MidAmerica XXV

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for the Study of Midwestern Literature

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary Issue

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To the memory of
John Towner Frederick
1893-1975

PREFACE

The First Twenty-five Years of *MidAmerica*

While this prefatory essay for the twenty-fifth edition of *MidAmerica* was taking shape in my mind, I wandered into Ray Walsh's Curious Book Shop in East Lansing to check out new arrivals. Ray had told me he'd acquired a number of Sherwood Anderson titles, and there they were: three or four novels, none of them particularly desirable except as working copies, in the fiction section, and three or four autobiographical works of the same condition in the biography section. Wondering who might have cleared his or her shelves so unwisely, I checked each for a name or other inscription, but there were none—except for a penciled note on the flyleaf of Ray Lewis White's 1969 edition of Anderson's *Tar: A Midwest Childhood.* It read:

> Do an article on folk expressions in
> SA, as the drafty house walls on p. 208:
> "You could throw a cat through the cracks."
> Also p105, p113
> —for David Anderson's new journal.

I have no idea who wrote the entry or owned the book, but I assume that "David Anderson's new journal" was *MidAmerica,* that the note was written sometime in 1973, when *MidAmerica I* was, against all odds and a good deal of advice to the contrary, taking shape, and my initial reaction to the note was regret that I didn't have the essay to consider for *MidAmerica I* or *II*, or, indeed, any of the following issues. The essay was never submitted to me; it was never published elsewhere, and, to the best of my knowledge, never written, its only memorial that anonymous note on the flyleaf of that well-read, well-used copy of *Tar*, which I promptly bought.

The year of that unwritten essay is still clear in my mind. The idea that was to become *MidAmerica* had been with me for several years, perhaps ever since the MMLA section meeting that October

morning in 1969, in the old Chase-Park Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, where I listened to Sanford Marovitz's paper on Howells, Alexander Kern's on Dreiser and Fitzgerald, and then gave my own on Sherwood Anderson, all within the context of social criticism. Something stirred in me during that program that eventually, by March 1971, after a good deal of advice sought, some accepted and some rejected or ignored, the Society became a tentative reality.

Perhaps at the same time the idea for *MidAmerica* germinated; certainly by 1973 it had been publicly announced, contributions and advice sought and accepted or rejected, and the journal, initially announced for Fall 1973, went to press in October 1973 to appear early the next year. Although I didn't say so in either public announcements or the preface to *MidAmerica I,* I kept two principles in mind that first year, and I live and edit *MidAmerica* by them even yet. The first has to do with commitment: bringing a journal into existence is a profound commitment and responsibility, best remembered when the work piles up, other activities may seem more attractive, and money is short. Often in the early years the journal seemed as demanding of my time and the Anderson bankroll as any half-dozen offspring, but societies and journals, like children, eventually mature to the point where they seem less demanding. *MidAmerica,* unfortunately, hasn't quite reached that point, but 25 is young.

The second principle is equally important, and to forget it is equally dangerous: never give an academic institution power over an organization or a journal in exchange for financial support. Many journals and not a few organizations have succumbed to the temptation, only to be eliminated when budgetary shortfalls, real or imagined, make them tempting targets. Institutional vagaries have never financed, influenced, or controlled either the journal or the Society.

In the preface to *MidAmerica I* I tacitly acknowledged those principles when I wrote that "The first issue of a new publication normally appears as the result of hard work by editors, writers, and countless others, but often it also appears because of hope and enthusiasm that outweigh either logical evidence or financial support. The latter is certainly the case with the publication of *MidAmerica I...*"

The Roman numeral I, I insisted, was not a volume number but an important part of the title, suggesting both beginning and con-

tinuing, which I presumptuously proclaimed in that preface: "...*MidAmerica I*, in spite of its diversity, does not encompass all of Midwestern literature or exhaust its dimensions. Rather, as MidAmerica *II, III, IV,* and beyond will make evident, this first volume will have become the point of departure for further, even more diverse explorations that continue to reflect the dedication of the Society and its members to the study of the literature of the American Midwest, past, present, and future."

Somehow, in the late twentieth century, *MidAmerica II, III, IV,* and beyond did come, each an addition to our knowledge and understanding of the literature of that great area between the mountains, the area drained by great rivers and great lakes, a region that, in less than a century became synonymous with the nation as it began its direction of the courses of American politics, technology, language, and literature throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Since the Civil War the Midwest has had a peculiar role it will not relinquish in a new milleneum. As became increasingly evident in *V, VI, VII,* and beyond, Sherwood Anderson's MidAmerica, that land between the mountains, is America.

Here, then, is *MidAmerica XXV,* another venture along that diverse and yet singularly uniform path into the study of Midwestern literature, past, present, and to come. It is suitably inscribed to John Towner Frederick, editor of *The Midland,* 1915-1933, who showed us the way.

July, 1999 DAVID D. ANDERSON

CONTENTS

JANEY GETS LOCKED IN THE BOHEMIAN CEMETERY FOR THE NIGHT

for Bill Kloefkorn

ANN BARDENS

You know the place,
way at the top of one of Omaha's sudden
hills. You know,
right off of Center Street, where
the sign at the gate says NO ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS
ON THE GRAVES BETWEEN APRIL I AND NOVEMBER I and
every other grave has artificial flowers and
it's only October 7. You know
how they lock the gate at midnight, so the spooks
won't escape, I suppose. Well, anyway, there she was
wandering around the graves like some lost
ghost, looking for her home—or maybe
just one too many
Bohemian beers at Lorna's Fan Tan Club
below.
She's spooky, all right,
always strolling
through graveyards, pencil and paper in her hand. What
is she really looking for, I wonder. Well, makes no
difference—that particular October
night she stayed too
long and someone locked
the gate before she finished
looking,
and so she walked all night
among the Sedlaceks and Lavickas, feeling
at home
enough by dawn to lie down and sleep beside

McCormic Mildred and McCormic James TOGETHER FOREVER
while the sun rose purple over
Woodman Tower rising
above real trees.

Central Michigan University

LIFE IN PRAIRIE LAND: ELIZA FARNHAM'S TRANSCENDENTALIST TEXT

NANCY MCKINNEY

With *Life in Prairie Land,* Eliza Farnham wrote essentially a travel book detailing her experience in Illinois from 1835 to 1840. I was taken more with Farnham's personality than with her account of life on the prairie frontier, though the fascinating narrative proves compelling enough to encourage a reader. Farnham, a New Yorker, traveled to Illinois to join her married sister, Mary Roberts, who had earlier homesteaded with her husband and his family in Groveland, Illinois, near Pekin in Tazewell County. While in Illinois, Farnham married, had a son, and lost her sister and son to illness. In 1839, while her husband, Thomas Farnham, led an expedition to Oregon, she traveled throughout the state; she describes traveling to Alton in southern Illinois and Springfield in central Illinois, and visiting friends in the Rock River country, in northwestern Illinois. When Thomas Farnham returned from Oregon the couple moved back to New York. Farnham became known as a social critic, writing and speaking on women's issues, working for prison reform, and meeting the New York literati.

Following her husband's death while traveling in California in 1848, Farnham sailed to California early in 1849 to settle his estate. For a number of years she operated a farm, El Rancho de Libertad, in Santa Cruz County. In 1856 Farnham returned to New York where she worked for abolition and women's rights, speaking at the 1858 Woman's Rights Convention. She died in 1864. Besides *Life in Prairie Land* (1846), Farnham's books include *California, In-doors and Out* (1856), *My Early Days* (1859)—retitled *Eliza Woodson* and republished in 1864, *Woman and Her Era* (1864), and *The Ideal Attained* (1865).

Both John Hallwas and Robert C. Bray have discussed connections between *Life in Prairie Land* and New England Transcen-

dentalism. Bray ranks Farnham "one of the most important social thinkers ever to discuss emigration to Illinois," because of her contributions to prison reform and her years of writing and lecturing on women's issues (47). He states that "Farnham's romanticism in *Life in Prairie Land* shows distinct affinities with New England Transcendentalism and deserves serious study in this context" (47). Hallwas charts William Cullen Bryant's influence on Farnham and the evidence of Emerson's *Nature* in Farnham's handling of the "theme of spiritual rejuvenation through contact with nature on the prairies" (300, 312, 314-16, 320). Hallwas reports "no verbal parallels with *Nature*," but "unmistakable" influence nonetheless (316).

When I read Lawrence Buell's genre study, *Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance* (1973), the work suggested a method to examine and evaluate Farnham's book. I employed two approaches used by Buell to show how *Life in Prairie Land* may be considered a Transcendentalist text. One approach, my focus in this essay, investigates how the demands of vision and of expression "reinforce and qualify each other in Transcendentalist writing" (14). The other approach focuses on the "principal genres or formal traditions upon which [Transcendentalists] drew" (16). Buell describes the following generic traditions and their application in Transcendentalist writing: the conversation, the essay, the sermon, the literary travelogue or excursion, the catalogue, the diary, and the autobiography (17). In addition, Buell delineates the "leading characteristics" of Transcendentalist rhetoric: inchoate structure, prodigal imagery, wit, paradox, symbolism, aphoristic statement, paratactic syntax, and a manifesto-like tone (18). Buell denotes as "main tendencies" in Transcendentalist writing "the impulses to prophesy, to create nature anew for oneself, and to speak in the first person singular" (20). And, finally, Buell considers spirit, nature, and man the "three most significant intellectual and literary concerns of the Transcendentalist movement" (19).

Life in Prairie Land manifests many of the specific characteristics outlined by Buell. Farnham's subject matter includes spirit, man, and nature; she prophesies, creates nature anew, and uses the first person perspective. Message and vision dictate Farnham's genre choices and prose style. Theme, not specifically addressed by Buell, reveals Farnham's social concerns. Her most urgent themes include the Course of Empire, the Machine in the Garden, and the Cult of Domesticity. *Life in Prairie Land* disseminates a female voice and

view of not only the Illinois frontier, but also of mid-nineteenth-century American society.

I have found *Life in Prairie Land* to be an example of the Transcendentalist aesthetic. Farnham employs a Transcendentalist inchoate structure which reveals her message and vision. She employs a multi-generic approach which advances her message according to her vision.

Farnham's message is that the development of the resource-rich West will be central to the nation's advancement; the approach to the development of the West should reflect Eastern American attitudes and modes of living. The West, unspoiled by civilization, has the potential to improve individuals both physically and spiritually; the potential to improve individuals extends to the potential for improving the nation's citizens and society in general. Farnham's vision is of a synthesis of the best aspects of the opposing Eastern and Western regions, producing a new and better civilization. She envisions a dissipated Eastern society renewed and invigorated by Western freedom and abundance. She also sees the purposeful, practical Eastern culture accomplishing the development of Western potential. Farnham's message and vision dictate her form of expression.

A study of the structure of *Life in Prairie Land* reveals a typically Transcendentalist inchoate structure which, in turn, reveals Farnham's message and vision. The denotation of *inchoate*—being only partly in existence or operation, imperfectly formed or formulated—may create the incorrect notion that Transcendentalist writers employed either a haphazard structure or no discernible structure at all (Merriam Webster). In fact, they used nature as a model and accepted the Romantic concept of organic form (Buell 147). They believed that a work of art "should take shape like an organism according to the nature of the thing expressed" (147); an organic structure grows out of the work itself and develops according to the work's own nature. The microcosm became a model for structure, as in Emerson's *Nature* (158-9). Cycles of nature were used frequently as organizing elements (163).

The structure of *Life in Prairie Land* illustrates the Transcendentalist tendency toward inchoate structure. The organic structure grows out of the narrative itself and mirrors the unpredictable quality of Farnham's journey. The book is separated into two parts. Part one begins with Farnham's account of her journey from St. Louis by steamboat up the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, then overland by

wagon to the home of her sister, Mary Roberts, near Pekin, Illinois. It continues with sketches of the neighbors; a description of Eliza's marriage, her early housekeeping, and the birth of her son; and a long narrative by Eliza's sister, Mary, about her family's arrival and life there. Part one ends with Mary's death after a long illness and with the sudden death of Eliza's son shortly thereafter. Part two includes accounts of Farnham's extensive travels in the area, sketches of neighbors and wildlife, and a meditation on the region's history as well as speculation on possibilities for its future. Part two concludes with Farnham's departure for the East.

The break between part one and part two is itself illustrative of a seemingly eccentric structure which actually arises organically out of the narrative. Hallwas partially ascribes the change in tone apparent after the break to the deaths of two of Farnham's family members (298). Not only because of the deaths, but also because Farnham had several purposes for the work, and each purpose dictated a different approach, the structure is fractured.

The structure of *Life in Prairie Land* mimics the structure of Farnham's journey. The unpredictable and surprising events of her physical travels and spiritual quest are recounted in a narrative that is equally unpredictable, with varying chapter lengths, themes that recur unexpectedly throughout the book, surprising relationships between cause and effect as well as between expectation and reality. Consequently, the book's very design, in its unconventionality, suggests that we cannot entirely trust our senses, nor can we entirely trust our logic and past experience in looking at the West. Only a syncretic vision will suffice.

In trying to detect an underlying pattern or structure in *Life in Prairie Land*, I found several organizing patterns, spatial and temporal: the theme of the outer journey, appropriate to a travel narrative and highlighting one of the two major concerns of the book, the development of the region; the theme of the inner journey, conventional to the *bildungsroman* with its emphasis on the narrator's personal development, the other focal point; a cyclical seasonal pattern, emphasizing a natural order, appropriate to a Transcendentalist work; and a chronological arrangement of chapters, again highlighting the parallel between Farnham's personal development and the nation's geographical expansion. A counterpointed pattern of action runs through and contradicts the chronological chapter arrangement, creating a series of recurrent thematic motifs throughout the book.

Farnham weaves a tapestry effect of motifs and themes so that her concerns sound throughout the book.

The theme of the journey contributes the narrative frame of *Life in Prairie Land.* At the beginning of the book, Farnham describes the final leg of her journey to Illinois, the beginning of her travel narrative; at the end of the book, Farnham leaves Illinois, never to return.

The journey is an archetypal symbol that metaphorically represents progress toward a spiritual or inward goal, rather than a physical destination. *Life in Prairie Land* yields information beyond that of an objective account of a physical journey; the archetypal journey theme frames Farnham's narrative, establishes her as the main character and narrator in the American *isolato* tradition, and signals a spiritual journey.

Farnham uses the regional network of rivers as a recurring motif, creating a pattern which reinforces the journey theme. In the first paragraph of chapter one, Farnham introduces the network of rivers motif by stating that the travelers' "question was how and when they should prosecute the remainder of their voyage up the principal eastern tributary which the father of waters receives above the Ohio" (3). She adds, "We had traveled far enough on the western waters already," suggesting the existence of a water route into the region (3).

At the end of the book Farnham leaves the "free plains and far-reaching streams" of Illinois (269). As she bids farewell to the "land of majestic rivers [,]" Farnham states that the "bright waters of Lake Michigan dance around our steamer" (268). Farnham's farewell follows a romantic discussion of the history of the area's settlement, including the "wandering trapper and the solitary ... missionary" floating from "fort to solitary fort" "on streams, thousands of miles in length" (264).

At one of the two focal points of the book (page 133), Farnham extends her use of watery images by discussing "[o]ne of the most impressive features of this magnificent land, ... the magnitude of its streams" (133).[1] Farnham describes the vastness and sublime beauty of the region, the spiritual effect of traveling on the "tributaries," and the spiritual effect of mental reflection upon the streams:

> There is a sublimity in journeying on these great waters which language cannot describe. ... It is not in looking out upon them. To the mere optical sense they are often less impressive than the puny streams of the east. It is in the association—the idea that the water

> which ripples at your side has come from a far land, a land full of unexplored wonders and beauties. The reflection opens an immense field of thought and inquiry, and makes you long to be transported to the region where all these exist. (133-4)

Farnham's discussion of traveling the western streams follows her powerful description of a steamboat disrupting the silence of the natural world. She juxtaposes two scenarios, one of man and nature in harmony with one of man and nature in opposition. Taken together, the scenarios illustrate authorial ambivalence toward the development of the West. The juxtaposition represents a traditional use of pastoral—specifically, the machine in the garden theme.

The introduction of a machine into an idyllic rural setting was a "literary commonplace" during the 1840s (Marx 17). Marx cites several examples: the locomotive in *Walden,* the New England textile mill in *Moby Dick,* and the steamboat smashing the raft in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (15). The emblematic machine in mid-nineteenth-century American pastoralism speaks to the process of industrialization and the "ugliness and squalor" engendered by the "new factory system" (18).

Marx cites as a "distinguishing mark of pastoral set in the New World" the "close juxtaposition of fact and fancy" due to the "actuality of the landscape" (47). Before the discovery of the New World, the setting in pastoral was acknowledged as ideal (47). Pastoral since the Age of Discovery has come to mean a temporary retreat from the "corrupt" city, a renewal period spent in the "raw wilderness," and a return to the city with the hope of applying what one has learned (69, 71). *Life in Prairie Land* stands as an underappreciated example of American pastoralism. Farnham's journey to the Illinois frontier can be viewed as a renewing retreat from the East before a return there with the hope of improving society. Her book represents an effort to improve society through her account of the experiences and discoveries detailed in the text.

At the same time that they offer the promise of renewal, pastoral works "qualify" and thus "bring irony to bear against the illusion of peace and harmony in a green pasture" (24). Working within the pastoral tradition, Farnham exhibits a complex perspective as she relates incidents that express ambivalence toward the West and toward development of the West. Nature is not only beautiful and beneficial, but also destructive. The West is at once a garden and a wasteland;

it offers freedom and opportunity in the midst of primitive lawlessness. Farnham considers the Native American perspective as she weighs the effect of civilization by white settlers upon the land, animal life, and waterways. She sensitively describes the encroachment of civilization upon nature. She astutely speculates that pioneer settlement and all it entails will radically alter the face of the countryside. On one hand Farnham praises Yankeeism, nationalism, the movement westward, and the progress of civilization. At the same time she regrets progress at the expense of the countryside; she laments the hastening of the Native Americans' "natural loss of dominance" which she likens to players moving off-stage (225). Through the use of pastoral Farnham expresses ambivalence, but ultimately acknowledges the inevitability of westward expansion.

Because New England was becoming industrialized and urbanized during the mid-nineteenth century, it may seem inconsistent that Farnham should advocate its use as a model of development for the West, a region whose very landscape and lack of development represented the greatest attraction to her. In fact, Farnham was not against development. She viewed progress as a natural pattern. She regarded the settlement of the West as having been accomplished by subsequent groups of newcomers displacing the settled population. Farnham states that "as the numbers of [emigrants] increase, the [first settler] retires before them as the Indian has retired before him. He forms the second wave that pours itself into the bosom of this wilderness" (215). Farnham offers many portraits of the Suckers (Illinoisans). In one instance she asserts that the frontier residents, by virtue of their character are suited to primitive conditions:

> Their minds exult in the boldness and freedom of those enterprises which demand little practical detail. The dangers which hung over their early years have cultivated in them a certain boldness and love of adventure which find no proper field but on the wild frontier. The richness of the soil has obviated the necessity of severe labor, and they have consequently grown up with habits of indolence and a want of practical talent, found in no other free states of the Union. (216)

Despite their "peculiarities," Farnham admires the Suckers for their "strong intellects, bold and vigorous ideas, and their vast fund of knowledge, drawn from sources with which a more artificial society is too little acquainted" (216). Yet—perhaps somewhat egocentri-

cally—she regards the Yankee emigrants as better suited to manage the task of developing the West.

Farnham recreates a regional rivalry between the Westerners or Suckers and the Yankees by contrasting them throughout the book. She scatters through the text a mix of amusing minor criticisms and more serious indictments of Westerners contrasted with positive images of successful Yankee emigrants; East versus West becomes part of *Life in Prairie Land*'s rich thematic tapestry. Contrasting East and West, Farnham states that the Sucker settler "never bestows any increased care upon his crops; even though his eastern neighbor on the next farm doubles his harvest by it" (216). She reports the Sucker opinion:

> Yankees are just fit for [teaching because] they are a 'power smarter' at that than the western boys. But they can't hold a rifle nor ride at wolf hunt with 'em; and he reckons, after all, these are the great tests of merit. (216)

Farnham characterizes the Suckers as honest, but notes that they consider "a little fraud or shrewd trick played upon a Yankee" as "evidence of superior sagacity" (219). Farnham, a native New Yorker, supports the Yankee cultural imperialism exercised at the time. In her view, the potential of the West was too important to be left to Westerners.

Besides the pattern of the journey , three other patterns intertwine to serve as structural elements in *Life in Prairie Land.* A cyclical seasonal pattern emphasizing the natural order provides structure to the book. Farnham aptly begins her narrative in spring, the symbolic season of beginnings, on "one of the last days of April"; chapters one through seven take place during spring (3). The action in chapter eight takes place outside the chronology of the narrative and consists of sketches of two households. In chapter nine spring turns to summer. The action in chapters 10 through 15 occurs during the summer, followed by two chapters outside the chronology of the narrative. In the next chapter "summer had worn away" to autumn (108). The pattern of seasons blending into each other, with interrupting chapters providing material that disrupts the calendar's progression and the ongoing narrative, continues throughout the book.

Part one, 165 pages long, records Farnham's first two years in Illinois while part two, 98 pages long, represents a more condensed narrative, less tied to the writer's daily activities and covering a

period of about two and one half years. Thus Farnham treats time as relative and gives different temporal weight to periods and events of her life. Part two begins with two chapters outside the chronology of the narrative. The third chapter then duplicates the season depicted at the close of part one (summer turning to autumn), and chapter four occurs in autumn. Chapters 5 through 13 return to summer with the original pattern resuming and continuing through the end of the book.

The break in the seasonal pattern, the duplication in part two of the season at the end of part one (summer turning to autumn), emphasizes the action taking place then, the death of Farnham's loved ones and her recovery from grief. The return to the earlier season (summer) allows Farnham to continue her narrative much as one resumes life after the death of a loved one and, in effect, repairs the break in pattern.

The cyclical seasonal pattern supports and complements a chronological arrangement of chapters that temporally undergirds *Life in Prairie Land.* Together the cyclical and chronological patterns create a unified thread through both parts of the book. Chapters 26 and 27 of part one make up one of the two focal points in the book with 25 chapters on either side.[2] The climax of the narrative occurs at the end of chapter 25 with the death and burial of Farnham's sister, Mary. Chapters 26 and 27 represent a denouement and conclusion; Farnham's son had been ill, but Mary's illness took precedence and no one had expected the boy to die. His death in chapter 26 overshadows Farnham's grief for her loss of Mary. Drought and epidemic mirror her desolation. Farnham's account of her recovery from grief is more closely bound to the loss of her son than to the death of her sister:

> The loss of my boy, and this loneliness, heightened by the previous death of my sister, made me shrink from everything like joyousness in the natural or human world. ... One afternoon when I had exhausted the solace of tears over recollections of my lost babe, the sublime consolations with which the Psalmist hushed his griefs under a like affliction, occurred to my mind with unusual force: 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' (167)

Chapters 26 and 27 thus comprise a unit which makes up a focal point of Farnham's book.

Adding to the complexity of her structural design, a counterpointed pattern of action runs through and contradicts the chrono-

logical chapter arrangement and creates a series of recurrent thematic motifs throughout the work. Chapters in which action occurs outside the chronology have been noted in my discussion of the cyclical seasonal and the chronological patterns. Besides these anomalous chapters, Farnham interjects single incidents which occur outside the chronology. Scattered through the text, they provide a dark element in Farnham's thematic tapestry. The story of the dark man's grief provides a vivid example. Farnham hints at the story in chapter six, promises to tell the story in chapter nine, and relates the story in the first three quarters of chapter 10. Another example begins in part one and ends in part two. In that instance, Farnham introduces a family in part one, chapter 22 and foreshadows their terrible fate. She recounts the woeful tale in part two, chapter 24.

In general, the counterpointed episodes reveal the dystopic aspect of the West. They also open a place in the narrative for Farnham to expound on her social concerns. For example, the story of the dark man's grief early in the book reveals the existence of extreme weather conditions and epidemics in the the West, resulting in the strong probability of human suffering during its settlement. Farnham portrays the man as an example of the type of settler who, despite severe hardships, loves the land and the "social and physical freedom ... in their most enlarged forms" which it affords, and chooses to remain in the West (54). There follows an expository conversation between Farnham and her sister Mary about the benefits of that social and physical freedom, the potential of nature to improve humanity, and the prospects of a "mighty Future" for a country so possessed of natural resources (55).

By including the counterpointed pattern of action Farnham blends the concerns centered at her two focal points. The material outside the chronology is placed next to and within the context of Farnham's personal development focus, yet it speaks to Farnham's regional development focus. It directly and vividly portrays the negative features of the West and balances the interpretation of the West as the new Eden (and, implicitly, of the East as the postlapsarian Garden).

James Hurt has written about what I independently have termed the counterpointed pattern of action in *Life in Prairie Land* as "inset narratives only loosely attached to the main section," the effect of which is "a narrative constantly folding back upon itself, embedding miniature versions of itself within its larger structure" (28). To Hurt,

the "inset narratives" present a "counter-theme" of the "prairie as a dangerous, sinister force that, without warning, can destroy anything human encroaching on it" (30). He states that the dark man's story "anticipates the deaths of Mary and Farnham's baby" (30). Applying a psychological interpretation to the "counter-theme," Hurt likens its emergence to "the return of the repressed" (30). Hurt's reading emphasizes Farnham's structural use of the microcosm and suggests to me an organic, inchoate structure employing circular patterns within larger circular patterns.

My study of the structure of *Life in Prairie Land* reveals a Transcendentalist inchoate organic structure which, in turn, reveals Farnham's message and vision. Several organizing patterns centered around two major focal points provide structure and create unity. *Life in Prairie Land* exemplifies American pastoralism as Farnham's journey to the Illinois frontier represents the archetypal retreat from society, renewal in nature, and return to society with the hope of improving it. The Western experience encompasses a series of contradictions which Farnham details. Farnham's treatment of regional rivalry sounds a thematic note of East versus West, as she advocates Yankee cultural imperialism. Farnham's layering of cyclical seasonal, chronological, and counterpointed structural patterns creates unity. In addition, the counterpointed pattern successfully unifies Farnham's two main foci, her own personal development and the development of the West.

NOTES

1. Trying to locate a centerpiece, I found two. Each is located roughly at the center point of the book, determining the center by different means. I discovered this thematic focal point by dividing the book's 266 pages, excluding the introduction and preface, in half. Page 133 contains a romantic reverie about traveling the region's system of rivers by steamer. Directly preceding the reverie is a passage depicting the steamboat as a monster; directly following is a passage extolling the awe of nature as superior to that inspired by "displays of human power" (134). The steamboat represents the quintessential vehicle in the metaphor of the machine in the garden. It is significant that the compromise position—that of traveling the rivers by steamer, in harmony with nature—is flanked by the two more extreme positions, because Farnham advocates the middle ground, planned and prudent development of the region.
2. I discovered this chronological focal point by dividing the number of chapters in half. The resulting asymmetrical arrangement placed the death of Farnham's son at the center point. That seemed unsatisfactory because the death of Farnham's sister, in the previous chapter, was equally important. That arrangement also placed Farnham's dramatic recovery with the less personal section of the book, part two. Mary's burial at the end of chapter 25 signals an end. Seeking a symmetrical arrangement, I designated chapters 26 and 27 together as the centerpiece, which left 25 chapters on either side. I read Farnham's state-

ments, cited in my discussion, as textual evidence that my arrangement is valid, not contrived. My purpose in determining a centerpiece was to discover Farnham's major emphasis. It is in chapters 26 and 27 that Farnham records the mystical experience, which she uses as a structural center for one of the two major concerns of her book, the theme of personal development.

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GHOST DOGS

DAVID DIAMOND

Most people die here, just as they're born, bare as the Badlands and howling like a March blizzard.

What I have to say concerns the summer my father died.

He used to tell me, "Life beats you down. You lose your timing. You miss the bus."

It came to me much later that he was explaining how he got stuck in the Black Hills, deep on the all-night shift at the Homestake Gold Mine.

My mother was an alcoholic. She was critical of everybody and everything, especially me. I can't say I hated her, but I didn't like her.

One night, drunk on vodka, she said, "How did we end up here in Western South Dakota, Arlen? That's what I want to know." She was in her late thirties and had her body, but the alcohol had started to savage her face.

She lifted her drink and said, "I can get mean on highballs. Do you know that, Arlen?"

"Oh, I know."

She sat down and pulled an old red-and-black Indian blanket around her as if she were freezing. She sipped her vodka and said, "Your father came in on the bus. I was waiting tables at the Hills Hotel. That's how it happened."

"He was handsome. He's a good-looking man. That had something to do with it. We got together. He'd been in prison up in Canada. He killed a man up there. Has he told you about that?"

I didn't know if I should believe her. She said mean things about people when she was drinking. She would retell the same stories, look me in the eye and say, "Stop me if I've told you this. Have I told you this story before?"

It hurt me when she got this drunk.

* * * * * *

My father cut a Bunyonesque figure. Hands big as T-bone steaks, steel-tough arms, broad shoulders, blue, marble-shooter eyes that could cut you in half. Bad luck was branded on his face.

He was from Devil's Lake, North Dakota. He'd worked the Mesabi iron mines in Northern Minnesota. He'd told me that much one night when we were trout fishing up in Rapid Canyon, near Silver City, where Wild Creek flushes out of a savage scar in the pine and granite outcroppings, pours over slabs of rock, slicks down mossy-green shale, splashes into a deep cool pool that joins Rapid Creek, which flows east through the aspen and birch, winding the Canyon, rushing deeper and deeper toward Rapid City, where it spills onto the prairie and feeds the Cheyenne River out near the Badlands.

Weekends we'd fish the confluence. I'd watch my father sling his line over the creek, make it zing and curl like a lariat at the "Days of 76 Rodeo."

We used live grasshoppers as bait and always caught our limit. We'd clean our catch and cook over a crackling campfire.

My father was a stoic man. We'd just sit there, while he sipped from a bottle of Jim Beam. Silence was his code. Maybe that's something I invented, but I think I'm right.

On this night, the one I'm telling about, I shattered the awkward stillness.

"Why is mother so mean and critical?"

This question startled him. He hesitated, I waited, he took a long pull on the Jim Beam and said, "I guess I knew you'd ask me this one day. There was an incident, something about ghost dogs, that keeps coming back to her. A childhood problem. A warped event that happened back there. It's got her hot-wired into the past. She won't discuss it, and it can't be changed now."

I'd heard about the ghost dogs. That came with the seventh highball of the evening, when my mother would rave about the ghost dogs howling up in the canyon.

"I know she drinks while I'm at the mine. I can't stop her. It doesn't affect the way I feel about your mother. She was kind to me when I first came here. She was pretty. You know, something special."

"The ghost dogs, is that why she drinks so much?" I asked.

"The vodka makes her life easier. I wish I could tell you something different, but I'm not going to lie. Truth is all I have left. See these wrinkles on my face? That's heartache."

This is when I asked him if he'd killed a man up in Canada.

"The vodka makes her life easier. I wish I could tell you something different, but I'm not going to lie. Truth is all I have left. See these wrinkles on my face? That's heartache."

This is when I asked him if he'd killed a man up in Canada.

He shook his head as if he couldn't believe my mother had told me about Canada. "It was self-defense. I'll stick to that. I would have told you myself someday. It was ruled manslaughter."

He drank straight from the bottle, two big gulps, wiped his lips and said, "A man gets caught up in trouble. It's nothing you ever mean to do. It happens, then you can't cut it loose. I was young. That's all I'll say."

"What did you do when you got out of prison?" I asked.

"I wanted a new start. I worked a gold mine in the Yukon until it pissed out. All I know is mining. That's why I'm here at the Homestake. It's a tough, dangerous business, and I don't want you getting into it."

"Are you scared down there?" This was something else I'd wanted to ask him.

"If you get nervous you're dead. The worst part is riding the cage, takes twenty minutes to hit bottom."

I thought we'd made a breakthrough, talking like this. Maybe we could have some more chats, get to know each other, but the following week he died in a cave-in. He was buried under a ton of rock.

* * * * * *

My father's death killed my mother.

She departed life for the living-room couch, lying there under the Indian blanket, shaking and mumbling about the ghost dogs. She was drinking all day now and having her vodka delivered.

I cooked and kept house. Mother kept drinking. There were baffling periods of lucidity when she would warn me, "Be careful, Arlen. My mind is fragile."

She stopped eating, became weak and frazzled. "Arlen!" she'd scream. "Here come the dogs! Get the gun!"

I had to send her to the mental hospital in Yankton. They gave her shock treatments, but that didn't help. I drove back and forth across the state to see her. She would stare at me with wild-owl eyes and say, "You better kill those dogs, Arlen. Get the gun. Shoot!"

During my final visit she asked me to kill her.

* * * * * *

Numbed by the events that had happened and fresh out of Deadwood High School, I took a bellboy job at the historic Hills Hotel and Saloon.

The Jack Rabbit Bus arrived every evening at six and dropped off the *Rapid City Journal* and a load of tourists.

I made good tips carrying the bags and answering questions like: "Where's Boot Hill? Where did they shoot Wild Bill Hickok? Is Calamity Jane buried next to Wild Bill? Were they lovers? Who is Jack McCall? Where's the gold mine? Do they have tours?"

There were always drifters, men looking for union jobs at the mine, women scouting the whore houses. People on the run. It didn't take me long to learn the meaning of desperation and survival.

* * * * * *

It was hot in the Black Hills the day the Brit arrived. The Jack Rabbit Bus swerved to a stop at the Hills Hotel. The driver stepped down, dropped a bundle of newspapers, and called: "Passengers west—Spearfish, Sundance, Miles City."

The Brit stumbled out, reeking bourbon. You could see he'd lived his best days, and from here it was all downhill.

The next day at the Bodega Cafe the coffee crowd buzzed about how Belle LaRue, the rich old widow who owned the Hills, had hired the Brit out of a classified in the *Rocky Mountain News* to wait tables in the hotel dining room.

The gossip centered on how Belle LaRue had bought herself a companion.

The story about Belle was well known. She had arrived in Deadwood as a rich, beautiful young widow from Louisiana. She purchased the Buffalo Bar and the whore house upstairs. She invested her profits in small gold-mining projects and made a fortune. There were rumors she owned shares in the Golden Chance, Last Reward, and the Homestake. She left the "entertainment business," as she liked to call it, and bought the Hills Hotel. She remodeled and built herself a lavish apartment on the first floor, just off the lobby.

She was in her seventies when the Brit came to town. He was sixty-three.

Lyla Lyttle, the housekeeper at the Hills, told me she'd found evidence in the Brit's room that he'd served in the French Foreign

Lyla Lyttle, the housekeeper at the Hills, told me she'd found evidence in the Brit's room that he'd served in the French Foreign Legion. "I seen his discharge papers, birth certificate, and campaign ribbons on a chiffonier in his room. I wasn't snooping, if that's what you think."

The Brit reminded me of my father. He didn't say much. He'd work his shift and amble down to Saloon Number 10 and drink whiskey shooters.

One night, in the middle of the tourist season, I was walking the hallway on the first floor and I overhead the Brit and Belle LaRue arguing.

"You're killing yourself!" Belle shouted. "You're drunk every night."

The Brit said, "Thank you. I'm sure you are the Virgin Mary."

"Don't be sarcastic. Your life doesn't have to be hopeless.

"I've seen the fires of hell," said the Brit.

"I know you're running from something, I know about the French Foreign Legion. Stay here, we can make a life together," Belle said. "We don't have much time left."

Then the Brit said, "I'm not done running.

He disappeared the next day. Tony Two Bulls, a Rosebud Sioux who hung out at the Nugget Bar next to the Hills, said he'd seen the Brit up in Spearfish Canyon, hitchhiking south toward Newcastle, Wyoming.

* * * * * *

A week later the Jack Rabbit brought Slim Winner to town. He was the last one off the bus. He hesitated, as if he were surprised he'd landed in Deadwood. He looked to be in his late fifties. Wrinkled and worn, skin dark as a well-oiled ball glove. You could see he'd done some hard living. Lean as a shock of wheat and ready for trouble, that was plain enough.

Slim rented the Seth Bullock suite at the Hills and spent a week hustling poker games and drinking shots of Early Times in the card room, where he told colorful stories about his life in Omaha, Cheyenne, Sioux Falls, and Denver.

I'd stand directly behind him watching, listening, hoping I could learn something that might help me escape my summer tragedy.

"I worked the packing plant in Sioux Falls, the stockyards down in Omaha. I made a pile during Frontier Days in Cheyenne last summer. Met a young woman there named Pretty Valentine. A stripper at the Branding Iron Bar. She sucked the soul right out of me. I'd made two grand in the backroom at the Branding Iron. She stole it. That's how serious she was. You maybe don't believe me, but this is a true story. I get suckered like that all the time. I'm an easy touch.

"So I go to Denver. I had the Molly Brown suite at the Brown Palace. I played liar's poker at the bar and won my money back. Got myself even.

"Then I won ten thousand at the Harbor Bar in Sioux Falls. They have a cat house upstairs, women working the circuit from Kansas City to Fargo. I win big and go upstairs ... this is the truth ... and hire two women. A blonde and a brunette. They take me to a room and make a beef sandwich out of me."

The poker game had stopped.

A circle framed the table. Everyone listening to Slim Winner. He turned in his chair, looked me straight in the eyes, and said, "Son, soon as I win this hand, bring me a double Early Times on the rocks."

He worked a fan-dance shuffle, let Sid Pope cut the deck, then sprayed the cards around the cigar-scarred table.

"Seven-card stud. That's what I'm dealing. Twenty bucks to ante."

The players checked their hole cards. Slim started up again. "It's all a bluff, boys. Late nights and Early Times, that's my motto. I've got a black six and a red nine in my hole here. You can't win with lousy cards like that."

Slim Winner said this while holding two queens.

He left town the morning after the night he'd clipped the Cutler brothers, rich ranchers from out by the Badlands, for four thousand dollars in a game of five-card stud—deuces wild.

A week later an FBI agent showed up in Deadwood asking questions about an Indian fugitive named Marty Has No Respect, alias Slim Winner, who he said was wanted for robbing a bank down in the Nebraska Panhandle.

* * * * * *

A dark cloud churned the sky the day Betty Lou showed up. Honeysuckle bushes fishhooked in the hot wind. The Jack Rabbit turned off the highway and rolled toward the Hills Hotel.

The thunderhead pushed closer, a black curtain scraping the tips of the hills.

Devil's Tower upside down.

The bus stopped. The doors opened, the tourists filed out, then Betty Lou in blue jeans, red sweater, school jacket, and a purse hanging from her shoulder.

Lightning stitched the sky.

I'd seen a lot of girls looking for the whore houses that summer, but Betty Lou didn't appear jaded, tough, or vacant like most. She had a wounded, anxious look, as if she were living her life minute-to-minute and expected something terrible to happen any second.

She was young, slender, so white she almost glowed. No baggage, just the purse. I remember her lips—juicy-red, like fresh watermelon.

I took her arm and gave her the speel Belle LaRue had made me memorize about Wild Bill, Calamity, all the history, with the caveat that I mention the whore houses only if asked.

Lightning cracked, thunder rolled. Betty Lou shuddered, faked a smile and said, "I guess I brought bad weather."

Something hurtful was dragging her down. I caught that right off.

The black cloud skimmed lower. Ropes of lightning, more thunder. Raindrops danced like quicksilver on the dusty street.

I led Betty Lou to the check-in counter. Belle LaRue gave her a cursory glance. That's all Belle needed to size someone up. "How long will you be with us, young lady?" she asked.

"I'm just passing through."

Belle stared at her and said, "Oh."

Fear flared in Betty Lou's eyes.

Belle arched an eyebrow. "Where would you be headed, my dear?"

"Farther west."

Belle nodded approval and said, "It's always better the farther west you go. Be sure to skip Utah. How far west had you planned traveling?"

"Nevada, California, I'm not sure. Listen, do you have a room or not?"

I liked her spunk. Belle said, "You can have the Calamity Jane Suite tonight. Do you have twelve dollars?"

Belle always pulled this trick with people who did not know enough to ask for the low rate. Betty Lou dug into her purse and paid up.

I guided her to the second floor. The room featured a huge bed, thick mattress, bright yellow spread (Calamity's favorite color), antique chiffonier, and a cheap reproduction of Calamity hanging above the bed. I noticed Betty Lou staring at the poster, sizing up Calamity, so I said, "Her real name was Martha Jane Canary."

Betty Lou ignored me.

I pulled the curtains open to a mountain view. Outside, lightning split the sky and zapped a pine tree behind the hotel. It lay there, sliced in half, its shattered trunk resembling the daggers of electricity ripping the purple sky.

A shed flew away, sucked into the funnel like Slim Winner might snatch a card from a poker table.

Thunder rattled the window.

More lightning.

Hail.

Betty Lou grabbed my hand, examined my palm, as if contemplating our futures. "I've been through worse than this storm," she whispered.

I wondered if she might be talking about the kind of storm I had just been through—the cave-in, the mental hospital.

She made quick eye contact, looked up at me. I said, "Me too."

Betty Lou shifted her gaze out the window at the raging twister then back to me. She was frightened. "Look," she said, "I'm sorry but they have houses here, right? I've heard the rumors. A girl can make some money. Do you know anything about that?"

I felt stupid, but I gave her Belle LaRue's special narration for "wounded doves," which was what she called girls looking for work in the whore houses: "Four bordellos. It's illegal, but no one cares. There's no problem. The houses have been open since 1876. That's when George Hearst bought the Homestake Gold Mine for five thousand dollars. That's how the Hearst fortune started."

I kept going. "Calamity Jane was a hooker. She was one of the women who followed General Hooker's Troops during the Indian Wars. They comforted the men at night and became known as *Hooker Girls*."

Ghost dogs.

"Maxine Billings owns the Buffalo Bar. She works nights. Talk to her. The girls work upstairs. They do big business on payday at the mine and deer season. Summer is the best, all the tourists."

We matched eyes. She was my age or younger. She clutched my hand again, traced a finger over my palm and said, "I didn't know what to expect ... thanks."

Two days after the storm Lyla Lyttle told me Betty Lou couldn't get on at the Buffalo Bar.. Too young.. She ended up working out of a trailer house behind the Blue Moon Saloon over in Lead, across the street from the gold mine.

* * * * * *

There's always something eating at somebody.

I don't know what set me off. Thinking about Betty Lou trapped in a whore house or my father's death, my mother's sickness. Maybe it was Slim Winner. It could have been the Brit.

Good chance it was alcohol.

Summer was fading. Kids my age were getting ready for tech school; college at Black Hills State; the University of Wyoming down in Laramie; cosmetology school in Rapid City.

Tourists were down to a trickle.

I got high on three-two beer and drove my dad's pickup to the Blue Moon Saloon. I parked and walked out back of the bar, where two big Airstreams had been welded together and converted into cribs. I pounded on the door.

An obese woman opened up. She had a huge belly and a puffle of double chins. She was close to being a side-show act. Four or five-hundred pounds. She wedged her moon belly through the opening

"You're too fucking young!" she shouted, then tossed a cigarette at me. It landed at my feet.

I yelled: "I came for Betty Lou!"

The fat lady put a hand on her hip. "Get going! You're drunk. I'll call the police."

"Let me talk to Betty Lou!" I shouted.

She cocked her huge ham arm and hit me. Sent me spinning. "Take off, you creep!"

I struggled up. "I'm not a creep. Tell Betty Lou Arlen is here!"

Betty Lou appeared in the doorway.

She stepped down, almost like that day on the Jack Rabbit bu: She wore a pink, see-through negligee and tight black lingerie. remember how scrawny she looked. Thin as a plank.

She walked towards me, glancing up at the sky. "Looks like a storm. See the lightning?"

Then she was in front of me. "Arlen, is that your name?"

"Are you all right?" I asked.

She slipped her arm around my shoulder and pressed close "Listen, Arlen," she whispered, "what the fuck is wrong with you Get out of here."

"Come with me. I have a pickup. I've saved my tips. We can gc farther west."

She was flat against me, her little red lips on my ear, "Don't cause trouble. I've got a customer waiting. Get lost."

Then the Fat Lady: "Betty Lou, get over here right now!"

She broke loose and walked to the trailer house, shiny, black heels spiking and spitting gravel. She paused in the doorway and looked back.

I felt naked.

"I've been through worse than this!" I screamed.

