

MidAmerica XLIV

*The Yearbook of the Society
for the Study of Midwestern Literature*

DAVID D. ANDERSON, FOUNDING EDITOR
MARCIA NOE, EDITOR

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In Honor of
Steven Trout

PREFACE

On June 1, 2017, members of The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature gathered in East Lansing for its forty-seventh annual meeting. At the awards luncheon on June 2, Steven Trout was named the 2017 winner of the MidAmerica Award for distinguished contributions to the study of Midwestern literature, and Gloria Whelan won the Mark Twain Award for distinguished contributions to Midwestern literature. John Beall was the winner of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize for “Self-Portrait,” and Jane L. Carman won the Paul Somers Prize for Creative Prose for “Where Am I Who?” Conference highlights included panels on Home and the Midwest, the work of Nobel laureate Bob Dylan, and the Great War.

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, Bud Narveson, Marcia Noe, Mary Obuchowski, Tom Page, E. Elizabeth Raymond, Herbert K. Russell, James Seaton, Guy Szuberla, Doug Wixson, Melody Zajdel, and the family and friends of Paul Somers.

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AN APPRECIATION: JAMES SEATON: (1944-2017)

MARCIA NOE

With great sadness, I write to report that James Seaton died of cancer on March 29, 2017. An obituary was published in the *Lansing State Journal* on April 2, 2017, and is available online. I, like many of you, have known Jim since the '80s; those of you who are newer SSML members may remember his Law and Literature panels that he organized and presided over in recent years at our annual conference, or as a fellow Editorial Committee member and peer reviewer for the Society's journals. Others may know him from his publications as a thoughtful, insightful, provocative, and productive scholar. For me, James exemplified the gentleman scholar in the best sense of that word; he was invariably pleasant and cordial, respectful of those whose opinions differed from his own, helpful to the younger scholars and a very active member of SSML for over four decades who richly deserved the MidAmerica award for distinguished contributions to Midwestern literature, which he won in 2008. I deeply mourn his passing, am grateful to have known him, and am honored to have been able to call him a colleague.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

NOVEMBER 22, 1963:
The Dallas Morning News

JOHN BEALL

I

President Kennedy will get
A thick, juicy steak
When he visits Dallas Friday.

But some of the guests
At his Trade Mart luncheon
May get thicker, juicier steaks—

“A would-be assassin couldn’t be sure
Of poisoning the President’s meal
Unless he put poison in every steak

Served at the luncheon,”
A spokesman explained
On Wednesday.

II

The Menu:
Fresh Fruit Cup
Top Sirloin Club Steak (8 ounces)
Tossed Green Salad
French-Cut Green Beans Almondine
Rolls and Butter
Apple Pie
Coffee

III

In the Mart the red phone
Started ringing. Bystanders paled
Before hearing it was only
The company checking connections.
Not affected by the visit:
Business, which continues Friday as usual,
And the flock of playful parakeets
Who dwell in the courtyard.

IV

A scout car occupied by Deputy Chief
Lumpkin will travel a mile ahead
To alert the motorcade of traffic jams.
Curry and Sheriff Decker will ride
In the President's party.

V

"Welcome, Mr. Kennedy, to Dallas...
A city that rejected your policies
In 1960 and will do so again in '64.

"Why is Latin America turning Communist,
Despite your Ivory-Tower pronouncements?
Why did you host and salute Tito—

"Moscow's Trojan Horse—just a short time
After Khrushchev? Why did Cambodia kick
The U.S. out after we poured millions

"To its ultraleftist government?
Why has Gus Hall, who heads
The U.S. Communist Party,

"Announced he'll support
Your campaign in '64? Why
Have you banned the showing

“Of a film by the HUAC
Exposing Communism in America?
Why have you scrapped the Monroe Doctrine

“In favor of the ‘Spirit of Moscow’?
Mr. Kennedy, as citizens, we DEMAND
Answers,” AMERICAN FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE.

VI

At an informal press conference
In his Baker Hotel Suite Nixon
Predicts that Kennedy will drop
Johnson from the Democratic ticket
If the race gets close. “If they think
The race a shoo-in, they will keep Lyndon.”

VII

Dallas sheds its sharp cleavages
At noon today in extending the hand
Of fellowship to the President.

Opposition is not personal.
Today welcome is extended regardless
Of party and belief.

In the battle with history’s
Most evil conspiracy, our country’s future
Is secure if, as Milton wrote

Of Cromwell, we meet each crisis with
“Faith and Matchless Fortitude.”

Collegiate School

DROWNING

MICHELE R. WILLMAN

I didn't realize at the age of ten that my mother's languid attitude, her calm, easy manner, was actually a wine-induced stupor. I spent my afternoons lingering in the front yard of our rust-colored wood-sided rambler letting my friends admire my new dangling Michael Jackson earrings. The ones with the picture from the *Thriller* album cover where he's reclining on one elbow and is still black. My mom would materialize on the porch, just outside the door, not quite stepping down to the second level, wine glass in hand, red—I think now it was Cabernet—and call for me to come in for dinner. Maybe all the moms in suburbia had wine glasses affixed to their smooth, white, Dove-lotioned hands. Or maybe it was just mine.

I remember the Christmas my dad custom-built her a wine cabinet and placed it reverently in the corner of the formal dining room. The one we never ate in. He was proud of his work. It was cherry wood with inlaid double doors and held twelve bottles. I know this because my baby sister Celia counted them. We always called her Baby Celie though at the time she must have been three. There were always twelve bottles in the cabinet. Every time Celia counted. And there was always a glass in my mother's hand.

I remember the last day of school before Christmas break. My big sister Stephanie was supposed to pick me up from school. She drove. She didn't like to pick me up because that meant she didn't get to sit around with the senior boys after school. Allen. That was the one she liked. But that day she didn't come. I waited by the lamppost like I was supposed to. It was cold. Crisp cold. The kind of cold you can tolerate if you are moving, walking briskly, knowing there's a warm house waiting to invite you in. But not the kind of cold you can stand in. My big toes were starting to feel numb as they pushed against the fronts of my khaki moon boots, the left one almost protruding through the loosening threads between the nylon upper and the rubber sole. My mom had promised to get the bigger boots out of the

cluttered storage room, but she hadn't gotten around to it yet. Anyway. It would just be another pair of khaki moon boots with the red and blue stripe, the kind that Stephanie had liked five years ago, but that fewer and fewer kids were wearing. Margaret Reel had come to school that year with Doc Martens. Now Amy and Lisa said they were getting them for Christmas too. Maybe if I put some duct tape over the protruding toe, the moon boots would last a little longer.

I wasn't sure what I was getting for Christmas that year. I hadn't seen my mom go shopping. Maybe she did it during the day, with Celia. But when I got home, if it was a good day, Mom was in the kitchen and I could hear onions sizzling over the sound of the J. Geils Band. I liked them and mom did too. I think it made her feel cool to listen to the same music as us. Celia would be playing Lite-Brite in the living room—she no longer ate the pieces—and Stephanie would stomp off to her room and put on her new cassette of KISS, neatly drowning out everything else.

If it was a bad day, the silent house greeted us, and I could see mom from the front porch, lying on the davenport with her eyes closed. Wine glass on the water-stained coffee table. Celia quietly playing Lite-Brite on the living room floor. She would look up but she wouldn't run to greet us. She was intent on her designs. First the rainbow, then the clown. Stephanie's door slamming broke the silence, then KISS would start up.

Those were sandwich nights. PB&J or cheese, not grilled cheese, just cheese. On spongy white Wonder Bread. The kind that was supposed to be good for kids. Dad was good with a skill saw but he didn't use the stove much. I remember him making eggs once after a party my parents had. Very precisely. Leaning over as he adjusted the gas as if to remove any parallax error. He scooped the eggs into my blue plastic bunny bowl where their heat permanently rippled the sides. As he ate, he held the bowl just under his chin and scooped the eggs into his mouth in a single motion, somehow keeping his moustache clean. He ate like my customers at the restaurant where I work downtown. Eating their ramen with chopsticks, the bowls inches from their downy faces, stubble breaking through the skin even as the lunch rush pours in. Dad stood a foot in front of our old RCA leaning into it as if he couldn't quite make out the figures on the screen, spooning the eggs into his lax mouth absentmindedly.

I wonder if he leaned in this way to look at my mother. To see her figure more clearly as it lay naked and cold, silent in the cooling

water. Did he look into her eyes to see if they were moving? Did the tepid water cover the sharp jut of her chin, her too-sharp nose? Were her features softened by the floating fan of her soft brown hair, her best feature, as she lay there, apparently dozing and letting the troubles of the world wash away?

I remember. Fourth grade. The last day of school before Christmas break. December 21. Winter solstice. The shortest day of the year. My dad found her in the bath tub. Called the paramedics. Hit her head, Dad said. That's all he said. Hit her head. Years later I asked Grandma Bea if he'd ever said more about that day. But he hadn't, she said.

Still standing numbly by the lamppost as the passing cars stopped briefly to collect the elementary children and then carried on, I poked my toe up again through the emerging hole in my boot and glanced again down the street. Eventually, Mrs. Lagerfield, who lived across the street, came and took me home.

Later, Grandma Bea said she didn't know anything about it, but she wouldn't look me in the face. Uncle Charlie didn't know either. I didn't ask, but I could tell by the way his eyes frosted over whenever her name was mentioned. Last week I called Steph out in California to ask her if Dad had ever said anything but I chickened out when Raoul answered the phone. I didn't know if his kids would be there and I didn't want to upset anyone. His oldest girl must be about ten. Like me, then. Like I was then. Just as I told him I'd talk to Steph later he'd put her on the phone. Her voice was a quick and sharp staccato, not at all like mom's low, slow murmur. Her comforting hum had woken me up every morning and put me to sleep every night.

"Say your prayers, sweetie pie," she would always say. "Pray for the morning."

"Josie? What do you want?" Steph had asked, direct as always, but not meaning to be rude. I heard her take a drag before asking, "How's Baby Celie? Is she ok?"

"Yes, she's fine. We're fine. Cold. I don't think it's been over zero for two weeks," I had exaggerated.

"Good, good." Another drag. A long pause. "So Raoul and the kids are here. Decorating a tree and all that. They insisted. Said my place needed a little sprucing up. Damn tree takes up half the living room. I can hardly get to my sofa." Another drag. Another pause. "But you haven't seen the new place. You and Baby should come out

here. Bring Grandma Bea—unless you can't take her out of that place. Can you take her out of that place? You'll have to sleep on the floor. Or at Raoul's. You could stay at Raoul's. He's got extra room when the kids are with Sally." Drag. Pause. "So, I gotta get back. To work that is. Kids'll have this place looking better than the Grinch's by the time they get done. You guys should come out. Let me know."

"We can take Grandma Bea out," I had broken in, "but her hip, you know, it's not so good after the fall. I don't think . . ." I trailed off.

"Yeah, yeah. Well, you think about it. I gotta get back. We'll talk soon." Drag. "Bye!"

"Bye," I had echoed to the empty line, trying to imagine strings of tinsel polluting Stephanie's sparse domestic life.

At our first visit, she'd only owned three plates, one for each of us, which she'd washed, dried, and put away in the dull fiberboard cupboards after each use. She'd bought the third one special, for Baby Celie, she said, and after each meal Celie could look down into her plate and see the French ladies in their satin gowns languishing in the toile pattern, under the trees, heads thrown back, glasses in hand.

We'd stayed a week with Steph, Grandma Bea calling every night to check on us since it had only been six months since Dad and it was Celie's first time away from home for so long. Steph took us to Universal Studios, where she'd gotten a job right out of school while she was working on launching her "real career." And later that year we saw her name "Stephanie Ward, back-up to the second assistant director," or some such thing, on the credits for *Swamp Thing from the White Lagoon*.

So I hadn't asked Steph then and I hadn't called her back. And Celia? Well, she wouldn't know anything anyway. What could Dad have said to her before he died, a ten-year-old kid, her nose always stuck in a book, the Black Stallion series or Nancy Drew, emerging only at meals to inhale her PB&J, then retreating back to her room, the one we'd used to share before I took over Steph's abandoned water bed at the back of the house, past the kitchen, next to the laundry room. The whoosh-whoosh of the rotating t-shirts and jeans was easier on the ears than Dad's dragon-like snore. Though Celie never said a word about it.

Staring at the phone, thinking about calling Steph again, I glance at the clock and instead head to the bedroom to get dressed for work.

Black pants. Black shirt. Name tag. Soft brown hair, I observe in the mirror. Too thin. Too limp. Ponytail. Sometimes I wish I was prettier.

Sometimes I wished mom was prettier. Like the other moms. The ones who went to work. Who feathered their hair and wore make-up. Her hair lay too long and too loose past her shoulders, sometimes bunching up in the back of her cowl-neck sweaters. But when she turned her head to call my name, unwittingly revealing my hiding place behind the arborvitae during our sixth game of kick-the-can, the strands broke free from the cowls and swept forward, drawing attention away from her face. The brown waves floated around her in the light breeze.

I wonder if she thought of us as her head slipped below the water. Did she close her eyes? Was it because of us—the tedium, the squabbling, the door-slamming, the demands? Or in spite of us? Was it because of us that she lasted so long?

When I get home from the restaurant at 4:00 pm I open a packet of Maruchen Ramen, crunching the dry noodles into a bowl with some water and nuking it for a minute. The dry brown powder I empty on top of it barely resembles food even as it makes my mouth water. I take it with a Rolling Rock into the living room and sit down to absorb Oprah, thinking while I do that I should call Celia, check up, see how she is doing. But I'm not sure when she said she'd be home from school. Basketball was it now? Or cross-country? Maybe she had to wait for a ride home from the twins. I know Uncle Charlie never got her a car. Nicholas Cage waltzes onto Oprah's stage with a loud approval from the audience and a bow. I always did like his smile.

Oprah is followed by *Cold Case Files* and I get sucked in because it is easier than getting up to balance the dirty bowl and spoon on top of the precarious stack of crusted bowls threatening to tip out of the sink. On the TV now is a picture of a blue and white 1955 Chevrolet, a hardtop, I note, a common model. The vehicle is sitting next to a large hole in the ground and the front of it seems to be encased in gray stone of some kind. Cement? Concrete? The back of the vehicle looks salvageable. My dad would be salivating over those quarter panels if he was still around to see this. In a corner of the screen is a photo of a pert blonde woman with a pink headband enclosing her bouffant. The narrator tells us, those of us too lazy to go do our dishes and so riveted to his every word, that this is the case of Toni Martha, who went missing one night while her twelve-year-old daughter was

asleep in the next room, never to be seen again. Earlier this year, they finally found the car she'd been driving before she disappeared. The screen shifts to a weeping, mousy-haired, overweight woman, presumably the aforementioned twelve-year-old girl of the cold case, who sobs that she knew her mother would never leave her. Her mother wasn't suicidal like people said. It was foul play. I nod agreeably. Of course it was foul play. Her mother wouldn't just leave her like that in the middle of the night. In the middle of the afternoon. Someone or something took her. They took her. With her blonde bouffant spilling over her face. Facedown in the Chevy, deep in the suffocating cement. The cold case reminds me vaguely of a book I've read or a story I've heard before that I just can't put my finger on. I let my eyes slip closed. Just for a moment. Recline back on the sofa. My soft brown hair fanning about my face.

The phone rings just as I am starting to open my eyes and I am getting hungry again. *JAG* on the TV and I'm thinking about grabbing another beer. Instead, I pull myself off the checkered cushions to answer it. Celia? Steph.

"Hey, so, I was thinking about what we were talking about last week, about the visit. I know Grandma Bea can't come, but you and Baby could come and maybe even Uncle Charlie and the twins, Dusty and . . . Rooster? What's that other one? Red?" She finishes quickly, inhales deeply, desperately, as if the string of words has taken her away from the satisfying inhalation for too long.

"I could get you tickets. I know waitressing doesn't pay that well and I don't know what Baby does for money. Is she on an allowance or something? What about that money from Dad? Did you get money from Dad? Raoul said he would help out. With the tickets. We don't have the kids this year for Christmas so . . ." Drag and exhale, a little less desperately now as her request becomes clear and she comes to the end of her persuasion.

"Hey. Hi. Steph. That sounds . . . great." I am still groggy from my half-doze on the couch and my stomach rumbles. "But, when? Celie starts her school break next week. I think. Aren't tickets hard to get at Christmas at the last minute? And expensive?"

"But you want to get away from all that snow, right? And the news said you wouldn't get temps above freezing for another three weeks." She actually checked the Minnesota weather reports. "It's warm here. In the '60s. Sweatshirt weather—"

I laugh. Try shorts weather. Her years away from Minnesota have made her soft. Really out of touch, I think.

She stops. Offended by my snort. She seems oddly, uncharacteristically aware that I am even on the line. Most conversations we have begin and end with big sisterly advice and leave little room for comment.

“You’re not coming.” A statement. Almost a pout. After years of us not coming. “We don’t have the funds, Steph. I’d like to. I really would—”

“We will get the tickets and you can pick them up at the airport. I will call Uncle Charlie and find out when Baby Celie is done with school. You get time off from that Chinese dump you work for and come out and see us for Christmas.” Click. Just like that. No chance to hear the final drag on her ash-laden cigarette. Perhaps with all the chatter the ashes had fallen like snow, gently, onto the red and green tinsel, strung across the room.

