

MidAmerica XLVI

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for The Study of Midwestern Literature*

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In honor of
Christian Knoeller

PREFACE

On May 16, 2019, members of The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature gathered in East Lansing for the forty-ninth annual meeting. At the awards luncheon on May 17, Christian Knoeller was named the 2019 winner of the MidAmerica Award for distinguished contributions to the study of Midwestern literature, and Bonnie Jo Campbell won the 2019 Mark Twain Award for distinguished contributions to Midwestern literature. Mary Catherine Harper was the winner of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize, Jane Holwerda won the Paul Sommers Prize for Creative Prose, and Lucie Jammes won the David Diamond Student Writing Prize. A conference highlight was Mollie Godfrey's plenary session presentation, "Renaissance Women: Gwendolyn Brooks, Lorraine Hansberry, and the Radical Humanisms of the Chicago Black Renaissance." Godfrey is the first winner of the new David D. Anderson Award for the best essay in Midwestern studies published in 2018.

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AERIAL COMBAT

EDWARD MORIN

for Camille

A pair of robins built their third nest
of the summer in our climbing rosebush.
They'd abandoned one nest after a heavy
cowbird chick suffocated their offspring.
Squirrels ate the eggs in their second nest.

I watched these skilled masons weaving grass
into mud mortar for a deep-bowled fortress
sturdy enough to last beyond one season.
Pitched high among red roses on tough canes,
it was protected by a moat of thorns.

With tail erect, the incubating female
learned to tolerate us passing gardeners.
One afternoon a red-tailed hawk appeared
on a thick phone line in view of the nest.
Both robins screamed an alarm. One buzzed

over its head, one perched dangerously close.
Eying the chicks who filled the nest, the hawk
ignored the parents' frantic commotion.
The agonizing standoff lasted until
the two of us waved our arms and shouted.

The smug hawk arched its wings and flew away.
After the chicks had fledged, I saw the mother
perch exactly where the hawk had been. I spoke
softly about our recent scare, and she
listened thoughtfully to every word.

College for Creative Studies

PINK

MICHELE R. WILLMAN

She waited all day for Ray to return. When she'd woken to the sound of the mewling infant, sun streaming in on the empty pillow, he was gone. He'd been gone other mornings, silently slipping out of the metal-frame double bed so quietly as to suppress its labored squeaks, probably to The Diner in town for his morning cup o' joe. But he'd always returned, still looking tousled, with bitter coffee breath before it woke up. This time, he hadn't.

Kaylie rubbed her sleep-encrusted eyes, rolled over and looked at the clock. 6:17. They'd put it in the spare room where shaggy old Buster used to sleep, but the room was usually empty these days except for the cat. Ray had brought a little crib with him, setting it up with a one-handed shake next to the quilted double bed. "Port-a-crib," it said on the side. You could bring anything around with you now-a-days, it seemed.

6:30. The mewling was getting more insistent. Meowing? Mewling? Kind of like a cat. A sort of low moan. A hum. But with the potential for more volume. A wail. Kaylie couldn't take a wail so she sat up and threw her legs over the side of the bed, shoving her feet into the blue rubber duck boots she kept there because the cold of the bare hardwood floors always startled her soles.

It was getting louder now. Where the hell was Ray? She wished she could shuffle sleepily in her rubber-soled shoes, but she was forced to pick up her feet and enter the day assertively. Reluctantly, she stamped out of the comfort of her own cozy room, edging around the metal frame where it fit tightly by the dresser, brushing against her grandmother's prairie quilt spilling over the edge of the bed, and went to face it.

The port-a-crib was pink. Kaylie supposed they came in pink or blue. It seemed like everything the infant had was pink. Pink diaper bag, over-sized with two outside pockets. Not exactly manly, but it made Ray appear fatherly, domestic, caring, especially with the

infant thrown over his broad, well-developed shoulder. It reminded her of the ad for family photographs with the hot shirtless man cradling a naked newborn in his two outstretched hands that she passed every time she needed to use the restroom in JCPenney. Pink blankets, pink sleeping clothes, even little pink slippers with bunny heads on them, though it didn't even walk. Only half-crawled, pulling itself with its arms, kicking its pudgy legs behind in a frog kick like it was doing the breaststroke. Even pink bottles, which Kaylie supposed she needed to retrieve from where Ray had lined them up in the plastic drainer next to the sink.

Kaylie hesitated in the still-dim hallway. Did she get the infant first or the bottle? Ray always held the fussing infant with one arm while deftly flipping open the container of formula with the other hand, that same hand grabbing the bottle, flipping on the faucet—luckily the faucet handles were flip-style rather than round—filling it up with the sweet-smelling well water, setting the bottle on the counter, scooping up the formula with the plastic scoop that seemed too small for his hardened fingers. And it was done. Ray tossing everything back into its place as if it had never happened. Kaylie had been mildly impressed with his dexterity. The infant was instantly calmed as Ray rolled her onto his arm, football-style, and held the bottle with the other hand.

Could she do that? Maybe. But she didn't have the wide shoulders to rest the infant on, and her hands weren't as big. As the mewling, humming, turned to wailing, Kaylie shifted directions away from the spare room and toward the kitchen.

The yellow wallpaper border with the repetitive apple pattern was peeling in places. She needed to take it down and replace it, but it had never been a priority. Not yet. She hadn't pasted it up herself. It had come with the oversized two-story farmhouse along with the bare, worn floor and the drafty doors. It was fitting, for a Minnesota apple farm. Cliché, but fitting. She liked it.

The pink diaper bag lay open on the counter. Pink bottles in the drainer where Ray had washed and placed them last night. Formula in the bag. Kaylie pulled the container out, flipped open the lid, found the plastic scoop inside. Formula in bottle. Or was it water first? Damn. Where was Ray? She dumped in the formula, her hand shaking, spilling some on the counter. The wailing increased in the background. Why did they make the bottle openings so small? She sloshed

in the water from the tap—how much?—and clomped back down the hall to the spare room.

The infant's face was red now. Tears streaking down its face. It didn't cry pretty.

"It's ok, sweet sugar pea," Kaylie murmured haltingly, trying out the pet name Ray always used, but it felt awkward on her tongue. "It's ok . . . little pink thing. Pinky. Pink. Little pink one." She had always thought of the infant as "Pink" with its bald, pink head and its pink accessories though she'd never vocalized it before. It was more red than pink now with its fists balled up into its eyes. Crust and tears streaked down its face. And the wailing. Couldn't it cry just a bit quieter?

She awkwardly picked up the unhappy infant, turning her head abruptly to avoid a wafting putrid odor. Cradling the infant in one arm, bottle in the other hand, she returned to the whitewashed walls and streaming sun in her own cozy room. Switching hands, Kaylie felt around under her pillow for her cell phone, spying it under some tissues on the bedside table. She snatched it up, marched back down the hall and settled into the green, corduroy recliner in the living room. So many steps just to accomplish this one thing.

Settling the infant and the bottle into the crook of her arm, she pushed the first listing on speed-dial and called The Diner.

"Hey. Has Ray been in there this morning? He's tall, well, sort of tall. Brown hair. Amazing biceps, like a farmer."

"Yeah, that one."

"No?"

"Ok. Thanks, Shelley. Yeah. I'll see you on Tuesday. Yeah. Yeah. I got it. Thanks."

Kaylie wiggled the tip of the bottle that had drifted out of the infant's mouth before it could wail again and wiped a dribble with her shirt sleeve. Ray must be getting the hitch repaired on that old truck.

The first time she'd seen Ray was at The Store, which propped precariously against its next-door neighbor, The Diner. These hometown names no longer sounded strange on her tongue. Locals threw the names about, knowing everyone was on the same page. Was it a week ago already that she'd seen him? Two weeks? He'd been wandering up and down the aisles, carrying one of those plastic car seat, baby-carrier things (not pink but a pale pea green) and looking a lit-

tle lost. He'd come up behind her in the cat food section though he had no reason to be there. No cat.

"Ma'am?" he'd said. Polite. Formal. He stood parallel to her, perusing the offerings of Whiskas and Friskies, the sleeping infant between them. Kaylie didn't usually like to be called "ma'am," but at least he was respectful about it, referencing her authority rather than her age, she told herself.

"Uh. Hi. What?" She stumbled, startled, her mind sliding from the debate going on in her head between wet food or dry, to the aisle, The Store, the man standing next to her. She half-turned to face him, awkwardly grazing the carrier with her knee.

"Is there a parts store in this town?"

Well, there was The Store, where they were standing, not a parts store. Then there was Bob and Ernie's, not a parts store.

"Uh. You could try Bob and Ernie's. Small engine repair. Or the gas station, I guess. Really everyone just goes to Harmony to get parts or to Rochester. It depends on what you need."

Ray's sinking expression sank a little lower.

"It's my camper. The axle won't hold all the way to Rochester. I could fix it myself, but. No parts. Do Bob and Ernie order?"

"Just Bob. No Ernie. Kind of like Scrooge and Marley, without the . . .," Kaylie trailed off. "Yeah, I think they order."

"And they are . . .?" He looked at her squarely now, open-faced, questioning.

"Oh, corner of 3rd and Pine Tree. Go through the alley. The shop is in the back."

Ray thanked her, stuck out his clean hand to shake her smudged one with the dirt lingering under her chewed-up fingernails. He brushed past her, the carrier causing her to bend her knees as its weight pressed against her. She turned back to the Friskies, taking two cans from the shelf. Might as well spoil The Beast with fall setting in. Fatten her up before winter.

She saw Ray again the next day—odd that she was even in town two days in a row—but she needed to talk to Joe about the pies for the Hofstedter fundraiser and Joe didn't like to negotiate on the phone.

She wore a lavender sundress and white cardigan in place of her usual jeans and dark t-shirt advertising Twins baseball or the U of M. Being Sunday, the unusual outfit didn't turn any heads. Joe was at the

counter of The Diner. Ray was at a booth by the window, sipping coffee and picking at what looked to be “The Big Breakfast,” with the infant in her carrier, propped up on the table, awake now and eyeing the waitress warily as she shuffled from table to table with refills.

Ray saw Kaylie enter and smiled in apparent recognition, though she wondered how he recognized her without the ponytail and dirty shirt. She nodded in his direction and approached Joe. Negotiations to make ten pies, or twenty, and have them ready at the end of the month, were sealed with a firm handshake. The Hofstedters would make a killing on her pies. As she turned to go, Ray’s tanned face was hidden behind the front page of *The Gazette*. Killing time? Looking for spare parts?

The third time she saw Ray, Monday, was a charm.

Kaylie played idly with the buttons on her phone as she stared out the picture window. The bottle seemed to satisfy Pink at first. She took it in her chubby hands, awkwardly, hungrily. It looked heavy for her. Kaylie propped the end of the pink plastic on her little finger as she dialed Bob and Ernie’s, then stopped. Ray would be back soon. He was . . . just delayed by coffee. Something. Not coffee. He wasn’t at The Diner. Maybe he was on his way back already. But without the coffee. It got harder to make excuses.

Pink stared up at her with wide blue eyes. Alert. Wary. She drained the bottle, but didn’t seem satisfied. Food, Kaylie thought. Baby food? She’d seen Ray give the infant banana. Mashed banana. Did she still have a banana? Tossing the phone on the side table, she peeled herself and the infant from the depths of the worn chair and headed back to the kitchen. She was putting a lot of miles on this morning, yet she still wasn’t out in the yard where she should be. The chickens would be squawking, and she was in for a scolding when she got to the henhouse.

7:30. No Ray.

8:30. No Ray. Kaylie thought about the picking she needed to do for the pies and the market coming up on Saturday. She dialed Bob and Ernie’s and let it ring through this time while the infant rolled onto her stomach on the brown dappled afghan on the floor. Bits of mashed banana still clung to her chin.

Bob hadn’t seen Ray since yesterday when he’d collected the camper. He’d paid his bill in cash and driven away. Kaylie stepped carefully around the afghan as she hung up the phone and leaned on

the davenport to look out the front window. No camper. No cherry red Dodge Ram in the driveway. Only her own F-150, blue paint hazing to dull rust around the wheel wells, themselves partially obstructed by field mud and gravel dust. No Ray.

Around 10:00, the infant fell asleep on the afghan. Kaylie folded a corner of it on top of her stockinged feet and crept gratefully from the room where she'd been hovering, pacing from the phone to the window unsure if the infant would damage herself in some way if left alone.

In her bathroom, she brushed her teeth, ran a comb through her thick, brown hair, tangled in the ponytail holder from yesterday and noticed that she was overdue for a trim. What used to be bangs she tucked behind her ears. She looked longingly at the shower but decided she couldn't risk it and ran her wash cloth over her face and under her arms before adding deodorant. She sighed at her purple tank and matching purple plaid lounge pants leftover from the night before and, as an afterthought, reached down and swept the wash cloth between her legs releasing an odor of sweat and sex.

Crossing to the bedroom to rummage for fresh clothes, she peered in at the infant who was still asleep in the living room with the corner of the afghan now dangling over one foot. Damn him, she thought, damn Ray. She tiptoed the rest of the way into the bedroom as best she could in the heavy duck boots, wishing she could stomp loudly. March. Wail.

Her eyes scanned longingly over yesterday's jeans and dark tee still on the floor where Ray had tossed them. Sighing again, humphing, she turned and tromped into the kitchen to check the state of the spilled formula, banana peels, and dirty bottles. She clutched her silent phone.

By 12:00, the infant was awake again. Not mewling this time, but waking suddenly, eyes snapping open, her feet twitching. She rolled over, sweeping her gaze around the room until it came to rest on Kaylie. And she began to wail. Really wail.

Diaper. Bottle. Mashed banana. Repeat.

At 3:00, while the infant dozed again lightly, Kaylie crept to her bedroom and changed furtively into a white tank and denim jacket, pulled on yesterday's jeans from the tangled pile, and dropped the morning's purple tank and lounge pants with their remnants of banana and stench of urine on the rag rug in the center of the bed-

room floor. She checked her phone again—no messages—and dropped it onto her still unmade bed.

Clomping back into the living room satisfyingly refreshed and seeing the infant awake from its afternoon doze, Kaylie determined to make it outside. The chickens could wait no longer. She could hear the tomatoes ripening on the vines, beefsteaks threatening to burst their strained skin. She rummaged around in the diaper bag and plopped a pink hat on the infant's pink head as she'd seen Ray do.

The day was bright, but the air carried a chill, a hint of things to come. Perfect fall picking weather. Kaylie secured Pink in the red wagon she'd retrieved from the shed and left in the entry the day before, planning to haul the pots in from the outside porch. She propped the tiny body up with pillows from her bed enclosed in their delicately embroidered cases sporting tiny yellow tulips. She tied the infant securely, she hoped, with the arms of a gray Old Navy hoodie, squiggling the knot around Pink's middle. Pink didn't seem happy, but she didn't wail either. Her wide eyes took in the blue sky, blinking in the bright sunshine, as Kaylie opened the front door. The Beast, satiated with his Friskies, stroked the metal sides of the Radio Flyer and Pink's eyes widened even more. She'd seen the cat before, certainly, but maybe the angle was new, the proximity. Ray always slung Pink on his shoulder or cradled her in his arm. She thought she'd seen him with one of those kid backpack things. Where the hell was that thing when she needed it? Maybe that old Sierra Club backpack was still in the back of the closet. It was clean, mostly. She pictured maneuvering the backpack wrong-way-'round onto her chest, the infant's face in her face, body stuffed down into the backpack's generous belly, arms stretching out of the half-zippered sides, baby body wiggling, as she fed chickens, picked tomatoes and apples, made pies.

The bump down to the front porch was minimal. "Th-thump" and all four wheels were on the graying wooden boards. Pink remained secured, one chubby fist in her mouth and the other clinging to the frayed sleeve of the sweatshirt around her middle. Good. This was ok. As the trio emerged, the chickens, hearing the commotion, set to a racket. The Beast left the wagon's side with its strange contents in favor of terrorizing the two-leggeds in their fenced enclosure.

There were only three more steps down to the dirt path and rather than bump down them straightaway, Kaylie circled around to the front of the wagon, hesitated slightly, then pulled. Pink, slurping her

fist, saliva running freely onto her pink cotton coveralls, didn't register the precipice she was about to descend: wagon, bed pillows, sweatshirt, pink passenger, wavered on the brink. Kaylie recognized the impossible slope of the stairs, the low wheel-base of the wagon, too late. She caught up the contraption as the front tires bumped down to the first step and the arms of the sweatshirt slipped forward, off the oblivious infant whose tiny fingers continued to clutch a cuff. The infant's shifting weight threw the whole apparatus off balance as Kaylie attempted to hoist it aloft. She dropped heavily to a knee on the dirt path, hearing the rip of the worn denim and feeling pebbles grind into her calloused skin. The metal front axle came down hard cutting into her upper thigh and a stripe of blood radiated from the gash in her jeans. Kaylie cried out an "oof" and a "fuck," but didn't wail. The momentum catapulted Pink's soft body into the front of the wagon and spun her around, pillows lost over the side, until Kaylie grabbed her by her tasseled cap, pulling her back again from one brink to the other until they came to rest splayed out below the bottom step. Baby on wagon on Kaylie on gravel.

Pink, flat on her back on the bare metal, stared up at the wide blue sky above, at the dark curls, reaching towards her, at the anxious face looming at the edge of her vision. The chickens had ceased their squawking. Maybe in awe of the near-miss or in an attempt to hide in plain sight from the stalking cat. In the silence, Kaylie heard an engine in the distance, heard tires bumping down the gravel drive, saw a hazy dust cloud obscuring a long caravan: pick-up, camper, Ray.

University of Minnesota Crookston

WITNESS
CARLA BARGER

On the rise at the back of the pasture
the old windmill
slowly screeches its rusty blades
at the world.
Flanked by saplings and trumpet vines,
it leans into the hard ground,
remains,
irrelevant.

But beneath it, a boy on his knees
digs with a hand spade.
At last
a hole appears in which he lays
a bridle and bit, a curry comb.
He wipes his wet face
with his sleeve once
it is finished.

I watched him from the barn.
I swear the windmill heeled further
as it wailed its painful revolution,
a relief
against clouds gliding effortlessly.

The University of Illinois at Chicago

NEW DIRECTIONS IN MIDWESTERN STUDIES:
A REVIEW ESSAY

MARCIA NOE

- Hoganson, Kristin L. *The Heartland: An American History*. NY: Penguin, 2019. 399 pp.
- Lauck, Jon K., Gleaves Whitney, and Joseph Hogan, eds. *Finding a New Midwestern History*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2018. 365 pp.
- Oler, Andy, ed. *Pieces of the Heartland: Representing Midwestern Places*. Hastings, NE: Hastings College P, 2018. 228 pp.
- Oler, Andy. *Old-Fashioned Modernism: Rural Masculinity and Midwestern Literature*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2019. 234 pp.
- Olson, Liesl. *Chicago Renaissance: Literature and Art in the Midwest Metropolis*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2017. 373 pp.

The spring 2019 issue of the *Middle West Review* features a symposium, “Making Midwests,” in which Midwestern historians reflect on the future of Midwestern history studies, suggesting that researchers look beyond the borders of the twelve states to explore more relational lines of inquiry while still focusing on place and region. Borderlands theory, transregional studies, and transnational foci are some of the approaches they advocate. This essay reviews recently published books about the Midwest that move in some of these new directions, entangling and interrogating concepts of place, region, gender, race, border, and nation.

