

SOCIETY  
FOR THE  
STUDY  
OF

MIDWESTERN  
LITERATURE

Newsletter  
Volume Three  
Number Three  
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Society for the Study of  
Midwestern Literature

Newsletter

Volume III  
Number Three

The Third Annual Conference

The Third Annual Conference was held at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, on October 6. Two major topics, "Images of City and Country in Midwestern Literature" and "Mythical Dimensions of Midwestern Literature," were discussed. The former panel included Perry Gianakos of MSU, William Thomas of Ohio State, William McCann of East Lansing, and JoAnn Hackos of Mt. Pleasant. John Ferres of MSU was moderator.

The second panel included Henry Galemba of Wayne State, Gerold Nemanic of Northeastern Illinois, Blair Whitney of MSU, and Nancy Scott of MSU. Eugene Huddleston of MSU was moderator.

At the lunch session, David D. Anderson, outgoing president, spoke on "The Uncritical Critics: American Realists and the Lincoln Myth." A convivium was held at the Anderson home.

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Summaries of Papers and "Images of City and Country in Midwestern Literature"

On George Ade

My original interest in Ade was sparked by his anti-imperialist stories and plays, all but one of which were set overseas. Ade and Finley Peter Dunne were among the most prominent American humorists to oppose American imperialism at the turn of the century. Both were newspaper men, writing for a Midwestern audience. Ade's stories are "popular literature," and they tell much about the audience for which they were written. Ade's stories not yet re-published although I have collected them, clearly show the city-country dichotomy so common in Midwestern literature but Ade skillfully transfers that dichotomy to foreign scenes and the "city slicker" emerges as the imperialist while the exploited native becomes the simple, honest, hardworking countryman.

Ade ironically concludes that the simple native counterpart can only be enslaved by force; he is innately too wise to succumb to the eloquence of the imperialists.

Perry Gianakos

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On Charles Allen Smart

Charles Allen Smart, who died in 1967 in his 63rd year, began his literary career with two novels, New England Holiday and The Brass Cannon, both published before he was 30 years old. Neither was successful, either commercially or artistically.

His first (and only) real success was RFD (1938). In 1934 Smart and his sister inherited two farms in Ross County, Ohio. Seeking a way of life that would offer personal satisfaction, the following year he brought his bride of a few months to Oak Hill, the stone house on the smaller of these farms.

Though born in Cleveland, Smart thought of himself as an Easterner (he graduated cum laude from Harvard in 1926). But for the eight years to and including 1942 he lived rather primitively (Oak Hill then had neither electricity nor plumbing) as a practical farmer.

It is the experience of these years that he dwells on in RFD. He was truly a "dirt" farmer, himself performing the farm operations, with the aid of one hired man. He writes of planting and tilling, caring for animals (he raised sheep), conservation, and his association with neighbors, with whom he achieved a relation of mutual respect.

I believe, however, that I detect in his analysis of the 1930s' rural life a problem greater than the sum of the manifold petty problems that constantly confronted him on the farm. He was the intellectual out of his proper environment, obliged to rationalize the course of action he had chosen while yet not finding the stimulation he sought. In the later years at Oak Hill he associated himself with a theater group in Chillicothe.



Charles Allen Smart  
Continued

The history of literature can at best accord Smart a footnote. He was a writer because he wanted to write, not because he had compelling things to say. Belie-  
tristically, his only work likely to endure is RFD. It remains a likable book, and within the limits of its subject matter, a good one. Yet its merits are debatable--for the reasons implied in this paper. It is, to some degree unconsciously, the record of a search for a satisfactory way of life. Unlike Thoreau, Smart never found that.

William Thomas

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On Kin Hubbard

Kin Hubbard was born in 1868 in Bellefontaine Ohio, where his father edited and published a weekly newspaper, The Examiner. Kin left school in the seventh grade, became a sign painter, and occasionally wandered off with a side show or carnival. Finally he went to work on his father's paper and then became an itinerant newspaperman, arriving in Indianapolis in 1901. There he perfected Abe Martin, a fictional countryman who lived in Brown County, Indiana. As the rustic Abe, whom Martin caricatured as clad in baggy pants, oversized gunboats, a shapeless black coat, and huge floppy hands protruding from ragged sleeves), Hubbard became famous.

Abe's quips had an authentic homespun touch. Hubbard based most of them on his boyhood memories of Bellefontaine, a town that, he wrote once, could be identified "by the two sparrows on the south end of the water tank near the Big Four station". "The town was so lonely," he wrote, "that owls sometimes flew 900 miles out of their way to spend a day there."

In his years of doing Abe Martin, Hubbard had only one column that many editors declined to run. It read "Nothing annoys a vulture like biting into a glass eye," a line any of today's black humorists could be proud of.

William McCann

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On Willa Cather

In one of her earliest short stories, "On the Divide," Willa Cather provides a definition of the wild lands that points out the significance of that land in her Nebraska novels:

"I am still here, at the bottom of things, warming the roots of life; you cannot starve me nor tame me nor thwart me: I made the world, I rule it, and I am its destiny."

The lines are overwrought but they do anticipate the ambivalent attitudes of many of Cather's later protagonists toward the land. The land has power that is sinister and threatening yet is, at the bottom of things, a creative force. The wild land speaks for itself, providing an image which grows out of specific scenes of the Nebraska Divide, but with a voice that also speaks outside of space and time. The land in Cather's story and later in the novels becomes symbolic of universal value as well as a reflector of personal value.

By 1913, with the composition of O Pioneers!, Cather had gained a perspective on the prairie through time and distance. A certain element of ambiguity in her attitude toward Nebraska had existed in those early stories. Then she had needed to escape that sometimes brutal and devastating landscape for a more congenial atmosphere. But by 1913 the ambiguity of her attitudes toward the wild land of the country and the good life of the city developed in full force and supplied the tension of several novels. She had gained success in the city, and never denied the nourishment that civilization provided the artist. She came to realize as well the dominance of material values upon her city life--eventually she quit her job at McClure's to devote herself fulltime to writing. She returned to Nebraska as the scene of her tales, with a basic nostalgia for the past that critics have called the 'drama of memory.' But the drama of memory never remains simple nostalgia, as the variety and intensity of the description of the country make clear. She explodes the myth of place, which dominated the stories, and threatened to dominate the Nebraska novels.

Jo Ann Hackos

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# Summaries of Papers on "The Mythical Dimensions of Midwestern Literature"

## On Science Fiction

One curious fact about science fiction is that Midwesterners dominate the genre. Eminent SF writers born in 1920 or before include Ray Bradbury from Illinois, R.A. Lafferty from Iowa, Robert Heinlein from Missouri, Fritz Leiber and Robert Bloch from Chicago, and Clifford Simak from a farm outside Millville, Wisconsin. The Midwest is likewise well represented by younger SF writers like Harlan Ellison and Roger Zelazny from Ohio, Michael Crichton from Chicago, Alexei Panshin from Lansing, and Kurt Vonnegut from Indianapolis.

Of course, New York can produce great science fiction writers, but the SanSan and BoWash megolopoli do not match the Midwest in the number of SF masters they can claim. It is probably no accident therefore that the best SF school -- the Clarion Writers' Workshop is located in the Midwest at Michigan State University. Nor is it mere coincidence that SF conventions are usually held in cities like Muncie, Detroit, St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland. SF critics also tend to be Midwestern. In the best critical anthology published to date (The Other Side of Realism, Bowling Green, Ohio, 1971), thirteen critics are identified by college. Of these, three are from Ohio, two from Indiana, one each from Kansas, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan. None of the remaining four is from any of the major coastal cities. Hence at all levels -- learning to write SF, discussing it at conventions, and criticizing it formally -- the Midwest predominates.