In Los Angeles, the sun is blinding. Literally blinding. But different than that winter glare off a Minnesota pasture covered in pure, white, even, crisp, mid-winter snow. We leave the airport sloughing our extra layers, having bundled up to avoid bringing our winter coats, but now aware of the inappropriateness of our fleece Gopher sweatshirts and multi-colored windbreakers. Steph is pointing out the palm trees and the low line of the city and the mountains in the distance. Celie is quiet and eyeing Raoul suspiciously, not remembering him from the last time we were here. He is quiet, but polite, shorter than Steph by a hair, but broader. She’s lost weight and her brown hair seems listless in the dull warmth. Raoul guides us to his Lexus and puts our duffels in the trunk.

In the front seat, Steph shifts her body to look at us and holds up a sagging plastic mistletoe, some of the berries missing. “Merry Christmas! Kisses to you! I have my two best girls with me and it’s going to be a great time!” Celie shifts in her seat. I glance at her, wondering if she’s feeling what I’m feeling, the expectation, the pre-emptive disappointment, but she’s looking out the window at the cars whizzing by on the freeway. It is December 21.

Steph’s apartment in Culver City, on the fourth floor of a modest building, is like I imagined it, sparsely furnished, but now oozing Christmas. She opens the door with an uncharacteristic hesitancy; the tinsel and bright twinkling lights do not suit her. I think Raoul should

know this by now, but it was not Raoul, I remember, who adorned it, but the kids, Felipe, Pedro, and, what was the girl again? Lola. We step from the brightness of the outdoors, the fluorescent hallway, into the twinkling room. Strings of red and green lights crisscross the ceiling. The Christmas tree does indeed take up half of the front room which itself is the width of the apartment. The ornaments on the tree look as if they are about to wage battle. Walmart standard-issue red, green, silver, and gold glass balls compete with homemade macaroni and popcorn strings, pretzel-frames with children's faces grinning out from them, innocently. Steph is chattering again as she lights up another cigarette and I've missed the first half of her instructions. We are to put our duffels in the bedroom, straight through to the back, as I understand it. I peer down the short hallway that bisects the room. Steph will take the couch, her head nestled under the overhanging branches of the enormous tree. She is pouring the lemonade that was standing, iced, on the counter top and Raoul is stowing our now extra-neous layers in the tiny closet next to the door.

Celie stands expectantly, looking at me holding her duffel, her stature noticeable in the cramped space. She holds herself inward always. Her shoulders shrugging as if she is trying to shrink, as if her height, the space she takes up, is too much for her. She will grow into herself, I think, as I study her. She will come to own it. To own herself. Her height. Herself. In contrast, I am the shortest of the three of us, the three sisters. We never compared heights as we were growing up, the ages between us making it seemingly impossible that the younger of us would ever catch up to the older. This is perhaps the first time we are together in our grown-up heights, our grown-up selves. Raoul is holding out the lemonade to me and Celie. She takes it absently, but drinks thirstily. We are not used to the heat even as modest as it is. I shrug at Raoul, the two duffels in my hands, and head down the hall to the door at the back.

Steph's bedroom has a window straight across from the door and I look out expecting to see the skyline of Los Angeles, but I am facing the wrong way, north maybe. It's hard to tell in the midday sun. The décor is simple and tasteful, tan bedspread, no downy comforter like the ones we grew up with. The ones you could snuggle down into and giggle when Mom tried to find your head, patting you gently on the bottom and saying, "Here she is. I found her head." And giggling some more. The spread is turned down with a minimum of throw pillows at the head, a masculine concession perhaps, and I remember

this is really Raoul's room too. I set down the duffels and retreat from the thought of my sister and Raoul together in the bed, oddly squeamish.

From the kitchen, Steph is rattling off her plans for the week. There are a few things she wants to do that have closing times over the holiday, so we may need to spend a night or two at home, maybe even an afternoon, but she's still working on it. She wonders if Celie wants to go to Disneyland? Is that something teenagers like to do? Because they are open every day, even on Christmas, and so we could knock that out when other things are closed. There is no talk of Christmas dinner, Christmas presents—though I see a few childishly wrapped tokens under the tree—Christmas celebration, Christmas caroling, Christmas. Without any kids here, now that Celie is an adult—except for her potential interest in Disneyland—Christmas doesn't really have to happen. But, then, Christmas hasn't really happened. Not really. For a long time.

When they took Mom away, her face covered, not even a strand of her long brown hair found its way out of the stark, white sheet. The lights of the ambulance flashed a red streak against the pale siding supplementing the red and green Christmas bulbs hanging down from the soffits. There was no accompanying woo-woo of the siren. There was no need. Dad got in beside Mom after they hoisted her up, looking lost, absent, staring at the figures moving efficiently around the gurney, the figures climbing into the driver's seat of the ambulance. And they drove away. I stood in the empty driveway next to Mrs. Lagerfield's Buick. Steph's Toyota was absent. Celie stood precariously, crying, and clinging to Mrs. Lagerfield's knees.

Hit her head, Dad said to me and Steph later that night, when Steph was back from wherever Steph went and when he'd returned home from the hospital. Mrs. Lagerfield had put us to bed in our own rooms and I don't remember her going home. Steph left again sometime later, maybe after Dad went to bed. Must have been. I heard the car turn over a couple times in the cold before it caught. It never was very reliable, that Toyota, well past its prime, but Mom always said it was what we could afford. And Steph was lucky to have a vehicle to drive at all since Mom didn't need it most days. Steph drove it away from the house that night and, later, she drove it all the way to California. Somehow it kept running, probably grateful to trade in the Minnesota winters for the mild, soothing seasons of California.

And here we are, enjoying the mild weather, drinking lemonade,

under the shade of a gigantic pine, its scent mixed with the wafting cigarette smoke, stifling the room. I go to open a window over the sofa, hesitating to put my weight on its skinny wooden legs, but needing the air, only to be pre-empted by Steph.

"The air's on, Sweetie," she assures me. "We keep it on in the winter here. When we are having one of these warm ones. You really don't want to let that outside air in, anyway. They say it's polluted." She takes another drag from her cigarette, holding it expertly in her left hand as she pours something with a Smirnoff label into her lemonade. Raoul has lit up now as well and I cross to the counter separating the small kitchen from a dining room table and hold out my glass. Celie is perched on the only chair in the living room, across from the tree where no branches brush her face or get tangled in her long blonde ponytail. The chair's spindly legs and rounded top seem more decorative than functional.

"So, first we'll check out Hollywood Boulevard and all that and then I have tickets for a show tonight. Raoul can't come to the show, but he can drive around with us this afternoon. Right, Raoul?" He nods. I'm not sure if I've heard him speak.

I lie in Steph's bed that night, Steph and Raoul's bed, with Celie's warm feet brushing my calf. I remember her feet being cold. Maybe it was just the weather. Or maybe little kids had colder feet. She'd slipped into my bed that night. After Mrs. Lagerfield left. After Steph left. After Dad went out. Her feet were cold like she'd been the one standing by the lamppost, her toe protruding from the hole in the upper, instead of the one at home in the living room, the furnace thumping away merrily, heating our home for Christmas. Her breathing had been raspy, like she was getting a cold, but maybe it was just from swallowing the snot and the tears that she'd shed in the hours before she slept. Her body curled into me then, folded into itself, into me, like it did when she was trying not to take up so much space. But now, tonight, it curls away from me, facing the bright window filled with a city glow that I'm not used to and that is keeping me awake. I slide out of the bed and shuffle to the kitchen in search of the Smirnoff that we hadn't finished earlier. I don't have far to look as the bottle sits, inviting, on the countertop. The lemonade is gone or MIA so I take down a glass from the cupboard and pour it neat. Taking a relieving sip, I breathe in the pine, the lingering smoke, probably some smog, and push the air from my lungs audibly, hard.

“Josie?” I hear the quiet inquisition from the couch. “What time is it? What day is it?”

Steph sounds groggy and slightly raspy. I don’t remember ever hearing her groggy. I don’t remember being around her at night. It is disconcerting to hear this low voice coming from under the white sheet, lit by the glow from the window, looking like a bed of snow with the tree branches hanging over it, casting a shadow on the floor.

“Sorry. It’s nearly midnight I guess. It’s Monday still. I couldn’t sleep. I just needed a drink. It’s warm, I mean. I was thirsty, I mean. I’m not used to it.”

“No. I mean what date is it?”

“Uh. Almost Christmas. December something. December 21.” Winter solstice.

“Yes.”

“So, still night. Why are you up? Did I wake you? I’m sorry.”

“Is there any of that left?” She sits, emerging from under the whiteness, brown hair lank when I expect it to be full of static in the crackling dry winter air, but the air isn’t dry and crackling. The furnace isn’t humming.

I cross over to her with the bottle and then, realizing I haven’t gotten another glass, I hand her mine. She doesn’t sip, but drains it, effortlessly, and holds out the glass. I refill, higher this time, not a pour, and we pass the glass back and forth, sharing like little kids sipping soda from a can. Only we’d never shared a can of soda, Steph, as the older sibling, being understandably possessive of her rights to her own soda cans. I giggle as two children might, alone in the dark, after hours, sneaking soda from the fridge. Or cigarettes. Or vodka. I missed this growing up, all of us growing up as onlys, never at the same school, never having the same friends.

Steph giggles too, or snorts. She is awake now, her tone familiar again as she barks, “There’s another bottle in the cupboard. Over the fridge. It should be full. And get my cigarettes off the counter.”

I cross dutifully to get them, her voice compelling nothing less, and find the full bottle just as she’d indicated in the cupboard above the refrigerator, the same familiar label as the bottle we just polished off: Smirnoff raspberry. I pick up the cigarettes and the lighter next to them, but before bringing them over to her open, waiting hand, I slap the pack against my open palm a few times, flip it open and shake one out. Lighting it inexpertly while still holding the bottle, I suck the smoke into my lungs, feeling the heat too fast and coughing a lit-

tle, covering my mouth awkwardly with my other hand.

“Novice.” Steph quips and waggles her fingers for me to bring her the pack.

We open the second bottle, still sharing the one glass, like fugitives, blowing smoke into the piney-scented air.

“So. Disneyland tomorrow. Raoul can’t go. Well, he could, but he doesn’t want to take a whole day off for that. He’ll join us tomorrow night. There’s this great Chinese place, not like your Midwestern Chinese place, or Japanese, or whatever it is. But real Chinese food. And you won’t even have to wait the tables.” This last stings a little, but I know it hadn’t meant to. I am aware, she is aware, I am in my mid-twenties, college-degree abandoned, serving ramen in a wannabe Midwestern Asian restaurant in Minnesota. Never having left the place where we grew up. Well, I have to be there for Celie, I think, until she finishes school. For Grandma Bea, until she, well, until I don’t have to be.

“Then, the next day I will take you back to Universal Studios.” Drag. “I know we already did that—”

“Yeah, like seven years ago.” Cough.

“—but you will like seeing it again. They’ve got lots of new stuff—”

The clock in the kitchen chimes in to interrupt her plans. Midnight, but it seems much later. I pass her the glass to shut her up for a minute, or at least for a few swallows. December 22. Winter.

I’d woken the next morning not having remembered falling asleep, Celie still beside me, red-faced, asleep. The house quiet. Even the furnace taking a rest from its huffing. Then, I’d heard the clanking of dishes in the kitchen. Breakfast! No school! Christmas vacation! I’d rolled cautiously over Baby Celie’s sleeping body and clumped to the kitchen, sure of eggs and toast and hash browns. Sure on this day we would have a big breakfast to celebrate. The table was empty and I’d crossed into the kitchen to discover my dad. His back was toward me and he was wearing his gray work shirt, unbuttoned, its tails flapping behind him exposing the white t-shirt underneath. He’d picked up another glass from the counter beside him, immersed it in the soapy water in the sink, methodically scrubbed it with Grandma Bea’s homemade scrubber pad, and placed it on the drying rack on the other side. With the others. With all of the others. Tall ones. Short ones. Some with a slim bulb protruding from a delicate stem. Others bulbous and denser, wide-bottomed, but with a narrow

top. I'd felt disappointment at not seeing the eggs sizzling on the stove. Then, annoyance. Why wasn't Mom making me breakfast this morning? Why was Dad in the kitchen? Why wasn't Mom washing the dishes? Mom. In her white sheet. In the ambulance. Not coming back to do the dishes.

The swallow doesn't stop Steph for long and she launches into the plans for the following day, Christmas Eve, a drive to the beach, the Pacific Coast Highway. I fill the glass quickly and hand it to her again without taking a swallow for myself. My head is already buzzing and I am beginning to feel a little peckish.

"Steph. December 22."

"I know." She pauses and takes a long drag then and I follow suit. We breathe the smoke out slowly, the only sound our exhalations.

"December 21. December 22. December 23. December 24. December 25. Only three days until Christmas."

"You know I mean—"

"I know. Mom. But all that was a long time ago, Josie. A long time ago." She speaks in her quick staccato. "I thought the past was behind us. And there's Dad, what about him?" She sounds suddenly sober now, when she couldn't be. I pour the last of the bottle into the glass and drain it myself.

"Cancer. Kind of hard to fake cancer. Especially the fast kind."

"Well, it's kind of hard to fake dead, altogether, isn't it? Do we have to do this again, Josie? Haven't we done this enough?" She is irritated now. It creeps into her voice and sounds unnatural. Not her usual, pointed tone.

I look at her incredulously. Do this again? Do what again? We haven't done it. Isn't that why we're here? December 22. Winter. Why had she called? Why this week? Why this year?

"'Hit her head,' he said," I say. "How many people hit their head in the bathtub, Steph? How many people?"

"Do you want me to look it up?" Her edge of irritation turning nasty.

"People do."

Celia's whisper comes quietly from the hall, her body in shadow. "People do." She crosses into the middle of the room. Barefoot. Tentative. "You're drunk. You smell."

"I'm not." "I'm not." We protest simultaneously, automatically, and giggle, a softening of any growing tension.

"You are. You both are. But I'm not. I don't touch that stuff and you shouldn't either." Her command comes out a whimper. She needs more tips from Steph to sound commanding, matter-of-fact.

I look up at her tall frame, lit from the window, her blonde hair released from its high ponytail and allowed to trail over her shoulders. She looks less stoop-shouldered from my angle on the couch, but not confident, just bigger.

"People do what, Celie? People do what?" Steph growls in an unnatural, low voice. "Were you listening to us? Eavesdropping?"

When we were younger this would have shut her up, but Celie presses on. "People do hit their heads. Hit their heads in the bathtub." She says quietly.

"Of course they do." Steph sits up. Stands up. Crosses to Celie. Transfers her cigarette to her mouth to take Celie's hand in hers. Giving comfort. Or showing solidarity.

Celie doesn't pull away, but I can see that her hand is limp, resisting Steph's pressure.

"But Mom didn't."

Steph stills. And then the room is filled with the slow drag of her inhalation and exhalation. She turns her head to blow the smoke away from Celie, waves her hand to clear the air in front of Celie's face.

"What." It is staccato, that one question. That one statement.

"You don't know anything. You were just a baby. Baby Celie."

I find myself standing too, unsteadily, light-headed, hungry. The empty bottle still in my hand and the stub of a cigarette in the other. I drop it on the floor and step on it with my stockinged foot. Grind it into Steph's wooden floorboards.

"I do know. I was there. I was the one who was there." This too comes out a whine, then she turns and pulls away from Steph's comforting hands. "And where were you? Where were you ever? With Allen? With Ben? With Raoul? You weren't there and you didn't see what I saw. You all didn't see what I saw." She turns her accusing eyes to me and I don't see Baby Celie anymore with the blonde ringlets playing Lite-Brite on the living room floor. "You didn't see what I saw," she repeats, quieter still. She seems to be losing steam before she's even begun to fight.

We face her, no longer on opposite sides, but united against her and Steph takes her hand again. Harder this time. I blink twice to keep the scene in focus, bring my hand to my face, but the cigarette is no longer there.

“What did you see, Celie? What was it you saw, that day? You were just a baby. You don’t know what you saw. Dad said she hit her head. Hit her head in the bathtub and drowned. I guess. She drowned in the bathtub. Dad said.”

“Dad wasn’t there.”

Of course Dad was there. He was there when Mrs. Lagerfield’s Buick pulled into the driveway. He was there when they pushed the white-sheeted gurney out of the house. He was there with Celie when Mom was in the bathtub. He said she hit her head. He knew she did. That’s what he told us. Told Grandma Bea. Told Uncle Charlie. Told the police.

“He wasn’t there. And then he was there,” she continues, steady now. Sure of herself, of the memories she has been carrying with her. “When he lifted her out. He was there when he lifted her out and he knocked the glass off the side of the bathtub and it shattered and I cut my toe and it bled. A lot. Quite a bit, it seemed like. So there was blood on the floor where I cut my toe on the glass. And Dad came when he lifted her out.”

“But he was there.” I speak, finding my voice though it sounds strange to me, interrupting Celie’s quiet determination and Steph’s persistence. “He was there when Mom . . . hit her head. In the bathtub.”

“He wasn’t there.” She looks at me, defiant now. Growing taller, almost a head taller than me.

“Call Grandma Bea. Call her,” she challenges, animated suddenly and taking up space. “She’ll tell you what I told her. Even now, she will tell you.”

But I don’t need to call Grandma Bea. I don’t want to wake her up. What time is it in Minnesota anyway? I don’t need to call her. Anyway. I am drowning. Drowning in the glow from the Christmas bulbs that Celie flicks on, reckless, showing our forms to the neighboring apartments, standing, all three of us now, in the center of the room.