* * * * * *

I left Deadwood that fall and bounced around. I did some ranch work over near Miles City, worked the coal mines in the Powder River Basin. Tended bar in Cody, and worked as a summer guide at the Wild Bill Cody Museum.

Drifted farther west and worked at the Round Mountain Gold Mine in Nevada. From there I moved down to Las Vegas and got a job in the baggage department at Western Airlines. Union and everything. I was caught drinking.

Then California, the steel mill in Fontana. That didn't last. Marijuana this time.

Six months in a Colorado jail. Drinking again.

I spent years I can't count touring the Northern Plains with the Big Sky Carnival Show. We played all the dump towns. I ran the bingo game. No one cared if you sipped vodka, smoked weed, shot up, dropped pills.

I'm in my forties now and I've drifted back to Deadwood. The Homestake is still operating twenty-four hours a day. There are no openings. I'll wait for the next accident.

I don't have anything to show for my life. I won't lie about that. But I've quit drinking, and I've learned to tell the truth like my father, and I've learned that most people shoot too low. They settle for less than they deserve. They give up. Like my dad said, "Life beats you down, you miss the bus."

Nights, when I drive by the Blue Moon Saloon I think of Betty Lou. If she would have left with me, things might not be as tarnished as they are now.

And up in the canyons, beyond the gold mine, I hear the ghost dogs howling.

But I'm a fast runner, and I'm not a quitter.

So don't count me out.

Black Hills State University

WHEN THE WINDIGO SPIRIT SWEPT ACROSS THE PLAINS...: OJIBWAY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDWEST

JEAN STRANDNESS

...Black Hawk, fleeing through marshes, hiding in caves,
Black Hawk, on the earth, the nurturing earth,
In the streams, Black Hawk, the sound of the water
Cutting through sandstone in the dells, meandering
Through valleys, then rushing to the great river

They said you could no longer cross. Black Hawk,
Above the earth, tundra swans seeking rest
In the recesses of the Mississippi where you ran,
The eagle circling over the Sauk,
They claim it manifest destiny
And wash their hands in the bloody stream.

Now my child explores your cave.
I think of children too terrified to cry.
I cannot call it all past while your name's locked
In a stream of taverns, motels, and campgrounds,
A hockey team, a tough guy devoured
And claimed by **cannibals of the spirit.**[1]

Black Hawk shot at from the river
And from the river banks, captured,
Put on tour, evidence of land freed
For Europeans becoming American
Without knowing, without wanting to know, his
Story...

Margaret Rozga

Before the European voyageurs (timbermen, traders, and tr
pers) and settlers (farmers, merchants, and priests) began their p
gressive encroachment onto their lands, the Anishinaabe pe
(later called the Ojibway or Chippewa by the new arrivals)[2] pc

lated the vast landmass (woodlands and plains) spanning the northern portion of what came to be the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota in the United States and the contiguous provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan in Canada (Appendix). As the Europeans entered their lands, the Anishinaabeg traveled westward.

During an exploratory expedition in 1820, Stephen Harriman Long of the U.S. Topographical Engineers described the area known today as the Great Plains as the "Great American Desert." Long said the area was "wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence." Dr. Edwin James, who chronicled the 1820 expedition in *An Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains,* published in 1823, stated that he had no hesitation in "giving too unfavorable an account of this portion of the country ... an unfit residence for any but a nomad population" (Morris 190-200).

The "Great American Dessert" appellation continued to be used on maps until the 1870s, when the U.S. military, encouraged by the Northern Pacific Railroad, began to reappraise its estimation of the northern plains. By 1877, General William T. Sherman—who five years earlier had commented that a fort to be constructed at the site where the Northern Pacific would cross the Missouri should perhaps be named "Fort Desolation or Damnation" (Hutton 21)—had begun to claim that there was "a great deal of valuable country along the line of the Northern Pacific railroad" (Vaughn 323-33). In a new campaign of boosterism, the area once known as the "Great American Desert" came to be acclaimed as the "Great American Garden" (Hyde 81).

Lured by Edenic imagery and hoping for a better life, Scandinavian and German settlers arrived in Minnesota and North Dakota to homestead in the latter decades of the 19th century. Little or no reference to the native populations having been made in the promotional materials that attracted them, many of the newly arrived Midwesterners were relatively unaware of the kinds of displacement strategies the U.S. government had employed to clear the land of what the U.S. military referred to as the "Indian problem" (Hutton 21).

In fact, by choice or force, the Anishinaabeg (Ojibway/ Chippewa) ceded their lands, finally moving onto small reservations scattered across this vast territory (Appendix). Then, the passage of

the Dawes Allotment Act in 1887 allowed reservation land to be purchased by "white men" so that in a number of instances in Minnesota and North Dakota as little as ten percent of a reservation's land is still "Indian-owned" today (Ojibwe Curriculum 33). This phenomenon has led many Native Americans to hold the view that "although white people had 99% of the land, they wanted it all" (Peltier Interview). One culture's perception of historical reality may be very different from another's. The Lakota[3] author Vine DeLoria recently observed sardonically that it is "impossible to sin today because all the really good sins have become Christian virtues, much as Greed, once one of the Seven Deadly Sins, has become the chief American and Republican virtue" (22).

Stereotypic depictions of Native Americans have long been part of American culture, particularly in the popular media, where native people, until recently,[4] have been represented as primitive, practically non-verbal, and initiators of aggression. In her poem, "Dear John Wayne," Louise Erdrich describes what it was like for Turtle Mountain Chippewa kids to see such stereotypic depictions at the drive-in movies while they were growing up:

> Always the lookout spots the Indians first,
> spread north to south, barring progress.
> The Sioux or some other Plains bunch
> in spectacular columns, ICBM missiles,
> feathers bristling in the meaningful sunset.
>
> The drum breaks. There will be no parlance.
> Only the arrows whining, a death-cloud of nerves
> swarming down on the settlers...

In an ironic inversion, the victims of the "land-stealers"[5] become the perpetrators—the settlers become the victims. In this inverted paradigm, John Wayne's righteous anger is justified:

> The sky fills, acres of blue squint and eye
> that the crowd cheers. His face moves over us,
> a thick cloud of vengeance, pitted
> like the land that was once flesh. Each rut,
> each scar makes a promise: *It is*
> *not over, this fight, not as long as you resist.*
>
> ***Everything we see belongs to us...***
>
> He smiles, a horizon of **teeth**
>
> the credits reel over...

These Indian kids leave the drive-in haunted:

> How can we help but keep hearing his voice,
> the flip side of the sound track, still playing:
> *Come on, boys, we got them*
> *where we want them, drunk, running.*
> *They'll give us what we want, what we need.*
> Even **his disease** was **the idea of taking everything.**
> Those cells, burning, doubling, splitting out of their skins.
>
> (Erdrich, Jacklight 12-13)

In the final lines of her poem Erdrich identifies a trait characteristic of the malevolent spirit which the Ojibway call "windigo" (and which DeLoria relates to Greed)—an insatiable hunger, marked by a compulsive need to keep gorging oneself, to have it all.

The Ojibway windigo spirit is a cannibal, who, once having tasted human flesh, can't get enough. A giant creature with a heart of ice, windigo, when encountered, is almost impossible to overcome. The Ojibway encountered the windigo in nature, especially in the winter. A hunter who went out might not come back—devoured by windigo. Generally, winter starvation was attributed to windigo. In Ojibway culture, it is also believed that an individual person can be possessed by a windigo spirit, the human body becoming the container of this inhuman spirit. Once windigo possession occurs, it is very difficult to reverse the process, though there are ways to do so. Symptoms of windigo possession include brittleness and coldness. The windigo-possessed individual becomes increasingly delusional and cannibalistic, compulsive in his or her desire to eat human flesh (Johnston 165-167; Landes, *Ojibwa Religion* 12-14; Vecsey 77-78).

While American popular media has been free to present a distorted view of native people for years, only within the past 20 years have Native Americans been able to present an alternative view in the national forum—as Native American authors, slowly at first, then more regularly, began to get published. A motif I have seen recurring in works by Ojibway authors is that of the encroaching European voyageurs and settlers, together with the U.S. government and military, as windigo possessed. The new arrivals "devour," to excess (literally and figuratively) trees, minerals, animals, land, culture, and people—anything that crosses their path. Within this construct, John Wayne's toothy smile in Louise Erdrich's poem becomes grim and threatening indeed.

In this paper, I will consider three works by Ojibway author which illustrate, I believe, a kind of evolution in the representatio of windigo imagery in the last fifteen years and will present som hypotheses as to the significance of these changes. The works I wil be examining are Ignatia Broker's *Night Flying Woman* (1983) Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* (1988), and Winona LaDuke's *Last Standin Woman* (1997). The historical time frame of *Night Flying Woma* moves up to 1867 when the White Earth Chippewa reservation i west central Minnesota is established. *Tracks* takes place on th Turtle Mountain Chippewa reservation in north central North Dakot (which was established in 1882) between 1912 and 1924. The actio of *Last Standing Woman* also takes place on the Minnesota Whit Earth reservation, encompassing a time frame from 1800 to 2018.

In *Night Flying Woman*, Ignatia Broker depicts the early contac with European voyageurs, primarily lumbermen, who, as they head ed west, also caused the Anishinaabeg to move westward. While tra ditionally the Anishinaabeg were migratory, moving around accord ing to the seasons—here for ricing, here for hunting, here fo sugaring, they were not accustomed to being forced to move.

The novel is told from the perspective of the great-great-grand daughter of Nibowisegwe (Night Flying Woman, nicknamed Oona) as an older woman looking back at her life, who writes down the stor she has heard told, as a legacy to her grandchildren. She says, "Ou family traveled a torturous way ... winding back and forth, leavin no path to follow ... trying to escape alien contact and retain a satis fying life" (9, 27). She calls the early European voyageurs "th strange new people" or "the strangers" who "came into our home land, pushing and disrupting" (10). Her family traveled west, fror "the industry that ate the forests." Then the "Great White Father" ser treaty papers to the Ojibway. "Six times the Ojibway were require to mark the treaties. Each time their lands passed into the hands c the alien peoples, each group was required to move to a Nativ Area—now called the Chippewa reservations of Minnesota" (11).

By the end of the novel, Oona's family, too, has moved to a reser vation—White Earth established in 1867. When the food that wa promised does not arrive, the integrity of their traditional life style i compromised: place restricted, they are forced to enter into the frame work of the "stranger's" economy. Her father finds himself with n choice but to engage in lumbering—to earn a living. He expresses th

painfulness of his circumstances, when he says "I do not like cutting the trees. My heart cries too often when I do this" (72).

In *Night Flying Woman* Broker never explicitly uses the term "windigo" to describe the action of the *voyageurs* but she does say they "eat" trees, which the Ojibway believe possess soul-spirits (Johnston 33). Because Broker is describing earlier history, the devastating impact of the European invasion on the Ojibway could not yet have been fully comprehended by the characters, whose attitude throughout is represented primarily as bewildered and cautious: the actions of the European *voyageurs* make no real sense within the framework of the traditional Ojibway clan value system in which the economy is based on sharing, trees and animals are relations, nothing more is taken than needed, and land is sacred, to be treated with respect (Broker 55-56).

In Louise Erdrich's interrelated novels, *Tracks* was written third, but comes first in chronological sequence, its action taking place between 1912 and 1924 on the North Dakota Turtle Mountain Chippewa reservation. It begins about 25 years after Broker's *Night Flying Woman* ends. The situation at the beginning of *Tracks* is bleak: "We started dying before the snow and after the snow we continued to fold" (1) says Nanapush, describing the new sickness, consumption, that strikes. The symptoms are horrible. Nanapush says,

> "The names of the dead collected within us like ice shards. ... Then the **slivers of ice** began to collect and cover us ... we didn't leave the cabin for fear we'd **crack our cold and fragile bodies.** We had gone **half windigo**." (6)

In *Tracks*, we see the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa plagued almost simultaneously by disease, starvation, loss of land, and the Catholic Church's pursuit of souls. Life is precarious, held in the balance. Erdrich suggests this precarious balance by structuring the novel as alternating narratives by Nanapush, who holds to the traditional ways, and Pauline, who is drawn to Catholicism: Nanapush's name, words, and actions parallel those of Nanaboozho, the Ojibway creative trickster spirit; Pauline becomes a Catholic nun, taking the name Leopolda.

> *Leopolda.* I tried out the unfamiliar syllables. They fit. They **cracked** in my ears like a fist through ice. (205)

Erdrich's use of ice imagery clearly suggests Pauline/Leopolda's initial windigo possession. Leopolda will be teaching young girls at St. Catherine's schools. She says, "I will add their souls to those I have numbered." In *Tracks* and later in *Love Medicine,* we see Leopolda, in the guise of a Christian martyr, increasingly windigo possessed as she becomes cold and brittle, feeding on souls.[6]

In *Tracks*, which I see as a second stage in the use of the windigo motif by Ojibway authors, Erdrich rarely uses the term "windigo" explicitly, but in her depictions of the overwhelming physical and psychological damage to the Ojibway people resulting from the arrival of European greed, disease, and religion, Erdrich clearly implies a connection with windigo. Further, the traits of Leopolda's windigo possession, which Erdrich comprehensively details in *Tracks* and *Love Medicine,* suggest that European culture, as a whole, is windigo possessed and that this disease is contagious. In *Tracks*, a kind of balance of powers is achieved as Nanapush (and certain other characters) are able, by living a traditional life, to withstand the power of the encroaching windigo, while Pauline, turned Leopolda, succumbs. As the novel ends in 1924, in terms of a power struggle, we might say it's a draw.

In *Last Standing Woman,* Winona LaDuke (Native American land-reclamation activist and one-time Green Party candidate for vice-president of the United States) continues the depiction of historical injustices endured by the Anishinaabe/Ojibway people—the usurpation of reservation land through legal and illegal means, imported contagious diseases, the withholding of rations as a means of coercion, the outlawing of traditional religious practices, attempts to obliterate the Anishinaabe culture and language by sending children off to boarding schools, grave digging for Indian artifacts and skeletal specimens, and the destruction of the ecological balance (and hence the traditional food supply) through timber stripping, which leaves the land "battered, scarred, and shorn" (122). It would be understandable if the tone of this first novel, which takes place on the White Earth reservation in Minnesota, were bitter and acerbic, but it is not.

While LaDuke, like Erdrich, portrays the painful effects of the arrival of European civilization, her work also contains a greater degree of "Indian survival humor." As an example, LaDuke, something of a trickster herself, describes Father Gilfillian, preaching, at the end of the 19th century in Ojibwe, "a language filled with subtle

nuances." In a sermon admonishing the use of pipes in traditional ceremonies, he mistakenly refers to the "pipe" as a "penis"—to the utter disbelief of his silent congregation (47). Such humor cumulatively helps to restore balance, to return power to battered souls.

La Duke, more assertive in tone than Broker or Erdrich, *repeatedly and explicitly* identifies acts of aggression by the "white man" as windigo. Two examples will illustrate, the first from a chapter entitled "The Drum."

> ...Those families that had drums, their numbers multiplied and their strength grew. They were determined to survive, to keep their ways, their songs, their medicines. To outwit **the *wiindigoo*, the white man**...
>
> When the young chief Bugonaygeeshig was assassinated in the summer of 1868, it was if a shadow set across White Earth, a shadow that did not lift for almost one hundred years. Bugonaygeeshig was shot dead at Leech Lake, and Washaashkoons and the others reported that it was the work of lumber men and **land stealers,** men who had paid a handsome price for the chief's killing. Bugonaygeeshig had been the most feared, outspoken, and daunting of *Anishinaabe* chiefs... The ***wiindigooweeg*** had killed him in hopes of ending what the *Anishinaabeg* knew was theirs. Their ways, their land, and their drums. But the ***wiindigooweeg*** underestimated the *aanikoobijigan,* the old people, and they underestimated the drums. The old people drew further into the woods and brought the drum with them, the new one that Ishkwegaabawiikwe had dreamed, and they kept the drum to themselves. Those men of theirs kept the drum.
>
> But the war of the God raged on the edge, and now moved into the village. The war of the God...
>
> Those men kept the drums. Namaybin Minnogeeshig had one, Chi Makwa another, and Wazhaashkoons a third. They kept those drums, fed them and cared for them. That kept the priests away. The priests could not touch those people. So they stayed, deep in the woods by Round Lake, by Many Point Lake. They stayed, never faltering from their path. (40, 42-43)

Here, by sustaining their traditional religious practices and recognizing and articulating the windigo possession of the "white man," the Anishinaabe people are able to achieve and sustain a balance of powers.

In the second example, a series of excerpts from a chapter explicitly entitled "Wiindigoo," dated 1915, the terms "windigo" and "cannibal" are repeated again and again with a confident assertion that becomes a verbal shield of resistance.

> The Minnogeeshig family watched as the logging teams encroached closer and closer to their trapline. The animals behaved differently now, moving nearer to the Minnogeeshig family camp, the logging companies close on their tracks. The logging companies had moved onto the reservation with the blessing of the Indian Agency and now began a **feeding frenzy** that would last for thirty years...
>
> When old man Namaybin Minnogeeshig would go to town with his horses, he would see the lumbermen cutting, or in the least, see their work. Shaking his head, he would say, ***"So much greed, so much greed,"*** wondering where it would end and what would be next...
>
> He could hear now the sounds of men and Swede saws, the sounds of workhorses straining as they pulled the big logs, and smell the timber just recently cut...
>
> Namaybin looked now toward the road, and he saw the logging foreman coming down his trail in a small buggy pulled by a bay horse. Namaybin's stomach ached now...
>
> Namaybin looked at the lumberman and did not stand... [He] regarded the lumberman and his Indian. He remembered that there had once been a ***wiindigoo,*** or **cannibal,** at Round Lake, many winters past. It had been long since the cannibal had been there but Namaybin remembered him just the same...
>
> *...The* ***wiindigoo*** *had starved once, long before, starved during a cold of too much snow and not enough rabbits. Starved nearly to death. Until he found a family, also weak from the winter. He culled those animals, culled them right from the herd. He culled them out of hunger and out of anger too. His own wife and family were long gone from the small pox. His bitterness at those who brought it had not subsided... He* ***ate*** *his visitors now... He* ***ate*** *those who strayed, were weak, or were just plain unfortunate. He* ***ate*** *the bold and the foolish, and he* ***ate*** *the young. He relished in his evil, and he forged a magic, a strong magic with the Mishinameginegib, the Great Horned Sturgeon, saying* "Ninitim, ginitim. Ninitim, ginitim. *My turn, your turn.*

Namaybin looked again at the lumberman. *"The **cannibal** is here again,"* Namaybin observed...

"There is no use to make small talk with a **cannibal**," he said in Ojibwe and paused, looking to the interpreter...

"An Indian can sit and talk to a **cannibal,** making all kinds of jokes, telling stories, and drinking tea," Namaybin continued in Ojibwe, his eyes locked on the lumberman, "but both the Indian and the **cannibal** know exactly what the **cannibal** is thinking..."

The lumberman spoke now. "Mr. Minnogeeshig," he said abruptly in his harsh, awkward white man's language, irked by the silliness of the Indian's veiled words and secrets. "I have papers that say I can take the trees off your land. I have the papers...

Namaybin grasped the paper, looking closer at the marks he could not understand. He understood the intent of the paper. He understood the **cannibal.**

Namaybin tore the paper now and threw it into his fire as the **cannibal** gasped, lurching forward to retrieve his precious document from the flames, the fire scorching his fingers as small, burnt cinders of the paper were lifted away by the breeze. It was an unsuccessful rescue. The Indian looked back at his beaver hide and walked toward it, knife in hand. The **cannibal** sputtered, shaking his head, and now his finger, at Namaybin.

"Your trees are mine. And your trees are coming down," the lumberman said coldly...

Rousing Namaybin's anger was a mistake, much like waking a hibernating bear prematurely from its slumber...

Namaybin watched the **cannibal** and his associate as they retreated hastily down the road toward the logging camp. The **cannibal** gone from his presence, he stood up, stayed his fire, and moved to his horse... (66-70)

From an Ojibway perspective, the moment when Namaybin throws the paper into the fire which the lumberman lunges after, scorching his fingers in the process, is very important: the Ojibway believe that the only certain way to destroy the windigo is through burning (Landes, "Windigo Personality" 137). Thus, the burning of the "legal" paper, the license to indulge the lumberman's voracious appetite to "take down" more trees, is at least symbolically signifi-

cant, and Namaybin's strategy to trick the windigo-possessed lumberman himself into the fire is clever and partially successful.

After the lumberman leaves, Namaybin visits other families who would be affected. By night, they move into the logging camp, take all the saws, axes, chains, hammers, and skids, and hide them in the woods. In the morning, the lumberman finds his camp dismantled and fifty Indian men and women armed with Winchester rifles in canoes forming a blockade below the logs at the confluence of Round Lake and the Ottertail River. "Damn Indians," the lumberman curses. When his eyes meet those of Namaybin, Namaybin, "now, in perfect English," speaks: "It's no use to make small talk to a **cannibal**" (71).

By explicitly *naming* the windigo possession of the "land stealers," the characters in LaDuke's novel depotentiate the power of the lumbermen and become empowered themselves in the process. While still an awesome power, windigo ceases to be overwhelming. In both of the above examples, the Ojibway are able not only not to succumb to the windigo spirit, but to act to resist it. In *Last Standing Woman,* which continues through the present and up to the year 2018, the tides turn, the circle comes round to the 5th generation, and the Ojibway people are re-empowered, in part, LaDuke suggests, due to the cumulative actions of earlier generations.

In these three novels by Ojibway authors published between 1983 and 1997, we see an evolution in the treatment of the windigo motif: Ignatia Broker in *Night Flying Woman* (1983) describes the European "strangers" as having windigo traits but the term itself is not mentioned; Louise Erdrich in *Tracks* (1988) emphasizes the *internalized* effects of windigo possession on its victims; and Winona LaDuke in *Last Standing Woman* (1997) explicitly articulates and names *external* forces as windigo, enabling the characters of her novels to stand up to these forces and resist them. In conclusion, I would suggest that these three Ojibway authors represent *both* a reasonably accurate depiction of northern Midwestern history *and concurrently* a reflection of the gradually increasing empowerment of Ojibway people in contemporary society.

NOTES

1. Seemingly by chance (as we both addressed a similar, though somewhat unusual, theme), Margaret Rozga read "Black Hawk" at the 1998 Midwest Poetry Festival, whose programming ran concurrently with the 1998 SSML Symposium on the Cultural Heritage of the Midwest, where I also read this paper. Struck by her parallel use of the term "cannibals of the spirit," I have incorporated an excerpt of her poem as a frontispiece to my paper.

For emphasis and clarity throughout my paper, the term "windigo" and related terms such as "cannibal" and "feeding frenzy" will appear in boldface type when part of a textual example. (Any italics in textual examples are part of the original texts.)

2. The term "Anishinaabeg" means "the people" or "the original people." ("Anishinaabe" is the singular of this plural noun and also the adjectival form.) The term "Ojibway" (also "Ojibwe") or "Chippewa—regional pronunciations of the same noun, which means "puckered"—probably refers to a unique style of moccasin construction among this group of people. "Chippewa" is the legal term used by the U.S. government, whereas the Canadian government employs the term "Ojibway." The term "Ojibway" seems to be most broadly used. Recently, there is a return to the use of the term "Anishinaabeg"—"Oskhi Anishinaabeg", the new people—sometimes shortened in speech to "Shinaab." In this paper, I will use all three terms—"Anishinaabeg," "Ojibway," and "Chippewa"—depending on usage in historical time and place. The term "Native American" refers to all native people. The term "Indian" is used both as a general term applied to all native people by others and as a self-referent term native people may use among themselves, as in "Indian people" or "Indian country."
3. As the Ojibway moved westward, they pressed up against the lands of the Lakota. At times the two groups fought against each other, but they respected each other as "their most honored enemies" and sometimes "strategic allies" (LaDuke 30). I include Vine DeLoria's perspective here, as a Lakota, because he reinforces the Ojibway perspective, and in many ways the Lakota and Ojibway worldviews are similar.
4. Probably Kevin Costner's film *Dances with Wolves* (November 1990) had the greatest influence in changing the ways in which Native Americans were depicted in the popular media. Since *Dances with Wolves,* Native American characters in film are much less likely to be depicted in stereotypic ways.
5. The term "land stealers" appears in Winona LaDuke's *Last Standing Woman* (87, 148).
6. In a paper presented at the 1995 SSML Symposium on the Cultural Heritage of the Midwest, I developed in greater detail the analysis of Sister Leopolda as windigo possessed.

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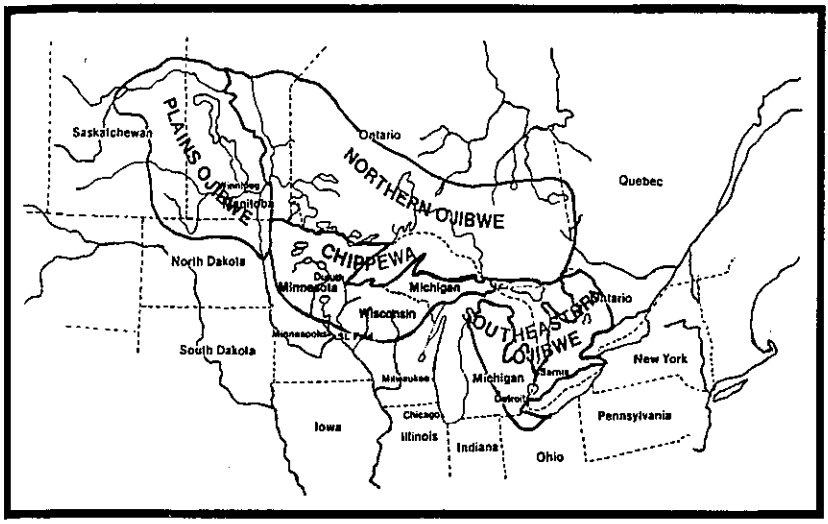
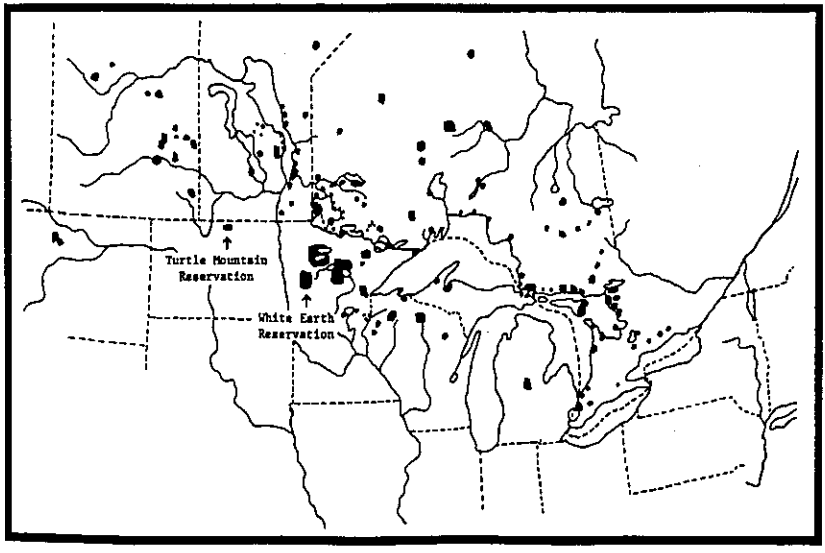
Appendix

Former Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Chippewa) Lands
(Prior to the Arrival of the European *Voyageurs* and Settlers)



(Adapted from Ojibwe Curriculum 5)

Current Ojibway/Chippewa Lands in North America



(Adapted from Ojibwe Curriculum 33)

SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S CHANTS OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

BERNARD F. ENGEL

Sherwood Anderson once wrote that "the best way to kill the growth of a distinctive middle western literature is to talk about it" ("Chicago Culture"). But Anderson got it partially wrong. His prose survives the endless talk about it; the verse almost no one talks about has nearly disappeared. Aware of this, he defiantly continued to write poetry. In the representative collection *MidAmerican Chants* (1918), the speaker in his poem "Song of the Singer" declares that he will "dare to sing" no matter what, that he will not be crushed by "the machine."[1] Anderson's readers know that for him the machine stood for industrial civilization, the social pattern that he believed had often broken his fellow Americans. The singer, gifted with spiritual vision, will trust confidently to "the terrible strength of indomitable song."

As with most of us, however, Anderson's ambitions exceeded his grasp. His "song" is too abstract, too removed from the particulars of experience that poetry, the art of the concrete, demands. Here and elsewhere, *Chants* gives a rhetoric of generalized loss, of baffled incomprehension too easily accepting the romantic-sentimental notion that the speaker is a specially victimized self in a heartless world. This "hunger" for an "understanding" he cannot attain places Anderson with his contemporaries Thomas Wolfe and Ross Lockridge, Jr. as a member of that well-populated sect which, despairing of an accurate statement of the ethereal, turns to puzzled complaint, inquiry, and protest in the hope that in their threshing about they may stumble onto discoveries as yet unmapped. In "The Cornfields," Anderson rightly speaks of his visionary persona as one "dizzy with words."

But though the abstraction and often windy rhetoric in *Chants* limit its impact, the verse does present a useful interpretation of Anderson's principles. The major argument in the poems is that there

is in America, in the very land itself, a seldom recognized afflatus that could inspire in people a religio-aesthetic understanding of themselves and of their fellows. This spirit is symbolized especially by the corn, the crop that in its sturdy naturalness seemed to Sidney Lanier to represent "the poet-soul sublime" ("Corn"), and that in its fecundity, its ability to feed much of the world, awed Anderson's Midwestern predecessor Frank Norris, the author of that set of novels which has been termed a "serial about cereal."

The corn, however, could not make up for America's aesthetic deficiencies. Anderson sided with Henry James and others who felt that America does not yet have the material for first-rate literature. According to the prose "Foreword" to *Chants*, good verse expresses an unworldly beauty that arises only after a society has lasted for many generations. The people of Middle America, Anderson says, "hunger for song," but they have too few "memory haunted places": they have, indeed, only "the grinding roar of machines." The consequence is that "We do not sing but mutter in the darkness." Anderson therefore means to awaken his countrymen. He would urge them to look not to the machine-dominated city but to the land that he saw as the only valid source of inspiration.

The tragedy of the speaker's life is presented in "Song of Stephen the Westerner." Stephen says that he came out of the land, the corn-rows where he had lain for ages (Midwestern cornfields were not ages old; but Anderson was seeking to heighten his effect, not to give a history lesson). Stephen heard mankind's noises, especially the sound of his fathers killing each other (the Civil War?). Thoroughly awakened, Stephen says, he then went to the city, where though he shouted his alarm men did not see him because he was no larger than a mote of dust. In a passage reminiscent of the nostalgia that was a favorite emotion of 19th-century poets, he recalls pleasant evenings on the farm when "the old things were sweet" — the simple food, the women who, though they had forgotten "old singers," still knew glimmerings of the divine that more traditional societies were aware of. Desperate always, Stephen declares that he has killed his beloved "on the threshing floor" — meaning, it seems, that he has severed his agrarian roots. Now he will build in the city a "new house" and will sing a new song: he has no time to "bury my beloved," to mourn the passing of rural ways. His condition is comparable to that of Matthew Arnold's speaker in "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse": he is aware that one world is dead, the other is almost, as Arnold put

it, "powerless to be born" — almost, because Anderson's speaker declares that, though standing "raw and new by the coal-heaps," he will build and sing. The seeming optimism of this ending does not outweigh the near hysteria of most of the poem. Stephen is attempting to find a role in a world wherein he senses that he is an alien.

Declarations that he will sing beside the coal lack the depth of feeling that appears in poems portraying the role of the bard in the agrarian economy. "Song of the Middle World" describes the mission Anderson's man would prefer. Sounding, I am afraid, more like Bing Crosby than Walt Whitman, he declares that he would be a singer of assurances, "crooning to the moon" while his listeners feel the "grace of old gods" in their hearts. He would have his song "sweep forth" from the mines of the Alleghanies to the farms of Nebraska, the territory he calls "Great cradle-land of giants where my cornfields lie." Letting the factories close, he would turn to the "Promise of corn," the crop whose rows form aisles running into the dawn and on to the throne of gods.

The role of the sexual, of overwhelming importance in the prose stories of *Winesburg, Ohio*, is less emphasized in the poems. In "The Stranger," the love of a woman is said to have made the cornlands the possession of the speaker. In "Song of the Love of Women," the speaker addresses women as his sisters, talks of unsatisfying love making "In the doorway of the warehouse," and urges women to join him in, one may take it, the cornfields where the spark of the divine could unite him with them. In "Salvo," the speaker finds in love making a Wordsworthian moment of revelation that enables him to see himself as a "Thin rift in time." In such a moment, he recalls, the love of a woman made time halt, thereby creating him. The reader may take this to mean that the "rift" delayed his move toward death and made him a fulfilled being. But the interlude was brief: the speaker has taken up his old burdens, and will pass them on to the next generation. Love did not solve his problems. It did, however temporarily ease them and thereby, the reader may deduce, provide a glimpse of what a fulfilling life could offer.

One who believes that a divinity or, at least, a spirit, exists in the land is likely to develop a ritual for attaining contact with it. "The Cornfields," the first poem in Anderson's book, tells of a rite to be carried out in the Midwestern fields. Declaring that he is "pregnant with song," the speaker at first expects to conceal himself; he will hide his songs in holes in the street. He believes that in the urban

world the would-be bard who does not want to risk condemnation as a subversive must act in secrecy. But in the second stanza, he changes his stance. He awoke one night, he says, to find that he had been freed from his bonds, the chains that have caused everyone to forget the fields, the corn, the west wind and have made them unable to "find the word in the confusion of words" — Anderson's own recognition that in verse he does not, cannot, seek *le mot juste.*

Seizing his opportunity, the speaker tells how he found a "sacred vessel" and ran to place it in the fields. In his desperation he debased himself, eating the excretions of his people's bodies and then dying into the ground. But he reappeared in the corn, where he was touched by the wind and awoke to "beautiful old things." The sacred vessel, filled with corn oil, now waits in the fields. The speaker will cause his people to renew the worship of gods; he will set up a king before them, a king who is apparently to be himself, since he announces that the people may eat the flesh of his body. His new knowledge has made him strong, determined to bring love to his fellow humans. He is careful to say that the sacred vessel "was put into my hands" — he is not himself a god, but is one to whom a god has given an assignment. The speaker therefore has acquired a divine impetus. The singer of songs has been transmuted into a priest who must awaken his community to its needs and chart its path to fulfillment.

The speaker in "The Cornfields" is not giving a specifically Christian message. James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) had shown Anderson's generation that communion rituals appear in many cultures. Sometimes, however, Anderson does use Christian imagery. In the poem "Spring Song," this imagery is combined with suggestions of sexual fulfillment as the speaker sees men worshipping at a shrine in the seasonally dead forest. The spirit of God hovers above; the speaker tells his countrymen to press their lips to his, to see him as "Christ, come to life." This act brings spring. God continues to hover as the farmers plant the corn. The speaker declares that he will press men's bodies down on the new-plowed ground and will "have my sacred way with you." The planting and growth of the corn have become a ritual of communion in which the connection between divinity and mankind is achieved not by eating or drinking from sacred vessels, but by an act of sexual love. The result will be an understanding, a recognition of the existence of divinity within the land that the people work.

City dwellers who find themselves impelled to the bardic will rur to the fields because in their urban homes there is no possibility tha they could express the spiritual. Anderson's poem "Chicago" is free of the brag asserted in Sandburg's famous poem on the city, and i does not attempt to reconcile brute reality with suggestions of traditional beauty in the manner of Benjamin Franklin Taylor (1819-1887), the city's first well-known poet, who in his "Chicago" linkec lovers and roses with the mechanical. Anderson's persona is both ar old man and a child. He wants leisure, but there is none; he declares that love will save him but finds that his lover does not appear. The "word" he needs will not come to him in "the confusion of words" that is city life.

Yet there are grounds, faint but discoverable, for a measure o optimism even if one does not accept religious suggestions. The speaker in "Song of Industrial America" feels himself to be one o the "broken things" that all of us in the West (meaning Chicago) have become. Twice in the sixth stanza, however, the speaker says that this situation is "part of the scheme." He does not explain; one takes i that Anderson believes people's lives are governed by a design whether they recognize this power or not. There is, the speaker says a beginning underway: "faint little voices do lift up." Reasons for a spare optimism include the intoxication of American place names and the memory of old men the speaker knew in his village boyhood These people were a generation of wagon makers and pioneers, mos of whom, one gathers, were not especially admirable but whose ranks nevertheless produced Lincoln and Whitman. This old generatior was succeeded by "Chicago triumphant," by the age of ugly factories of elderly millionaires whose developments crushed others (Anderson, no radical, observes that this destruction was not intended by the rich; presumably he thought it was also part of the "scheme") The speaker shouts out his songs despite the roar of industry. He avers that God reached down to touch him, but then he backtracks to declare that notion a lie and rephrases his statement to say that the face of God looked down at him — that is, he was not singled out as a bard but at least he was made aware, as his fellows were not, o God's watch over mankind. He urges others to have the confidence to lift their voices in song. Somehow, the speaker believes, the rise of Chicago and industry is part of a divine plan people do not ye understand but that they may take heart in.

Religious belief and a generalized optimism provide one way of withstanding the pressure of mechanized life, of holding to the expectation that one day human existence will be better. Another pathway to improvement, hinted at and sometimes openly suggested, would be what Anderson terms "revolt." His stance is not at all programmatic; he does not advocate specific changes, whether reform movements or Socialist or Communist revolutions. In "Industrialism," rebellion is represented by a woman, "My mistress/ Terrible." This mistress has thin hands — as the women in Anderson's poems often have — yet they were strong enough to kill off "all old beliefs," the faiths of past generations. The aim of rebellion, however, is not merely to kill the old; it seeks to clear the ground for new ways and creeds. She waits now "beside the mill" to take up the sword of Christ or to encourage those who "dare/for her," who will fight for the goal she would lead humanity toward. This outcome presumably would include worshipful recognition of the spiritual underlying human lives. The urge to rebellion is more declarative in several poems. "Revolt" says that the old agricultural ways have been abandoned, often forcefully. Now "my men," apparently those who would overthrow the industrial way, are assembled, aware that the era of "madness and washing of hands has been done," that the time for bemoaning industrialism has passed. Whatever the future they fight toward, it will include the delights of apples and cornfields, and the "whoring of men for strange gods" — here meaning a search for new ways of existence.

Always present in the poems is the urge to run west, to escape into the cornfields that not only symbolize renewal but seem themselves to offer it. In "Song of the Mating Time," the speaker, seemingly half man and half spirit, waits in the fields for his "little sister," the citizen of the city, to join him in flight through the "soft midwestern nights," running west of Chicago through the corn to destinations the speaker does not specify.

The merely political, and the booklore of the past, do not provide the light Anderson's speaker is seeking. In "Song of the Soul of Chicago," the voice is that of a workingman who finds at least a fragment of inspiration on the city's bridges, objects Anderson perhaps felt to be more aesthetic than most features of urban life. The man here, indeed, approaches Sandburgian brag in proudly comparing himself and his peers with the sewerage that is swept along by "a kind of mechanical triumph." He declares that "we'll love each other or

die trying." His people reject the voices of bards because "w Americans from all over hell" want "to give this democracy thing .. a whirl." This poem, however, is the only indication in the book tha Anderson considered political ends a reasonable goal.

As for books and the bookish, the poem "Mid-American Prayer reminds the reader that in Anderson's day the up-to-date blamed wha they inaccurately termed "Puritanism" for the nation's inadequacies The speaker declares that the true faith came to him out of the ground that the New Englanders who "brought books and smart sayings int our Mid-America" destroyed that faith. The speaker restored hi belief only after long and lonely meditation in the corn, in which h defied "the New Englanders' gods" and sought "honest, mid-wester American gods." He prays that divinity will "lead us to the fields, will enable Midwesterners to find their way out of confusion and fee the world by returning to the cornlands that are, he believes, thei proper home.

Like his peers, Anderson did not seem to recognize that the Nev England influence he condemned was itself inherited from th European culture he admired. His respect for that culture was on cause of the complexity in his attitudes toward World War I. Thoug he later would write that he had opposed U.S. participation in the wa his biographical statements were not always accurate. The fact i that, though in *Chants* he sometimes spoke of the war as proof o American moral failure, he also voiced hope that the war would be cleansing moral experience. The same notion appeared in some o his prose. In a letter to M. D. Finley, dated November 27, 191(Anderson — positing two unattractive alternatives — even wrote tha he'd rather young men would die at Verdun than undergo the "spiri tual death" of residence in Chicago (Sutton, 394). And in Septembe 1917, after the publication of *Marching Men,* he wrote to a newspa per inquirer that he was a "strong believer in compulsory military ser vice" (Sutton, 397). Life in an Army company, he said, is "exactl like living in a family... A spirit of understanding of his fellow ma comes to the individual soldier" (Sutton, 397). (Anderson obviousl had no combat experience. He had joined the Ohio National Guar in 1895, and was called up for the Spanish-American war in 189(but was still in training camp when the war ended. He spent the post war months of January to April 1899 with his outfit in Cuba (*A Stor Teller's Story,* 199).

The Foreword to *Chants* observes that a country comes to the maturity needed for "song" only after it has experienced the long history that the U.S. lacks. In his view, the European countries then engaged in World War I had the necessary far-reaching memory. Ideas related to these speculations appear in several poems. In "Night," the speaker seems to reflect the struggle in Americans' minds as they sought to remain neutral yet feared that the Allies might lose. "We," he says, are in the longest night of our lives; he ends pleading "Dear France—/Put out your hand to us." France, it seems, represents a nation that through its art (and perhaps also through its military struggle) exhibits qualities he thinks the U.S. should have. In "War," the speaker asserts doubt as he sees men from Nebraska and Kansas, Ohio and Illinois, run from the factories and fields to take part in the fighting. Their participation raises questions that hurt, he observes. Perhaps he suspects that the men's behavior demonstrates the presence in Americans of a warlike spirit he does not want to acknowledge. The war also brings to life in the cornfields gods we had not known, perhaps gods associated with militarism rather than those the speaker would prefer to see.

Anderson's most extended verse appreciation of the war is in "Mid-American Prayer." The speaker here suggests that Americans had grown "fat" in their cities, forgetting the fulfilling life of fields and prayer they once knew. He thinks of "lean men" fighting, of a time when Midwestern hands, "no longer fat," will be qualified to touch "the lean dear hands of France," at a time "when we also have suffered and got back to prayer." The war is "terrible," but it may bring to America "out here west of Pittsburgh" a redemption, a "hardness and leanness" accompanying lives "of which we may be unashamed." Anderson thus places himself with those like Teddy Roosevelt and Marianne Moore who, though professing to deplore the costs of war, have seen it as a purifying force, one that may bring to life virtues suppressed in the materialistic everyday world.

Such fatuous theorizing is countered, however, in other poems that, though equally moralistic, reflect on the significance of combat. The speaker in "We Enter In" sees that by sending its troops into battle the U.S. has shown itself to be no better than the Europeans. It has been as material-minded as they, and consequently has failed in its mission to remake the world. "Dirge of War" reflects that the battlefield has made Americans face the failure they have hidden and,

moreover, has caused them to become one with the hatred th
should not have allowed themselves to feel.

Anderson did not work out a systematic position with regard
the war, and his suppositions about it ended with the Armistice. Ide
concerning the existence of some controlling force or power al
were suggested but not developed. These speculations might ha
led him to primitivism. But though Anderson's people had be
shell-shocked by the city, he was cautious about finding a spirit
nature (agriculture is an activity of human farmers, not of natu
itself). Suggestions of primitivism appear in, for example, the notic
of gods lying for ages in the fields until they are awakened by plante
(and, in a few wartime poems, by militarism) Yet, in "Song
Industrial America," the speaker suggests that there is an underlyir
"scheme" that directs even the wrenchings of life in the city.

Anderson did not say directly in *Chants* whether he saw a rel
tionship between gods in the fields and the "scheme" he saw in tl
city. The strongest indication that a force exists in untamed natu
is in "Forgotten Song." Here the speaker declares that behind tl
modern human world there is a strength that is both "magnificen
and hateful, an opponent as well as a companion, one strong ar
challenging rather than comforting. The poem finds this now unre
ognized presence to be represented by the wolf, known today onl
in its guise as the economic distress that lies in wait at people
doors, but once a physical adversary, one who in struggle wi
humankind became their lover and their enemy. People have fo
gotten the wolf, "God's challenge to all," in the "bitter night" of the
lives. But he still lurks far back in their minds. The speaker urg
humans he loves to run with the wolf, to become again as natural,
God-following as this ancient foe, and fellow creature, who embo
ies realities people now fail to see.