Tony Tanner tells us that Transcendentalism's ultimate intention was to create a sense of wonder, and we find Damon Knight (who, like Thoreau, is fond of printing his name with lower case letters) entitling his book of SF criticism In Search of Wonder. The epigraph to Bradbury's Martian Chronicles reads: "It is good to renew one's wonder. . . . Space travel has again made children of us all." As to content, in creating their own mythological worlds, are not SF universesssimilar to the self-contained worlds of a Thoreauvian pond and an Emersonian study? Perhaps these correspondences help elucidate why Loren Eiseley, the most famous living Transcendentalist, hails from the Midwest and is often claimed in SF anthologies. The relationship between

three data may be stronger and more telling than has been heretofore suspected.

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Henry Golemba

On Ross Lockridge Jr.

Among the more recent Midwest epics, Ross Lockridge's Raintree County is, I think, one of more interesting and successful. When this 1060 page novel was published, in 1948, Lockridge was an obscure instructor of English (perhaps that's a redundancy) at Simmons College in Boston. He had been reared in Bloomington, Indiana -- his father, Ross Lockridge, Sr., was a professor at Indiana University and a specialist in Indiana history and lore. Ross Jr. labored over what was to be his only novel for nearly a decade. Publication brought him immediate wealth, fame and critical recognition. Howard Mumford Jones went so far as to declare that the appearance of Raintree County marked the end of a serious slump in American fiction. It appeared, for the moment, that another gifted, young midwesterner was emerging to reshape American fiction, as Dreiser, Lewis, and Hemingway had done before him.

Well, the ink was barely dry on the reviews when whatever expectations the critics held were abruptly dashed. For within six months of the publication of his novel, Ross Lockridge, at 33, had killed himself, by carbon monoxide poisoning. Family and friends were either baffled or reticent about the suicide. To those groping for motives his mother said, simply: "The boy put his heart's blood into the book, he had nothing else to give."

Well, the twenty-five years since Lockridge produced Raintree County could have been two hundred, so thoroughly has the novel been forgotten by critics and literary historians. It has been long out of print, and its author has been quickly relegated to the status of those sometimes mentioned in a list, as an afterthought, by critics impatient to hasten on to more important business.

And there are certain reasons which account for this neglect: the general skepticism with which we now view the "Great American Novel" idea; the fact that Lockridge wrote only one book, and that one, for all its promise, a seriously flawed work, a young



Ross Lockridge  
Continued

writer's first novel, after all. Perhaps Raintree County seems too romantic, too ingenuous for us now. Even Lockridge's "eight year pregnancy" writing it, and that dramatic self annihilation on the brink of glory are touched with melodrama too embarrassing to ponder quite seriously.

Nevertheless, a consideration of Raintree County can reveal to us some interesting things about ourselves as Americans, and especially as Midwestern Americans. In its prodigious effort to be born, this epic novel tells us something important about the possibilities and difficulties of making an epic literature in this time and place. For those of you who may not have read it, let me take a few moments to summarize the action of the novel: Raintree County details the life of a potential epic hero, John Wickliff Shawnessy, from his youth in antebellum Indiana (that idyllic "mirror of the ancient republic now lost in time") through a young manhood caught up in Civil War and on into later life amid trappings of a "Gilded Age." Like the epic heroes of old, Shawnessy represents the essential hopes and strivings of his times. And his times, though a century old now, are the root of our own times.

Gerald Nemanic

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On John Neihardt

John Neihardt's epic poem, A Cycle of the West, is based on two myths -- the American West as Virgin Land and the Sioux Indian myth, symbolized by the sacred hoop. The Sioux myth expresses a vision of unity, harmony, and peace, which is destroyed by the coming of the white man, who believed it was his manifest destiny to sweep to the Pacific, regardless of who or what was in his way. Neihardt makes excellent poetry out of the conflict between two cultures, two ways of seeing the world, two national myths.

Blair Whitney

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That Sam Clemens burlesqued false or conventionalized myth extensively both in structural and textural terms and that he may simultaneously have been searching for a renewed "faith" in his early and middle works is hardly a startling observation. What has not received much needed attention is the manner in which the artist retained his ability to destroy false myths with a humorist's distance into even the latest pieces, and how the author's search for a way into a refreshed mythopoeia and an escape from conventionalized forms remained an active concern even into his last years.

One of the most lively and revealing of the very late long fragments in this regard is a piece written in the Summer of 1905, entitled "3,000 Years Among the Microbes." The microbe story is structured upon the familiar Jonah and the whale motif in which the hero moves not outward from the village to the moving river, but within to achieve awareness.

In "3,000 Years Among the Microbes," the burlesque of the Jonah myth, like the burlesque of mythical structure from earliest work, cannot be easily analyzed, and the journey into the belly of the tramp Blitzzy, the burlesque of a journey inward rather than outward down a river or to Jackson's Island, may contrary to all first impressions still carry some promise which reveals an impulse toward rebirth or recovery, a newer or recovered mythopoeia, truer than the false myths which Clemens poked such fun at. The journey inward is left incomplete, in a fragmented form; we do not know if BKSHP will return or how, but there are suggestions in Clemens' interest in dreams, in his interest in the new psychology, his reading in the newest and most controversial thinking of psychologists and parapsychologists around the turn of the century, and in the late serious journal entries regarding his own dreams and a dream self, that the turning inward may be of more than passing significance for our understanding of Clemens' later fight against despair. In the recovery of humorous distance, in his newer experimentation with form, and in some of the microbe narrator's late conversations about dreams and the imagination, about the possibilities of other world, there are hints that the predominantly negative impressions of Clemens' late moods and last work need some



Mark Twain  
Continued

qualification. It is perhaps as John S. Tuckey suggested some two years ago at MLA; perhaps Clemens was moving "beyond despair"; perhaps the newest publications of the several long fragments will eventually lead critics to heed the careful exhortation of #44, the mysterious visitor of the last unpublished version of the Mysterious Stranger. He recognizes the possibility that all of life may be a dream, but if that is the case, then shouldn't we still "dream other dreams and better."

Nancy P. Scott

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#### On Abraham Lincoln

Major American writers, who saw themselves as realists, were "uncritical critics" when they build the myths about Lincoln, according to a Michigan State University professor.

Dr. David D. Anderson, speaking at the third annual conference of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature at Kellogg Center Saturday (Oct. 6) said William Dean Howells, Brand Whitlock and Sherwood Anderson sought to present Lincoln as occupying "a central place in the ultimate unwritten definition of America."

In each case, Dr. Anderson said, the writers' kinds of realism produced a Lincoln beyond objective reality and "approaching universality."

The self-made frontier natural aristocrat portrayed by Howells, the crusading progressive humanist defined by Whitlock, and the tortured romantic seeker after a meaning and fulfillment poetic rather than material as (Sherwood) Anderson felt him to be, are all elements of Lincoln," he said.

"Such a definition of Lincoln (and America) is not the stuff of critical realism.... As each of them knew, it can only be expressed in terms of myth, of the essence rather than the appearance of life, a time, a people, a place.

"This is what these realists have made of Lincoln, and in so doing they teach us much

about an American reality as vast, as complex, as provocative as the man in whom they insist it is epitomized."

Fran Murray  
MSU News Bureau

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#### The Seminar at Midwest MLA

The Society sponsored a seminar at the Midwest Modern Language Association meeting at Chicago on November 3rd. The session, chaired by David D. Anderson, focused on problems in research, publishing, and teaching. Clarence Andrews discussed his research toward a history of Midwestern Literature and Gerald Nemanic discussed his progress toward compiling a Bibliographic Guide to Midwestern Literature.

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#### Coming Events

##### The MLA Seminar

The MLA Annual Meeting will again include a seminar on Midwestern literature, at 3:45 on Friday, December 28. The seminar will consist of five brief presentations, each dealing with an author or group of authors from a different part of the Midwest, followed by questions, comments, and discussion.

Our speakers are:

Prof. Gerald Nemanic on Wisconsin natural history writers  
Prof. William Elliott on North Woods poetry  
Prof. Lynne Waldeland on Wright Morris and Willa Cather of Nebraska  
Prof. Dorys Grover on Emerson Hough of Iowa  
Prof. Robert Kindrick on Edward Dahlberg of Kansas City

If you are interested in attending, please write me at the address below.