GEORGE ADE AND ESSANAY FILMS: CRUEL OR UNUSUAL COMEDY?

GUY SZUBERLA

Just before World War I, during the years when silent movies were booming into an industry, “The Goat Man” wrote a weekly gossip column for the strangely titled trade magazine, *Motography: Exploiting Motion Pictures*. Most weeks, “The Goat Man” restyled press releases and dropped a line or two of insider talk. On 18 April 1914, sniping and snickering as usual, he informed his readers that the writer and humorist George Ade (1866-1944) had signed a contract with Essanay Films of Chicago: “The Essanay News announces George Ade is an exclusive Essanay scenario writer. And the *News* isn’t stingy about the size of the type used in its big announcement. Nothing short of the sign over the door could make more noise” (MG 266).¹

Essanay’s flakmeisters had good reason to order up banner headlines in the biggest type fonts and boldest print. A nationally syndicated columnist for years, the author of the best-selling *Fables in Slang* (1899) and *More Fables in Slang* (1900), a playwright with more than a half-dozen Broadway hit plays and musicals, Ade, in almost every respect, could fill the billing that Essanay ads soon gave him: “America’s greatest humorist” (MPW 6 June 1914: 1347). His plays—comedies like *The College Widow* (1904) and musicals like *The Slim Princess* (1907)—had earned him the reputation of “the most successful American playwright” (Kelly 192). In 1914, when he turned to film work, Ade was near the height of his prestige and popularity.

For the next three and a half years, while working under contract with Essanay Films, Ade wrote scenarios and treatments, supplied and edited subtitles, acted in a cameo role in one film, and, now and then, visited the set to “personally supervise” the filming of his fables (MPN 3 Oct.1914: 57).² With his help, and sometimes with his

grudging consent, Essanay adapted his fables, one of his plays, and the musical *The Slim Princess* (1915). The IMDb (Internet Movie Database) gives Ade credit for over one hundred Essanay films. About ninety of these are “film fables,” mostly one or two-reelers adapted from Ade’s popular “fables in slang.”

George Ade’s fables and short stories, at first glance, do not look like ready-made material for silent film comedy, particularly the knockabout kind that Essanay had been routinely making and marketing. Essanay’s weekly releases of “whirlwind slapstick,” “rural comedy,” and “farce,” like most silent film comedies before World War I, were more often than not steeped in ethnic and sexist stereotypes, motivated by violent actions, and happily indifferent to narrative form.³ Their first production, *An Awful Skate; or, the Hobo on Rollers* (1907), was short, crude, and plotless, pioneer slapstick bursting with manic energy and terrifying speed: “stunt comedy” in the language of the silent movie trade. Ben Turpin, the hobo and awful skater, rolled haphazardly over the sidewalks and streets of Chicago’s Near North Side. A cameraman filmed him as he knocked down pedestrians and crashed into anything that got in his way. The film was a surprise hit and a big moneymaker (Smith 73-4). Spurred on by this success, Essanay repeated the simple formula in *Hey There! Look Out!* (1907), and followed with a steady run of other “whirlwind slapstick” productions. As early as 1910, Essanay was branding itself “The House of Comedy Hits.” “We are,” they added in an unqualified piece of self-promotion, “the most popular producers of comedy films in the world” (MPW, 23 April 1910: 663).

George K. Spoor and Gilbert M. Anderson had formed Essanay in the summer of 1907, a time when slapstick and westerns (and their own hybrid, “western comedies”) accounted for the most film rentals and reliably filled theater seats (Smith 94). Shortly before and after signing Ade, Spoor and Anderson (the initials of their surnames combine in Essanay) began to buy up the rights to popular plays, current magazine stories, and best-selling novels. Lists of screen credits in the “Essanay Film Manufacturing Records” at the Chicago History Museum include the names of more than one hundred writers, most minor and now forgotten. Essanay adapted the work of Chicago novelists Edwin Balmer, Hobart Chatfield-Taylor, James Oliver Curwood, and Samuel Merwin; they brought the mystery stories of Mary Roberts Rinehart to the screen and produced the first American film version of *Sherlock Holmes* (1916). The company made come-

dies from magazine stories by Albert Payson Terhune and P.G. Wodehouse. And, for good measure, in 1917 Essanay adapted *On Trial*, a 1914 play by the young Elmer Rice (then Elmer Leopold Reizenstein). “The House of Comedy Hits” had opened its doors to literature and literary respectability.⁴

Essanay had coined the term “photoplay” in 1910, and used the neologism to tout its artistic and cultural credentials in more serious productions (Corcoran 18). At a time when movies commanded little more respect than low-life vaudeville and nickelodeon peepshows, Essanay, like other movie producers of the time, sought to blur the difference between legitimate theater and their “photoplays.” By early 1915, Essanay had staked out a claim to the “top-notch position” among “photoplay producers.” They were “adapting the best and highest-class magazine stories to the film” (MPW 9 January 1915: 164). Adding George Ade to its roster of photoplay writers and scenarists in April of 1914 was one more sign that Essanay was altering its idea of comedy and reconstructing “The House of Comedy Hits.” By midyear of 1914, the old brand label, “The House of Comedy Hits,” was giving way to a new advertising headline: “Essanay: Superlative and Aristocratic Features” (MPW 6 June 1914: 1347).

The story of George Ade and Essanay has been largely untold. His principal biographer, Fred C. Kelly, skips over Ade’s film work at Essanay without once naming the company or citing a single title of an Ade film fable. Kelly mistakenly decides that “one of Hollywood’s film companies”—not Chicago’s Essanay—bought and produced Ade’s film fables (242). Dorothy R. Russo, in her *Bibliography of George Ade*, notes in passing that Ade “revised his fables for Essanay,” but she does not and cannot give space to the particulars of the resulting revisions and invented scenarios (31). The film historians Michael Glover Smith and Adam Selzer define Essanay’s outsized role in this “golden age” in *Flickering Empire: How Chicago Invented the U.S. Film Industry* (2015). But Ade appears only twice in *Flickering Empire*—both times checked off in long lists of writers, performers, and directors (xv, 5). Ade himself said nothing about his work for Essanay in his foreshortened “Autobiography of George Ade,” though there he complains, as writers usually do, that what he wrote for Hollywood in the twenties “bore no resemblance” to what arrived on the screen (quoted in Tobin 16).

Ade was, in the end, to express ambivalence about Essanay's adaptation of his stories into film fables. When George K. Spoor offered to revive the series in 1921, Ade turned him down, saying "we never got the right angle on the Fables." He wrote Spoor that he feared that, in "straining for acrobatics or low comedy effects," a new series of film fables would be doomed to repeat the old distortions (CH box 18, folder 16).⁵ Four years earlier, during the production of the "Fable of the Speedy Sprite," Ade had complained with some heat about "the repeated efforts of the bright scenario men to change the whole character of these little fables." At the time he told his "editor," Edward T. Lowe, that he "most resented" their introduction of "entirely new material of a different kind" (CH box 18, folder 16). On the other hand, Ade worked agreeably with his director, Richard Foster Baker (1857-1921), and he did, for all his complaints and objections, collaborate in the creation of some one hundred films with Essanay (Tobin 68).

Unspooling the details of the disputes and differences between Ade and the "scenario department" at this late date can never be complete or finally satisfying. Almost all copies of his film fables were lost long ago or, like the bulk of nitrate stock films, were destroyed in fires and explosions. Without the recovery of a score or more of the lost "film fables," Ade's ideas of silent film comedy—and Essanay's notions and expectations—will remain shadowed by a tantalizing obscurity. But placing the few surviving film fables alongside Ade's original stories and probing the literary prototypes behind other adaptations can illuminate Ade's film work and, in a limited way, the evolution of silent film comedy. At the least, this glimpse of his films and scenarios helps us understand his humor and the conventions of the silent film comedy he so often contested.

"FRESH, CLEAN HUMOR"

Essanay, in promoting George Ade, primed its audience to expect a different kind of silent film comedy. Reviewers called his film fables "sermons in slang," and categorized them as "sagely humorous reflections"; his films were always "wholesome," "highly moral but more highly humorous."⁶ Critics regularly placed his films under the generic and honorific headings of "comedy-drama" and "straight comedy" (MPW 20 Oct 1917: 378). The National Board of Censorship—a trade group established to combat legalized censor-

ship—once certified Ade’s film, “The Fable of the Higher Education,” as “good” and added, with an extra boost of assurance, that this was “real comedy” (MPN 1 August 1914: 66). No spicy bedroom scenes, no stunt comedy, no violent slapstick. Ads for the 1915 film version of Ade’s play, *Just Out of College*, had asked “Mr. Exhibitor” this pointed question: “Haven’t you realized that your patrons are tiring of the rough slap-stick kind of comedy lately? There is a certain indescribable charm about a George Ade comedy, with its fresh, clean humor, that is particularly delightful” (MPW 2 October 1915: 120). Filmgoers were being led to expect—even when it was not to be delivered—comic action that slowed the frenetic speed of slapstick and quieted its more anarchic and destructive tendencies.

Readers of his many published fables had little reason to look for sexual titillation or wacky violence—they were not paying good money to see a cleaned-up version of Max Sennett’s bare-legged bathing beauties on parade or actors prancing through a bedroom farce. “Clean Comedy,” the kind talked up in ads, could be both a cliché and an oxymoron. In *Main Street* (1920), Sinclair Lewis mocked the idea of “clean comedy”: he ridiculed the Gopher Prairie audiences that watched “Under Mollie’s Bed” and other productions of a fictional “Clean Comedy Corporation” (Lewis 215-16). But Ade’s “clean comedy,” or some vague and ambiguous notion of it, was serious business and a salable commodity. If what Essanay’s writers and editors concocted in scenarios did not always satisfy Ade, its “expert dramatic corps” worked diligently to adapt Ade’s fiction into film, melding his stories and character types with the newly formed conventions of silent film comedy (MG 30 October 1915: 909).

In his classic work on *The Silent Clowns* (1975), Walter Kerr observes that around 1910 filmmakers, especially those creating silent film comedy, began to discover “the possibilities and pleasures of narrative” (50). That is, the acrobatics of stunt comedy and the cruel and unusual tricks of slapstick, the kind of laugh making that had defined Essanay’s earliest productions, was gradually giving way to the delights of narrative form.⁷ Characters and story lines, if only intermittently, now framed the random flow of alternating pranks and prat-falls. Translating Ade’s fables into photoplays or “straight comedy” did not, for Essanay’s filmmakers, preclude a slide or two back into old slapstick habits or a fling with some antic acrobatics. This was

the film company that had made *Mr. Flip* (1909), the first slapstick comedy to stage the pie-in-the-face gag (Smith 3).

The adaptation of “The Fable Of Why Essie’s Tall Friend Got The Fresh Air” illustrates the stuttering steps that Essanay was making from slapstick and stunt comedy towards “the possibilities and pleasures of narrative.” Up until the final sequences, the film version—one of the three shorts grouped together in “Three Boiled-Down Fables” (1914)—follows Ade’s story line and characterizations fairly closely. Bert (called “the Lady-Killer” in the film) works as a sales clerk in a men’s furnishing store. He regularly stands outside the store flirting with young women and spends more time talking to Essie than with his customers. Customers “annoy” him when they ask for service or want to spend money. Not surprisingly, he’s eventually fired. When he comes to pick up his pay envelope, his employer sarcastically advises him to get some “Outdoor Life and Exercise . . . looking for another Job” (88-9). The action in Ade’s original story ends with these words and this neatly dramatized dismissal.

The film carries this action off beyond this moment into a series of slapstick scenes. The Lady-Killer/Bert, with a large bucket oddly tied to his back, stumbles out of the store (Figure 1). A sub-title informs us of the obvious: he has been “CANNED.” In a mix of comic panic and delirium, he skips, spins, and runs on to the streets of Chicago. Essie, looking on in distress, follows him, and, facing him and his accusing gestures, mouths the words: “I’m sorry.” And yet, even as she pities him, she can barely suppress a titter of laughter over his ridiculous appearance (Figure 2). The superimposition of these slapstick scenes—one minute of the entire three-minute, twenty-second short—points to the likely reasons Ade was, in his 1921 letter to Spoor, to complain about Essanay’s “low comedy effects” and the straining for “acrobatics” (CH box18, folder 16).

Whether Ade objected to the “low comedy” in “The Fable of ‘Napoleon and the Bumps’” (released 15 July 1914) is a question that cannot be settled by reading the “Sample Scenario” written for the film. If reviews and published synopses are to be trusted, the finished film, the second of the film fables, lurched somewhat surprisingly towards roughhouse slapstick and farce and ended sweetly with “a picture of humble domesticity.” The scenario “elaborated” the comic story of Wilfred Smalley, “a simple-minded and credulous employee in a large office . . .” (CH box12, folder 25: 1,7). Convinced by the phrenologist Dr. Bunkum that the bumps on his head make him



Figure 1 (top) and Figure 2: Scenes from *Why Essie's Friend Got the Fresh Air* (1914). Produced by Essanay Films of Chicago.

another Napoleon, he marches out onto the street and commands a policeman to stop traffic for him. At home, putting on his imperial airs once more, he orders his wife to obey his every wish. The policeman, in response to his order, had hit him on the head, raising a billiard ball-sized bump. His wife, in her turn, answers his insults and orders by throwing their new china at him. The next morning, still thinking of himself as someone “born to command,” he dishes out some more Napoleonic gibberish:

“Remember what Napoleon did. If you are disrespectful, I will divorce you.” [subtitle 7]

“You have a new set of bumps. You are no longer a Napoleon. You are a plain \$12 a week mutt.” [subtitle 8]

In a quick reversal that evening, he returns home with candy and flowers, wearing an “apologetic smile.” At his wife’s command, he takes his “accustomed place” at the dining room table. The final scenes, 36 and 37 in the scripted “Sequence,” present “a picture of humble domesticity.” Smalley bounces their baby on his knee as his wife prepares to leave for a nightly “meeting of the Women’s Club” (CH box 12, folder 25: 7).

“The Fable of ‘Napoleon and the Bumps’” begins with a pair of cameo appearances by Ade. According to a press release, he was filmed “feeding his chickens on his farm” in Brook, Indiana, and then in his study “in the act of writing the scenario” for “Napoleon” (MPW 1 August 1914). Ade, no doubt with a nudge from Essanay, was refining his public persona, openly approving the film’s interpretation of his fable, and authenticating his identity as the “Hoosier Humorist.” About two years later, an Essanay press release reworked the idea of his native wit: “A new crop of fables in slang, just raised by George Ade on his farm in Indiana, the state where most of his humor comes from anyway, is being picturized by Essanay. These fables form the best work of this kind ever attempted by this famous author” (MPW 29 April 1916: 779). Though Ade would, in September 1915, travel to Hollywood to write more “fables and scenarios,” it seems safe to say that Essanay never ballyhooed the idea that he was harvesting Hoosier humor and writing up local color on the West Coast (MPW 11 September 1915: 1818).

During his first year with Essanay, Ade did express some discomfort with the type-characters and the humor that was being pro-

duced and marketed under his name. As early as “The Fable of the Coming Champion Who Was Delayed” (released 29 July 1914), Ade was warning Essanay directors against “the old stereotyped conventional figures” and questioning their comic “exaggeration” of his figures (CH box12, folder 26: 1). Weeks later, in the “Notes and Suggestions” for “The Fable of the Two Mandolin Players and the Willing Performer,” he tactfully demanded that Essanay stay away from “caricatures.” He stipulated that the mandolin players—two earnest young men who lose “a very attractive Debutante” to the “Willing Performer”—should not wear “foolish wigs” or “dress . . . like chumps” (CH box12, folder 28: 1). What he had seen in the first half dozen film fables and what he was learning about Essanay comedy put him on guard against new and even greater distortions.

His fears and his anger came to the surface with the adaptation of “The New Fable of the Speedy Sprite.” Towards the end of his three and a half years with Essanay, sometime early in September of 1917, he wrote in protest to Edward T. Lowe, the editor in charge of the scenario department.⁸ Ade cited several changes to his original story and its language. First published in *Cosmopolitan* in 1912, the story of “The Speedy Sprite” told of “a she-Progressive” running through her busy day of meetings and pet projects. Ade charged, in a heated letter, that Lowe’s writers were slipping in “a lot of entirely new material . . . and then [putting] my name on it.” The invention of “a trio of Rube lovers,” in particular, pushed the normally gentle and easygoing Ade to undisguised irritation: “This girl [the Speedy Sprite] is a city girl of the most modern type. Don’t put in any hayseed lovers and don’t make a love story out of the thing or it will . . . repeat a series of incidents that have been seen too often in the movies.” Again, as three years before with “The Coming Champion” and “The Mandolin Players,” he worried that his stories of “human follies or eccentricities” were being made over into “the stereotyped ‘comic’ stories of the movies.”