Chants expresses hunger for that unworldly romantic beauty th
is forever unattainable, its eternal distancing contributing to its fa
cination. Critical views of Anderson's accomplishment in vers
have varied. There is near unanimity in the opinion that the *Chan*
are negligible as art. Bernard Duffey is perhaps the most severe i
his judgment that the poems are "as bad a case of maundering ...
the whole Chicago Liberation, so ready in formless effusion, was t
produce" (*Chicago Renaissance,* 203). David D. Anderson concu
in this dismissal of the poems as aesthetic creations, but finds the
significant as experiments by the author in expressing his feeling

rather than the ideology he espoused in prose, and as exercises in developing his writing style (33). Walter B. Rideout suggests that the emphasis on planted fields shows a fondness for symmetry arising from what he sees as Anderson's "obsessive" need for order (169). The most favorable critic is Philip Greasley, who, in the tradition of what has been called Whig history, sees the *Chants* as an affirmation, the forging of "an optimistic myth for ... urban-industrial man" (210).

To the finding that Anderson's verse maunders, one suitable reply is that so does much of his prose. Realist critics sometimes fail to recognize that one virtue of poetry is that it can quickly expose weakness and falsity that these critics accept in prose. My own reading finds the *Chants* worth attention. They provide a distinctive angle of attack on several of Anderson's themes. Among these are the importance of the American landscape, especially that of the Midwest; the insistence that divinity lies in the land and the consequent effort to develop a communion ritual; the visionary sense of alienation; the effort, only partly successful, to find release in the sexual; the occasional speculations on the possibility of revolution; the desire to see World War I as morally uplifting and the postwar suggestion that Anderson had been among the opponents of U.S. entry into that war; the sparse gestures toward primitivism; and the tentative effort — to my mind, not nearly as systematic and assured as Professor Greasley would have it — to develop an affirmative understanding of the possibilities of a fulfilling life in urban-industrial America; and the yearning of many young writers of Anderson's time for something more profound than the prosperity and quasi-democracy of America seem to offer.

These responses are not those of the wolf, of the indomitable will that he sometimes asserted, but those of a baffled, though not defeated, citizen of Chicago. One must not, however, see Anderson as merely another disappointed Romantic, a cisatlantic kissing cousin of J. Alfred Prufrock. Anderson's literary contemporaries might run from Main Street, seek an unfound door, find the principal value in modern life to be grace under pressure, or see only a forever receding green light. One may instead adopt William Faulkner's appraisal, said of his prose but applicable also to his verse, that Anderson's work represents "the vast rich strong docile sweep of the Mississippi Valley, his own America."

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NOTES

1. A version of this paper was read at the Sherwood Anderson Memorial Conferenc Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia in April 1
2. Association of "corn" with running and other footwork ignited a revelry of punn Walter Rideout told me that Anderson enjoyed this verbal podiatry.

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VISUAL IMAGERY IN *WINESBURG, OHIO*

DAVID D. ANDERSON

When Sherwood Anderson published his "The Book of the Grotesque," more literally titled by his publisher, B. W. "Ben" Huebsch, *Winesburg, Ohio* and subtitled "A Group of Tales of Ohio Small Town Life," its critical reception was almost uniformly favorable, ranging from Vincent O'Sullivan's assertion in *Mercure de France* that it was perhaps the best novel published after the World War, to, as Waldo Frank described it in *Our America,* "that impalpable marriage of substance and of human spirit which is art"(136). Further, the tales, individually and collectively, were typically seen as, in H. L. Mencken's terms in *Smart Set,* "half tale and half psychological anatomizing, and vastly better than all the kinds that have gone before" (142).

In the context of those appraisals the most frequent literary comparisons are with Chekhov, Dostoevski, and Gogol, and its ideological and intellectual sources are seen as Freud and Jung, and the heart of Anderson's style and technique, as well as his purpose, are seen by Idwal Jones in the *San Francisco Chronicle* as the "revelation of men's motives by psychoanalysis," ... "that in every life there comes, even if but once, moments of dramatic climax" (6).

In the eighty years since the publication and initial reception of what may well be the single most influential work in this century, critical evaluations of *Winesburg, Ohio* have varied little, and its importance and literary worth continue to be acknowledged, even by those misguided critics, such as Irving Howe and others who relegate the bulk of Anderson's work and hence his place in literary history to the second rate, even to the "minor" category. But *Winesburg, Ohio* continues to be significant—it appears as number 24 on the controversial list of the 100 best books of the century compiled by a group sponsored by the Modern Library—but the emphasis upon its origins in the Russian writers and the psychoanalytical parlors of Vienna and Zurich has, partially as a result of Anderson's insistence that he knew

neither writers nor analysts, largely vanished. What remains ce to contemporary criticism of Anderson's technique in the stories tales of *Winesburg, Ohio* is, as I pointed out in my 1967 study c of Anderson's work, that he attempted in each of the *Wines* stories and in many of his other fictions, stories and novels alik reveal in what I called "Moments of insight," the inner human r ty of each of his people, to make clear the individual psyche, essence of whatever it was that made them the psychologically mented souls, the human grotesques, who people Winesburg, O and all the Winesburgs of the American countryside.

Such a technique has its roots in American romanticism ra than the post-Darwinian, post-Freudian naturalism that has too o been ascribed to Anderson's work. Like Emerson and Whitr Anderson was concerned with the reality that lies beyond hur appearance, and Anderson's reality may or may not be a direct ref tion of the appearance beyond which that reality lies. But un Emerson and Whitman Anderson sees that reality not as an ultim intangible spiritual good but in each of his people as an intens human, clearly individual manifestation of an inner nature of warped or distorted by misguided social institutions and values. T so many of his people are sexual grotesques, as has been observ either favorably or unfavorably, or with the compassion t Anderson demands for his people, is not, as Anderson makes cle the result of his use of each story as a literary psychiatrist's cou but of his recognition of the importance of sexual motivation, of distorted, in human nature, in social mores, and in the constructi and direction of human society.

Thus, in the story "Hands" we glimpse the inner torment of Wi Biddlebaum whose human isolation results from appearance misu derstood; in "Adventure" we see the momentary madness that driv Alice Hindman to the realization if not acceptance of "the fact th many people must live and die alone, even in Winesburg" (120). "The Strength of God" the Reverend Cyrus Hartman finds refu from his confusion and inner torment in his deluded conviction th his voyeuristic pursuit of Kate Swift, the schoolteacher, h unleashed in him the strength of God to act in accordance with co ventional virtue; in "The Philosopher" we perceive the source Doctor Parcival's grotesquery and that of all the people of Winesbu when he insists to young George Willard that "everyone in the wor is Christ and they are all crucified" (57).

As the stories unfold, George Willard, the young reporter on the *Winesburg Eagle,* whom many of the grotesques see as the means by which they may overcome the isolation imposed by their grotesqueness, and the reader come closer to understanding not only the essence of each individual's grotesqueness but to understanding, too, the necessity that each be approached with the compassion that their very humanity demands. Thus, as George Willard early in the tales mistakes a plea for human understanding as an invitation from Louise Trunnion for a sex adventure, he takes refuge in a conventional conclusion that his reputation is safe because "Nobody Knows;" in "The Teacher" his nocturnal embrace of and rejection by Kate Swift leads him to conclude that "'I have missed something. I have missed something Kate Swift was trying to tell me'" (166); in "Sophistication," as George prepares to go off into the world beyond Winesburg, west toward the setting sun and from the town to the city, thus combining two dimensions of the American dream, he learns that he can, if only for a moment, transcend human and social appearance and touch whatever inner reality that makes each of us human. At that point, as Anderson comments, he had "for a moment taken hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible" (243).

So important is our recognition that, as Anderson insists, human and social appearance, the source of human grotesquery and the inner torment that it causes, can be transcended if only in moments; and so convincing is Anderson's insistence that appearance, the role in which society sees each of its members, is neither representational nor symbolic of the human psyche, that we seek with Anderson what lies beyond. So powerful, however, is his depiction of each individual human reality that we tend to overlook or disregard or dismiss an important characteristic of each of Anderson's stories. This characteristic makes possible his portrayal and our understanding of psychic reality, a characteristic that led some early critics to designate him a realist, a literary term that perhaps more than anything else gives substance to the vividness of his portrayal of the town of Winesburg and the people who give it life.

This characteristic is the clarity and precision with which Anderson recreates the town and its people, the vivid, visual imagery that gives substance to his portrayal. Neither town nor each individual inhabitant is reality in Anderson's terms and hence Anderson cannot be called a realist in the traditional late nineteenth century sense,

but the vividness and economy of words with which he etches t appearance of the town and its people and the manner in which ea of his people sees the others is itself a remarkable achievement.

Each of Anderson's stories in *Winesburg* is firmly rooted in tl apparent reality which is his point of departure for the reality tl lies beyond. In "Hands," the opening story of the collection after t symbolic mood and tone-setting opening, "The Book of t Grotesque," Anderson displays his use of apparent reality as a po of departure for human reality at its most effective. In what I delig in pointing out to my students is the best opening line of a story all American literature, Anderson begins in the moment: "Upon t half decayed veranda of a small frame house that stood near the ed of a ravine near the town of Winesburg, Ohio, a fat little old m walked nervously up and down" (27). The little old man is Wi Biddlebaum, as the town knows him, and as a passing group young berry pickers shouted teasingly at him to comb his ha Anderson tells us, the bald little old man's "nervous hands fiddl about the bare white forehead as though arranging a mass of tangl locks" (27).

This is Wing Biddlebaum as the town knows him, isolate frightened, alone, truly a grotesque if the town had known the wo his only remarkable feature the nervously-active hands that ma him the town's champion berrypicker. These hands alternate attracted and frightened young George Willard, and they carried their very nervousness the secret of Wing Biddlebaum's torment, secret young Willard intuitively sensed but dared not mentio Anderson tells us of another town, another identity, and a sincere b misguided effort to communicate with those once-eloquent hands, a effort that was perhaps inevitably misunderstood, and the fear a flight that made Wing what he was, that made him ashamed of h hands, that made his communication with George Willard or anyo else forever impossible. Anderson concludes with a return to appa ent reality as night falls:

> ...Lighting a lamp, Wing Biddlebaum washed the few dish soiled by his simple meal and, setting up a folding cot by the scre door that led to the porch, prepared to undress for the night. A fe stray white bread crumbs lay on the cleanly washed floor by tl table; putting the lamp upon a low stool he began to pick up tl crumbs, carrying them to his mouth one by one with unbelievab rapidity. In the dense blotch of light beneath the table, the kneelir

> figure looked like a priest engaged in some service of his church. The nervous expressive fingers, flashing in and out of the light, might well have been mistaken for the fingers of the devotee going swiftly through decade after decade of his rosary. (33-34)

Anderson's initial emphasis upon the apparent reality of each of his people dominates the visual imagery in each of the following stories. Thus, in "Paper Pills," the story of Dr. Reefy, the retired physician who writes his thoughts upon bits of paper that become hard pellets in his pocket that resemble the hard knuckles of his hands and that he throws playfully at his only friend, John Spaniard, the nurseryman, is described in the opening sentence as "... an old man with a white beard and huge nose and hands" (35); in "Mother" Elizabeth Willard, the defeated dreamer and inarticulate mother of George Willard and wife of the hotel keeper, is portrayed as vividly against the setting of her life:

> Elizabeth Willard, the mother of George Willard, was tall and gaunt and her face was marked with smallpox scars. Although she was but forty-five, some obscure disease had taken the fire out of her figure. Listlessly she went about the disorderly old hotel looking at the faded wall-paper and the ragged carpets and, when she was able to be about, doing the work of a chambermaid among beds soiled by the slumbers of fat traveling men. (39)

Equally detailed is Doctor Parcival, the reluctant physician in "The Philosopher," who, like Wing Biddlebaum and others, sees George Willard as the means by which he might communicate with the world from which he has been excluded:

> Doctor Parcival was a large man with a drooping mouth covered by a yellow mustache. He always wore a dirty white waistcoat out of the pockets of which protruded a number of the kind of black cigars known as stogies. His teeth were black and irregular and there was something strange about his eyes. The lid of the left eye twitched; it fell down and snapped up; it was exactly as though the lid of the eye were a window shade and someone stood inside the doctor's head playing with the cord. (49)

In "Adventure" Alice Hindman is portrayed as the epitome of ordinariness, the prototype of what Winesburg saw and whispered about as an old maid:

> Alice Hindman, a woman of twenty-seven when George Willar was a mere boy, had lived in Winesburg all her life. She clerked i Winney's Dry Goods Store and lived with her mother. ...
>
> At twenty-seven Alice was tall and somewhat slight. Her hea was large and overshadowed her body. Her shoulders were a littl stooped and her hair and eyes brown. She was very quiet but beneat a placid exterior a continual ferment went on. (112)

Unlike the other grotesques whose psyches are almost masked b their appearance, Wash Williams, whose story is told in "Respect ability," is extraordinary in the grotesque appearance and the bitter ness that mark his chosen isolation from the townspeople in ever way except his work:

> If you have lived in cities and have walked in the park on a sum mer afternoon, you have perhaps seen, blinking in a corner of hi iron cage, a huge, grotesque kind of monkey, a creature with ugl sagging, hairless skin below his eyes and a bright purple underbod The monkey is a true monster. In the completeness of his uglines he achieved a kind of perverted beauty. ...
>
> Had you been in the early years of your life a citizen of the vil lage of Winesburg, Ohio, there would have been for you no myster in regard to the beast in his cage. "It is like Wash Williams," yo would have said. "As he sits in the corner there the beast is exactl like old Wash sitting on the grass in the station yard on a summe evening after he has closed his office for the night."
>
> Wash Williams, the telegraph operator of Winesburg, was th ugliest thing in town. His girth was immense, his neck thin, his leg feeble. He was dirty. Everything about him was unclean. Even th whites of his eyes looked dirty.
>
> I go too fast. Not everything about Wash was unclean. He too care of his hands, His fingers were fat, but there was something ser sitive and shapely in the hand that lay on the table by the instrumer in the telegraph office. ... (121)

In Anderson's visual portrayal of each of these grotesques and th others in the town—Joe Welling of "A Man of Ideas," Seth Richmon of "The Thinker," Enoch Robinson of "Loneliness," Elmer Cowley c "Queer" and all the others, even such lesser characters as Wi Henderson, owner of the *Winesburg Eagle,* Tom Willy, the saloon keeper, and Tom Little, the railroad conductor, and the others, th person is portrayed in two ways: as the town sees him or her in phys ical appearance and as the town defines his or her role in the com

munity, whether completely isolated but nevertheless a champion berrypicker, or a docile store clerk, a hotel-keeper's wife, an eccentric physician or two, or a skilled telegrapher. At the same time each of them sees young George Willard—earnest, intelligent, sensitive, ambitious—as the means whereby he or she can find understanding and communion with others. As George encounters each of them in an uncontrived moment, he senses and gradually learns that beyond physical appearance, beyond role identities assigned by the community, each of the grotesques is worthy of respect, of compassion, of understanding. And as he goes off into his future he carries with him not merely the visual images that reflect the life of the town, but he carries, too, the dream to which each of them has made a contribution. *Winesburg, Ohio* is in this sense the story of a young man's growth toward intuitive wisdom, but more importantly, it is the means by which Sherwood Anderson expresses with deceptively simple eloquence the reverence for human beings that is at the heart of all his work.

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THE SMALL TOWN AND URBAN MIDWEST IN RING LARDNER'S *YOU KNOW ME AL*

DOUGLAS A. NOVERR

In Ring Lardner's *You Know Me Al* (first published in book for in 1916 but published in serialized form in the *Saturday Eveni Post* in 1914) Jack Keefe, a professional baseball player, writes series of letters to his friend Al Blanchard in Bedford, Indiana. T letters trace Keefe's progress from pitching for Terre Haute in t Central League to the beginning of his up and down career with t Chicago White Sox. He starts the 1913 season with the White Sc but after giving up 16 runs in eight innings against the Detroit Tige on April 19th, Jack is sold to San Francisco in the Pacific Co League, where he pitches well (winning eleven straight games at o point) and is recalled to the Chicago team in mid August. In the d drums of the season, pitching for a team well out of the pennant ra Jack wins six straight games and helps the White Sox win the c series against the Chicago Cubs. In his second big league seas Jack has a 13-7 season record, and the White Sox again finish w out of the pennant race.

Jack's letters to Friend Al allowed Lardner to develop the voi personality, temperament, and peculiarities of Jack Keefe. He w the "busher" coming out of the bush leagues to the majors with lit more in assets than his arrogant confidence in his fastball and spitt Uneducated and inexperienced in the ways of the big city, the bush is subjected to abuse, embarrassing and humiliating experiences and off the diamond, and almost constant frustration. He has raw t ent and potential but is undisciplined and refuses to take advice how to pitch or field his position better. When he fails to win pitches badly, he blames his fielders or faults a lack of hitting su port, or resorts to the excuse of a sore arm.

In 1927 Stuart Sherman called Jack Keefe the all-Americ 'boob,' two fisted, pig-headed, a liar, braggart in victory, whining

defeat, greedy for money, callous, brutal, intemperate in food and drink, and gregariously pleased with himself in every relation of life.[1] A 1945 World Publishing Company edition of the novel had the following description of Jack Keefe on its book jacket:

> So this is his story, but it is also the story of The Great American Sport during its halcyon days in the early years of this century. The story is riotously funny — read it for entertainment; but read it too as a pungent exposé of an American Hero — a hero who wasn't very big or brave or smart underneath, but who was too dumb ever to find it out.

Gilbert Seldes described the Busher as "simply a roughneck and a fool, a braggart and a liar."[2]

These harsh and unfavorable characterizations of Jack Keefe focus on his faults and limitations and fail to take several factors into account. Lardner's story of the busher's initiation into the major leagues and into a new life in Chicago was more sympathetically drawn and treated than Stuart Sherman, Gilbert Seldes, or an anonymous dust jacket writer could understand. Certainly, the busher character presented Lardner with a great opportunity for satire, irony, comic undercutting of an over confident and unsophisticated character, and hilarious display of misspellings, confused sayings and malaprops, and ungrammatical English.

But underneath the surface of the story is a human personal drama of a simple and uncomplicated person dealing with the pressures to succeed in big-time baseball and with the anomie of early twentieth century urban life and its confusions and uncertainties. Jack is the product of a small Southern Indiana city and its culture. When he pitches in Terre Haute during his first year in professional baseball, he was (as he tells Al in the first letter) treated well and felt that his "work was appreciated." His team finished second in the Central League, and Jack felt he had contributed in a major way to the team's success. Lardner's novel shows how heartless and exploitive the system of professional baseball can be. Jack is brought up to the White Sox before he can develop as a pitcher, and the White Sox owner, Charles Comiskey, takes advantage of his inexperience and plants doubts in Jack's mind about his pitching control. As a result Jack signs for $1500 a year, half of what he and Al had agreed he was worth and should get for a first year contract. Thus, Jack's career with the White Sox begins with uncertainties about money and the

high cost of living in Chicago and traveling with a big league club a well as all the rookie doubts. After signing his contract, he immed ately goes back to Bedford, Indiana to spend the winter with his pal

Jack's letters to FRIEND AL are written for several reason First, they are a way of keeping in touch with his closest person friend as Jack's life moves into another orbit and out of the familia ordinary, and predictable life of a small city. Jack also has a clos circle of pals in Bedford, and their activities revolve around the loc saloon and pool hall. The process of separation has already begu because Al Blanchard has married Bertha, a local young woman, an moved into a house in town. Jack's letters are also an outlet for hi growing frustrations and problems, and he frequently writes Al in moment of crisis or uncertainty. He readily admits his frustration often wanting to bust someone in the jaw when he is made a fool o is criticized, or is taken advantage of. Jack brags of his successes i pitching and with a series of three women, but then when things g badly, he pours out his grievances or constant regrets. Jack's letter also are self-congratulatory and boasting as well as explanatory fc the conditions that often conspire to bring him failure and misery He tells Al the inside story of games where he lost due to factor beyond his control or efforts. He does not want Al or the local boy to believe what reporters write about the games or his performanc and elicits Al's sympathy and understanding. In doing this, Jack fre quently uses the "you know me Al" phrase, which implies that frien Al knows Jack's disposition and temperament so well that he ca understand and accept Jack's feelings and actions. Al's knowledg of Jack is rooted in their close friendship, their common roots i Bedford, and the intimate familiarity and acceptance offered b small city life and routine.[3]

An important element in Lardner's *You Know Me Al* is the mean ing of Bedford, Indiana, to Jack Keefe and his attempts to maintai his connections to "down home" and to his friends there through hi letters to Al Blanchard. To Jack, Bedford is a place where he feels h is accepted as "one of the boys." He asks Al to give his regards t "Frank and the bunch" and misses his favorite local beer. He boast of how much he can drink and how well he can hold his liquor, an obviously, he has a reputation among his Bedford friends for this. I his home town Jack's habits are known and understood. His reputa tion for a quick temper and anger is also known, and he is frequentl threatening to bust another ball player or reporter on the jaw. He doe

get into a drunken fight with Allen, another pitcher on the White Sox and his brother-in-law, in a Chicago restaurant on New Year's Eve but only after Allen slaps his face. Otherwise, Jack restrains his impulses to violence. This can be attributed to the fact that Al and his other Bedford pals have been able to humor Jack and have helped him see that nothing is gained from aggressive acts. Al knows that Jack is quick to anger when he feels insulted or is made to look foolish and inadequate, and the letters confirm that. Jack is accepted by a local group as a person with some faults and excesses, but these are moderated by the fact that Jack is a person with personal pride and a strong desire to be well thought of by others. He wants to be known as a man "that wants to pay his share and not be cheap" (87). In Chicago, however, Jack looks and acts cheap when he is reluctant to tip or when he grouses about the outrageous costs of things such as getting married to Florrie. But in Bedford his careful watching of his expenditures and his anticipation of costs would be a virtue reflecting good judgment and common sense. He knows that Al Blanchard has this financial sense and cautiousness, which is a form of control over life but also an admirable male trait.

Bedford also means a place where, for Jack, life was cheaper and more manageable, where the costs of things did not change dramatically due to inflation or the price gouging of the landlords. When Jack anticipates marrying Hazel, a woman he met during spring training in California, he writes Al and asks him to find him a house in Bedford so he can move in with Mrs. Keefe after the season ends. Al gets Jack a one-year lease on a house owned by "old man Cutting" at the rate of ten dollars a month. After Hazel dumps Jack to marry a middle weight boxer, Jack then plans to marry Violet, a young woman from Detroit. In a P.S. to his October 7 letter Jack writes:

> Hazel probably would of insisted on us takeing a trip to Niagra falls or somewheres but I know Violet will be perfectly satisfied if I take her right down to Bedford. Oh you little yellow house. (76)

It's interesting to note here that Jack thinks Al has rented the "yellow house across from [him]" when in fact it is old man Cutting's house on which Al got the lease. But Jack associates the "little yellow house" with a double happiness: an inexpensive honeymoon in Bedford and a location near his old pal. After Jack then loses Violet to Joe Hill, a left-handed pitcher for the Detroit Tigers, he quickly writes Al and tells him to "get rid of that lease for me," but Mr. Cutting

will not let Jack out of the one-year lease. In despair, Jack writes tha he will probably not return to Bedford to spend the winter. He say "It would drive me wild to go past that little house every day an think how happy I might of been" (77). But Jack's frustration abou the lease and the loss of $120 quickly turns positive when he meet Florence on October 13th and marries her on the morning of Octobe 15th. Jack writes,

> I am the happyest man in the world Al. You and Bertha and I an Florence will have all kinds of good times together this winte because I know Bertha and Florence will like each other. Florenc looks something like Bertha at that. (81)

In his P.S. to that letter Jack writes:

> I certainly am relieved about that lease. It would of been fierce to o had that place on my hands all winter and not getting any use out o it. Everything is all O.K. now. Oh you little yellow house. (81)

But Jack is forced to ask Al a second time to see if Mr. Cuttin will call off the lease, this time because after his marriage to Florrie Jack rents a flat in Chicago for $42.50 a month and had incurre expenses of $30 to get married. Jack had promised Al that he an Florrie would come to live in Bedford, but Florrie wanted to be wit her sister. He later promises Al that he and his wife will come for visit at Christmas but the visit never takes place. He asks Al an Bertha to come up to Chicago for the holidays, but they do not mak it and only exchange token gifts.

The "little house" in Bedford represents a place of security an refuge to Jack, even though of course he feels it is a wasted $10 month. It represents a location of potential happiness as well a more possible control over his financial and personal situation Florrie Keefe turns out to be a head strong, willful, and unpre dictable woman who does not accept Jack as the "boss of the house." She insisted that Jack marry her immediately, and Jack was thu unable to have Al and Bertha stand up with him, as he had hope they would. The $10 a month rent represents a place where costs ar more reasonable and where expenses do not escalate or spin out o control due to a night of entertainment or a wife who leaves and ther threatens to sue for non support. The house is an anchor back in th sensible and predictable past.

After Florrie has left Jack and returned to Texas and then returne pregnant, they have a brief interlude of happiness with the arrival o

little Al (named after Jack's pal and friend down home). For a time Florrie even agrees to go with Jack and the baby to spend the winter in the little house, and Jack wants to "ree-new the lease on the house for another year" and asks Al to take care of this. However, this is not possible, and Jack, Florrie, and little Al never show up on the Saturday evening, October 20th that Jack says they will be there. Florrie repairs the damaged relations with her sister and brother-in-law and decides not to go to Bedford. Finally, after repeatedly promising either to actually arrive in Bedford or to come and stay there, Jack has to admit that he doesn't know when he will be in Bedford. He must accept and live with the confusions, turn-arounds and switches in directions, and unpredictable relationships that urban life presents.

Bedford also represents a place where Jack could return if he failed. When the White Sox sell Jack to San Francisco after his disastrous first outing in his first season, he writes to Al on April 29:

> I ain't had no fair deal Al and I ain't going to no Frisco. I will quit the game first and take that job Charley offered me at the billard hall. I expect to be in Bedford in a couple of days. I have got to pack up first and settle with the landlady about my room here which I engaged for all season thinking I would be treated square. I am going to rest and lay round home a while and try to forget this rotten game. Tell the boys about it Al and tell them I never would of got let out if I hadn't worked with a sore arm. (49)

Of course, Jack ends up going to pitch for the San Francisco team, and in fact, he only returns once to Bedford by train and that is when he is desperate to get another cash loan from Al after he has already borrowed $150 from his generous friend. In his March 4 letter Jack refers to "that $25.00 you give me at the station the other day." Jack had earlier borrowed $25.00 so that he could return home because he was "flat broke" and he is in limbo as far as his contract and future with the White Sox. But when Jack returned home by train, Al called his attention to an article in the paper that said that Charles Comiskey did not have the right to sell Jack to the Milwaukee minor league franchise. Al advises Jack to go see Ban Johnson, the president of the American League, and have him look into Jack's treatment by the White Sox. Eventually Jack resolves his differences with owner Comiskey and signs a contract for his second season. These details indicate other qualities of life that Jack associates with Bedford. It

is a place where friends look out for each other, do favors for eac other, and even loan money to each other with the expectation c repayment but with the knowledge that this could take some time c that the whole or part of the debt might have to be written off as loss. Al acts to protect Jack's contractual rights under league rule and calls Jack's attention to the "right dope" at a time when Jack wa so confused and desperate that he could not think straight or ac rationally. Al is repaid $75.00 of the $175.00 he loaned to Jack, eve though in his March 4 letter Jack had said,

> So Al you see you have got a cinch on getting back what you lon me but I guess you know that Al without all this talk because yo have been my old pal for a good many years and I have allway treated you square and tried to make you feel that I and you wa equals and that my success was not going to make me forget my ol friends. (122)

While there is something of the insouciance of the naturally gifte athlete (in Jack's case a strong pitching arm) in this statement, ther is also a sincere expression of a desire to maintain an old equality an the terms and understandings of a relationship that made them friend in the first place.

Lardner's story is one of missed connections. Jack's friends including Al Blanchard, never make it to Chicago to see him pitch i his first game. Al and Bertha do not stand up for Jack when he get married. Jack and Florrie never make it to Bedford, either after the are married or after the baby is born. Jack and Florrie never make i to Bedford for a Christmas visit, and Al and Bertha do not make th trip to Chicago. But despite all this, Al remains Jack's close friend and he and Bertha show every consideration to Jack and Florrie. On constant in the novel is Al's friendship and Jack's reliance and depen dence on it. The other constant is the town of Bedford, which Jacl associates with security, the familiar, the unchanging and predictable It is a place where he believes Florrie would be accepted and looke after, where Al and Bertha would fuss over little Al, where Berth would fix the spare ribs and sauerkraut dinner that Jack and Florri never showed up to eat on the evening of Saturday, October 20th. Bu in fact, the broken promises, the on-again off-again arrangements, th constant requests for favors, the money borrowed, the claims o friendship and palship that are no longer affirmed in person (excep for one brief visit) all strain the relationship between Jack and Al an

make it difficult for Jack to return, if indeed he could. Instead of returning to safe and secure Bedford, Jack goes on the exhibition world tour of the New York Giants-Chicago White Sox teams to far-away places like Japan and Egypt.

Jack's emotional and actual ties to Bedford and the people in it are stretched thinner and thinner. Before Jack leaves, he writes to Al from Victoria, Canada, on November 19 and asks him to become his informal executor in case he drowns on the trip or if something else happens. He asks Al to see that Florrie gets the money she is due from the insurance company if Jack dies, to find her a place in Bedford "if she is willing to live down there because she can live there a hole lot cheaper than she can live in Chi," and to "help take care of little Al until he grows up big enough to take care of himself," which includes breaking him of his left-handedness. Jack concludes this farewell letter by writing,

> Well Al old pal you allways been a good friend of mind and I allways tried to be a good friend of yourn and if they was ever any thing I done to you that was not O.K. remember by gones is by gones. I want you to all ways think of me as your best old pal. Good by old pal.
>
> Your old pal, JACK. (217-18)

This letter in many ways is a requiem for a friendship, as the relationship recedes into the past tense and into memory. Jack, of course, knows that Florrie would never consider going to Bedford to live or letting strangers raise little Al. The only way Jack could have insured that his wife would have wanted to live in Bedford is if he had married a young woman from Bedford with her family ties there.

Social and personal relations in the city are more accidental, conditional, subject to disruption or misunderstanding, and affected by monetary concerns and materialism. In Chicago Jack is caught up in a lifestyle that is exciting and different but at the same time unnerving and unsettling. In his January 20 letter Jack describes to Al the fact that Mrs. Keefe and her sister, Mrs. Allen, do not cook, that a hired girl does the kitchen and housework for $7 a week, and that the four of them eat dinner downtown then "generally run round downtown till late and don't get up till about noon." (100) Jack then writes to Al "That sounds funny don't it Al, when I used to get up at 5 every morning down home." This detail reveals that Jack was probably a farm boy who rose early to do his morning chores. But Jack becomes

used to more disconnected and less routinized life of the city and doe not worry as much when he has enough money to pay for things.

Lardner's choice of Bedford, Indiana, as Jack's home city – what he leaves behind and hopes to return to — is an interesting one as is his treatment of the place from Jack's point of view. In 191 Bedford had a population of 10,349 and was part of a then prosper ing region of stone quarries and stone mills for sawing and dressin limestone. In 1912 there were twenty-four industrial establishment in Bedford employing nearly 2,500 persons, most of whom wer engaged in the production of stone.[4] The city was located on th Monon Railroad line that ran from Michigan City to New Albany o the Ohio River, with coal cars and limestone cars as common on th rails as passenger trains.[5]

But the Bedford in Lardner's novel is not the Bedford of histori cal reality in this time period. Rather, it is more like the generic o nostalgic Midwestern small town. Lardner was familiar with a playe named William Angel Rariden, nicknamed Bedford Bill, born i Bedford, Indiana, (and died in Bedford).[6] Perhaps this is where h got the idea for Jack being from Bedford, or perhaps Bedford wa imagined to be enough like Niles, Michigan, Lardner's home town which was also located on a railroad to Chicago. Lardner also mad a trip to Chicago, with a two year stop over in 1906-1907 with newspaper in South Bend, and became part of the competitive worl of sportswriting. He had to learn how to develop a thick skin and t use his ironic and sarcastic wit to succeed and survive. He had t keep up with the fast and often bewildering pace of his career in orde to earn the big money, and the alcohol later became a release and out let for the pressures. He was not totally unlike his fictional Jac Keefe — a small town youth who has to deal with an unfamiliar bi city society and a highly competitive line of work. As Jack's man ager at Terre Haute told him "Go and pitch the ball you been pitch ing down here and there won't be nothing to it. All you need is nerv and Walsh or no one else won't have nothing on you." (21) Facing th anonymous and intimidating big city, self-confidence and nerve were all one had to go on.

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NOTES

1. As quoted in Robert J. Higgs, *Laurel & Thorn: The Athlete in American Literatur* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1981), p. 23.
2. As quoted in Higgs, p. 24.

3. For an excellent discussion of small town life and society, see John A. Jakle, *The American Small Town: Twentieth-Century Place Images* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982), especially chapters Three and Four.
4. Information on Bedford, Indiana is drawn from *Centennial History and Handbook of Indiana,* by George S. Cottman and Max R. Hyman (Indianapolis: Max R. Hyman, Publisher, 1915), pp. 301-02.
5. James H. Madison, *Indiana Through Tradition and Change: A History of the Hoosier State and Its People 1920-1945* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1982), pp. 223-225.
6. Bedford Bill Rariden played with the Boston Braves from 1909-1913, two years in the Federal League with the Indianapolis and Newark teams in 1914-1915, three years for the New York Giants from 1916-1918 and the 1919 and 1920 seasons with the Cincinnati Reds. He was the Reds' catcher in the 1919 fixed Series.

THE MIDWESTERN EXPATRIATES: WHY THEY LEFT, WHAT THEY REMEMBERED

ROGER J. BRESNAHAN

At the end of *Winesburg, Ohio* George Willard leaves his small town for Chicago, the big city where he hoped to "paint the dreams of his manhood." It was a movement made by most young writers of the time, and eventually Anderson himself found even Chicago too confining. As Willa Cather later observed, books were bought and sold in the East, and thus one had to go there to get noticed.

Unlike George Willard, who benefits from a sense of direction, however waffling, given to him by the already cosmopolitan Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser merely drifted toward the metropolitan East much as Hemingway did at a somewhat later date. After an interlude in Pittsburgh, which allowed him a perspective on the astonishing disparities between rich and poor, he would move to New York where that disparity would be magnified and personalized as Dreiser's futile search for newspaper work made him even more conscious of the precarious existence endured by the working poor.

Soon, however, Dreiser was as much captivated by New York as any young person arriving to seek a new life: "Its barrenness did not now appall me, nor its lack of beauty irritate. There was something else here, a quality of life and zest and security and ease for some, cheek by jowl with poverty and longing and sacrifice, which gives to life everywhere its keenest, most pathetic edge" (*A Book About Myself* 451). The comparison to Chicago is an invidious one. As a boy he had "invested Chicago with immense color and force, and it was there, ignorant, American, semi-conscious, seeking, inspiring. But New York was entirely different. It had the feeling of gross and blissful and parading self-indulgence. ... Here, as one could feel, were huge dreams and lusts and vanities being gratified loudly" (452). But in New York he also confirmed what he had discovered in reading Thomas Huxley and Herbert Spencer: that

"man is a mechanism, undevised and uncreated, and a badly and carelessly driven one at that. . . . With a gloomy eye I began to watch how the chemical—and their children, the mechanical—forces operated through man and outside him, and this under my very eyes. Suicides seemed sadder since there was no care for them; failures the same" (458).

Having attracted attention with her early writings in the Lincoln *Courier,* Willa Cather was invited to Pittsburgh to edit a new magazine. Her biographer, Phyllis C. Robinson, acknowledges that "it was a bold step to go from living at home and working part time for a Nebraska newspaper to editing a major magazine and moving east to an unfamiliar city" (76). She was only twenty-two when she left in 1896, and until her mother's death in 1931 she returned at least once a year, generally for an extended visit. But she was eager to get on with her writing career and she knew that "the East was where books were bought and sold, and Pittsburgh was only 350 miles from New York" (77).

It is an indication of the difference in perception of space and distance that for Cather, coming from the wider horizons of the prairie, as for Dreiser, Pittsburgh seemed a near neighbor of New York. For both of them, the Pittsburgh interlude was, as Robison puts it in reference to Cather, an "apprenticeship in the provinces" (129). Robinson keenly perceives that whenever Cather uses the city as background, as in "Paul's Case" or "Uncle Valentine" or "Double Birthday," it is "oppressive and inimical to art and creativity" (81).

On a trip to Boston, Cather met Annie Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett who enjoyed what genteel New Englanders then called a Boston marriage. Her developing relationship with these two women gave her a literary mentor in Jewett, and in the easy relationship of Field and Jewett a model that she would have liked to emulate. Robinson notes that Cather "was happiest in a domestic setting and she wanted a place to live that would give her a feeling of home and family, that was neither transient nor lonely. Her physical surroundings were important to her and so was the companionship of a loving and attentive friend" (153). In Pittsburgh, she had this companionship in Isabelle McClung, with whom she shared a bedroom in the McClung family home. But Isabelle was too dependent on her family, and the McClungs were too traditional to allow their daughter to move to New York and set up an independent household with another woman. Thus it was Edith Lewis with whom Cather lived in

New York, and though they enjoyed a 40-year relationship, Robinso notes that Cather was "too Midwestern" to fully emulate the Field Jewett model (208), and so they maintained the appearance of tv spinsters sharing expenses.

Though living in New York, Cather wrote much of her fiction o of the stock of memory that the Nebraska prairie had provided. A early story, published in 1904, depicts a refined and cultured woma who, having lived thirty hard years on the prairie, returns to Bosto for a business trip and happens to attend a concert. A lifelong mus lover, Cather apparently intended to show that harsh conditions cou not extinguish the human spirit, but the boosters back home took as an insult to the state of Nebraska. Later, she came to see this ar other early stories as symptomatic of what Robinson characterizes "the raging bad temper of a young person kept away from the thin she wanted" (125). Robinson paraphrases Cather: "If a your woman sits down in the cornfields and howls because she can't he music ... it does not mean she has fallen out with the cornfields. Giv her all the music she wants and take her about the world a little ar she will come out all right with the corn" (125). There is in the mov ment of Willa Cather from Nebraska to Pittsburgh and eventually New York, only to return in imagination, a reverse portrait of the pri cipal character of "Neighbor Rosicky"—a city-bred immigrant wh enjoys the glitter or New York but finds his deepest satisfaction farm ing in Nebraska.

Jewett showed Cather that place could be more than backgroun Thus, when she came to write *My Antonia* she was going home in th sense that Jewett had taught her. Robinson observes that Cather fe herself beginning to work with material that was really her ow adding that Cather's "genius" consisted of making "her personal pa a place not only that she could return to, but that would draw reade from all over the world, long after she was dead and towns like Blac Hawk had been left to dwindle in the hot Nebraska sun" (214).

Paul Laurence Dunbar did not want to be a "race man" but rath a poet who happened to be Black, and his lyrical poetry is wh enabled him to supplement his meager income with readings i Toledo and Chicago and Detroit. But Dunbar's home town Dayton was no place to get published. Only when William Dea Howells brought his work to the attention of the wider world wa Dunbar able to leave the menial position of elevator operator coi signed to him by a rigidly segregated society. Arriving in New Yor

a generation before the Harlem Renaissance, he participated in the cultural life of the community of Black artists, writers, actors, and musicians that gathered at the Marshall Hotel on West Fifty-Third Street in what was then known as the San Juan Hill area. There he could socialize with others of like talent—the musician Harry Burleigh, from whom Anton Dvorak derived the authentic spiritual melodies that run through the "New World Symphony." There, also, he knew the vaudeville team of William and Walker, the young James Weldon Johnson, the producer Will Cook, and the orchestra leader James Europe.

Dunbar had to struggle to restrain the appetites of his white publishers for the kinds of lyrics that he wrote for Will Cooks's show, *Clorindy* (Gould 230-1). Addison Gayle, Jr. writes that *Clorindy,* which dazzled audiences with the innovation of having the chorus dance and sing at the same time and which popularized the cakewalk, was little more than a "coon-show." Gayle ascribes to Harry Burleigh the caution Dunbar held concerning such works: "Burleigh...had told him once that minstrel tunes were a menace to true Negro music. Dunbar knew that such lyrics were a threat to Black poetry" (88-9). Dunbar remained at heart a Midwestern poet, and the community he created in his dialect poetry was the one he knew and had been nourished by—the African American community of Dayton in the years following the Civil War. And it was to this welcoming community that he returned, after the breakup of his marriage, ill with tuberculosis exacerbated by dust encountered in his work as Assistant to the Librarian of Congress.

War took Hemingway out of the Midwest. Except for that, like Cather and Dreiser, he not so much set out for a new world in the fashion of George Willard as he drifted, Gatsby-like, from Oak Park to Chicago to Kansas City to Toronto, and ultimately to Paris. But he seems always to have brought with him the quintessential notion of the American town. His was not a town like Winesburg or Black Hawk or Gopher Prairie which, though fictional, were closely imitative of real towns. Rather, Hemingway's American village was the brainchild of the social engineers. And though Kenneth Lynn claims Hemingway never actually said Oak Park was a place of broad lawns and narrow minds, the desire to write an Oak Park novel never really left him. Michael Reynolds characterizes Hemingway's fiction as imbued with Oak Park values—socially progressive yet individually conservative (163).

Hemingway's immersion into the Chicago writing community 1921 came after most of the Chicago Renaissance writers had left f the East, though Anderson would still be there for another fe months. Reynolds notes that "just when Hemingway's sexual li was blossoming, he discovered from Anderson that one could wr about it in ways long forbidden." And while Reynolds adds that "tl discovery was crucial to Hemingway's development as a writer," also cut him off from Oak Park "where the sexual bastions remain unbreached until well past mid-century" (184). Anderson, it will recalled, shocked the denizens of Clyde quite as much as Cather t boosters of Red Cloud and Lincoln.

The spiritual agony endured by Hemingway's heroes is situat in the dissonance between traditional moral values and new situ tions: "... courage, love, honor, self-reliance, work and duty ... a the values which sustain Hemingway's characters in physical a moral crises" (Reynolds 163). What Hemingway took out of t Midwest was the rigid code of conduct of which Garrison Keill has more recently reminded us. Yet for both Keillor and Her ingway, such a code, looming clearly enough in memory, is alwa elusive in its application to contemporary life. Reynolds observ of Hemingway's resort to war and conflict as metaphor: "Time a again he would create characters ... forced to forge their own co of conduct in a world without universal values, and like Roland Roncevalles, fighting a holding action against impossible odd (223-4). Keillor has lovingly—some might say cynically—evok in sonorous, mantra-like monologues "the town that time forgc where the traditional values of honor and self-sacrifice were wi ingly practiced or, in the case of the odd free spirit, compelled by t dominant social institution—whether Lutheran or Catholic Sanctified Brethren. Yet when the metropolitan counterpart of thc institutions, the St. Paul *Dispatch,* printed Keillor's home address part of its coverage of his wedding, he reacted with immoderate or rage, declaring that he could no longer live in a town that so f grantly violated his privacy (Fedo 221).

For many writers of the early to mid-twentieth century, t Midwest was, in Eliot's formulation, a place to start out from. T economic imperatives must have been clear, though the resid memories were often sustaining. And there are countervaili patterns to be noted: setting out in the world, returning like the r tive. In this respect one might deal more substantively with Lo

Bromfield and Brand Whitlock, with Susan Glaspell, with Fitzgerald and Lewis and Anderson, with Floyd Dell and Garland and Masters and Margaret Anderson. This recurrent pattern is framed between two archetypal Midwestern sojourners. Huck Finn lighting out for the territories to shape the world is one. The other is Nick Carraway, the silent, brooding observer. Both are imbued with values derived from memory, though neither is certain what those are. Garrison Keillor's monologues on life in New York are instructive, particularly the one about how the croissant differs from the solid bread of the Midwestern homestead. Like Willie Sutton who said he robbed banks because "that's where the money is," writers went East because that's where the publishers were, or West because that's where the movies were being made. Yet surely what made their writing popular was their ability to evoke the heartland from whence they had come. For contemporary writers like Keillor or Bellow, moving to New York or returning to the Midwest is driven less by professional growth than personal desire. In effect, first air travel and now electronic communication have broken the traditional frames that have bounded and shaped American regionalism-whether the temporal and spatial rhythm of rail travel of yesteryear, or Huck Finn's lighting out for the territories, or Frank Lloyd Wright's startlingly easy transposition of Taliesen to the Southwestern desert, or Nick Carraway and Hemingway imposing Midwestern values within a society that seemed to have lost its way.