The oxymoronic title of Andy Oler’s *Old-Fashioned Modernism* suggests that modernism in Midwestern literature is messy and complicated, resisting the easy dichotomies of rural and urban, heartland and flyover country, agriculture and industry, production and consumption, masculine and feminine. Oler explores texts that offer complex constructions of the Midwest, demonstrating the personal, regional, and national elements that complicate rural and masculine

identity formations and render them neither stable nor determinate. Of Sherwood Anderson's *Poor White*, Dawn Powell's *The Story of a Country Boy*, Lorine Niedecker's *Next Year or I Fly My Rounds*, *Tempestuous*, Wright Morris's *The Home Place*, William Cunningham's *The Green Corn Rebellion*, and Langston Hughes's *Not Without Laughter*, Oler writes that, "[t]he fiction and poetry examined here pair common images of the country and the city with the anxieties of modern masculinity, and they imagine spaces and gender roles that do not conform to prevailing narratives of socio-economic modernization" (26-27). Thus, Oler's notion of old-fashioned modernism in Midwestern literature describes texts that juxtapose conflicting elements: the pastoral and the modern, the urban and the rural, the traditional and the experimental, the stereotypical and the anomalous.

Impressively situated within existing scholarship, each of Oler's chapters considers the ways in which modern socio-economic changes have shaped Midwestern and masculine identities in the texts that he discusses. Chapter one focuses on Anderson's construction of "a modern rurality of ambiguity and contradiction" in *Poor White*, as Bidwell, Ohio, struggles with the coming of industry (32). Oler asserts that in depicting this process, Anderson "both embraces and subverts nostalgic modes," thereby exemplifying old-fashioned modernism (32). Heteronormative masculinity, Oler argues, is inadequate in this modernizing Midwest; in *Poor White* we see that Anderson challenges conventional notions of masculinity in protagonist Hugh McVey, demonstrating the limitations of equating masculinity with economic success and autonomy.

Oler's second chapter discusses two lesser-known Midwestern works, *The Story of a Country Boy* and *Next Year or I Fly My Rounds*, *Tempestuous*. He contends that these works challenge Midwestern stereotypes and conventional gender roles, such as the self-made man and the country boy in the city. Oler is especially concerned with how these works deal with time. He finds that textual disruptions in both the Powell and the Niedecker texts upend conventional temporalities, identities, and narratives. Through the story of Chris Bennett's corporate rise and fall, Powell subverts the archetype of the self-made man, with its concomitant progressive narrative time frame and normative masculine expectations. "In short, no matter how badly Chris wants to be a self-made man, the book won't let him," concludes Oler (82). Niedecker's unique work

overlays the homilies centered on the calendar pages of *A Sunlit Road* with short poems, a process that undermines traditional rural temporalities and nostalgic images, creating “an elastic temporality open to a variety of possibilities. . .” (89). Niedecker thus replaces the forward movement in time in this repurposed pocket calendar with a palimpsest-like overlay of poems over homilies, in this way constructing a temporal simultaneity. “By representing Midwestern spaces and stories that do not rely exclusively on recognizable narrative progressions, Powell and Niedecker offer a countryside in which multiple temporalities, narratives, and identities can co-exist,” Oler concludes (82).

Two novels of the 1930s, *The Home Place* and *The Green Corn Rebellion*, are discussed in Oler’s third chapter. These Great Plains novels, like the works dealt with earlier in the book, complicate notions of heartland and masculine identity, cultivating “a rural masculinity that acknowledges—even dwells in—failure” (104). In a reverse revolt from the village, the protagonist of *The Home Place*, Clyde Muncy, departs New York for Nebraska but finds the family farm not to be the hospitable, comforting refuge he imagined. While Clyde resists the forces of urban capitalist modernism by moving back to the heartland, the Socialist characters in *The Green Corn Rebellion* attempt to fight these forces by joining with their neighbors to march on Washington to protest the inequities resulting from a modernizing nation. Clyde’s failure to escape his problems by fleeing to a heartland sanctuary and the Socialist farmers’ failure to launch an effective protest upend pastoral fantasies; a non-normative masculinity thus emerges from thwarted expectations of rural life.

Oler’s penultimate chapter deals with Langston Hughes’s *Not Without Laughter*, a coming-of-age novel that chronicles Sandy Rodgers’s journey from small-town Kansas to Chicago. Oler’s analysis centers on the multiplicity of forces that shape Sandy’s developing identity as a black male in the Midwest: rural Kansas; Chicago; family members; books by Midwestern and African American authors; black public spaces (the barbershop and the pool hall); Southern culture, especially blues and jazz. Sandy’s masculinity is shaped by both male and female models, both urban and rural locales, both the Booker T. Washington and the W. E. B. DuBois notions of black manhood; in its conjoining of these opposing elements, *Not Without Laughter* exemplifies old-fashioned modernism. Oler argues that “this novel’s interactions between the modern and anti-modern,

as well as between the typical and the exceptional, drive this book's modernity" (155). In his concluding chapter, he has a bit more to say about the works he previously discussed, but goes on to show how two recently published Midwestern stories—J. Ryan Stradal's "Venison," and Bonnie Jo Campbell's "Boar Taint"—feature fraught male characters struggling to adapt to the postindustrial Midwest of rural decline and thus exemplify versions of old-fashioned modernism.

Old-Fashioned Modernism has many virtues: insightful readings of the works under consideration; a helpful scholarly apparatus, including a very comprehensive bibliography; a focus on material as well as literary culture; attention to lesser-known Midwestern works; and, most of all, an emphasis on the intersection of gender and region. If his argument occasionally collapses under the weight of its own complexity, as in his treatment of the Niedecker text, Oler's *Old-Fashioned Modernism* is nevertheless a welcome and important addition to Midwestern studies.

One year prior to the publication of *Old-Fashioned Modernism*, Oler published a collection centering on place, *Pieces of the Heartland: Representing Midwestern Places*, as volume three of Hastings College Press's Rediscovering the Midwest series. Oler's deeply researched introduction to this collection provides a useful lens for looking at Midwestern places: the tension created by the juxtaposition of opposites. Exemplifying this approach is Nora Pat Small's chapter, "Preserving a Midwestern Moment," which focuses on the tension between idealistic preservationists and technical planners and profit-minded members of the business community as they struggled for control over the restoration of New Harmony, Indiana. Echoing this argument is Jim O'Loughlin's and Jordan Lea Ludwig's "The Midwest below Me," which explores the conflict in James Hearst's poetry between the local and the universal. Another thought-provoking chapter of this kind is Camden Burd's "In the Land of Hiawatha," which suggests that literature + landscape = place. Burd argues that Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* became a useful tool for conservationists who sought to protect Michigan Upper Peninsula from the ravages of extractive industries as well as for promoters of the UP as a tourist destination.

Another major emphasis in *Pieces of the Heartland* is the relation between the Midwestern and the national. As scholars such as Andrew Cayton, Peter Onuf, and James Shortridge have argued, the

Midwest is commonly viewed as the most American part of America and is seen by many as a synecdoche for the country as a whole. Wayne Anderson's "'Beautiful Land of Make-Believe'" argues that twelve films set in Iowa and produced during the 1930s helped to establish this notion in the America public's mind. Likewise, in "Speaking from the Middle West: Susan Glaspell's Critique of Nation in *Inheritors*," Yi-chin Shih shows how this multi-generational play set on an Iowa college campus enacts the threat to American ideals such as freedom of speech and assembly by conservative forces, at the same time a very Midwestern and a very American play.

Perhaps the most significant chapter is Kerry Alcorn's "Saskatchewan's Midwestern Moment." This transnational study of the ways in which Canadian educational policy makers borrowed concepts and structures from their Midwestern counterparts is interesting not only for its own sake, but also for its forward-looking methodology, as it demonstrates how regional studies scholars can engage in fruitful transregional inquiry. The chapters on the National Black Political Convention, held in Gary, Indiana, in 1972, on the world premiere of a Haitian opera in South Bend, Indiana, in 1949, and on Indiana ecofeminist Gene Stratton Porter take regional studies further along this trajectory. Overall, *Pieces of the Heartland* offers chapters from the disciplines of history, literary studies, political science, film studies, educational policy studies, and theatre studies; all thirteen chapters offer valuable insights and new information from their respective disciplinary perspectives.

Liesl Olson's *Chicago Renaissance: Literature and Art in the Midwest Metropolis* is an ambitious book that ranges over the better part of six decades and embarks on multiple lines of inquiry. The Chicago Renaissance is well-trodden territory, but unlike Bernard Duffey's argument for a two-stage Renaissance, Dale Kramer's author-intensive study, Timothy Spears's look at small-town writers in the big city, and Ellen Williams's focus on Harriet Monroe, Olson's book offers perspectives unavailable in the afore-mentioned works. In exploring the question of how Chicago was important to the cultural expression of American modernity, Olson examines, throughout all five chapters, the tension between modernist experimentalism and traditional forms, the challenges these writers faced, and the linguistic choices they made in writing for multiple audiences.

The strongest contribution that the book makes to Chicago studies lies in the many connections it forges between the literature, art, and architecture of early twentieth-century Chicago. Olson explores the ways in which Harriett Monroe drew inspiration from the natural wonders of the Southwest, such as the Grand Canyon, connecting Native American art to modernist innovation. She also examines the impact of the 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Arts, held at the Arts Institute following its headline-making show at the Sixty-Ninth Street Armory in New York City. This discussion of the Armory Show and the Arts Club of Chicago's role in transforming the city into a modernist center and thereby ushering Chicago into the modernist age is among the best things in an overall excellent book. Olson argues that Sherwood Anderson's Armory show experience helped him to develop the unique narrative language that he used in *Winesburg, Ohio*. Her discussion of the interfertilization of Anderson's painting and fiction is likewise illuminating. Her eleven-page analysis of *Winesburg, Ohio* that focuses on Anderson's knowledge and exploitation of the limitations of language is especially insightful.

A similar discussion in the following chapter focuses on Hemingway's modernist use of language. "Chicago for Hemingway is a touchstone for cataclysmic changes in literary language and an embodiment of the clear-eyed realism that Hemingway sought to produce in his writing," argues Olson (156). However, Olson strains to connect her Hemingway discussion to a Chicago context. She asserts that "Chicago for Hemingway was both a place and a moment in his life that reflected back to the past and forward to what would be written with a voice that he found there" (158) but is less successful in exemplifying her assertions in this chapter than she was in the preceding chapter on Anderson. Her discussion of the influence of the impressionist painters in the Art Institute on Hemingway also could use more development. The Gertrude Stein chapter, predicated on Stein's four visits to Chicago in the 1930s, seems similarly tangential. While interesting for its window on Chicago social and intellectual history during the Great Depression, the chapter seems less pertinent to the overall concerns of the book than the other four chapters. Olson's final chapter offers an invaluable look at the interactions of Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks, Margaret Walker, and Era Bell Thompson within the collaborative aesthetic developed by the Illinois Writers Project and the South Side Writers Group.

One strength of *Chicago Renaissance* is Olson's strategic choice and use of visuals, not simply to supplement the text but to tell the story in ways that complement and expand it. Another is the author's meticulous research, which extended to combing the minutes of Art Institute Board meetings. Olson can be forgiven for misquoting Harold Ross's famous statement about the old lady in Dubuque; less forgivable is her tautological argument that many Chicago writers' modernism was actually realism. However, despite these caveats, Olson's *Chicago Renaissance* is a book well worth reading and owning for modernists, Americanists, Midwesternists, and anyone interested in the Chicago story.

Fourteen papers from the first conference of the Midwestern History Association have been published by the University of Nebraska Press as *Finding a New Midwestern History*. The result is a book whose high production values are matched by the excellence of its scholarship. In the introduction, editors Jon K. Lauck, Gleaves Whitney, and Joseph Hogan state that one of the book's objectives is to promote a diversity of viewpoints, and *Finding a New Midwestern History* accomplishes this goal, with chapters on indigenous peoples, African American migration patterns, American and European immigrants, conservative intellectuals, and religious traditions that support Michael Steiner's assertion that the Midwest is "a matrix of cultural diversity and bulwark against the leveling forces of mass culture" (15). Midwestern culture is explored in chapters on sports figures, intellectuals, musicians, writers, and artists, all of which contribute to a rich portrait of Midwestern identity and thus achieve a second stated objective of "giving voice to a forgotten region and reconnecting to an earlier and once strong tradition of Midwestern historical and literary regionalism" (xxii). A standout in this respect is Steiner's "The Birth of the Midwest and the Rise of Regional Theory." This chapter calls attention to the erasure of the indigenous Midwest by scholars intent on emphasizing its European history and character. Steiner traces the origin of the concept of the Midwest to a thirty-year period between 1880 and 1910 and relates the ways in which nineteenth-century writers contributed to the construction of the Midwest and the notion of regionalism, focusing specifically on Frederick Jackson Turner, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Hamlin Garland.

This volume might also have been titled *Finding a New Midwestern Identity*, for that topic is the focus of many of these essays. One conclusion that can be drawn if the book is conceptual-

ized this way is that geography was a major factor in the formation of Midwestern identity; a major emphasis on the intersection of geography and history is seen in chapters on settlement patterns, towns, cities, and rivers. In these chapters, James E. Davis, Christopher R. Laingen, Michael Allen, Jon Butler, and Jon Teaford demonstrate the important role that the physical environment plays in identity formation.

Another way to look at *Finding a New Midwestern History* is to see the book as generating a new set of questions about the Midwest: not “what are the dimensions of the Midwest?” but “how does the Midwest intersect with other regions?” or “how is its history entangled with that of indigenous peoples, immigrants, and migrants from other regions and nations?” Scholars of the Midwest will find this book illuminating and useful in many ways.

Kristin L. Hoganson’s *The Heartland: An American History* asks us to interrogate, not celebrate conventional constructions of nation, heartland, and region. In this highly readable yet flawed book, Hoganson asserts that despite much geographical and cultural diversity and disjunction in the region, Americans “imagine their nation with a protected, essential core: the heartland” (xiii). She argues that the heartland myth, with its connotations of isolation, parochialism, and cultural backwardness, is an invitation to explore its layers and depths, its point of origin, and its divergence from the facts of regional history. In her initial chapter, Hoganson chronicles the history of the heartland’s earliest inhabitants, the Kickapoos, from the seventeenth century to the present, throughout present-day Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri, focusing on their values, culture, and economic interactions with “settler colonists.” She emphasizes that “so-called pioneers” used the Kickapoos’ mobility as an excuse to take their land, although these “settler colonists” were quite mobile also.

Rather than conceptualize the Midwest as middle ground, insular center, or heartland, Hoganson sees it as a place between borderlands, a version of the Midwest that allows the inclusion of Native Americans and people from neighboring countries. She meticulously traces the history of a transborder and transnational economy, citing the commerce between Midwestern cattle farmers and Canadians, Mexicans, and Native Americans during the latter half of the nineteenth century, enhanced by the agricultural press and agricultural associations. Hoganson argues that “[b]y framing the Midwest as

thoroughly domestic and quintessentially American, the heartland myth has prevented us from seeing the Midwest as a place where borderlands converged,” when, in actuality, hog and cattle farmers were heavily engaged in a global economy that enabled US and British imperialism and “settler colonialism” (75).

As in the previous chapter, Hoganson cites economic reasons to explode this myth, stating that “the settlers who forged the heartland hankered after foreign markets” (135). More compelling evidence of the heartland’s connections to other regions and countries lies in the provenance of many heartland plants and crops. “With the important exception of maize, all the pioneers’ major grains came from Europe,” she writes (140). Settlers also imported European breeds of cows, pigs, horses, sheep, chickens, ducks, and even bees. Midwestern political appointees served as consuls and commercial agents in Europe and Asia, representing the farmers of their region and reporting on European agricultural practices. Midwestern farmers and agricultural students, in turn, traveled abroad to learn about best agricultural practices and invited their foreign counterparts to travel to heartland universities to collaborate. Foreign engineering techniques, too, were used to drain the boggy heartland prairie, and the coming of the telegraph, radio and telephone connected the heartland even more closely, both internationally and locally, as did international bird protection treaties and tracking expeditions, ballooning competitions, aerial flights and exhibitions, and military installations. “Within a generation, central Illinois had become a biculture commodity zone, its miles of corn checkered by soy,” concludes Hoganson (166).

In her final chapter, Hoganson references her original project of defining the cultural meaning of the heartland, asserting that, in essence, it represents safety and security, made so by its allegiance to that which is white and its hostility to people of color. Hoganson articulates her contention that the innocent safe heartland is a zero sum construction, created to protect privileged heartlanders (i.e., white people) and exclude nonwhite people, and then resumes her discussion of the marginalization and oppression of Native Americans, specifically, the Kickapoo. “The white nationalist boundary drawing of the heartland myth has contributed to a larger process of erasure,” she argues (261). Thus, the bulk of this chapter comprises stories of clueless and careless white power wielders who rode roughshod over Native American traditions and values. Loss of their

lands to government, railroads and swindlers compounded the Kickapoos' problems as they attempted to migrate successfully and resettle on land, in Mexico and elsewhere, that would be hospitable to their lifestyle and culture.

The Heartland is a perplexing book, well-researched, well-written, and cogently argued in part, yet awash in paradoxes, contradictions, unsupported generalizations, and logical lapses. For example, Hoganson deplors local history, but most of her research centers on the county where she lives and teaches. She aims to investigate a question of regional and national significance: "What *really* lies at the heart of the nation?" (xxiii). However, anyone who reads this book would conclude that the heartland is pretty much coterminous with Champaign County, Illinois. The book, published by a trade press, is readily accessible to nonspecialists, yet much of its content would be of interest mainly to academics. She goes into way too much detail, particularly on topics that are tangential to her argument, such as kite-flying and ballooning competitions, yet many broad generalizations about the heartland lack explanation, exemplification, and support. "Depending on perspective, the heartland of myth enshrines tradition or stands for attributes better left behind" (305). Whose perspective? Which traditions? What attributes? Better left behind for whom? And how does she know this?

Equally troubling is her conflation of the terms "global" and "globalization" and "isolation" and "isolationist." She does make a compelling, nearly irrefutable argument that the heartland, throughout its history, has been far from isolated, participating in multiple regional, national and international economies and cultural interchanges. However, she challenges the belief that the Midwest is the isolationist capital of America only with her inability to find instances of Midwesterners calling themselves isolationists in small-town Midwestern newspapers published during the first half of the twentieth century. Other than this evidence, or lack thereof, her argument goes begging. Much the same is true with respect to her claim that the heartland is complicit in imperialism. The Berkshire pig as a "particularly apt agent of empire" (95)? Isn't that rather a lot to put on one pig? Even a 300-pound one? "Berkshire breeders' efforts to whiten their animals can be attributed to their investments in white supremacy" (94). Seriously? Bizarre, unsupported statements like these, scattered all too frequently through the book, undermine the author's credibility and make her an easy target for critics eager to

dismiss her as living in a leftist bubble, trapped by ideology and unacquainted with critical thinking. In its wealth of information, *The Heartland* will be of most value to Midwestern historians, economists, geographers, agronomists, and scholars of Native American culture. But as a thoughtful and well-informed investigation into the meaning of the term “heartland,” it leaves much to be desired.