Lowe answered with a long, diplomatic letter, saying at least twice that he did “not want [Ade] to feel that our writers are taking undue liberties with the original ideas in your texts” There followed eight numbered and carefully worded points. In point three, Lowe explained and reasoned with bureaucratic certainty: “to put these fables into two-reel length, a certain amount of material must be added.” This line of argument could hardly be expected to placate Ade. Lowe’s letter was dated 11 September 1917; Ade’s reply came

roaring back three days later. Though he acknowledges that he might have “[flown] off the handle” before, his second letter treats “the efforts of these bright scenario men” with the same contempt. And he adds a new complaint that sounds like a nagging repetition of past complaints. He protested that his “parlor slang” was being recast as “barroom slang”: “I am not such an expert on slang, but I try to observe certain rules . . . I never use the word ‘slob.’ I never speak of a policeman as a ‘bull,’ nor refer to a woman as a ‘chicken.’ I have no objection to any other author using any kind of slang he likes, but I don’t want him to call it my product.” Essanay had made a practice of including a neatly formed “George Ade” signature in the lower right corner of each subtitle card. Misquotations and trumped-up attributions in the wording must have rankled Ade, the author of *Fables in Slang*.

THE FILM-FED FAMILY

Ade’s resentments over the “liberties” taken in the adaptations of his fables had been simmering for years. He let them boil over in “The Fable of the Film-Fed Family.” In this story, first published in the September 1915 issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, he satirized silent film comedy, the movie industry, and an audience that, he said, had succumbed to this “Pseudo-Art” and “spreading Contagion.” Without naming Essanay, he lampooned its signature film products: “flashing Animated Pictures of brutal Low Comedy [alternating] with Cowboy Murders” (*Cosmopolitan* 550, 552). The wonder of it all is that Essanay produced “The Film-Fed Family.” Judging by the scenario, the film closely followed his story line and repeated, sometimes word for word, his most savage and satiric attacks (released 29 October 1917). Still more surprising, the screenwriter, Raymond E. Dakin, when ordering up a “cheap garish style of architecture” to represent a movie house, directed the prop men to frame its entrance with old Essanay posters (CH box12, folder 14: scene 2).

The scenario for the film, like the original *Cosmopolitan* story, opens with a familiar trope, one Ade may well have borrowed from Mark Twain: the vision of a drowsy village, waiting to be awakened from a long sleep. The small unnamed city, in the magazine version, is said to be located “in one of the doubtful States, safely away from the Seaboard.” The town, secure in its ways and established values, is landlocked and provincial—its commercial center, “benumbed and

backward" (*Cosmopolitan* 549).⁹ The Wiggamores—soon to be identified as the film-fed family—move through their daily routines, bound to fixed patterns of behavior and belief: "Alpheus Wiggamore [was] a nice man who still wore an Alpaca in the Open Season and had faith in Congress." His wife, while upholding social uplift and feminist causes, seems destined to follow daily routines "through many years." Their children, in their own ways, are shown to be captive to current fashions and self-conscious posturing (*Cosmopolitan* 549).

What wakes the "sleepy city" is the arrival of a "brash intruder" in a loud "plaid ulster." Ade's mysterious stranger rents out the old Delicatessen building, hangs a "screen at one end of [a] cramped Cubby-Hole . . ." and starts showing "flashing Animated Pictures of brutal Low Comedy and Cowboy Murders." Movies and the first movie house have come to town, and they awake and shake the Wiggamores and others out of their sleepy ways. "The Elegantine," a larger, grander movie house, succeeds "the fuzzy little Show Shop." Mr. Wiggamore, with Ade's implied assent, calls this Taj Mahal/Gothic/Romanesque faux palace a "Peanut Parlor of Pseudo-Art." The theater now dominates Main Street and brings to life the "benumbed" and moribund city center. Before long, five more "Ballyhoo-Joints" open. Everyone has "broken out with the Habit" (*Cosmopolitan* 550-51, 554).

Mr. Wiggamore, once "an omnivorous reader" of "Meaty and Historical" books, is seduced by the "Buzz-Dramas." At first, he thought the Silent Drama might be "Sinful" (*Cosmopolitan* 552, 554). Now he is "snarled up with three beautiful Women, each of whom was being separately persecuted by Lions, Tigers, Elephants, Motor-Cars, Hydroplanes, and Villains with Eyebrows" (*Cosmopolitan* 554). Mrs. Wiggamore also succumbs to the "Kinetoscopic Bacilli." She and her friends are so addicted "to watching several forms of Excitement pop out of the White Curtain that they become restless if compelled to take a day off." She gives up the suffrage cause and the "Oolong Uplift Club" (*Cosmopolitan* 552, 554). Randolph, their youngest son, "had to have a couple of Melodramas and a slap-stick Comedy every evening before he could go to sleep, the same as all the others [in the family]." By the end of the story, the whole Wiggamore family and nearly all their fellow citizens find themselves enmeshed with a movie company that has built "a large Studio on the edge of Town" (*Cosmopolitan* 556).

HOLLYWOOD HUMORIST

Essanay released “The Fable of the Back-Trackers from the Hot Sidewalks” on 24 November 1917. Nearly every Wednesday, for more than three years, Essanay had brought out an Ade film fable, some weeks two or three. “The Back-Trackers” was billed as the last in a series of “George Ade Fables,” and, as it turned out, it was also among the last of the Essanay company’s film releases. Early in 1916, George K. Spoor had bought out his partner, Gilbert M. Anderson, gambling that Max Linder, the French comic, would have the drawing power to replace Chaplin at the box office. Linder had no more love for Chicago winters than Chaplin did, and when he, like Chaplin, left Essanay for California, Spoor lost money and his last main chance for survival (Smith 155). “The true golden age of film production in Chicago” was fast coming to an end (Smith and Selzer 159). Essanay studios closed in 1918.

Spoor’s attempt to revive Essanay in the 1920s fizzled and failed. As we have already seen, Ade rebuffed Spoor’s offer to renew the series of film fables in 1921. His letter of rejection on 18 October 1921 was blunt if polite. In addition to telling Spoor that “we had never got the right angle on the fables,” Ade let him know that he was comfortably fixed under his Hollywood contract with Famous Players: “For one long picture I will get considerably more than I would get from turning out Fables one a week for one year” (CH box18, folder 16).

“The Fable of the Film-Fed Family” overflows with bubbling ridicule, sharp satire, and, just below the surface, a quietly subdued rage. To read the story as Ade’s bittersweet farewell to movies and screenwriting, though, would be a mistake. Ade went on in the 1920s and into the 1930s writing what he called “continuities.” Between his screenplays for *The Slim Princess* and *Just Out of College* in 1920 and *Campus Cinderella* (1938), he was to compile over twenty screen credits. He tried, not always successfully, to convert his homespun wit, verbal ingenuity, and quiet humor into movie plots, jokes, and dialogue for a new generation.

H.L. Mencken, writing and raging in a *Smart Set* article published in early 1913, had pointed to the “grimness” in Ade’s fiction and fables, stating that he had seen in Ade’s humor “satire at its best, terse, ferocious and stinging.” He cited stories where “you will find him on the edges of a deep seriousness and wielding a devastating

humor.” Mencken went on to contend that Ade’s readers were determined to reduce him to “a wayside scaramouche” and a “mere clown” (154). And that, of course, was what the Essanay directors and its scenario department, with the film audience so often seemed intent on doing. “The Fable of the Film-Fed Family” tells us that Ade had resisted being made into a “mere clown,” that, when he spoke of the film industry’s freakishness, he was both joking and edging toward “deep seriousness.”

The University of Toledo

NOTES

¹All of the references to trade journals cited in the text are derived from the “Media History Digital Library: Early Cinema Collection.” Online: <http://mediahistoryproject.org/earlycinema/> These references, except where otherwise noted, will be given parenthetically in the text, using the following abbreviations: MG (*Motography*), MP (*Movie Pictorial*), MPN (*Motion Picture News*), MPW (*The Moving Picture World*).

²*Movie Pictorial* reported that sometime in July of 1914, Ade appeared at the Essanay studios, and “underwent his first real experience before the camera . . . in a picture which will likely preface a series of comedies he is writing” (MP 14 July 1914: 28).

³You Tube makes it possible to see *Mr. Flip* (1909), an early and, so far as can be told, representative example of Essanay’s slapstick comedy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fo2fG3t0eE>. See Essanay’s ad in *The Motion Picture World* (4 July 1914: 3) for *Sweedie the Swatter*, “a whirlwind slapstick comedy” in which the burly Wallace Beery, in drag, plays a Swedish maid.

⁴The “Descriptive Inventory for the Essanay Film Manufacturing records, 1896-1960, bulk 1911-1942” at the Chicago History Museum can be read online: <http://cdm16029.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16029coll6/id/593> Even a quick glance at their listings indicates that Essanay had signed up several score popular writers in the 1910s.

⁵Ade to Spoor in a letter dated 18 October 1921. This letter and the correspondence between Ade and Edward T. Lowe can be found in the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company records at the Chicago History Museum, collected in box 18, folder 16. Subsequent references to Ade’s correspondence and scenarios in the Essanay records will be cited in the text, using the collection’s box and folder numbers and abbreviating Chicago History Museum as CH.

⁶These characterizations of Ade’s film fables all come from reviews and synopses in the periodical *The Moving Picture World*. *The Fable of the Through Train* qualified as one of “his sermons in slang,” (15 Oct. 1915: 252); *The Fable of Sister Mae* . . . passed as “sagely humorous” (25 Dec. 1915: 2388). The columnist, writing “Spokes from the Hub,” judged Ade’s film humor to be “wholesome,” a term that long before this column had become a catchword in describing his films (20 Oct. 1917: 318). *The Fable of the Sorrows of the Unemployed* . . . was said, in a 30 Oct. 1915 review, to be “highly moral but highly humorous” (967).

⁷The wording, “cruel or unusual” has been inspired by the Museum of Modern Art’s title for its film series, “Cruel and Unusual Comedy.” See MoMA’s advertisement in *The New Yorker* (16 Jan. 2017): 5.

⁸The exchange of correspondence between Ade and Lowe about the “Speedy Sprite” began sometime in September of 1917. Ade’s first letter to Lowe, handwritten and undated, itemized his objections to the adaptation of “The New Fable of the Speedy Sprite.” Lowe answered Ade’s letter on 11 September 1917, and Ade replied, repeating many of his objec-

tions, in the typed letter dated 14 September 1917. See the Essanay Film Manufacturing records: box 18, folder 16, Chicago History Museum.

⁹All references to the text of "The Fable of the Film-Fed Family" will be to the September 1912 *Cosmopolitan* publication of the story. Ade later collected the story in *Hand-Made Fables* (1915), where he deleted some passages and made a few changes in wording. Citations will be given parenthetically in the text.

SELECT LIST OF ESSANAY FILMS AND GEORGE ADE FILM FABLES

- An Awful Skate; or, the Hobo on Rollers*. Essanay 1907. Print at the George Eastman House of Photography and Film, Rochester, NY.
- The Fable of the Film-Fed Family*. Essanay 1917. No known copy extant.
- The Fable of Why Essie's Friend Got the Fresh Air*. Essanay 1914.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvTGhgB1Ju4>
- The Fable of "Napoleon and the Bumps."* Essanay 1914. No known copy extant.
- The Fable of the Speedy Sprite*. Essanay 1917. No known copy extant.
- Hey There! Look Out!* Essanay 1907. No known copy extant.
- Mr. Flip*. Essanay 1909. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fo2fG3t0eE>
- Three Boiled-Down Fables*. Essanay 1914. No known copy of the complete film extant, though the separate parts can be seen on You Tube.

SCENARIOS CITED

- "Fable of the Coming Champion," "Scenario—Fable No. 5," Chicago History Museum. Essanay Film Manufacturing records. Box 12, folder 26.
- "The Fable of the Film-Fed Family." Chicago History Museum. Essanay Film Manufacturing records. Box 12, folder 14.
- "Fable of the Two Mandoline Players and the Willing Performer," "Scenario—Fable No. 9," Chicago History Museum. Essanay Film Manufacturing records. Box 12, folder 28.
- "Fable of 'Napoleon and the Bumps,'" "Sample Scenario," Chicago History Museum. Essanay Film Manufacturing records. Box 12, folder 25.

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HEMINGWAY'S "NOW I LAY ME": RIVERS, WRITING, AND PRAYERS

JOHN BEALL

Ernest Hemingway composed some of his most powerful stories in Paris. In 1924, he composed "Big Two-Hearted River," at least in part writing on a café table at the Closerie des Lilas, as he recounted in *A Movable Feast*: "When I stopped writing I did not want to leave the river where I could see the trout in the pool . . ." (76). Originally, he ended "Big Two-Hearted River" with a rambling digression about the artists, poets, and acquaintances in Paris. Instead of that original ending, Hemingway followed the recommendation of Gertrude Stein and cut the self-referential "conversation" about Paris (Beall 2017). Published as the final story of *In Our Time*, "Big Two-Hearted River" concluded the collection with a fishing story centered on a fictional setting in upper Michigan, excluding any reference to Paris.

A couple of years later, Hemingway composed one of his masterful war stories, "Now I Lay Me," again while in Paris, this time living in a borrowed apartment on 69 rue Froidevaux and lying awake at nights while in turmoil over the dissolution of his marriage to his first wife, Hadley, and the uncertainty of his relationship with Pauline, later his second wife (Reynolds 55, 88-90, 230 note 7; Hemingway, *Letters* vol.3, 155; Vaill 184). Perhaps the most searing testaments to his insomnia are in letters to Pauline Pfeiffer in November and December of 1926. In one letter, he confessed that ". . . in the nights it is simply unbelievably terrible" (*Letters* vol. 3, 139). In another he wrote Pauline about "the horrors at night and a black depression" (172). He added in language that seems closely related to his portrait of Nick Adams in "Now I Lay Me": "You lie all night half funny in the head and pray and pray and pray you won't go crazy" (172). As he wrote to F. Scott Fitzgerald in early December of 1926, the typewriter Hadley had given him six years before was "busted." In the same letter, he lamented to Fitzgerald that because

of the broken typewriter he was typing the story on a “bloody borrowed typewriter” (164, and 166, notes 2 and 3). That story probably was an early draft of “Now I Lay Me,” a “better one” than the story he had already finished, “In Another Country.”

Hemingway gradually shaped this story with the jagged edges of three stories stitched to one another: first, a soldier listening to silkworms feeding on mulberry leaves within earshot of “the noises of night seven kilometers behind the lines outside” (CSS 279); second, flashback memories of the soldier’s mother’s burning snakes and arrowheads collected by his father; and third, a conversation between the American soldier and his Italian orderly about their trouble sleeping, about writing, and about marriage. Only after several drafts did Hemingway weave those parts together into a complex whole whose disparate combination itself forms the haunting power of the story. This essay will delve into what the manuscript history shows about Hemingway’s transforming his original fragments concerning Nick’s memories of listening to silkworms while he was at the Italian front and of listening to his parents’ confrontation over his father’s burnt relics.

From the initial stages of the story’s focusing on those childhood memories, Hemingway wove together threads of Nick’s out-of-body experience while being wounded on the Italian front, his nocturnal meditations on streams (both actual and imaginary) where he fished, Nick’s conversation with his orderly, John, about writing, and Nick’s prayers throughout the story. Hemingway’s complex process of revising “Now I Lay Me” makes clear how important those threads are. Just as “Big Two-Hearted River,” his earlier fishing story, was the capstone of *In Our Time*, so “Now I Lay Me” became the final story in Hemingway’s *Men Without Women* as he shaped the collection in close collaboration with his editor, Maxwell Perkins (Beall 2016). In both stories imagined geography matters—the rivers in northern Michigan, the tent within the sound of artillery fire in the distance—as the fictional geography flanks Hemingway’s actual boyhood homes in Oak Park, Illinois. In “Now I Lay Me” his deft, brief allusions to Nick Adams’s memories of past rivers evoke the redemptive power of imaginative writing.

In the earliest fragments of parts of “Now I Lay Me,” Hemingway sets the narrator lying on the floor of a room with two other men listening to the silk worms eating (folder 618). Thus, Hemingway began “Now I Lay Me” as a story of three men, not just Nick and an Italian orderly, just as the earliest draft of “Big Two-Hearted River”

initially presented Nick accompanied by two other fishermen (Beall 2017). Rather, in the initial fragment, "Three of us lay on the floor . . . and listened to the silk worms" (EH/JFK folder 618; cited in Smith 172).¹ There is no sign of a conversation between any of the men, who spend "all night" listening to the same "dropping sound in the leaves" that Nick hears in the first and final paragraphs of "Now I Lay Me" (folder 618, CSS 276, 281). Furthermore, in this earliest manuscript fragment, Hemingway referred to a regiment that had been in a large battle, but by hand he crossed out those initial references to war. As Paul Smith has observed, the second sentence of this manuscript fragment—with its references to a regiment of men marching in dust—looks ahead to the opening paragraph of *A Farewell to Arms* (Smith 172).²

The longest of these early fragments includes two separate memories of deliberate fires in two separate childhood homes, the first based on Hemingway's birthplace in his grandfather's house on North Oak Park Avenue.³ In this first scene Nick remembers his mother's burning his father's collection of snakes soaked in alcohol in jars as a final house cleaning from this attic of those "things that were not to be moved" before the family's relocation to a "new home" (CSS 277-8). Ironically, the alcohol in which Nick's father had preserved the specimens served as fuel for his mother to burn them. The second home is based on the home on North Kenilworth, "a new house designed and built by my mother" (CSS 277). Hemingway set Nick's memory of the second fire at this second home: the scene of his mother's burning his father's collection of stone axes, arrowheads and other Ojibway artifacts (Mellow 19-20). In this draft, Hemingway initially had the mother identifying "Ernie" (crossed out, replaced by "Nicky") as having helped her with the burning (folder 618, cited in Smith 173). These earliest drafts of "Now I Lay Me" are dominated by Nick's memories of burnings in his childhood homes—the end points of his backward nocturnal mental exercises that he began just before the war and went as far in his past as "that attic in my grandfather's house" (CSS 277). In these early fragments, Nick remembers his mother and father in these burning scenes. In one fragment he is implicated in the burning. In neither fragment does he mention fishing actual or imagined streams, nor does he give even a hint of his work as a writer.