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THE GARDEN OF EDEN AS A RESPONSE TO *TENDER IS THE NIGHT*

ROBERT E. FLEMING

When he first read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* soon after its publication in 1934, Ernest Hemingway wrote to his old friend to express ambivalence about the novel. While he began by saying that he liked the book, the balance of his letter criticized Fitzgerald's characterizations of Dick and Nicole Diver. On rereading *Tender Is the Night* the next year, Hemingway was more impressed with it, and over the next fifteen years he told not only Fitzgerald but also such friends as Maxwell Perkins and Charles Scribner and Fitzgerald biographer Arthur Mizener that the book was Fitzgerald's best work. It was strange that Hemingway should place himself in the position of sitting in judgment over his friend's best novel, for when the two met in Paris in 1925, two misplaced Midwesterners, Fitzgerald had been the senior member of their budding friendship, an author with multiple novels and volumes of short stories in print with a major New York publisher. Yet he did judge the book, and his qualified endorsement came at a time when Fitzgerald needed encouragement.

More significant than any praise, however, was Hemingway's attempt to create his own treatment of the novel's theme. In 1934 he had written, "There is no use writing anything that has been written before unless you can beat it. What a writer in our time has to do is write what hasn't been written before or beat dead men at what they have done. ... The only people for a serious writer to compete with are the dead that he knows are good" (*By-Line* 218). Matthew Bruccoli long ago noted that such a feeling of competition existed specifically between Scott and Ernest, at least as the latter perceived it:

> The mortality rate among literary friendships is high. Writers tend to be bad risks as friends—probably for much the same reason

> that they are bad matrimonial risks. They save the best parts of themselves for their work. Moreover, literary ambition has a way of turning into competition. If fame is the spur, envy may be a concomitant. (Bruccoli 5)

Bruccoli went on to show how in the 1930s Hemingway, smarting over advice the more experienced author had given him concerning "Fifty Grand," *The Sun Also Rises,* and *A Farewell to Arms*, sought to outdo Fitzgerald, who was then in decline. At that time Hemingway would content himself with giving pompous advice to his "weaker" colleague, suggesting that their positions had become reversed since the 1920s, and with denigrating Fitzgerald in the first published version of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" in 1936. Aside from such sniping, Hemingway would enter the ring to compete against Fitzgerald only several years after his rival's death in 1940. Such a competition was natural if belated. Like Mark Twain in the previous century, both men grew up in provincial Midwestern towns but went on to win the respect of the sophisticated critics of the literary East.

Soon after returning from World War II, Hemingway began the composition of *The Garden of Eden*, in which he attempted to tell a story that would embody most of the key features of *Tender Is the Night* yet would avoid what he considered pitfalls by which Fitzgerald had been trapped. The task did not prove easy. Although he struggled with the manuscript from 1946 until the end of his life, he was unable to solve the basic creative problems that he had pointed out to Fitzgerald, and he left *The Garden of Eden* unfinished. The manuscript, a textual editor's nightmare, consists of 1117 pages of mixed holograph and partially corrected typescripts that approximate the contents of the novel published by Scribner's in 1986, holograph fragments that introduce an additional trio of characters, a "provisional ending" for the novel, and several folders of miscellaneous notes and fragments. Compared with the multiple manuscripts of earlier works that Hemingway revised for publication, *The Garden of Eden* manuscripts do not show any clear evolution toward a final definitive text. Unless otherwise specified, references to *Garden* in this article will be to the manuscript novel in its entirety.

Both *Tender Is the Night* and *The Garden of Eden* feature gifted expatriate Americans who marry wealthy but unstable American women. In each novel the couple lives under relatively artificial con-

ditions in Europe on the income of the woman while the husba attempts to continue his career. Although one man is a scientist a the other a novelist, both careers involve writing. The wife becom an emotional drain on her husband, who must decide whether to pu sue his career or become a caretaker for his wealthy wife as h unconventional emotional life becomes more extreme and dri toward schizophrenia. Fitzgerald's Dick Diver chooses to sacrifi his career as a psychiatrist to devote himself to the care of his wi Nicole. Reversing this pattern, Hemingway's protagonist, Dav Bourne, refuses to abandon his writing to care for his wife Catherir even when her madness threatens to end in suicide. Thu Fitzgerald's novel examines the consequences of making the huma istic choice, while Hemingway's story presents the results of choc ing art over humanity.

Marital infidelity threatens the marriage in each novel. Fitzgera created two separate triangles by introducing Rosemary Hoyt, wl becomes Diver's lover, and Tommy Barban, who becomes Nicole Hemingway combines and complicates the roles into a double, inte connected triangle by employing Marita, a bisexual young wom who becomes first the lover of Catherine and then of David. In bo novels the love affairs are augmented by their settings in the south France, a playground where monotonously good weather, heat, a languor seem to heighten passions as well as create an artificial env ronment so unchanging that it seems to force the characters to foc on themselves. The endings of the published novels differ, howev as Dick Diver, drained by the need to minister to his wife, loses h chance to achieve greatness in his profession, while David Bour returns to his career with Marita not only playing the part of a ne supportive mistress but acting as David's muse as well, actual enhancing his work by her encouragement. But Hemingway's unfi ished manuscript reveals that the author did, in fact, envision a dark ending—one closer to the spirit of *Tender Is the Night*—an ending which Marita would be forsaken, David would return to Catherin and the latter two would discuss a suicide pact (Fleming 261-270)

The similarity between *Tender Is the Night* and *The Garden Eden* was mentioned in print immediately after the publication Hemingway's posthumous novel in 1986. Mark Spilka noted th near the end of *Tender Is the Night* Dick and Nicole go to the barb together as David and Catherine do in Chapter Nine of *The Garde*

of Eden, and he calls attention to an incident in Book 3, Ch. X of *Tender Is the Night*, in which Mary North and Carolyn Sibley-Biers disguise themselves as French sailors and pick up two prostitutes, only to be arrested when they take the women to a hotel and their own gender becomes known. Spilka commented on Fitzgerald's "strong 'distaste' for and punitive response to lesbian practices" and theorized that "the strength of his homophobic response comes through and seems to have moved at least one emulative reader to exploit its hidden connections with the barbershop drama that follows" (Spilka 30). Spilka then went on to discuss the manuscript of *The Garden of Eden*, but he drew only minimal further parallels between Fitzgerald's novel and Hemingway's.

Hemingway was moved to write his version of Fitzgerald's bleak story only after years of fascination with his friend's novel. As early as 1929, Hemingway had read parts of Fitzgerald's work in progress and wrote Fitzgerald in a letter dated 4 September 1929 that "it was better than anything I ever read except the best of Gatsby" (*Letters* 305). He had continued to follow the progress of the novel's composition, probably sympathizing with Fitzgerald when Zelda dealt her husband a setback with the publication of *Save Me the Waltz* in 1932. No doubt feeling as Scott did that Zelda's use of the same raw material in her book would inhibit Scott's own treatment in *Tender Is the Night*, Hemingway professed not to have read *Save Me the Waltz*, writing to Maxwell Perkins, who had sent him a copy, that he found it "completely and absolutely unreadable" and offering to forward his copy to anyone that Perkins thought would be able to stomach it (*Letters* 376-77). Sincere as Hemingway's dislike for Zelda was, it is still hard to imagine that he did not in fact read the novel, at least to be sure that he did not appear in it as an unsympathetic character, for Zelda made no secret of the fact that she reciprocated Hemingway's animosity.

After *Tender Is the Night* was published, however, Hemingway told his friend in a letter dated 28 May 1934 that he "liked it and didn't like it" (*Letters* 407). His reservations arose from the way Fitzgerald began with Gerald and Sara Murphy as models for Dick and Nicole but then "started fooling with them, making them come from things they didn't come from, changing them into other people and you can't do that Scott. ... Invention is the finest thing but you cannot invent anything that would not actually happen" (*Letters* 407). In this letter, Hemingway mentions not only prototypes for

Fitzgerald's characters—the Murphys and the Fitzgeralds—b potential prototypes not used by Fitzgerald—Ernest himself, Hadle and Pauline. Quite possibly he had already started looking at t novel as a problem in revision and implicitly asking himself how might have used a similar cast of characters to construct a novel his own.

Nor did Hemingway stop thinking about the novel after his i tial reading. It continued to intrigue him, and he wrote Fitzgeral more favorable analysis some eighteen months later, on December 1935, calling *Tender Is the Night* a better book on refle tion than he had first thought it (*Letters* 425). On 25 March 1939 enthusiastically wrote Maxwell Perkins that he had read the no yet again and was amazed at its excellence. While he still qualifi his praise by suggesting that the book could have been better "in grated," he concluded that "much of it is better than anything e [Fitzgerald] ever wrote" (*Letters* 483). After the publication of *T Last Tycoon*, Hemingway again told Perkins in a letter dated November 1941 that *Tender Is the Night* was Fitzgerald's best bo even "with all its mix-up of who was Scott and Zelda and who w Gerald and Sara Murphy" (*Letters* 527). On 12 December of t year he told Charles Scribner much the same thing, repeating complaint about Fitzgerald's mixing the characteristics of Murphys and the Fitzgeralds and adding that "parts of it are rea wonderful" (*Letters* 533).

After the war, when Viking published *The Portable Fitzgera* Hemingway received a copy and might well have read the novel more time. Mark Spilka has theorized that this reading might h been the immediate impulse for Hemingway's beginning *T Garden of Eden* (Spilka 29-30), an assertion that seems quite c vincing. While it is impossible to tell exactly how many tin Hemingway read Fitzgerald's novel, the letters suggest that he mi have read it as many as six times before he began work on *T Garden of Eden.* If he did reread it when *The Portable Fitzger* came out, his postwar reading of the novel would have renewed acquaintance with a book over which he had been brooding for so twelve years, frequently going back to the novel to criticize mentally rewrite parts of it.

Nor did critical questions about *Tender Is the Night* cease o Hemingway began work on his own novel. Between the two m periods of its composition—in 1946-1947 and in 1958-195

Hemingway corresponded with Arthur Mizener while the latter was engaged in research for his Fitzgerald biography, *The Far Side of Paradise*. In July 1949, responding to Mizener's request for information on his old friend, Hemingway alluded to Zelda Fitzgerald's alleged jealousy of Scott's writing, a concept that would be central in *The Garden of Eden* and significant in *A Moveable Feast* as well. According to what Hemingway wrote Mizener, Zelda encouraged Scott's drinking when he was writing well, knowing that he would be unable to write when he was drinking heavily (*Letters* 657-58). Zelda Fitzgerald turned the accusation around, suggesting that it was Ernest who distracted Fitzgerald from his work by encouraging his drinking (Bruccoli 50-51). Probably inspired by the recollections of the Paris years that he dredged up for Mizener, Hemingway would accord this theory about the Fitzgeralds' tortured relationship a full literary treatment in the chapter "Hawks Do Not Share" in *A Moveable Feast*. In May 1950 Hemingway wrote to Mizener about *Tender Is the Night*, repeating his assertion that it was Fitzgerald's best book but again qualifying the praise by complaining that Fitzgerald had started "with Sara and Gerald and then shift[ed] to Zelda" (*Letters* 695).

Not a great deal is known about the composition of *The Garden of Eden*. Although Hemingway had ridiculed Fitzgerald for not being able to finish his novel, it is obvious that, ironically, Hemingway's writing of *The Garden of Eden* was an even more tortured process than Fitgerald's writing of *Tender Is the Night*. Carlos Baker states that Hemingway began work in "the early months of 1946," and that the page count in longhand stood at 400 pages in mid-February, 700 at the end of April, and 1000 pages by the middle of July (*Life Story* 454). Letters to Maxwell Perkins and Maxwell Geismar suggest that the manuscript remained at about the same size or was perhaps pruned during the next year: in March 1947 Hemingway wrote to Perkins that the manuscript consisted of 907 handwritten pages, of which the first 157 had been revised and converted to 137 pages of typescript (*Letters* 616); in September of the same year he wrote Geismar that his current book was big, but that "I cut the hell out of it periodically" (*Letters* 626). In spite of the fact that they were written sixteen and eighteen years later, neither Jeffrey Myers' nor Kenneth Lynn's biography adds any factual material on the composition. A marginal note in Hemingway's hand on the manuscript itself refers to the date of 19 November 1958, dur-

ing which Hemingway was working on the book (Chapter 24, Garden manuscript).

In his correspondence with Fitzgerald and others, Hemingway had stressed what he saw as Fitzgerald's failure to be true to the prototypes of the characters he had created. Therefore it seems probable that one of Hemingway's motivations was to tell a similar story which would also employ multiple prototypes but would be more true psychologically to those prototypes. Yet Hemingway himself would have considerable difficulty separating his own characters from their prototypes: in place of the Murphys and the Fitzgeralds, Hemingway would use himself and his first two wives with John Dos Passos as a supporting character. Catherine and Marita grew out of considerable alteration of their prototypes, alterations so drastic as to cause them to do things that Hemingway's wives would not have done in real life. Hemingway often shifted characteristics or events from one wife to the character based on another prototype. For example, Catherine Bourne resembles Pauline Pfeiffer in her wealth, her physical appearance, and her critical interest in her husband's works in progress, yet Catherine destroys David's manuscripts, recalling Hadley Richardson's accidental loss of Hemingway's manuscripts in a Paris railway station in 1922. A disinterested observer might accuse Hemingway of doing what he faulted Fitzgerald for, making characters do things that they would not really do, as he drew on the characteristics of more than one person to create complex composite characters.

Hemingway would overlay his own composite characters onto two basic themes of *Tender Is the Night*: mental illness and the conflict between one's work and one's personal life—topics that were particularly interesting to Hemingway after World War II. Whereas Fitzgerald had conflated his own character and Zelda's with those of Gerald and Sara Murphy, Hemingway complemented the triangle of David, Catherine and Marita with a set of shadow characters—Nick and Barbara Sheldon and Andy Murray. The Bournes are obviously based on Hemingway and his second wife, Pauline, while the Sheldons are based—at least in their physical appearances—on Hemingway and Hadley as they were during the Paris years. In addition, he would give both Catherine Bourne and Barbara Sheldon the mental instability that Zelda had struggled with, which Hemingway felt had ruined both Fitzgerald's career and his personal life.

As he worked, the characters began to reflect their real-life models so tellingly that at one point Hemingway inserted references

to Scott, Zelda, and the Hemingways as friends of David. A recently arrived friend reports the latest Paris gossip about each couple: the Fitzgeralds are trying to salvage their marriage after Zelda's affair with a French aviator, and the Hemingways, now returned from Canada, have been skiing in Austria before returning to Paris and settling down on the rue Notre Dame de Champs (Garden ms., Book 3, chapter 25, 24-25). Hemingway probably intended the references to the Hemingways and the Fitzgeralds to forestall their identification with the fictional characters on whom they were based. But the fact that the gossip echoes the patterns of the Bournes' lives ironically reinforces the identification: the globe-trotting of the Hemingways and the marital feuding of the Fitzgeralds closely reflects the lifestyle of the Bournes and thus provides a thematic link between the real and fictional couples.

Marital infidelity and the hints of homosexuality in *Tender Is the Night* reawakened interests Hemingway had earlier displayed in "The Sea Change"—a story to which Fitzgerald alludes in *Tender Is the Night* (83)—and Hemingway undoubtedly believed that he could use his considerable acquaintance (and love-hate relationship) with lesbians to his advantage in expanding that theme. "The Sea Change" might be considered an early study for the writing of *The Garden of Eden* although Hemingway probably did not recognize the kinship until he began to work on the novel after the war, when he used the name "Phil" in an early draft for the character who would become David Bourne (Garden manuscript, Book I, chapter I, p. 1). "The Sea Change" deals not only with the problems of the writer and the relationship of his craft to his life but also with a heterosexual relationship threatened by a homosexual attraction. The short story takes place in Paris, but the young couple are deeply tanned after their holidays "so that they looked out of place in Paris" (*Short Stories* 397), and the contrast of the woman's short blonde hair against her tan anticipates Catherine's appearance.

The short story, with its Paris setting, exploited the sexual ambiguities that were more possible in that city than in less cosmopolitan locales. Such sexual ambiguities would continue to interest Hemingway when he turned to his memoirs of the Paris years in *A Moveable Feast.* In his memoir he would recall discussions of homosexual love with Gertrude Stein and an overheard conversation between Stein and Alice B. Toklas, and he would imply that the tolerant mores of Paris made their open lifestyle

possible. In his novel, he focused attention on his principal characters and theme by leaving behind the Paris scene—David and Catherine have just come from Paris at the beginning of the novel—and by stripping away much of the rich background and the supporting characters of *Tender Is the Night* although he retains the artificial, almost unreal, Mediterranean setting of the earlier novel—a fairytale place where sudden transformations of character can take place with little warning.

Improving upon Fitzgerald's classic was not easy. Perhaps seeking to maintain the integrity of his characters, Hemingway created multiple avatars of himself, Hadley, and Pauline. In the manuscript novel, Nick and Barbara Sheldon not only serve as shadow characters to David and Catherine, but Andy Murray serves as a complement both to writer David and to painter Nick as well as playing the role of lover (and later psychological caretaker) of Barbara Sheldon. Hemingway seemed to vacillate about whether to use the Sheldon plot in the final draft of the novel. The fact that a suicide note written by Barbara Sheldon is alternately signed with both her name and Catherine's suggests a combining of the characters, yet Catherine's reference to Barbara's suicide in Venice in the "Provisional Ending" suggests that, at least when he wrote this ending for the novel, Hemingway planned to continue the separate existence of the shadow characters. Obviously the recipe he had given Fitzgerald proved hard for Hemingway himself to follow.

In addition to the origins and complex interplay of the characters, specific parallels between the two books are so numerous as to make it clear that the similarity is not accidental. In *Tender Is the Night*, Nicole Diver appears to Rosemary Hoyt like a figure sculpted by Rodin; the Rodin group "The Damned Women" is an obsession of Catherine Bourne's. Rosemary nearly dies of pneumonia after diving into a Venice canal during the making of a movie; in the manuscript of *The Garden of Eden*, Barbara Sheldon drowns herself in a canal in Venice. Rosemary declares her love for both Dick and Nicole just before she makes a pass at Dick; Hemingway's version of that triangle is more physical, as Marita becomes sexually involved with both Catherine and David. Nicole's father, whose incestuous abuse explains Nicole's troubled adulthood, has a parallel in Catherine Bourne's unstable father, of whom it is hinted that he killed himself and his wife in a car—quite possibly on purpose.

Conflict over the husband's professional life is central to both novels. Nicole wishes that she could study medicine and be Dick's colleague; Catherine tries to participate in David's writing by dictating his subject matter and by buying illustrations for the book he is writing. Both wives ostensibly see themselves as complementing their husbands' professional lives, but recognizing that work is everything to their spouses, both wives actually wish to compete with them. In *The Garden of Eden* manuscript, Barbara Sheldon competes with Nick by painting. Both Nicole Diver and Catherine Bourne use their considerable fortunes to support the professional advancement of their husbands, but more insidiously they also use their financial resources to distract their husbands from their work.

Both Nicole and Catherine have suicidal tendencies, echoed in the manuscript of *The Garden of Eden* by Barbara Sheldon. Nicole nearly kills herself and the entire family by grabbing the steering wheel on a mountainous road and Dick later tries to discourage her from driving; David prevents Catherine from possible suicide by insisting that she take the train when she leaves their hotel for Paris because he suspects that she, like her father before her, intends to kill herself in an auto accident. During Barbara Sheldon's period of insanity after Nick's death, her sister comes from America to try to help her, but with no better results than Baby Warren achieves when she comes to Europe to try to help Nicole.

Of course, there are also many differences between the two novels. David Bourne, a temperamental artist rather than a psychiatrist, makes few attempts to salvage his marriage at the expense of his career—at least until the provisional ending of the story. Because David is a writer, Hemingway understandably spends much more time than Fitzgerald treating the professional life of his protagonist. In fact, one of the chief strengths of *The Garden of Eden* is its treatment of the creative problems that a writer faces and the incorporation of David's African story. In spite of the fact that sex is the mainspring that drives both novels, sexual identity and its complexity are much more important in the later novel, where a good deal of space is devoted to David's questioning of his own sexual identity. David's struggle to come to terms with his positive and negative memories of his father is a distinctly personal theme added by Hemingway. In spite of sharing its downbeat mood, the "Provisional Ending" of *The Garden of Eden* differs considerably from the ending of *Tender Is the Night*: Fitzgerald buries Dick Diver like Melville's Bulkington in a

six-inch chapter of summary; Hemingway closes his treatment of the theme with a dramatic exchange between David and Catherine, foreshadowing a genuine tragedy and artistically exploiting the possibilities of that tragedy even though—true to his iceberg technique—he does not show it happening. And, finally, Hemingway's virtual isolation of his characters produces something more like Willa Cather's novel *demeuble* (or "unfurnished novel") than Fitzgerald's richer and more socially oriented masterpiece.

Matthew Bruccoli has commented briefly on "possible cross-pollinization between Fitzgerald and Hemingway" (122). He lists possible echoes of Hemingway dialogue in "The Rich Boy," the characterization of Tommy Barban in *Tender Is the Night* and the low-key ending of that novel, which might have been influenced by that of *A Farewell to Arms*. On the other side, he notes Fitzgerald's valuable help in the editing of *The Sun Also Rises* and his less appreciated (and less heeded) advice on *A Farewell to Arms*. But perhaps the evidence of Fitzgerald's greatest impact on Hemingway's work came long after Fitzgerald's death, with the writing of *The Garden of Eden*.

Unlike *Tender Is the Night*, Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden* will never be considered its author's best novel, and it might not have achieved that prominence even had it been finished by Hemingway himself. By taking so much of the basic premise of his novel from Fitzgerald, Hemingway surrendered the freedom to create a novel that would seem more of a piece with the balance of his *oeuvre*. But Hemingway gained as well as lost by this surrender: the very fact that *The Garden of Eden* differs in subject, theme, and treatment from most of Hemingway's work suggests that the challenge of responding to *Tender Is the Night* gave Hemingway opportunities that he might not have found otherwise. *The Garden of Eden* surely is one of Hemingway's most significant attempts to consider the nature of the writer and the problems he faces. His venture into questions of gender identity has forced a new generation of critics to reassess his position on human sexuality. Finally, his unsuccessful attempts to bring out character traits by the creation of doppelgangers opened up new avenues for psychological exploration that would bear fruit in other postwar work, most notably *Islands in the Stream*.

Writing *The Garden of Eden* not only demonstrates Hemingway's respect for Fitzgerald's novel and the creative struggle which produced it, but the stimulus provided by the earlier novel led Hemingway to respond to Fitzgerald's masterpiece by pro-

ducing some significant new achievements during a period when he was attempting to resume his career after a long interval of literary inactivity.

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THE QUESTION OF MERIDEL LE SUEUR'S LOST PATRIMONY

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Readers new to Meridel Le Sueur's writings enter an unfamiliar and problematic landscape deeply contoured by the problematic nature of the author herself, whose work is acclaimed by radical critics, feminists, and others who simply enjoy the pleasure of the text.Her writerly voice is fundamentally performative, rich in figural play and compelling in its persuasive demands. The fact that Le Sueur's texts reject rhetorical modes of dominance and mastery suggests that they must be apprehended emotionally, understood from within, not subjected to intellectual analysis like modernist literature. Le Sueur's vision reflects traditions of dissent, lyrical humanism, and public oratory that are native to the Midwest. Like Walt Whitman, Le Sueur wrote of "Those of earth-born passion, simple, never-constrained, never obedient, / Those of inland America."[1]

Men are absent or ancillary figures in Le Sueur's stories; their passions are, at the very least, incomprehensible, at the worst, destructive. In *Crusaders,* a memoir of her mother and step-father, Marian and Arthur Le Sueur, Meridel describes the period of early settlement in the Midwest when "women were left alone, the men gone to better fields. The pattern of the migrating, lost, silent, drunk father is a mid-west pattern, and accompanying that picture is the upright fanatical prohibitionist mother, bread earner, strong woman, isolated and alone" (35). Women in Le Sueur's writings make their way largely without or in spite of men. Karl in "Annunciation" is absent while his wife is bearing their child. Bac in "I Hear Men Talking" betrays the striking farmers. Cory Fearing's husband is a mean-tempered drunk. The dark, foreboding figure of March is an abductor in "Persephone," Le Sueur's adaptation of an ancient grain legend. Based upon cultic celebrations of agrarian practices, the legend evokes female fear of sexual violation by male predators. The

love of machinery, of technical knowledge, draws Winji away from his wife Ruth, signalling the end of an older, communal form of agricultural production ("Harvest"). In the novel *The Girl,* Butch, unable to find work, dies from wounds received in a botched bank heist. Left alone his girlfriend joins a community of women organizing help for the unemployed. Blundering into trouble, Butch is no longer able to help when he is most needed.

Le Sueur drew upon ancient myths, radical traditions, and her own amalgam of Marxist-feminist-populist ideas in portraying working-class women in a time when expanding opportunities for women in the workplace loosened rigid Victorian conventions regarding respectability, marriage, domestic roles and sexuality. Meridel grew up among women activists, including her grandmother Marie Antoinette Lucy, a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and her mother Marian, who with a group of Socialists, including Arthur Le Sueur, organized the People's College in Fort Scott, Kansas. Radical reformers like Emma Goldman, Eugene B. Debs, Bill Haywood, Helen Gurley Flynn, and Helen Keller, who lectured at the People's College, deeply influenced Meridel's early political education. They represented different political philosophies: anarchism, socialism, populism, labor syndicalism. On this point all agreed: that the aim of society is not the production of wealth but the emancipation of people through meaningful work. Meridel put flesh and bones on abstract theory. Her writings portray the loneliness and emptiness of working-class women's lives, alienated from nature and isolated from community. The "male patriarchy," she said, "is leading us to death. They have trashed the female in themselves and in our society, which is male oriented. You don't think that you'd be destroying the earth if you were nourishing the earth, if you had any mothering of the earth in you."[2]

In elaborating her critique of alienation and the crippling structures of dominance, Le Sueur drew upon the philosophies and models of male political thinkers and activists like Marx, Debs, Gramsci, and Paolo Friere. Her views on patriarchal tyranny have to do with gendered attitudes and behavior, not with individuals; she had many close friendships with men, including Jack Conroy, Communist Party leaders, Mike Gold, and Alexander Trachtenberg. Notwithstanding her outspoken advocacy of a separate sphere for women, she married Marxist organizer Harry Rice, had two daughters, and later maintained an intimate relationship with artist Bob

Brown, lasting twenty-five years. As main literary influences she readily acknowledged D. H. Lawrence and Sherwood Anderson. She saw no contradiction in decrying "male patriarchy," yet loving certain men. Like other progressive-minded activists (and theologians) she hoped to achieve a better society. Perhaps her father, the Reverend Winston W. Wharton, had similar hopes, but the society he envisioned was a City on the Hill, not on earth as Meridel desired. Meridel had little memory of her father; she knew only Marian's unhappy tales of him. Those tales were planted early in Meridel's mind like a Biblical parable.

In *Crusaders* Le Sueur speaks of her father, Winston Wharton, as "Marian's husband" (40). Indeed, several critics have confused Arthur Le Sueur for Meridel's real father. She often told how Marian, "a captive of her early marriage to a Protestant minister of the Disciples of Christ, captive of a patriarchal world in which she had no rights" (xiii), had "kidnapped" the children and fled her home to live with her mother in Perry, Oklahoma.

Meridel's admonition about seeking understanding beyond mere facts rang in my ears when I decided to explore the question of her lost patrimony. Absence, a central topic in her writing, invited my inquiry like a troubling question mark. Absence, after all, is a kind of presence, expressing a longing for something that might have been or could yet be.

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In the summer of 1907, Meridel Wharton and her two younger brothers, under the wing of their mother, Marian Wharton, arrived in Perry, Oklahoma on a train from San Antonio, Texas, to live with Marian's mother, Marie Antoinette Lucy. From the train station they walked across town to Marie's white, wood-framed, one-story prairie house at 924 D Street. With its secure storm cellar and elegant (by Perry standards) bay window, Marie's home was a sanctuary for Marian, who had fled San Antonio to escape an unhappy marriage to a minister named William Winston Wharton.

"I hung, green girl in the prairie light, in the weathers of three fertile and giant prairie women who strode across my horizon in fierce attitudes of planting, reaping, childbearing, and tender care of the seed," Meridel writes in "The Ancient People and the Newly Come," a loosely autobiographical narrative that conflates her child-

hood years in Perry with her later experiences in Iowa and Minnesota. Marie and Marian were two of the "fertile and giant prairie women"; the third was an Otoe Indian woman who came from Red Rock, a few miles north of Perry, to do domestic work for Marie Lucy and other townspeople.

Unaccompanied, Marie Lucy had made the 1893 land run into the Cherokee Outlet. In a photograph taken several years before the Whartons arrived in Perry, Marie appears as a severe, upright-looking woman, with tightly pursed lips, wearing an attached collar and a WCTU white ribbon on her white dress. "She was embarrassed by any excess of feeling and had a way of turning down her lips bitterly," Meridel remembers. "She had that acrid, bitter thing too about her body, a kind of sourness as if she had abandoned it. It was an abandoned thing, perhaps it had not been occupied. The Puritans used the body like the land, as a commodity, and the land and the body resent it. ... Pleasure of any kind was wicked, and she never lay down in daytime even when she was dreadfully tired. It would have been a kind of licentiousness to her to have done so."[3]

Despite the unflattering portrayal, Meridel felt pride in her grandmother's struggle to survive and succeed in the "man's world" of early settlers in the Cherokee Outlet. Marie Lucy was among those who helped to make the prohibition of alcoholic substances an Oklahoma state law, enacted at the 1907 constitutional congress, not long before the Whartons arrived in Perry. In her horse-drawn buggy Marie traveled to the coal-mining communities to the east of Perry to lecture miners' wives on temperance: "/S/he packed her small bag every week, set out by buck board, into the miserable mining communities where she met in shacks and white steepled churches the harried, devout, half-maddened women who saw the miserable pay checks go weekly at the corner saloon, and who attempted to stave off poverty and the disappearance of their husbands by smashing the saloons" (*Crusaders* 36). The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which organized Marie's crusades, linked alcoholism with men's abuses of power, both in the family and in society. The WCTU's perception, that women needed to constitute their own authority to address the grievances caused by drink, led temperance workers to turn to political means, principally the issue of women's suffrage.

Meridel's father, Winston William Wharton, left behind in San Antonio, became a non-person to her, excised from her life, eventu-

ally to be replaced by a step-father, Arthur Le Sueur, whose name she took as her own. "Marian," she writes in *Crusaders*, "fled with her three children from Texas in 1910 (sic) because there she was a slave, property of the father-husband, William Wharton. She fled north over the Texas border into Oklahoma where women had the vote in the early organization of the state. My father tried to extradite us, kidnap, invade, and possess us" (xi). Meridel's mother, she continues, was a "captive of a patriarchal world in which she had no rights, not even of having her own soul. ... She could not own property, and my father could collect her wages if she had a job" (xiii). Meridel's biographers and commentators seem content to repeat her account of her father and of Marian's abandonment of him. Some even refer to Meridel's stepfather, Arthur Le Sueur, as her actual father. Meridel's own version has to do with emotional truths; to her that was as good or better than any "fact."

Le Sueur was born on February 22, 1900, in tiny Murray, Iowa, where her father was minister of the Disciples of Christ church. In the following excerpt (from a videotaped tribute produced by a feminist collective in 1976) she poeticizes her birth:

> I was born on the prairie, in the corn country, in the corn village, in the middle of winter, in a square puritan house, at the beginning of the most brutal century, the twentieth century. I was out of the body of women, earth, village, and the peoples of the Americas. I was born into a valley richer than any river valley in the world between two rivers, the Missouri and the Mississippi, on an alluvial drift where the pure humus of the earth went down without stone or poison, ten or twelve feet. A beautiful curving prairie with rolling hills and valleys strangely mingled together, from passages of prairie to woodland flower, only hardwood forests, a land so rich that the Indians didn't have to plant anything. I was born in the Indian lands of the Fox, Dakota, Potawatomie, Wapello, Osceola and Tama, those people driven away from this paradise. I was born in the village of democratic utopians who came for free lands and for freedom of worship, and the new democratic human being. In seventy-five years this rich land has been corned out, poisoned with chemicals, over-plowed, eroded, the homestead gone back to the banker and the land now subjected to corporate farming. ...
>
> The night I was born, snow came, and in the white square house, in the birthing room on the ground floor, my grandmother, a young aunt, a neighbor woman, labored with two other women, my mother and myself. The men sat cozily in the parlor, drinking, telling

> jokes—my father, uncle, my mother's two drunk brothers, and a country doctor, waiting, I'm sure, for a son.[4]

This is one of the few instances in which Meridel mentions her real father apart from Marian's story of him. Critics have, for the most part, observed her silence. Silence in this case implies a conscious turning away. What, we might ask, was Meridel turning away from?

*

Winston W. Wharton, born in Indiana, studied theology at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, and the University of Chicago. Winston had grown up among preachers. Five sons of Winston's grandfather, Stanfield Wharton, were ministers, including Joseph B. Wharton, Winston's father, who was a "travelers' evangelist," selling the merits of the Christian church along with insurance on the road. The Wharton family, then, included six preachers, spreading the good news of Christian unity throughout the Midwest and the frontier.

The Disciples of Christ drew their beliefs principally from the New Testament. "Where the scriptures are silent," they said, "we are silent." They were called Campbellites in the early days, disciples of Alexander Campbell, who preached a rational faith, arguing for one Christian church with no denominations at the communion table. The Disciples adapted well to the frontier. They preached wherever listeners gathered, foregoing the material comfort of church buildings, when necessary, and dispensing with formal baptismal immersion. They were democratic in organization, observed few rituals and a rigid orthodoxy that seemed to fit the spirit and needs of new settlers. The method of the Disciples is summarized in the Five Finger Exercise: faith, repentance, baptism, forgiveness, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit and eternal life. Such was in brief the church into which Meridel was born, the daughter of a righteous, disciplined man who wrote poetry of some merit (including a collection entitled *Cactus Rose*) and saw evidence of God's work in everything.[5]

Meridel's mother, Mary Dell (Marian) Lucy, was born in Bedford, Iowa, August 2, 1877. Her father, an attorney, escaped domestic problems through drink, eventually squandering the family's property. Divorced from her husband, Marie Antoinette Lucy worked as a cook at Drake University in Des Moines, where Marian enrolled as a student and met Winston, who was completing his the-

ological studies. In 1896, they were married. Meridel was the eldest of three children. In the tradition of a minister's wife, Marian's role was to raise their children, organize a women's auxiliary, and serve refreshments at church gatherings. Greek, Latin, German, philosophy, mathematics and the other subjects she had studied at the university were of little practical use to her. Nonetheless, she read widely and held discussions with herself.

Marian left Murray, Iowa, and its tiny white clapboard church a few months after Meridel's birth, following Winston as he pursued his missionary work, first in St. Louis, Missouri, then in quick succession, Tipton, Missouri, Winchester (where Meridel began her schooling) and Roodhouse in Illinois, before settling in San Antonio, Texas, in 1907.

A division over church doctrine in the congregation of the new Central Christian Church at 720 North Main Avenue in San Antonio had occurred shortly before the Whartons arrived. As a consequence, Winston shared the ministry with another preacher, Reverend J. B. Cleaver. The magnificent brick church had Greek Corinthian columns, cupolas, a massive dome, with windows thirty feet tall, and a sanctuary that seated 600 people. Years later, recalling his ministry there, Reverend Wharton asserted proudly that his church "was then the outstanding Protestant church building in the city."[6]

San Antonio in 1907 was already an old community by American standards. Settled by Mexican nationals and Spanish priests who built missions, it took its name from the Mission San Antonio, the site in 1836 of a battle between Mexican army forces and a ragtag collection of 189 Texans, the martyred defenders of the Alamo. In the early nineteenth century, Germans settled the King William district, opening the city to commerce and using their profits to build beautiful homes. To early visitors, San Antonio combined the grace and slow pace of the Spanish colonial period with the tidy efficiency of German merchant life. But to Reverend Wharton's wife, life in San Antonio was a living hell.

Marian Wharton was an embryonic "new woman," responsive to new ideas and currents of thought—universal rights, for example—percolating into the minds of middle-class women, taking form in women's organizations, temperance and suffrage activism, and writings by Ibsen, Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Susan B. Anthony. Marian's unhappiness and her sense of oppression derived principally from two sources: Texas law and her husband, Winston.

Marian was restless with her position as a minister's wife. She was eager to try her hand in business activities. In Texas, however, married women could not enter into contracts without their husband's consent. Bank accounts, for instance, were in the husband's name; a married woman had no access to her own money without the husband's signature. The legal status of a married woman, then, was essentially that of a minor. The justification for the laws was that women, many of whom at the time were unschooled beyond the sixth grade and lacked practical experience in business affairs, needed protection from shysters and unscrupulous predators who abounded in the frontier period of the law's origin. A married woman could, however, file for "removal of disabilities of coverture," which, if granted, gave the woman control of her own property without the husband's consent.

In matters of divorce, on the other hand, the scale was evenly weighted. Either party could, with sufficient reason, sue for divorce. Grounds included cruelty, adultery, and legal separation for seven years. (Separation was defined as living apart without cohabitation.) To feel emotional alienation, as Marian did, was not sufficient reason. In the event of divorce, fault was always established; the party at fault received no alimony or child support.

Women lacked the right to vote, but in other respects *single* women possessed the same rights under the law as men. Texas law, furthermore, contained a community rights clause, considered quite forward-looking at the time, that ensured that property was jointly owned by husband and wife, and that title to the property came to the surviving spouse. Winston could not forbid Marian from visiting her mother in Oklahoma, of course, but he could, as a parent, legally restrain her from taking the children.

At the time of Marian's move to San Antonio, women such as Minnie Fisher in Galveston, Annette Finnigan in Houston, Jane Yelvington McCallum in Austin, and Eleanor Brackenridge in San Antonio were speaking out for women's rights. Bettie Gay owned a large ranch north of Columbus, Texas, inherited from her husband. She chose not to remarry, not to be a man's "helpmeet." "Nature," she said, "has endowed women with brains. Why should she not think ... why not act? If allowed to act, what privilege should men enjoy of which she should be deprived?"[7] Active in the temperance and woman's suffrage movements, Eleanor Brackenridge, a San Antonio banker, called for reform of property rights legislation affecting mar-

ried women, promoted higher education for women, and gave legal advice to the poor. Marian, as a minister's wife, would have had access to activists like Eleanor through the newly formed women's clubs, but there is no evidence that she had any contact with them.

One evening, leaving the unwashed dinner plates on the table, she and her three children boarded a train for Perry, Oklahoma. Marian left behind everything except the clothes they wore and several treasured keepsakes. Winston made no effort to stop her because he was away that evening and knew nothing of her plan to leave him. Oklahoma operated under different laws affecting contracts and divorce. In those days, states observed few formal interstate legal agreements. By crossing the state line into Oklahoma, in effect, Marian was free of her husband's "discretionary" authority under Texas law. Moreover, he was powerless to extradite her and recover the children without coming to Oklahoma to petition a court there. Texas sheriffs had no extradition authority in another state. In abandoning her husband, on the other hand, Marian relinquished any claims to financial support. Winston was not obliged to provide for support of the children, given that Marian had left him and, in effect, kidnapped the children.

When one considers all factors, then, it was a desperate move on Marian's part to leave, taking the children without Winston's consent. In *Crusaders*, Meridel explains that her mother felt trapped in a loveless marriage: "She came to the conclusion entirely outside the experience of her society, that it was a sin to stay with a man you no longer loved" (44). Yet, in reviewing the circumstances, it seems clear to me that Marian had options—filing for removal of disabilities of coverture, legal separation—which, apparently, she did not choose to pursue. There is no evidence that Winston was a "bad" father—Meridel never claims that he was. Nonetheless, the children, after the fateful train ride to Perry, lost contact with him and with his entire extended family. Marian and her children were no longer "captives of a patriarchal world," to use Meridel's words, since for them that world no longer existed, including the women (paternal grandmother, aunts, cousins) who belonged to it. Meridel entered her mother's world, and that of her mother's mother, a maternal world without men. These two women nurtured and prepared her, through their example, for the course her life would ultimately take. It is little wonder, then, that Meridel's understanding of this defining event early in her life respected in every detail her mother's version.

These, then, are the results of my attempts to resurrect Winston W. Wharton, the "disappeared" father of Meridel Le Sueur, based on slender materials garnered from various historical archives, his own writings, and from discussions with a 89-year-old attorney and friend, Gaynor Kendall. Kendall, who grew up near Wichita Falls, Texas, recalls when women, referred to as "the gentle sex," could not vote and were thought to need male "protection." Like other disenfranchised classes of people, what women lacked and therefore sought was the opportunity, and the *means,* through education principally, to make their own choices and provide their own protection.

Marian possessed the means and saw her opportunity. Her story, then, has to do with personal liberation—and ultimately, growth in political consciousness. This is the meaning of Marian's story of leaving her husband. It became Meridel's story and it is told in many variations, in her writings.

*

Meridel was raised among strong, compassionate, brilliant men: her step-father, Arthur Le Sueur, former Socialist mayor of Minot, North Dakota and attorney for the Non-Partisan League; Eugene B. Debs, a frequent visitor to the Le Sueurs; the anarchist Alexander Berkman, and numerous other political reformers and educators. Yet men are absent figures for the most part in her fiction; when they do appear they are frequently bungling, obsessive, and violent, like Butch in *The Girl.* The matrilineal tracings of Le Sueur's writings have drawn her to the attention of feminist critics. It is a world in which men function chiefly as seed-bearers and sometime mates; their conflicts with other men, their obsessions with power, abstractions and machines occupy them elsewhere. They are quite simply not here. Yet this portrayal does not constitute a rejection of men, in my view, so much as a longing for presence, for other, gendered ways of connecting to the world and to people that Le Sueur described in terms like "circularity," communal, transformative. It is fundamental to Le Sueur's radical vision therefore that this absence be seen as a call for change, for the restoration of something that has been lost in men-women relationships.

I had hoped that Meridel would be able to clarify a comment she made in a letter to me in the fall of 1996. She wrote: "I lived in San Antonio when I was young. My father was the most beautiful

preacher in the Christian Church and believed in the Boy Jesus who gave his life for the poor. ..." However, her health was failing; she died several weeks later.

To ask for a clarification from Meridel would likely not have succeeded in any case. She had little patience with people who asked for explanations, as I discovered during my early interviews. The question and answer format was anathema to her. It hinders people from talking in their own voice, she said. Le Sueur made an art of hearing people talk. People's stories, the basis of her writing, reveal their lives; and that is what is essential if one seeks understanding.

Le Sueur's writing calls upon us to engage with her in seeking new habits of thought more compassionate and just than those that dominate Western societies wedded to capitalist economic systems. Because certain dominant myths in American society—the myth of the individual, the myth of technological progress, the myth of male supremacy—are rooted in patriarchal structures,[8] Meridel sought alternatives in Native-American and feminist thought. The answer to the question of missing patrimony, then, is ultimately bound up with her quest for new ways of conceiving the world and living in it, and in that quest she had many "fathers."

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NOTES

1. "The Prairie-Grass Dividing." As in Whitman's famous disclaimer, Le Sueur often contradicted herself without apology. Thanks to Sanora Babb, Suzanne Chamier, John Crawford, Michael Erard, Fred Whitehead, Mary McAnally, and the Disciples of Christ Historical Society for their assistance and suggestions.
2. Lofquist, 9.
3. "Corn Village," 20-1.
4. "My People Are My Home."
5. One commentator calls Meridel the daughter of "an itinerant preacher" (Goddard, 60). In fact, Reverend Wharton was highly educated, with three university degrees. He occupied a series of ministerial positions at different parishes within a mainstream church—hardly an "itinerant." Wharton's poems are mainly devotional, expressing reverence toward nature and God. Conventional in form they show considerable skill in the use of meter and rhyme.
6. "The San Antonio Churches," 7.
7. Quoted in Barthleme, 46.
8. See Schleuning, 7-14.