In *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape*, Douglas Reichert Powell conceives of region as a “rich, complicated, and dynamic cultural construct rather than a static, stable geophysical entity,” writing that “[w]hen we talk about a region, we are talking not about a stable, bounded, autonomous place but about a cultural history, the cumulative, generative effect of the interplay among the various, competing definitions of that region” (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007, 6, 5). Powell’s critical regionalism is an endeavor that the authors discussed in this essay have undertaken; their books provide, not just templates for scholars wishing to engage in investigations of region, but, in Powell’s words, “new, potentially revelatory perspectives on it” (7).

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EMBRACING AND TRANSCENDING PLACE IN
MIDWESTERN POETRY: A REVIEW ESSAY

CHRISTIAN KNOELLER

- Harper, Mary Catherine. *Some Gods Don't Need Saints*.
Finishing Line P, 2016. 25 pp.
- Harrison, Jim. *Jim Harrison: The Essential Poems*. Copper
Canyon P, 2019. 229 pp.
- Lockhart, D.A. *The Gravel Lot That Was Montana*. Mansfield
P, 2018. 77 pp.
- Radavich, David. *America Abroad: An Epic of Discovery*. Plain
View P, 2019. 115 pp.

Over the last several years, a particularly promising crop of new work by Midwestern poets has underscored the diversity that has characterized the region's literature historically and remains vibrant today. This review surveys four recent collections from both established and emerging writers. All of these books might well be termed learned works—but by authors who wear their learning lightly, writing in an unassuming, colloquial style that might be seen as a regional trope. Anchoring this set is a remarkable volume of selected poems by renowned poet and novelist Jim Harrison, published posthumously by Copper Canyon Press.

In her most recent collection, Mary Catherine Harper has achieved a remarkable feat: a manuscript rich in historical, literary, and mythological allusions compressed into a chapbook, *Some Gods Don't Need Saints*. In truth, she had me at the title (Note to self: *Wish I'd thought of that!*). Yet from start to finish, its steady voice—compelling yet gentle—commands attention. And while the style is nuanced, the diction is precise.

Indeed, I find many things to admire about the craft of this gifted writer. Above all, the subject matter is wide ranging culturally and philosophically. The volume opens, for example, by juxtaposing the

Navajo/Keresan mythic figure Spider Woman with Joan of Arc and Tiresias: a breathtaking pivot from Native American creation narratives to a medieval Catholic warrior/saint to classical Greek mythology—in just four pages—spanning disparate historical periods, religious traditions, and world views. Yet all three of these poems evoke themes of gender: specifically the place of the feminine in such divergent cosmologies.

Harper repeatedly succeeds in addressing such vexing topics with seeming ease, in poems that are both intriguing and approachable. Consider lines from the closing poem below. After evoking the dynamic cycles of air, water, and earth—trees breathing, tides surging, and magma rising—she unifies the book by concluding:

the issue and return of
these not bound to us
so much as we to them,
our lives a small contribution
to the universe that spiders
out its web of silk and dew. (24)

Indeed, this gem of a collection belies its brevity with great breadth and depth.

America Abroad: An Epic of Discovery, the eighth collection of poems from David Radavich, is perhaps his most ambitious intellectual venture yet. Throughout this compact epic that crosses continents and spans centuries, the poet traces historical trajectories from the Age of Exploration to the present. Organized geographically, sections recount the “discovery” of the “New World” and exploration of the American West, as well as sojourns in the Arctic, South America, Asia, and finally the Middle East (“to find myself // again in the cradle of time”).

Along the way, we encounter persona poems speaking in the voices of historical figures including intrepid adventurers, conquistadors, and the agents of Manifest Destiny: from Uncle Sam to the Statue of Liberty and Betsy Ross, from Leif Ericsson to Ponce de Leon, Coronado, and Sacajawea. Indeed, we even recognize echoes of Walt Whitman (“I contain multitudes”) in its sweeping embrace.

Following a litany of voyages—whether ancient or modern, ongoing or imagined—the poem concluding this collection arrives at a moment of hope: offering a glimpse of *compassion* (“So many needs / are still // raw”), *mercy* (“nursing the sick // clutching / the forgot-

ten”), while still “holding high / this great flame,” and the promise of *redemption*. This is a bold and expansive book, challenging readers to reconceive the ways that history has been said to *rhyme*.

In his most recent collection, *The Gravel Lot That Was Montana*, D.A. Lockhart stakes a personal claim to Midwestern regional literature by his unvarnished and pluralistic depiction of the region’s landscapes and inhabitants. The publisher, Mansfield Press of Toronto, aptly characterizes the scope of the book: “In poems that stretch from the wide boulevards of Detroit to the big sky vistas of Montana, D.A. Lockhart explores the way that places make us who we are. In these journeys and stopovers, layers of folk and indigenous histories unfold” (cover). Indeed, many of these narrative poems cross over between twenty-first-century perspectives and the author’s own Native American heritage (“Lenape nation and a member of the Moravian of the Thames First Nation”). The opening poem set in proximity to Detroit, for instance, explicitly evokes the trope of a journey across both space and time: “A place birthed by Odawa fire dances, / cleansed in flames of the Nain Rouge / reborn by the smog cast off by industry / of cars” (9).

In fact, place is a central element in many of Lockhart’s poems. In the tradition of revered Midwestern poets such as James Wright, titles often name specific locations from Dearborn, Michigan, to Mitchell, South Dakota. Indeed, the titles of at least half a dozen individual poems, as well as that of the volume as a whole, allude to particular places in Montana alone, including the Crow Agency, Hot Springs, and Rosebud County. As Roethke demonstrated in “North American Sequence,” such place names can serve as shorthand to signal cultural and environmental history and, especially, to evoke the region’s indigenous peoples.

Yet Lockhart’s poems are also highly modern (at moments perhaps even postmodern) in their sensibilities, such as when making apt references to recent popular culture, powerfully juxtaposed with indigenous history: “She talked / B.T.O., and all those legendary rockers / from the hundredth meridian and she was alone / huddled like a buffalo in a prairie snowstorm” (11). This is not a poetry that succumbs to nostalgia, but one that recognizes ironies as it depicts incongruities. For all its accessibility, this is a mature and sophisticated work by an important poet we will undoubtedly be hearing from again in the years to come.

And, finally, *Jim Harrison: The Essential Poems* further cements the author's legacy as a major American writer. Doggedly committed to region, nature, and place, Harrison's impressive oeuvre in a variety of genres including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry is justly celebrated. Novels such as *Dalva*, for example, as well as collections of shorter fiction such as *Legends of the Fall* and *The Woman Lit by Fireflies*, stand among the masterpieces of contemporary Midwestern literature. Moreover, his reputation as a contrarian who shunned the status quo as well as the shelter of the academy is well deserved and widely admired. Yet his excellent poetry—though admittedly uneven—is arguably yet to receive its due. Hopefully this posthumous volume will help to set the record straight.

A generous sampling from his fourteen previous collections (including the earlier *Selected and New*, 1982), *The Essential Poems* is characterized by editor Joseph Bednarik as “a distillation of nearly 1,000 poems published within fourteen volumes over fifty years” (xii). Here, that impressive body of work has been fastidiously pared down to only the most compelling. The book's attractive presentation is enhanced by color facsimiles of eight manuscript pages, replete with the author's handwritten revisions. In addition, the striking cover photo, “Bristlecone Pines and Milky Way,” hints at the profound—perhaps existential—dimensions of the poetry itself.

Remarkably, there is even a glowing endorsement by Denise Levertov of his very earliest work, presumably his first attempt at a collection: “Harrison appears to be a natural poet, with unfailing instincts for where to break his lines, for the image that embodies meanings beyond appearance . . . symbols are not applied but are deeply inherent in the image itself—in a word, the purest lyric tradition” (inside front cover). High praise indeed, coming from one of the most influential American poets of the twentieth century. It is tempting to think that she might have said much the same of the new volume. Even if you own no other poetry by Jim Harrison, this retrospective collection would be an ideal place to start.

In aggregate, these four collections provide a cross section of the poetry being created and savored in the Midwest today, suggesting continuity with literary history in the region—one that both embraces and transcends place.

FORMAL INNOVATION AS A REGISTER FOR
RACIAL COMPLEXITY IN THREE POEMS
BY GWENDOLYN BROOKS

CAITLIN DOYLE

Gwendolyn Brooks, who spent the majority of her life in Chicago, earned a reputation as one of America's most celebrated Midwestern poets. Among her signal achievements was the way in which she applied the traditional components of the English-language poetic lineage, such as rhyme, meter, and inherited forms, to subject matter that had long been missing from that lineage. Producing the majority of her oeuvre between 1940 and 1990, Brooks wrote primarily about the black experience with an emphasis on the intersection of class, gender, and race. In her engagement with poetic form, Brooks combined an expert handling of traditional technical elements with a commitment to innovation. Through numerous poems in which she took a highly inventive approach to meter, line breaks, and syntax, Brooks enacted a formal push-and-pull between restriction and freedom. Whether forging a mimetic relationship between form and content or using a poem's technical features to create a productive friction between the two elements, Brooks crafted poems in which the structural aspects deepened and complicated her exploration of race in America.

One of the forms that most attracted Brooks throughout her career was the sonnet. Gladys Margaret Williams connects Brooks's facility for the sonnet to her early years steeped in the African American folk forms, including the "blues, the spirituals, and the folk seculars," which, according to Williams, share with the sonnet "a sense of intimacy, of a poet-speaker speaking-singing directly to another" (21). Williams also attributes Brooks's sonnet-making skills to her self-taught education in poetry, through which she read the work of Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, Keats, and numerous others: "A combination, then, of sensitivity to the potentialities of forms well known

by Negroes and the emotional and educational delight she received from her study of English-language poetry predisposed Brooks in the 1940s to take the sonnet form in hand and have her own good way with it” (22). We can see the mastery with which Brooks has “her own good way” with the form throughout her debut poetry collection, *A Street in Bronzeville*, (1945). A close look at Brooks’s poem, “the white troops had their orders but the Negroes looked like men,” reveals her innovative approach to the form:

They had supposed their formula was fixed.
 They had obeyed instructions to devise
 A type of cold, a type of hooded gaze.
 But when the Negroes came they were perplexed.
 These Negroes looked like men. Besides, it taxed
 Time and the temper to remember those (1-6)

Significantly, Brooks starts the poem with several unvaried iambic pentameter lines. This stringent adherence to the traditional metrical dictates of the sonnet form mirrors the mechanistic, predetermined, and inflexible manner in which the white troops have prepared themselves to interact with the African American soldiers. Brooks also creates a subtle double meaning with her use of the phrase “had supposed their formula was fixed,” an expression that applies not only to the immediate narrative situation involving the troops but also offers a layer of meta-reflection on the sonnet form itself. Much as the troops eventually realize that their “formula” cannot remain “fixed,” Brooks invites us to observe how the poem’s structure, rather than enacting an unwavering fulfillment of the form’s inherited rules, contains variations that mirror the subject matter she explores.

When the white troops recognize that they must readjust their assumptions about the African American soldiers, the metrical patterning of the poem undergoes its own adjustment. Brooks breaks away from strict iambic pentameter and startles the reader’s ear by beginning line six on a stressed syllable (a trochee), rather than on an unstressed syllable (an iamb). This artfully jarring moment evokes the surprise that the white troops feel upon discovering that they can’t regard the African American soldiers as anything other than full human beings.

Another instance of consequential metrical variation in the poem occurs in the penultimate line. Brooks again overturns our expectations by starting with a trochee rather than an iamb: “Neither the earth

nor heaven ever trembled.” She creates an ironic aural atmosphere by making the poem’s rhythm, in effect, “tremble,” when the white troops discern that recalibrating their racial attitudes hasn’t resulted in a major shift to their conceptions of reality, evidence of what Judith Harris has called Brooks’s “unique mastery of verbal irony” (39). Of course, such a recalibration on the part of the white men *does* have the power to cause a figuratively earth-shaking change in the lives of the African American soldiers, and thus Brooks makes sure that we feel “earth” and “heaven” tremble through the sonic impact of the penultimate line, even as the language literally insists on the opposite.

Also worth noting, Brooks uses slant rhymes instead of perfect rhymes in this poem. Through this effect, which pulls against the strict iambic pentameter of the poem’s first five lines, she prompts us to sense tensions present in the minds of the white troops even before they find themselves openly questioning their attitudes toward the African American soldiers. In other words, from the poem’s very start, she modulates between rigid obedience to the form’s rules and inventive structural deviations, suggesting to readers that the white troops may already intuit that their attempt to view race through a “fixed” formula is profoundly flawed.

As we have seen in “the white troops had their orders,” Brooks started out in her career with a view of poetry’s traditional formal elements as powerful tools for the expression of racial complexities. In a book-length critical study of her life and work, *Gwendolyn Brooks: Poetry and the Heroic Voice*, D. H. Melhem argues that Brooks’s engagement with poetic form became increasingly idiosyncratic and innovative after the publication of *A Street in Bronzeville*, an aesthetic shift that corresponded to a growing emphasis on overtly political material. Brooks’s third book, *The Bean Eaters* (1960), in Melhem’s view, demonstrates a correlation between “an increased specificity regarding political events” and “an increased irregularity (or freeing) of the meter while shifting formal weights from the ballad to the sonnet” (101). Two companion pieces from *The Bean Eaters*, “A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon” and “The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till,” exemplify the relationship between political subject matter and formal invention that Melhem highlights. The first two stanzas of the former poem gesture toward the conventions of

the ballad tradition without containing any of the form's expected structural features:

From the first it had been like a
Ballad. It had the beat inevitable. It had the blood.
A wildness cut up, and tied in little bunches,
Like the four-line stanzas of the ballads she had never quite
Understood—the ballads they had set her to, in school.

Herself: the milk-white maid, the “maid mild”
Of the ballad. Pursued
By the Dark Villain. Rescued by the Fine Prince.
The Happiness-Ever-After.
That was worth anything.
It was good to be a “maid mild.”
That made the breath go fast.” (1-12)

We quickly learn that the “Mississippi Mother” who views herself as a “milk-white maid” is Carolyn Bryant, the woman whose accusations led to the murder of African American teenager Emmett Till. Brooks starts the poem after Till's death. We're placed in the kitchen of Mrs. Bryant as she cooks bacon and reflects on what unfolded after she claimed that Till (“the Dark Villain” mentioned in the second stanza) openly flirted with her in a public place. As the poem progresses, Mrs. Bryant privately admits to herself that the murder of fourteen-year-old Till at the hands of her husband and his half-brother, enacted as recompense for the boy's alleged crime of pursuing her, may not have been justified. Yet Brooks suggests that it isn't exactly the reality of Till's brutal death that bothers Mrs. Bryant, but rather that the boy fails to embody sufficiently the character of “the Dark Villain” in the stories that she and other white people have inherited: “The fun was disturbed, then all but nullified / When the Dark Villain was a blackish child / Of fourteen, with eyes still too young to be dirty,” (28-30). As Brooks emphasizes from the start of the poem, such stories have roots in the Western European tradition going all the way back to the invention of the ballad; thus, she prompts us to recognize that her decision to engage with the ballad tradition throughout both poems springs from political motivations as much as from aesthetic considerations.

As she explores the inner life of Carolyn Bryant, Brooks gestures toward balladic plot archetypes without fulfilling the form's technical elements. Untethered by the abcb rhyme scheme and fixed met-

rical structure associated with the ballad tradition, “A Bronzeville Mother” contains a series of free verse lines that sprawl across the page in stanzas of varying lengths. As Carolyn Bryant realizes that her husband’s murder of Emmett Till falls short of the narrative that she absorbed from the ballads she learned at school, Brooks spurs us to notice that the dissonance between myth and truth experienced by Bryant has been built into the very structure of the poem. Not only does Brooks resist balladic formal constraints in this poem, she continually returns us to the harshness of actual existence after immersing us in Bryant’s ballad-inspired fantasies. Immediately following Bryant’s fairy tale musings at the end of stanza two (“It was good to be a ‘maid-mild.’ / That made the breath go fast.”), Brooks pulls us back into the raw concreteness of the kitchen in which Bryant stands:

Her bacon burned. She
Hastened to hide it in the step-on can, and
Drew more strips from the meat case. The eggs and sour-milk
Biscuits
Did well. She set out a jar
Of her new quince preserve. (13-18)

The laconic nature of the sentence “her bacon burned” stands in powerful contrast to the flowery imaginings that unfold in the preceding stanza. Brooks’s language mirrors Bryant’s shock as the smell of burnt bacon yanks her into reality. Throughout the rest of the poem, we encounter such a pattern multiple times as we move between Bryant’s balladic dream life and the world where she can’t deny, when her husband leans in to kiss her, that she hears “no hoof-beat of the horse” and sees “no flash of the shining steel” (130-131).

To fully understand how Brooks engages with the ballad form in “A Bronzeville Mother,” Angela Jackson contends that we must take a close look at its companion piece, “The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till.” Brooks ends her exploration of Bryant’s inner and outer life with three lines that prepare us for what we’ll encounter in “The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till” while directly evoking, once more, the ballad tradition: “The last bleak news of the ballad. / The rest of the rugged music. / The last quatrain” (148-150). Jackson highlights how Emmett’s mother appears “tense with held-in emotion,” a tension present in the form of the poem itself (86). We can observe Jackson’s argument in action by taking a look at the following lines of “The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till”:

Emmett's mother is a pretty-faced thing;
 the tint of pulled taffy.
 She sits in a red room,
 drinking black coffee. (3-6)

Jackson's reading of "The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till," with its emphasis on the tautness of Brooks's language as expressive of the emotional restraint present in Emmett's mother, prompts us to reflect on the poem's relationship to the ballad form. Though the title indicates that we're about to read a balladic quatrain, a stanzaic structure containing four lines of rhymed and metered verse, Brooks delivers several lines of free verse. The poem does contain a series of slant rhymes—for example, "taffy" and "coffee"—but otherwise Brooks diverges considerably from the abcb rhyme scheme typically present in ballad stanzas.

Why, then, does Brooks title this poem "The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till," an effect that not only sets us up to expect a four-line metrical quatrain but also directs us to view the poem's preceding companion piece, "A Bronzeville Mother," as a ballad? Neither poem, as we've seen, possesses the structural properties associated with the balladic tradition. In contrast to Brooks's engagement with the sonnet form in her debut collection, *A Street in Bronzeville*, typified by the aesthetic approach we've considered in our reading of "the white troops had their orders," her relationship to the ballad form in "A Bronzeville Mother" and "The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till" adheres far less closely to tradition. This shift in formal approaches over time, an evolution we've considered in the context of D. H. Melhem's arguments throughout *Gwendolyn Brooks: Poetry and the Heroic Voice*, corresponds to a growing emphasis on the political in Brooks's poetry.

Yet Brooks's differing relationship to form in *A Street in Bronzeville* and *The Bean Eaters* reveals two strategies that essentially serve the same aim: Brooks employs her acuity with poetry's formal properties as a means of exploring the paradoxes and ironies present in race relations. Whether strictly inhabiting an established poetic form while engaging in meaningful variations, as she does in "the white troops had their orders" or evoking the conventions of a poetic form while eschewing that form's structural elements, as she does in the companion pieces discussed above, Brooks demonstrates her mastery of a tradition that has largely excluded voices like hers.