The only conversation in the manuscript fragments is between Nick's parents, ending with his father's telling Nick, as in the final

draft of the story, “The best arrow-heads went all to pieces” (CSS 278). In the next draft of the story, Hemingway included neither the burning scene nor the conversation in the second scene between Nick’s mother and father (folder 619). In the next draft (folder 620), Hemingway restored both the burning scenes and the parental conversations. As Hemingway revised his initial version of this scene, he added two telling details in the typescript version titled by hand “Now I Lay Me” that he preserved in the final draft. First, he added Nick’s memory of “how they popped in the heat and the fire flamed up from the alcohol” (CSS 278)—language present in the typescript draft. Then he included Nick’s thought: “But there were no people in that, only things.” This addition implies that, had Nick’s more recent memories not been blocked with the onset of his experiences in the war, he would have remembered when there *were* people in the fire and when the sounds of loud popping were more menacing than the remembered popping of glass jars.⁴

In the manuscript fragment with the earliest version of the second burning scene, the only spoken words in that fragment are those spoken by Nick’s father and mother (folder 618). As he expanded that scene in the later typescript version (folder 620), he included a comment by Nick’s mother in which she tells his father that Nick helped her burn the things cleaned out of the basement—a statement Hemingway crossed out by hand in this draft and cut in the next version titled “In Another Country—Two” (folder 622). Instead of the mother’s statement implicating Nick in the burning, Hemingway added by hand a sentence he retained in the final draft: “She was standing there smiling, to meet him” (CSS 278). Her smile seems ambiguously welcoming, but in Nick’s memory he registers his father’s initial reaction as physically aggressive: “My father looked at the fire and kicked at something” (CSS 278). Next, Nick observes his father’s quietly inspecting the remnants of the fire: “Then he leaned over and picked something out of the ashes,” as if both the fire and its contents have been reduced to a mixed rubble (CSS 278). Then, Nick remembers his father’s curtly commanding: “Get a rake, Nick” (CSS 278). Without comment, Nick records these simple four words. Not until the next paragraph does he refer to his mother’s having “gone inside the house” (CSS 278). Although Hemingway reworks the paragraph breaks, these sentences are almost identical with those in the earliest draft of the story (folder 618).

Hemingway's striking revisions of this scene emphasize the efforts by Nick's father to gather himself into a measure of self-control. As in the original draft, Hemingway repeats the verb "rake" three times to describe the father's actions after Nick brought him a rake. In revising that draft he added in the print version a second "very carefully," repeating the phrase that emphasizes Nick's remembering how his father "raked them all out very carefully" from the fire (CSS 278). That is, Nick recollects not his father's losing his temper or his masculinity, but his gaining self-control after the initial kick in the fire. Another significant addition in Hemingway's revision of this scene indicates that Nick remembers his father's conduct as protecting him from trying to take on—or take in—too much during this scene. Not present in the original draft are the father's words when young Nick struggles to carry both the shotgun and the bags: "Don't try and carry too much at once" (CSS 278). This addition, also present in the typescript titled by hand "Now I Lay Me" (folder 620) is striking: Nick remembers his father's counseling him to take the gun and the bags during separate trips. Moreover, his father's careful raking and his advice not to carry too much of a load at once surely resonate with Nick, as he struggles at night to avoid carrying too much literally and emotionally.

As Don Daiker has argued, this advice shows that Dr. Adams is in control of his anger and remains cognizant of his responsibilities "as Nick's father and teacher" (64, note 47). In "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," as has been pointed out, Nick probably does not witness directly the exchange between Dr. Adams and his wife inside the cabin (Daiker 58). In "Now I Lay Me," though Hemingway filters the narrative through an older Nick's memory of the scene, the young Nick is present and does witness the scene from "When my father came home" (CSS 278). Even *within* the narrative of the second burning (and not just retrospectively), Nick follows his father's advice. After returning with the newspaper, instead of making a second trip with the bags to re-enter the house, he "stayed outside on the grass with the two game bags" (CSS 278). That is, Nick implicitly followed his father's advice by not reentering the cabin and witnessing a possible argument between his parents over the burned artifacts. To risk witnessing such a fight would be to carry too much emotionally. As he reworked this memory in his drafts, Hemingway preserved the scene of marital tension with laconic, terse conversation, leaving Nick outside the house that was, in effect, Nick's remem-

bered domestic war zone. The most salient revision places Nick as remembering his father's advice, along with his final words registering a deep sense of loss: "The best arrow-heads went all to pieces" (CSS 278).⁵

Not until the typescript with the handwritten title, "Now I Lay Me," dated by Paul Smith as late November of 1926 or shortly thereafter, does Hemingway include the conversation on the Italian front between Nick as "Tenente" and John as orderly (folder 620, Smith 172). Nick's conversation with his Italian orderly, John, dominates the last half of the finished story. This conversation develops their comradeship in a way that recalls but strikingly differs from the portrait of Nick and the major in "In Another Country." John's and Nick's exchanges about writing point to a distinct difference between their conversation and that of the major and Nick in "In Another Country." Only with this typescript does Hemingway include the references to swamp grass, to grasshoppers, and to "made up" streams, all contributing to his metafictional self-reference to Nick as a writer and echoing the earlier Nick Adams story, "Big Two-Hearted River" (folder 620; discussed by Smith 172).⁶ As I will argue below, these references to Nick's writing point to an essential element of his self-directed rehabilitation from the wounds of war.

The deepest wound is Nick's coping with the memory of feeling his soul leave him when an explosion struck him. Nick's memory left him afraid that, if he were to fall asleep at night, he "may lose his soul again, permanently" (Nickel 93). Hemingway worked to portray Nick's struggle to stay awake to keep his soul with his body. He drafted several versions of "Now I Lay Me" before he included, by hand, a powerful passage of Nick's remembering his soul's leaving his body. The language for Nick's out-of-body experience would not be present until the handwritten addition to a relatively late version of the story (folder 622). Only then does Hemingway arrive at the language in which he shares his memory of losing his soul when he "had been blown up at night" (CSS 276). The initial pencil fragments of the story contain no reference to the narrator's being blown up; rather, as discussed above, the longest section of this draft presents the memory of his mother's burning of his father's collections (folder 618). The next draft, an untitled typescript, omits the memories of the burning, but includes the first general reference to the narrator's feeling that, if he fell asleep in the dark, his soul would "sail" out of his body (folder 619, cited by Reynolds 1999, 89). In the next draft,

the typescript titled in pencil, "Now I Lay Me," the narrator retains the verb "sail" and refers for the first time to the "very great effort" it took to keep his soul with his body (folder 620, CSS 276). As Paul Smith has discussed, in this draft Hemingway included a curiously decorative simile, likening his soul to "a red silk handkerchief being pulled out of your pocket if your pocket was your body" (folder 620, Smith 173). Hemingway cut the simile in the next and final drafts of the story. Hemingway's effort to revise this account of Nick's out-of-body experience suggests its importance to the story, just as when he shifted to a "blast-furnace" in his narrative of Frederick Henry's out-of-body experience in *A Farewell to Arms* (47).

Initially, in the later typescript version titled "In Another Country-Two," Hemingway retained much of the language in his previous draft, except for cutting the "handkerchief" simile. Then he crossed out two sentences by hand and wrote a note to insert a page of pencil writing that was on the tenth and final page of the typescript (folder 622). This handwritten passage contains perhaps the most powerful language of the story's first paragraph: "I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back. I tried never to think about it, but it had started to go since, in the nights, just at the moment of going off to sleep and I could only stop it by a very great effort" (CSS 276). This passage replicates verbatim the handwritten addition at the end of the ten-page typescript, and only the phrase "a very great effort" appears in earlier drafts than this typescript. Nick's narrative is set in two different levels of the past tense—first, the "had been" past perfect of his immediate fears after being blown up at night. Hemingway presents these fears, albeit distanced in the past, as an enduring trauma: lasting "for a long time" and persisting "since, in the nights" after the initial explosion (CSS 276). Even in the more immediate past, when Nick "tried never to think about it," he did not seem able to let go of the fear of losing his soul if his body lost consciousness.⁷ Thus, with this revision, Hemingway framed the entire sequence of memories—of catching grasshoppers and other insects for bait, of fishing the rivers, and of watching his father's possessions—with a powerful passage of a soldier's out-of-body experience. His pauses with commas around the phrase "in the nights" (commas placed *after* the handwritten addition preserved in folder 622) emphasize these out-of-body experiences as Nick's dark night of his soul. He retained this language in the last draft, a carbon copy

of a typescript, titled in ink “Now I Lay Me” (folder 621). As Matt Nickel has argued, Nick’s “wounding experience” leads to his “composition of place” in his recollection of fishing trout streams as reflective of his strenuous effort to stay awake in the dark night of both his body and his spirit (93, 96-7).

Central to Nick’s “composition of place” are his remembering and imagining streams to envision himself fishing in a fictive past. Present for the first time in the initial typescript (folder 619) is Nick’s thinking “of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy” (CSS 276). Hemingway suggests the intensity of Nick’s meditative exercise when he repeats the phrase “very carefully” to describe the meticulousness of his boyhood fishing—and, implicitly, of his present mental concentration. In this first typescript, Nick’s exercise in meditation focuses on *actual* streams in which he had fished. Hemingway’s first repetition of the phrase “very carefully” suggests the strenuous effort with which Nick concentrated on his “composition” of the places where he remembered fishing. That is, as first-person narrator, Nick tells us that he would fish the entire length of the trout stream “very carefully in my mind” (CSS 276). This repetition points ahead to the second repetition of “very carefully” to describe his father’s raking the charred remains of his collection from the embers. Although that second repetition comes later in the narrative, in Nick’s fictional life his father’s *earlier* carefulness taught Nick by example how to concentrate on self-control. The model for Nick’s meditation on fishing was his father’s focus on “very carefully” raking the ruins in the fire.

Only with his second typescript (folder 620) does Hemingway include Nick’s explicitly inventing streams as fictions: “Some nights too I made up streams, and some of them were very exciting, and it was like being awake and dreaming” (CSS 277). With each revision of this passage, Hemingway accentuates the metafictional nature of Nick’s imagined dreams. For instance, in the typescript he added by hand the simile comparing the excitement of imagining the streams to that experienced in waking dreams. This simile suggests that for Nick the imaginary streams helped him stay awake, a waking dream vision.⁸ Such an addition accentuates how Nick wills himself to stay awake by remembering both the actual streams he remembered and the imaginary ones he made up. Thus, Hemingway seems to portray the writing of “Big Two-Hearted River,” the earlier story where he made up a fictional river, as a creative result of Nick’s self-adminis-

tered therapy to hold back his fear of losing his soul in "Now I Lay Me."

Likewise, Hemingway's handwritten additions to this typescript underscore the importance of his imagined fishing. After Nick's reference to the imagined fishing as akin to "being awake and dreaming" (CSS 277), Hemingway's next (the third) typescript, titled "In Another Country-Two," includes the following sentence in the printed text: "Some of those streams I still remember and think that I have fished in them . . ." (CSS 277). Thus, in his later typescript Hemingway has Nick emphasize with his adverb "still" the permanence of his *imagined* memories as equally present in his thoughts as those rivers he actually fished. Furthermore, by hand in this third typescript, Hemingway added an additional comparison between fictive and actual streams, as he remembers the imagined streams so well that "they are confused with streams I really know" (CSS 277). With this additional note about the streams Nick invented as "confused" with the streams he "really" knows, Hemingway conveys the importance of Nick's fictional fishing.

Not in the latest typescripts, including the even later carbon typescript (folder 621), is a sentence Hemingway eventually added at some point for the print version of the story: "I gave them all names and went to them on the train and sometimes walked for miles to get to them" (CSS 277). This last *addition* seems unmistakably to connect the imagined streams of "Now I Lay Me" with "Big Two-Hearted River," a story about a river whose name Hemingway adapted, a story that begins with Nick's disembarking from a train and walking miles to reach the section of the river where he decides to fish. In his third typescript of "Now I Lay Me," Hemingway *did* name one of these rivers as "Wolf River" and then crossed out the name by hand (folder 622), leaving unnamed "all" the rivers to which Nick says he gave names. In leaving out the names of the rivers, Hemingway leaves the reader guessing at what those names might have been. With each of these revisions, Hemingway presents Nick's imaginary and remembered fishing as essential to his keeping at bay the fears of being blown up, and as foreshadowing his development into the writer he becomes.⁹

The most substantial addition to the story, from the first fragments with memories of the burning of Nick's father's artifacts, is the conversation between Nick and John that dominates the last half of the story. This conversation did not exist either in the manuscript

fragments (folder 618) or in the untitled typescript (folder 619). Not until the typescript titled by hand “Now I Lay Me” did Hemingway include, for the first time, the extended conversation between Nick and John, his Italian orderly. The dialogue emerges almost fully formed in that typescript revision (folder 620). The revisions Hemingway made as he shaped their conversation suggest the importance of what might appear to be an idle conversation about writing. Not often discussed in the commentary on “Now I Lay Me” have been the references to Arthur Brisbane’s columns in this exchange, from the first version of the dialogue to the print edition.¹⁰ The references to writing in the conversation bring “Now I Lay Me” back to the importance of the bullfight critic’s column for *El Heraldo* in “The Undefeated,” the “very beautiful” writing with words like “*fratellanza*” and “*abnegazione*” on Nick’s medals in “In Another Country,” and the columns in *The Forum* that Hemingway mocks in “A Banal Story.” An important thread tying together many stories in *Men Without Women* is the implied distinction between the commercial, patriotic writing in popular culture and the writing Hemingway offers in his stories. The exchange between John and Nick about Arthur Brisbane’s writings ties that thread with sharp irony.

At first glance, Nick’s and John’s conversation about writing seems incidental to the story. However, the context is Nick’s answering John’s question as to what he will do when he returns to “the States.” Nick’s answer is the one definitive identification in this story of his planning on a career in writing: “I’ll get a job on a paper.”¹¹ John’s response—“In Chicago?”—implies that he has reason to suspect that Nick will return to his home city. When Nick answers with an equivocal “maybe,” John responds with a reference to “this fellow Brisbane,” whose “editorials” his wife sends him. He asks Nick if he’s ever read Brisbane. Nick’s answer, “Sure,” is rather noncommittal (CSS 280). This volleying back and forth is among the clearest of Hemingway’s metafictional references to writing in the Nick Adams stories. In revising the almost complete version of this conversation, Hemingway added in the print version John’s question, “Did you ever meet him?” and Nick’s response, “No, but I’ve seen him.” To that response, Hemingway also added John’s statement: “I’d like to meet that fellow” (CSS 280). The brief exchange Hemingway added to the typescript draft elongates the conversation and implies that, while Nick has not met Arthur Brisbane, he has seen him in person, presumably during one of his speaking engagements.

Nick's lack of response to John's hope suggests his tacit skepticism about John's enthusiasm for Brisbane's writing.

With language present in the typescript titled by hand "Now I Lay Me," John resumes his praise: "He's a fine writer. My wife doesn't read English but she takes the paper just like when I was home and she cuts out the editorials and sports page and sends them to me" (CSS 280). John's praise of Brisbane's writing and his wife's thoughtfulness in serving his needs as a reader indicate quite clearly that, since his wife doesn't read English, she sends him Brisbane's columns because John must have enjoyed reading them before his becoming a conscript in the war. Ironically, in John's set of values as a reader, Brisbane's columns have the same weight as the sports pages, as suggested by the paratactic syntax of his brief monologue. In this exchange, Hemingway seems to set John's appreciation for Brisbane as "a fine writer" against Nick's plans to become a writer. Nick is more definite about his future plan than in the explanation he had just offered as to why he became involved in the war: "I wanted to, then." When John responds, "That's a hell of a reason," Nick asks John to speak lower—perhaps not simply to avoid waking the soldiers up, but rather to suggest that Nick does not need John to lecture him about what he has already thought for himself. It does not seem accidental that, after John tells Nick that his wife sends him Brisbane's editorials, Nick changes the subject by asking John about his children (CSS 280). Nick's lack of enthusiasm for Brisbane's writing suggests his lack of interest in writing in such a vein.

What Hemingway knew of Brisbane's columns is a matter of conjecture, but his prewar columns were collected and published by the Hearst organization (Brisbane 1906). In his column, "How Marriage Began," Brisbane wrote, "Marriage was brought about on this earth by the will and wisdom of God Almighty working through primitive babyhood" (Brisbane 1906, 99). Brisbane's glowing optimism about the biblical sanction of marriage would seem an ironic context for John's assurance to Nick that marriage "would fix up everything"—and for Nick's implied skepticism about such bromides (CSS 282).¹² Given John's trying to persuade Nick to marry an Italian girl despite his limited knowledge of Italian, the fact that John's wife sends him editorial columns and sports news from the *Chicago Examiner* when she cannot read English seems doubly ironic. Likewise, Brisbane's column titled "The Vast Importance of Sleep" appears strikingly germane to Nick's struggle not to fall asleep in "Now I Lay Me."