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"[W]RITTEN ALONG THE MARGIN AND NOT THE PAGE ITSELF": THE EARLY SHORT FICTION OF JOSEPHINE W. JOHNSON

MARK GRAVES

If readers and scholars of Midwestern or Twentieth-Century American literature know of Josephine Winslow Johnson at all, it is perhaps only as the author of *Now in November,* the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of 1935. Published when Johnson was only 24, the novel is an evocative and naturalistic look (in the truest sense of that word) at a farm family facing almost certain defeat on the arid Missouri soil during the Great Depression. In a year which spawned fiction as diverse as Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* and Stark Young's *So Red the Rose,* critics may have been surprised by this unlikely choice for the prestigious American award, but they seemed nonetheless pleased that so promising a young novelist should have received recognition for a work of remarkable beauty and poignancy. Writing in *The New Republic* of Johnson's first novel, for example, Jon Cheever noted, "...[T]here is no trace of the novice, of derivation, of irregularity; here is talent full blown at twenty-four, fragile and, in its way, nearly perfect" (193).

Clearly critics remarking on the maturity of her voice at such a young age may not have been aware that, certainly, Johnson was neither emotionally immature for her years nor a novice writer. In fact, Johnson had been writing short stories, poems, and nature sketches all of her life in an attempt to reconcile the dualisms in her own personality and to fill in the excess hours spent in a family headed by a stern, withholding father and an artistic, more flamboyant, but equally overbearing mother in Kirkwood, Missouri. Johnson would later document her earliest years in the impressionistic memoir *Seven Houses,* so called because Johnson aligned most of her memories with the seven residences she occupied during her lifetime. About her June 1910 birth, Johnson described herself as "[b]orn

within the margin of ... Gemini's power and doomed already to a dual soul. What more appropriate gift than this huge and invisible load of gravity? (35-36).

Later on in the memoir, Johnson would write that "[t]he important things of childhood have very little to do with reality" (37), but the "reality" of Johnson's life and work is that, indeed, she did carry with her an enduring legacy of alienation and confusion and an enduring social consciousness, all themes and issues she explores in her writing. Born of Anglo-Irish stock to a family where literary expression was valued, Johnson developed a life-long love of nature, of literature, and of learning from reading multitudes of books in the library at Oakland, the large Victorian home of her mother's family, the Franklins. Both Benjamin and Ethel Franklin Johnson encouraged their four daughters in their artistic, literary, and scholastic pursuits, and Johnson began her education at the Hanover School, a private academy run by Miss Katherine and Blanche Byars. Although Johnson enjoyed the freedom and safety that life at the Hanover School afforded, Miss Blanche joined a long list of others who reminded the adolescent of her own powerlessness. Johnson's own mother increased Johnson's feeling of disempowerment and distrust, for while Ethel Franklin Johnson reveled in her daughter's artistic achievement, the elder was perhaps more than a little jealous of Josephine's success. Moreover, Johnson's older sister Mary Elizabeth, or Mary Lib as she was called in the family, hovered on the brink of mental illness for most of Johnson's growing up, mostly manifested in an intense rivalry with Josephine for their father's affections and culminating in an attempt to strangle her at one point.

Perhaps more than anyone in Johnson's early years, though, her father served as the greatest impediment to the emotional well-being of the entire family. When Johnson's father died of cancer at the age of 59 in 1926, his immediate family, Johnson included, remarked, "Everyone is relieved" (as qtd. in Carter 6). In *Seven Houses,* Johnson wrote, "We were afraid of our father. I learned to woo, to fake, to be silent or to sidle away into books. ... I supposed he loved us all, but I have raked memory over and over to rock bottom and I cannot find one shred of evidence to present here" (47-48). In defense of Benjamin Johnson, however, his decision to build a stone house in the countryside and to move his family there in 1922 enabled Johnson to make her first serious observations of nature. In the peacefulness of an upper floor of the house later known as Hillbrook,

Johnson composed essays about nature, poems, and short stories until she graduated from high school. A year of study at Washington University under the guidance of an encouraging professor who did not care for her writing but saw her potential led to the publication of her first poems in 1930. Her formal writing education ended when she left college without completing a degree, but it resulted in the composition of "Hyde Annan," a short story later rejected for publication in *The Atlantic Monthly,* but which drew the attention of prominent New York editors (Carter 57-58).

The publication of a later short story called "Dark" piqued the interest of an editor at Simon and Schuster, who, in light of her now burgeoning publishing record, encouraged Johnson to begin the novel later called *Now in November.* To capitalize on the critical approval the novel garnered when it hit bookstands, Simon and Schuster brought out a volume of Johnson's early published short stories entitled, *Winter Orchard and Other Stories,* an eclectic mix of nature sketches, stream of consciousness narration, journeys into minds clouded by alienation and despair, and social protest fiction. While critical opinion of Johnson's short story collection was less flattering than for her novel, most reviewers correctly perceived that Johnson's early short fiction is about moods, in particular about an autumnal mood, or, as one reviewer noted, "... about life lost and life renounced" (Gannett 15). As with most fine writing, her stories exist on multiple levels and to categorize them trivializes their depth, but such classification is necessary in order to begin peeling back, layer by layer, their multi-dimensional range and scope. Thus, Johnson's stories might be divided into three or four basic themes or genres: expressions of longing, confusion, separation, and estrangement; metaphorical or symbolic observances of nature; allegories of social protest; and explorations of spiritual or religious disillusionment.

In certain respects all the stories in the collection examine confusion, longing, or alienation, but the resulting fear, anxiety, and estrangement from self and humanity is more strongly expressed in some more than others. An example includes a story ironically titled "Safe," an episode in the life of two sisters, Mary, a teacher, and Abby, who willingly sequesters herself within a well-orchestrated routine of household activity. The first lines of the story foreshadow not only the struggles her characters will face in the text, but also the dilemma we all face living in an uncertain world. Johnson writes, "I don't know why things come this way. If I'd known before—but

we never know, we always find things out too late" (3). When Mary falls in love with an itinerant labor organizer, Abby waits every day in terror for his love letters she knows will change all their lives forever. When the first letter arrives, as if overtaken by some overwhelming naturalistic force, she tears it open. Whatever fit drove her to unseal the letter in the first place now demands that she play God by destroying those that will follow to avoid confessing her crimes. At first glance, Abby's actions appear selfish, but Johnson makes it clear that Abby's concern rests alone with the hardships Mary might experience with a man subject to the abuse and rebuke of capitalist ideology. She watches as no word from the young man hardens her sister against her own flesh and blood and the world. In the end, Abby remains dazed, confused, anxious, and estranged, caught between her own natural instincts to preserve and concerns for her sister's welfare. By the end of the story, then, Abby utters an anguished cry to the universe, pleading, "I don't know—I don't understand why things come this way. How could I see this would happen to her? But she's safe now. She doesn't suffer. ... [M]aybe it was the best thing after all ..." (21).

Besides "Safe," other stories also examine the estrangement and disappointment which can often exist between spouses and families. Two of Johnson's stories center around traditional sites of merrymaking and courtship in rural areas. In "I Was Sixteen," for example, the narrator has baked and put up for auction the favorite pie of a young man, certain that his purchase of her confection will advance their developing relationship. When the rival of her beloved purchases the pie and cloisters her from the youth of her interest, the narrator returns home heavy hearted and full of self-pity. Once there, she finds her mother weeping over the death of her grandfather, a death which means nothing to the girl in the grips of adolescent angst when she believes her old and mad grandfather was foolish to live in the way he had. Of her grandfather's demise, the girl admits, "... I did not care. ... I cried, not for him, ... but for myself who had so many years to live" (54). Moreover, "County Fair," tells the tale of another Mary in the throes of her first love, but thwarted in her attempts to see her beloved on the last day of the fair. Through a collage technique and the use of typographical variation, we succumb to the confusion of the young girl's mind, clouded by the cacophony of sideshow barkers, concession stand venders, and her own mounting realization of forces working

against her happiness: the clutter of the midway, the urgency of her father to return to the family farm, and the disinterestedness of her beloved. Johnson reveals Mary's heartache and sense of injustice through the conversations of the others in combination with the rumblings in Mary's own head alone, forcing readers to remember the pain of first romantic disappointment.

In a similar technique, Johnson uses interior monologue to reveal the estrangement between husband and wife in "August Evening." In the story, Johnson portrays a husband and wife who pause to look at the headstones of dead married couples as they stroll through a cemetery. Individually, they wonder what hardships each partner suffered in their respective roles during their lifetimes. Readers quickly understand how far apart the couple is in terms of compassion for each other. While not angry or bitter, their relationship can be characterized by something far worse and far more insurmountable, indifference. At one point in the story, for instance, the woman even admits,

> She wanted to say aloud and irrelevantly that she was glad they did not love each other. If they loved each other, he would have found it hard to say the things he thought, and their minds would have been confused in the endless consciousness of each other. ... Love was a loss of the mind's clarity and a walking in confusion. (255)

Only when the couple come upon a man digging a grave for his wife and their son crying bitter tears for his mother do the two realize how inconsequential their individual wills seem. Johnson writes, "They looked at each other, their lives seeming to diminish and appear callow, to shrink before the stature of some reality into things of no importance. ..." (262).

While a keen chronicler of human alienation and estrangement in her fiction, Johnson is best in her treatment of nature. In all of her work, nature maintains the power for redemption and solace, but it can be the site of unmitigated hardship and violence, as Johnson well knows. In the title story to the collection called "Winter Orchard," really nothing more than a sketch, Johnson presents a microcosm of all life through the fate of the creatures living between two rows of apple trees on a February day. Overhead, a few shriveled apples dangle precariously on the trees, while below starving rabbits scurry over the crackling, snow-covered earth in search of any food to boost their

strength for escape from prowling hunters. The only sound in the trees is the brittle clanking of the ice-cloaked branches, the woodpeckers, blue jays, and crows long since gone when the food supply ran out. Elsewhere, a titmouse bores a hole in the pupa of an orchard moth, devouring its soft, fat contents. Spots of blood on the snow bespeak of abundant quail, chased from the safety of their nests by a hunter's beagles and speared on the end of a hawk's claw. While red marks death and violence in this Darwinian winter world, the color in its various shades also harbingers rebirth and the spring to follow, as Johnson concludes the life study with, "... [A]t last there came an hour in which a redness flowed along the apple branches,—a redness which was not sun on ice, but the warm magenta stain of birth" (308).

Although stark as Johnson casts it in "Winter Orchard," nature, in its most redemptive capacity, is the subject of two of Johnson's most optimistic stories, "Arcadia Recalled," a fictionalizing of Johnson's summer vacations spent with her sisters and two maiden aunts, and "The Quiet Day," a chronicle of one perfect day spent alone in the environs of a farm house. Both contain Johnson's typical vivid descriptions of the abundant beauty of the Missouri countryside, but only "Arcadia Recalled" can boast of a pig named Agamemnon as a central character. As its title suggests, the story is an altogether uplifting, although not unrealistic, portrait of the possibilities of childhood on the farm, not without sibling rivalry or physical aches and pains. In anticipation of what life on the farm can mean, the sisters in the story quickly work out their difficulties, however, and learn important lessons about the value of a life spent close to the soil. After a long day's work, the two youngest girls in the story, Millie and Mary Josephine, who is Johnson herself, lay in the hammock staring up at the moon they have claimed for themselves. They muse contentedly, "There didn't seem any end or beginning to this happiness. It was themselves, and big as all the world" (252).

Similarly, Johnson's message in "The Quiet Day" is easily summed up in these simple, but nonetheless powerful, words of wisdom:

> It is better to trust the small and not human things for a more enduring happiness, and it almost seems sometimes that the vast and important experience we go stumbling after will never give as much happiness as the little sound, the streak of color, or the brief taste of something in the mouth. It is not very wise to trust too much in people or expect very much of love or name or place.

> Perhaps after all, the meaning of life is written along the margin and not on the page itself. ... (32)

All the qualities necessary for a peaceful life according to this philosophy Johnson presents with abundance in the story, the breathy aroma of hyacinths, the shadow of a walnut tree, the soft blanket of grass, the warm, viscous honey which stains the leaves of the bee tree—in short, too many reasons to get up in the morning and too many excuses not to cast off regret. In Johnson's fiction, the burdens of adult reality in an uncertain world rarely fade from view. But the philosophy of the story is not diminished in the narrator's awareness that responsibility cannot be shirked in the house forever, but rather heartened by a belief that "... if in the corner of hourly living, under the grief and irritation and fear, one can know there will be always these intervals of peace, then there is no reason to desire death. It is enough to wait and be certain of their return" (40).

Vivid and sincere under her pen, Josephine Johnson's reverence for all things beautiful and natural clearly underlies an understanding that life was often unfair for some in an industrialized nation undergoing economic and social turmoil. Her concern for the environment would be best articulated later in a nature book entitled *The Inland Island,* but she vividly portrays her outrage at oppression and bigotry, racial and economic in particular, in other stories in *Winter Orchard.* To illustrate, in "Mr. Nathan," Johnson writes of a young farm couple who have taken in an older farm hand after his release from prison. Although railroaded into signing a confession to a crime he never committed and pardoned, the extended family of the couple instruct Karl and Freda that Mr. Nathan is not welcome at Thanksgiving dinner or any other family gathering. Torn between a longing to "go home" one of the few times during the year farm life offers them and their commitment and loyalty to higher humanistic purposes, the couple enjoy the fellowship that only true human acceptance and hospitality provide by celebrating the holiday with neighbors instead. Here, Johnson reveals not only the hardships prejudice can bring, but also she argues that true family connections are not necessarily predicated on biology.

Never an ardent believer in organized religion or Christian redemption in its traditional sense either, in "John the Six'," Johnson exposes the inadequacy of abstract Christianity to address real social ills. In the story, a priest runs across a young bedraggled boy selling

the most recent edition of a cheap newspaper to make money to support himself. When the boy reveals that he reads the Apostles, the priest wonders who better to demonstrate the power of Christianity to uplift the downtrodden than the boy. When he discovers the most appealing aspect of the reading to the child is the story of Jesus feeding the multitudes with fish and bread, the priest realizes abstract notions of goodness have nothing to provide the boy that a good meal and warm clothes would not better supply. Betrayed by the accumulated knowledge of almost two thousand years of so-called spiritual doctrine, the priest can offer the boy no comfort and no understanding of his circumstances.

Besides economic oppression, racial prejudice figures prominently in three stories in the collection. In "Nigger Honeymoon," a child watches her father refuse to rent a room in their small roadside motel to young African American newlyweds, even though to turn the couple away jeopardizes the family's well-being and livelihood itself. The father knows no surrounding hotel will take them, and the child stares as the couple's "Just Married" sign is lost in the blinding snow as they drive away. Similarly, in "The Preacher's Pilgrimage," Reverend Arnold embarks on the last leg of an eighty-year trip to the Holy Land, a visit that will supply meaning to the whole of his life of faith and struggle. After the death of his wife frees him from earthly cares, Arnold purchases a place on the tour with money put by for his funeral. For three weeks, Arnold feels the pressure of community expectations that something great should happen in the land of Christ and that he will return a changed man. He even convinces himself that once in Palestine, he will be rewarded by a divine visitation. When he arrives at the tourist office to depart, his money is refunded and he is turned away: the tour package was only for white subscribers. Johnson ends the story by likening Arnold to a prophet wandering in the wilderness, for he stumbles out of the tourist office mumbling that he cannot return home again.

While both stories reveal just how deeply entrenched some prejudices are, Johnson's most dramatic portrayal of racial injustice appears in a story called "Off the Luke Road," which blurs the line between what the protagonist believes will occur and what actually does. In search of honeysuckles he will exchange for pickles and honey from a local housewife, Rike Whilhite instead finds her husband's body, throat slit, almost buried in the underbrush. As an African American in southwest Missouri, Rike knows he will be

accused of the crime and lynched. In another example of her experimentation with psychologically inspired narrative techniques, Johnson locks us in Rike's mind, juxtaposing sensory images of the lush, fertile countryside against the young man's scattered, feverish thought patterns:

> "How long Gain Adams been here Lord? O God Almighty who kill Gain Adams? who kill Gain Adams in the honeysuckles? and what I do now Lord? ... Maybe should I rush back down to Mrs. Adams 'I found him Mrs. Adams. I found Gain Adams back there off the Luke Road, down in a mess of honeysuckle with his throat slit open and red on the honeysuckle'"...
>
> Down knelt Rike in the high heat, almost to faint with grape scent and honeysuckle smothering on the white air ... feeling skin on Gain Adams' wrist, poke-stiffness under his shirt ... sick enough to die right there in the hot vines and bee warmness. "He ain't died long, it's sun heat on his skin, but he don't smell none. ...
>
> "...What I do now Lord? ... First thing they say, 'How come you found Gain Adams when nobody else could? ..." (106)

The question of whether Rike should inform authorities of his discovery is never resolved for us, nor does it need to be for the story to be an effective and dramatic revelation of racial injustice and the horror produced in its wake.

In a short five-year period, from 1930 to 1935, a young Josephine Johnson produced and published a unique, yet highly polished canon of short fiction and poetry. Her first published collection of stories reveal her as not only a young woman of rare emotional insight, but also as a keen observer of the economic and social injustice of her era. Johnson's crusade for environmental awareness, social justice, and emotional understanding would permeate all of her works through the rest of her forty-year career making for a meaningful contribution to not only Midwestern and women's literature, but American literature as well. A proletariat novel *Jordanstown* criticized for its didacticism would fail to win critical or popular approval in 1937. The same year she would publish *Year's End,* a collection of poems. A children's book called *Paulina: The Story of an Apple-Butter Pot* appeared in 1939. Two novels about the loneliness of adopted children, *Wildwood* and *The Dark Traveler*, Johnson would publish in 1945 and 1963 respectively during the years she was rearing her own three children. *The Sorcerer's Son,* her only other short story collection, came out in 1965. Moreover, the composition of her

reflective nature book *The Inland Island* corresponded to the death of her beloved husband Grant Cannon in 1969. And Johnson ended her career with the impressionistic memoir, *Seven Houses,* and with the captions to a book of nature photographs by Dennis Stock called *Circle of Seasons* published in 1973 and 1974 respectively. She died in Cincinnati, February 27, 1990, of pneumonia, sixty-four years to the day after her father died, drawing to a close a remarkable but relatively unheralded life and career.

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EVA K. ANGLESBURG OF THE LEVEL LAND

LAWRENCE MOE

In thinking about the "Midwesternness of Midwestern literature"—to adapt a phrase from Professor David D. Anderson—one often encounters "sense of place" as a key ingredient in the imaginations of Midwestern writers. In the case of poet Eva K. Anglesburg, sense of place is absolutely central to her creative practice and to our understanding of her work. Therefore we begin with a sketch of the place on which she lavished her sense.

The Red River Valley of the North was once the southern lobe of Glacial Lake Agassiz, an immense freshwater body larger than the present five Great Lakes combined. Agassiz was drained as the last glacier retreated to the north, and the Red River still flows north. So the Valley was actually the floor of a huge lake as recently as eight or nine thousand years ago, and this accounts for the extraordinary flatness of the place. In fact, the land is so flat that a visitor might well wonder why it is called a "valley" at all since in so many places there one's view is of smooth prairie extending to the horizon in all 360 degrees. The portion of the Agassiz lake bed south of the Canadian border is over two hundred miles long and includes more than 17,000 square miles, an area about the size of Vermont and New Hampshire together.

The attractiveness of the Valley for European settlement was mainly agricultural. The soil is the rich sediment of Lake Agassiz, more than one hundred feet thick in places, and conditions are highly suitable for large-scale wheat production. But the Valley remained remote through most of the nineteenth century, and shipping of wheat in large quantities is not compatible with ox cart transportation. The arrival of railways in 1871, however, changed the situation, and in the Great Dakota Boom that followed the Valley was settled and its prairie sod busted within about thirty years, a single pioneer generation.

Life was not easy for homesteaders. Weather conditions are extreme, as for example in the winter of 1996-97 when Fargo was hit with eight blizzards and many other snowfalls, piling up a total of 117 inches of snow while still-air temperatures went as low as 30 degrees below zero. But actually the air is rarely still. The absence of surface friction makes the Valley a windy place, visibility often dangerously reduced by blowing snow, with skin-freezing wind chills and house-sized snowdrifts common. Harrowing pioneer tales tell of families coping with such winters in profound isolation. The summers get quite warm in spite of the northerly latitude, humid as well, and the pioneers had to deal with drought, wind-driven dust storms (the "black blizzards"), grasshoppers, hails, prairie fires, a spectrum of weeds, and diseases of crops, cattle, and people. Annual temperature variations in the Valley routinely exceed 125 degrees. In 1887 it reached 48 below in Fargo while in 1917 it reached 11C above—a maximum variation of 158 degrees. Quite a few homesteaders simply left after a year or two.

At the same time it must be stressed that the Valley is a remarkably beautiful place, capable of inspiring awe in all seasons. The poets describe this beauty best, but it has much to do with the enormous scope of space circumscribed by the round horizon and hemispherical sky, and with the play of light within that space as variously refracted through dust or clouds. And the shared experiences of the settlers who survived and succeeded helped build a proud, cohesive community, at once self-reliant and mutually helpful. It was into this community that Eva K. Anglesburg was born on May 28,1893.

Her parents lived in Grand Forks, but they left their only child alone in the world when both died in a typhoid epidemic before little Eva was old enough to retain any memory at all of either parent. The child was then adopted by Miranda Morris, a fifty-year-old widow, who brought her new daughter home to tiny Thompson, ND a village fifteen miles southwest of Grand Forks.

Eva Morris thrived in this mutually devoted family of two, soon displaying qualities by which she was characterized throughout her life: intelligence, initiative, independence, and an overflowing creativity particularly evident in her way with words. She began to create poetry as a child. After finishing the usual primary and secondary education offered by local schools, she became the teacher at a one-room school in the nearby countryside.

While taking correspondence classes in creative writing from the Northern State Teacher's College in Aberdeen, SD, she came into contact with Dr. J. C. Lindberg, founder and editor of *Pasque Petals,* a South Dakota poetry magazine. Dr. Lindberg recognized something worth nurturing in Anglesburg's juvenilia and became her mentor, leading also to her first publications during the 1920s, not only in *Pasque Petals,* but also in *The Rural Educator, The Dakota Traveler, The W.C.T.U. Bulletin, The University of North Dakota Record, The North Dakota Clubwoman, The North Dakota Teacher, The Souix Falls Argus Leader, The Taper, The Exponent, The Farmer's Wife, Kaleidoscope, Sonnet Sequences,* and *Sunshine Magazine.*

Interestingly, her blossoming artistic development in this early period coincides with significant challenges in her personal circumstances. Eva's adoptive mother—that is to say her family—died in her arms when Eva was twenty-four, a shattering event. Two years later in 1919 she married a down-to-earth local man named George Anglesburg, who became a farm implement dealer. Eva bore a daughter in 1920 and a son the next year. But both children died, aged three and four, in the diphtheria epidemic of 1924. Then in the years immediately following she had four more children.

During the 1930s, when she gave her occupation as "housewife and mother of four," her work was first anthologized in *Fifteen South Dakota Poets,* and in *North Dakota Singing.* The "first directory of North Dakota Writers" (a tiny pamphlet called *Who's Who Among North Dakota Writers 1935*) lists twenty poets, somewhat apologetically observing that "The youth of the state and of its native born writers accounts for the brevity of the list." Eva K. Anglesburg is not only included but is distinguished, with six others, as a "professional poet" because she had received payments for her work. Anglesburg's first book also appeared in 1935. Aptly entitled *Of the Level Land,* it presented twenty-five of her poems. In 1936 the book won the second place award in the national competition sponsored by the League of American Pen Women. *For Many Moods,* her second book, came out two years later in 1938 and offered forty-nine additional poems. But after that her muse fell silent.

Special Collections Folder 1490 at the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, in Fargo, contains an informative exchange of unpublished letters from 1951-52. It seems that Kenneth Kuhn of that Institute was preparing to publish anthologies of regional verse, and he had written to Anglesburg to see if she were ready,

after thirteen years, to bring out a third collection. She replied non-committally, spoke about a disparate batch of poems in hand, and donated a copy of *For Many Moods* to the Institute library. Kuhn then turned the matter over to Richard Lyons, professor at North Dakota State University and a prolific poet himself. Continuing the correspondence, Lyons bears down on Anglesburg, trying to see if she has fresh work to publish, and offering critical evaluations of her work. "... [I]n discussing North Dakota poetry with anyone who knew it," writes Lyons, "your name was one of the first to be mentioned." He opines that there are both good and bad poems in her two books, but that the first book, *Of the Level Land*, was clearly superior, showing "a handling of prosody above that of any other North Dakota poet I have read." *Of the Level Land* frequently shows "the sharp and arresting image, the original, living observation in a corresponding form." In this Anglesburg had for Lyons, "an individuality worth maintaining."

In her replies, Anglesburg agrees that *Of the Level Land* is the better book, specifically because it "consisted almost entirely of regional poetry." "I had quite a collection of poems," she wrote. "We picked out the ones dealing with the Red River Valley and its people, then filled out with closely related poems and included them in the first book. What was left went into the other." Moreover, Anglesburg explains that her more recent efforts have been less satisfactory still, even to herself as well as to Lyons, because "I am older and live in a different section of the country." In fact the Anglesburgs had wound up in Minnesota after a series of moves driven by her husband's career. The dislocating effects on the poet were such that she admitted to not publishing a poem in ten years and not rhyming a couplet in eight.

Thematic analysis of the thirty-five poems in *Of the Level Land* validates Anglesburg's account of them. More than half (about 62%) explicitly connect to the Valley and life on its prairie. Some poems, like "Vanished Days" or "Burning Strawpiles," mention the Red River Valley by name, and when adjacent poems refer to "this western plain," or "the level prairie land," or "the prairie's monstrous, plaided floor," or to a prairie that "sleeps beneath its robe of snow," it is not hard to understand what place is in mind. Even the few poems not apparently about the Valley, like one praising Roald Amundsen, reveal a degree of Valley sensibility, for the discoverer of the South Pole was a well known hero to the Norwegian ethnic

majority in the Valley's population. By contrast, only about one in four of the poems in *For Many Moods* is Valley-specific, and quite a few of the others have no conceivable tie to the Valley. While there are good poems in both books, one inclines to agree with Professor Lyons, and indeed with the poet herself, that *Of the Level Land* is the better book precisely because it is there that Anglesburg's sense of place is most strongly foregrounded, a sense of place so germane to her creativity that after she had to leave the Valley she stopped writing poetry altogether.

Richard Lyons praised Anglesburg's prosodic skill, sharp imagery, and authentic regionalism. Starting first with the prosody, one sees a poet fascinated by form, always ready to cook up a new pattern. *Of the Level Land* exhibits: 1) eight sonnets, of three different types; 2) rhyming structures on *abcb,* subdivided into three in pentameter, four in tetrameter, two in alternating lines of sixteen and fifteen, and two in short lines; 3) two poems rhyming in *abcbdb,* one each of pentameter and tetrameter; 4) five in rhymed couplets, no two alike in line lengths; 5) three in *abab,* no two alike in line lengths; 6) eight nonce forms each highly patterned in rhyme; and 7) one example of vers libre. *For Many Moods* sustains nearly all this structural variety and adds five new nonce patterns (including a two-stanza rhyme pattern of *aabbaaabc-aabbac,* in tetrameter, which she exploits in three poems), and two examples of the Spenserian stanza.

Speaking of stanzas, both books show formal exuberance there as well, for example varying the *abcb* rhyme by casting it into quatrains of eight or ten, into octaves of eight or ten, into quasi-stichic sequences, and into stanzas containing internal quatrains of different lengths, for instance in "Mannequin of Dreams" where each stanza gives four pentameter lines followed by four lines of five, six, or seven syllables. Fit metrical substitutions abound. The overall effect is one of painstaking craftsmanship yielding wide variety while perpetually exploring boundary zones between cloying predictability and pleasing fulfillment.

Lyons also wrote of Anglesburg's striking imagery, and while some images will strike some of us harder than others, a few examples, all excerpts, may nevertheless be educed. In "Burning Strawpiles" we are taken back to harvest threshing in the Valley when time was precious and work continued into night by light of torched strawpiles:

> On Autumn nights when heaven is hung,
> With threatening clouds far strawfires strung
> Round earth's dark rim glow redly bright
> And gem the velvet edge of night.

In "Devil's Lake," the speaker contemplates the lake so named, transforming the surrounding landscape into a crouching threat and then noticing with alarm that "dazzled eyes" are viewing the "eerie spirit-dance" of dead Indian warriors "Who rest not well beneath its / Sinister waves." The final stanza animates the lake itself:

> For dark the legends told of this too-bright
> Glittering lake
> Which, purring, claws the white
> Encrusted margin
> Of its rock-strewn shore.

In "Drouth," which begins "No longer are the mornings fresh with dewy coolness," a series of specific images pass by, including lifeless trees in "ghostly regiments" pointing "accusingly / At the merciless heaven," and farmers "with sullen eyes watching the southwind whirl "powder," once "fertile soil," to "weave with it / The shroud of all their hopes." One stanza in this free-verse composition goes like this:

> The coulee, shrunken to a filthy puddle,
> Is swarming with frantic minnows.
> In its center a gorged gartersnake
> Languidly contemplates the frenzied efforts
> Of the doomed creatures to escape him.

Interplay between sound, form, and sense is evident in these examples, and that is a point Lyons emphasized:

> You say you are a landscape painter in words, but I find that is not quite true. You are more than that. ... Word pictures have a limited range and interest because they reduce words to a minimum function, eliminating overtones of emotional and symbolic significance. Your early poem "As the Mirage" demonstrates the difference between word pictures and a more significant poem. True, you paint a picture, but you interpret your material at the same time. You give it a wholly unexpected, new meaning approaching symbolism and expand it, in this way, into the area of general human experience. It is given toughness and strength by such handling of prosody as
>
> > Brief glimpses of far heights beyond the curled
> > Edge of the plain.

> At "far heights" the image is beginning to slip away into vagueness, but the two strong accents of "curled / Edge" with the sharp visual image they produce, bring it back into the reader's mental horizon.

And if this image does succeed in reaching "general human experience," it must all-the-more-powerfully touch the "regional human experience" of actually seeing purple horizon mirages along the "curled / Edge" of the "amethystine brim" around the suddenly bowl-like prairie now in joyous repudiation of its own flatness, transporting those living in the real world of the Valley, "these narrow confines"—"as does morn ? Weaving its magic for the prairie-born."

And as for Anglesburg's regionalism, praised also by Lyons, it has been of course manifest in all these excerpts. Space permits just one additional example from *Of the Level Land*, a Petrarchan sonnet called "The Prairie":

> It is an ancient land supremely wise,
> For it has watched the eras come and go
> Since Time's dim dawn and has perceived the slow
> Perfecting of Creation. Now it lies
> A disc of earth, this land which yearned to rise
> And pillar heaven. Time has laid it low;
> But through the eons it has come to know
> The secrets of the earth and sea and skies.
>
> Serene it lies; content to rest supine
> And watch Time's pageantry go passing by.
> While empires rise and flourish and decline
> And conqueror races dominate and die,
> Unmoved it gazes. Nothing ever mars
> The calm of its communion with the stars.

Let us return to the historical Eva Anglesburg, whom we left in the early 1950s, displaced and poetically silent. Happily the story does not end there. Her husband died in 1957, and Anglesburg went to live with her daughters in Duluth, Minnesota. There she joined the Arrowhead Poetry Society and found for the first time in her life a group of creative and supportive poets with whom she might commune. We should remember that she had never before had the experience of face-to-face contact with other poets; she had never given or attended a reading. For all of her poetic practice, from her training to her publishing, occurred in the isolation of the rural Valley,

through her mailbox. Now, in Duluth, she started writing again, contributing poems to the Arrowhead Poets' monthly organ through which she won an ample series of awards throughout the 1960s. She contributed to the *Moccasin,* and her verse was printed in England and New Zealand. She also renewed her characteristic habit of expressing herself by composing poems about interesting people and then mailing these poems to their subjects. The Anglesburg family scrapbooks contain many examples, along with the acknowledgments, sometimes elegant, from individuals including Winston Churchill, Richard Nixon, Walt Disney, and the Queen Mother.

In 1974 at the age of 80, 2 years before she died and 36 years since *For Many Moods* had appeared, Anglesburg brought out *As From a Height,* her third and final book, containing ninety-four poems. In it we find a new investment of sense in a place, Duluth, with its hills and forests and of course the great lake. Consider one last poem from that final book, entitled "Varied Aspects of Lake Superior." Here we see again long lines of alternating sixteens and fifteens, rhyming *abcb,* in quatrains, with sharp images, the greatest of which ends the poem and is in fact a visionary experience on the part of the speaker, who thereby reveals the lifelong persistence of the sense of place forever at the heart of her poetry.

> Since the glacier departed, this vast lake has been reflecting
> Centuries of summer sunsets, opal, orchid, jonquil, rose;
> All the fiery dawns of winter, that have reddened distant ice-fields,
> Stained the leads maroon and crimson, lightly tinged the drifting floes.
>
> Sometimes churned by wild Northeasters, spindrift, like a mammoth blanket,
> Hides the dark, tormented waters from the fury of the sky.
> Sometimes white as milk the lake seems, when dread storm clouds loom above it,
> Then becomes a sheet of silver, as the Hunter's Moon rides high.
>
> Unendurable its brightness, when it seems the sun has melted
> To an incandescent liquid that upon the lake is poured!
> In sharp contrast are those mornings, when the fog-horns are complaining
> Walls of white that have enclosed them are too dense to be ignored.

Of the lake's amazing aspects, one that rated with the strangest,
Was observed one summer evening following torrential rain.
Offshore, as the storm departed, based upon the dust-gray water,
A majestic triple rainbow spanned what seemed a drouth-seared plain.

Metropolitan State University

NOTES

Eva K. Anglesburg's three books of poetry are now out of print and extremely rare. Copies of *For Many Moods* and *Of the Level Land* are held by the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies at North Dakota State University, in Fargo, where one will also find the correspondence between Anglesburg and Richard Lyons, the pamphlet "Who's Who Among North Dakota Writers 1935," and much more in the way of Red River Valley literature.

Selections of Anglesburg poems are anthologized in *Fifteen South Dakota Poets* (James Christian Lindberg, ed. New York: H. Harrison, 1930), and in *North Dakota Singing* (Grace Brown Putnam and Anna Ackermann, eds. New York: Paebar, 1936).

Heartfelt thanks to Yvonne Anglesburg and Donna Krance for their gracious willingness to provide additional information and insight about their mother, the poet.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE RUINS: WRIGHT MORRIS AND MIDWESTERN GOTHIC

RODNEY P. RICE

In an essay entitled, "The Romantic Realist," Wright Morris tells a story about an unexpected remark he received from an Israeli journalist during a retrospective exhibition of his photography in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1975. Expressing both puzzlement and amusement during his encounter with Morris's stark, black and white photographs of the American landscape, the journalist at one point turned and said, "You are a romantic." (*Time Pieces* 23). Though the comment startled Morris, accustomed as he was to thinking of himself as something of a realist-modernist scion of the likes of Twain, James, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and Hemingway (*The Territory Ahead* vii-viii; xiii-xvi), perhaps it should not have, for it reveals an important and often overlooked dimension of Morris's photographic and fictive art that hitherto has not received much critical examination. Certainly, Morris is a romantic. He is many other things, too, but his attraction to haunting ruins—as well as the past, rustic figures, and the possibilities of the imagination—suggest that he has a number of affinities that connect him to the larger romantic tradition.

Although it is not my purpose here to trace the broad origin of Morris's romantic species of art, I do intend to explore the way in which he uses the photo-texts to awaken the latent imagination. Specifically, I shall explore one subspecies of the artistic transformation that obtrudes from the visual and verbal dialogue found in Morris's landmark photographic works, *The Inhabitants* and *The Home Place.* To be exact, that subspecies includes the disturbing Gothic images found in these texts, images that provide the first signs of a darker side to his artistic sensibility, something Morris later recognized as a paradoxical presentation of "artifacts, representing conditions, and ballads singing of heartbreak, death ... pleasurable long-

ing. ... and that fine madness that gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name" (*Time Pieces* 31).

Interestingly enough, in the April 29, 1998, *New York Times* obituary written after Morris's death, Ralph Blumenthal referred to him as "one of the nation's most unrecognized recognized writers. ... whose taut American Gothic novels, stories, essays, and photographs plumbed the mysteries of the stark Nebraska landscape" (A23). Notwithstanding Blumenthal's praise, however, outside of Leslie Fiedler's bold assessment of the devilish, "castrating mother-wife" in the 1952 novel, *Man and Boy*, no one has given sustained treatment to the tenebrous, quintessentially Gothic elements found in Morris's work, despite the fact that the writer, himself, noted an artistic "yearning for blackness" in his 1977 interview with John Aldridge (*Conversations* 32-33). Not surprisingly, then, particularly with respect to the photo-texts, the subject has hardly been whispered. As a result, rather than focusing on the hidden, and often disturbing, imaginative essences that Morris periodically conjures up, critical attention up to this point has emphasized formal metaphoric constructions produced by the fusion of photograph and word. For instance, through a careful structural analysis of narrative voice and photograph, Alan Trachtenberg identifies the center to be "the community of men in America searching for a way to convert the loss of pastoral innocence into a gain of personal integrity" (55). Similarly, David Madden builds upon Trachtenberg's structural analysis, but emphasizes the role of reader perception and sensibility in creating the fusion of pictures and words into a "supreme metaphor" (50). Later, Joanne Jacobson assesses some of the ways in which Morris combines the emotional and the visual to "select and preserve daily elements of a way of life that time is threatening" (8). Moreover, in two of the most innovative approaches thus far, Joe Wydeven not only establishes a typology of Morris's metaphoric photographic effects ("Consciousness Refracted" 95), but also a careful analysis of how he uses the camera to show evidence of the "deliberate polarity of this world and another more mysterious and potentially rewarding one" (*Wright Morris Revisited* 40). And most recently, Laura Barrett discusses how Morris's photographs provide a thoughtful counter to the superfluity of deceptive cliches born of the prosperity of post-World War II American society (28).

Therefore, given the paucity of information concerning Gothic designs in Morris's work, my intention in this essay is to formulate

the beginnings of a critical context for assessing the function of such structures in the photo-texts. Although my approach in part builds on what I have said elsewhere about the poetics of intimate places in Morris's work (*Texas Review*), I intend to expand on the dialectics of the "two worlds" theme first suggested by Wayne Booth ("The Two Worlds in the Fiction of Wright Morris"), and subsequently refined by Madden (*Wright Morris*), Crump (*The Novels of Wright Morris*), and Wydeven (*Wright Morris Revisited*).[1] In doing so, I am incorporating the antithetical Gothic notions of *limit* and *transgression,* contrary concepts frequently associated with the violation of boundaries of reality and possibility. According to Fred Botting, the function transgression plays within the Gothic is to question received rules and values so as to identify, reconfigure, and transform commonly accepted limits. Ultimately, the dualistic dynamics of the process both restore and contest boundaries by opening perception to the natural ambivalence manifest in the opposition of good and evil, light and dark, reason and irrationality (*Gothic* 7-9).[2] Significantly, when translated into the context of the photo-texts, this concept is perhaps most clearly articulated spatially through the photographs, and temporally through the fusion of both photo and text. Ultimately, the dialectic Morris establishes in the process serves to examine important American cultural anxieties and fears.

Artistically, the way Morris initiates reader consideration of these anxieties is twofold. First, his photographs betray the affective intensity he has for a landscape reflective of his fascination with time and the dark persistence of the past in haunted relic, all of which are quintessential qualities of Gothicism critic Francis Russell Hart refers to as the "cult of ruin" (85-86).[3] Second, in depicting the relics of this world of ruin, Morris employs extreme contrast, or what is commonly referred to as polar opposition. As Linda Bayer-Berenbaum explains:

> Contrasts are included in Gothic literature because they magnify reality; between the greatest extremes lies the greatest breadth. The constant presence of polar opposites prevents us from mistaking any single dimension for the whole and ... the mind is unable to tolerate extremes for very long. We either avoid, or forget the unbearable or become accustomed to it, yet persistent contrast discourages adjustment, because in the clash between two states we can adjust to neither, and thus any dulling of the senses is averted. (22-23)[4]

Within the Gothic tradition, this technique also reflects what David Punter refers to as the need to render truth through modes of expression other than scientific realism (188). Because the Gothic sensibility assumes that reality is an expanded domain that also includes the irrational, the primitive, and the supernatural, polar opposition affords a useful way of simultaneously emphasizing spatial and temporal extremes. In other words, polar opposition helps alert the mind to the notion that what is commonly thought of as real by society and language is merely a smaller portion of a larger reality that can only be apprehended through expanded consciousness, heightened perception, and refined sensitivity.

Generally, Morris's artistic sensibility seems to connect closely to these assumptions about experience. In *Earthly Delights, Unearthly Adornments,* for example, he chastises contemporary writers who are "idolatrous of the facts" and "skeptical of the imagination" (183). In the same chapter, he also praises medieval painter Hieronymous Bosch for his ability to fuse the "familiar" real and "suppressed" unreal in his "tableaux of horror" ("The Garden of Earthly Delights" 185). Elsewhere, Morris hints that his own sense of reality is bipolar. In *The Territory Ahead,* for instance, he posits the following: "Life, raw life, the kind we lead every day, has the curious property of not seeming real enough. We have a need, however illusive, for a life that is more real than life. It lies in the imagination. Fiction would seem to be the way it is processed into reality" (228-29). Although Morris uses the term, "reality," rather loosely, the above quotation suggests that there are two forms—*ordinary reality,* or "raw life," and what could be called *Reality.* Therefore, whenever the artist invokes imaginative apprehension or expands into the world of sensory experience, he moves beyond one form of reality into another in order to "transform" transitory experience into the permanent form of a work of art (*Territory Ahead* 229). Interestingly enough, the tool used to affect that transformation is the imagination, which from Morris's point of view also is dualistic, drawing its energy from an emotional source that he describes respectively as "positive and life-enhancing" or "negative and life-negating" (*Earthly Delights* 169).

So the artist's fundamental charter, at least by the above definition, implicitly involves crossing boundaries and testing limits, quite literally transgressing frontiers, both physical and psychical. And of special significance in this context is the fact that Morris first began

taking his photographs of the American scene *after* he had returned from an almost surreal *wanderjahr* to 1930s Europe, an experience that propelled him beyond the conventional boundaries of American heartland experience into a bizarre ruined world of crazy Austrian castles peopled by Breughel-like peasants, a kooky Count and his loaf-headed minions, corrupt Fascist police, and grimy Parisian nights replete with homosexual British sailors (*Solo*). Indeed, the effects of this confrontation with the haunted old order were so profound that it obsessed Morris all his life, and he tried repeatedly, and unsuccessfully, to come to grips with it in his fiction, most notably in *Cause for Wonder,* possibly the most purely Gothic of all his works. At any rate, when Morris returned, nearly penniless, to American shores in 1934, he was now armed with what he termed, "new eyes. ... an explorer's sense of discovery" that reinvigorated his sensitivity to the American scene (*Time Pieces* 31), something that he would later echo in the Henry James epigraph to *The Home Place* as, "the superstition that objects and places, coherently grouped, disposed for human use and addressed to it, must have a sense of their own, a mystic meaning proper to themselves to give out ... to the participant at once so interested and detached as to be moved to a report of the matter."

Thus, on the physical level, Morris and his camera subsequently broke upon the empty silences of the American Middle Border, a crossroads where extremes meet and worlds collide, where sheer distance and remote vacancy spawn dreams and nightmares mixed with mysterious visions of hope and despair. Correspondingly, on the psychic level, the visions born of this journey into the new unknown simultaneously move him in two directions: outward into the lives of farmers, townspeople, and the structures they inhabit; and inward into the most profound depths of his own being. In either case, however, the mood evoked is reflective of universal benign and malevolent forces that paradoxically outline the contours of the lofty ideals and deep-seated fears under which the American experience has traditionally been defined. To be sure, it is no accident that Morris begins *The Inhabitants* with a reference to Thoreau. When speaking of lives of quiet psychic desperation in *The Territory Ahead,* Morris shrewdly observes that "somewhere between Walden Pond and Boston—at some point of tension, where these dreams cross—the schizoid soul of the American is polarized" (44). And in the photographs, the center of this tension is given spacial emphasis and

symbolic focus through the many images of the house, or more properly, the "haunted" house.