Blair Whitney  
Department of American  
Thought and Language  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan  
\*\*\* 43824



## The Special Society Program

At a special program  
in conjunction with the  
1973 Modern Language Association  
Annual Meeting

The Society for the Study of Midwestern  
Literature  
is sponsoring a discussion,

The Sense of Place in Midwestern Poetry.  
The program will be held  
at the Newberry Library, 60 West  
Walton Street, Chicago,  
on December 28,  
1973, at 7:30 in the evening.

Participants include :

Bernard Duffey, Chairman;  
Frederick Eckman,  
F. Richard Thomas,  
Linda Wagner, and  
David D. Anderson.

The Society also encourages attendance at  
the seminar on the Chicago Renaissance,  
chaired by Neale Reinitz. The program  
will include a tour of architectural  
monuments.

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## The Popular Culture Association Meeting

At the Fourth National Popular Culture  
Association Meeting in Milwaukee, May 2-5,  
1974, the Society will sponsor a program  
on Popular Midwestern Literature. Papers  
include Patricia Anderson on "Images of  
the Midwest in Children's Literature";  
William McCann on "Midwestern Humorous  
Journalism"; Bernard Engel on "Midwestern  
Popular Poetry"; Douglas Noverr on "Small  
Town Life and Violence in Recent Michigan  
Fiction," and David D. Anderson on "Booth  
Tarkington and the Myth of Boyhood."

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## Journal Announcements

### Clio

This is to introduce you to CLIO, an inter-  
disciplinary journal from The University  
of Wisconsin--Parkside. CLIO publishes  
material of general interest for scholars

concerned with the inter-relations of  
literature, history, philosophy, and re-  
ligion. We accept essays, reviews, review-  
articles, and related scholarly communica-  
tions.

Recent issues have explored such areas as  
the nature of narrative and argument, the  
"dialectic" of history in various literary  
works, the historical backgrounds of pieces  
of literature, the literary criticism of  
history, the historical imagination, human-  
ism, "literary" history, mythology of  
history, the historical novel, historicism,  
and the Christian view.

CLIO is published three times a year, with  
subscriptions at \$4.50 per year for indiv-  
iduals and \$12.00 per year for libraries  
and institutions. If interested in a sub-  
scription (and we hope you are!) please  
send a check to: CLIO, The University  
of Wisconsin -- Parkside, Kenosha, Wisc.  
53140. Are you sure your institution's  
library subscribes to us?

Dennis R. Dean  
Associate Editor

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## New Literary History

I wish to bring to your attention New  
Literary History, the foremost theoretical  
journal in America dealing with literary  
problems. New Literary History, now be-  
ginning its fifth year of publication, has  
achieved a unique reputation among scholars  
throughout the world, who have called it  
"the best in its field," "the one journal  
in America indispensable to anyone inter-  
ested in literary theory," and "remarkable  
. . . in making a serious contribution to  
our literary theory."

The purpose of New Literary History is to  
inquire into the nature of literature and  
into the relation of literature to other  
disciplines and to society. Each issue  
is devoted to a single subject and is con-  
cerned with such inquiries as the relation  
of literature to the lives of its readers,  
the meaning and significance of literary  
history, and the interrelation of history  
and fiction. Each issue concludes with a  
commentary on the principle articles, usual-  
ly by an expert from another discipline.



New Literary History is published three times a year -- in the autumn, winter, and spring. Subscriptions are \$8.00 for one year and \$15.00 for two years (plus postage for subscribers outside the United States). The average length of issues is two hundred pages, and the journal is indexed every second year. Back issues are available at a cost of \$3.00 each.

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#### The Annual Bibliography of Midwestern Literature

The Annual Bibliography of Midwestern Literature is being prepared by a staff of members under the direction of Don Pady of the Iowa State University staff. Don is Society Bibliographer, and his staff includes Paul Somers, James R. Bailey, B. Donald Grose, Betty Ann Burch, Robert Bessecker, Milton Reigelman, William E. Koch, Mary Ellen Caldwell, Gerald Nemanic, George C. Longest, Clarence Andrews, Lynne Waldeland, Rosalie Hewitt, Frank Robinson, Elizabeth Steele, Michael Butler, and Robert Narveson. Don can be reached at the Iowa State University Library, Ames, Iowa 50010.

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#### Announcements

Clarence Andrews has been included in Outstanding American Educators of 1972 and 1973.

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The Newsletter welcomes its new office mate, The Newsletter of the Michigan Women's Studies Association, Volume I, Number 1 of which appeared in July.

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Bill Sutton has recently published, in pamphlet form, "Sexual Fairness in Language." Copies, at 35¢, are available from Bill at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

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The Michigan State University Library is compiling a Midwestern Women Poets Collection. Nominees and materials may be sent to Carolyn Blunt, Special Collections, MSU Library, East Lansing, Michigan 48824.

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John Voelker (Robert Traver) has published "Hemingway's Big Two-Hearted Secret" in Sports Afield, July, 1973. A odd piece by one writer-fisherman on another, it's well worth discussing with John in the North Country some snowy night.

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The Sadakichi Hartmann Newsletter, edited by Richard Tuerk, is published at East Texas University, Commerce, Texas 75428. The Fall, 1972, issue features "Sadakichi in Detroit." Subscriptions are available from Mr. Tuerk.

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#### Modern Poetry Studies

The Spring, 1973, issue of Modern Poetry Studies is a Horace Gregory Issue. Gregory, born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1898, has usually been considered peripheral to the modernist trend in poetry; but his poetry and criticism has been in the mainstream, according to many other poets and observers of the contemporary scene. In this issue, such critics as M.L. Rosenthal, Robert Phillips, Robert Morris, and Linda Wagner assess Gregory's impact on the poetry and the strengths and weaknesses of his own poems. Also included are essays by David Zucker, Daniel Stern, Arthur Gregor, Victor Kramer, William V. Davis. Three poems by Horace Gregory -- "The Smoldering Light," "Elegy and Flame," and "Seven A.M. in Cold Blue Air" -- also appear.

Linda Wagner

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#### Ohioana Awards

Book awards, citations and the prestigious Career Medal were presented at the 44th annual meeting and luncheon of the Martha Kinney Cooper Ohioana Library Association, at 10 a.m., Saturday, 27 October, at Capital University Learning Center, Columbus, Ohio.



## Ohioana Awards

Dr. Merrill Patterson, President of Ohioana Library and Consultant to the President, Parkersburg College, Parkersburg, West Virginia, announced the following authors as the recipients of the 1973 Ohioana Book Awards:

KENNETH E. DAVISON for his History, "The Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes". Dr. Davison, Professor of History and American Studies and Chairman of the Department of American Studies at Heidelberg College, Tiffin, portrays Hayes as a middle-class, moderate statesman who effected a recovery of the economy.

HANNAH GREEN for her novel, "The Dead of the House". Miss Green (Mrs. John Wesley), formerly of Cincinnati, now resides in New York where, as assistant professor, she teaches in the School of Arts, Columbia University. Chapters of her memoir-novel first appeared in the New Yorker Magazine.

J. ALLEN HYNEK for his scientific volume, "The U F O Experience: A Scientific Inquiry." A true scientist, Dr. Hynek now holds the chair of astronomy at Northwestern University. He has earned many prestigious titles and formerly was Director of Ohio State University McMillin Observatory, the assigned astronomer to "Project Sign" (code name for Unidentified Flying Objects) located at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton.

MARY OLIVER for her volume of poetry, "The River Styx, Ohio and Other Poems." Many of these poems in this, her second volume of poetry, envision memories of her early years in Ohio.

Born in Maple Heights, not far from Cleveland, Miss Oliver is journeying from her home in Provincetown, Mass. to accept her Ohioana book award.

JAMES T. PATTERSON for his biography, "Mr. Republican; a Biography of Robert A. Taft". The Taft family gave Dr. Patterson access to all their papers deposited in the Library of Congress and trunksful of memorabilia still in the Taft home, Cincinnati.

Dr. Patterson is both an historian and

biographer. He is Professor of American History at Brown University.