The combination of formal genius and social consciousness in Brooks's writing, as Quraysh Ali Lansana asserts, makes her "a pivot in literary history, straddling multiple experiences, generations, and communities" (17). Through Brooks's poems we discover that, much like the men in her sonnet, set-in-stone "formulas" can rarely contain the complexity of lived experience. Brooks's work prompts us to recognize that, just as the white soldiers affect a "hooded gaze" while encountering the black troops, so, too, do we resist seeing and being seen within any context that threatens to alter our "fixed" perceptions. Even when we most bristle against transformation, as Brooks's poetry reveals, language possesses the capacity to create "startling" changes in the "weather" both around us and within us.

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THE BACKGROUND OF BETRAYAL IN TWO HEMINGWAY MICHIGAN STORIES

ELLEN ANDREWS KNODT

Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time* (1925) introduces themes prominent in his later stories and novels that Hilary Justice identifies as "a kind of double helix in Hemingway's early writing: the marriage tales and the Nick Adams stories" (16). Two *In Our Time* Nick Adams stories set in Michigan, "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow," while often overlooked as significant to Hemingway's overall work, share a background of betrayal in Hemingway's life experiences that he revisits in his fiction until the end of his life. This background includes the well-known incident of a teen-aged Hemingway's jilting by his nurse (and erstwhile fiancée), who tended to him after he was severely wounded as a Red Cross volunteer in World War I. Hemingway renders the heartbreak and subsequent bitterness he felt at her betrayal through his unnamed but clearly autobiographical protagonist in his *In Our Time* story, "A Very Short Story."

Written in 1923, the story "is a close account of [Hemingway's] relationship with Agnes von Kurowsky from July 1918 to March 1919" (Smith 26). This heartbreak, traumatic to young Hemingway as revealed in his letters, is followed by the devastating loss of nearly all his early manuscripts in 1922, stolen from his wife Hadley's possession in the Gare de Lyon, Paris (Baker *Life* 103). The two early Michigan stories derive from real-life characters and relationships that Hemingway encountered between these two events in the summer of 1919 and were written in early 1924 (Smith 50). With Hemingway's avatar Nick Adams as protagonist, these two stories explore complex aspects of betrayal, including betrayal of the self as well as betrayal by others. Understanding the background of these stories reveals the roots of a theme and an image that frequently reappear in Hemingway's later fiction.

These two companion stories with the same characters—Nick, Marjorie, and Bill in “The End of Something” and Nick and Bill discussing Marjorie in “The Three-Day Blow”—were composed shortly after Hemingway and his wife Hadley returned to Paris in 1924 after their son Bumby’s birth in Toronto in October of 1923 (Smith 50). What Michigan experiences did the twenty-four-year-old Hemingway draw upon in writing these two stories that involve betrayal of the self and others and that reappear in his later fiction? Although Hemingway often modeled his characters on real people, he usually changed their names. In these stories, however, Hemingway uses his own real teenage nickname and two real names of his Michigan friends. In “The Three-Day Blow,” Nick Adams is called “Wemedge,” one of Hemingway’s boyhood nicknames (Baker, *SL* 49), and in both stories the characters Bill and Marjorie have been clearly identified as being derived from Hemingway’s real friends Bill Smith and Marjorie Bump. Paul Smith verifies that “both manuscripts identify the character as Bill Smith” (51). Moreover, the real Marjorie Bump suffered her whole life from her perception that Hemingway used her real name in the two stories, as she tells her daughter in a memoir: “It has remained a deep hurt for all my long life because Ernest painted a false picture of me under my real name. . . . It made me so upset that I was never at all comfortable about going back to Petoskey, Michigan, where people knew the true Marge” (Main 14).

However, Hemingway’s authorship is much more complicated than simply using three names that are the same as three real people. Marjorie Bump’s history has been re-evaluated by H. R. Stoneback: thirteen-year-old Marjorie met sixteen-year-old Hemingway in 1915, not after the war, and she was a daughter in a respectable middle-class family, not a cheap small-town waitress (although she and other girls did help out at Dilworth’s guest house when there were many diners). Marjorie and Ernest were friends within a group of friends in summers in northern Michigan. She knitted him what Hemingway called “a peach of a sweater” (*Letters vol. I*, 69) in preparation for his leaving to serve in the ambulance corps in World War I and they corresponded. When he returned from the war, they dated in 1919 as Hemingway stayed on in Michigan after the summer. As Baker reports, “When high school let out in the afternoon, he was often on hand to meet Marjorie Bump and walk her home” (*Life* 65). Marjorie Bump and Hemingway were close friends.

How close has been the subject of much speculation, but Marjorie's daughter's memoir sheds light on conversations within "The Three-Day Blow." Bill and Nick in the story discuss the rumors that Nick was "engaged" to Marjorie, which Nick denies, though to Bill's question, "'Weren't you going to get married,' Nick admits, 'Yes. But we weren't engaged'" (48). In Georgiana Main's memoir of her mother's recollections, she recounts that Marjorie was told that Hemingway had indeed discussed marriage with Marjorie's mother and "In that conversation, he had inquired about my inheritance prospects. . . . but learned from mother that I would not inherit my grandmother's money until after she died" (16). Marjorie speculates to her daughter that this conversation may be why Hemingway refused to invite Marjorie's mother to his wedding to Hadley: "I think he may have been embarrassed or angry that [my mother] had rejected him as a potential marriage partner for me. Or perhaps she gave him the feeling that she saw him as an opportunistic fortune hunter. He did not want to look at this too closely, feeling that she may have been intuiting him as he really was, and he didn't like what he saw" (16).

We have only Georgiana Main's recollections, based on her mother's account, to understand Hemingway's intentions toward the real Marjorie. However, this speculation coincides with the conversation between Bill and Nick regarding marriage to the fictional Marjorie and underscores the feelings of both boys about Marjorie's fictional mother; in Nick's words, "'You know what her mother was like'" (48).

Though Marjorie told her daughter that she "never really forgave Ernest" (14), as a married woman in Ormond Beach, Florida, she sent him a Christmas card in 1935, and Hemingway visited the family on his way to Key West (25). Moreover, Marjorie recalls fond memories of Hemingway for her daughter Georgiana: "Before he married Hadley in 1921, Ernest wrote me a letter telling me of his forthcoming marriage. The letter was nostalgic about old times, reminiscing about the 'perfect' summer of 1919. . . . moonlight swimming in the lake, fishing for rainbow trout off the old docks at the Point and Horton's Creek, dancing at parties and school functions . . ." (27). The overall picture of the relationship is affectionate, and Hemingway, reflecting on his early writing in 1952, expresses regret over using real people in some stories: "When I started I wrote some short stories about actual things and two of them hurt people. I felt

bad about it.” (Baker, *SL* 764). Did Hemingway feel that he had betrayed the real Marjorie?

The fictional Bill is very involved in the events in both stories as discussed below, but the real Bill Smith did write Hemingway in 1920 that he “was afraid that Ernest would hurt Marge deeply” (Reynolds, *The Young Hemingway* 89). Hemingway alludes to this remark when he responds to Marjorie’s letter in 1921, in which she calls him a person of “abominable conceit” and disagrees with his contention that he has been “good for her”: “Cheer up Red—I wasn’t so bad for you—Except as Bill always said—But I won’t repeat that because I never agreed with him” (Main 62). Did Hemingway feel that Bill betrayed him? If the real Bill’s concern was for Marjorie’s feelings, his portrait in both stories as an uncaring misogynist who declares, “Once a man is married he’s absolutely bitched” (46) might be Hemingway’s revenge. As Hemingway is writing the stories in early 1924, he and Bill Smith had not been in contact since they had a falling out in 1921 (Reynolds, *Paris* 251). So the portrait of the fictional Bill may reflect Hemingway’s perceived sense of betrayal by the real Bill.

A blurring of fact and fiction in “The End of Something” also involves Hadley, who was the original recipient of a similar remark Nick makes to Marjorie, ““You know everything. That’s the trouble. You know you do”” (“The End of Something” 34). Hadley wrote to Hemingway on November 5, 1920: “Why did you say to me . . . on the car last night when I said I didn’t know anything that I knew *too* much?” (Reynolds, *Young Hemingway* 148). At this time the couple was beginning their courtship, and Hemingway, according to Reynolds, was winding down his involvements with Katy Smith, Irene Goldstein, and Marjorie Bump, a number of “ends of somethings.” So by 1924, Hemingway had much life experience to draw upon when he had Nick break up with the fictional Marjorie.

Hadley may figure even more prominently in the background of the stories. Hadley’s loss of Hemingway’s early manuscripts at a Paris train station in 1922 may be an iceberg lurking under the surface of the two stories. Hemingway was devastated by the loss; he felt Hadley betrayed him. Hadley biographer Goia Diliberto writes, “It can’t be denied that the loss of the manuscripts was the beginning of the end for Hadley and Ernest. . . things were never quite the same again. Hadley felt guilty about the incident for the rest of her life. . . Ernest never truly forgave her. . .” (136). Hemingway told his

friend Mike Strater, “You know, Mike, if you had had those manuscripts in your trunk, you would not have left them to go and get something to read” (Diliberto 135). Hemingway’s friends had even harsher opinions. Ezra Pound reportedly “told Robert McAlmon that he thought Hadley had lost the manuscripts deliberately” (Diliberto 146). The feelings of loss and perceived betrayal would last all of Hemingway’s life. In the posthumously published *The Garden of Eden*, he revisits this event as he writes of the deliberate destruction of David Bourne’s manuscripts by his wife Catherine.

By 1924, betrayal in many forms had become part of Hemingway’s consciousness. So how does he use this consciousness in writing these two stories featuring the adolescent Nick Adams? How does the author transform his experience and feelings of betrayal into his fiction? One narrative technique aids Hemingway in evoking levels of betrayal: his handling of shifts of focus from character to character in a third-person narrative. Robert Paul Lamb notes that in “The End of Something,” the third-person narration follows Marjorie’s thoughts and then shifts to Nick’s and then even to Bill’s (97). As the story begins, the reader gets Marjorie’s thoughts: “She loved to fish. She loved to fish with Nick” (32). Marjorie has no idea that Nick is about to break up with her, and Nick and Marjorie work as a team as they troll for fish: “He rowed the boat around to troll past the feeding fish, then headed it for the point. Marjorie did not reel in until the boat touched the shore” (32). Marjorie even takes over the rowing as the two prepare bait on lines attached to rods on the shore: “Marjorie rowed the boat . . . holding the line in her teeth, and looking toward Nick, who stood on the shore holding the rod and letting the line run out from the reel” (32-33). After both are on shore, Marjorie notices Nick’s mood, which has not been signaled in the text: ““What’s the matter, Nick?””(33). At first he says, ““I don’t know,”” but then picks an argument when Marjorie says that she knows the moon is coming up, echoing the Hadley remark: ““You know everything”” (34). After Nick continues in this vein, Marjorie says, ““You don’t have to talk silly. What’s really the matter?”” (34). Nick requires more prompting from Marjorie until he finally says, ““It isn’t fun anymore”” (34).

At this point the narrative focus changes. We don’t get Marjorie’s thoughts anymore; the focus now switches to Nick: “He was afraid to look at Marjorie” (34), showing that Nick does not want to face her because his resolve might crumble, because he does not want to

see her reaction, or possibly because he knows his actions are against his own feelings for her, a kind of self-betrayal. When he does look at her, her back is to him, and Nick talks to her back: “I feel as though everything was gone to hell inside of me” (34). After Marjorie asks, “Isn’t love any fun?” (34), and he answers, “No” (35), she stands while “Nick sat there, his head in his hands” (35) and announces, “I’m going to take the boat” (35). Nick offers to push the boat off, but she demurs—and Nick (who has apparently gotten up) “went back and lay down with his face in the blanket by the fire” (35). Marjorie does not cry or even object once she gets Nick’s final answer. She leaves, as Joseph Flora says “with great dignity” (*Ernest Hemingway* 29). Hemingway portrays the breakup as an abrupt change in what had looked like a close relationship.

The focus continues to be on Nick, who has had his head in his hands or his face in the blanket and who does not appear happy with his decision. Nick does not move even when he hears “Marjorie rowing” or when he hears Bill “come into the clearing” (35). The only way he appears to know that it is Bill approaching is that he is expecting him because the two boys have had a prior conversation about Nick’s planning to break up with Marjorie. Bill asks, “Did she go all right?” (35). “Oh, yes,” Nick said, *lying*, his face on the blanket” (35, my emphasis). Hemingway’s use of “lying” is brilliantly ambiguous, referring to Nick’s prone position or to his awareness that Marjorie’s leaving wasn’t really “all right.” In any case, Nick exhorts Bill to “Go away for awhile” (35). Readers may conclude that Nick hides his face because, in the real Marjorie Bump’s words, “he did not like what he saw.” Nick may be aware that he has betrayed himself and his real feelings for Marjorie by breaking up with her, perhaps at Bill’s instigation—an idea that deepens the betrayal theme of the following story “The Three-Day Blow.”

The last line of “The End of Something” switches to Bill’s consciousness since after Nick tells him to “Go away,” only Bill knows he “selected” a sandwich from the picnic basket and went “to have a look at the rods” (35). The reader realizes Bill’s nonchalance because Nick is not in a position to know Bill’s actions or his intentions. If the reader remembers that the sandwich Bill “selects” comes from the picnic basket Marjorie has prepared, Bill’s action deepens the betrayal of Marjorie.¹ Hemingway’s words for Bill’s actions provide a contrast to Nick and Marjorie’s relationship at the beginning of the story: “the emotional poverty of ‘have a look’ contrasts with the intensity of feel-

ing that Marjorie brought to fishing with Nick” (Lamb 213). Lamb summarizes: “In a story about something turned into nothing, about the replacement of feeling with emptiness, the shifts in focalization enforce the theme; we go from a focalizer full of feeling to one who’s lost feeling, or thinks he has, to one who is devoid of feeling” (97). The surprise of Bill’s pre-arranged meeting with Nick at the Point does not yet fully define Bill’s role in this event. While Lamb characterizes Bill as “adolescently shallow” (212), the portrait of Bill in “The Three-Day Blow” is more damning.

What becomes clear in “The Three-Day Blow” is Bill’s motivation for discouraging the relationship between Nick and Marjorie. In this story Bill reveals his self-interest, betraying his friend Nick. Although much commentary about this story centers on the boys’ drinking and talks about literature and baseball, the crucial discussion after these preliminaries is the Nick-Marjorie breakup. Bill broaches the subject in the dialogue that follows, revealing not his concern for Nick but his self-centered concern that Nick should stay in Michigan to fish and hang around with Bill:

“You were very wise, Wemedge,” Bill said.

“What do you mean?” asked Nick.

“To bust off that Marge business,” Bill said. [Note that Bill, unlike Nick, usually refers to Marjorie as “Marge,” perhaps reflecting his disdain.]

“I guess so,” said Nick.

“It was the only thing to do. *If you hadn’t, by now you’d be back home working trying to get enough money to get married.*” [my emphasis]

Nick said nothing.

“Once a man is married he’s absolutely bitched,” Bill went on. “He hasn’t got anything more. Nothing. Not a damn thing. He’s done for. You’ve seen the guys that get married.”

Nick said nothing. (46)

This dialogue reveals Bill’s real reason for favoring the breakup: Nick would not be in Michigan anymore if he had not broken up with Marjorie; he would be back home working. After more comments about Marge’s being unsuitable for Nick, Bill elaborates further, revealing even more clearly, his self-centered interest: “*If you’d gone on that way we wouldn’t be here now . . . Probably we wouldn’t even be going fishing tomorrow. . .* So long as it’s over that’s all

that matters. . . *I tell you, Wemedge, I was worried while it was going on*”(47-48, my emphasis).

This last comment reveals Bill’s real motive, which trumps any concern he shows for Nick. Bill has been opposed to Nick’s relationship from the beginning, and, based on these comments and his appearance at the Point the night of the breakup, he appears to have been working on Nick to break up with Marjorie. He has, in fact, betrayed his friend. Flora says that “Nick fails to see Bill’s possessive streak and the rigidity of his position” (*Hemingway’s Nick Adams* 65). While Nick doesn’t openly object to Bill’s remarks, Hemingway shows Nick’s lack of agreement with Bill by emphasizing Nick’s silence, stated twice, followed by weak acquiescence and more silence: “‘Sure,’” said Nick . . . ‘Yes,’ said Nick . . . Nick nodded . . . Nick sat quiet . . .” (46-47). Bill’s attempts to convince Nick that he has done the right thing have not been successful in changing Nick’s mood.

Finally, Nick reacts to Bill’s reasons that the breakup was warranted in a stunning revelation of Nick’s real thoughts, an emotional repudiation of Bill: “The liquor had all died out of him and *left him alone. Bill wasn’t there. He wasn’t sitting in front of the fire or going fishing tomorrow with Bill and his Dad or anything. He wasn’t drunk. It was all gone. All he knew was that he had once had Marjorie and that he had lost her. She was gone and he had sent her away. That was all that mattered . . . It was all gone, finished*” (47, my emphasis). In these thoughts, Nick shows his true feelings for Marjorie. His feeling alone and denying Bill’s presence show he is not convinced by Bill’s arguments. As Hilary Justice says, “He must weather the blows of the ensuing storm in the company of but not in sympathy with, *a friend whom he has learned not to trust*” (24, my emphasis).

Nick acknowledges that he was to blame for the breakup, telling Bill, “‘It was my fault’”(47). However, Bill then miscalculates when he tells Nick, “‘You don’t want to think about it. You might get back into it again’” (48). Immediately, Nick seizes on this possibility: “‘He felt happy. Nothing was finished. Nothing was ever lost’” (48). With these thoughts to buoy him, Nick proposes leaving the cabin, “‘Let’s take the guns and go down to the point . . .’” (49). The story ends not with Bill’s warnings against marriage but with Nick’s thinking that “he could always go into town on Saturday night” (49), where presumably he might see Marjorie. Hemingway focuses almost solely on Nick in this story, allowing the reader to experience Nick’s feel-

ings acutely. Only two places in the story center on Bill's actions or thoughts that Nick can't know; neither minor shift in focus detracts from the examination of Nick's feelings about the breakup with Marjorie.

Underscoring the theme of betrayal is Hemingway's image of a mirror reflecting Nick's feelings of self-betrayal in "The Three-Day Blow." Significantly, Hemingway returns to a mirror showing self-betrayal in his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), and in his last, posthumous novel, *The Garden of Eden* (1986). In the short story, Nick and Bill have been drinking steadily, and, although Nick "wished to show he could hold his liquor" (44), readers realize that Nick is actually quite drunk as he knocks a pan of apricots off the kitchen table. With the great care of someone trying very hard to function while inebriated, he "carefully picked up all the apricots off the floor" (44-45). A few minutes later Nick returns to the kitchen: "On his way back to the living room he passed a mirror in the dining room and looked in it. *His face looked strange*. He smiled at the face in the mirror and it grinned back at him. He winked at it and went on. *It was not his face but it didn't make any difference*" (45, my emphasis). This image works so well because the action can be interpreted entirely realistically: when one is drunk, one doesn't focus as well, and a face in the mirror may look distorted. But to borrow the real Marjorie Bump's statement about the author in her daughter's memoir, Nick sees himself "as he really was, and he didn't like what he saw" (Main16). Jackson Benson may have been the first to understand that Nick's reaction to his image in the mirror shows that he has been "radically changed by his disillusioning experience" (23). Nick *is* disillusioned with himself (and perhaps with Bill, too). On some level, he realizes that his sadness results from a betrayal of himself and his real feelings.