Of course, the haunted house is at the heart of all Gothic tales. Usually it is alive with a power that perplexes its inhabitants or visitors and its geometry is often uncanny or irregular, a distortion that yields mystery, precludes human control, and endows the building with power beyond its strictly physical dimensions.[5] As well, there is frequently a chamber where no one has dared to enter, and there can be apparitions that endow the structure with a soul-like presence. Most often, the setting is remote or exotic, which serves to defamiliarize perspective and evoke a place and time that is not in the present. Within the Gothic tradition, as Manuel Aguirre points out, such a place is sometimes referred to as an *unheimlich* center—literally a "dark" or "foreboding" home—because it possesses no natural, tangible living presence (92).

Without doubt, variations of the unheimlich obtrude throughout the photo-texts. The ruins are there, the setting is remote, and there are even hidden chambers such as the deserted rooms of Ed's place, which Clyde and Peggy Muncy are hesitant to invade. The soul-like presence exists also. As Morris describes the intrusions of these apparitions in *The Inhabitants*, there is nothing "so crowded, so full of something, as the rooms of a vacant house" (n. pag.). But the way Morris conveys this *unheimlichkeit* in the photographs is through a series of contrasting images—light, then dark, then light and dark.[6] In doing so, Morris uses three broad categories of images to create an emphasis on the numinous "inhabitant."

The first group captures what can be referred to as *diurnal* images of structures and homes that are still in use. In such shots, the dominant color is white, and the prevailing emotion corresponds to felicity and optimism. Examples include. "White House, Cape Cod, 1939," "White Church Facade, Rahway, New Jersey, 1940," and "Gano Grain Elevator, Western Kansas, 1940" (*Photographs & Words* n. pag.).* These particular images evoke a life-enhancing, light-filled vision of a present outlined by limits of order, reason, common sense, and ordinary reality. Fittingly, they capture the telling symbols of this daylight dream—the tidy home, the place of worship, and the place of work. In other words, these are the images of security, prosperity, and self-fulfillment.

*Morris's photographs follow the text of the essay in the order discussed.

By contrast, the second set captures a darker nocturnal quality that is more disturbing. In these shots, the houses are abandoned, the dominant color is gray, and the corresponding emotions are melancholy and loneliness. Frequently, such images feature stark, weather-beaten dwellings that open toward a past in which the limits of reason and rationality have apparently been violated by destructive natural and supernatural forces. In photos such as "Farmhouse near McCook, Nebraska, 1940," "Church near Milford, Nebraska, 1947," and "Faulkner Country, near Oxford, Mississippi, 1940" (*Photographs & Words* n. pag.), for example, the palpable expression of failed dreams, loss, and alienation are the bleak houses themselves, which rise hauntingly upward like tombstones, as if to signal the violation and demise of an American dream.

Finally, Morris includes yet a third set of photographs consisting of images of juxtaposed nocturnal and diurnal structures to signal the tension between competing elements such as past and present, real and ideal, and order and chaos. Included in this category are photographs like "Houses on Incline, Virginia City, Nevada, 1941" (*Photographs & Words* n. pag.), "Western Kansas, Stores with False Fronts, 1943," "Baltimore, Steps Painted and Unpainted, 1940" (*Structures and Artifacts* 51, 24), and "Church and House, Virginia City, 1941" (*Photographs & Words* n. pag.). Most of the time, Morris shoots such structures head-on, a technique which effectively highlights the natural light-and-dark polarity they embody. A striking example is a photo found in *The Inhabitants* that features two row houses side-by-side. One is angled perfectly at 90 degrees to the horizontal, but the other tilts awkwardly off-center, leaning Pisa-like, with walls, windows, and doors askew. Also noteworthy in many of these photos—nocturnal and diurnal alike—is an additional entity, the landscape, embodying subterranean primal forces of birth and death, which may manifest themselves in anything from the benignancy of the well-tended lawn to the savage malignancy of the eroded landscape.

Taken cumulatively, the function of the contrasting dual imagery contained in these three types of photos therefore is to heighten sensitivity and magnify reality. In essence, the pictures provide visual testimony to Morris's statements about the polarity of the American vision. Focused as they are on one Western frontier, now defunct, they signal the opening of another, bounded only by the imagination. As well, they thoughtfully render the notion, as Robert Heilman

observes, that on one hand the American experience provides a variety of dreams, but that it may also provide a corresponding number of nightmares rife with countering doubts, skepticisms, and antipathies (14). Thus, in one sense the photographs offer palpable evidence of the impalpable, that what truly haunts these houses are projections of human dreams, some of which can lure and satisfy, and some of which can also tyrannize and obligate.

Yet another significant function the photos provide is a backdrop for focusing perception on the ways in which humans interact constructively and destructively within their environment. Structurally, this backdrop consists of two main ingredients—an inside world and an outside one—that function much like what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick terms the "spatial model" of Gothic conventions commonly used to focus on the ways in which fictional selves are positioned in texts. As Kosofsky Sedgwick explains, the dialectic of inside and outside drives the Gothic mode of expression because it, too, effectively can convey extreme psychological conditions. The way in which it performs this, however, is through the insertion of a third ingredient—a barrier. Functionally, the barrier is a triggering device used to indicate separation of some sort; for instance, the self may be blocked off from something—the past, family history, a lover, or circumambient life. As a result, this self becomes increasingly isolated and divided because the barrier forces the inner world and the outside world to exist separately, a schism which ultimately produces "doubleness where singleness should be" (12-13).[7]

Morris's photographic technique evokes this additional duality by using worn out structures as markers that correspond to a type of divided internal state caused by lost hopes, failed dreams, isolation, and despair. Quite literally, it is a life which Morris can appreciate, but can truly only share imaginatively because he stands physically outside of it. Fittingly, the camera, too, is kept outside so as to emphasize the separation of the viewing sensibility from the lives of those who once inhabited the structures caught in the photographic frame. Nevertheless, Morris occasionally peeks inside the external shapes and forms in order to view the life within. In *The Home Place*, for example, the quiet corners and sheltered sites of intimacy reflected in the shots of parlors, bedrooms, outdoor privies, corncob stoves, and straight-backed chairs all give veiled glimpses of the so-called "indweller." Nonetheless, even when he is inside, he is still blocked off from truly sharing these lives. As if to punctuate the

point, he includes several pictures of doors—some open, some closed, some half-open—in order to conjure a range of emotional states relative to such a condition, including everything from freedom, welcome, and security, to entrapment, repulsion, and alienation. Among them, one of the most intriguing is a photo that features Uncle Harry, with back turned to the camera, entering the doorway to his own natural space, the shadowy interior of a barn. His foot touches the threshold, and he is suspended half in the light and half out, frozen between two worlds, caught permanently transgressing the limits of one in order to enter the realm of another.

Projected inward and outward, these images of space are disorienting because the code they reflect is not a simple one in which past is encoded in present, or present in past. Rather, they reflect a condition associated with the Gothic mode, one David Punter describes as a dialectical state in which past and present intertwine and distort one another, thereby demonstrating that "individual involvement with the world is not merely linear but is composed of moments with resonances and depths which can only be captured through the disruptive power of extensive metaphor and symbolism" (198). Photographs such as "Reflection in Oval Mirror, Home Place, 1947," for example, express this very clearly (*Photographs & Words* n. pag.). The photo features the corner of a parlor with a table containing several rows of photographs of generations of family members. On one side of the table, a door stands unhinged, symbolically suggesting the removal of a barrier to the past which the photographer is now privileged to enter. Ironically, however, the access it provides is disjointed because the photograph is shot through the reflection of a mirror, which simultaneously reverses the image and also distorts it, an effect that can actually be detected in the wavy refraction of the mirror's surface. Elsewhere, Morris achieves this intertexture in photos such as "Model T with California Top, Ed's Place, 1947" (*Photographs & Words* n. pag.). In this photograph of a classic American symbol of industrial innovation, the shadowy outline of the photographer and his camera is actually visible near the base of the picture. The effect this shadow casts on the photo is to reveal an intrusive other, one who is both inside and outside the frame, but who violates the boundaries and in doing so somehow disorders and diffuses them.

In *The Home Place* and *The World in the Attic,* companion pieces that were both originally intended as photo-texts (Madden 49), this

intrusive presence is given fictive form in the shape of Clyde Muncy, a refugee writer who returns to Nebraska with his wife and two children after fleeing a housing shortage in New York. While visiting the Nebraska home of his Uncle Harry and Aunt Clara, Muncy is notified that a neighboring farmhouse has become available upon the death of their Uncle Ed, someone Clyde never knew. The Muncys nearly decide to move in, but ultimately resolve that they cannot because the house is "haunted' by a mystical presence that permeates the inner sanctum enclosed within its walls (*Home Place* 130). But in *The Home Place*, this numinous presence is largely benign, and corresponds closely to the tone established by the look of Morris's bright, diurnal photographs.

In articulating the sensation the experience conjures up, Morris writes:

> There's something in the rooms, in the air, that raising the windows won't let out. ... There's a pattern on the walls, where the calendar's hung, and the tipped square of a missing picture is a lidded eye on something private, something better not seen. There's a path worn into the carpet, between the bed and the door. ... The pattern doesn't come with the house, nor the blueprints with the rug. The figure in the carpet is what you have when the people have lived there, died there, and when evicted, refused to leave the house. (132)

The mystical figure referred to here is the imprint left of the interaction between humans and the structures they inhabit. However, the supernatural force in this case is not a sinister one; rather, it has ascribed to it a sort of "holiness," which is also closely aligned with a set of Midwestern Protestant values under which Uncle Ed, Uncle Harry, and Aunt Clara operate. Specifically, those "holy" values are stated as, "abstinence, frugality, and independence—the home grown, made-on-the-farm trinity," qualities which the Muncys are reluctant to transgress (*Home Place* 143).

Operationally, these values are also used to factor in a set of limits to the fictive equation presented in both books. In *The Home Place*, such qualities are useful in several contexts, say, for conquering frontiers, turning deserts into gardens, teaching self-reliance, and building towns. However, as *The World in the Attic* makes clear, establishing one set of limitations inevitably violates others. Like the nocturnal images which it reflects, this disturbing sequel to *The Home Place* again focuses on the Muncys, who by now have moved

on to a Kansas town named Junction, ostensibly to visit Clyde's old school friend, Bud Hibbard. While there, they encounter another haunted house, only this time it is not the humble dwelling of a deceased bachelor, but a sprawling seventeen-room mansion inhabited by two eccentric widows: Bud's grandmother, Aunt Angie; and Miss Caddie, an aunt who came from a mysterious location in Southern Indiana and was formerly married to Bud's uncle, Clinton. The ladies cannot get along, and after Clinton dies, Angie immures herself, in near Edgar Allan Poe fashion, and refuses to enter any portion of the house other than the kitchen and the basement. Meanwhile, Caddy retreats to the private world of an upstairs bedroom, where she exists almost totally in bed until her death.

On one level, this mansion, which is also referred to as the "attic," is thus a disturbing counter to the extreme embodied in the modest, functional farm home of Uncle Harry and Aunt Clara. Clearly, it is also a manifestation of the psychic division suggested by Morris's darker photographs. In diametric opposition to the ordered sanctity of the home place, stands the profane, dysfunctional superfluity of the Hibbard mansion. And caught in the middle—literally and figuratively at the "Junction" of East and West—are the Muncys, who witness firsthand the losses and gains associated with both forms of American experience. Naturally, it terrifies them, for here the airy dream of home place nostalgia has been exchanged for the nightmarish vulgarity of nauseating reality. As Morris explains, "Everything is there in the hot afternoon, there in the room and the open window, everything is there, in abundance, to make life possible. But very little to make it tolerable. Any one of these things, at a time, is nostalgia—but taken together, in a single lump, it is home-town nausea" (*World in the Attic* 26). On the one hand, abstinence may lead to restraint, but it may also dehumanize and disconnect. Frugality may be important for economic contingencies, but it can also produce unnatural excess. Independence may produce self-reliance, but it can also create crippling isolation.

When considered within the larger Gothic context, then, the cumulative symbolic function provided by the photo-texts is to suggest an outline of some of the limits of space, time, and culture. Accordingly, these texts abide on a physical and psychic frontier bounded by a benign and malevolent dualism conceived in internal rather than external terms. Thus, Morris's brand of Gothicism, like the larger American tradition to which it belongs, uses the land and

its inhabitants to project disturbing internal states of mind and being (Folsom 30).[8] In doing so, he employs photograph and word to metaphorically explore the quintessential American question of where one is at home. However, his disturbing discovery seems to be that there is no single home place, but rather several, all with changing features, emphasis, and meanings, and all incompatible in their values. Therefore, from such a perspective, one story told by these texts is actually a ghost story, an evocation of the empty spaces and remote vacancies of a tenuous past for which Wright Morris's feelings are ambivalent and polarized between nostalgia and nausea, gain and loss, belonging and alienation.

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NOTES

1. To Booth, Morris's fiction manifests a highly sophisticated dialectic between the "phony" and the "real," or the timebound everyday world of "reality" and the timeless world of a more perfect Platonic reality. Booth says, "the real world, gruesome as it is, is not as real as it looks. To endure it, indeed to live in it at all, a man must ... find a more genuine reality by getting 'out of this world'" (377). According to Booth, Morris's characters get out in three ways: (1) through heroism; (2) through imagination; or (3) through love. As a result, "whatever has been really done, imagined, or felt has been, in fact, recreated, transformed from one world into another" (395). Using Booth as a touchstone, other critics, such as David Madden, have investigated the hero-witness relationship in the novels, the role of nostalgia and the use of the past in his fiction, and the relationship of Morris and his work to American culture (*Wright Morris*). However, G. B. Crump (*The Novels of Wright Morris*) and Joe Wydeven (*Wright Morris Revisited*) suggest that Booth's notion of Platonism places too much emphasis on escape and takes Morris's metaphor "out of this world" perhaps too literally because he does not use the phrase to signify that a given character has left the world completely behind. For instance, although Crump maintains Booth's emphasis on "twoness," he distinguishes between those novels which emphasize *transcendence* (the eternal or fiction) and those which emphasize *immanence* (the present or fact) (*Novels* 1-27).
2. From Botting's perspective, for example, the many dualistic images of light and dark found in Gothic texts focus explicitly and implicitly on the "acceptable and unacceptable sides of the limits that regulate social distinctions" (*Gothic* 8). In other words, the play of oppositions manifest in such imagery—sacred/profane, real/fantastic, past/present, rational/fanciful etc.—"means that Gothic is an inscription neither of darkness nor of light, a delineation neither of reason and morality nor of superstition and corruption, neither good nor evil, but both at the same time" (*Gothic* 9). Accordingly, the role transgression plays is thus twofold: (1) to interrogate received rules and values; and (2) to identify, reconstitute, and transform limits (*Gothic* 8).
3. According to Linda Bayer-Berenbaum, ruins also indicate the limitless power of nature over human creation. Thus, in Gothic art, the decay of a building raises the question of death and forces the confrontation with time and the eternal forces of destruction. In effect, the contrast between eternity and temporality made manifest by such ruins "stretches consciousness" (*Gothic Imagination* 26).

4. In addition to Bayer-Berenbaum, Heilman ("The Dream Metaphor" 6), Newton (*Romantic Rebellion* 153), and Punter (*Literature of Terror* 188, 198), for instance, all suggest that Gothic writers capitalize on unresolved spatial and temporal extremes to heighten sensitivity and magnify reality. As Newton explains, "Not conflict, ... but the exposure of conflict," is the aim, "for mystery is the sign of tensions unresolved that leave behind them an unanswered question. And abnormality is a sign that the conflict is still undecided, the resolution beyond guessing at, and wonderment more potent than satisfaction" (*Romantic Rebellion* 153).
5. Bayer-Berenbaum also notes that irregularity produces imaginative enlargement: "When one views the partiality of ruins, the enlargement that the imagination provides in its attempt to reconstruct the buildings can surpass the original measurements" (*Gothic Imagination* 28).
6. Of course, setting has much to do with enhancing the *unheimlichkeit.* Typically, the foreign, the exotic, and the barbaric serve as background and source for arousing the numinous presence (*The Closed Space* 92). However, Gothic of the sort Morris produces employs remote vacancy—the emptiness of the Great Plains, for example—to evoke the sublime in the horizontal. Therefore, instead of relying on common Gothic elements such as darkness and silence to evoke spiritual presence (Varnado 17), Morris more often uses empty distance to do so.
7. As Mark Madoff explains this phenomena, in Gothic the *outside* is also frequently associated with the present, and with order and reason. By contrast, *inside* opens toward the past, and is associated with what is ancient, disorderly, passionate, and indecorous. Thus, the Gothic protagonist transgresses these boundaries for two reasons: (1) "*because* the outside is open, obvious, familiar, and unsatisfying in its simplicity and rationality;" and (2) "*because* the inside is closed, obscure, exotic, and alluring" ("Inside, Outside" 51). However contemptible or fascinating the inside may be, however, the transgression typically opens upon unrestrained egoism and unexpected, inexplicable peril ("Inside, Outside" 50-52).
8. Folsom observes that the heart of all Gothic writing is the exploration of the duality—benign and malevolent—of human nature ("Gothicism" 36).

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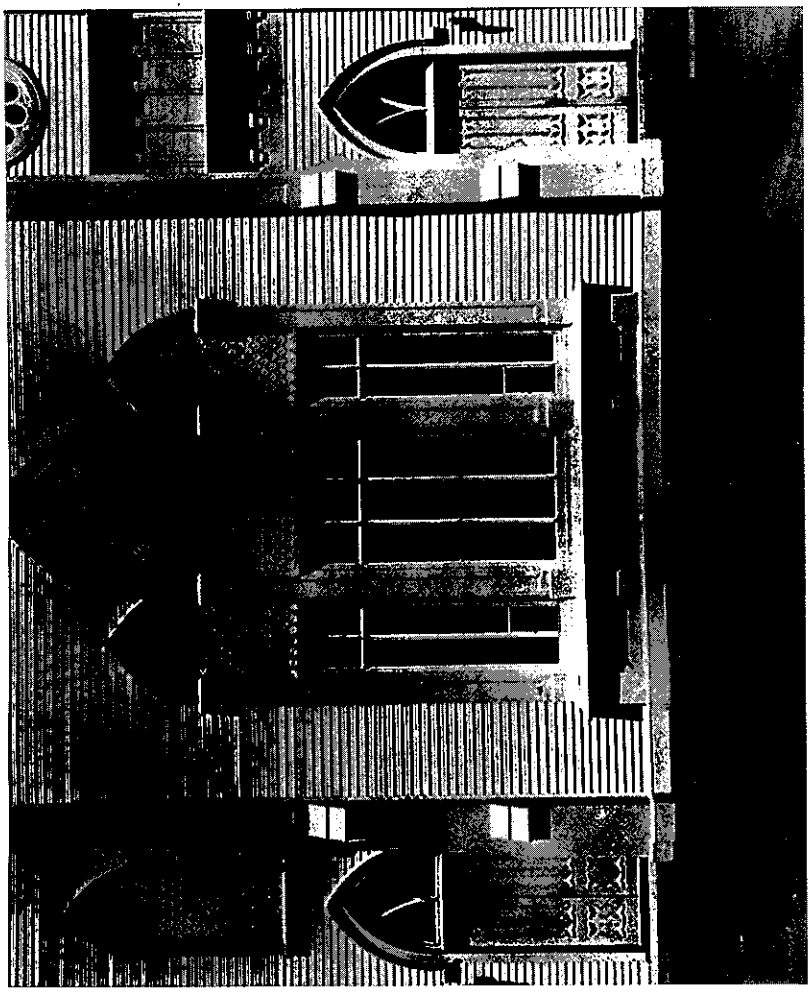
Wright Morris, *White House, Cape Cod, 1939.* Reprinted with permission of Josephine Morris.



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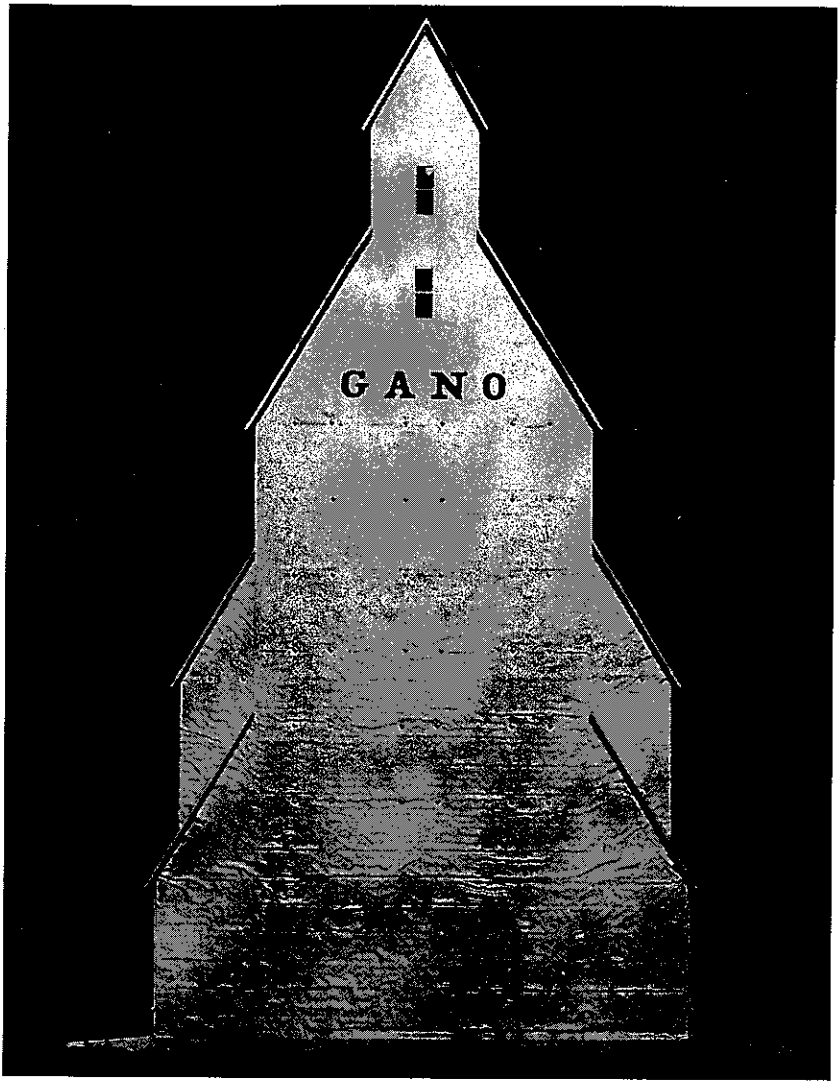

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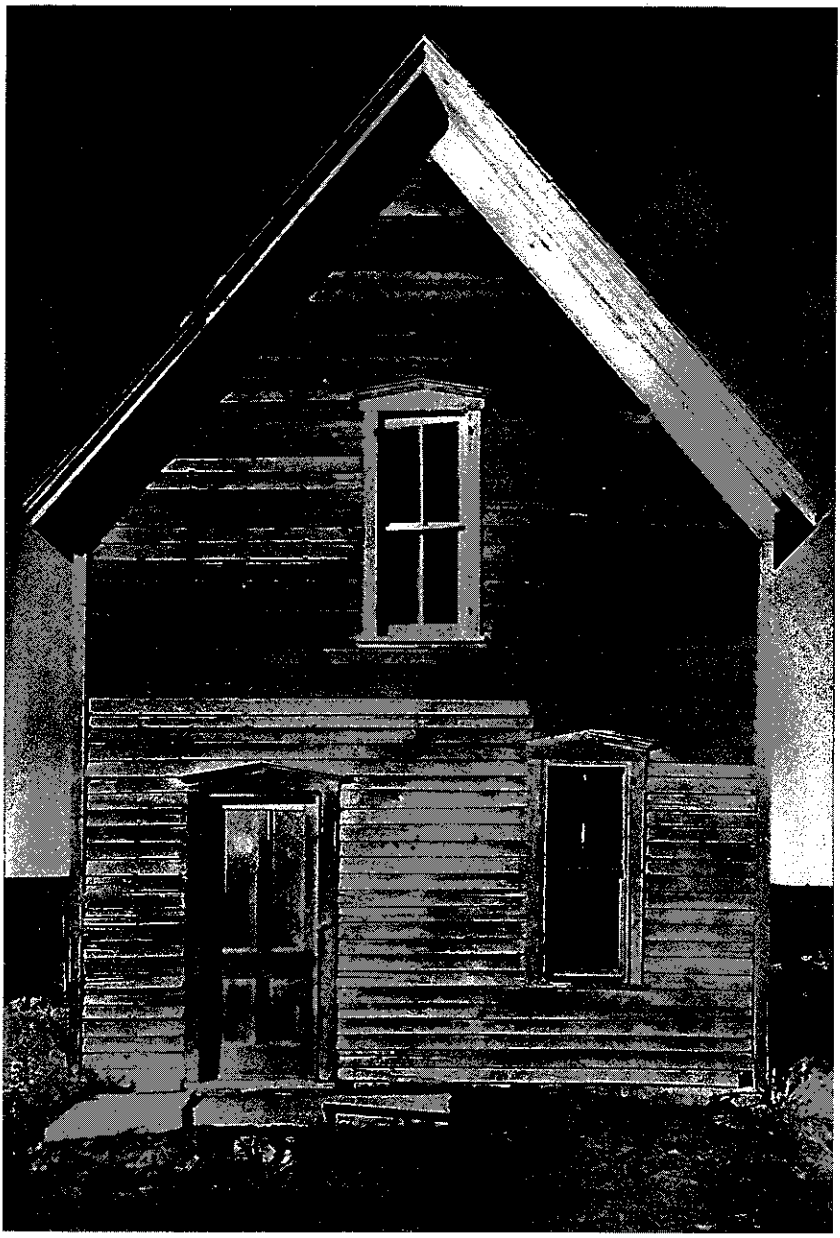

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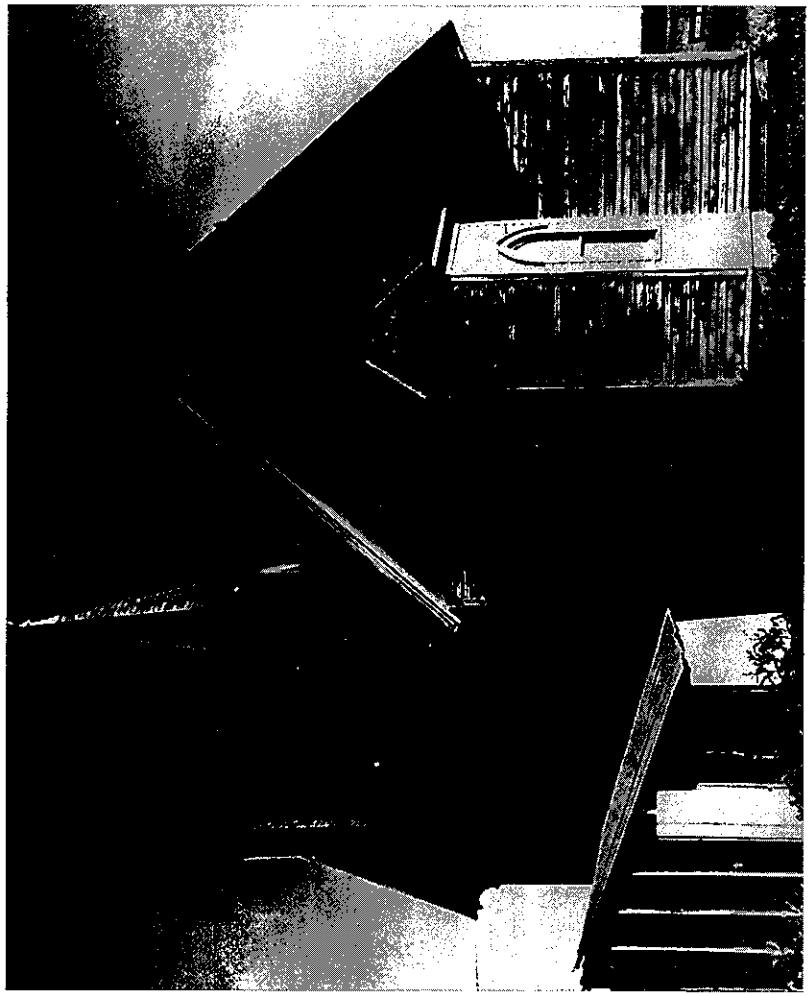

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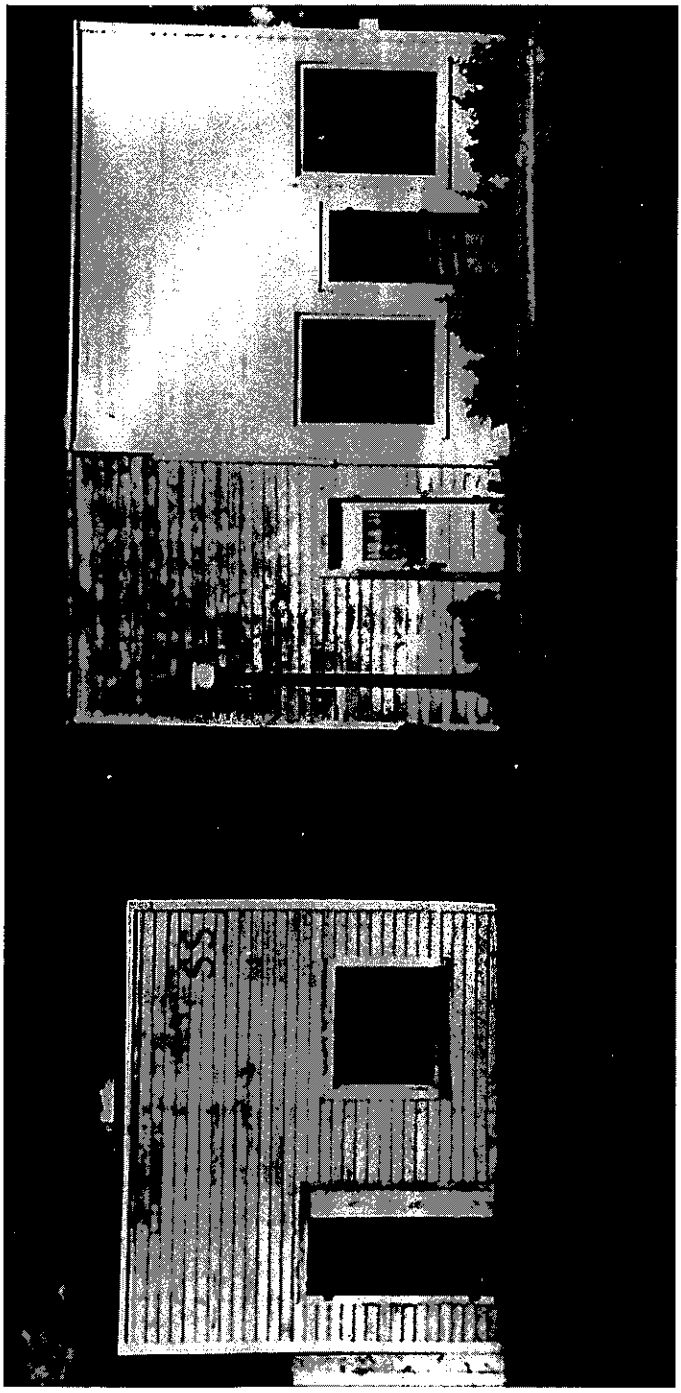
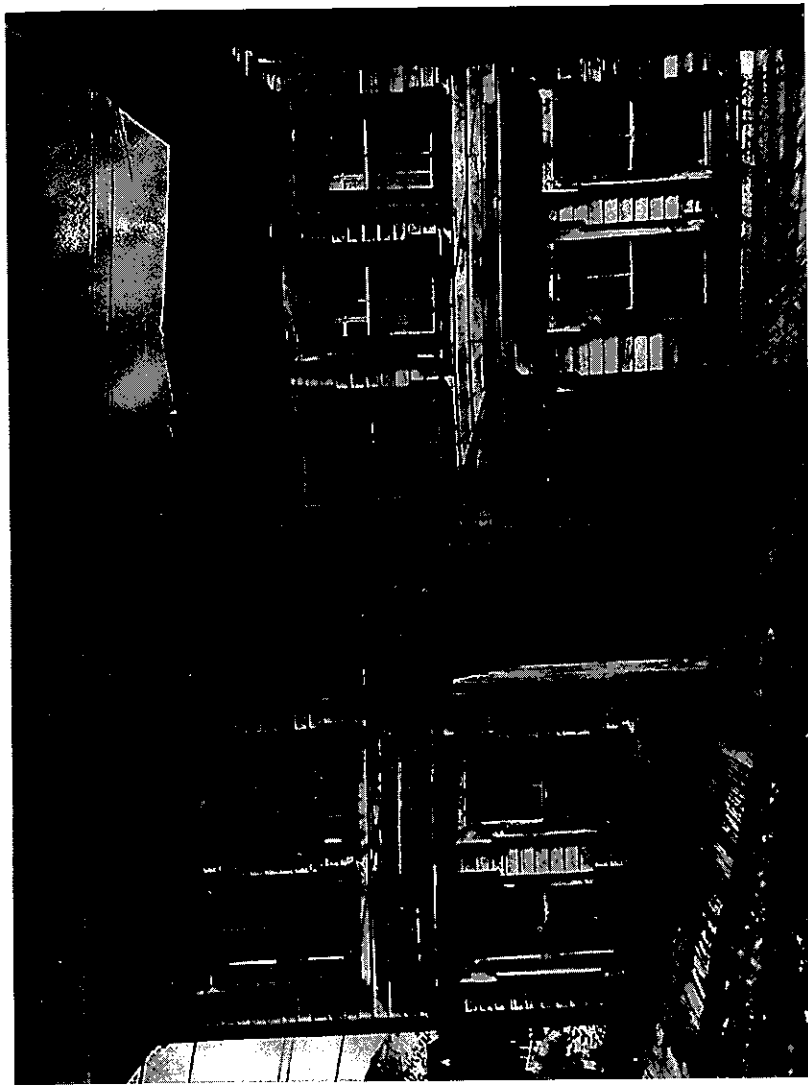


Wright Morris, *Western Kansas, Stores with False Fronts, 1943*. Reprinted with permission of Josephine Morris.



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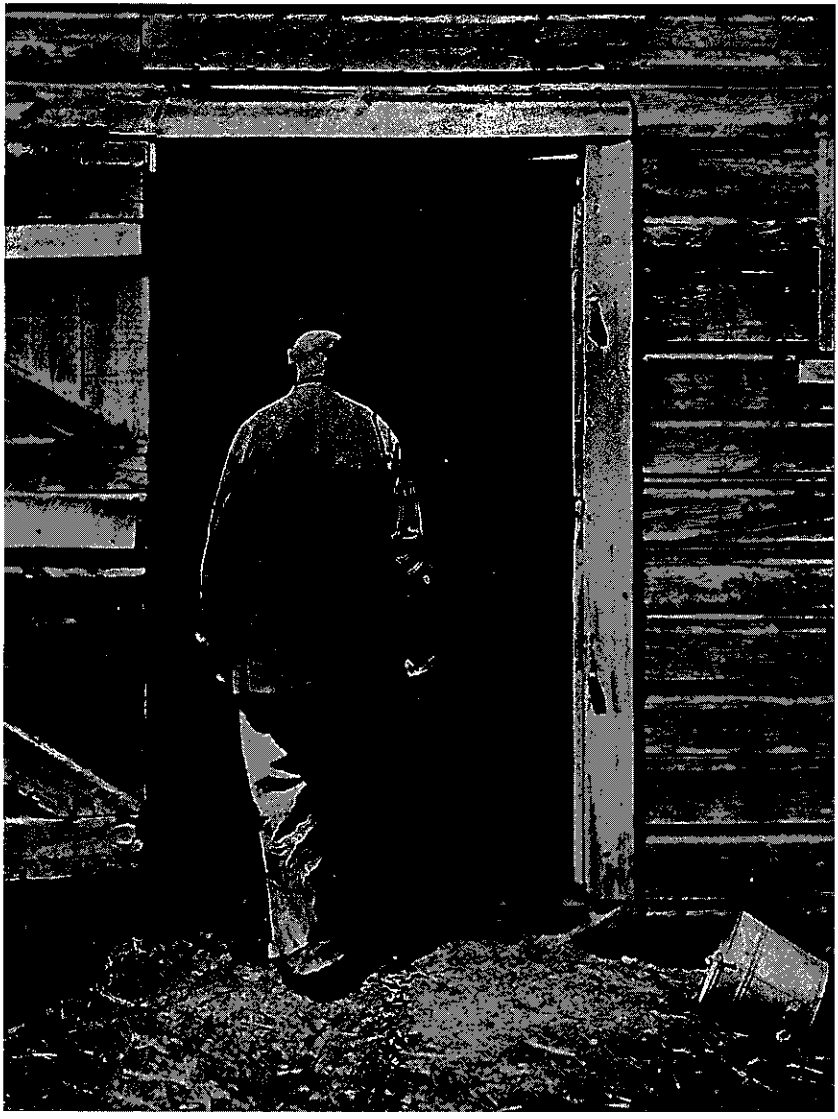
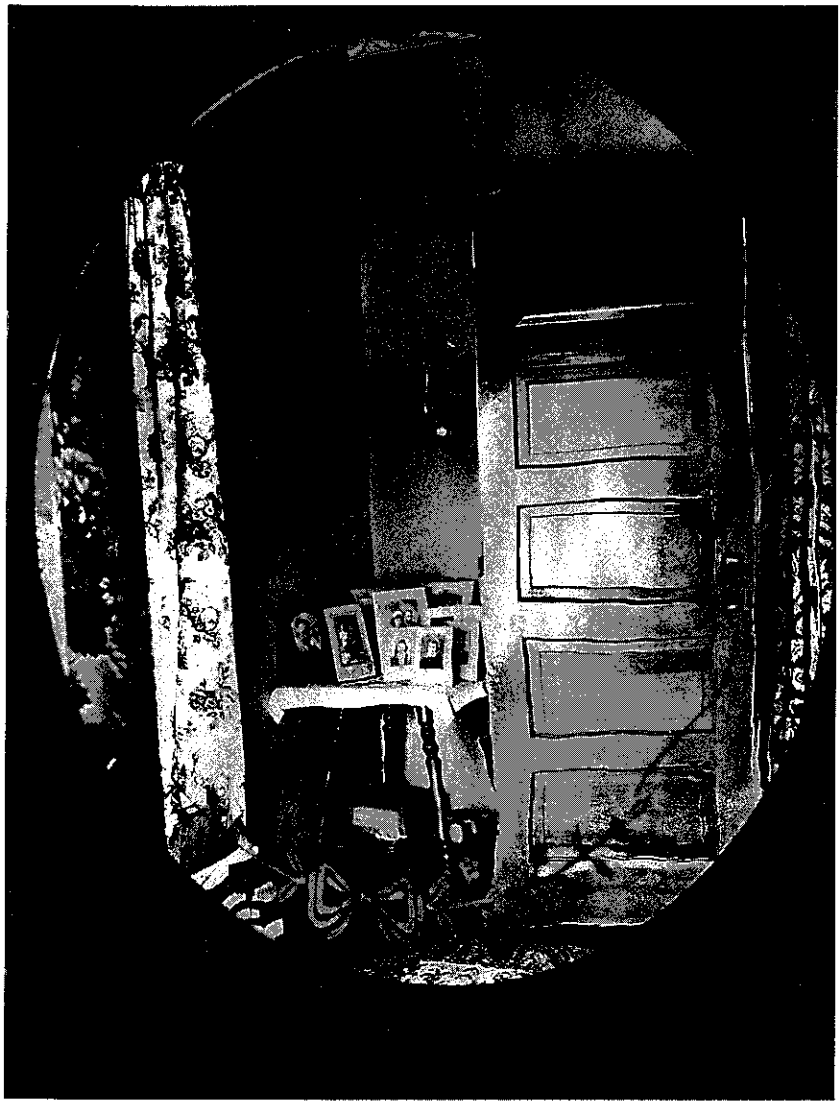
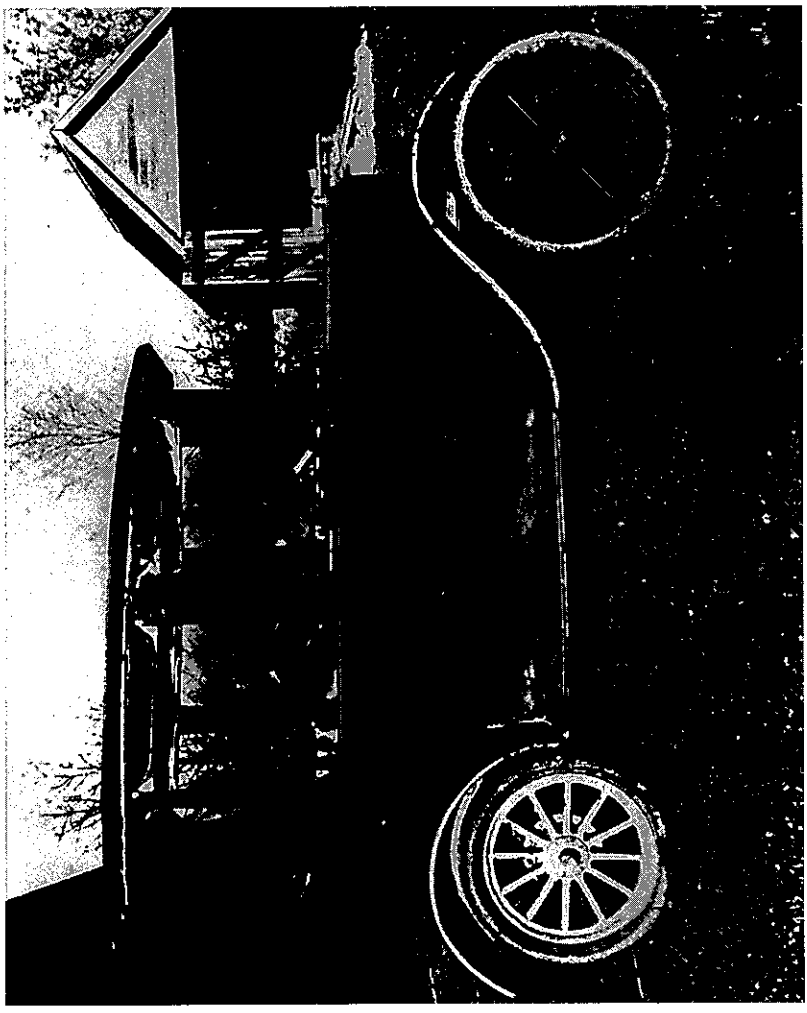


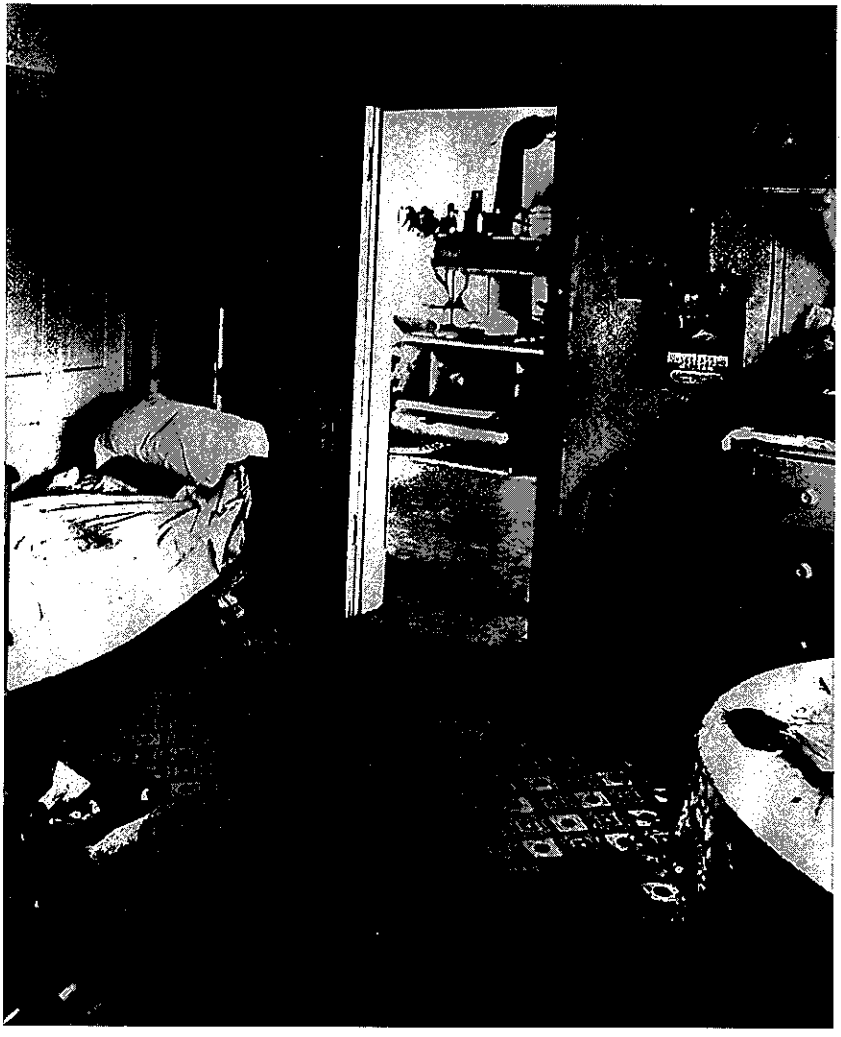
Wright Morris, *Uncle Harry, Home Place, Norfolk, Nebraska, 1947.* Reprinted with permission of Josephine Morris.