The Florence Roberts Head Memorial Award of 1973 went to CHARLES S. HOLMES for his portrait-study entitled "The Clocks of Columbus, The Literary Career of James Thurber."

Born in Oberlin, Dr. Holmes "grew up on Thurber". As a Thurberphile, he shares with the reader his delight in this humorist. Dr. Holmes is Professor of English at Pomona College in Claremont, California.

The Career Medal was presented to JOHN H. GLENN "First Man in Orbit," who was born in Cambridge, Ohio.

As a pilot in World War II and the Korean War, he received awards and recognition for bravery and high performance. In "Friendship 7," the first capsule to orbit the earth, he set many more brave records.

JOHN ALEXANDER, Metropolitan Opera tenor of world-wide renown, received Ohioana's 1973 Citation in Music. He studies at the Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati and made his professional debut in the Cincinnati "Zoo" opera performance of Gounod's "Faust."

Ohioana Citations were presented to DANA ADAMS SCHMIDT, Pentagon Correspondent for The Christian Science Monitor for his clear, unbiased reporting of the news, and author of three recent books; to BOYD C. SHAFER, Professor of History at the University of Arizona for his leadership as educator and historian and to FRANCIS LEE UTLEY, Professor of English, Ohio State University, for his notable contributions to Ohio Folklore.

Mrs. Mills Judy, whose mother, Martha Kinney Cooper founded Ohioana Library, introduced Citation winner, Mr. Schmidt.

All Ohio authors of the year who attended were given recognition during the Ohioana Day program.

Bernice Williams Foley

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JOHN GNEISENAU NEIHARDT

January 8, 1881-November 11, 1973

"He is a word-sender. This world is like a garden. Over this garden go his words like rain, and where they fall they leave it a little greener. And when his words have passed, the memory of them shall stand long in the west like a flaming rainbow." (Black Elk of the Ogalala Sioux explaining why he gave John Neihardt the name "Flaming Rainbow.")

The word-sender is dead after ninety-two years, more than seventy of them spent writing -- poetry, history, fiction, drama, biography, criticism. John G. Neihardt was a true man of letters in the old-fashioned meaning of that word. Although he never made much money or achieved the fame of many lesser authors, he remained true to his mission. The literary vocation, he believed, was an exalted one, and he agreed with Emerson's conception of the poet as visionary bard, as a prophet who goes to the mountaintop and comes back to tell the people what he has seen.

When he was eleven and seriously ill with scarlet fever, Neihardt had a vision of himself flying through space while a great unseen Voice urged him to fly faster. Later he wrote a poem about this dream in which the Voice becomes what he calls the Ghostly Brother, who represents a striving to discover a transcendental reality, "to be lost in something impersonal and larger than oneself." In Black Elk Speaks, his best-known work, Neihardt recaptures the vision of a Sioux holy man, and in his epic, A Cycle of the West, he emphasized the universal, mythic quality of the American trappers and soldiers and their Indian antagonists. Neihardt's short stories often deal with men who discover previously-unknown dimensions in their personalities, while his criticism emphasizes that literature is a way of discovering hidden truths. His definition of the literary symbol, for instance, is that it "is like a little door opened suddenly upon long vistas of life, and he who looks through them shall be glorified by the consciousness of his close kinship with all men in all time."

Now John Neihardt is himself part of that glory.

Blair Whitney

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John Towner Frederick, whose service to the study of Midwestern literature is beyond measure, was honored by the University of Iowa on June 16, 1973, when the University, which does not award honorary degrees, gave Professor Frederick its highest award the Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Frederick was awarded the Litt. D. by the University of Notre Dame in 1965.

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The Newsletter needs an indexer and contributors of short reviews, news items, checklists, and other items of interest.

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Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature Newsletter

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## Michigan State's New Course in Midwestern Literature

Michigan State University will offer its first course in Midwestern literature during Winter term, 1974, under the title: American Studies 411: Midwestern American Literature. The course will be taught by David D. Anderson.

The purpose of the course is to explore the nature of Midwestern literature, emphasizing the peculiar characteristics that make it Midwestern and the culture that it reflects. Consequently, the term literature is used in its broadest sense, and it may include biography, history, and other forms as well as fiction and verse.

The course will not only emphasize information, ideas, and definitions, but it will also provide an opportunity for the students to develop their critical, interpretive, and analytical skills and talents as each one pursues an independent, concurrent project and presents a brief final report to the class as well as a formal essay incorporating the results of the study. Specific topics will be determined by each student in consultation with the instructor.

Class work will focus upon 7 works, each designed to illustrate a particular dimension of Midwestern literature. They include the following:

The Frontier and  
The Country: H. Garland, Main-  
Travelled Roads

The Village: E.W. Howe, Story  
of a Country Town

The City: J.T. Farrell, Studs  
Lonigan  
G. Brooks, Selected Poems

The Myths: L. Bromfield, Pleasant  
Valley S. Anderson, Windy  
Macpherson's Son

The Essence: Poets of the Midwest, edited by  
Lucien Stryk

Because each of these works occupies a key position in themes that permeate Midwestern literature, they will serve as points of departure for discussion and research that will focus upon attempts to define the Midwest in terms that range from myth to reality to metaphor. Each student will narrow his topic for individual research to suitable dimensions for the term's work.

## The Irving Wallace Collection

Since 1967, The University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, Wisconsin, 53140, has been the deposit recipient of the literary manuscripts of the Wisconsin raised award winning author Irving Wallace. The collection, consisting of twenty-six linear feet of material, is housed in the library's Special Collections Room and is available for use by appointment. This comprehensive collection affords scholars an insight into the literary world not often available. In addition to literary manuscripts, the collection includes: galley proofs, corrected and uncorrected; research notes; travel memorabilia relating to literary research; personal photographs; juvenilia; and correspondence. Irving Wallace has made copious notes concerning each item and its relation to his life in writing. Highlights of the collection are:

- A1. The Fabulous Originals. 1955  
Manuscript; photographs for illustrations; work sheets; publicity materials; reviews; five editions.
- A2. Square Pegs. 1957.  
Manuscript; photographs for illustrations; work sheets; publicity materials; research notes; correspondence; four editions.
- A3. The Fabulous Showman. 1959.  
First draft manuscript; final draft manuscript; Spanish translation manuscript; publicity materials; reviews; four screen adaptations; six editions.
- A4. The Sins of Peter Fleming. 1959.  
Manuscript; work sheets; eight editions.
- A5. The Chapman Report. 1960.  
Manuscript; work sheet; publicity materials; reviews; extract of court transcript; screenplay; movie publicity; fourteen editions.
- A6. The Prize. 1962.  
Manuscript; work sheet; publicity materials; reviews; synopsis for screenplay; screenplay; movie publicity; twelve editions.



- A7. The Three Sirens. 1963  
Manuscript; work sheets; publicity materials; reviews; twelve editions.
- A8. The Man. 1964.  
First draft manuscript; revised draft manuscript; work sheets; research notes; galley proofs; final page proofs; publicity materials; reviews; screen plays; correspondence; fourteen editions.
- A9. The Sunday Gentleman. 1965.  
Manuscript; work sheets; galley proofs; unbound sheets; publicity materials; reviews; correspondence; six editions.
- A10. The Twenty-seventh Wife. 1961.  
Manuscript; work sheets; Spanish translation manuscript; galley proofs of Spanish edition; research notes; publicity materials; reviews; correspondence; seven editions.
- A11. The Plot. 1967.  
Style sheet for The Plot; first outline; manuscript; work sheets; advance page proofs; final page proofs; reprint galley proofs; Spanish edition galley proofs; Japanese edition galley proofs; research notes; publicity materials; synopsis for screen play; movie publicity; seven editions.
- A12. The Writing of One Novel. 1968.  
Manuscript; work sheets; publicity materials; reviews; two editions.
- A13. The Seven Minutes. 1969.  
Manuscript; publicity materials; reviews; correspondence; synopsis for screenplay; two editions.
- A14. Nympho and Other Maniacs. 1970.  
Manuscript; one edition.
- A15. The Word. 1972.  
Manuscript; one edition.