First Brisbane compares insomnia to suicide: “He might better open a vein and lose a pint of blood than lose the sleep, which is life itself” (*Hearst* 339). Then Brisbane compares the insomniac to a “young spendthrift” who “squander[s] capital” and “throws away money.” In this column, Brisbane’s focus is squarely on conserving the body as akin to a financial savings account: “. . . just so surely you bring irreparable loss upon yourself when you go without sleep” (Brisbane 340). Brisbane concludes his column with a comfortless prediction of doom to the soul who cannot sleep: “The man who loses sleep will make a failure of his life . . .” (*Hearst* 341). Brisbane’s pronouncements have the certitude of John’s sweeping generalization that marriage “would fix up everything” for Nick (*CSS* 282). Nick appears to share neither John’s confidence in marriage nor his enthusiasm for Brisbane’s writing, as suggested by Hemingway’s adding the understated line about Nick’s having seen, but not met, the columnist—as if seeing him is enough.

In the context of the time frame of “Now I Lay Me,” the allusion to Brisbane seems both intentional and ironic. The story apparently takes place during the summer of 1918 (Flora, 1982, 114). Nick and John are discussing columns that John’s wife clipped and sent him from the Chicago newspapers, probably during the spring and early summer of 1918. Nick apparently participated in the “October offensive” from which John was spared in 1918; he was wounded in that offensive and was visited by John in a hospital in Milan “several months after” (*CSS* 282). Those months quite likely stretched past the Armistice of November 11, 1918, placing Nick as wounded in one of the final battles of the war. At the same time, in 1918 Arthur Brisbane was writing his “To-Day” columns for the editorial page of the *Chicago Examiner*. Most of Brisbane’s columns in the spring of 1918 comment upon the war.¹³ A striking change in both the headlines of the *Chicago Examiner* and Brisbane’s columns comes towards the end of April 1918. On April 29, 1918, the headline was an alarm: “BRITISH RETIRE AT YPRES; TEUTONS WIN VITAL HILL 60; HOLLAND YIELDS TO GERMANY.” Such a headline sounds like a prediction of defeat and surrender.¹⁴ The title of Brisbane’s “To-Day” column was “Charity and Horse Meat. An Ingenious World. Polygamy for Germany.” That is, even as the front page headlines invoke a doomsday setback for the Allies, Brisbane’s column suggests a patriotic slur about German disregard for monogamous marriage.

On April 30, 1918, the tide turned. The front page headline, in all caps, read: "GERMANS REPULSED IN ALL DAY BATTLE ON 15-MILE FRONT; U.S. TROOPS IN AMIENS FIGHT." The message in this headline seems clear: the American presence in the latter days of World War I was making a decisive difference. The final line in the headline of Brisbane's column caricatured Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm: "The Kaiser as Walrus." John may have found in Brisbane's columns a way of proclaiming the moral superiority of the American way over the polygamists and walruses on German soil. John may also have been enthusiastic about Brisbane's ascendancy as the editorial head of the combined *Chicago Examiner and Herald* on May 1, 1918. In the same issue that announced "To Our Readers" Brisbane's new position on the front page was the headline: "GREAT GERMAN DEFEAT." John's enthusiasm for Brisbane as columnist may have much to do with the patriotic celebration of American involvement in the Allies' fight against the Germans.

The exchange between Nick and John—in particular, their exchange about Arthur Brisbane's writing—concludes the sequence in *Men Without Women* of repeated references to writers, beginning with the bullfighting critic of "The Undeclared," whose slick journalism and jingoism seem antithetical to the kind of writing to which Nick, or Hemingway, would aspire. Together with his advice about marriage, John's role as counselor seems limited, as suggested by Nick's skeptical invocation in the story's final sentence of what John "knew" about America, marriage, and "everything" (CSS 282). In short, John's role as mentor in "Now I Lay Me" seems ironically to point readers back to the Major of "In Another Country," to whom Nick shows considerably more "profound empathy" and respect than he does to John (Flora 1982, 143; see also Beall 2016, 100). Thus, "Now I Lay Me" completes a pattern of writing references such as the bullfight critic's in "The Undeclared" through the columnists' clichés in *The Forum* that Hemingway mocked in "A Banal Story." In contrast, Nick's fictional imagination of rivers he had *not* fished evokes the redemptive power of writing and connects "Now I Lay Me" with "Big Two-Hearted River."

Hemingway's probably knowing about Arthur Brisbane's sympathetic profile of Mary Baker Eddy might suggest a critical view of religious faith in "Now I Lay Me." However, Hemingway's final revisions to "Now I Lay Me" signal the importance of prayer, from the children's prayer evoked by the title of the story to Nick's prayers for

John in the final paragraph. In the story's dark night, Nick's response to his father's comment about the arrowheads gone "all to pieces" is to "pray for them both" (CSS 278). In both the early fragment and the final version, Nick's response to his memory of his father's comment about the "best arrowheads" going "all to pieces" is to pray for both of his parents: "In remembering that, there were only two people, so I would pray for them both" (CSS 278). Hemingway's verb phrase, "would pray," implies that Nick prayed recurrently whenever he recollected the burning scenes. In his second draft, an untitled typescript (folder 619), Hemingway included for the first time Nick's references to specifically Catholic prayers, as he highlighted in this draft when he capitalized, by hand, "Hail Mary" and "Our Father" (CSS 277, see Flora 2008, 166). Nick refers to these prayers as efficacious in helping him stay awake all night by tracing his memories back to the attic of his grandfather's house. That is, by praying for all of the "great many people" he remembered, "it took a long time and finally it would be light, and then you could go to sleep, if you were in a place where you could sleep in the daylight" (CSS 277). This winding, forty-eight-word sentence suggests Nick's prayers as therapeutic ways to focus on his past memories, starting with just before I went to the war"—that is, blotting out the war, the sounds of which Nick can hear in the distance (Flora 2006, 188).

On the other hand, this typescript includes the first reference not only to the Hail Mary and Our Father prayers, but also to the Lord's Prayer that he often could not remember beyond "On earth as it is in heaven" (CSS 278). Nick's memory of his parents' truncated conversation seems connected to his being "absolutely unable" to complete the Lord's Prayer—language present as of the typescript titled by hand "Now I Lay Me" (folder 620, CSS 278). That is, when Nick cannot complete the Lord's Prayer, he does not reach the part of the prayer ("Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors") that seems consistent with the spirit of forgiveness with which he prays for his parents ("them both") after the burning memories. Whether Hemingway includes the references to prayer as indicating Nick's "wavering religious faith" (Flora 2008, 169), as intimating his inability to "reconcile the living hell of combat with the promise of a peaceful afterlife" (Florczyk 123), or as reflecting his "contemplation of the soul" (Nickel 101), the inward recitation of his prayers becomes an increasingly central part of the story with each revision. And, although he

only quotes from the Lord's Prayer he cannot complete, his final references to prayer in the story are to those for his Italian orderly, John.

Hemingway's further revisions in the typescript titled by hand "Now I Lay Me" accompany and complete his extended conversation with that Italian orderly. After John has fallen asleep, Nick, responding to John's advice about marriage, tried thinking of all the girls he had known. In language present in the typescript, after trying to concentrate on retracing the girls in his past, Nick "gave up thinking about them almost altogether" when they became mixed up in his mind (CSS 282). Then he returned to praying, specifically for John: "But I kept on with my prayers and I prayed very often for John in the nights and his class was removed from active service before the October offensive" (CSS 282). Two changes that Hemingway made in the typescript to this sentence bear noting. First, by hand he added the words "kept on," stressing his continuing to pray, in contrast to his giving up on the memories of girls. Second, in the typescript Hemingway has Nick date John's release from the service as June before the Piave offensive, to which he refers by name. In revising the typescript, Hemingway removed Nick's reference to the Piave and simply referred more generally to John's class as removed before the October offensive, which could refer to a range of attacks in October 1918, the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, including attacks centered on the upper and middle Piave River (Thompson 364; see also Gilbert 482-3 and Banks 203). Nick was apparently wounded again during one of these attacks, and John came to visit him in the hospital in Milan "several months after"—presumably, well after the Armistice of November 11, 1918. In the present tense ("now") of the story, Nick seems to have healed sufficiently to be "fairly sure" that his soul would not leave his body if he fell asleep (CSS 276). In the final paragraph of the story, Nick's repeated reference to prayers implies that they played a role in his healing.

Nick's final reference to prayer in "Now I Lay Me"—a story that is, in effect, an extended set of prayers—implies their efficacy. With his paratactic syntax, he seems to connect his prayers with John's being spared the risks of being wounded or killed in the Battle of Vittorio Veneto: after referring to his praying "very often for John in the nights," Nick follows with "and his class was removed from active service . . ." (CSS 282). While not necessarily implying a causal relationship between Nick's prayers and John's demobilization, Hemingway suggests that Nick's final thoughts about prayer in

the story are positive: John missed the October offensive, and Nick is “now” relatively confident (“fairly sure”) that he can fall asleep in the dark without losing his soul (CSS 276). Although Hemingway does not suggest that Nick believes his prayers for John were, in themselves, directly responsible for John’s surviving the war, the syntax of the sentence does seem to suggest a connection between prayer and endurance.

Hemingway presents Nick’s prayers in “Now I Lay Me” as more meditative and deliberative than either those of the soldier in chapter 7 of *In Our Time* or those of Frederick Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*. The anonymous soldier’s prayers in chapter 7 are laced with direct addresses to “Dear Jesus” with repeated pleas of “Christ please please please Christ,” even if the lack of punctuation follows Joyce’s style in *Ulysses* of not placing quotation marks around spoken words (CSS 109, Beall 2014). Frederick Henry’s prayer to spare Catherine, placed in a context of terror at losing his beloved, is more personal and poignant than that of the anonymous soldier: “Please, please, please, dear God, don’t let her die. God, please don’t let her die” (AFTA 282). That Frederick repeats his plea—with five direct addresses to God—marks his prayer as desperate, yet authentic. And Hemingway does not undercut his prayer with an ironic comment as he did by mentioning at the end of chapter 7 the visit that the anonymous soldier made to the Villa Rossa, a brothel in Mestre. That said, both prayers are presented as if spoken. The anonymous soldier speaks directly to Jesus and Christ; Frederick Henry speaks directly to God. In neither case are the spoken words marked by quotation marks, but in both cases the words seem so intense as to be spoken aloud.

In contrast, Jake Barnes in chapter 10 of *The Sun Also Rises* prays silently and meditatively. He is in a church, a sanctuary for prayer—not in a battlefield or in a hospital ward. His prayer is marked not with quick, repeated addresses to Christ or God, with a desperate repetition of “please,” but with Jake as narrator reflecting calmly on what he did—he “knelt and started to pray.” Jake prayed for his beloved Brett and for Cohn, he prayed for the bullfighters he liked and those he did not like, and he prayed to make a lot of money—which reminds him of Count Mippipopolous (SAR 78). Indeed, Jake’s reference to money may be a prayer to be like the Count—not so much in the baldly materialistic sense of praying for more wealth, but in the more figurative sense of praying that he may find more

"value" in his life. That figurative sense recurs later in the nocturnal interior monologue of chapter 14 of *The Sun Also Rises*, during which Jake seems to internalize and expand the Count's motto: ". . . get more value for my money . . ." (SAR 51, 119). As retrospective narrator, Jake reports his prayers calmly—as if far away in distance and years from the fields of battle. The repetitions are a first-person journalist's ("I saw") and a memoirist's ("I felt"). The paragraph of Jake's praying begins with a simple declaration of approach, "walked up toward," and an elision over his exit, ". . . and then I was out . . ." (SAR 78). His elision over the exact details of his exit suggests that Jake completes his prayer and then does not notice any details of the church's interior on his way outside. Hemingway presents Jake's prayer in the cathedral at Pamplona as retold from the calm distance of a narrator's recollection in tranquility.¹⁵

That distance seems to be the case with Hemingway's presentation of Nick's prayers in "Now I Lay Me," a story he wrote soon after revising *The Sun Also Rises*. It may seem odd to suggest that Nick's prayers in the story are calm, given the contexts of his father's artifacts being burned in a back yard and Nick's being wounded on the Italian front. However, each of Nick's references to prayer is presented in a calm tone. His first reference comes after three paragraphs of explanations about how he meditates on fishing in order to stay awake. Even when he admits that "[s]ome nights I could not fish," he refers to his prayers in a methodical, ritualistic tone: ". . . on those nights I was cold-awake and said my prayers over and over . . ." (CSS 277). In this case, the repetitions are not those of a hysterical soldier, nor of a desperate lover, but those of a narrator explaining what he repeated in his nocturnal meditations. The prayers are explicitly recalled by Nick as his ritual adjustment when his waking dream of fishing trout streams did not work. Even when the narrator personalizes his references to prayer, addressing his reader as "you," repeated six times, his emphasis is on how prayer allowed "you," to "go to sleep" (CSS 277). Whereas in *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederick Henry is looking back on his prayers as if sharing their desperation, Nick seems relatively tranquil. Near the end of the story, he refers to his prayers for John with another series of simple phrases joined by conjunctions: ". . . kept on with my prayers and prayed very often . . ." (CSS 282). There seems to be no irony here about Nick's prayers, as there is at the end of chapter 7 of *In Our Time*. Nor is there deep anguish, as in Frederick Henry's recollection

of his prayers. Although Nick as narrator reflects ironically on how John was “sure” marriage would “fix up” his life, his relief that John was spared the dangers of the October offensive seems a genuinely hopeful comment on the possible efficacy of his prayers. Nick’s prayers are effective in keeping him awake until daylight; they may also have helped, he implies, in keeping John safe.

Hemingway wrote about his composition of “Big Two-Hearted River” in his memoir *A Movable Feast*. Looking back over thirty years after composing the story, at times at the café Closerie des Lilas, Hemingway placed Paris in his creation of the story. In the story itself, he expunged all references to Paris. The geography is all upper Michigan. Likewise, even though Hemingway composed “Now I Lay Me” in Paris while in a tormented transition between his divorce from Hadley and his marriage to Pauline, the story itself bears no sign of the city where Hemingway composed it. Here, the geography is Oak Park, upper Michigan, and northern Italy on the Italian front. Although absorbed in the personal drama of his life in Paris, Hemingway kept out of his story any reference to that life. Indeed, the only city in the story is Chicago, from which Nick hails, and in which John has settled as an immigrant with his family. In Hemingway’s late story, “The Last Good Country,” Nick and his sister Littless speak of the woods behind their house as like “cathedrals.” When Littless challenges whether Nick has actually “seen a cathedral,” Nick replies, “No. But I’ve read about them and I can imagine them. This is the best one we have around here” (CSS 517). In “Now I Lay Me,” Hemingway portrays Nick’s composing in his night thoughts the rituals of fishing and praying that help him construct an imagined sanctuary, “the best” he can fashion during the war near the front. In her essay about “A Pursuit Race,” Ann Putnam connects “Now I Lay Me” with “Big Two-Hearted River” as showing that Nick Adams creates “certain rituals” that help him remain steady against the “fast currents” of the river (188, see also Flora 2006, 189). Part of the beauty of “Now I Lay Me” is its blotting out of Paris and, instead, its juxtaposing the crackling family drama of Nick’s childhood, the cannonades of war that he can hear behind the gnawing of silkworms on mulberry leaves, the fishing streams of his memory and imagination, and his prayers.

APPENDIX

Drafts of Hemingway's "Now I Lay Me"

KL/EH 618 (Kennedy Library, Ernest Hemingway Collection, Folder 618)

- Two false starts: in the first, "Three of us lay on the floor . . . and listened to the silk worms. . ." (cited by Smith 172).
- In the second start: the two burning scenes, but with "Ernie" crossed out, instead of "Nicky" (only case of the Ernie/Nick substitution, cited by Smith 173). In this draft Ernie/Nicky helps his mother with the burning of the artifacts.

KL/EH 619

- The first typescript, an untitled typescript with many corrections in pencil by hand.
- Deletes the two burning scenes—retains the silkworms but with "we" (not "Three of us").
- Dated by Paul Smith as late November 1926.

KL/EH 620

- The second typescript, titled in pencil "Now I Lay Me." Dated by Smith as shortly after KL/EH 619.
- Included the first instance of an out-of-body experience as "a red silk handkerchief being pulled out of your pocket if the pocket was your body" (cited by Smith 173). Later cut.
- Restored the two burning scenes.
- First draft to include conversation between Nick and John, his orderly.

KL/EH 622

- The third typescript, titled "In Another Country—Two." Hemingway used this title in tentative lists he drew up in January/February 1927 for a table of contents for his collection *Men Without Women* (see Smith 172 and Beall 2016).
- In this typescript, Hemingway adds by hand the description of Nick's being blown up present in the final draft: "I had been that way for a long time ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back" (CSS 276).

KL/EH 621

- Carbon copy of a professional typescript, titled in ink “Now I Lay Me,” probably a copy of original sent to Scribner’s for *Men Without Women* late spring 1927 (Smith 172).
- Retains the passage of Nick’s being blown up, but does not include the following: “I gave them all names and went to them on the train and sometimes walked for miles to get to them” (CSS 277).