Wright Morris, *Reflection in Oval Mirror, Home Place, 1947.* Reprinted with permission of Josephine Morris.



Wright Morris, *Model T with California Top, Ed's Place, 1947.* Reprinted with permission of Josephine Morris.



Wright Morris, *View into Kitchen, Ed's Place, Near Norfolk, Nebraska, 1947.* Reprinted with permission of Josephine Morris.

LIVING IN BRAINARD: THE MEMORY OF PLACE IN DAN GERBER'S *GRASS FIRES*

TODD DAVIS

> In our literature, when community enters at all, it is likely to appear as a Conspiracy against the free soul of a hero or heroine.
>
> Scott Russell Sanders, *Writing from the Center*

Although Dan Gerber's *Grass Fires* suggests immediate comparison to Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*—all of the stories are set in a small Midwestern town where the understated lives of its residents unfold—unlike Anderson's masterpiece, Gerber's collection is not focused around the education and desired flight of one particular citizen. Rather than use a single character as focalizer, Gerber employs the idea of place, more specifically the memory of place, as a means of focalization. In the story "Things Are Closer than They Appear," collected in *Grass Fires,* one of Gerber's narrators says about her dead mother that "my memories of the house must be hers as well. Funny how the mind works, how it goes on in others" (155). Like the memory of someone long dead whose life continues on in those who still live, Gerber's stories insist that we remember each character, each event that has come before, suggesting that all moments in the life of a place matter; nothing is superfluous. It is through this accretion of often ordinary detail that Gerber convincingly demonstrates that the memory of place is the memory of the people who have lived and died in that place. Put simply, the narrators who people Gerber's fiction are the way they are because they live in Brainard, and Brainard is the way it is because of those very same people who year after year attempt to carve out a life in the rolling hills and woodlots of Western Michigan. By concentrating on the commonplace—the everyday events, people, and locales that Brainard's citizens have become so accustomed to seeing that at times their presence no longer registers—Gerber challenges us to

notice the symbiotic relationship that develops between a place and its people. His stories call attention to the small moments of beauty that may be shared when we begin to make note of a yard sale or the work of a crop duster; his writing urges us to mark the sacred in the plain and mundane rhythms of small town, Midwestern life. Ultimately, *Grass Fires* dares its readers to notice their own place in their own community, to cease neglecting what is most precious.

By demonstrating the veracity and worthiness of lives not unlike our own, Gerber creates a collection of stories that, as Jim Harrison suggests in a note printed on the book's jacket, does nothing to say, "Look, we are fiction." Using a flat, understated style, Gerber does not wish for his stories to draw attention to their own fictive nature, nor does he wish for them to fall back into traditional forms that seek to fulfill readerly expectations for closure and resolution. Reading *Grass Fires,* one might be tempted to characterize the volume as a foray into a mixed genre: a kind of minimalist fiction with a debt to the New Journalism of the late 1960s. While clearly Gerber, as author, must make decisions about what will happen in the course of his stories—after all these are not "real" people and Brainard is not a "real" town—the stories, nonetheless, carry the weight of plausibility, describing incidents that might occur in any small town found in the Great Lakes region. In a review of the collection, James Grinnell explains that in *Grass Fires* "we hear tales of ordinary people struggling with the usual conflicts of late twentieth-century life—disintegrating marriages and relationships, unrequited love, inflated expectations, boredom, and death" (323). But where Grinnell finds fault with the collection, complaining that the "major shortcoming of Gerber's book is this: the stories are a little too commonplace and, consequently, less than memorable" (323), I find the book's most remarkable strength. While admittedly there are no "Joycean epiphanies of self-awareness" in *Grass Fires,* I contend that the stories are to be read as a single narrative, as Brainard's own bildungsroman. Rather than a search for individual self-discovery, often associated with epiphanic moments of self-realization, Gerber appears to focus his energy on the task of fashioning a new literary form with the sole purpose of chronicling communal epiphanies. Moreover, Gerber's way of seeing the world, informed by his devotion to Zen Buddhism, dictates that we will not find an equivalent for Winesburg's George Willard among the orchard farms and factories of Gerber's fictionalized Western Michigan. Instead, he offers a series of stories that shift

from the individual to the family and, ultimately, to Brainard as a living, developing community whose very being is shaped by the land and its people. By looking across *Grass Fires* the way one might look across a town from the vantage of a hill a mile or two beyond the city limit, we see how these stories relate the larger epiphanies of an entire community, proffering a testimony to the profundity of a collective life, transcending the boundaries of the individual by delving into the memory of place.

In her volume of insightful essays, *Letters from the Country,* Carol Bly contends that "Rural people tend to think history takes place at My Lai, not here" (173). For the most part, the television media and the publishing industry have done little to debunk such a myth. By focusing the vast majority of their coverage on urban stories and events, these powerful shapers of our national consciousness have helped to perpetuate the unfounded idea that what occurs daily in the countryside is of no import when compared with the events of New York City or Chicago or Los Angeles; by highlighting news that is rooted in urban experience, the media establishes a false hierarchy of value. In an attempt to combat such notions, in his poetry, fiction, and nonfiction Gerber repeatedly chooses to concentrate on out-of-the-way places, particularly small villages and crossroads in his home state of Michigan. Beginning *Grass Fires* with an epigraph from Flaubert—"Bovary is me"—Gerber suggests that, like Flaubert, there is no clear division between his characters' experiences and his own: Brainard is not unlike Gerber's real home in Leland, Michigan, and the small tragedies and oft forgotten triumphs of its citizens not unlike those of his neighbors. Working in a similar vein, Zen poet and essayist Gary Snyder asserts that we cannot view humans as separate from the communities or "systems" in which they reside, nor can we understand a certain person as an individual that somehow presides over or is set apart from his or her community. Instead, Snyder maintains that "in many ways we are not separate entities; we are all sharing, living in, the same nervous system" (21). How Gerber maps the intricate web of Brainard's "nervous system" and the role memory plays in perpetuating such a system is a large part of the book's beauty. "Yard Sale," the volume's initial story, establishes the role of memory and the dynamic of community while at the same time deconstructing the myth that rural life is not as worthy a subject as urban life for the making of fiction.

In "Yard Sale," a local medical doctor tells us about his dislike for selling what was once used in his home; about the fragile beauty of late spring in Brainard and the blossoms that will be washed away with the first hard rain; about the impossibility of facing the death of a young woman who had been the childhood friend of his daughter and who had only that afternoon died in his care. Like all of the stories in *Grass Fires,* in "Yard Sale" Gerber uses first person narration to provide a means for immediate connection. Such a technique thrusts a kind of intimacy upon the reader from the very first sentence, making us privy to the most personal details of the narrator's life. A good example of this type of connection and the potential revelations it anticipates may be found in the second paragraph of "Yard Sale." Here we learn how Dr. Walsh landed in this small town, making a home and a life out of the many artifacts now being sold by his wife in a sale on their lawn. He tells us about leaving Detroit nearly thirty years earlier, how he pictured himself a medical missionary of sorts: the noble doctor sacrificing the pleasantries and luxuries of an urban existence—not to mention the lost financial security promised by Detroit's swank suburbs—in order to travel to the west, to a land of farmers and undereducated factory workers. Walsh tells us that he thought he "would bring good medicine to the sticks." Yet over the course of his life he has come to see that "this isn't the sticks. It's a place, a good place, and when I go back to Detroit, that's what seems strange to me" (12). Not until Walsh begins to live in Brainard—becoming a part of the lives of its people, entering into its very memory—can he see it for what it truly is: "a good place." Like most, Walsh imagines he understands a region without truly experiencing it. Nothing could be further from the truth, of course, but, truths of this nature take time and relationship to come to fruition, and, in the end, it is this "good place"—its community of workers, its topography, its geography, its very history—that transforms Walsh. As he says, it's Detroit that "seems strange to me" now.

Aptly, as the first story in the collection, "Yard Sale" establishes both the importance and value of rural life—the way a "good place" is shaped by the lives of its residents and, in turn, the way its residents lives are shaped by such a place—themes integral to Gerber's vision. But, more importantly, "Yard Sale" also explores the function of memory and how memory always demands connection to others; memory is seldom experienced as an isolated event. While the story begins with Walsh going to work in the morning and ends

with his return from work in the evening, the narrative does not follow a linear or chronological sequence. Instead Gerber gives us a tale of associative leaps, taking us through the sometimes painful, sometimes sweet memories of the doctor's family. Helping his wife Alice prepare for the sale, Walsh is confronted with his past through the many items they lug down from the attic. As he explains, the rollerskates and bicycles and baseball shoes remind him "of what we aren't anymore" (11). These domestic objects function as touchstones—keys that unlock the doors of his past that now keep him removed from the horror of his father's suicide or the delight of the plays his children and their friends put on in summers long past. Although Walsh complains that yard sales have "always seemed to me like airing your dirty laundry. All the cast-off debris of people's lives laid out on tables to be picked over by anyone curious" (11), the very form his story takes is that of a yard sale. He lays his memories out in no particular order on the card tables of his past, telling stories about people who are no longer living or whose lives have been altered by the course of time. In setting out such memories, however, Walsh demonstrates that the events of Brainard's history, of which he is a part, are bonds that cannot be broken by mere forgetfulness.

In "The Common Life," Scott Russell Sanders explains this idea as "the respect I feel for the long, slow accumulation of knowledge that informs our simplest acts" (68). For Walsh, the death of Nancy, his daughter's childhood friend, takes on added dimensions because of this "long, slow accumulation of knowledge." If he had stayed to practice medicine in Detroit, the death of a patient in the ER likely would not carry the same emotional weight. As he says, "I'd read of patients dying of asthma attacks. I've read of people dying of measles, but you don't expect to see it in a small town ER. You expect cardiacs and farm and highway accidents, drownings in the summer, gunshot wounds in the fall. But you don't expect a beautiful young woman with a six-year-old daughter to suffocate in your arms on what might have been the prettiest day of the year" (14). Because of shared experience—the many afternoons and evenings that this woman spent with Walsh's daughter when they were children—he cannot ignore the import of her death. With the death of even one person, Brainard changes. Like the relics of our past that find their way into yard sales, such events, despite the passage of time, continue to exert a force and influence that in large part determines the present.

With "Yard Sale" Gerber establishes the tone for *Grass Fires.* Like Sanders, Gerber works through an accumulation of knowledge and detail, but, in doing so, Gerber seeks to explore the fragility of life and how we might come to terms with it. "Yard Sale" ends with Walsh's wife observing that all of spring's rich blossoms will be gone with the first hard rain, and, while the story seems to suggest that this is true, it also intimates that this day will become part of the larger fabric of shared life in Brainard. Composed of nineteen different stories, *Grass Fires* offers glimpses into the lives of prison convicts, fishermen, house wives, factory workers, lovers, truckers, and CEOs. Because each narrates his or her own story, we are prevented from becoming attached to any single character as a hero or heroine—a narrative decision that thwarts our expectations and desire for the individual as opposed to the communal. Gerber also never allows Brainard to become a symbol or metaphor for something else; it remains solidly rooted in the facts of the natural world. Lionel Basney contends that "work brings into focus ... the concrete, prosaic actuality of [a] place and its history. Work cannot be treated metaphorically without ceasing to be work; and a place cannot be too figurative without ceasing to be the place itself" (141). For this reason, each story in *Grass Fires* highlights the kind of work the narrator and his or her companions do. Unlike many literary traditions where the kind of work one does seems incidental at best, Gerber toils in a form that builds the description of work into the story, proposing to the reader that what one does impacts how one acts and thinks. Because of this, what the residents of Brainard do with each other and the land they inhabit, both at work and at play, becomes the real story of *Grass Fires.* As Wendell Berry explains in his essay, "Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community," "respect always implies imagination—the ability to see one another, across our inevitable differences, as living souls" (173). Gerber not only treats his subjects with respect, in *Grass Fires* he asks us to become the kind of readers who see the importance of the commonplace, who can imagine the significance of the communal.

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(MIS)READING THE REGION: MIDWESTERN INNOCENCE IN THE FICTION OF JAY McINERNEY

MARCIA NOE

Well, East coast girls are hip,
I really dig those styles they wear.
And the southern girls with the way they talk,
They knock me out when I'm down there.
The midwest farmers' daughters
Really make you feel alright.
And the northern girls with the way they kiss,
They keep their boyfriends warm at night.[1]

Brian Wilson's "California Girls," which celebrates the relative charms of American women from several regions, suggests through understatement and contrast that Midwestern girls are considerably less sophisticated, alluring, and sexually skillful than girls from other parts of the country. In this respect the song participates with many other texts of both popular and high culture in the construction of the Midwest as the locus of innocence, goodness, wholesomeness, and naïveté.

The notion of the innocent Midwest is an old one, ultimately deriving from the pastoral tradition of Theocritus and Virgil that sees the city as decadent and the country as a refuge where jaded urbanites can find rest and refreshment through communion with Nature. In the 18th century the French Physiocrats, with their view of Nature as a source of goodness that produced virtue in those who worked the land, laid the groundwork for a strong agrarian orientation in the United States, as seen in the works of Franklin, Jefferson and, particularly, Crevecoeur.[2] The latter's notion that the middle border, situated between the lawless wilderness and the corrupt cities of the eastern seaboard, was the ideal location for settlement was one of the first representations in our literature of the innocent Middle West.

Nineteenth century prairie realists such as E. W. Howe, and Joseph Kirkland later deconstructed this notion in novels such as *The Story of a Country Town* and *Zury.* Early twentieth century works by Edgar Lee Masters, Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis also reflected the death of the agrarian ideal, yet the image of the innocent Midwest lives on in the American cultural imagination.

Evidence abounds, especially in the popular press. In *The Chronicle of Higher Education* a young engineering professor is said to project "an appealing Midwestern ingenuousness."[3] Anita Baker, describing her first date with her husband in *New Woman,* comments, "We met in Washington, DC and toured the monuments. He brought an instamatic camera, and I remember thinking, 'What a hick this guy is, how Midwest!'"[4]

A *Self* article about pedophiles describes the subjects attending their national conference: "They didn't look very sophisticated or urbane, more like Midwestern farmers."[5] In a *Good Housekeeping* interview, television personality Mary Hart, a South Dakota native, says, "I'm pleased if viewers see me as a good, wholesome American woman with Midwest values."[6]

The Midwest is associated with innocence in a number of literary texts as well. *A Chance Acquaintance* (1873), William Dean Howells's story of Western democratic values in conflict with Bostonian aristocratic pretensions, features Midwesterner Kitty Ellison, who, tasting her first glass of the bubbly, exclaims, "Why, I thought you had to learn to like champagne."[7] In Edith Wharton's *The Custom of the Country* (1913), Undine Sprague's Midwestern education has not prepared her to understand why a new mansion on Fifth Avenue is less prestigious than an old family home in Washington Square or portrait painter Claud Popple is a less advantageous acquaintance than Ralph Marvell, whose mother was a Dagonet.[8]

Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook's *Suppressed Desires* (1915) contrasts the sophistication of two Greenwich villagers with the naïveté of a Chicagoan who thinks that psychoanalysis is a new kind of explosive and whose traditional attitude toward marriage is ridiculed as conventional and bourgeois.[9] And in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1962), George obliquely characterizes Honey and Nick as naive by repeatedly referring to their native region: "It's all about a nice young couple who come out of the Middle West. It's a bucolic you see. AND, this nice young couple comes out of the

Middle West, and he's blond and about thirty, and he's a scientist, a teacher, a scientist ... and his mouse is a wifey little type who gargles brandy all the time. ..."[10]

Like the writers quoted above, novelist Jay McInerney frequently invokes the image of the Midwest to suggest naïveté and innocence. The nameless second person narrator and protagonist of *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) says, "In the heartland of the country, carnage is usually the result of acts of God. In the city it's man-made—arson, rape, murder. Anything that goes wrong in other parts of the world can usually be attributed to the brutishness of foreigners. It's a nice simple world view."[11]

Here and elsewhere in the novel the narrator's simplistic vision of the Midwest functions as an index of his immaturity and inexperience. *Bright Lights, Big City* is a Bildungsroman, the story of a 24-year old's struggle to become an adult during a crucial week in his life during which he comes to terms with the death of his mother, the breakup of his marriage, and the loss of his job as a fact-checker at a prestigious New York City magazine. His nighttime odyssey through Manhattan's bars and discotheques as he attempts to assuage his pain with cocaine and women at times resembles a similar journey taken by Holden Caulfield, another fictional New Yorker who also struggled with loss, evil, and human limitations. His narrative voice, a paradoxical blend of youthful angst overlaid with hip cynicism, also recalls Salinger's protagonist.

McInerney's narrator resembles Holden Caulfield in yet another respect: although bright and well educated, he is very much a naïf on a quest, an innocent adrift in a perilous city. The narrator's humorous account of his arrival in Manhattan reveals his youthful egocentricism and romanticized self-image:

> Getting out of the taxi next to the famous fountain, you seemed to be arriving at the premier of the movie which was to be your life. A doorman greeted you at the steps. A string quartet played in the Palm Court. Your tenth-floor room overlooked an air shaft; though you could not see the city out the window, you believed that it was spread out at your feet. The limousines around the entrance seemed like carriages, and you felt that someday one would wait for you (BLBC 151).

Although in retrospect he describes this vision as shallow, his subsequent imaginings are no less fanciful or egocentric. He sees

alcoholic has-been Alex Hardy as the editor who will help him rise from fact checker to hot young author:

> You are fond of this man. While others view him as a sunken ship, you have a fantasy. Under his tutelage you begin to write and publish. His exertion on your behalf renews his sense of purpose. You become a team, Fitzgerald and Perkins all over again. Soon he's promoting a new generation of talent—your disciples—and you're evolving from your Early to your Later period (BLBC 64).

Ironically, the narrator is not only unlikely to write the Great American Novel, he can't even hang onto his job as a fact-checker, for he doesn't understand the politics and protocols that he must master to survive at his magazine. When he is given a book review by a Pulitzer Prize winner to cheek, his overzealous efforts earn him the enmity of his boss: "In your innocence you not only fixed up the occasional citation error; you went on to suggest some improvements in the prose and to register questions regarding interpretation of the book" (BLBC 21). His habit of sending his own short stories up to the Fiction Department and reading encouragement into the "Not quite right for us now" rejection notices also conveys the impression of childlike vulnerability, as does his comment that sneaking into work at 11:00 on Monday morning and making the sign of the cross as he passes his boss's office reminds him of the way he used to feel walking into school after the weekend without his homework done.

Although the Midwest will figure heavily in his destiny, the narrator of *Bright Lights, Big City* is not from the Midwest, or anywhere, for that matter. He shares McInerney's family background: his father was a corporate executive who moved his family to a different city with every promotion, thus endowing his son with the perennial stigma of "the new kid" and with a sense of insecurity and inexperience that result from the never-ending struggle to read the codes of a new culture:

> Every year there was a new body of lore to be mastered. The color of your bike, your socks, was always wrong. If you ever go into psychoanalysis, you will insist that the primal scene is not the encounter of parents in coitus: it takes the shape of a ring of schoolchildren, like Indians surrounding a wagon train, laughing with malice, pointing their vicious little fingers to insist upon your otherness (BLBC 47).

In this novel the Midwesterner is the narrator's wife Amanda White, and it is the way that he misreads her behavior as a function of her native region that most powerfully demonstrates his naïveté. Moving to Kansas City to take a first job as a reporter in what is his first experience with the Midwest, the narrator meets Amanda in a bar and is struck by her beauty and by what he perceives to be her Midwestern Innocence.

> As you talked you thought: *She looks like a goddamned model and she doesn't even know it.* You thought of this ingenuousness as being typical of the heartland. You pictured her backlit by a sunset, knee-deep in amber waves of grain. Her lanky, awkward grace put you in mind of a newborn foal. Her hair was the color of wheat, or so you imagined; after two months in Kansas, you had yet to see any wheat (BLBC 69-70).

The narrator characterizes Amanda's behavior as ingenuous, concluding that she is unaware that she could make a fortune with her good looks. Yet the language with which he describes her suggests that his reading is unreliable. The repetition of the terms "you thought," "you pictured," "you imagined," as well as the Midwestern clichés with which he associates her (amber waves of grain, a newborn foal, Kansas wheat) reveals his reliance on the way he is constructing the region—and Amanda—through stereotypes rather than through observation. His ironic admission that he has been in Kansas for two months without seeing any of its famous wheat suggests that his limited experience with the Midwest distorts his perceptions of that region, as well as of Amanda, who turns out to be a lot less ingenuous than she looks.

After he marries Amanda and moves to New York City with her, he is puzzled when she begins to take modeling seriously and devastated when she leaves him to pursue her career in Europe. No one else is terribly surprised at her desertion. "I never really liked her much, to tell you the truth," his brother Michael says. "I thought she was fake" (BLBC 161). His friend Tad Allagash enlightens him about Amanda's motives: "You were her ticket out of Trailer Park Land. ... Amanda was trying to get as far from red dirt and four wheel drive as she could. She figured out she could trade on her looks farther than she got with you" (BLBC 116).

The narrator naively conceives of the Midwest as a place where "some kind of truth and native virtue lurked thereabouts, and as a

writer you wanted to tap into it" (BLBC 69). His job as a fact checker foregrounds his naïveté in this respect, for his is a positivist epistemology in which meaning is determinate, questions have definite answers, and absolutes such as truths and facts not only exist but are easily recognized. Although a coworker has embroidered a needlepoint motto for him that says, "Facts all come with points of view; facts don't do what I want them to," (BLBC 23), the narrator has not learned the lesson of this text. He wants to know why Amanda left him and will not accept her explanation that things happen and people change. He wants "an explanation, an ending that would assign blame and dish up justice" (BLBC 127).

Confronted by a multiplicity of texts in his urban environment, only some of which he is able to interpret accurately, he is unperplexed by the subway graffiti, New York *Post* headlines, and the posters plastered on fences and lampposts, offering a cynical observation on his milieu: "Above Forty-second they sell women without clothes and below they sell clothes with women" (BLBC 87). Yet he seems unaware that he is almost as fragile as the Coma Baby featured in the *Post,* that his grasp on reality is so tenuous as to suggest his similarity with missing person Mary O'Brian McCann, subject of one of the posters. Texts continue to defeat him as the week wears on; haunted by the rejection of his short stories, he fails even at the task of fact-checking, and his mishandling of an article on French politics costs him his job.

His failure to deal effectively with crucial texts in his life is compounded by his inability to read the larger text of his environment. He consistently takes things at face value, buying what he is told is a genuine Cartier watch that falls apart several hours later, purchasing an Austin Healey from a friend that's actually a piece of junk, failing to realize that the two girls he and Tad meet at Odeon are lesbians until he stumbles upon them having sex in the women's lavatory or that the glamorous Stevie he's dancing with at a loft party is a transsexual. The last line of the novel, "You will have to learn everything all over again" (BLBC 182) emphasizes the immaturity and inexperience that mark the narrator's attempts to apprehend and deal with his world.

In his fourth novel, *Brightness Falls* (1992), McInerney makes a more extensive use of the innocent Midwest. Set in the late 1980s, the novel juxtaposes the demise of the Decade of Greed, epitomized by the October 1987 stock market crisis, with Russell Calloway's

personal and professional loss of innocence and first experience with failure as he launches an unsuccessful leveraged corporate buy-out of the publishing house where he is an editor, thereby losing his job and alienating his wife and his best friend with his newly acquired duplicity.

Like the nameless narrator of *Bright Lights, Big City*, Russell is portrayed as an *enfant savant* and repeatedly associated with images that suggest how childlike he is. In contrast to his friend Jeff Pierce's "dark eyes of an old soul," Russell has "boyish wide blue eyes and was born the day before yesterday."[12] Watching him view the television through an empty paper towel tube, his wife Corrine thinks that he has "a ten-year-old boy's appreciation of props" (BF 113); later, when she sees him sleeping with his mouth open, he looks to her like "a baby bird trying to suck nourishment from the sky" (BF 113).

The naïveté of Russell's audacious bid to take over the Corbin Dern publishing company is remarked on by the principals in the action. "You look too innocent to me," comments Leticia Corbin, who asks him to find a buyer for the 13% of the stock that she owns (BF 141). Corporate raider Bernie Melman, calls Russell an ex-altar boy and remarks, "You've obviously never been kicked in the balls" (BF 173). Russell's actions, too, reflect his inexperience with the corporate world, as he unhesitantly takes enormous financial risks. "It seemed so easy. He was winning on paper, even though his total capital amounted to only a few thousand" (BF 24). During the takeover, he buys a hundred thousand dollars worth of Corbin Dern stock, borrowing fifty thousand dollars from his new credit card and purchasing the rest on margin, an action that leaves him thousands of dollars in debt when the deal falls through and the price of the stock goes down.

Like F. Scott Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway, whose surname differs from his by only three letters, Russell is a native Midwesterner who comes East for college, begins his career in New York City, and completes the process of maturation by learning to survive in an alien culture that he initially finds difficult to interpret. In an interview with Sanford Pinsker, McInerney tells of rereading *The Great Gatsby* while writing an introduction for a new edition of John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer.* This re-experiencing of Fitzgerald's novel seems to have played a major role in McInerney's conceptualization of *Brightness Falls,* for allusions to *The Great Gatsby* resonate through this novel: gossip columnist Juan Baptiste mentions James

Gatz; novelist Victor Propp quotes Nick Caraway's comment that anything can happen after crossing the Queensboro Bridge into Manhattan; Russell Calloway's reaction to his first glimpse of his future wife Corrine reveals that he idealizes her much in the same way that Jay Gatsby idealizes Daisy Fay Buchanan. McInerney's comments to Pinsker about Fitzgerald's novel further suggest that *The Great Gatsby,* which juxtaposes the innocent Midwest with the superficial and corrupt East, was an important influence on both *Bright Lights, Big City* and *Brightness Falls:*

> Certainly Manhattan is very present in *The Great Gatsby,* even if it doesn't all take place there, and I thought after finishing it about Fitzgerald's later remark in "The Crack-Up"—about his definition of a first-rate mind as one capable of holding two contradictory opposing ideas at once. On one hand, we have the American Dream that is New York City and Gatsby's mansion while, on the other hand, we have the critique and the deconstruction of that dream.[13]

McInerney goes on to say of the protagonist of *Bright Lights, Big City* that "as cynical as he may be in certain respects, [he] is very much an innocent. ... the narrator is innocent to the extent that he's still under the spell of this dream of high expectations. Gatsby's Nick Carraway starts out, after the story is all over, narrating it, and I think there's more than a twinge of lost innocence throughout the book."[14]

McInerney alludes to Russell Calloway's Midwestern heritage nine times in *Brightness Falls,* using the region metonymically to suggest Russell's innocence, and Victor Propp articulates the idea almost too clearly: "Despite your considerable intelligence, Russell, you are remarkably naive. Do you suppose it has anything to do with coming from the Midwest?" (BF 22).

Russell Calloway's fall from innocence is precipitated, in part, by this Midwestern upbringing, which affords him little preparation in reading the text of sophisticated New York other than the stories his father told him about the city when he returned from business trips:

> For Russell the restaurant had naively romantic connotations courtesy of his father, who had traveled to New York on business and brought back to Michigan tall tales about the metropolis in the East, not the shortest being an account of the fancy tavern with a number for a name where a hamburger cost nine dollars. This, in Russell's mind, took its place alongside giant alligators in the sewers and side-

> walk-fried eggs among the primary legends of the city that he gradually came to identify as the setting of his dreams (BF 175).

Like the narrator of *Bright Lights, Big City*, who has constructed his version of the Midwest from stereotypes, Russell has created his version of Manhattan from the traditional myths of that city. Thus, in a city where a front booth in "21," a Versace jacket, and an office decorated in Moroccan leather are subtle signs of power and status, he is as ill-prepared to interpret his Manhattan environment as the narrator of *Bright Lights, Big City* is to understand the Midwest. Trying to get a handle on "Russell's innocence, his representative nature as one of the best and brightest of a barbaric native culture" (BF 72), Victor Propp characterizes the kind of ingenuousness from which Russell suffers: "More innocent than Kalahari bushmen, who were adept at reading signs and symbols, Americans took everything at face value—words, signs, rhetoric, faces—as if reality itself were so much legal tender" (BF 71).

And like the nameless narrator of McInerney's earlier novel, Russell's insensitivity to his semiotic environment is a key factor in his downfall. Despite his characterization of his boss, Harold Stone, as a horned owl, of Victor Propp as a bald eagle, and of corporate raider Bernie Melman as a turkey vulture, Russell's naive assumption that they are, like himself, men of good will blinds him to the logical conclusion he should have drawn from these metaphors, a conclusion that might have forewarned and saved him: like the birds they resemble, these men are predators. During a conversation with his former mentor, Harold, he fails to recognize the signs that he has fallen from favor. Russell has come to plead for Harold's support in launching a controversial book he is publishing, but he is unable to see trouble in his communication pattern: whenever Russell brings the matter up, Harold changes the subject. Later, Russell fails to read Harold's closed office door as the sign that he needs privacy and walks in on Harold and his secretary as they are making love. After he returns from vacation, he notes the tidiness of his secretary's desk without realizing that it is an indication that she has been fired.

Russell's father, a General Motors executive, provides a clue to the way that Russell's Midwestern background shapes his perceptions; he is contemptuous of people like investment bankers who become wealthy without producing anything. "At least GM makes something," he argues, echoing the agrarian principles that undergird

Midwestern morality (BF 193). The rules that he lives by—"Never endanger a woman's reputation, never climb on another man's back, never talk about what you make or what things cost" (BF 97)—are absolutes, Midwestern conventions with which Russell amuses his eastern friends but which nevertheless govern his conduct and the way he sees the world. A Michiganian on an Ivy League campus, his response to his first glimpse of Corrine is colored by a Midwestern upbringing characterized by such absolutes and by a romanticized vision of the East:

> She was standing at the top of a fraternity house staircase, leaning forward over the banister with a cigarette held exquisitely between her fingers, like a blonde in a thirties movie, gazing down on a party that until that moment had seemed the climax of his recent escape from home, parents and the Midwest ... he read intelligence in her gaze, breeding in her slightly upturned nose, sensuality in her lips, and self-confidence in her languid pose (BF 63).

After he has been married for five years, he clings to this initial vision as an unchanging ideal, hesitant to acknowledge his desires for other women. He flirts with a Frenchwoman named Simone in the Metropolitan Museum, but later rationalizes that "his conscience was almost clear, in fact it was more than clear. This morning his fidelity had been untested of late, while tonight he was a man who had turned down an invitation to see another woman's etchings ..." (BF 69). When Simone turns up on the island where he and Corrine are vacationing, his conflicting feelings reflect a Manichaean world view that recognizes only two kinds of women: good women and whores: "While technically innocent, he was guilty in principle. He wanted to fuck Simone a hundred different ways, immediately. And yet he had been slightly abashed when Corrine talked about giving him head" (BF 121).

He is equally confused about his desire for Trina Cox, an investment banker who is managing the buyout. Finding himself in Trina's apartment one night, he continually misreads the signs that she is seducing him. Neither the champagne she offers him nor the fact that they're both sitting on the bed while they drink it indicates to Russell that anything out of the ordinary is happening; to Russell he and Trina are just sitting around, talking like two guys:

> Even when she twisted over on top of Russell to pour him another glass and kissed him instead, as if merely because she chanced to

> be in the immediate vicinity—this was harmless enough. Why should anybody object to this pressing together of lips, which felt so good, after all? Why should pleasure be a zero-sum commodity, when the store of it could be so easily expanded, the wealth increased by sharing? (BF 258).

When he and Trina finally do consummate their relationship during a publishing convention in Frankfort, Russell, like a Midwestern virgin on prom night, is too drunk at the time they have intercourse to be able to remember what it was like when he awakens the next morning. His comment the previous night to the wife of his European publishing mentor, "I love my wife, but I sometimes wonder if it's...ungenerous not to love other women" prompts her patronizing response, which underscores Russell's ingenuousness: "Americans are like children" (BF 340). And because Russell's Midwestern upbringing has conditioned his inept reading of and ambivalent response to Trina's advances, she reacts as a woman scorned and leaves him out of the restructured buyout that ultimately returns Harold Stone to Corbin Dern as the CEO of Bernie Melman's latest acquisition. As the novel ends, Russell is struggling to put both his career and his marriage back together; he has become a lot less naive and a little more dissembling, but, like the nameless narrator of *Bright Lights, Big City*, he has not synthesized his experiences with the sophisticated amorality of New York culture into a more complex moral awareness and has a lot to learn.

Both Russell Calloway and Nick Carraway were formed by a Midwestern upbringing that determines the way they read and misread the culture of the East and plays a key role in their respectives journeys from innocence to experience within that culture. Nick, however, achieves a more mature moral vision than either the nameless narrator of *Bright Lights, Big City* or Russell Calloway. The twenty-nine-year-old son of a Midwestern hardware store owner who has come East to learn the bond business, Nick has "the familiar conviction that life was beginning all over again with the summer."[15] This feeling of new hope and promise colors his initial visit with Tom and Daisy Buchanan until he comes to see that he is the only one present who doesn't realize that Tom is involved with another woman. His response to their troubled marital relationship seems more characteristic of an adolescent than of a man in his third decade of life: "I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away. It seemed to me

that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms—but apparently there were no such intentions in her head" (GG 20-21). His characterization of himself as "one of the few honest people that I have ever known" and his description of himself, dressed in white flannels, wandering from guest to guest at Gatsby's party, inquiring for his host, further reinforce the reader's perception of his initial naïveté (GG 60;42).

The progress of Nick's enlarging consciousness is marked by the three trips to New York City upon which the novel is built, during which he is confronted with adultery, hypocrisy, falsehood, fraud, deception, and manslaughter, all perpetrated by the Buchanans and Gatsby, the friends with whom he regularly socializes. During the first trip, he meets Tom's mistress, Myrtle Wilson, and spends a bizarre afternoon in their love nest listening to Myrtle posture and her friends and relatives relate a number of untruths about Tom and Daisy. During the second trip, Gatsby introduces him to Meyer Wolfsheim, the man who fixed the 1919 World Series; Wolfsheim offers the uncomprehending Nick a "business gonnegtion." The final trip, during which Gatsby and Daisy's affair is revealed to Tom, culminates in Myrtle Wilson's death after she is struck by Gatsby's car, driven by Daisy; the denoument enacts Tom and Daisy's flight from the mess they have made after Tom facilitates George Wilson's fatal shooting of Gatsby.

Through these experiences, Nick loses his innocence and comes to understand that, as Fitzgerald would later write, the rich are very different: their wealth anesthetizes them, protects them from life's unpleasantries, absolves them from moral responsibility, and facilitates their dishonest and cowardly behavior. In coming to understand the amiable but morally bankrupt Buchanans and Jay Gatsby, whose dream, he realizes, is both fine and shallow and whose moral character encompasses both corruption and nobility, Nick becomes the kind of person Fitzgerald would later describe in "The Crack-Up," someone whose mind is capable of holding two contradictory ideas at the same time.

By virtue of his Midwestern background, Russell Calloway is too innocent to read correctly the texts of the sophisticated city, and this inability precipitates his downfall; by virtue of the way he misreads the Midwest, the nameless narrator of *Bright Lights, Big City* reveals the essential innocence that brings him to the point of crisis in that novel. In both novels, Jay McInerney, like F. Scott Fitzgerald, uses

the Midwest as an objective correlative for a state of moral innocence and social unsophistication that, while refreshingly different from the duplicity and decadence of the East, clouds the protagonist's perception and impairs his judgment, However, both of McInerney's protagonists, while initially similar to Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway in background, outlook, and consequent inability to read the texts of the Eastern urban environment, fail to attain the complexity of moral vision that Nick has achieved when he tells Jay Gatsby, the bootlegger from North Dakota who has constructed a self from dreams and desires, petty crimes, big lies, shabby half-truths, and showy surfaces, "You're worth the whole damn bunch put together" (GG 154).

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ROADTRIP TO WINESBURG

PAUL P. SOMERS, JR.

I decided to write about Clyde, Ohio, last year when my wife and I passed through after spending Memorial Day weekend with her family in Bergholz, Ohio, which makes Clyde look like Paris. I have roots in small town Ohio, too, in Ada and Celina in the western part of the state, so I get all froggy-throated on the subject of small Ohio towns.

Just as his disciple, Ernest Hemingway, substituted "Big Two-Hearted River" for "Fox River," so Sherwood Anderson abandoned the prosaic name "Clyde" for the more poetic "Winesburg," a town not far away. Sherwood wrote in his Memoirs: "Winesburg of course was no particular town. It was a mythical town. It was people. I had got the characters of the book everywhere about me." Nevertheless, there are enough similarities to have kept readers and scholars intrigued for the three quarters of a century since *Winesburg, Ohio's* publication in 1919.

We stopped at McDonald's that time, and I scribbled down a few notes, thinking that's where the story must be. I watched a young couple—she wore a big, loose blue dress, and he had on a tight red t-shirt: "DARE to resist drugs and violence." With his flattop and thick neck, he looked like a Special Olympics weight lifter. They left in a new teal Camaro. A high school kid with a mustache read a book and ate a super-sized Big Mac Meal at a back booth.

The workers were fascinating: they don't pick berries anymore, riding to the fields in horse-drawn wagons, laughing and shouting to one another. They're workin' for The Man, Ronald McDonald, and they wear light blue uniforms and dopey ball caps. A very young, very pregnant woman, her belly hanging over her belt, was clowning around with the manager. He was thirty with blond hair, shaggy but well cut. She stood next to him. "See? My belly looks just like John's." They all laughed, including John.

A disheveled middle-aged man with unwashed hair and cross-buttoned green windbreaker approached the counter diffidently. I wondered if Wing Biddlebaum would have to register as a sex offender in the new Winesburg.

My most recent return to Clyde is a spur-of-the-moment trip, taken just two days after I dropped a 75,000 word manuscript on editorial cartooning into the mail, thus fulfilling a contract I have been working on since some of my young colleagues were in Garanimals. I used to write about Sherwood Anderson, twenty-some years ago, before I stumbled down the primrose path of popular culture. What do I hope to find here? The ghost of Sherwood Anderson, who lived in Clyde from 1884 to 1896; my long buried literary roots; or perhaps a glimpse of the white neck and shoulders of the schoolteacher, Kate Swift, from the stories "The Strength of God" and "The Teacher," lying on her bed smoking a cigarette.

I know I'm getting close: the trees have that Ohio trim, where they take a maple and prune its graceful, spreading limbs way back, as if it were a lowly privet. The most zealous property owners will do this every year or two, so the main branches end in gnarled knobs, from which secondary shoots erupt at tortured, unnatural angles which are, to use a favorite word of Sherwood Anderson's, grotesque.

When I reach the city limits I stop to copy the signs, individual metal emblems on wire mesh: "This is a Welcome Wagon Community," American Legion, Kiwanis International, VFW, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Clyde Christian Church, Methodist Church, National Exchange Club—"Unity for Service"—and a rusty moose head vowing to "Protect our Children." A few yards beyond, one of those wistful fetishes erected by Americans everywhere to ward off evil admonishes: "Stop Hate, Teach Tolerance."

Various signs proclaim Clyde as "America's Famous Small Town" and "Home of Rodger Young, World War Two Hero who inspired 'The Ballad of Rodger Young,' which swept the nation," but I don't see the one I remember from years ago, "Home of Sherwood Anderson, famous Writer."

Of course, I must stay at The Winesburg Motel. A few years ago it was for sale. I advised my friend and colleague, Sherwood Anderson scholar Dave Anderson, to invest his retirement, that he could do his egg trick there, but he declined. The man at the desk seems too substantial to be a mere clerk, so I ask him if he is the new owner. It turns out that he owns The Winesburg and another motel

in the next town. He is from Bombay and found this place through his brother, a cardiologist in Cleveland. For the first of many times this weekend I ask "do you know who Sherwood Anderson was?" He says he thinks Anderson was a writer but doesn't know if he is alive any more and suggests that I try the library. What a good idea.

My room is musty, non-smoking, as distinguished from the musty, smoking ones. It's quite ordinary, with very dark walnut-paneled walls. I must admit that the mirrored ceiling above the bed catches me by surprise. Well, thus far Winesburg has changed from Sherwood's day: innkeeper from India and mirrors over the bed. Baffled as he was by the man-woman thing, poor Sherwood would have had a second nervous breakdown over the man-woman thing reflected on the ceiling.

I phone the high school, hoping for an appointment to interview one or two teachers, after school. Instead I am connected with the principal, who also teaches junior English and assigns the entire book *Winesburg, Ohio.* He assures me that the students enjoy and relate to Anderson. He also tells me that most people in town know who Anderson was. When I mention the missing sign, he tells me it is still there. Thirty-eight years after my own graduation, I still can't contradict the Principal, and I can't imagine any ball cap-wearing sixteen-year-old presuming to tell him that Sherwood Anderson is irrelevant in modern-day Clyde.

I unpack and hurry over to the library. On the way, I pass the storefront office of *The Clyde Enterprise,* where Anderson worked as a young man. His autobiographical character, *Winesburg Eagle* reporter George Willard, unified the Winesburg stories by observing, asking questions, and sometimes serving as unwilling recipient of other characters' confidences.

Under the red tile roof of the Carnegie library, the staff members are very helpful. When I ask about the church in the story, the white-haired librarian immediately knows I mean the Presbyterian and arranges for Bill Samford, the church caretaker, to come over and show me around. It's no trouble, she says; he's retired and lives a block away. I continue to photocopy news clippings about the town and Sherwood. A young guy with a long black ponytail and a cannabis leaf tattooed on the back of his hand has been there the whole time, looking through some sort of reference book. He obviously has a new Winesburg story to tell.

Soon it is time for my appointment. The modest little brick church was built in 1869. Its stained glass windows, like those of churches everywhere, are shielded by Plexiglas. The little square steeple is sided with white vinyl. My guide fondly recalls Thaddeus Hurd, son of Sherwood Anderson's friend Herman. He takes me up the few stairs to the minister's small office, which is in the bell tower directly below the steeple. It is outfitted with a leather chair and a Brother electronic typewriter. A bell-rope snakes down through a hole in the ceiling. There are no stained glass windows—never have been, the gentleman says—but there is a good view down onto the alley where a boarding house once stood. Add some stained glass, a confused minister, and a frustrated schoolteacher, stir in the cauldron of Sherwood Anderson's imagination, and you have the Reverend Curtis Hartman peering through a broken corner of the window down into the bedroom of the teacher, Kate Swift.

Next stop, the museum, originally the Grace Episcopal Church, which is closed. The librarian gives me the name and number of Bill Rodgers, the curator, who, like the handyman, lives within a block or two. I call from a pay phone around the corner from the Town Tavern, where an artfully lettered sign pleads in maroon letters on a gray background: "please, no colors worn in bar." Perhaps there are serpents in paradise, or at least guys with serpents tattooed on their biceps. As I wait, I watch a jug-eared kid on a bike balancing his load of evening papers on the handlebars. Known as "Jobby" in his youth, enterprising young Sherwood hawked newspapers at the railroad station.