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## II. SCREENPLAYS, ARTICLES, AND UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS

According to Hoyle; American Legion; Are You Decent?; Army Flight Control Advises; Bad For Each Other; The Big Circus; Black Dragon Over The Pacific; Bob Benchley's Ten Best Gags; Bombers B-52; Captain Mission; Clip Joint; Corn On The Gob; The Cradle Of Genius; The Dog Who Wouldn't Be; Etcetera; Exodus; Fascist With A Cross; Fountain Of Youth; Gatling Gun; The High Fence; Hotel For Terror; I Was The Real McCoy; Jump Into Hell; Know Your Enemy; Krakatoa; The Last Bachelor; Lazy Eights; The Life Of Goldy Goldfish; Love Nest; The Loves Of Mona Liza; Madames Chastity Belt; Man With The Golden Nose; Man With The Vinegar Drawl; Manhunter's Deluxe; Meet Mister Miller; Mickey Mouse; The Mozarte Express; The Murder; Murder For Money; My Adventure Trail; Pantheon; Paris Does Strange Things; Petticoat President; Pope's Paper; Report From New Mexico; The Sane Madman; Split Second; Strange Facts About Famous People; Ten Against Caesar; They Arm The Underdogs; What Is This Thing Called Romance; The Weapon; and, A Young Wives Tale.

David Streeter  
Special Collections  
Librarian  
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(formerly Head of Reference and Special Collections, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, \*\*\*)

The David Kherdian and Giligia Press Collection.

The University of Wisconsin-Parkside David Kherdian Collection contains the publications of this Racine, Wisconsin, born poet, editor, and publisher. In addition to Kherdian's own publications the collection includes the publications of the Giligia Press founded by Kherdian in 1966. Also included are miscellaneous news items, reports, reviews, letters, and copies of Ararat which contains Kherdian poems or those issues for which he served as editor in 1971. There are numerous single issues of magazines in which Kherdian poems have been published such as The Minnesota Review, Apple, Granite, Cafe Solo, The Lamp in the Spine, Station One, Ironwood, Scraps, The Desert Review and others. There are also anthologies con-



David Kherdian  
Continued

taining Kherdian poems such as The Berkshire Anthology, ARARAT: A Decade of Armenian Writing, Our Place: A Selection Of Poems by New England Poets, Northern Lights, and so on. The collection is housed in the Special Collections Room, University of Wisconsin-Parkside (Kenosha, Wis. 53140), and is available for use by appointment. A Checklist of the collection follows:

David Kherdian and Giligia Press Checklist

- A1 David Meltzer: A Sketch and Checklist. Berkeley, Oyez, 1955. Edition: 500
- A2 Gary Snyder: A Biographical Sketch and Descriptive Checklist. Berkeley, Oyez, 1965. Edition: 600 (announced:500)
- A3 Bibliography of William Saroyan, 1934-1964. San Francisco, Roger Beachum, 1965.
  - A. 1st state binding: Ochre (inscribed)
- A4 Letter to Virginia. San Francisco, Caligia (i.e. Giligia) Press, 1966. Edition: 150 (broadside)
- A5 William Saroyan Collection. Fresno, Fresno County free Library, 1966.
- A6 Kato's Poem. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1967. Edition: 100 (broadside)
- A7 Mother's Day. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1967. (broadside)
- A8a Six Poets of the San Francisco Renaissance: Portraits and Checklist. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1967. (intro. William Saroyan)
  - A. Edition: 1,000
  - B. Tan cloth edition, 1973: 168
- A8b \*(see end of list)
- A9 Christmas, 1968. Fresno, Janet Saghatelian, 1968. Edition: 100 (broadside)
- A10 with Gerald Hausman. Eight Poems. Santa Fe, Giligia Press, 1968.
  - A. Regular edition, 1st state, red title, with colophon: 1,000
  - B. Regular edition, 2nd state, red title, without colophon (signed)
  - C. Signed edition, green title: 25
- A11 Santa Fe Theatre Company. Santa Fe, Santa Fe Theatre Company, 1968. (Program Designer, D. Kherdian)
- A12 Gerald Hausman. The Shlvurru Plant of Mopant and Other Children's Poems. Santa Fe, Giligia Press, 1968. (Intro. D. Kherdian) Paper edition: 1,000
- A13 Gerald Hausman. At Five In the afternoon. Santa Fe, Giligia Press, 1969 (broadside)
- A14 Zahrad. ABrief Biography of Gigo. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1969.
  - A. Paper edition, 1st state, grey paper: 475
  - B. Paper edition, 2nd state, grey textured paper
  - C. Clothbound, signed edition: 26 (signed by poet and translator)
- A15 Gerald Hausman. Crows blown out of snow. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1969. (broadside)
- A16 My Mother Takes My Wife's Side. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1969. (Inscribed broadside ) Edition: 300 Signed edition: 50
- A17 Gerald Hausman. New Marlboro Stage. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1969.
  - A. Paper edition.
  - B. Ochre clothbound edition.
  - C. Terracotta clothbound, signed edition
- A18 O Kentucky. Fresno, Biligia Press, 1969. Edition: 250 (broadside)
- A19 Outside the Library. Fresno, 1969. Edition: 200 (broadside)
- A20 Gerald Hausman. El Porvenir. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1969. Edition: 533 (broadside)
- A21 Khatchik Minasian. The Simple Songs of Khatchik Minasian. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1969. (Intro. William Saroyan)
  - A. Paper edition: 500
  - B. Signed edition (by Minasian and Saroyan)
  - C. Second printing



David Kherdian  
Continued

- A22 A.J. Hacikyan. Tomas. A Novel. Montreal, Librairie Beau Chemin Limitee, and , Fresno, Giligia Press, 1970.
- A23 with James Baloian, eds. Down At The Santa Fe Depot. 20 Fresno Poets. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1970.  
A. Green clothbound, inscribed.  
B. Paper edition  
C. Red clothbound, signed by all 20 poets
- A24 An Evening With Saroyan. The Ghost of Shah-Mouradian. A Review of Short Drive, Sweet Chariot. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1970.  
A. Tan paper edition: 974  
B. Red paper edition, signed: 26
- A25 On The Death Of My Father. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1970. (intro. William Saroyan)  
A. Paper edition, inscribed  
B. Tan clothbound edition, inscribed  
C. Red clothbound edition, signed by Kherdian and Saroyan
- A26 Root River. Mt. Horeb, Perishable Press Ltd., 1970. (broadside)  
A. White paper edition: 18  
B. Grey paper edition: 23  
C. Blue paper edition: 69
- A27a Homage to Adana. Mt. Horeb, Perishable Press Ltd., 1970.  
Edition: 120 (signed)
- A27b Homage to Adana. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1971.  
A. Paper edition  
B. Cloth edition
- A28 Ray Drew. Goat Songs. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1970.  
A. Black cloth edition  
B. Paper edition (signed by Kherdian)  
C. Limited signed edition (by Kherdian and Drew)
- A29 Announcing the Marriage. March 17, 1971 (folded broadside)
- A30a Poetry and the Little Press. Fresno, Giligia, 1970.
- A30b Poetry and the Little Press. Plainfield Vt., Richard Flamer, 1970. (pamphlet reprint from Ararat)
- A31 John Montgomery. Jack Kerouac: A Memoir In Which Is Revealed Secret Lives & West Coast Whispers, Being The Confessions Of Henry Morley, Alex Fairbrother & John Montgomery, Tribune Madman Of The Dharma Burns, Desolation Angels & Other Trips. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1970.  
A. Paper edition: 2,000  
B. Clothbound edition: 200
- A32 Birds In suet. Hanover, Giligia Press, 1971.  
Edition: 150 (signed broadside)
- A33 Looking Over Hills. Lyme Center, N.H., Giligia, 1972.  
A. Paper edition, inscribed by Kherdian and Nonny Hogrogian  
B. Green clothbound edition, signed by Kherdian and Hogrogian  
C. Yellow ochre clothbound edition
- A34 Hey Nonny. Hanover Press, 1972.  
Edition: 75 (Season's Greetings, decorative map)
- A35 Martin J. Josenblum, ed. Brewing: 20 Milwaukee Poets. Lyme Center, N.H., Giligia Press, 1973.  
A. Paper edition  
B. Clothbound edition
- A36 Visions of America: By the Poets of Our Time, N.Y., Macmillan, 1973.
- A37 Poem for Nonny. Goshen, N.Y., Phineas, 1973. (broadside)
- Andrew M. McLean  
Humanistic Studies  
Division  
University of Wisconsin  
Parkside  
Kenosha, Wisconsin  
53140
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- \* A8b Six San Francisco Poets. Fresno, Giligia Press, 1969. (reports portraits of A8a which includes Snyder, Whalen, McClure, Meltzer, Ferlinghetti, Antonius) A. Paper edition, inscribed B. Clothbound edition, inscribed C. Paper edition, second printing (signed) D. Paper edition, third printing



The current issue of New Letters, published at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, is dedicated to the work of Jack Conroy, novelist and a distinguished new member of the society. Conroy, formerly of Chicago and now of Moberly, Missouri, is well-known for his pioneer work in the proletarian novel, most notably The Disinherited, published during the Depression and recently re-issued in paperback by Hill and Wang.