Two years later, in *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), Hemingway returns to a mirror revealing self-betrayal. After Jake introduces Brett to the bullfighter Romero, thereby sacrificing his reputation as a true aficionado, Jake gets "drunker than I ever remembered having been" (223) and feels "low as hell" (222). Attempting to sleep it off, Jake hears "the fiesta going on. It did not mean anything" (224), a similar reaction to Nick's comments about Bill and fishing in "The Three-Day Blow." After a while, Jake recovers enough to prepare to rejoin his companions: "I washed, brushed my hair. *I looked strange to myself in the glass*, and went down-stairs to the dining-room" (224,

my emphasis). The mirror shows the real character of the viewer, not as he would like to see himself.

Mirrors revealing self-betrayal also occur *The Garden of Eden*. One occurs early in the novel when David and Catherine have had their hair cut and colored exactly the same. David examines his image in the mirror and asks, “How do you feel? Say it” (84). He responds that he likes it, and then “He looked at the mirror and *it was someone else he saw* but it was less strange now” (84, my emphasis). David’s acceptance of his new persona is incomplete: “Of course he did not know exactly how he was. But he made an effort aided by what he had seen in the mirror” (85). David thinks he needs to become the person he sees in the mirror, a person who is not really his true self. Later in *The Garden of Eden* David and Catherine argue about yet another hair cut and color, and David gives in, going against his real feelings. This time he refuses to look in the mirror:

“I wish you could see yourself,” Catherine said.

“I’m glad I can’t.”

“I wish you’d looked in the glass.”

“I couldn’t.” (177)

David now fully realizes his self-betrayal: “He began to realize what a completely stupid thing he had permitted”(178).

In “The Three-Day Blow” Hemingway uses an image of a mirror that conveys a character’s feelings about his having betrayed himself, an image that he returns to in later fiction. Nick, as a young man, is discovering the cost of betraying his true feelings, and while in this story he seizes on the possibility that “[n]othing was ever lost,” the older Nick, as well as Jake and David, has no such illusions. The mirror reveals all that is uncomfortable but true. Though Paul Smith concludes (and Johnston agrees) that Nick’s naiveté ultimately makes “The Three-Day Blow” “not one that engages critical interest” (59), betrayal, central as it is to Hemingway’s later fiction, *should* engage us.

“The End of Something” and “The Three-Day Blow” are stories written from Ernest Hemingway’s complex web of memories of early heartbreak, relationships with friends and his wife Hadley, and his own deeply felt feelings of being betrayed and betraying others. The only person who emerges absolutely unsullied and unscathed in these two stories is the fictional and real Marjorie Bump. As Stoneback says, “it is nothing that she says, nothing that she does, nothing that

she is, that causes Nick's hateful rejection of her"(67). If only the real Marjorie could have gotten past the comments about the fictional Marge to see how Nick feels he had betrayed his real self and what joy he takes in the possibility of rekindling the relationship in town on the following Saturday night, she might have understood Hemingway's enigmatic apology to her in a later letter: "Everything understood is everything forgiven" (Main 4).

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NOTE

¹ I am indebted to a conversation with Scott Donaldson for this insight.

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VISITING THE GRANDFATHER'S TOMB

ROBERT E. FLEMING

“Why do we never go to pray at the tomb of my grandfather?” This question, based on the original title of “Fathers and Sons,” is the last and the most important of several that Nick Adams’s young son asks near the end of story. Nick replies, “We’ll have to go. . . . I can see we’ll have to go” (*Short Stories* 499; future citations are to this text).¹ By changing the title, Hemingway buried long-held resentment over the circumstances of his own father’s death, but the reader who pays a visit to Dr. Hemingway’s “tomb” will see “Fathers and Sons” in a different light.

The grave of Hemingway’s own father is in the Forest Home Cemetery in Forest Park, Illinois, just west of Oak Park. During Hemingway’s youth, it was an almost rural setting. Today it is bounded on the north by the busy Eisenhower Expressway, on the east by Des Plaines Avenue, on the west by First Avenue, and on the south by US Highway 30, Roosevelt Road. The Des Plaines River bisects the grounds, which are covered with large trees. An oasis in the middle of expanding suburbia, it might seem a fit resting place for Dr. Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, an outdoorsman who taught his son to hunt and fish. But it is not a wholly appropriate setting; on December 6, 1928, Dr. Hemingway shot himself while depressed about his health and finances, a depression to which his family had failed to respond. Later his son would write about his father’s literary persona, Dr. Henry Adams, that “[h]e had died in a trap he had helped only a little to set, and they had all betrayed him in their various ways. . . .” (489-90), a trap ironically reflected in the cemetery’s current encirclement by busy highways.

Biographers have noted possible circumstances about the trap in which the doctor had found himself and have suggested his relationship with Grace Hall Hemingway as one source of his despair. Michael Reynolds speculates that “[w]hen he . . . sat down on his marriage bed and put the steel barrel to his temple, it was not only

the diabetes or the debts that squeezed the trigger. He fell back into a bed that had been a long time in the making. . .” (*Young Hemingway* 85). Certainly Ernest, who was prone to sympathize with his father and view his mother harshly, placed much of the blame on her and had earlier created manipulative mothers in short stories such as “Soldier’s Home” and “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife.” Oddly, Dr. Hemingway had approved of the latter story, which depicts both of Nick’s parents unfavorably: he could seemingly ignore the faults of a fictional character who bears a distinct resemblance to himself (*Letters* vol. 2, 287 note 2), but Grace Hemingway, if she had ever recognized her own characteristics in the fictional mother, could have felt no comfort. After her husband had escaped his marriage, Grace had the last word as she had had during much of their married life: his body lay in state in Grace’s music room (*American Homecoming* 211), and he was buried, not with his mother and his heroic Civil War veteran father in the Hemingway family plot in Forest Home, but among the Halls in their family plot; at his right hand lies Grace’s uncle Tyley Hancock, and, of course, Grace herself would lie on his left.

As well as the disposition of his body, Grace also had the last word in interpreting the meaning of her husband’s death. She chose for his headstone the number of a brief Bible verse, John 15:13. But the verse—“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”—was a curious interpretation of her husband’s suicide. In laying down his life Dr. Hemingway left his family in a perilous financial situation. As Hemingway summed up the family finances in a December 9 letter to Maxwell Perkins, “there are my Mother and two kids. . .still at home—\$25,000 insurance—a \$15,000 mortgage on the house. . .worthless land in Michigan, Florida, etc. with taxes to pay on all of it. No other capital—all gone . . .lost in Florida” (*Letters* vol. 3, 480). Ernest’s brother-in-law Sterling Sanford and Uncle George Hemingway paid the \$300 bill for the doctor’s funeral (*American Homecoming* 219). To avoid possible suspicions of financial hardship or mental illness, George Hemingway blamed the doctor’s depression solely on his angina and diabetes (*American Homecoming* 209-210), deliberately misleading the coroner’s jury. Hemingway cited the same health factors as well as the doctor’s money worries in his letter to Perkins.

In “Fathers and Sons,” Nick’s father had similarly suffered mental anguish not only because of his inability to stand up to his domi-

neering wife but also because of his own inflexibility. The result was the sort of family struggle Hemingway referred to in a 1919 letter to his father about the latter's ineffectual "ultimatum" against Grace's building her own retreat across from the family cottage in northern Michigan. Ernest supported his father's side in what Michael Reynolds has called "a bloody family battleground" (*Young Hemingway* 64) and what Ernest himself termed a "selfish piece of damn foolishness" in that letter to his father, ending the letter with "Stand by Your Guns!" His father, however, would ultimately give in and write a polite note in Grace's guest book praising the cottage (*Letters* vol. 1, 190-191). Ernest himself suffered from his mother's inflexible rules the next year when he was "kicked out quite permanently" from the family cottage, forcing him to move to a boarding house in Boyne City, Michigan (*Letters* vol.1, 235).

While Dr. Hemingway's suicide was a shock, it should not have been entirely unexpected. According to Michael Reynolds, family members had observed disturbing danger signs concerning his mental health years before Hemingway wrote the first of the Nick Adams stories. As early as 1904 and again in 1908, the doctor had taken solo out-of-town trips, apparently at least to escape the pressures of home life. Furthermore, in 1909, he listed insurance policies totaling nearly \$50,000 for Grace. The instructions he left about applying for their benefits in case of his death were significant; he warned, "*don't tell all you know* [sic] to every one . . . should there be any doubt at all as to the cause of death . . ." (qtd. in Reynolds, *Young Hemingway* 84).

Suicide is inevitably traumatic for family survivors, and Hemingway would not deal with the feelings that troubled him after his father's death until 1933. However, on the way to "Fathers and Sons," he had created several transitional portraits of broken families. "Soldier's Home," (1925) not a Nick Adams story, features a manipulative mother who wields her motherly love as a tool to control her veteran son and an inflexible father who doles out privileges as if his son were a teenager. Closer to home, "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" (1925) depicts Nick's parents as a mismatched couple, the mother a manipulator whose devotion to Christian Science conflicts with her husband's medical career and who gently but constantly reminds him of his shortcomings. Dr. Adams, a master of passive aggression, rejects her counsel, slamming the screen door to irritate his wife's headache and insincerely apologizing. The

relationship between Nick's parents in this story helps to explain Nick's own hesitation over relationships that may lead to marriage.

"Now I Lay Me," written near the end of 1926 and published the following year in the significantly titled *Men Without Women*, considers Nick's childhood from a mature perspective. Having been seriously wounded in World War I, Nick passes his sleepless hours by reflecting on the family dynamics. His earliest memories are of the attic of his grandfather's house, where his family lived until his grandfather's death just as the Hemingway family had lived in the Hall house. The memories are not of special incidents but of the attic's contents, which constitute a rich source of Freudian images. Hanging from the rafters in a tin box is Nick's parents' wedding cake. Does the stale cake suggest a mummified marriage? Another detail is a collection of preserved snakes that Nick's father had collected in his youth. These are poorly preserved in alcohol, "the alcohol shrunk in the jars so the backs of some of the snakes and specimens were exposed and turned white. . ." (365). When the grandfather died and the family was about to move "to a new house designed and built by my mother," as the Kenilworth house had been designed by Grace, the jars are thrown into a backyard fire. Nick's memories of the jars popping in the fire and the snakes burning are vivid, but "there were no people in that, only things. I could not remember who burned the things even. . ." (365). This inability to remember suggests Freudian censorship. Does it conceal some traumatic family event?

The first burning is followed by another while the doctor is on a hunting trip. Nick's mother, who frequently cleaned the house and purged unwanted things, cleaned the basement "and burned everything that should not have been there" (365-366). On the doctor's return, she smilingly reports that she has been cleaning, but Dr. Adams ignores her, looking at the ashes and seeing that his collection of Indian stone axes, knives, tools, pottery, and arrows has been burned. He does not challenge his wife—did he learn from a previous argument over the snakes?—but he takes revenge subtly when his wife goes inside. He tells Nick, "The best arrowheads went all to pieces" (366). The lesson reinforces for Nick the assumption that women are insensitive to the needs and feelings of their husbands and are ready to impose their will no matter what the cost to their men. And the best men, like arrowheads, end up going to pieces. It is a chilling view of marriage, but looking back, Nick thinks, "In remem-

bering that, there were only two people, so I would pray for them both" (366). But there are actually three people in the memory: the person who is happy to have a clean, uncluttered house, the man who subtly implies that his marriage has left him as devastated as his collection of Indian artifacts, and the boy who draws the intended implication and will apply it to his own life.

The ending of "Now I Lay Me" is ironic. Nick's orderly John, a fellow Chicagoan, talks about his own happy marriage and suggests that his lieutenant should be married, too. He could marry an Italian woman who would make him happy. "He was . . . very certain about marriage and knew it would fix up everything" (371). Nick's jaundiced view of marriage in response to his own fractured home life is traceable through several other short stories: "The End of Something" (1924), in which Nick breaks off a love affair; "The Three-Day Blow" (1924), in which the reasons for the breakup become apparent; and "Ten Indians" (1927), in which Nick is betrayed by his promiscuous girlfriend Prudie.

Hemingway needed to lay to rest the ghost of his father by writing about him, but like Nick, he had put off this healing process. But finally, in 1933, the time had come. The most traumatic event of his life, greater than his near-death experience in the Great War or the heartbreak of his divorce from Hadley, his own father's suicide provided insights and memories toward the story of Nick's father's death. Furthermore, Hemingway, like Nick, knew that "if he wrote it he could get rid of it. He had gotten rid of many things by writing them" (491). Nevertheless, like Nick, Hemingway realized that "[t]here were still too many people alive" (491) for him to tell the whole story. Interestingly, John Beall observes that "[t]his sentence is not completely present in *any* draft before it appeared in the first edition of *Winner Take Nothing*" (137). Had he told the entire story as he had lived it, the reputation of the Hemingway family would have been exposed as a sham. But by fictionalizing it and employing his principle of the iceberg, he could partially cleanse his memory. Inwardly he blamed his mother for exacerbating her husband's depression, but he lacked the necessary distance to express artistically his feelings through his persona, Nick. His anger is apparent in an early fragment (Item 384) never used in the published story. Nick recalls his parents "[having] it out again before the children—then the inevitable making up . . . everything that had been told the children cancelled, the home full of love. . ." (qtd. Smith 306).

But Hemingway could not avenge his father in fiction by laying the blame for his death on Nick's mother. Instead "Fathers and Sons," this bittersweet story, examines the doctor's character from Nick's own perspective as a father. Appropriately set in America during the Great Depression, the story focuses on the relationship between Nick and his father. Nick recalls the positive lessons his father taught him and dismisses, sometimes in comic terms, some of the mistaken notions his father tried to instill in his son. The final third of the story depicts Nick as father facing some of the same parental difficulties his father had faced.

Some of the finest lessons his father taught Nick reveal his character as a sportsman. As he drives through farm country, Nick finds himself "hunting the country in his mind as he went by; sizing up each clearing as to feed and cover and figuring where you would find a covey and which way they would fly. . . . In shooting quail you must not get between them and their habitual cover . . . or when they flush they will come pouring at you" (488), making it difficult to get a shot. In 1935 Hemingway would publish an article in *Esquire*, "Remembering Shooting-Flying," similarly characterizing his own father as an excellent hunting mentor (*By-Line* 187-189). Nick recalls that his father was a great wing shot, partly because of his extraordinary eyesight. Once when he and Nick looked across the lake, the doctor called Nick's attention to sheep on a hillside, which Nick sees only as a "whitish patch" on the hill. The doctor can count them; he can see the flagpole in front of their cottage and even identify the sister who has raised the flag. Nick can see only the vague shape of the cottage. The doctor sees "as a big-horn ram or as an eagle sees, literally" (489).

But having "a faculty that surpasses human requirements" is not an unalloyed gift. Nick equates his father's keen eyesight with his nervous tendency to detect slights, to react negatively to them, and in doing so to become cruel. It is this combination that accounts for his dying "in a trap he had only a little to set" (489-90). The nature of the trap and the tragedy that led to his death are unexplained, but perhaps Nick realizes that his own artistic ability encompasses a similar sensitivity and carries with it the same dangers. His father's phenomenal eyesight is coupled with an ironic blindness when dealing with his son's sex education. When Nick unwittingly calls a squirrel a "dirty little bugger," his father admonishes him that "bugger" is a nasty word denoting one who commits a "heinous crime" (490).

Later Hemingway treats the moral instruction comically when Dr. Adams explains too little about Enrico Caruso's arrest for "mashing," another "heinous" crime. Nick's reaction is awakened prurient interest: his "imagination pictured the great tenor doing something strange, bizarre, and heinous with a potato masher to a beautiful lady. . . . He resolved, with considerable horror, that when he was old enough he would try mashing at least once" (491).

Driving through hunting country brings back more somber memories of his father's futile attempts to talk about sex, and Nick recalls his own sexual education with Ojibway teenage girls, in spite of his father's awkward warnings of the dangers of such relationships. In "Indian Camp" (1927) Dr. Adams exposed Nick to Prudie Mitchell's infidelity in a manner that seems cruel to some critics, but two passages omitted from the final manuscript (JFK Items 728 and 729) document the father's ambiguity and the guilt that lay behind his seemingly inflexible enforcement of rules.² Particularly disturbing is Nick's Oedipal reaction to his father's stubborn discipline in "Fathers and Sons" when he fantasizes about shooting Dr. Adams with the very same shotgun that his father had given him and trained him to shoot.

Nick's humiliation by his father and his shame over his own response are the final feelings he associates with his role as the doctor's son. Now he must shift to the role of father when his own son awakens. With preternatural insight, the boy's first question is about hunting with the Indians and what the Indians were like. Nick finds that he cannot answer any more effectively than his father answered his own questions about sex. Evasively he tells his son that his Indian companions, Trudy and Billy Gilby, were "very nice," and when the boy asks further questions about "what they were like to be with" Nick excuses himself by thinking of Trudy, "Could you say she did first what no one has ever done better and mention plump brown legs, flat belly, hard little breasts. . ." (497). It is even harder when the boy moves on to the other taboo topic that has been on Nick's mind: "'What was my grandfather like?'" (498).

Nick relates only Dr. Adams's qualities as a sportsman: his wonderful eyesight and his skill as a fisherman and hunter, the best wing shot that Nick has ever seen. Only partly satisfied by Nick's bland answers, the boy moves on to his hardest question: "'Why do we never go to pray at the tomb of my grandfather?'" (498). Reared in France, the boy assumes that filial piety obliges one to honor his forebears by

visiting and praying at their final resting place. Accustomed to elaborate European tombs, the boy would be disappointed by the grey granite of a small American headstone, an inadequate artifact to commemorate the boy's larger-than-life grandfather. Nick realizes that he can no longer avoid dealing with his relationship with his father as he has avoided visiting his father's grave and tells his son, "'We'll have to go. . . . I can see we'll have to go'" (499).

In this 1933 story, Hemingway's best-known character, who is both son and father, resolves to visit the grave of the father with whom he has found it so difficult to come to terms. Whether he will keep this promise of a visit to the grave or not, eventually Nick will write the story of his father as Hemingway wrote of his. But after he buried his own father at the Forest Home Cemetery in December of 1928, Ernest Hemingway never revisited the grave site (*American Homecoming* 220).³ This story took the place of a physical pilgrimage to Forest Park. He did not really need to visit the grave, whose inscription does not encompass his father's life and heritage. "Fathers and Sons" stands as a better monument to Dr. Clarence Hemingway than any headstone with a misleading Bible verse as an epitaph.

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NOTES

¹The title of "The Tomb of My Grandfather" was changed to "Fathers and Sons" rather late in its composition. As late as 26 July 1933, Hemingway still referred to the story by its working title in a letter to Maxwell Perkins. (*Selected Letters* 395).

²For a more full discussion of Dr. Adams's struggle with his conscience in Items 728 and 729, see Fleming 105.

³Although Hemingway paid for his mother's funeral in 1951, he did not attend it (*The Final Years* 242). Another opportunity for a visit to the grave in the Forest Home Cemetery presented itself in 1958 when Hemingway left to go to Ketchum after picking up his wife Mary in Chicago. He wrote to son Patrick that driving west on US 20 "through northern Illinois—from Rockford to Galena really beautiful . . . across Mississippi to Dubuque—Galena a wonderful town. . . .(*Selected Letters* 887). Surely he would have mentioned a visit to the Forest Home Cemetery, which by then held the graves of both of his parents.