In five minutes the curator bounces into the parking lot of the Museum in his muddy pick-up. He shows me around. There are numerous portraits and photographs of Sherwood and his family, and a case of first editions from the library. Among the artifacts is a program from the 1976 Centennial of Anderson's birth, held at Michigan State University. I find my name, and the names of several friends and colleagues, recalling a time before some of us wore bifocals or even had gray hair, and the ones who did were vigorous and healthy.

In the staging area at the back of the museum I admire a gleaming 1904 Elmore, the "Doctor's Runabout" model, black with red trim. The curator demonstrates its pioneering tilt steering wheel. It has non-skid tires, whose treads literally spell out "NON SKID." Elmores were manufactured in the converted bicycle shop where

Sherwood worked as a young man. Behind it stands an antique Clydesdale fire truck, also built locally.

The curator volunteers to show me McPherson Cemetery (Anderson's first novel was *Windy McPherson's Son,* in 1916), where Sherwood's mother, who died at age forty-three, and brother Earl are buried. Also resting there, he tells me, are two Congressional Medal of Honor winners. All the Clyde dead are guarded by a magnificent statue of General James Birdseye McPherson, at thirty-five the youngest general—or is it the highest ranking, or both?—to die in the Civil War. (So many facts, so many plaques.) He died in combat outside of Atlanta on July 22, 1864. Flanked by polished brass cannon, the General is pointing dramatically to the West, from whence come the enemy.

Bill leaves me to my own devices (irony and keen observation), and I climb the hill to read the General's plaque. Then I walk toward Route 20 to check out signs I missed coming into town on the other side. The town has erected six in honor of its state wrestling champions. The raw May wind of a late spring is too much for even my commitment to old-fashioned literary realism, so I don't copy down their names. I can tell you, however, that, in this decade, the Clyde Fliers have captured six state titles: two in the 119 lb. class, one each in the 125 and 160, and another pair in the 171 lb. class, demonstrating that Clyde's lads are scrappy at any weight, the stuff of which heroes have always been made.

I return to the motel to enter my notes into my computer. I am disappointed that there is no Winesburg Motel stationery. One of my chief memories of Anderson, as an Attention Deficit Disordered scholar, is the thrifty way in which he made use of the stationery in the many hotels in which he stayed. I may yet revive an old project: "The Hotel Stationery of Sherwood Anderson." (My McDonald's notes from last year are on a notepad from a Marriott on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.) But, I have my powerbook, a Macintosh—my own little twisted Apple—and didn't bring along a printer, so it doesn't really matter. I start typing up my notes, taken on 3x5 cards and sheets of yellow tablet paper, and look for tidbits in the Xeroxes of newspaper and magazine articles.

And what tidbits:

There is a Winesburg Medical Center, but no Dr. Reefy. I wonder if they have anything for Enoch Robinson or for Elmer Cowley's

hurting heart. *The Clyde Enterprise* announces that Wednesday was National Anxiety Disorder Screening Day.

Stella Anderson, daughter of a runaway slave taken in by the Loomis Ames family, was the first and only "Negro" to graduate from Clyde high school.

The town's glossy brochure announces that Clyde has a home page on the World Wide Web: WWW.Clydeohio.ORG. The logo of the town still on the go consists of the words "Pride in Clyde World Wide" superimposed over a global map, and then the obligatory "Welcome to America's Famous Small Town." The town's history book laments that "something happened. Clyde fumbled and let the railroad action move on. Then the village came to a virtual standstill." (A century ago, Clyde had seven attorneys, four today; six doctors then, five now; and four newspapers to one at the present time.) They're not going to repeat that mistake. Always a booster, although sometimes a reluctant one, Sherwood would appreciate this "modernness." (After I returned to campus, I found a brief, sanitized biography of Sherwood and some blurry photographs on the web page, along with a link to "Clydescope 2000 Economic Development Corporation," which strikes me as just the ticket to the next century.)

Across from the Whirlpool Plant was the Winesburg Inn, founded by Anderson Good during the Sherwood Anderson boom in the early eighties. The owner had a little museum of Sherwood Anderson and Clyde memorabilia. Today it is Work Horizons Rehabilitation Center.

Finally, I give up and turn on the television, to watch the Indians of Cleveland trounce the Tigers of Detroit: the room has Cable TV, but no remote control, and I fancy myself like one of the pioneers who settled Clyde. I turn off the TV and the light before the game is over. Stirred occasionally by the brakes of trucks stopping only because of the traffic light, I drowse. In all of Winesburg, I am one of the first to go to sleep that night.

Saturday morning, I go out for a paper. At the Ameristop Gas and Food Mart chain store, I ask the sixtyish woman if she knows who Sherwood Anderson is. She does and suggests I try the Library and the Museum. When I ask about the old train station, she says: "Don't get me started!" The other employees laugh, because they obviously have seen her get started before. Apparently "some people" in town managed to tear down, in favor of a new town plaza, the historic depot from which George Willard departed Winesburg and from

which, perhaps, James A. Wales left for New York to draw caricatures for *Puck.* I drive the block over to see it, an old-timey pavilion with benches and a great expanse of intricate brickwork funded in part, a plaque explains, "by the men and women of the Whirlpool Corporation"; proving that corporations don't destroy historical landmarks, people do.

There's no restaurant left on Main Street, so I have breakfast at Bogey's Diner on Route 20, a tiny place with country music on the juke box and a big wooden Indian (Cleveland, that is,) logo flashing its politically incorrect grin from the front wall. Before I order a breakfast that will take six weeks off my life, I ask the young woman who waits on me if she knows who Sherwood Anderson is. "Uh, yeah," she says noncommittally, the teacher's gleam in my eye having triggered her warning system. I decide to stop playing reporter and concentrate on my sodium and cholesterol

I have one more lead to follow up: the librarian gave me the name of Glen Giffen, trustee of the library for many years but now retired. I call him reluctantly, but he insists that I come over to his home to take the tour. A tall, thin man, quite old, he worked for the city for many years and is the town's unofficial historian, now that Thaddeus Hurd is gone. The skin on his rectangular Welsh face is reddened by sun and silvered by time. I talk with him and his wife for a while. He is truly an old timer; he knew people long ago who wouldn't speak of Sherwood Anderson because he had abandoned his family, not to mention written a "filthy book." (The story has it that the librarian once burned copies of *Winesburg, Ohio.* Glenn tells me that, actually, she just kept the offending books in her office, where they wouldn't corrupt the townspeople.) Anderson's nervous breakdown at thirty-nine and his renouncing of the bourgeois family life for that of bohemian writer, while enchanting to the literati, were anathema to most citizens of Clyde.

After a while Glenn and I get into his van for the tour. I should have brought a tape recorder, because he tells me more than I can possibly scribble down:

General McPherson was an engineer, who built Alcatraz. I did not know that.

Spring Street was once the site of a spring. Jesse Benton, the town's first settler, squatted and built there in 1820. Samuel Pogue purchased the land, then bought out Benton with a barrel of whiskey, which he used to start a tavern. There's no historical record of any

such Bentley tavern (maybe he drank it all himself), but it's a good story. The God-obsessed patriarch in Anderson's four-part story "Godliness" is named Jesse Bentley. Right next to the spring, which has since been covered, is 129 Spring St., my reason for coming here. In this little white house, Sherwood Anderson's family lived from about 1888 to 1895. Today it has red trim with ornamental picket shutters and a nautical motif—a big red anchor hangs on the garage. There's a small porch on the side—perhaps the mythical one onto which Sherwood's mother tricked neighborhood boys into throwing cabbages? (Clyde was, by the way, at one time the cabbage capital of the world and home of the Silver Floss sauerkraut company. Cabbage was to Clyde what horse apples are to Mackinac Island.) The sign out front announces "Bill's Upholstery," operated by Bill Dunnigan, the son of the Dunnigans who lived in the first house built in Clyde, Glenn tells me.

He takes me past Water Works Pond, another landmark from Sherwood's Winesburg. There was a boiler works there in Sherwood's day, still functioning in Glenn's time, too, by the pond where kids skated. If you fell through the ice, you could warm up in the boiler room and watch the great flywheel of the generator go 'round. The immense brick chimney is gone, now, and the two ponds are one big one.

There is one more Anderson house to see, the one on Race street, former site of a race track. It's another modest white frame house with ... aha! a porch! On the way back to Glenn's we pass through the Fair St. subdivision, where the old fairgrounds used to be, where George Willard and Helen White talked and kissed and romped as they begin to "take hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible."

As I am leaving, Glenn gives me a copy of the town's history and an antique postcard showing the old hotel, where George Willard's mother looked out the window onto Main Street. He also gives me a typescript of a comparison he made of characters from *Winesburg* and people in Clyde in the early part of the century. There are many similarities, and a few transparent name changes. Sherwood the wag gave the names of respectable families to some of the book's less reputable characters.

Turning west onto Route 20 toward Toledo, I take stock: In the face of all this unrelenting kindness, it's impossible to maintain the satirical edge with which I came into Clyde—maybe I should have

gone into the Town Tavern Friday night and asked some bikers if they knew who Sherwood Anderson was. I'm touched by all of these nice people, well along in years themselves, so eager to keep Sherwood's name alive and tell the story of their town. They want to tell me all the stories, all the facts, not realizing that I'm not an historian; I'm just an itinerant belles lettrist passing through, looking for a few impressions to patch together for a piece that will help me make sense of my own life. I can't be their George Willard; I can't tell their whole story for them. So as I head out of town, out of nowhere into nothingness, as Sherwood once wrote, I feel satisfied that I have enough for an essay, a paper to read at a conference, but I'm more than a little sad.

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VIOLENT SILENCES IN THREE WORKS OF DAVID MAMET

JILL B. GIDMARK

I have always suspected that, in the works of David Mamet, it is the pauses, the silences, that are the defining and shaping moments. The spaces where meaning wounds or deflects, severs rather than connects, are more highly charged and significant than one might guess. These places of non-speech are sharp places; in some ways, they can be even more violent and wound more certainly than the angry dialogue. Three of his recent works illustrate how and why.

Mamet's dialogues have always beat with the dehumanizing and brutal rhythm and energy of the City of the Big Shoulders. At the same time that they deconstruct the American Dream, his plays utter dark prophecies, spawned by an inspiration of his acknowledged naturalist Midwestern predecessors: Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Upton Sinclair, and Willa Cather (he named his first daughter Willa). Mamet's particular stamp is gritty urban dialogue in a dog-eat-dog world, where characters more often than not speak right past each other in broken, elided, jackhammer speech. Words buffet at cross-purposes, provoke and antagonize, brazenly clank without resonance. His language is sharp, earthy, and aggressive. Street slang and compulsive obscenities infuse the earlier plays; the later works are more cryptic and ambiguous, more complex in articulating threat and anguish, but no less sinister. In three recent Mamet works—the plays *Oleanna* (1992) and *The Cryptogram* (1995) and the novella *Passover* (1995)—silences exude danger. Speech is rarely safe haven in any Mamet territory, but in these particular works it is silence that makes space for the consideration or the actualization of an emotional or physical brutality. Consequently, silence holds more destructive potential than could any linguistic construct.

During its New York premiere, it was a commonplace to compare the explosive drama *Oleanna* to the Anita Hill-Clarence

Thomas hearings for the purported fact-finding and the double-edged victimization. Had Mamet's play premiered later in the decade, the Clinton-Lewinsky litigation would have no doubt been evoked. I saw one of the opening performances, in December 1992 at the Orpheum Theater, and the playbill that I saved says it all. It gives *Oleanna* the subtitle "the Power Play." Half of the playbills were printed, as mine was, with a black female silhouette centered directly in the sights of a red bull's-eye target. I noticed that other playbills targeted a male figure.

Oleanna is a play for two actors. A 40-ish pedantic professor named John is on the brink of both being approved for tenure and signing the papers on his dream home. Carol is a befuddled field-mouse of a student in Act 1, transformed by Act 3 into a nasty and militant avenging angel of death. The dialogue is a chaos of unfinished, short-circuited, clashing sentences. In the opening scene, Carol drops in on John's office hours, frustrated about a course she's taking from him, which she is on the verge of flunking. John reassures her that she's not "stupid" (13), speaks of his own youthful self-doubts, dismisses higher education as "virtual warehousing the young" (11), and tells a risqué joke. He offers to break the rules and change her grade on the condition that she doesn't tell anybody. In an effort to quell her frustration, he puts a paternal hand on her shoulder: a huge mistake.

All hell breaks loose in Act 2. Every innocuous and well-meaning gesture in Act 1, every exchange has been taken out of context and becomes an indictment. Carol, who had previously lacked words and understanding, has gotten educated in a hurry by what she refers to as her Group, and she is now empowered: "What gives you the *right* to speak to a woman in your private, yes. Yes ... To *strut.* To *posture.* ... And *confess* to a taste to play the *Patriarch* in your class. To grant *this.* To deny *that.* To embrace—your students" (51). John Lahr, writing for *The New Yorker,* observed that Carol "adopts political correctness as an intellectual carapace that substitutes dogma for thought, mission for mastery" ("Dogma Days" 124). Naming is claiming, and since Carol won't work to master a world that she can't comprehend in Act 1, she changes the frame of reference to a world that she can manipulate in Act 2. She advocates a kind of linguistic fascism, forcing John to define his words using her terms: "paradigm," for example. "It's a model," he says (45). Carol the language police counters, shrewishly, "Then why can't you use that word? ...

Who the hell do you think you are? You want unlimited power. To do and to say what you want. As it pleases you—Testing, Questioning, Flirting" (45). Tension in the already tense dialogue all but snaps with the shrill, staccato, insistent ringing of a string of phone calls to John: from his wife, from the realtor, from someone named Jerry, a character about whom we're given no other information, and this non-identification increases our anxiety.

In the New York performance that I saw, Carol appeared in a black loose-fitting jacket, green chinos, and tough black boots in the last of the three encounters, looming over John with the demeanor of a Maoist enforcer. She had filed a written complaint with his tenure committee that accused John of "rape" ("I was leaving the office, you pressed' yourself into me. You 'pressed' your body into me" [78]) and now swaggers, calling him a "yapping little fool" (71). In a throw-away line as she exits his office, she chides John for calling his wife "baby" on the phone (79), and at this John snaps. In the savagery of a silence that's beyond words, John grabs Carol and belts her around the room. This explosion of violence ends the play.

Three years later, Mamet published *The Cryptogram*, an emotionally volatile play that focuses on home life rather than on the office, which Mamet has referred to as his most personal work. Mamet had written pointedly about the domestic abuse that he witnessed and experienced as a child in "The Rake," an essay in his collection *The Cabin* (1992). As dramatic realization of this tragedy, *The Cryptogram* is also the most tightly wound, the densest, the most uncompromising statement in its implication that real truth can only be spoken in silence. It is a painfully compelling play haunted by silences; it shocks us with what silence can mean and do.

The title of the play signifies a private code, the hidden meaning of our inner lives, a secret message that we can never fully interpret. Set in 1959 (the year Mamet turned twelve), ten-year-old John is both bemused and frightened, trying to make sense of his broken world. His parents are separated. He can't find his slippers. And he worries that he has just torn his beloved security blanket which he has, with some effort, dug out from a packing box in the attic, but his mother keeps correcting him: he couldn't possibly have just now torn the blanket because it was torn long ago. John is looking forward to the camping trip that his absent father, Robert, will take him on the next day, but in the course of the play Robert not only reneges on that promise but pulls out of his marriage as well. The absent, silent

Robert, in fact, exerts a damaging gravitational pull on all three of the play's characters.

John's troubled and emotionally-detached mother, Donny, and a family friend, Del, try to calm sleepless John as he repeatedly trudges from his bedroom down the stairs to adult company in the living room. But rather than comfort, John's caretakers confound him with double-talk, deflecting his questions with half-truths and admonishings that smack of treachery. The huge staircase that dominates the set of *The Cryptogram* suggests almost unbridgeable space between the muffled grownup world downstairs and the child's insecure realm of sleepless anxiety upstairs. The living room, sterile in its lack of clutter, is an impenetrable landscape of denial. As the safety net of the parental embrace collapses, everyone comes to betray everyone else. Donny, the non-motherly mother, utters the wisest and saddest words of all, words which tear at the fabric of her son's innocence: "Each of us ... is alone." (90)

Psychological truth becomes scrambled in the play, like a cryptogram. Del's and Donny's words are stumbling and inappropriate: the broken teapot that announces Donny's entrance is exaggeratedly called "an upheaval" (8); the stadium blanket's being ripped is a portentous "Misfortune" (28). Something—everything—is misrepresented. Speech is evasive or elided or aborted; no one knows how to interpret the codes of another. If when the play ends we are still in the dark about the specific source of each character's angst, what is clear is the charade of the human connection. Donny and Del, who by all indications seem to be very close friends, will never be lovers; they aren't even intimate enough to tell each other the truth. John falls apart before our very eyes. Besides chronic sleeplessness and night sweats, he hears voices and sees phantom candles. "And how do we know the things we know?" he says. "And, and we don't know what's real. And all we do is say things" (54). It's the saying of things, it's the speech, finally, that's frustratingly devoid of meaning.

At the end of Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck,* a child secretly takes off to an attic bearing a pistol, her anticipated suicide the consequence of chilling games that adults in her household play. In *The Cryptogram,* John mounts the stairs to the attic, too, ominously bearing his father's pilot's knife. He is told to use it to cut the twine on the box containing his blanket, which once again has been packed away, out of his reach. However, he has openly voiced suicidal thoughts. His world is desperately frightening, and his mother is

practically killing him with her own ambivalent victimization: "Go away. Leave me. Do you hear? I love you, but I can't like you. ... What are you standing there for? Can't you see that I need comfort? Are you blind? Are you blind? That you treat me like an animal? What must I do?" (97-99). Though he isn't aware of it, John's silences and terse phrases are alarmingly articulate; he becomes prophetically clearer and clearer about his terror as the play proceeds. He is the ultimate victim, the mini-oracle who sees into the darkness that surrounds an ordinary family committing lethally ordinary treacheries. John Lahr describes the final, bold image of the London production:

> John is looking down over the banister at Donny and Del. He flicks the knife. The blade jolts into view with a startling thwack—a chilling sound that holds out promise, as the lights fade, of murderous fury directed at John himself or at the world ("Betrayals" 73).

In May 1998, the Park Square Theater in St. Paul, Minnesota, mounted the play's Midwest premiere. While the theatre's mission promises "exceptional performances of traditional plays," *The Cryptogram* was perhaps not "traditional" enough for the several disgruntled patrons who walked out during acts one and two of the performance that I attended. Tension was maximized by staging the production in a single eighty-minute sitting. In place of an intermission, recapped lines were voiced over pensive, somber piano strains during fadeouts after acts one and two.

Mamet's taut emotional line was precisely rendered in Park Square's set, costume design, and technical aspects. A spare living room mirrored the alienated and atomized personalities of Donny (Jody Kellogg), John (Graham Ballou), and Del (Stephen D'Ambrose). A dull brown floral sofa and a coppery dead-red overstuffed chair with mismatched footstool flanked a simple wooden table holding a bottle of Jim Beam and two glasses. An angled stairway, carpeted and banistered, dominated the rear, with kitchen doorway stage right and outside doorway stage left. Even before the exchange between Del and John opened the first act, a bronze light glowed with portent and threat. Walls of deepest purple, darkening to black by Act 3, seemed to hold both objects and lives in suspension.

D'Ambrose's tall, slight build and squarish, pinched face contributed to his portrayal of the weak, forbearing Del, hovering continually on the verge of apology. D'Ambrose traded one mousy

earth-tone jacket, tie, and vest for another between the second and third acts. His nervous removal of his glasses when John mentioned having left his gray hat at the cabin nicely anticipated Del's groveling disclosure to Donny in Act 3 that he was not at the cabin with Robert at all.

At thirteen and with his voice deepening, Ballou may have been a few years too old to play John, yet his instincts for the role were excellent, from earnestly modulating the early speeches, ripe with curiosity, to playing out keyed-up sleeplessness in nervous tics such as jiggling his knees when he's sitting down. Whether in his bedtime yellow flannel pajamas with red horsemen or a blue-and-white striped tee-shirt and jeans, Ballou's John, tragically, could pass for the All-American boy.

Donny, who vies with Carol in *Oleanna* and Susan in *The Spanish Prisoner* for Mamet's most fully-realized female character, initially seems to have a lot going for her, but loses it all in the course of the play. As costumed in Park Square's production, Donny underwent as radical a change of appearance as of fortune. In Act 1 she was ebullient, slightly officious, proprietary, and pleasantly domineering in soft curls and a smartly belted, full-skirted dress. In Act 2, hair headbanded away from her face, newly wounded by her husband's goodbye letter, she was vulnerable in cream sweater and brown fitted slacks. In Act 3, discovering Del's part in her husband's infidelity and frustrated with her son's hallucinations, Donny looked damaged and destroyed in an unflattering bun and a spinster's overlarge, dowdy cardigan which, in a desperate attempt at either armor or camouflage, Kellogg kept pulling across her chest, crossing and re-crossing her arms. When Del exited following his disclosure that Robert had used Del's apartment for romantic trysts, Donny, center stage, simply crumpled to the floor in a guttural crying jag, which rendered John's bizarre, dead-pan entrance line—"Are you dead?" (75)—ironically, prophetically on the mark.

In a rare glimmer of close physical contact, the three characters sat together on the sofa in Act 1, in strikingly composed postures, to examine a photograph of themselves and Robert at the lake, which Del can't remember the occasion of. Near the end of that act, as Donny occupied the red chair and John the adjacent footstool in a Madonna-and-child pose, Donny draped the stadium blanket over both of their knees. Even this Tender Moment, a reminiscence about

Robert being away at war and about the purchase of the blanket, seethed with pain and loss:

> Donny: You slept in it [the blanket]. All of the time. We covered you.
> John: Why did you stop using it?
> Donny: We put it away.
> John: Why?
> Donny: It was torn. (46-47)

Act 3, however, is devoid of bonding space or refuge, and the pain and loss were palpable. A rolled rug and boxes were piled on the sofa and chair in preparation for the movers, preventing anyone from being seated for the Important Private Conversations that Del intended to have with both mother and son. He bore his guilt offerings of book and knife pathetically: the book was a thin one, and he kept putting the knife back into his pocket. Kellogg's strong voice tensed to hoarse stridency as she vented Donny's frustration and rage. John's flat, catatonic delivery as he ascended the stairs for the last time, holding the knife in front of him, implied no alternative to an imminent suicide, a conclusion urged by a bright spotlight that fixed both actors' and audience's attention on its out-pointed blade.

A knife also figures prominently in *Passover* (1995), the short, powerful coming-of age novella that reaffirms religious faith even as it chills the reader to the bone. Concise and profound, Mamet's 49-page narrative is a searing domestic portrait within the larger context of an isolated and victimized ethnic group. The book is enhanced by stunning woodcuts from Massachusetts engraver Michael McCurdy, many of which ominously feature a large, glittering chef's knife. The dust-jacket illustration features a child's hand about to grasp the knife.

Passover is not a classic retelling of the biblical story in which the Jews of Egypt are freed from slavery. It is instead one particular family's memories, an account of how one clever woman, long ago in a Polish *shtetl,* managed to save her household by creating a scene of bloody devastation to fool the enemy. *Passover* opens with grandmother and a young girl in a kitchen preparing the Seder meal. The rhythm of the telling is in synch with the girl's chopping of apples, raisins, and walnuts for the traditional *charoset.* This is a dark little tale laced with foreboding and imminent violence. The chef's knife holds more meaning than is immediately evident.

We keep guessing about this meaning as we read, and the unraveling is both bitter and sweet. As the young girl chops the fruit, bits and pieces of family lore are revealed. Great-great-great-grandmother Clara had managed to save a set of candlesticks from rampaging Cossacks; the young girl studies these candlesticks on the dining room table, and she asks whether the knife she is now using is also the knife that Clara used, so many years earlier, to thwart death. The riveting ending brings the tyranny, violence, and flight of history to life in a stunning, unsettling, and silent Mamet moment:

> They heard the sound of the key in the door. But neither moved. The old woman went to the child, and pulled her head toward her, and stroked her hair once, and again, and then kissed the top of her head; and then they both turned to the sound of activity in the entranceway. (49)

On the question of whether or not the Angel of Death passes over this particular grandmother and child, Mamet's silence carries weighty meaning.

Three years elapsed between the publication of *Passover,* with its violently articulate knife imagery, and Mamet's use of a knife to articulate his dramatic aesthetic for the series The Columbia Lectures on American Culture. Published under the bracing title *Three Uses of the Knife* (1998), the three collected lectures, each focusing on one of three acts in a well-made play, speak to the connection of art to life, of language to power, of imagination to survival. All three essays are compelling in their characterizations of what good theater and what bad theater is, in the vulnerability of some glimpsed autobiography, and in their wry speculations about politics and popular entertainment. It is the title essay, however, which closes the small volume with its discussion of a play's third act, that addresses the significance of knife imagery for Mamet. Making the case that most great drama concerns betrayal, Mamet quotes Huddie Ledbetter, popularly known as Leadbelly: "You take a knife, you use it to cut the bread, so you'll have strength to work; you use it to shave, so you'll look nice for your lover; on discovering her with another, you use it to cut out her lying heart" (66).

A passage at the heart of this essay most clearly captures the theoretical impetus for Mamet's obsession with knife imagery in his creative work:

> [T]he dramatist, the blues writer in us, seizes upon the knife as both embodying and witnessing the interchange [the murder of the lover], subtly changing its purpose through the course of the drama. The knife becomes, in effect, congruent to the bass line in music. For the bass line, not the melody, gives music, strength, and moves us. ... [T]he drive-to-resolution, that is the bass. ... The tragedy of murder is affecting as the irony of the recurrent knife is affecting. The appearance of the knife is the attempt of the orderly, affronted mind to confront the awesome; to discover the hidden structure of the word. In this endeavor our rational mind will not be of help. This is the province of theater and religion. (67)

Confronting and examining life through art, Mamet suggests finally, discerning the pattern, results in true resolution and peace, freeing us "to sigh or mourn. And then we can go home" (81).

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SAND COUNTY ALMANAC AND THE EVOLUTION OF ECOLOGICAL CONSCIENCE

PHILIP A. GREASLEY

Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* was first published the year after the author's death in 1948. The volume was revised and expanded in 1966 to include eight essays originally presented in the 1953 collection *Round River*. The aggregated volume is highly polemic expository writing on a scientific subject—preservation of the biotic community. The essay collection, premised upon Leopold's scientific training at Yale and his decades of empirical study as a member of the US Forest Service, manifests and yet transcends scientific marshalling of data to become a significant work of literature. Ultimately, Leopold's use of literary and humanistic, rather than scientific, techniques and approaches is central to the volume's continuing success in moving readers toward ecological modes of thought and action.

This paper considers the means by which *Sand County Almanac* makes the leap from scientific treatise to compelling literary experience and assesses the persuasiveness of these humanistic and literary modes in presenting empirical data and scientific argument.

Leopold's integration of non-scientific modes begins with emphasis on graphic description. Although empirical data is the hallmark of scientific study, close description is not exclusively scientific or literary. The element that distinguishes Leopold's description as literary rather than scientific is its experiential quality. Readers of *Sand County Almanac* experience for themselves its settings, situations, characters, events, and moods. Rather than simply *talk about* natural phenomena, Leopold *shows* them. For example, in portraying the stirrings of the incipient year in Wisconsin, he describes snow melting near his rural Wisconsin home. Rather than talk theoretically about wildlife emergence in January, the first three pages of the volume show us particular meadow mice, skunks, rough-legged hawks,

rabbits, and owls in January, all with their situations and options meticulously drawn, their personalities and motivations imputed. Their paths cross literally and figuratively in the thawing January snow. Each pursues its options, all seeking food and security, all responding unconsciously yet inescapably to unseen yet deeply felt stirrings of re-emergent life.

Second, while logic and analysis are evident throughout the volume, they are not portrayed as independent governing absolutes. Rather, they appear as tools whose salutary effect is contingent upon their positive application to the needs of the human-natural community. Thus, Leopold considers natural phenomena from the wider human-natural perspective. The author's experiential orientation pairs natural timelines—like the ten-year peaks in the emergence of oak trees as a function of rabbit scarcity and the life span of the tree from which came the log burning on his grate—with historical events in the human realm. These events include the dustbowl droughts of 1936, '34, '33, and '30; "the Babbittian decade when everything grew bigger and better in heedlessness and arrogance—until 1929, when stock markets crumpled" (10-11); "1915, when ... [Wisconsin's] Supreme Court abolished the state forests and Governor Phillip pontificated that 'state forestry is not a good business proposition'" (11); 1899, when the last passenger pigeon was shot near Babcock, Wisconsin (13); 1871, with its Peshtigo and Chicago fires; and "the 1860s, when thousands died to settle the question: Is the man-man community lightly to be dismembered" (17)? Leopold's conclusions regarding the Civil War are particularly telling in maintaining his sense of the inescapable integration of human and natural life. He asserts, "They settled it, but they did not see ... that the same question applies to the man-land community" (17).

In *Sand County Almanac,* Leopold expresses the need for multiple perceptual tools to aid understanding of the human-natural interface. The analytical tools of science are important, but Leopold makes it clear that other, equally important tools exist, each with its own particular value. He provides "an allegory for historians" (17) in asserting the value of the "diverse functions of saw, wedge, and axe" (17): the first working across the years in sequence, the second providing "a collective view of all the years at once—or no view at all, depending on the skill with which the plane of the split is chosen" (18), the third working diagonally across the years and only with

the recent past (19). Leopold maintains that these three tools together are "requisite to good oak and good history" (19).

Commitment to multiple orientations and techniques marks the author's humanistic approach to perceiving the world, defining issues, developing solutions, and enlisting societal support. The divergent techniques associated with saw, wedge, and axe mark segments of *Sand County Almanac.* Even these, however, do not constitute the author's full perceptual or authorial approach.

Cool, disengaged, objective scientific approaches produce many insights, but they must not dominate or preclude the subjective modes: passion, feeling, engagement. Throughout, Leopold is passionate. His logical, analytically based commentary is imbedded in an intuitive, emotive context. And Leopold's emotional response is wide ranging. It encompasses revulsion at individual and societal arrogance; a deep sense of irony at much of what is deemed "progress"; and excitement, eagerness, and hope, which he values more highly than prudence and certainty. The volume also repeatedly expresses joy in the moment—whether at fly fishing for trout in June or hunting for grouse in October—and a strongly developed aesthetic sense that builds toward the author's ultimate goal, reverence, value formation, and religious feeling.

Amid the graphic, experiential quality of this volume, humanistic orientations prevail, as moods and emotions are presented fully and evocatively. The August entry, entitled "The Green Pasture," portrays the evanescent beauties of a river in summer and carries the complex emotive loading of beauty, transience, humility, and something approaching religious awe. The following brief excerpt expresses some of this as the author invites readers to imaginatively

> "visit the [river's] bar on some bright morning just after the sun has melted the daybreak fog. The artist has now laid his colors, and sprayed them with dew. The Eleocharis sod, greener than ever, is now spangled with blue mimulus, pink dragon-head and the milk-white blooms of Sagittaria. Here and there a cardinal flower thrusts a red spear skyward. At the head of the bar, purple ironweeds and pale pink joe-pyes stand tall against the wall of willows. And if you have come quietly and humbly, as you should to any spot that can be beautiful only once, you may surprise a fox-red deer, standing knee-high in the garden of his delight" (56).

Both logic and emotion operate in this passage. Using them, Leopold is able to capture and present *full* human experience and meaning. The vision, however, is unfailingly experiential, particular, fully engaged, and emotionally responsive, not generalized, dispassionately deconstructive, emotionally distanced, or partial. Leopold's methods and thought processes always assert connections.

On this basis the volume encompasses poetry and music as well as science, synthesis as well as analysis. Leopold's integrative perceptual and authorial approaches go even farther, admitting parallels, analogies, and metaphors. He considers empirical phenomena through multiple humanistic perspectives, including those of history, philosophy, ethics, poetry, art, music, and dance. In admitting these complementary perceptual modes, the author makes explicit his sense of the limitations of unrestrained science and his concern at its potential for narrowly self-serving, self-perpetuating linkages to commerce, technology, and the cult of the material. In "The Quality of Landscape" he decries isolated, deconstructive, analytical approaches as well as science's potential for misuse, ironically proclaiming:

> "There are men charged with the duty of examining the construction of the plants, animals, and soils, which are the instruments of the great orchestra. These men are called professors. Each selects one instrument and spends his life taking it apart and describing its strings and sounding boards. This process of dismemberment is called research. ...
>
> A professor may pluck the strings of his own instrument, but never that of another, and if he listens for music he must never admit it. ... For all are restrained by an ironbound taboo which decrees that the construction of instruments is the domain of science, while the detection of harmony is the domain of poets.
>
> Professors serve science and science serves progress. It serves progress so well that many of the more intricate instruments are stepped upon and broken in the rush to spread progress to all backward lands. One by one the parts are thus stricken from the songs of songs. If the professor is able to classify each instrument before it is broken, he is well content.
>
> Science contributes moral as well as material blessings to the world. Its great moral contribution is objectivity, or the scientific point of view. This means doubting everything except facts; it means hewing to the facts, let the chips fall where they may. One of the facts hewn to by science is that every river needs more people, and all peo-

> ple need more inventions, and hence more science; the good life depends on the indefinite extension of this chain of logic. That the good life on any river may likewise depend on the perception of its music, and the preservation of some music to perceive, is a form of doubt not yet entertained by science" (162-63).

Leopold opposes this false portrait of science and progress with real progress that fully integrates thought and feeling in order to maintain and advance the entire biotic community. He sees progress as dependent upon hearing the music of all the instruments, on seeing the beauty, on sharing in the dance, and in feeling the poetry in all. For that reason, this man trained in the study of natural phenomena ultimately lends credence to the "imponderable essence, the *numenon* of material things. ... [which] stands in contradistinction to *phenomenon,* which is ponderable and predictable" (146). He reveres beauty, music, and poetry as expressive of that imponderable, unpredictable essence.

Although in moments he pays homage to the "professor of logic," (67) Leopold's thought processes and writing in *Sand County Almanac* are dominantly inductive and synthesizing. Like Thoreau, he constantly perceives and proclaims the correspondences between "natural" and human, between Walden Pond and the mind of man. Like Whitman's speaker in "The Noiseless Patient Spider," Leopold is "ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them," and, again like Whitman, moving from perception of physical *phenomena* regularly to focus on the *numena,* to ethical and moral vistas.

In *Sand County Almanac's* perceptual, authorial, and thematic orientations, Leopold rejects Western traditions of cool, detached, analytical observers reporting on phenomena external to themselves. Instead, he asserts harmony and unity with the world around him. He is an engaged participant, a member of the biotic community. Distinctions between self and other, between mind and external reality are rejected. Leopold's modes of perception and presentation as well as his ecological theme proclaim the unity and interdependence of all. His approach is that of Eastern mysticism. Its study of the natural world rises, as Emerson suggested in "Nature," inevitably to fuller perception and to development of ethical standards and religious values.

Leopold's repeated echoes of Biblical language—like "In the beginning there was. ... (24), "Let there be a tree. ... And in the seventh year he may lean upon his shovel and look upon his trees, and find them good" (86-87), "there is a third commandment ...: thou shalt. ..." (97), and "He leadeth me by still waters ..." (151)—are neither incidental nor whimsical. Rather these references offer literary expressions of the sanctity of the interdependent community of life and the creative, even Godlike, role people can play in advancing and sustaining the biotic community.

Taken as a whole then, Aldo Leopold's approach is literary and humanistic in seeking to do much more than marshal evidence to instruct his audience. He involves his readers to draw them in, to allow them to experience his message fully through all possible modes. Analysis, synthesis; deduction, induction; detachment, engagement, objectivity, subjectivity: all are modes by which all life is to be lived and the ecological message conveyed. By electing full experience and presentation, Leopold transmutes science into life and argument into literature.

Leopold's approaches to perception and expression are romantic. As used here, that term refers to a view of life that is neither mechanistic nor reductive. The romantic orientation accepts both the rational and the emotive, the sensory and the transcendent. Romantic study of the natural world is marked by acceptance of and reverence for the seen and the unseen. This worldview sees order, unity, and holiness in the creation. Romanticism perceives humans as priests of a higher, holier order, not as low animals whose existence is threatened or diminished by that of others.

Yet if Leopold's worldview is essentially romantic, his reasons for adopting literary and humanistic approaches in *Sand County Almanac* are absolutely pragmatic, purposeful, and results oriented. These approaches allow him to apply scientific findings to support life and growth for the entire biotic community. Ultimately, they promote human ethical systems and religious values; they support the evolution of ecological conscience.

Although Leopold knows science's reputation as that which works and can be counted on while the arts and humanities are frequently dismissed as inessential, inconsequential, and questionable in effect, he is skeptical about science's incomplete and at times self-serving perspective. He sees the exclusive focusing on the phenomenal, that which can be perceived, measured, sensed, as poten-

tially excluding the equally important focus on the immaterial, the numenal, that which cannot be perceived through the senses, measured, or pondered.

Leopold sees society's scientific, technological, commercial focus on the material as limiting and dangerous in its readiness to substitute short-term material gains for higher values and longer-term goals. The limited concept of "progress," so construed, becomes a function of material acquisition; all is seen in the context of money, holdings, ownership, power, control, and dominance. Nylons and bombs (171) become marks of societal superiority just as material opulence, ownership, and dominance come to be viewed as the marks of individual superiority. The author responds, asserting: "An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise" (197).

Sand County Almanac argues for a more "balanced economy" (106), one that esteems other values equally with short-term economic gain and security. Among the neglected values, Leopold champions mutuality, nature, freedom, and spirit. In the "Foreword," he says: "Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild, and free" (xvii). Lack of balance, he contends, is as ultimately destructive for mankind as lack of balance between wolves and deer. "Pursuit of too much safety, prosperity, comfort, long life ... too much safety seems to yield only danger in the long run" (140-41).

Unfortunately, many in our society have not adopted this perspective. In *Sand County Almanac,* the author begins the process of martialling the ecological opposition, of raising the integrative, life-supporting ecological perspective to an ethic and a value. Leopold dramatizes the dichotomy by portraying the philosophical viewpoint of scientific and business leaders as: "Man cannot live by marsh alone, therefore he must needs live marshless. Progress cannot abide that farmland and marshland, wild and tame, exist in mutual toleration and harmony" (172).

Leopold feels that achievement of this critical balance is possible only through modification of our perceptual framework and belief structure. We must come to recognize that science depends on art,

material on spirit, individual on community, human life on the perpetuation and fostering of the entire biotic community. *Sand County Almanac* proposes such an evolutionary change that will rise through the creation of a new ethic, a "land ethic," (258) and achieve ultimately the level of God-ordained "biotic right" (277).

Leopold asserts: "No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions" (246). The route to these goals must, he understands, be "an intellectual as well as an emotional process" (263). His use of humanistic modes and approaches in *Sand County Almanac* is his conscious strategy for achieving these ends.

The first proselytizing step is the fostering of aesthetic appreciation. He says, "Our ability to perceive quality in nature begins, as in art, with the pretty. It expands through successive stages to the beautiful ... [,] to values as yet uncaptured by language" (102). From beginning to end, Leopold's loading of *Sand County Almanac* with experiential descriptions of natural beauty is designed to enhance public understanding of and commitment to ecology. As such, it counters society's destructive, short-term material orientation, which operates to deconstruct and destroy natural beauty and our appreciation of it.

Leopold makes clear his sense of the importance of beauty through reference to all the arts. In each case he asserts a pleasurable experience; in each the individual is connected to the larger community. The author goes beyond repeated references to natural "art," repeatedly citing music and the orchestra, (159, 60) as well as theater in which we are all actors in an allegory (160). He also speaks throughout the volume of poets and critics, asserting rhetorically, "If ... we can live without goose music, we may as well do away with stars, or sunsets, or *Iliads*. But the point is that we would be fools to do away with any of them" (230). Apprehension of natural beauty is the first step toward achievement of ecological conscience.

From aesthetics and the arts, the volume moves to human-natural interactions, using arts and humanities-based descriptions of plover watching (the dance), quail hunting (enjoying uncertainty), and trout fishing in a swiftly flowing stream (hope). The author complements his presentation of the positive aspects of human-natural interaction with the experiential cost of lost wildlife, the numena of wilderness. Whether exemplified as the sole quail inhabiting an acre of land or

the lone grizzly lending soul to Escudilla's mountain, the message is always the same: humans derive joy, life, spirit in these expressions of freedom and wildness. Without them the land is dead.

Leopold's topical presentations of natural and social history allow him to define who we "are" and to assert what we as a people "mean." His continuing history lessons, begun in great detail within the first ten pages of the volume, are critical to creation of a cosmic life-supporting ethical system and to rejection of short-term materialism. Many references are caustically ironic, like those to Wisconsin's Governor pontificating as he allows the state forests to be abolished or the emotionally understated references to wholesale slaughter of passenger pigeons, prairie chickens, and ducks. In just this way, the author ironically equates the crusade for democracy in the Great War with the Illinois "State College['s effort] ... to make Illinois safe for soybeans" (125) regardless of the cost to marshes, wildlife, and the biotic community.

These ever-rising aesthetic and humanistic perceptual frames move readers from history to philosophy, from definition of a land ethic to a call to adopt

> "a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from anti-social conduct. ... There is yet no ethic dealing with man's relation to the land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it. Land, like Odysseus' slave-girls, is still property. The land-relation is still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations. ... The extension of ethics to this third element in human environment is ... an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity. ... All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. ... The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" (238-39).

Consistent use of literary and humanistic techniques asserts the community of life while allowing readers to experience and participate emotionally in the values being asserted. Graphic recounting of highly particular personal experiences and stories portrays these abstract concepts with great emotional force. Though highly polemic, the volume reads like a story, not exposition or argumentation. This presentational mode is strategic and highly effective.

Ultimately, Aldo Leopold asserts an even higher basis for ecological orientations. He moves beyond ethic, beyond human-based

and societal choice or basis for decision-making, and asserts them as religious values. Although evocation of morality in ecological thought and action is initially unexpected, over the course of the volume these assertions come to feel appropriate, even inevitable, allowing human beings to operate in a life-giving, life-sustaining, Godlike manner.

The author's next step in building an evolving ecological conscience is aggressive use of literary techniques recalling the mythic voice and oracular tone of Genesis and the Bible. These allusions start with "In the beginning there was only the unity of the ice sheet" (24). Regular recourse to lines like these sharpens the ironic commentary on contemporary society while lending credibility, emotional force, and a sense of morality to the volume's ecological pronouncements.

Continuing this strategy, Leopold asks rhetorically: "What value has wildlife from the standpoint of morals and religion?" (230). He answers with a dramatic retelling of a young man's religious experience, emphatically rejecting concepts of blind evolutionary change and asserting divine order, meaning, and purpose:

"... there were a hundred-odd species of warblers, each bedecked like to the rainbow, and each performing yearly sundry thousands of miles of migration about which scientists wrote wisely but did not understand. No 'fortuitous concourse of elements' working blindly through any number of millions of years could quite account for why warblers are so beautiful. No mechanistic theory, even bolstered by mutations, has ever quite answered for the colors of the cerulean warbler, or the vespers of the woodthrush, or the swansong, or—goose music. ... There are yet many boys to be born who, like Isaiah, 'may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this'" (231-232).

Sand County Almanac is much more than a light, uncomplicated appreciation of nature. The author consciously uses humanities-based approaches—graphic description, experiential presentation, anecdote, analogy, allusion, and Biblical language and tone—to foster ecological orientations. Leopold asserts that we must reorient our beliefs and actions to sustain and enhance the ecosystem. The authorial strategies in *Sand County Almanac* are designed to lead readers through an intellectual and emotional transformation (263) that feeds both intellect and spirit, changing our view of ourselves,

the natural world, and the symbiosis necessary for a sustainable, survivable future.

Aldo Leopold recognizes the value and importance of science, yet he sees that scientific studies alone cannot elicit the full, emotional response necessary for attitudinal and behavioral change. For that reason, *Sand County Almanac* opts for literary and humanistic approaches that heighten awareness of nature and enhance receptivity to his ecological message. Leopold's choices allow us to know fully—through experience, logic, and emotion—who we are and where we fit into the long-term natural order. In the process, he fosters the emergence of ecological conscience and the preservation of the biotic community.

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