Men Without Women

- “Now I Lay Me” disappears from Hemingway’s drafts of a table of contents from January-May 1927. In her recent biography, Mary Dearborn errs in claiming that the story was among those stories that “had been published before” *Men Without Women* and in asserting that the story first appeared in *Scribner’s Magazine* (244). (See Smith 172-173; Beall 2016, 90-93).
- With Perkins’s encouragement, after suppressing “Now I Lay Me” from his collection, Hemingway places “NILM” as the final story of *Men Without Women*, just as he had placed “Big Two-Hearted River” at the end of *In Our Time* (Beall 2016, 2017).
- “Now I Lay Me” concludes *Men Without Women* with its pointed references to Arthur Brisbane’s Chicago columns as another form of commercial writing. Thus, “Now I Lay Me” completes a pattern of such references to writing, beginning with the bullfight critic of “The Undefeated.”

NOTES

¹I gave an earlier version of this essay at a panel on Hemingway at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature on June 3, 2017. I would like to thank my co-presenters, Donald A. Daiker and Michael Kim Roos, and our moderator, Katherine Palmer, for their support and feedback. Subsequent references to the contents of folders in the Hemingway Collection will list the folder number(s). To avoid copyright issues, I reproduce passages from manuscripts and typescripts only if they have previously appeared in print. References to both “Big Two-Hearted River” and to “Now I Lay Me” are to the Finca-Vigia edition of the *Collected Short Stories*, cited parenthetically as CSS with page numbers. I am grateful to Stacey Chandler for her help during my research in the Hemingway Collection at the Kennedy Library.

²From this point, I will abbreviate *A Farewell to Arms* as AFTA and *The Sun Also Rises* as SAR.

³James Mellow makes this connection between Hemingway’s birthplace and Nick’s memories of the attic of his birth home, an attic in “my grandfather’s home” where his father’s

collection of "snakes and other specimens" lay alongside "my mother's and father's wedding-cake in a tin box hanging from one of the rafters" (CSS 277-278, Mellow 10). Mellow raises the question as to whether these scenes of burning are purely fictional or based on memories of actual events (19-20). Scott Donaldson assumes that Hemingway witnessed his mother's gathering up his father's collection of artifacts and tossing them "into a back-yard bonfire" (171). Both Hemingway homes still exist in Oak Park, Illinois. His birthplace is a museum operated by the Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park (<http://www.ehfp.org/>).

⁴In his piece for the *Toronto Star*, "A Veteran Visits the Old Front," Hemingway wrote about his revisiting Fossalta, the site of his wounding, where he remarked that the Austrians "were hunted down in" the same location and "had died in its rubble- and debris-strewn streets and been smoked out of its cellars with *flammenwerfers* during the house-to-house work" (*Dateline Toronto* 179).

⁵Unlike "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," set in the family's summer home on Walloon Lake (Daiker 45-47), Nick's memories of the burnings in "Now I Lay Me" place them near the homes where he was born and grew up. In her memoir, Hemingway's sister Marcelline recalls how their father assembled "a remarkable collection" of Indian artifacts along the Des Plaines River (Sanford 21, 28). The wisdom of Dr. Adams's advice to Nick suggests that he is not a failed guide, nor an "emasculated or ineffectual father" (DeFalco 107, 110), nor a father who raises "the child's feared wound of emasculation" (Hovey 186), nor a husband whose wife has "emasculated" him (Bell 124; Donaldson 1999, 306) "without even a hint of protest" (Flora 2006, 196). In short, I believe that Nick remembers not a "symbolic castration" by his mother's destroying his father's artifacts (Sempreora 22-24), but rather his father's gathering himself in a measured, self-controlled masculinity.

⁶In the early manuscripts and typescripts (folders 618 and 619), there is no reference to a "made up" stream, nor any reference to a swamp. In the typescript contained in folder 620, Hemingway added the word "swamp" by hand in the phrase that eventually became "swamp meadows" (CSS 276). In the print version of "Now I Lay Me," Hemingway repeats the word "swamp," a word he used six times on the final page alone of "Big Two-Hearted River" (CSS 160, 276). In "Now I Lay Me," Nick does not remember or imagine himself fishing in a swamp, but merely gathering fish bait there.

⁷For a different discussion of the verb tenses and repetitions in "Now I Lay Me," see Lamb 128-133.

⁸Hemingway read about the "composition of place" as one of St. Ignatius of Loyola's "spiritual exercises" in Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist* (137). Matt Nickel connects Nick's nocturnal meditations with the medieval tradition of the "dark night that follows an illumination" (96-99). Later in his chapter "The Dark Night," Nickel discusses the possible influence of Dante on Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (106-109). Hemingway's comparing Nick's meditation on imagined streams to waking dreams places "Now I Lay Me" in the tradition of the medieval dream-vision, of which Dante's *Commedia* is the pinnacle in presenting dreamlike fiction as visionary fact. In the edition of the *Commedia* that Hemingway owned, Longfellow follows his translation with notes about, and excerpts from, the dream-vision genre (Longfellow 181-2 and 417-446; Reynolds 1981, 115). In his first-edition copy of Pound's *Draft of XVI Cantos*, Hemingway would have read Pound's invoking both Dante and William Blake in the opening stanzas of canto 16, with its dream vision to follow.

⁹In a letter to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas dated 15 August 1924, Hemingway wrote, referring to his writing "Big Two-Hearted River," that "the country is swell" and that he "made it all up" (*Letters* Vol. 2, 141). Given Gertrude Stein's role in persuading Hemingway to give up his work as a journalist, his emphasis on the fictional nature of his fishing story in his letter to her probably reflects his regarding "River" as a part of that move. In a letter to his father dated 20 March 1925, Hemingway wrote that the story is "really the Fox above Seney" (*Letters* Vol. 2, 285). Hemingway's eldest son, Jack, recounted the anecdote of his trying to locate the Two Hearted River in upper Michigan. In his chapter, "A

Michigan Sojourn,” Jack told of a trip he took with two friends to find “the Big Two-Hearted River in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan” (Jack Hemingway 32). Try as they might, Jack and his friends could find neither the fishing stream nor the swamp to which “River” refers (33). Jack reported telling his father “years later” about the trip; he recounted his father’s response: “. . . he said the big Two-Hearted never was much of a year-round trout stream after the logging and the fires” (34). Steven Youra pointed out to me that the actual Two Hearted River in upper Michigan is, in the North Branch at its furthest point west, “probably within reasonable walking—certainly hiking—distance from the town of Seney” (email communication, 19 July 2017). Hemingway did not hyphenate “Two-Hearted” in the title of his initial manuscript draft. He did not hyphenate the title in a letter dated 7 January 1925 to Ernest Walsh and Ethel Morehead, who first published the story, nor did he include a hyphen when he cited the title in the May 1925 letter to his father (*Letters* Vol. 2, 202, 285). Nor is there a hyphen in the title where the story first appeared in Walsh and Morehead’s first issue of *This Quarter* (Hemingway 1925). My fundamental argument here is that in “Now I Lay Me,” Hemingway’s reference to the streams that Nick “made up” echoes his letter to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas about having “made it all up” in referring to the setting of “Big Two-Hearted River.”

¹⁰Flora discusses the conversation between John and Nick about Brisbane as a writer (2008, 173–4). In her extensive discussion of “the metafictional relevance of Nick the writer,” Sempreora does not mention John and Nick’s exchange about Brisbane.

¹¹Nick’s reference to newspaper writing here echoes Krebs in “Soldier’s Home.” When Krebs considers moving to Kansas City to get a job away from home in Oklahoma, he thinks of this plan to himself in a brief interior monologue at the end of the story. Krebs does not share that plan aloud in the conversation with his mother, even though earlier in the story she handed him the *Kansas City Star* (CSS 114, 116). In his conversation with John, Nick speaks aloud and explicitly identifies writing as his likely occupation when he returns to America (CSS 114, 116, 280).

¹²John’s enthusiasm for Brisbane and for marriage as a panacea seems ironic, given that in his 1907 profile of the founder of the Christian Scientists, Mary Baker Eddy, first published in *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Brisbane concludes by quoting from her 1897 “Miscellaneous Writings,” where she wrote that marriage “sometimes presents the most wretched condition of human existence” (Brisbane, 1930, 63).

¹³I was able to read the issues of the *Chicago Examiner* from the spring of 1918 online at <http://digital.chipublib.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/examiner>. I am grateful to AP (full name not given) of the Newspaper & Current Periodical Reading Room, Library of Congress, for guiding me to this link at the Chicago Public Library. Hemingway’s guarded view of Brisbane’s writing, as reflected in Nick’s responses to John’s laudations, may stem from Brisbane’s sympathetic interview with Mary Baker Eddy, published in 1907 (Brisbane 1930). However, a discussion of that interview is beyond the scope of this essay, despite the probable connection with Hemingway’s portrait of Mrs. Adams as a Christian Scientist in “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife.”

¹⁴In much smaller font is the headline and article titled “U.S. to rush 2 million abroad.” Hemingway’s allusions to Brisbane’s columns seem more subtly ironic than Nick’s mocking reference to himself in “A Way You’ll Never Be” as “demonstrating the American uniform” (CSS 312). During the 1930s Hemingway repeatedly used the word “propaganda” to warn against efforts to involve the United States in another European war (*By-line* 205, 223, 282–3).

¹⁵For a discussion of Jake’s praying in the cathedral, see Stoneback (173–7). In his nocturnal meditation, Jake’s sense of monetary exchange as a metaphor for living expands from financial to experiential and back to financial: “Either you paid by learning about them, or by experience, or by taking chances, or by money” (SAR 119).

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REINVIGORATING MIDWESTERN STUDIES: A REVIEW ESSAY

MARCIA NOE

Reimagining Environmental History: Ecological Memory in the Wake of Landscape Change, by Christian Knoeller. Reno and Las Vegas: U of Nevada P, 2017.

From Warm Center to Ragged Edge: The Erosion of Midwestern Literary and Historical Regionalism, 1920-1965, by Jon K. Lauck. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2017.

The Midwestern Moment: The Forgotten World of Early Twentieth-Century Midwestern Regionalism, 1880-1940, ed. Jon K. Lauck. Hastings, NE: Hastings College P, 2017.

The Stories We Tell: Modernism in the Tri-Cities, ed. Meg Gillette. Rock Island, IL: East Hall P of Augustana College, 2014.

In “The Future of the Middle West,” published in the November 8, 1939, issue of the *New Republic*, Robert Morss Lovett called for a Midwestern renaissance to bring about the fulfillment of the region’s potential: “The fact then that the Middle West for the time being has lost its forward impulse is of greater moment to this region than it would be elsewhere,” he argued (56). The four books discussed here can be seen as a partial answer to Lovett’s call; they perform important recovery work, calling our attention to Midwestern artists, naturalists, and writers who have been outshone by bigger names. They contribute as well to the recuperation of the Midwest as a vibrant matrix of cultural activity.

Christian Knoeller brings an impressive command of his subject grounded in an exhaustive job of research to give us a comprehensive and insightful survey of Midwestern nature writing in *Reimagining Environmental History*. Here he reviews the work of nine Midwestern literary naturalists: Gene Stratton-Porter, Paul Errington, Scott Russell Sanders, Theodore Roethke, William

Stafford, Louise Erdrich, Diane Glancy, Elizabeth Dodd, and Paul Gruchow, devoting a chapter to each author and examining how they represent landscape change in their work. Knoeller argues that “[e]ach of the authors examined engages place in direct and personal ways informed by a sense of environmental history, whether in their own bioregion or as they sojourned through less familiar terrain . . .” (xi). After an homage to the patron saint of environmentalism, Henry David Thoreau, Knoeller moves on to discuss a non-Midwesterner whose travels on the Upper Missouri and subsequent writings have established an “ecological baseline” against which the work of subsequent literary naturalists can be measured. Like Thoreau, John James Audubon was concerned about the decline in animal populations and the eradication of species, documenting these concerns in *Missouri River Journals* and *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*.

The authors covered in the remaining chapters deal with restoration in tension with loss, abundance with depletion, and desecration with preservation as they examine environmental crises fueled by destructive agricultural practice and extractive activities, overhunting, settlement and development, invasive species and other damaging factors. Knoeller first turns his attention to two lesser-discussed literary naturalists: Gene Stratton-Porter and Paul Errington. In novels such as *Girl of the Limberlost*, Porter presciently popularized ecological concepts, such as a reverence for the restorative powers of nature, and taught readers to value indigenous species and deplore destructive practices that doom ecosystems and species. Of her commitment to environmental stewardship, Knoeller writes that “stemming the tide of destruction—and the prospect of extinction—had become an ethical imperative” (45). Like Stratton-Porter, Errington was prescient in his view that the abundance of species and biodiversity he reveled in while growing up in the Midwest was threatened, perhaps irrevocably, by twentieth-century destructive practices. In books such as *Men and Marshes* and *Wilderness and Wolves*, he deplores policies that facilitate the eradication of predators and promotes the interdependence of species in ecological systems. Also like Stratton-Porter, he demonstrates a spiritual approach to nature and emphasizes the ethical dimension of preservation.

Next Knoeller discusses a contemporary literary naturalist, Scott Russell Sanders, who advocates a conservationist ethic that extends Aldo Leopold’s call for a land ethic in *A Sand County Almanac* by

emphasizing the global dimensions of the environmental crisis and the importance of valuing indigenous peoples and their cultures. In *Writing from the Center*, Sanders considers how Midwestern literature has been impacted by environmental degradation. "If the literature of the Midwest began as the story of arrivals and departures, it has evolved into a literature of loss," asserts Sanders (96). Like the literary naturalists discussed above, Sanders's ethical commitment to his conservationist ethic is rooted in a childhood engagement with and delight in nature and includes a spiritual element.

Knoeller then looks at two Midwestern poets of place. Theodore Roethke's Whitmanesque North American Sequence, comprising poems of self-discovery, focuses on the sublime in nature and its relation to our spirituality, a perspective shaped not only by his western travels but also by his Michigan childhood. In like manner, William Stafford's Kansas childhood informs his poetics, as does his connection with indigenous peoples and their mythic animals, such as the salmon and the bison. The next two chapters center on Native American novelists Louise Erdrich and Diane Glancy, who also write of the interdependence of biodiversity in nature and in American Indian cultures. Knoeller treats Erdrich's second memoir, *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*, as an ecocultural work that shows how Ojibwe language and cultural practices are linked to the landscape of the Lake of the Woods. Diane Glancy in *Pushing the Bear: A Novel of the Trail of Tears* and its sequel, *Pushing the Bear: After the Trail of Tears*, focuses on the removal of the Cherokee people from the Southeast to Oklahoma, emphasizing the toll it took on the Cherokees' place-based identity, "an amalgam of nature, place and narrative [that was] at times so visceral as to seem corporeal" (176).

Knoeller's last pair of Midwestern literary naturalists, Elizabeth Dodd and Paul Gruchow, brings the book to a close. Knoeller views poet and essayist Elizabeth Dodd's work as an extension of that of Loren Eiseley, with added emphasis on indigenous peoples, and stresses how impactful on her identity and writing were the landscapes of her native Ohio. Of Paul Gruchow, Knoeller writes that by the end of his career, Gruchow "had begun to articulate a more nuanced and intricate appreciation than had been advanced by previous generations of pioneering ecologists for the complex interdependence governing succession through the coevolution of species," learning to think about ecological change and preservation in new ways (212). Another key emphasis of Gruchow is valuing the cul-

tural significance of our interdependence with nature, particularly with respect to the relationship between indigenous people and the bison (221-223).

In the personal narrative that informs his epilogue, Knoeller asserts that the common principle that unites all of the writers he discusses is “the sanctity and inviolability of habitat” and concludes with a series of questions that is, in fact, a prescription for dealing effectively with the current environmental crisis (239-40). The book concludes with a comprehensive bibliography, something that more academic books should offer. Knoeller’s bibliography is a real boon to scholars, who won’t have to pick through endless endnotes to locate complete citations for works they would like to explore further.

This book is so good that I can think of only one thing that would make it better. Two iconic Midwestern literary naturalists, Aldo Leopold and Loren Eiseley, are alluded to frequently in these chapters, as Knoeller emphasizes how the projects of many of the writers he discusses parallel or build on their work. A chapter on Leopold and Eiseley, following the Audubon chapter, that would have briefly outlined their major works, theories, emphases, and contributions to environmental writing would have provided a useful context for the subsequent discussion of the nine literary naturalists who owe an intellectual debt to these men. Overall, though, one of the book’s chief strengths is its breadth of coverage, which makes it appealing to a number of audiences: Midwesternists, biologists, environmentalists, ecologists, historians of science, naturalists, and others. Moreover, it would be an extremely useful course text for classes in nature writing, environmental history, ecological theory, Midwestern history and literature, and possibly even a creative nonfiction course focused on nature writing.

For the better part of a decade, historian Jon K. Lauck has been engaged in an ambitious project to restore Midwestern history to the forefront of the discipline; two of his recent such efforts are discussed here. *From Warm Center to Ragged Edge* explores the question of why the Midwest failed to live up to predictions that it would one day become the dominant national region. Despite the promise of the Midwest articulated by Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Jackson Turner, Sherwood Anderson and others, by 1950 the region had been eclipsed by the cultural and political hegemony of the East and West coasts. “My primary purpose here is to analyze the forces that wilted Midwestern identity by mid-century, and, more generally, to bolster

the new and concerted search for the history and culture of the lost region at the heart of our nation by studying what went wrong, or examining how the Midwest as a region faded from our collective imagination, fell off the map, and became an object of derision,” asserts Lauck (3).