This issue of New Letters contains a critical assessment of The Disinherited by Lewis Fried of Kent State; letters to Conroy from H.L. Mencken, Arna Bontemps, Erskine Caldwell, Tom Mooney, Willard Motley, and Gwendolyn Brooks. The most interesting feature of the issue is, however, a long interview of Conroy by Fried. In it, Conroy reveals the origin of the notorious 'East St. Louis camarilla,' which the Partisan Review denounced as a 'literary lynching' of James T. Farrell. In response to Fried's question about it, Conroy replied:

It never really existed in the form assigned to it by Partisan Review. Otis Ferguson, who died during World War II while serving in the Merchant Marine, had written for The New Republic a somewhat severe review of a collection of James T. Farrell's short stories. It was entitled 'Lillian Lugubrously Sighed,' a quotation from one of the stories. I had written to Ferguson to say I enjoyed his review; he sent me an urgent telegram pleading for more support. The Farrellphiles were deluging the office of The New Republic with vehement protests.

At that time, Bud Fallon and I were often frequenting an East St. Louis honky-tonk in the Negro section called Jolly John's. There the habitués looked upon Bud and me with great favor, possibly because of our pleasant habit of setting up drinks for the house and distributing other largesse as our limited funds would permit. I was working at the Federal Writers' Project on the Missouri side of the Mississippi and Bud had a job in the aluminum ore plant in East St. Louis.

Hastily drafting an extravagant and plainly farcical defense of Ferguson's position, we repaired to Jolly John's and soon had an impressive group of corroboratory signatures. Some of the completely nonliterary signers affirmed with an 'X' either because of illiteracy or inebriation.

'The document as published in The New Republic really stirred up a hornet's nest. Partisan Review denounced it as a 'literary lynching' perpetrated by the 'East St. Louis camarilla.' Eugene Lyons later was to deplore in The Red Decade the 'ill grace' The New Republic displayed in publishing 'a round robin signed by twenty-five people attacking Mr. Farrell in slimy language.' He solemnly added: 'The publication of such a gang-up letter against a recognized novelist was, to put it most mildly, an extraordinary and unprecedented procedure.' 'Slimy' was a favorite epithet with both Stalinists and anti-Stalinists. The camarilla' never existed then, except in the fevered minds of Farrell and the Partisan Review dialectical toreadors. They could not or would not see the humor of the round robin.'"

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#### The Pleasures of Reviewing

Last Tuesday afternoon I sat in my last meeting as chairman of the University Library Committee, and the major discussion was very much like that of my first, two years ago: the growing numbers of books and journals published and the inability of library budgets to keep proportionate pace with them. Many of the suggestions for coping with the problem perhaps were logical from a financial point of view: stop ordering, cancel subscriptions, draw more heavily upon inter-library loans or library consortia, demand justification for new orders, and dozens of others. Some even suggested the unlikely possibility of increased funds.

As chairman I nodded wisely; as usual, as an editor, a writer, and above all, a bookman I found all of the suggestions except the latter distasteful. Nor was I surprised when my distaste was confirmed the next day by two new publications delivered to my desk by our somewhat reluctant mail service: a first-class new journal and a new book that is admirable in every way. Both, it was evident immediately, were pleasures to handle, to look at, to read, to own, and certainly to review. I hate to paraphrase Faulkner's comment that a good poet is worth any number of old ladies, but I am tempted to observe that there is a similar relationship between those who limit library budgets and those who produce first-rate, valuable publications such as these.

The new journal is Studies in American Fiction, published by the Department of English at Northeastern University in Boston (biannually, \$3.00 a year) and edited by James Nagel, a dedicated member of the



Continued  
The Pleasures of Reviewing

Society. To those who would say, "Not another journal!" I enthusiastically say, "Yes!" Studies in American Fiction is, unlike so many others, unpretentious in its purpose, "to provide a scholarly medium for the professional study of American fiction," and, as the first issue makes clear, its tastes are catholic but precise: a good idea well presented seems to be the controlling editorial concept, and in an age (and, unfortunately, profession) characterized so often by the opposite, the effect is refreshing. We can only hope that Studies in American Fiction will have a long life and that it will continue the same pleasurable approach that marks its first issue.

The book that shared the package delivery last Wednesday is one of those few books that is a genuine labor of love. Even more rarely, the very feel of the book conveys the motivation that brought it into existence. At the same time, the most cursory examination makes clear its impeccable scholarship. The book is F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Bibliography by Matthew Bruccoli (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972). It is not merely part of Professor Bruccoli's prodigious scholarly output; it is, in my bookman's view, his best work. The format is one of the most attractive that I have ever seen produced by a university press, terms are clearly and carefully defined, limitations are modestly made clear, illustrations are profuse, descriptions are precise, and organization is clear, logical, and usable.

The bibliography itself is, with the two major omissions that Professor Bruccoli makes clear in his introduction, as nearly complete as, to my non-specialist's eye, it is possible to be. It contains nine sections, including all of Fitzgerald's published work, ranging from his books through blurbs by Fitzgerald on the dust jackets of other writers' books and limited items not printed for sale. The last section is a bibliography of publications by Zelda Fitzgerald.

Cross references are precise and abundant, and Bruccoli concludes the bibliography with ten appendices, listing such varied items as English-language collections of Fitzgerald stories published in Japan, Braille editions of his works, and plays,

published and unpublished, based upon his works. The only items lacking in the volume are an inventory of Fitzgerald's manuscripts and the growing list of works about Fitzgerald. But Professor Bruccoli promises a later edition that will include these items also. All in all, this work will provide the foundation for work on Fitzgerald as far into the future as it's possible to see.

What fascinates me about the book, however, is not merely its effectively-accumulated data--that could have been presented more cheaply on microfilm, catalogue cards, or computer printouts--but the fact that it is a handsome book that defines the work of a major writer and at the same time has a great deal to say--and teach--about books and bookmaking in our time. The result is a rare literary experience.

The book is not cheap--I've misplaced the publisher's data sheet--but like Studies in American Fiction it literally demands that it be purchased, not merely by those interested, but by any library that does its duty. I'm not unsympathetic to library budget problems by any means, and I believe that librarians, like professors or bricklayers, deserve a living wage. But as a bookman--and more than once I've gone shopping for shoes, only to return home without the shoes but with an armload of second-hand books--I believe that whatever solutions are possible for libraries and their financial problems today, they must not include the rejection and hence the strangulation of the many worthwhile journals and books that, like these, fortunately continue to come off the presses today.

