scatological contribution to "the pornography-covered latrine wall. . . . 'Kansas City . . . Here I Come!' "

Stumbling out of the theatre, "bleary-eyed and lonelier than he had ever been in his life," Samuel enters an adult bookstore. Now thoroughly frustrated and alienated, he buys three magazines to read on the bus back to Lawrence: *Reader's Digest, New Yorker,* and *Playgirl* because he had read that the editor claimed she didn't pose nude men "as sex-objects" but "as something of social value." An underaged teenage boy has seen Samuel purchase *Playgirl* and accosts him outside the bookstore. The boy asks Samuel to accompany him to the men's room of the Muehlebach because "he seems like a kind person. . . . like an older brother." Though claiming not to be gay, Samuel acquiesces and thus solves the mystery of a dream he has been having. While engaged in homosexual acts with the boy, Samuel remembers a childhood friend whose call for human contact he had spurned. As he returns to the campus, Samuel is no less insular than before since he remains unaware that his activity with the boy is hostile to community values. An isolate in his own community, little more than a cipher in the university's freshman composition program, Samuel both yearns for and spurns community. Neglecting the present community, he reaches out for the childhood friend, now dead, whom he formerly spurned. He believes that he has "brought another human being to a kind of completeness," and "that was all that seemed to matter at the moment."

Is Paul Stephen Lim a Midwestern writer? Does merely living in Kansas for twenty years make one a Midwestern writer in any essential way? How would Lim himself respond to the label? I suspect he would be mystified, perhaps outraged, since he has been chary even of being called a Filipino writer. He might respond as Bienvenido Santos once did when I suggested to him an interpretation of one of his stories: "Where do you critics get these fantastic ideas?" Yet Lim's consciousness, as shown in these three stories, is one of seeking community and stability. That's quintessential Midwestern—to wit: *Winesburg, Ohio, Spoon River Anthology,* "Neighbor Rosicky," *Main Street, Sister Carrie.* Still, three stories do not comprise a writer's

oeuvre. Paul Stephen Lim may yet be a significant Midwestern writer in more than his place of residence. We shall have to see the direction he chooses to take.

The principal object of these essays was to stretch the boundaries of what is generally considered Midwestern. O. E. Rolvaag surely was a Midwestern writer, though he wrote in Norwegian and his books were published in Norway. Santos and Lim are writing in English, though only some of their works are set in the Midwest. The expression of a need for human community in Lim's writing is as Midwestern as *Winesburg, Ohio*. Even when his character is travelling from Japan to Manila by way of Taipei, there is something of the Kansas that he has left. Indeed, this young man is recovering from surgery performed in Kansas. Is it too much black humor to suggest he has left a part of himself in Kansas? Santos, too, may be said to have folded the Midwest into his worldwide geography. As we sat in his office at Wichita State University nearly seven years ago, he told me he could look out at the rolling fields and see the ricelands of the Philippines. Perhaps that was an exaggeration, for Santos is not above stringing along a gullible admirer. The truth is that Santos's characters are as lovingly sculpted as Cather's, and they are as dependent upon place. In the fiction of both Santos and Lim, the Midwest remains a place where community is both sought and shunned, a condition less dependent upon post-modern than upon post-colonial alienation.

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A NOTE ON SOURCES

Scent of Apples, a retrospective collection of Bienvenido N. Santos's stories, was published in 1979 by University of Washington Press. It contains both "Immigration Blues" and "The Day the Dancers Came," as well as the wonderfully evocative Midwestern story, "Scent of Apples." New Day Publishers in the Philippines has published two of his novels, *The Praying Man* (1982) and *The Man Who (Thought He) Looked Like Robert Taylor* (1983), and *Dwell in the Wilderness* (1985), a collection of pre-war stories. New Day has recently brought out new editions of Santos's two early novels, *The Volcano* and *Villa Magdalena*. New Day's exclusive U.S. distributor is the Cellar Book Shop (18090 Wyoming St., Detroit, Mich. 48221). *Distances: In Time*, a selection of Santos's poems, was published in 1983 by Ateneo de Manila University Press (distributed in the U.S. by University of Hawaii Press). Still out-or-print are his first collection of poems, *The Wounded Stag* (1958), and three collections of stories, *You Lovely People* (1955), *Brother, My Brother* (1960), and *The Day the Dancers Came* (1967), which contains "My Most Memorable Christmas in America." The post-colonial anguish of *The Man Who (Thought He) Looked Like Robert Taylor* is carried yet another step in Santos's just completed but not yet published novel, tentatively titled *So What the Hell For You Lost Your Heart in San Francisco?*

Paul Stephen Lim's collection of stories, *Some Arrivals, But Mostly Departures*, was published in the Philippines by New Day in 1982 (available from the Cellar Book Shop). Three plays, *Flesh, Flash and Frank Harris: A Recreation in Two Acts* (1984), *Woemen: A Recreation in Two Acts* (1985), and *Homerica: A Trilogy on Sexual Liberation* (1985) have been published by Aran Press (1320 S. Third Street, Louisville, KY 40208). *Conpersonas: A Recreation in Two Acts* may be ordered from Samuel French (25 West 45th Street, New York, NY 10036). *Hatchet Club* (1983) was printed in *Plays: A Quarterly* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Dec. 1985), published by Oracle Press (5323 Heatherstone Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70820). Excerpts from *Points of Departure: A Play in One Act* appeared in *Bridge: An Asian-American Perspective*, Summer 1977. Lim reports that he is working on five new plays.

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