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THE FOREVER FRONTIER: THE NOVELS OF
EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL AND LING MA IN
RE-IMAGINING FRONTIER VIOLENCE.

WESLEY BISHOP

Historians and literary scholars have long used Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 frontier thesis to construct deeper understandings of modern American culture and history. Scholars have used the idea to explain everything from American expansion to late-stage capitalism to American cultural productions. This widespread use of Turner's work speaks to the multiple interpretations and uses the document provides scholars of American society. Yet one of the most interesting aspects of the thesis is the declension narrative implied to describe American history. "Movement has been [the character of American life's] dominant fact," Turner argued, "and . . . the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise" (18). Turner worried that without this area of geographic expansion, Americans would face a crisis, compelling a new period of relative uncertainty and possible decline in American history. Turner believed to combat this issue, a new sphere of expansion would be needed to compensate for the closing of the original American frontier.

Yet why was this frontier so vital, especially given that the frontier was really just the movement of the United States across a large section of North America and Native American lands? Because, Turner reasoned, "For a moment, at the frontier, the bonds of custom are broken and unrestraint is triumphant" (18). In this place of broken norms, of violent possibility, America had found itself and created a new, "exceptional" identity. It would, therefore, need to continue finding these places of geographic and temporal exception to remain exceptional.

Although it is not very apparent on the first reading, there is a distinct and terrifying nihilism to Turner's conceptualization of

American history. America was made great because of its spheres of violent expansion. By behaving like colonizers, invading and consuming territories of other peoples, Americans had created a new identity for themselves. To maintain that “greatness,” America would need to find constant sources of expansion for “broken and unrestrained” growth. Violence, expansion, and the horrifying subjugation of others in the path of the American horde was, for Turner, a requirement, implying that violence existed in a never-ending loop, outside of historic time and evolutionary development. Constant violence and expansion was *the* defining feature of American civilization; without it, the United States would almost certainly enter a state of decline.

However, Turner did provide for a bit of nuance in imagining the frontier, its closing, and the space’s relationship to American history. Toward the end of his essay, Turner argued that “the frontier has gone, and with its going closed the first period of American history” (18), implying that new states and new periods awaited American society. In this fashion, the frontier society of the United States was a point in a linear path of development for Anglo-America. Turner fully expected these new, perhaps better, states to come into existence but there was an underlying tension. If the frontier as a space had provided such an important foundation for American civilization, what would happen now that the US was cresting into the twentieth century without its former frontier? Turner provided some possible optimism, namely, arguing that the violence of frontier life had made a distinct American character that would serve as the foundation of future periods of American society. “From the conditions of frontier life came intellectual traits of profound importance,” he argued. “The works of travelers along each frontier from colonial days onward describe certain common traits, and these traits have . . . still persisted as survivals in the place of their origin, even when a higher social organization succeeded. The result is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics” (17). The frontier might be gone, but the violence had permanently impacted the American psyche. It was there that America could build its new foundation and continue its linear, historical path of development.

However, despite the possibility of continued growth Turner permitted, there is still an underlying malaise to this formation or, at least, a possibility of malaise. America could continue to grow, in Turner’s thinking, but the closing of the frontier and the end of a

buffer zone for permitted violent expansion meant that America could lose its distinct advantage over other civilizations. This nihilism has not always been privileged in Turner scholarship; instead, many scholars have focused on Turner's characterization of pre-1893 America, where he praised the frontier in shaping a uniquely American character. Reading Turner in this fashion, he seems like a triumphant viewer of America. Yet, Turner's larger concern was that this was all potentially ending as the frontier closed and American society was left with the reality of a limited future. This declension narrative, therefore, posits a potential fatalism of American civilization. Without violence, a brutality contained in a timeless loop, there would be *no* America.

This essay argues that by understanding the imagined decline of the frontier we can better understand the genre of American post-apocalyptic literature, the imagined space of the Midwest in literature, and, specifically, two recent novels, *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel and *Severance* by Ling Ma. Both of these novels invert the frontier thesis and post-apocalyptic narrative by arguing that it is not in a violent, stripped-down essence that we find ourselves, but instead in the comforts and familiarities of modern commercial life. First, by understanding these novels as examples of refutation to the frontier, we see that Turner's thesis was not timeless, as some purveyors of American violence and rugged individualism have imagined. Instead, it was the product of a distinct cultural and historical moment, a period in which the violence of American society led to an American exceptionalism. Second, we see that the Midwest is not timeless, as myths of the region have purported. Instead, like Turner's thesis, the imagining of the Midwest as a no-place place is representative of a specific cultural vantage point. Finally, as the novels of Mandel and Ma demonstrate, the violence of post-apocalyptic narratives, which often adhere to a kind of frontier logic, is not reflective of human nature in general. Instead it is an American imaginary that sees frontier violence as a supposed permanent and necessary fixture of "human society." Mandel and Ma challenge this belief by showing how a post-frontier socialized ethics can be and must be the basis of a sustained civilization.

To help further ground these arguments this essay will also look at the late Minnesota writer and conservationist Paul Gruchow, who advocated for a more evolutionary sense of the American Midwest, one that was not based on an endless cycle of violence and degrada-

tion but instead on transcendent, evolutionary conceptions of time. Taken together, these writers provide a way to move beyond the specter of the “forever frontier,” an imagined ahistorical space that uses permanently fixed violence to determine self-worth, revitalization, and the continuation of civilization.

Greg Grandin has referred to Frederick Jackson Turner’s thesis as a “sociology of vastness.” Grandin, like many scholars who have dealt with Turner and the history of American expansion, pays particular attention to how Turner framed American exceptionalism as arising from the violence of the frontier. As Grandin notes, critiquing Turner’s praise of violence:

Such a multifunctional complexity! The frontier, here and henceforth, was a state of mind, a cultural zone, a sociological term of comparison, a type of society, an adjective, a noun, a national myth, a disciplining mechanism, an abstraction, and an aspiration . . . Within a decade of the 1893 paper, it became difficult to grapple with any of the main themes of American history without passing through Turner. (116-117)

However, this is only one aspect of Turner’s overarching argument. According to Turner, the frontier is what made white American society supposedly superior to European society, but that frontier was neither limitless nor infinitely vast. Instead, Turner’s thesis contained a possible declension narrative. Underlying much of Turner’s work is a concern that the frontier is closing, that this thing, this place of violent rebirth, no longer exists. As with all declension narratives, there is a decided villain, a culprit lurking in the shadows waiting to be vanquished. The frontier thesis argues that the villain of American history and, really, white-western-male society writ large, is civilization itself. The comforts and amenities of the modern capitalist democratic nation states produced a softness that led first to a sleepy body politic, then decadence and debilitating comfort, and then a fall of the society in question. Without a “safety valve” to go out and purge one’s personal psyche of excessive civilization and, therefore, violently remake oneself, the quintessential American character trait of white men would be lost. White men would be tamed, Turner feared; consequently, they would lack the ability to navigate the complex and violent world of modern capitalism. In this way, the post-apocalyptic narrative helps highlight the tension of post-frontier America. Survivors in these narratives can be depicted as either too soft and “civilized” to

survive and thrive in this horrifying new frontier-like society, whereby they die quickly, or too suited for the violence of the frontier, thereby eventually descending into a kind of violent madness. Only the characters who are able to navigate the complex and shifting frontier life of killing, surviving at all cost, and constant movement are able to survive with a sense of humanity left intact.

These story types can, therefore, contain two positionalities for their characters. Survivors of the apocalypse are simultaneously the native and the settler. In this sense, is there any other way to think of multi-generational white Midwesterners? Both imperial denizens in the interior, they claim fixed permanence and “home” in a colonized and settled home front. This is a nearly perfect metaphor for people in modern capitalist society. In the late eighteenth century, the eastern-most edges of the American Midwest were the site of a violent and ever-shifting border. As Anglo-Americans moved into first the Ohio River Valley and then quickly spread to the banks of the Wabash, the Midwest underwent a process of violent settler colonialism. Yet once that frontier was “closed” by the end of nineteenth century, a popular sense of melancholy set in for the cultural productions of the American Midwest. Sinclair Lewis’s “Babbitt” replaced the specters of Daniel Boone, William Henry Harrison, Theodore Roosevelt, and scores of white colonial settlers of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. These descendants of the early frontier “pioneers,” at least culturally, were left with the psychological task of navigating small towns, scattered cities, farmlands, and industrial factory life. Those who could maintain a sense of finesse in the face of growing commercial production were, thereby, more fit, but the fear of softness found in Turner was nonetheless ever present.

Both Emily St. John Mandel’s 2014 novel *Station Eleven* and Ling Ma’s 2018 novel *Severance* deal with an end-of-the-world scenario and the social implications that come with a return to a frontier society. Both authors imagine the fallout that accompanies a super-flu ravaging the world and set their books in the American Midwest. Ma pictures actual zombies, reanimated corpses who are victims of the super-flu, while Mandel imagines zombie-like survivors who move about the landscape trying to scrape together an existence. What is particularly interesting about both of these authors is that they simultaneously understand the inherent violence that comes with a breakdown of society, a return to the frontier, and an end to more complex social systems, but neither romanticizes the frontier

or is nihilistic about human civilization.

Ma's main protagonist is a first-generation Chinese American woman named Candace Chen who works in the publishing industry. Prior to the super-flu she oversees vast trade networks for her publisher's international press. Ma uses this landscape to construct a deeper meditation on violence, the ahistorical cycle that our lives and sense of time can take, and, finally, the ways in which the frontier-like society forces us out of those patterns. Yet as Chen witnesses her fellow survivors struggle in this new world, we see that the return to rugged conditions do not automatically liberate us. Instead, for Ma, liberation's possibility becomes a conscious act and not one of brute force:

Memories beget memories," Chen thinks in the book. "Shen Fever being a disease of remembering, the fevered are trapped indefinitely in their memories. But what is the difference between the fevered and us? Because I remember too, I remember perfectly. My memories replay, unprompted, on repeat. And our days, like [those of the fevered], continue in an infinite loop. We drive, we sleep, we drive some more." (160)

Mandel's protagonist is also a survivor of a super-flu virus, a young actress, Kirsten, who tours the post-apocalyptic Midwest in a Shakespearean company called the Traveling Symphony. Both characters understand the value that comes from commodities and commercial markets, and, in fact, long for a return to the abundance and security civilization provides. The frontier is less a place to find oneself than an arena of conflict, hardship, and danger.

In fact, Kirsten's main mantra throughout the book is an adapted line from *Star Trek*, "survival is insufficient." To merely survive, to have one's civilization stripped down to its bare minimum, reveals nothing deeper about humanity other than the cruelty that accompanies scarcity. Art, community, fellowship, and, most importantly, leisure are not to be denied or run away from, but something to aspire towards.

"What was lost in the collapse: almost everything, almost everyone, but there is still such beauty," Mandel writes. Describing the performances of Kirsten's company, she reflects:

Twilight in the altered world, a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a parking lot in the mysteriously named town of St. Deborah by the Water, Lake Michigan shining a half mile away . . . Shakespeare was the third born to his parents, but the first to sur-

vive infancy. Four of his siblings died young. His son, Hamnet, died at eleven and left behind a twin. Plague closed the theaters again and again, death flickering over the landscape. And now in a twilight once more lit by candles, the age of electricity having come and gone, Titania turns to face her fairy king. “Therefore the moon, the governess of floods, pale in her anger, washes all the air, that rheumatic diseases do abound.” Oberon watches her with his entourage of fairies. Titania speaks as if to herself, now Oberon forgotten. Her voice carries high and clear over the silent audience, over the string section waiting for their cue on stage left. “And through this distemperature, we see the seasons alter.” All three caravans of the Traveling Symphony are labeled as such, THE TRAVELING SYMPHONY lettered in white on both sides, but the lead caravan carries an additional line of text: *Because survival is insufficient.* (57-58)

As such, what both of these novels do is show a socialist ethic of the frontier, one where rugged individualism and brutal accumulation are not aspired to; instead, emphasis on community and society are privileged. As Mandel’s characters move about the landscape of the Midwest, they come across re-emerging towns. What is of particular interest is that these towns, scattered throughout the new Midwest, are centered around the previous commercial districts. What once were fast food restaurants serve as communal homes, gathering halls, and public meeting spaces. Ma’s band of survivors move into an abandoned shopping mall, with each person adopting a former store as their personal apartment. These commercial spaces dedicated to the production and sale of goods are not representative of a decadent culture, but a realization that we often do find ourselves in the products we consume, the markets that bring us together, and the exchange of goods and services that makes society possible. The novels of Ma and Mandel force us to rethink the nature of the frontier, humanity’s relationship to areas of excessive violence, and the promise of civilization as a state of good. This reading is particularly useful for us in the field of Midwest studies. Too often the Midwest is depicted as a No Man’s Land of empty landscapes, populated by static actors.

As Michelle Campbell has argued, authors and commentators have often constructed the Midwest as an all-encompassing origin myth for a supposed quintessential American character, but like all myths, this construction is both rooted in time and yet placed outside

of it. The way this occurs is that the myth in question serves as a definitive starting point in a narrative structure and, as such, is grounded in a sense of linear time. Therefore, the American character begins with the settling of the Middle West, and, in fact, that alleged “heartland” is the muscle connecting America’s continued imperial expansion to its origins on the eastern coast. Yet, this myth simultaneously posits that the Midwest, even after Anglo colonization, is mostly a static state. This is the Midwest of “flyover country,” a monotonous, tedious, and unchanging landscape:

The Midwest is often considered a kind of utopia; it is a provincial, flat, and undifferentiated landscape, which is the perfect setting for a revised origin myth, not the true origin myth inscribed on the land of the East Coast, but, rather, a sequel to the national public imaginary . . . The Midwest may be the perfect place at the heart of a perfect union in a nationalistic public imaginary, but it is also a “no place” in this same imaginary — a place to fly over or drive through, not a destination: a cultural waste land of nothingness. (Campbell 100)

Likewise, as Andrew Cayton has said in relation to popular understandings of the American Midwest, “The Midwest, it would seem, is a place where, to paraphrase Gertrude Stein’s famous line, there is no there, there. While the South is indelibly linked with racial slavery and the West with conquest, the Midwest’s reputation has to do with empty normalcy” (142). Continuing, Cayton argues that to construct a meaningful, robust, and historically accurate imagining of the American Midwest we need to reject this open, vast, and therefore epistemologically meaningless imagining of the region:

. . . the notion of a region demands something more than definitions rooted in economic structures and landscapes, ethnic checkerboards and family strife. What distinguishes the Midwest is the absence not just of contested regional meanings, but of any kind of regional discourse itself . . . Students look for regionalism in landscapes, food, immigrants, crops, the transition to capitalism, the organization and relationship of cities and their hinterlands. But we will never find the Midwest, if there is such a place, in those subjects. We cannot force people, living or dead, into identities that they never constructed for themselves. (148)

Cayton and Campbell, of course, do not literally mean we cannot force people into these identities, but rather that we should not,

because in reality forcing the dead (and living) to do our bidding in particular narratives is quite easy.

The myths of an unchanging Midwest are obviously historically inaccurate, but myths have never relied upon historical accuracy to derive their power. What Campbell and Cayton therefore argue for is that in order to create a socially just sense of time and place we would do well to follow the example of other, more dynamic writers, like the late Minnesota conservationist and essayist Paul Gruchow. Gruchow, who relied on an understanding of place, a sense of Midwestern identity that created a sense of place based on ecological conservation, and a sense of time that was evolutionary in its scope, reasoned that by understanding the world as both limited and tied to time and place, an area experiencing evolutionary time, we would better appreciate the fact that an entire civilization could not simply continue to expand, subjugate, and violently produce. “Nature is the ultimate humbler,” Gruchow wrote, “both of persons and of civilizations.” Although it was true that particular peoples and resources could be destroyed by greed, it would never “be made the domain of the elites . . . temporarily overwhelmed, but never, except at the peril of all, overwhelmed” (xviii). This reasoning challenges both the Turner thesis of American exceptionalism and the logic of the post-apocalyptic genre in which the environment and people are part of a never-ending cycle, divorced from time and place, caught in endless violence. Gruchow noted that although environmental concerns were often seen as frivolities by mainstream society, to understand the broader impulse of American racism, sexism, and violence required an understanding of viewing place and people as mere points in an endless cycle of violent degradation.

Such a reading forces us to reconsider, then, the imagining of the Midwest as a no-place place, since that lack of temporality or geographic and cultural distinctiveness is born of the same violent impulses to flatten and destroy subjects and justify lingering forms of imperial dominance. Ma and Mandel, again, provide an artistic envisioning of this, flipping the post-apocalyptic genre on its head and challenging basic ideas of necessity of violence as a creative catalyst. As Ma’s main protagonist, Chen, struggling with a pregnancy and the deepening deadly impulses of her survivor group, is forced to deal with the reality of looped time. As people succumb to the zombie sickness—Shen Fever, a disease of remembering—they do not become enraged monsters, but instead merely mimic the actions of

their previous lives. Faces glossed over, these zombies walk about opening doors, setting tables, and giving the illusion of life. Her survivor group is horrified of these creatures and go about killing them, thus ending the fevered state. This action is troubling, both for reader and Chen. Prior to the apocalypse she had worked, much like the fevered, in a state of looped time overseeing the global trade networks of her employer. What made these zombies so easily disposable compared to the pre-Shen Fever world? The answer, naturally, is ambiguous. There is little difference; in fact, as the survivor group kills zombies to take their places in homes, shopping malls, etc., the reader sees a familiar trope of the Turner thesis: violence against previous inhabitants to create a “new” society, followed by the colonizers setting into basically the same actions of the previous people. The very opening lines of Ma’s novel speak to this arrangement of the violent frontier: “After the End came the Beginning. And in the Beginning, there were only eight of us, then nine— that was me— a number that would only decrease. We found one another fleeing New York for the safer pastures of the countryside” (3).

Eventually, Chen breaks with the group and escapes into the expansive setting of Chicago, but the reader is left with a striking sense that grounding oneself in evolving place, not endlessly looped time, is key to liberation and ending both violence and destruction. Mandel’s book ends on a much more easily discernable positive note. After ending a threat posed by a marauding band of neo-Protestant religious fanatics, zombie- and ghoul-like in their disregard for others, Kirsten’s Shakespearean company witnesses the American Midwest, and human civilization, reasserting itself. People begin proto-newspapers, older survivors who remember the world pre-sickness start museums and education programs, villages begin to reconnect. “If there are again towns with streetlights, if there are symphonies and newspapers, then what else might this awakening world contain?” (332), Mandel’s novel concludes. Although the world has been broken by violence, it is reanimating, evolving into a new state. This new world contains the possibility of moving beyond past states, and its reanimation, far from being a zombie-like creature, is a wholly new historical era.

This re-imagining of the Midwest, and, really, of American civilization writ large, is not impossible. Yet in order to re-imagine them, we must also dispel our sense of the frontier, essentialist readings of human nature, and beliefs in the human preponderance for violence.