David D. Anderson

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Detached Thoughts On Books and Writing  
or  
(with apologies to Sherwood Anderson)  
A Midwest Childhood

De gustibus non est disputandum at any age, and I can scarcely remember a time when I did not prefer reading to any other entertainment, though there were few books in our house, and you could count on your fingers those that might be thought of as literature. The Bible, of course, and a six-volume encyclopedia, Ellis' six-volume History of the United States, The History of Marion County, and Barrett's Life of Abraham Lincoln. Bryant's A New Library of Poetry and Song in two volumes, The Sketch Book, Lowell's Poems, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Henry Esmond, Don Quixote, and Burroughs' Signs and Seasons. There was Footprints of Four Centuries, by Hamilton W. Habie, LL.B., Lit. D., whom I referred to irreverently as "Mr. Perhaps" and "Hamilton W. Sometimes-B ecause".

My favorite historical volume was one whose quality can be indicated only by complete transcription of its title page: The Discovery and Conquest / of the / Now World Containing the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus / By Washington Irving, Creator of American Classics / A Separate Account / of the / Conquest of Mexico and Peru / By L. M. Robertson, D. D., / The Eminent English Historian of the University of Edinburg. / A Perfect History of the United States / From the Works of Bancroft Fiske, Blaine, Grant, Sherman, Johnston / and others. / By Benjamin Rush Davenport, / Master of the Art of Critical Condensation / Introduction by / The Hon. Murat Halstead, Most Renowned Journalist and Columbian Student of Both Americas. / Four Hundred / Illustrations from the Greatest Artists, Portraying Every Scene of the World's Grandest Drama. / An Absolutely Complete Columbian Memorial. / A.D. 1492 A. D. 1892. / Victory Publishing Co., / Cincinnati, O. The publishers omit to specify that this superlative work had many of its illustrations in color, thus depicting the landing of Columbus, the battle of Santa Cruz (in which Spaniards in their boat are making off with naked Indian maiden captives), and Pocahontas saving the life of Captain John Smith. I think I never read any of it, either Irving's biography, or the eminent English historian's section, or that of the master of critical condensation; but I

spent many hours looking at the pictures. Of the four hundred, the most diverting was a small one showing the "ignominious and excruciating torture of a Mexican cacique", he being quartered alive by four horses attached one to each of his extremities.

There were also Our Martyred Presidents, Our New Possessions

(a glorification of the old century's imperialism), The Illustrated American Stock Book and Farrier, J.L. Nichols' Safe Citizenship, the same author's The Business Guide (which was really used), Drummond's Natural Law in the Spiritual World, Watts' The World to Come, and The Royal Path of Life. This last, my father's book and the only one I ever heard him express approval of, was a moral and sentimental treatise taken with utter seriousness by the youth of his generation. Among the rest were a set of Marie Corelli, St. Elmo, The Wide, Wide World, Children of the Abbey, The Dickens Story Teller (comprising selections from Household Words), and John Halifax, Gentleman. These last three were respectively "Arlington", and Gladstone editions, of which there were others also. Equally bad in typography and format, they had ugly stamped bindings and paper turned brown because it was so poor.

Some books were there by a salesman's effort, but the only books I can remember my mother's buying were Orison Swett Marden's Pushing to the Front and novels of Harold Bell Wright and Gene Stratton-Porter. She thought The Eyes of the World a great work: That Printer of Udell's, The Shepherd of the Hills, The Calling of Dan Matthews, The Winning of Barbara Worth--she read and praised them all, and I read them too, but with what final judgment I cannot remember. She disliked The Harvester. It was unrealistic, she implied: a man who ran a farm the way he did must certainly come to grief. Adventures in Contentment, which she had as a gift, she couldn't stomach well either, for there were too many things in her life to make her discontented, and in her experience nobody ever lived like this.

My grandmother, who held novel-reading pernicious, had some paperback novels -- which were thrown away when the house was cleared out for remodeling. I never got all the way through any of them, but I looked into them enough to ascertain that wrongdoers



Continued

suffered for their sins and in the last chapter virtue triumphed; she probably regarded them as tracts. I had abridgments of Robinson Crusoe and Uncle Tom's Cabin. I got the Leatherstocking novels somehow, before I was ten. By that age I had also read Henry Esmond. But Don Quixote was in such ugly binding and so fine print (it was another Arlington edition) that I tried to make a start. For the same reason I omitted to finish The Sketch Book and Lowell's Poems.

The books that came to me at Christmas were such things as Tom Swift and His Airship and The Motor Boat Boys Down the Mississippi. The Rollo books and imitations of them were generally unknown to my age group, and the Alger novels, though still in print (I saw many), had an archaic flavor that made them unattractive. G.A. Henty was little better; I had With Wolfe in Canada and one or two others, but few Hentys came my way. They were outmoded, like the Alger, the James Otis, the Oliver Optic, and the Harry Castlemon books for boys. Similarly, Frank Merriwell had been superseded by the heroes of Joseph A. Altsheler, William Heyliger, and Ralph Henry Barbour, whose work was serialized in The Boys' Magazine and The American Boy. There was also The Boys' World, a weekly given at Sunday school, but it had a Sunday-school air. The Youth's Companion was preferable, and in it I liked the Indian tales of James Willard Schultz and the farm stories of C.A. Stephens. These latter were historical in tone: you knew you were reading about country life as it was in "old times". Why didn't somebody give me a copy of Huckleberry Finn?

By the time I discovered St. Nicholas it had no appeal for me. The American Boy was the best monthly boys' publication of its time, well edited and well illustrated; under the title Quiller of the Hills it printed a serial by Melville Davisson Post which long afterward I learned to be identical with Dweller in the Hills and reread with pleasure, but the book was without the charm of the superb drawings (by J. Scott Williams) that accompanied the story in the magazine. Boys' Life was too definitely the official boy-scout publication to appeal to non-members, and I couldn't be a boy scout, because I lived in the country. The best a country boy could do was to be a Lone Scout, which I became, and I received Lone Scout, a weekly and a wonderful magazine whose

editorial content was articles and stories by members, for which the contributors were awarded points toward a title and a badge. To appear in print in Lone Scout was a great honor, and I attained it only four times. This periodical became a monthly with the issue of December 1920 and, in my estimation, deteriorated. Two years later its caption, The Real Boys' Magazine, was changed to The White Boys' Magazine. When the Lone Scout organization was absorbed by the Boy Scouts, it ceased publication.

I read prose fiction avidly and indiscriminately. The high-school library provided nearly all Poe's stories and many of Maupassant's, Knickerbocker's History of New York, Pride and Prejudice, Les Misérables, Treasure Island, Kidnapped, and David Balfour. Selections from The Spectator and The Life of Samuel Johnson, Ivanhoe, Silas Marner, A Tale of Two Cities, and stories of Hawthorne and Kipling were assignments. Thus I was led to other Scott novels, David Copperfield, and Pickwick Papers. Shakespeare, Milton, Burns, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson I also met in class, and I took huge gulps of verse (all one rainy Sunday afternoon tenaciously plodding through The Princess).

It was a wonderful time of reading, age twelve to fifteen, when one had no critical sense to mar enjoyment. Prose was best, and it didn't have to be a novel if it read like one: Confessions of an English Opium-Eater I thought wonderfully pathetic, especially the passages in which DeQuincey mourns the lost Ann. From the State Library in Columbus came Tom Jones, which I devoured. From there also came The Moonstone; and I asked for and received Ruskin's Modern Painters, but didn't go far into that, not having expected five volumes.

I compiled, from The Century Book of Facts and other sources, lists of "greatest short stories" and "best books" which I meant to read. I bought books too, but, ignorant of variety or choice of editions, ordered titles from Scott Foresman's or Macmillan's or Allyn and Bacon's school series without knowing that more pleasing formats could be had. In Delaware and Columbus I made in secondhand shops what I thought were excellent purchases. Thus I acquired Pere Goriot, some stories of Flaubert (but not Madame Bovary), Tales of the Alhambra, Middlemarch, and Wuthering Heights.



Detached Thoughts  
Continued

Titles by Merimee, Daudet, Hugo, Maeterlinck, and Oscar Wilde I had in the Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books. I found in more durable paper binding such things as "The Diamond Lens", "The Queen of the Red Chessmen", and "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch".

If my teachers had enthusiasm for literature, I didn't recognize it in them; but they did their jobs well, and suggestions from my English classes were enough to set me on many a trail of exploration. I had a much wider acquaintance among books than my fellow graduates when I received my high-school diploma at age fifteen. But along with the great and good books, I read a lot of trash, and later, when I began to write, became addicted to popular magazines -- The Saturday Evening Post, Everybody's, Redbook, The Argosy. For several years I was victim to their specious appeal even while I knew better. So Dante, Chaucer, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Cellini, Montaigne, Cervantes, Goethe came later, much later, into my literary life. Gulliver's Travels, as a title, was familiar to me early, but I didn't read it till a college course put it before me. I was as long getting to Tristram Shandy, Vanity Fair, Huckleberry Finn, and Tom Sawyer. I missed entirely The Jungle Books. I grew up ignorant of Greek and Roman mythology.

At that later time, when a good deal of my reading was in scholarly journals, I came on an article whose whole contention was that Thoreau decided to be a writer when he was twenty-three years old, in 1840. Now this is entertaining speculation, but no one ever decides to be a writer. When a young man find himself liking literature so much that he is impelled to create it and sets himself to that effort -- then he is a writer, and no conscious decision is involved. He must only believe it strongly enough that no more expediency can alter his purpose.

To support my belief at seventeen I persuaded my mother that the smallest room upstairs was not needed as a bedroom, installed there a couple of hanging lights, appropriated a big cupboard and a drop-leaf table, and had also the teacher's desk from the abandoned schoolhouse, which

father had bought "with everything in it". This room was always warm in winter, and there, in all my spare time, I read and wrote. I left off seeing friends of high-school years, for none was interested in what I was most interested in, and became a youthful recluse. I had neither encouragement from my parents but, like Jude the Obscure, lived in a world of the imagination more real to me than the physical world I moved in. I took the Home Correspondence School's course in story writing, and was sustained in my efforts to write by the knowledge that the world I imagined actually existed, for I read about it in The Beautiful and Damned and This Side of Paradise and magazines like College Humor. I had a copy of every magazine of general circulation I could find. If it printed stuff like what I wrote, I sent my things to it; if I could, I wrote stuff like what it printed. Diligent as Flaubert to discover and use "the right word", I kept Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases always at hand. My writing was very sophisticated; not having been in love, I was as disillusioned about love as a Fitzgerald or a Katharine Brush hero. I knew I hadn't adventured enough to write adventure stories, but to a man in New Zealand who who answered questions for Adventure Magazine I explained: "I am a writer and expect to spend the next five years traveling in search of material." I never decided to be a writer. I just was.

Knowing many writers of the Argosy-Adventure class used pen-names, I chose an appropriate pseudonym for the stories I was going to produce suitable for these magazines. I can't say why I was so enamored of the name "Sydney" (spelled with y in the first syllable)-- unless the reason was that I had seen and liked Sydney Chaplin in the movies -- but that is what I made it; I never fixed on a complementary surname, and put "Sydney Thomas" under the titles of two or three pieces. This made my cousin Ralph, whom I showed them to with misgiving, snort with disgust; he thought it a sissy name, and left me without doubt that he thought my literary activity issy too. A more dignified, aristocratic, and resounding invention was "Melville Blenheim Avery". I never wrote anything I thought worthy of that illustrious-sounding identity, and in



# Detached Thoughts Continued

time concluded--with the examples before me of Shakespeare, Blake, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Morris, and other good men -- that my own name would have to do.

Some of my early writing achieved final form in manuscript, and I typed it on my Oliver typewriter in the way Esenwein's Writing the Short-Story and Esenwein and Chambers' The Art of Story-Writing said it should be done, and sent it to magazines "in the market for material" listed in McCourtie's Where and How to Sell Manuscripts. Some of it sold. I could name and date my first acceptance and state the periodical and the sum I received, for I kept a record on a form that I devised and had printed -- and still use. I might send a piece first to The Saturday Evening Post and on the twentieth submission (when the postage expenditure would be \$1.60 or \$2.40) place it with Grit or College Humor. During three years the gross returns were \$81 and the postage expenditure was \$35.93. The next three years were better: on 16 July 1930 my total literary earnings were \$400.80. Evidently I didn't bother to calculate the net figure then, but it was much greater in proportion than that of the first triennium, for there was one one-hundred-dollar sale -- to a magazine that shortly ceased publication, without having printed my story.

By that time, however, I was a graduate student in English and at an enforced hiatus in my career of authorship. My parents were unimpressed by my success at writing. Aggrieved and perplexed by my escapades and utter lack of interest in things at home, they decided the only hope of making anything out of me lay in my going to college. I say "they", but it was my mother's plan, and if my subsequent life has been the better for it, that is entirely due to her. I didn't want to go: Sherwood Anderson never went to college, and he was just the sort of writer I was determined to be; of a certainty, my present life was poor, but I had read Dreiser and knew youth suffered; I knew that is what all life is -- suffering; why seek to mitigate it by going to college? But on a less philosophical level I was at an impasse. There was nothing else to do.

William Thomas

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## The Dreiser Newsletter

The current issue of the Dreiser Newsletter, Fall, 1973, contains essays and notes on Dreiser by George H. Douglas "Ludwig Lewisohn on Theodore Dreiser", Ellen Moers ("A New First Novel by Arthur Henry"), D. Gene England ("A Further Note on the 'Dreiser Annotations'"), and Richard W. Dowell ("Dreiser's Address to the Future"). It also contains the invaluable "Dreiser Checklist, 1972" compiled and annotated by Frederic E. Rusch. Edited by Richard W. Dowell and Robert P. Saalbach, it is published twice a year by the English Department at Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana 47809. (\$2.50 for two years).

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### MIDAMERICA I

MidAmerica I, the annual publication of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, will appear in late Fall, 1973. Containing ten essays, it sells for \$3.50 to members and \$5.00 to non-members. Contents of MidAmerica I are the following:

The Dimensions of the Midwest

David D. Anderson

Slave Narrative Turning Midwestern:

Deadwood Dick Rides Into Difficulties

Ronald Primeau

Clarence S. Darrow, Literary Realist:

Theory and Practice Alma J. Payne

Vachel Lindsay: The Midwest as Utopia

Blair Whitney

The Urban - Rural Vision of Carl Sandburg

Paul J. Ferlazzo

A Note on Hemingway as Poet

Linda W. Wagner

Earth Mothers, Succubi, and Other Ectoplastic Spirits: The Women in Sherwood Anderson's Short Stories

William V. Miller

Anderson's Twisted Apples and Hemingway's Crips

Paul P. Somers, Jr.

Edgar A. Guest: Twentieth Century Paradox

Frances Ewert

A Ripening Eye: Wright Morris and the Fields of Vision Gerald Nemanic



MidAmerica II will appear in the Fall of 1974. Members are asked to submit manuscripts on Midwestern writers and writing for consideration. It will contain about ten essays and also the first annual Bibliography of Midwestern Literature.

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#### The American Examiner

The Spring, 1973 issue of The American Examiner: A Forum of Ideas, the publication of the Michigan State American Studies Association, featured three articles which were part of an on-campus symposium on Arthur Kopit's play Indians. The forum included articles presenting a literary analysis of the existential implications of the recurring imagery in the play, an anthropological and historical view stressing the play's distortions and limitations as political statement and act, and a director's point of view emphasizing its power and force for those who produced a stage version of the play.

The Fall, 1973 issue of The American Examiner featured a much expanded issue including ten varied and provocative responses to the forum question: Has American Studies had an implicit political ideology? The question received a wide range of response, reflections on direct experience with the question's implications, and advocations of definite positions regarding the question. Copies of this issue (as long as they are available) can be secured by writing the Secretary-Treasurer of the MSU American Studies Association, 229 Bessey Hall, MSU, East Lansing, Mi. 48824.

The Winter issue will focus on the bibliographer's view of recent trends and directions in American Studies research. Current plans for the Spring issue for a series of articles relating to the sport of baseball as an American phenomenon, as entertainment, as source for popular literature and myth, as a reflection of American business, etc. Inquiries regarding subscriptions and manuscript solicitations are welcomed. Please send to the above address.

Douglas A. Noverr

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