The fact that nihilistic ideological assumptions are found so readily in the various popular works of post-apocalyptic literature is interesting. But they are little more than cultural constructions arising from a society obsessed with the possibility of decline, of violence, and the horrors that accompany continued expansion and consumption. By challenging the central tenets of these narratives and reimagining the Midwest in a fashion more in line with conceptions like Gruchow's evolutionary time or Ma and Mandel's feminist- and social-themed narratives, we are challenged to think about the centrality of civilization to human experience. We are asked to acknowledge that the American Midwest is an inescapable part of that story of settled human society as much as any other humanly inhabited region of the earth.

Once a frontier society has become "settled" and the region undergoes a decline of direct violence directed by settlers at native populations, we see the establishment of a kind of "forever frontier." As Turner noted, with the closing of the physical frontier of American empire, a new source of renewal would need to be found. Yet for many in the nineteenth century, especially those who held to a "cult of masculinity," this meant overseas empire, and brutal treatment of oneself to produce person. The forever frontier is a place of permanently fixed violence. Much like the physical frontier of America's early empire, it is a place where frontier people freely exercise violence and celebrate that violence for its purported positive transformative properties. Yet, unlike the older, geographic frontier, this new frontier is abstracted and capable of turning inward. The way in which we do violence against ourselves in a supposedly never-ending quest to be better is nothing less than a continuation of the frontier thesis, a fear that if we become too comfortable we will lose ourselves, and our society, to civilization itself. Diet culture, the cult of manliness, self-improvement obsession, and other acts of violence call us back not to the "final frontier" but to a permanent state of prolonged violence: a forever frontier. Art, however, can inspire us to better states, and what we see in works that force a more creative imagining of the Midwest and human society is that we are not necessarily doomed to the cycle of settler-colonial violence, but that we can break away and see community, society, and cooperation as both natural states and states to which we should aspire.

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ANOTHER LOOK AT SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S
CRAFTSMANSHIP IN *WINESBURG, OHIO*

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As we celebrate the one-hundred-year anniversary of the publication of Sherwood Anderson's masterpiece, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), the majority of critics still see this volume of short fiction as Sherwood Anderson's best work and as his only significant contribution to American literature. Melissa Gniadek states correctly that Anderson "has been both celebrated as a great American writer committed to the task of creating durable American literature, and derided as a Midwestern writer of mediocre ability" (1). Jennifer Smith concludes that Anderson's ". . . reputation as a pioneer grew in proportion to his influence on other modernists, including most famously Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Jean Toomer and John Steinbeck" (12). Both Gniadek and Smith, like Malcolm Cowley before them, agree that Anderson "became a writer's writer, the only storyteller of his generation who left his mark on the style and vision of the generation that followed" (Cowley 1). As we know, "the generation that followed" included such Nobel Prize winners as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and John Steinbeck, and, as Cowley notes further, they owe Anderson "an unmistakable debt" (1). *Winesburg, Ohio* is Anderson's best sustained effort, but the three volumes of short fiction that follow, *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921), *Horses and Men* (1923), and *Death in the Woods and Other Stories* (1933) all contain fine examples of Anderson's subtle craftsmanship; flawed by unevenness, they, too, demand careful scrutiny for any thorough evaluation of Anderson's short stories. This discussion, however, must concern itself with *Winesburg, Ohio*, for, in terms of character portrayal, imagistic strategies and movement of characters, it is the most revealing example of what Anderson was attempting to do with his craft. And, as such, it sets the aesthetic standards by which we judge virtually all of Anderson's work.

In the same "Introduction" to the Viking Press edition of *Winesburg, Ohio* quoted above, Malcolm Cowley states that Anderson's work is "desperately uneven . . . but one is gratified to find that the best of it is as new and springlike as ever" (1). More specifically, the generally accepted critical view of Anderson's short fiction is that a few of his tales are masterful, a few are poor and a good deal of them are mediocre. This unevenness has been attributed to Anderson's reputed carelessness with craft, an opinion somewhat fostered by the author himself, who in his *Memoirs* was fond of calling himself a poor scribbler, an amateur and even a minor figure (3). Consequently, the very best of Anderson's tales are seen as lucky strokes of a rather unconscious genius, while the bulk of his stories are regarded as examples of his inability or his refusal to pay close attention to the craftsmanship involved in carefully refining his seemingly vague notions of character, theme and setting.

In her book, *Chicago Renaissance*, Liesl Olson states that Anderson and his protégé, Ernest Hemingway, ". . . conceived of their writing as labor, a difficult process of composition that would produce a well-wrought style" (141). As Olson notes further, Hemingway himself insisted that ". . . the 'craft' of writing requires long hours of toil, day after day, to arrive at 'one true sentence'" (141). It is this dedication to the labor of writing that leads to the conclusion that Anderson, despite his own self-effacing comments, was, in fact, a self-conscious craftsman who relied on various quasi-poetic strategies to maximize the effects of his stories on his readers. These strategies usually involve the careful selection and creation of images and image clusters and are particularly effective in revealing theme. In Anderson's best tales, he relied not only on imagistic strategies, but on the more commonly recognized techniques of his repertoire, which included the use of rich sensory detail, first-person narrative skill and the invocation of archetypes. Even in his mediocre tales, Anderson tried to compensate for the story's shortcomings by a nearly complete reliance on these quasi-poetic strategies. The degree to which he succeeded or failed depended on how his images worked to reveal theme and involve his reader with the plight of his characters. Furthermore, interspersed throughout many of his tales are intriguing statements of aesthetic theory that shed a brighter light on Anderson's own convictions concerning the art of storytelling.

Olson also writes of the influence that Anderson felt from such movements as realism, naturalism, lyricism, cubism, impression-

ism, mysticism, symbolism, feminism and psychoanalysis (141). Many of the more artistic of these movements were on display at the 1913 Chicago Armory Show, and Anderson's friend and admirer, Paul Rosenfeld, suggests that it is these very influences that result in what Rosenfeld terms as Anderson's "impressionistic form curiously akin to that in certain paintings by the young Renoir" (ix). In Rosenfeld's view, what Anderson did was to develop this impressionistic form as a means of creating images and image clusters culminating in ". . . writings that please with their fineness" (ix). Rosenfeld concludes that these writings ". . . are the uninduced, naïve consequences of a simple need for understanding and the communication of that understanding, fulfilled by an extraordinary imagination" (viii). Olson comments on this "impressionistic form" as well in regard to Anderson's own water colors which ". . . emphasize his attraction to variations in light and movement of color in the natural world" (131). Like Rosenfeld and Olson, Irving Howe, too, had suggested that Anderson was able to tap the "flow of released unconscious materials" in his "valuable and finely formed fictions" (27-29). Olson, Rosenfeld and Howe focus on the importance of Anderson's devotion to his craft, and it is his courage to experiment with these impressionistic techniques that elevates Anderson to that of a literary pioneer.

In this study we will see that the success of Anderson's better tales was the result of his rather fortuitous choice of both a sympathetic character and a psychologically understandable situation. Thus, in his best work, the reader readily identifies with the character and feels empathy for his or her plight. However, Anderson's choice of character and situation was not always so fortunate, and in these less auspicious tales, Anderson was forced to rely more on laborious and self-conscious craftsmanship. By looking closely at a few of these *Winesburg* tales that hold the middle ground between success and failure we will be better able to discern just what it is that makes some of Anderson's work seem so moving and beautiful and some of it seem so sentimental and banal.

"Loneliness" is such a tale. It is in some ways the most promising and, in other respects, one of the most disappointing stories in all of *Winesburg, Ohio*. The main character, Enoch Robinson, is a dreamer whose dreams, even in boyhood, isolated him from the life around him. He was a quiet fatherless lad who often became so absorbed in his own thoughts that drivers of teams had to yell at him

in order to get him out of the road. At the age of twenty-one, he leaves Winesburg and goes to New York City to study art. Enoch lives for fifteen years in the city, first as a successful husband, father and commercial artist, and finally as a deranged recluse who spends all of his free time in his room happily talking to his invented shadow people. When another woman takes an interest in him and invades the hallucinatory privacy of his room, he forces her out, suffers a nervous collapse and returns to Winesburg, where he is condemned to a life of loneliness and defeat.

From this brief summary, it appears that Anderson has all the necessary materials for a moving portrait of isolation. Enoch's plight is much like that of Wing Biddlebaum in the highly praised tale, "Hands." Both characters were dreamy sensitive youths who grew up without fathers. Each had a certain gift for expression with his hands and each suffered from public misunderstanding of his gift. Finally, as middle-aged recluses, each makes a frustrated attempt to confide in the young Winesburg reporter, George Willard. But the comparison ends here, for Wing's tale is complete and satisfying while Enoch's tale leaves the reader with the feeling that something crucial is missing.

As "Loneliness" opens, Anderson does begin to reveal Enoch's inner life. We are told that Enoch had "many odd delicate thoughts in his brain that might have expressed themselves through the brush of the painter," but he was always hampered by the "child in him" which "kept bumping against things, against actualities like money, sex and opinions" (167-168). It was other people's opinions that frustrated Enoch; as a young art student, for example, he was unable to voice his objection to the views of other young male artists. It is clear that Anderson himself detests these so-called artists, for "they were artists of the kind that talk . . . They talk of art and are passionately, almost feverishly, in earnest about it. They think it matters more than it does" (168-169). Enoch listened to their endless talk about such things as line, value and composition, but he couldn't bring himself to join in the conversation; he felt that they were missing the point. The point, as Enoch saw it, was that his crude, half-finished paintings were of people and that these people had stories to tell:

"The dark spot by the road that you might not notice at all is, you see, the beginning of everything. There is a clump of elders there

such as used to grow beside the road before our house back in Winesburg, Ohio, and in among the elders there is something hidden. It is a woman, that's what it is. She has been thrown from the horse and the horse has run away out of sight. Do you not see how the old man who drives a cart looks anxiously about? That is Thad Grayback who has a farm up the road. He is taking corn to Winesburg to be ground at Comstock's mill. He knows there is something in the elders, something hidden away, and yet he doesn't quite know.

It's a woman you see, that's what it is ! It's a woman and, oh, she is lovely! She is hurt and is suffering but she makes no sound. Don't you see how it is? She lies quite still, white and still, and the beauty comes out from her and spreads over everything. It is in the sky back there and all around everywhere. I didn't try to paint the woman, of course. She is too beautiful to be painted. How dull to talk of composition and such things! Why do you not look at the sky and then run away as I used to do when I was a boy back there in Winesburg, Ohio?" (169-170)

Here, in miniature, is Anderson's own aesthetic theory, for in Enoch's desire to represent the essence of things rather than the things themselves he is expressing what Anderson meant in "Apology for Crudity" when he said that writers must "begin to write out of the people and not for the people" (438). At this point in the tale, Enoch's life and art represent that subjective impulse that Anderson felt was so desperately needed in American writing. Even Enoch's invented shadow people strongly resemble the fantasy figures of the dream-troubled old writer in "The Book of the Grotesque," the prologue to *Winesburg, Ohio*, a resemblance that gives us a key to understanding what Anderson was attempting to do with his craft. For example, Enoch's desire that his artistic acquaintances imagine the woman and her tale is the same as Anderson's desire that his readers understand the meaning of his tale, a meaning that is not directly expressed, but merely implied by his character's actions. Thus, as readers, we are somewhat like the old corn driver, Thad Grayback. We anxiously sense that something meaningful is hidden beneath the surface of Enoch's appearance, but we are not at all sure what it is. The mystery of Anderson's craft lies in the degree to which he is able to compel us to sense this implicit meaning.

Anderson explicitly stated that much of his creative impulse depended on dreams. This, coupled with the use of the dream-trou-

bled old writer and the hallucinating Enoch as artist figure, suggests that what Anderson is demanding of his reader is an intense reading, a creative act in itself. As readers, we must become artists in residence and, like Anderson, must identify closely with Enoch if we are going to feel empathy for his plight. But this kind of reading requires an ambitious effort on our parts, for Enoch's character is not as immediately understandable as some more successful characters, such as Wing Biddlebaum of "Hands" and Alice Hindman of "Adventure."

Wing's and Alice's characters are almost ready made for the type of psychological probing Anderson's aesthetic theory demands. Their traumas are clearly revealed in flashbacks and their resulting psychic pain is clearly manifested in their actions. Wing is the victim of a brutal beating that he does not comprehend, other than that it had something to do with his hands, and Alice is the victim of a jilting that has condemned her to a life of isolation and defeat. Enoch's trauma, however, is not nearly as concrete and, therefore, his character is not nearly as understandable. We do know that Enoch must have been psychologically crippled by his experience as a rejected and misunderstood art student, yet we see no convincing evidence of his rejection. His invention of a room full of shadow people is understandable, but it is not as psychologically revealing as Wing's pounding of his fists on the fence boards or Alice's making of a sheet and pillow lover. Like Wing and Alice, Enoch does make a futile effort to control his shattered life through fantasy, yet there is no clear dramatization of his psychic pain. We are told that he harangues, scolds and talks to his shadow people and that he always talked last and best, but we never hear any of his talk or see any of his actions. Finally, Enoch's attempt to tell George about his room and the woman who destroyed his shadow people is not nearly as dramatically effective as Wing's action of picking up the bread crumbs from his cabin floor or Alice's naked run in the night rain.

Moreover, characters like Wing and Alice are easier to portray because the concrete evidence of their respective traumatic experiences is apparent; their actions are psychologically convincing examples of recognizable defense mechanisms. Wing's pounding of his fists on fence boards is a classic compulsive activity, while Alice's making of a sheet and pillow lover is an easily recognized act of displacement. Thus, as readers, we feel what they feel either because we are forced to experience similar psychic pain or because their neuroses are familiar to our knowledge of psychology. But Enoch's

actions, since they are not as dramatic or familiar as those of Alice and Wing, are more difficult to comprehend; he seems an abstract construct of ideas and emotion rather than a psychologically credible personality. Enoch remains a rather lightly sketched portrait of "a little wrinkled man boy" who could not find understanding in the world outside his own imagination.

When contrasted with characters like Wing and Alice, Enoch's character does not evoke as strong a feeling of empathy from the reader, yet, contrary to most critical opinion, this is a result of Anderson's ambition rather than his laziness. Enoch's character was simply harder to draw than either Wing's or Alice's. In other words, we must judge this tale and others like it in terms of the degree of difficulty that the problem of characterization posed for the author. Anderson claimed that he wrote "Hands" in one sitting, but he could not write Enoch's tale in the same way, for, in this case, his reputed reliance on intuition and emotion was not sufficient. Because Enoch was a less impulsive and visual character than Wing or Alice, his tale demanded the type of laborious craftsmanship that was to make Anderson's protégé, Ernest Hemingway, so renowned. Here, Anderson may well have dreamed of art, but he worked at craft.

In "Loneliness," Anderson was compelled to compensate for his character's vagueness through a more intensive use of imagistic strategies. "Loneliness," "Hands," and "Adventure" are tales of isolation and defeat, and the repeated images that most consistently underline this common theme are walls, tables, lamps, beds, windows, doors and floors. It is appropriate that all of these objects make up rooms, but in Enoch's tale the room is clearly more significant than the character. The room's function is so crucial that the narrator intrudes to tell us that "the story of Enoch is in fact the story of a room almost more than it is a story of a man" (168). This statement is a clear admission on the author's part that the imagery in this tale will have a function more important than character. And the further implication is that in order to understand Enoch's character, we, as readers, must pay very close attention to these repeated images. Thus "Loneliness" demands a different and even more imaginative reading than the other two tales; it should be read in much the same manner that we read lyric poetry, listen to symphonies or look at cubist painting. As active participants in the creative act, we must order the parts to see the whole.

The main theme of isolation and defeat is evident in the very first paragraph of the tale. The images of brown walls and closed windows suggest that, in his boyhood, Enoch was shut off from the real life of Winesburg and its citizens. Many details concerning Enoch's life in New York City support this feeling of inhibition and repression. Enoch's room was "long and narrow like a hallway" (168). The so-called artists "gathered in rooms and talked" (168). When the drunken prostitute frightened Enoch, he crept off to his room while she leaned against the wall of the building and laughed. Enoch's marriage didn't work out because his imaginative life was threatened: ". . . he began to feel choked and walled in by the life in the apartment" (177). After Enoch sent his wife and children away, he was happy, for he could enter his room, lock the door and feel secure with his fantasy people. Enoch explains to George that the second woman in his life was too big for the room and "things went to smash" on the night that he forced her out: ". . . she went through the door and all the life there had been in the room followed her out. She took all my people away. They all went out through the door after her" (177). Finally, Enoch is left whimpering and complaining as George passes the window and goes out the door of the old man's room in Winesburg. Anderson's repeated use of this room imagery brings us, as readers, a good deal closer to a feeling of empathy for Enoch and his plight. Like Melville's *Bartleby*, Enoch is a man who is literally and figuratively walled off from life, and we do begin to feel real compassion for him.

However, the most significant revelation of theme is evident in the actions of George and Enoch as they talk in the latter's room. Enoch begins the story of the woman as he sits with his head in his hands on a cot by the window as George sits in a chair by a table:

A kerosene lamp sat on the table and the room, although almost bare of furniture, was scrupulously clean. As the man talked George Willard began to feel that he would like to get out of the chair and and sit on the cot also. He wanted to put his arms about the little old man. In the half darkness the man talked and the boy was filled with sadness (175).

George senses that the old man must be on the verge of one of the first chances he has had to communicate meaningfully with another human being, and he wants to reach out physically to help Enoch over the barriers of inarticulateness and misunderstanding that have con-

fined him all his life. The kerosene lamp suggests that Enoch's tale may at last emerge from the half darkness into the light of human understanding and compassion. Sensing this break-through, George gets out of his chair and sits next to Enoch on the cot. Enoch's "child-like blue eyes" shine in the lamplight as he tells George the tale of the woman, but, just as the story nears its climax, Enoch drops into a chair by the lamp and orders George out of his room. George's curiosity is stirred as he commands Enoch to finish his tale. Enoch runs to the window and quickly tells George that he couldn't let the woman understand him, so he swore at her, screamed, stamped his feet on the floor and drove her out of the room. This brief moment of enlightenment ends abruptly as George leaves Enoch in the darkness by the window and returns to the darkness of the night.

The movement from darkness to light and back again, as well as the movement of the characters toward and then away from each other, works effectively because it involves the reader emotionally with the despair, the hopeful expectancy, and the final frustration of the moment. James Joyce called this sudden moment of illumination an epiphany, whose aesthetic appeal is that it demands and must receive active reader participation. Such objects as the cot, window, door, chair, table and lamp involve us in the tale's movement to the extent that they delineate the character's actions and function on an imagistic level as tangible reminders of the theme of isolation and defeat. Read in this way, then, "Loneliness" can be seen as a fine example of Anderson's ability to depict the subjective impulse of his grotesque by emphasis on these imagistic strategies that, when coupled with the characters' rhythmical movement, both reveal theme and compensate for a necessary vagueness of character.

In terms of the more dramatic potential of their characters and the more understandable nature of their respective neuroses, Wing's and Alice's tales are aesthetically attractive works compared to Enoch's. However, in terms of Anderson's appeal to the reader's intellect and emotion through his use of imagistic strategies and character movement, "Loneliness" is a better example of what he was trying to do as a self-conscious craftsman. "Hands" and "Adventure" do have moments of illumination which affect the reader in a similar way, but, as a carefully crafted moment, Enoch's epiphany demands more intensive reader involvement. In "Hands" and "Adventure" Anderson impresses us with his art; in "Loneliness" he exhausts us with his craft.

In her fine article on Hemingway and Anderson, Kim Moreland offers a further perspective on "Loneliness." In commenting on the link between Anderson and Hemingway in terms of their usage of Hemingway's iceberg theory, she, too, singles out Anderson's passage describing Enoch's painting of the women hidden in the dark spot among the elders. In Moreland's view, Enoch is demanding that the viewer see the woman in much the same way that Anderson is demanding that the reader see below the surface of the text thus revealing "... to the writer George that he paints on the basis of an aesthetic theory that celebrates the power of omission" and that "... Hemingway recalled developing this theory shortly after leaving Chicago, where he had met Anderson and first read "Loneliness" (53). Moreland states clearly that the reader must be actively involved to empathize with Enoch and that the power of this active exercise is reliant on the reader's effort to see beneath the surface structure of the iceberg to understand the meaning and depth of what is unseen. Here again the reader is challenged to comprehend this act of omission because this tale demands it.

"A Man of Ideas" is another tale that gives us a key to understanding Anderson's craft. Like Enoch, Joe Welling is a character whose neurosis is not dramatized with convincing physical mannerisms. His actions are visible, but they are not clear manifestations of his psychic pain. Joe's job as the Standard Oil Company agent demands that he periodically visit all the stores in Winesburg; occasionally during his rounds he slips into a type of fit that would suddenly "blow him away into a strange uncanny physical state in which his eyes roll and his legs and arms jerk" (103):

[T]he visitation that descended upon Joe Welling was a mental and not a physical thing. He was beset by ideas and in the throes of one of his ideas was uncontrollable. Words rolled and tumbled from his mouth. A peculiar smile came upon his lips. The edges of his teeth that were tipped with gold glistened in the light . . . For the bystander there was no escape. The excited man breathed into his face, peered into his eyes, pounded upon his chest with a shaking forefinger, demanded, compelled attention (103).

Joe's power to command and even compel attention from his listener has little to do with what he says; rather, it is a result of how he says it. During one of these "visitations" he traps George Willard with his preacher-like delivery of his oratory. Joe backs George into

a corner, informs him of the decay that is burning up the world, and advises him to begin all of his pieces in the paper with the phrase, "The World is on Fire." Like the rest of Joe's victims, George is left baffled by this outburst, yet he senses that there is something meaningful beneath the surface appearance of this strange character. As readers, we, too, sense that Joe's fits are the result of a frustrated need to communicate meaningfully and find understanding, but, as is the case with Enoch Robinson, we are not given sufficient dramatic evidence to reveal exactly what it is that has left Joe subject to these disturbing outbursts.

The Winesburg telegraph operator, Wash Williams ("Respectability"), is a character who, like Joe, has some strange power over the men of the village. In contrast to Joe, however, Wash's trauma is clearly revealed and his dramatic actions are immediately recognized as a means of coping with his neurosis. Wash tells George Willard his story one night. As a young man Wash was cuckolded by his pretty young wife. He sent her back to her mother and when he decided to forgive her and take her back, the girl's mother forced her to walk naked into the room where Wash was waiting. As a result of this cruel act we meet the ugliest man in town, a miserable misogynist who calls all women bitches and drinks huge quantities of beer every night. As with Wing and Alice, Wash's character is a fortuitous choice. We can empathize with him and clearly imagine the devastating psychic pain of his experience; his trauma has turned him into a hopeless woman-hating alcoholic. In Joe Welling's case, however, there is no mention of any such traumatic experience that might explain his actions. Here again, however, Anderson's ambition is evident as he is forced to offset his character's vagueness and lack of convincing dramatic mannerisms with a more self-conscious use of imagistic strategies.

"A Man of Ideas" and "Respectability" are linked thematically by images of promised growth threatened by images of decay. Now a broken man, Wash sits with George on a decayed pile of railroad ties as he relates how his young wife had held the bag of seeds while he planted them in the warm soft ground of their garden. In a more direct way, Joe tells George of the decay that is threatening the world and warns of a disaster that could destroy all the wheat, corn, oats, peas and potatoes. This disaster could come in the form of fire and flood and it is especially significant that Joe's physical actions are described with an abundance of fire and water imagery. Words rolled

and tumbled from his mouth like waves. Thoughts rushed through his head. His personality overrode and swept away all of his listeners. When he began his affair with Sara King, her father and brother threatened him with a beating, but he swept them off their feet with a tidal wave of words and then engulfed them as he plunged into an exposition of his ideas. Use of fire imagery is seen in the description of Joe as a tiny volcano that lies silent for days and then spouts fire, as well as in his statements to George that decay is burning up the world. Finally, Joe's fits are variously compared to tidal waves and volcanoes.

Although this imagery suggests that Joe's character may well be an embodiment of the very decay that he prophesizes, the fact remains that Joe does hold a strong and somewhat positive power over his fellow Winesburg citizens. This power has significant quasi-religious undertones. Joe's fit is termed a "visitation." The manner and content of his warning to George and the Kings are reminiscent of a fire and brimstone preacher's sermon. As the successful manager of the Winesburg Baseball Club, he controls his players with an inspirational power that is like a spell. The strength of this power is especially evident in the final scene of the tale as Joe thwarts the Kings's attempt to give him a beating by sweeping them along with his idea of using weeds and grasses as alternative food sources in case of disaster.

As he did in "Loneliness," Anderson depends here on various quasi-poetic techniques to create another moment of enlightenment. In this final scene Tom King and his father are waiting in the "half darkness" (109) of Joe's hotel room when Joe enters from the darkness of the street with a bundle of weeds and grasses in his arms. Joe ignores the grumbled threat of Tom King, closes the door, lights the lamp, and spreads his handful of weeds and grasses upon the floor. George Willard is frightened at first, then laughs to himself as he listens from the hallway to Joe carrying the two men off their feet with his tidal wave of words. Joe convinces the Kings to go back with him to their own house in order to tell Sarah of his ideas, and the tale closes with both Kings rapidly following Joe down the street:

There was a scraping of chairs in the room. It was then that George Willard retreated to his own room. Leaning out at the window he saw Joe Welling going along the street with the two Kings. Tom King was forced to take extraordinary long strides to keep pace with the

little man. As he strode along, he leaned over, listening—absorbed, fascinated. Joe Welling again talked excitedly. “Take milkweed now,” he cried. “A lot might be done with milkweed, eh? It’s almost unbelievable. I want you to think about it. I want you two to think about it. There would be a new vegetable kingdom you see. It’s interesting, eh? It’s an idea. Wait till you see Sarah, she’ll get the idea. She’ll be interested. Sarah is always interested in ideas. You can’t be too smart for Sarah, now can you? Of course you can’t. You know that” (111).

George and the Kings are drawn by the power of Joe’s personality. The grasses and weeds function appropriately as images of growth and fruition while the movement of the characters toward each other from darkness into the lamplight of the room suggests not only that Joe’s power is compelling, but that his message is enlightening as well. Furthermore, it is no insignificant fact that Joe mentions the possibility of a new vegetable kingdom in the closing paragraph, since he may well be seen as a frustrated priest of fertility. Here the fire and water imagery combine with the quasi-religious nature of Joe’s power to hint that before this new vegetable kingdom is established, the world must undergo a purification by the Levitical cleansing rituals of fire and water. Seen in this light then, Joe’s character functions to reveal what so many of the Winesburg grotesques are painfully seeking, a hopeful prophecy of rebirth, growth and love.

That Anderson may have been trying to do too much with Joe’s character is possible, especially when the more convincing character of Wash Williams is seen in contrast. However, we must not be too hasty to criticize Anderson’s technique just because Joe’s character does not immediately grip us. In the same manner that the Kings are captivated by Joe’s power, the ambitious reader is swept away by the power of Anderson’s craft. Anderson’s self-conscious use of imagery and character movement demands our intellectual and emotional involvement. As is the case with Enoch Robinson, we are once again exhausted by the subtle craftsmanship of this stylistic pioneer.

Elmer Cowley’s tale, “Queer,” falls into the same category as “Loneliness” and “A Man of Ideas.” Elmer’s problem stems from an attitude of self-conscious paranoia toward the town’s opinion of himself and his father; he believes that public opinion judges them as “queer.” Elmer’s father has gone from being an unhappy and unsuccessful farmer to his current position as an equally unhappy and unsuccessful merchant whose general store sells “everything and

nothing” and who is constantly taken advantage of by traveling salesmen. Elmer and George Willard are roughly the same age and Elmer sees the young reporter as an embodiment of the public opinion that he feels condemns himself and his family. Elmer tries to communicate this feeling of inferiority to George, but he fails in much the same way that Enoch Robinson fails to communicate his psychic pain. Elmer’s frustration becomes so intense that by the tale’s end the only thing he can do is beat George into half-consciousness and hop a freight train out of town.

However, when compared to a character like Kate Swift, Elmer is not as understandable; hence, his dramatized actions are not convincing. The title of Kate’s tale is “The Teacher” and, indeed, her occupation is her main problem. She lives a vicarious existence; she reads and teaches of art and artists rather than directly experiencing beauty and truth in her own life. When she does try to reach out to George Willard, she betrays her sexual inhibition and emotional confusion: first by letting George embrace her and then, like Elmer, by beating him with her fists and running out of the newspaper office. In their final actions of beating George and running away, both Elmer and Kate reveal their psychic pain through the recognizable defense mechanism of projection, yet the actual source of Elmer’s pain is not nearly as identifiable as the stereotypical spinster school marm complex that victimizes Kate. The cliché of the sexually frustrated middle-aged teacher is recognizable, but it is more difficult for us to empathize with an awkward, inarticulate and paranoid adolescent like Elmer Cowley. Here again we must recognize the demanding task that Anderson faced in developing Elmer’s character, and, as a result, we must appreciate the ambitious craftsmanship necessary to see this tale through to its satisfactory completion.

Specifically, the theme that links “The Teacher” and “Queer” is the contradiction of appearance and reality. In both tales, clothing imagery functions significantly to obscure the reality of each character’s existence. Kate does try to break out of the confines of her psychic trap by reading half-naked on her bed, but all she accomplishes is the unknowing excitation of the Reverend Curtis Hartman, who is watching from the bell tower of his church. Elmer, on the other hand, does not even get as far as Kate; he feels that the appearance of clothing is the only way to judge character. As a result, he is shamed by his father’s old Prince Albert coat and threatened by George’s new overcoat. Ebenezer Cowley feels dressed up in his

coat, but, in Elmer's limited perspective, the old grease-spattered coat is an embarrassing visual manifestation of their "queerness," and George's new coat is a bitter reminder of the town's superior attitude. Elmer, of course, suffers from self-deception. In fact, we are told that, rather than being judgmental, George is genially curious and interested in Elmer. This is evident in the final scenes as Anderson once again uses imagery and movement to involve us both emotionally and intellectually with Elmer's plight.

Elmer fails in his first attempt to talk to George, decides to hop a freight train to Cleveland, steals twenty dollars from his father's stash, summons George to the train station and again tries to explain himself to the young reporter. As the train is beginning to pull out, Elmer wets his lips in an effort to articulate his frustration, but he loses control of his tongue and half-incoherently mumbles his father's favorite expression: "I'll be washed and ironed. I'll be washed and ironed and starched"(200). It is appropriate here that the seemingly meaningless expression is not only an ironic reminder of Elmer's similarity to his father, but also a thematically significant reference to the proper care of clothing. Elmer is so concerned with surface appearance that even his subconscious echo of his father's repeated phrase reveals his obsession with clothes. The money that Elmer steals from his father can also be seen as a futile attempt to acquire the illusion of respectability, perhaps now with a new suit of clothes.

As the tale concludes, we see that Anderson skillfully grants Elmer an epiphany. Elmer's brief moment of enlightenment comes as he gives George the twenty dollars and proceeds to beat him half-conscious:

Elmer Cowley danced with fury beside the groaning train in the darkness on the station platform. Lights leaped into the air and bobbed up and down before his eyes. Taking the two ten-dollar bills from his pocket he thrust them into George's hand. "Take them," he cried. "I don't want them. Give them to father. I stole them." With a snarl of rage he turned and his long arms began to flay the air. Like one struggling for release from hands that held him he struck out, hitting George Willard blow after blow on the breast, the neck, the mouth. The young reporter rolled over on the platform half-conscious, stunned by the terrific force of the blows. Springing aboard the passing train and running over the tops of cars, Elmer sprang down to a flat car and lying on his face looked back, trying

to see the fallen man in the darkness. Pride surged up in him. "I showed him. I ain't so queer. I guess I showed him I ain't so queer."
(200-201)

Elmer begins his furious dance in the darkness on the station platform, but the train's lights leap into the air as he quickly decides to give the money back. This brief moment of self-enlightenment continues as Elmer's hands reach out, not to George's coat, but to his breast, neck and mouth. George is rendered nearly unconscious by the force of the blows but Elmer, like Kate Swift in her attack on George, is actually groping for sympathy and understanding. Even though George suffers physically, Elmer is using his own hands in a frustrated attempt to reach past the outward appearance of George's character to his physical and, ultimately, his emotional self. Elmer is struggling for release from the shackles of his own self-deception and the only way he can express himself is with his hands. As with Enoch Robinson, Elmer's moment ends abruptly as George falls to the platform. Elmer hops aboard the freight train, lies on his face, and tries to see George in the darkness (201).

Anderson has rhythmically guided his character and his readers from the darkness of confusion to the light of understanding and back to darkness again. Elmer has tried to reach beyond the surface appearance of such deceptive trappings as clothes in order to find real human understanding and compassion, but, in the end, he slips back to his former practice of fooling himself by claiming that he "showed" George. The choice of the word "showed" is especially ironic, for it suggests that Elmer mistakes dark for light even as his own perception fails. The train pulls out as Elmer still tries to see George, but George, too, is left in the darkness. As is the case with so many Winesburg tales, the story ends with Elmer seemingly confined to a life of "queerness" by his inability to communicate. "The Teacher" is not quite as bleak a tale as "Queer" since Kate Swift does find some emotional outlet in her teaching and reading. Elmer Cowley, however, will forever be a psychic prisoner who is trapped in his own cell of self-deception.

"Loneliness," "A Man of Ideas" and "Queer" are not the best stories in *Winesburg, Ohio*, but they are three of the most revealing examples of Sherwood Anderson's craftsmanship. Ernest Hemingway's analysis was correct when he said that Anderson "often takes a very banal idea of things and presents it with such

craftsmanship that the person reading it believes it beautiful and does not see the craftsmanship at all" ("Lost Book Review" 177). This is precisely what happens when we, as readers, actively share the brief moments of beauty that Anderson crafts for Enoch Robinson, Joe Welling and Elmer Cowley. The themes of loneliness, isolation, self-deception, decay, growth, appearance and reality are, indeed, banal, yet in the hands of Anderson, the skillful craftsman of imagistic strategies and character movement, these ideas do resonate with an unordinary force. Hemingway's remark is a fitting tribute to the subtle stylistic genius of a writer who has long been underrated because he has been misunderstood.

In his introduction to Sherwood Anderson's *Memoirs*, Ray Lewis White makes the following prophetic comment about the criticism of Sherwood Anderson's literary work:

Finally, when the definitive studies of Sherwood Anderson are completed, and when the national literature is judged honestly and well, American letters will find for Sherwood Anderson a place of enduring major importance. Anderson will then be loved and understood; others may learn from him how to write and how to live . . . (xxxix).

Sherwood Anderson does deserve "a place of enduring major importance" in American letters for his courageous attempt to represent, through his work, the need that we all have to tear down the walls of inarticulateness and misunderstanding that continue to separate us from our fellows and ourselves.

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ANNUAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF
MIDWESTERN LITERATURE, 2017

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This bibliography includes primary and secondary sources of Midwestern literary genres published, for the most part, during 2017. Criteria for inclusion of authors are birth or residence within the twelve-state area that defines the Midwest. Fiction and poetry using Midwestern locales are included irrespective of their authors' ties with this region. Primary sources are listed alphabetically by author, including (if applicable) designations of locale within square brackets at the end of each citation. However, because of space constraints, primary source materials are limited to separately-published works; those appearing in literary journals and magazines are generally not included. Secondary sources, usually journal articles, books, or doctoral dissertations, are listed by subject; critical editions of Midwestern authors will be found here as well.

The third section lists *Library of America* editions of Midwestern authors issued in 2017; and periodicals published for the first time in 2017 that relate in some way to Midwestern literature, either in subject, content, or locale, are listed alphabetically by title in the fourth and final section of this bibliography.

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Abbreviations used in the citations denoting genre and publication types are as follows:

A Anthology jrnl Journalism

bibl	Bibliography	juv	Juvenile fiction
biog	Biography	lang	Language; linguistics
corr	Correspondence	M	Memoir
crit	Criticism	N	Novel
D	Drama	P	Poetry
gen	General studies	pub	Publishing; printing
hist	History	rev	Review essay
I	Interview(s)	S	Short fiction

Citations for novels, poetry, short stories, memoirs, and other types of literature about the Midwest, as well as those written by Midwestern authors, are continually sought by the editor for inclusion in this annual bibliography. Please send them to Robert Beasecker, Director of Special Collections, Grand Valley State University Libraries, 1 Campus Drive, Allendale, Michigan 49401.

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The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature
congratulates

Liesl Olson

Winner of the 2020 MidAmerica Award
for distinguished contributions to the
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For registration information, go to the
"annual symposium" link at ssml.org

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HONOR ROLL

SSML is currently operating at a loss due to increased expenses in publishing its journals and convening its annual symposium. Major gifts from the late Jane S. Bakerman, David Diamond, and David D. Anderson have enabled us to continue our work while we seek to establish a more stable financial footing for the work ahead. SSML is also grateful to the following members and friends who have made contributions in addition to their dues. As more such contributions are received, and earlier ones are discovered in searching the archives, we will add more names to this Honor Roll: Walter Adams, Robert Beasecker, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ray B. Browne, Mary Ellen Caldwell, Louis J. Cantoni, G.B. Crump, Bernard F. Engel, Kenneth B. Grant, Philip. A. Greasley, Theodore Haddin, Donald Hassler, Janet Ruth Heller, Ted Kennedy, Jean Laming, Barbara Lindquist, Larry Lockridge, Loren Logsdon, Mr. and Mrs. Bud Narveson, Marcia Noe, Douglas Noverr, Mary Obuchowski, Tom Page, E. Elizabeth Raymond, Herbert K. Russell, James Seaton, Sandra Seaton, Guy Szuberla, Doug Wixson, Melody Zajdel, and the family and friends of Paul Somers.

ERRATUM

In the Spring/Fall 2019 issue of *Midwestern Miscellany*, a formatting error rendered incorrectly the title of Michael Kim Roos's essay. The correct title is "The Doctor and the Doctor's Son: Ed Hemingway and the Conflict of Science and Faith."

RECIPIENTS OF THE MARK TWAIN AWARD
for distinguished contributions to Midwestern Literature

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Frederick Manfred	1981
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Jim Harrison	1990
Don Robertson	1991
Ray Bradbury	1992
Mona Van Duyn	1993
William H. Gass	1994
William Maxwell	1995
Sara Paretsky	1996
Toni Morrison	
Jon Hassler	1997
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Virginia Hamilton	1999
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Dan Gerber	2001
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David Citino	2003
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Louise Erdrich	2011
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Naomi Long Madgett	2014
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