Lauck largely succeeds in accomplishing these goals. His three chapters proceed more or less chronologically: he first examines the 1920 “revolt from the village” thesis that Carl Van Doren articulated in an October 1921 essay in the *Nation* and that Lauck believes to have instigated and sustained a decline of interest in and respect for Midwestern literature and culture. He then discusses those writers, scholars, politicians and intellectuals of the first half of the twentieth century who wrote in resistance to the revolt thesis, and concludes by analyzing how the study of Midwestern history became marginalized and nearly obliterated shortly after midcentury.

In “The Myth of the Midwestern ‘Revolt from the Village,’” Lauck delineates some of the cultural forces that brought about and perpetuated the notion of a revolt from the village. Asserting that “[t]he village revolt interpretation is simplistic and flawed, and its ‘institutionalization’ within the annals of history clouds our vision of the midwestern past” (14), Lauck heavily emphasizes the efforts of Eastern elitists like Van Doren, Van Wyck Brooks, Alfred Kazin, H. L. Mencken, and Frederick Lewis Allen, as well as other leftist scholars and writers, to paint the Midwest as a soul-destroying backwater from which anyone with a modicum of artistic, literary, or intellectual talent would seek to escape. Lauck also looks at political and cultural forces that converged to undermine the myth of the idyllic, democratic Midwestern town and, by extension, the region itself: the rejection of Victorian values and Christian mores; the growing influence of social sciences such as anthropology, sociology and psychology; Marxist attacks on small-town values; historians who denigrated the Turner thesis as part of a zeitgeist that fostered debunking; the anti-village bias of Eastern publishing houses; and the privileging of expatriate narratives of rebellion. He concludes the chapter with his most persuasive argument, focusing on the work of the three writers best known as village rebels—Edgar Lee Masters, Sinclair Lewis, and Sherwood Anderson. Lauck emphasizes the ambivalence of these texts and their authors’ commitment to Jeffersonian agrarianism; moreover, he quotes their own testimony: all three went on

the record in denying that they were writing in any revolt-from-the-village tradition.

In his second chapter, "The Failed Revolt against the Revolt," Lauck discusses a group of regionalists who persevered during the heyday of the revolt "movement" and the cultural trends, such as urbanism, internationalism, mass culture, Marxism, New Deal politics, and the US entry into World War II, that marginalized their work: the historian Stuart Pratt Sherman; John T. Frederick, who founded the regional journal, *The Midland*; novelists Ruth Suckow, Herbert Quick, Bess Streeter Aldrich, and Dorothy Canfield Fisher; Iowa poet Jay Sigmund; Wisconsin writer August Derleth; Nebraska writer and activist Meridel Le Sueur; and the later work of Hamlin Garland. One of the virtues of this book is the attention it gives to these neglected Midwestern writers, thus helping to dispel the impression that Ronald Weber leaves in *The Midwestern Ascendancy in American Writing* (Indiana UP, 2003) that Midwestern literature came to an end in 1930. Lauck also might have discussed the work of Pulitzer Prize-winning novelists Margaret Ayer Barnes, Josephine Johnson, and Louis Bromfield, poets James Hearst and James Wright, farm novelists Herbert Krause and Phil Stong, Ohio fiction writer and dramatist Dawn Powell, Norwegian American novelist Ole Rolvaag, Wisconsin novelist Glenway Wescott, and *New Yorker* editor William Maxwell, who wrote stories and novels set in his native central Illinois. Indeed, these authors deserve a book of their own, one that perhaps will be Lauck's next project.

Lauck's third chapter, "The Decline of Midwestern History," traces the trajectory of this subfield, which hit its high-water mark shortly before mid-century with the founding of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and its journal, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, and then sank into near oblivion, overwhelmed by the effects of World War II and postwar cultural forces such as Cold War politics, '60s radicalism, a growing internationalist emphasis, the professionalization of the discipline, and the broadening of historical studies.

Lauck has written a book that every historian and Midwesternist will want to own, yet it could have been so much more. Loath to fall into the trap of reviewing the book the reviewer wishes the author had written, I still would like to have seen the material on the counter-revolt Midwestern writers expanded; there is so much more to say about them and their work, not to mention other such regionalist

efforts that Lauck touches on. Briefly mentioned in chapter two's discussion of the resistance movement are "[s]ome New Deal Programs" that promoted regionalism (50). These programs, such as the Midwest Play Bureau of the Federal Writers Project, headed by Iowan Susan Glaspell; the FWP's Folklore Project; the Illinois Writers' Project's landmark *The Negro in Illinois*, to which Richard Wright contributed; and the wonderful FWP-sponsored American Guides initiative, in which all twelve Midwestern states are represented with a volume, deserve a fuller treatment.

If only Lauck could envision a more complex and inclusive Midwest, one that is more than prairie, farmland, and small towns! While he cites "urbanization" as one of the social forces that led to the decline of Midwestern history, throughout the book, he seems not to acknowledge that there is an urban as well as a rural Midwest. Alongside the statement that the "proletarian novels of Jack Conroy, James T. Farrell, and Nelson Algren began to edge out the work of older regionalists. . . ." (53), I made the marginal note, "Aren't they, too, Midwestern?" Lauck writes that he hopes he "can elucidate how and why the Midwest's fortunes declined so dramatically in intellectual and cultural circles during the past half century and how we might find the Midwest once again" (8), but we will not find it only in cornfields and country towns. He seems to acknowledge this when he calls for the amplification of African American and Hispanic Midwestern voices and says that "the amalgam of old and new, forgotten and to-be-discovered, and the collisions between them could make a compelling scholarly enterprise . . ." (102). If only that sentiment could have been the guiding spirit of the book!

Lauck's edited collection, *The Midwestern Moment*, the first volume in the Rediscovering the Midwest series that Hastings College Press is publishing, is more inclusive, as would be expected of a compendium of the work of sixteen different authors. These chapters focus on the period of Midwestern ascendancy known as the Midwestern Moment when "Midwesterners began to forge a strong regional culture and find voices to speak for the region. . ." (ix). The chapters can be divided roughly into three categories: those that examine lesser-discussed Midwestern writers (Tarkington, Aldrich, Suckow, and Sigmund, as well as the more obscure Walt Mason and Frazier Hunt); those that discuss significant shapers of Midwestern literary and cultural history: (the Society of Midland Authors, the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, South Dakota artist Harvey

Dunn, radio pioneer Henry Field, the Midwestern Catholic agrarian movement, Jane Addams's Hull-House work, and the Chicago Renaissance); and those that take a more theoretical approach, focusing on the development of the region's identity. The latter essays examine how corn came to represent the heartland, how critics' misreadings of two major "revolt" novels contributed to the denigration of the Midwest, and how middlebrow Midwestern literature has helped shape the cultural construction of the region, respectively.

The most interesting chapters combine two or three of these emphases, such as Paul Emory Putz's "The Homer of Middle America," which not only examines the newspaper verse of nationally syndicated poet Walt Mason but also the ways in which Mason's work, shaped by the region, became a representative Midwestern voice. "Mason took the middle-class ideology of the nineteenth-century Midwest and repackaged it into new cultural forms fit for an age of mass consumption," writes Putz (124), arguing that we can better understand the cultural power of the Midwestern small-town ideal of the early twentieth century by examining Mason's role in helping to establish it.

Another such chapter, Jeremy Beer's "Midlander: Booth Tarkington's Defense of the Midwest," argues that Tarkington's embrace of his Midwestern identity and his defense of his region both helped to establish his national reputation and led to its decline as the cachet of the Midwest deteriorated and other modes of literature—naturalism, modernism—became dominant; subsequently, critics began to perceive him as a romanticizer of an idyllic heartland rather than the author of realist works that chronicled the downside of Midwestern industrialization and urbanization, as recorded in his Growth trilogy. While other explanations for Tarkington's eclipse can be found—the casual racism that is employed for comic effect in much of his work, the deliberately commercial thrust of some of his novels and many of his plays—Beer's argument complicates our understanding of Tarkington's rise and fall by showing how the changing view of the Midwest became entangled with his reputation.

Professor Meg Gillette of Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, inspired an ambitious and successful recovery project when she challenged her students to research and write about several early twentieth-century authors from the Iowa/Illinois Tri-Cities (now known as the Quad Cities). The resulting book, *The Stories We Tell: Modernism in the Tri-Cities*, covers eight such writers, most of whom

went on to achieve national notice: novelist Octave Thanet (Alice French); *Masses* editor Floyd Dell; poet Arthur Davison Ficke; George Cram Cook, founder of the Provincetown Players and his wife, Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatist Susan Glaspell; Newbery Award winner Cornelia Meigs; showman William “Buffalo Bill” Cody; and mystery writer Charlotte Murray Russell. While it’s a bit of a stretch to include some of these writers in a volume with the word “modernism” in the title, the book makes a valuable and unique contribution to Midwestern recovery efforts, for each student’s scholarly essay on his/her author is paired with at least one example of or excerpt from that author’s oeuvre. A particularly insightful and well-focused essay is Megan Boedecker’s piece on Glaspell and Dell’s radical journalism that is accompanied by six newspaper articles Glaspell published on the Hossack murder trial that furnished the material for her most famous play, *Trifles*, and two pieces of political critique by Dell from the *Tri-City Worker* and the *Liberator*, respectively. In addition to his journalism and criticism, Dell also wrote novels and plays, and he is especially well represented in this volume; his work is discussed in three essays and represented with excerpts from his novels *Moon-Calf* and *Janet March* in addition to the two leftist periodical pieces mentioned above. Another strong essay is Isaac Lauritsen’s “Susan Glaspell, Existentialist,” which traces the Nietzschean influences on Glaspell’s modernist play, *The Verge*. The volume concludes with an essay about letters written by Native Americans who were interned at Fort McClellan in East Davenport after the Dakota Conflict of 1862.

While Robert Morss Lovett focused largely on economic concerns, he specifically recognized the value of literary pursuits in the Middle Western renaissance for which he was arguing. He noted that “[t]he Middle West had already become the home of regionalism in American literature” and that Chicago had attained “prominence in the literary world. . .” (54). The four books under review here validate Lovett’s argument and show the way forward to future recovery efforts.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

DYLAN'S DESTINY: LEGENDS AND TRUE LIES: A REVIEW ESSAY

JAMES A. LEWIN

Bob Dylan: American Troubadour, by Donald Brown. NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

Bob Dylan: A Biography, by Bob Batchelor. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2014.

Another Side of Bob Dylan: A Personal History on the Road and off the Tracks, by Jacob Maymudes. NY: St. Martin's, 2014.

Light Come Shining: The Transformations of Bob Dylan, by Andrew McCarron. NY: Oxford, 2017.

Dylan: The Biography, by Dennis McDougal. NY: Wiley/Turner, 2014.

From day one, he defied definition. Now, however, the whole world has finally learned how to categorize Bob Dylan: he is a Nobel laureate, awarded the Prize in Literature in 2016 “for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition.” Yet, the question remains, how does a vagabond troubadour become a canonized poet? Increasing the bafflement, Dylan did not show up for the official ceremony in Oslo. True, in 1964, Jean-Paul Sartre established a precedent when he rejected the award on principle. Dylan, however, stiffed the Swedish Academy without explanation, except that he was too busy. Maybe, like Sartre, he did not wish to be anybody's puppet. Or perhaps he was blown away by the irony of being a rolling stone set into the foundation. In June 2017, right at the deadline, he produced the acceptance address, required to receive the big bucks that go with the award.

His essay turned out to be a brilliant, quirky piece of writing. He was accused of plagiarism. So what's new? When the young Dylan switched from acoustic guitar to electrified rock 'n roll, at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, he played over booing audiences. He has

always mocked critics who called on him to be the spokesperson for his generation. While loyal fans received each new album as a cryptic message without a return address, he scoffed at their adulation. More recently, he has played concerts like a zombie, failing to introduce the members of his band. He seems, at times, to have made it his mission to confound everybody's expectations. Nevertheless, his songs remain, inscribed within the broken mailboxes of the heart—where they count most.

David Orr, in the *New York Times Book Review*, tried to undercut the news of Dylan's Nobel:

[W]hile most people have limited experience with poems, they do generally have ideas about what a poet should be like. Typically, this involves a figure who resembles—well, Bob Dylan: a counter-cultural, bookish wanderer who does something involving words, and who is eloquent yet mysterious, wise yet innocent, charismatic yet elusive (and also, perhaps not coincidentally, a white dude). When you join all of these factors—the wide metaphoric scope of “poetry,” the lack of familiarity with actual poetry or poets, the role-playing involved in the popular conception of the poet—it's not hard to see how you might get a Nobel laureate in literature who doesn't actually write poems. (“After Dylan's Nobel, What Makes a Poet a Poet?” *The New York Times Book Review* 24 Mar. 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/24/books/review/after-dylans-nobel-what-makes-a-poet-a-poet.html>)

This pundit warns all poets and poetasters: Beware! It's a jungle out there! The *New York Times Book Review* article devotes scant attention, however, to Dylan's poetics, implying that, perhaps, he does deserve the Nobel Prize because his best lyrics, as he and others perform them, leave us speechless and amazed.

Dylan was blessed from the start with the kind of luck that others only dream of. A 1961 article in the *New York Times* helped boost him to Columbia Records. “Blowin' in the Wind” became an anthem of the Civil Rights Movement. He expanded his audience with acoustic albums that included complex love songs and traditional ballads with cutting edge imagery, as in “A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall.” But when he grafted the electricity of rock 'n roll to his folk roots, his career took off like a rocket, hitting its height between March 22, 1965, the date that Columbia released *Bringing It All Back Home*, through August 30, 1965, with *Highway 61 Revisited*, to its culmination on May 16, 1966, and *Blonde on Blonde*. Ominously,

almost as if expected, there came reports of Dylan suffering a motorcycle accident. Unreported, however, and on the down-low, he married a mystery woman and they began having babies. His music turned bland. In 1975 he seemed to regain his edge, with the breakup of his marriage and *Blood on the Tracks*. Next, as a result of a religious experience while on tour in 1978, Dylan emerged as some kind of a Bible thumper. Subsequently, his career sputtered into decline and devolution, with rare flashes of his unique talent. Yet again, he sparked a major comeback in 1997 with *Time Out of Mind* voted Grammy Album of the Year. After that, he continued to perform and record. He made movies. He painted. He published a volume of his memoirs. Thus, the legend has endured.

There are many valid questions about Dylan, but very few authoritative answers. How did an individual formerly known as Robert Zimmerman become Bob Dylan? What unfathomable secrets remain, as with anyone, concealed in his unconscious? What makes a genius? Destiny? Dumb Luck? Or just persistently Dogging It? It is doubtful whether any one biography of Dylan can articulate his artistic journey as well as his own songs, performances, and other creative endeavors. Yet the gap between the facts of Dylan's life and the myth he has created demands explanation. In his earliest interviews, he described a hardscrabble coming of age while living on the road. He was actually raised in a middle-class family with no great claims to fame. And the more famous he got and the more he had to lose, the more he concealed his private self. His life story raises a cautionary mirror for aspirants to celebrity. Be careful what you wish for.

Somehow, he evolved from an adolescent wannabe following the tragic muse of Buddy Holly to an acolyte of legendary folksinger Woody Guthrie to a nine-day phenomenon with a lucky break in the record business to a growing presence as a writer of songs for a new generation to a bust-out rock 'n roll Rimbaud to a Jesus freak to a has-been grinding out tunes long after the thrill has gone to a good Dad and humble guy who, according to sources, likes to take a sock at a punching bag and even go for a few rounds in the ring, as long as none of his sparring partners tries to knock him out (McDougal 422). Yet he needs to believe he is fighting for something metaphysical. The red thread that shines through the Dylan epic is his knack for putting into words and music the eternal quest for truth and redemption.

Most of us probably have an opinion on Dylan pretty well formed by now, and, unless we are willing to invest a fair amount of time and effort, we are not likely to change our views. So what can new biographies, especially those that were published before Dylan hit the Nobel jackpot, tell us that we don't already know? On the other hand, because of his kaleidoscopic multiplicity, how can we know what we might have missed about him and his accomplishments, unless we give any new volume about him a shot? Yes, but not all shots are created equal. If you were sentenced to solitary with all of Dylan's recordings and could choose one study-aid for further information, Donald Brown's *Bob Dylan: American Troubadour* might be your best bet. The author writes for both the aficionado and the neophyte as an expert guide to the highs and lows of the artist's life and times. Brown eschews speculative psychoanalysis and unsubstantiated gossip while marshalling a plethora of facts and credible sources to portray a cultural icon in the context of his family life, personal relationships, and individual development as a performer and a person. He fills in the historical context while focusing primarily on the literary and musical value of Dylan's long career.

Brown's book provides what we need to appreciate Dylan's greatest and least experiences and accomplishments. It includes close-readings of Dylan's lyrics, a concise chronology of the artist's career within the context of his times, and an annotated bibliography of Dylan's many albums as well as a summary analysis of the most important secondary sources about him. For example, Brown notes that Anthony Scaduto's early 1971 biography remains as "scrupulous and unsensational as one could be at that time" while Robert Shelton's revised 2011 magnum opus benefits from the author's personal closeness to his subject "though that vantage provides distortion as well." He describes the highly regarded Christopher Ricks as being "word-drunk" and skewers the superexpert Clinton Heylin for implying "that every Dylan album would be better, if only Dylan had consulted Heylin first." In contrast, he praises Howard Sounes's 2011 volume for unearthing new facts while avoiding opinions about Dylan's cultural influence, which he calls "actually refreshing" (Brown 240-242).

Brown is especially skillful in providing close literary analysis of Dylan's development as a writer. He not only interprets the songs line by line, but also helps the reader to comprehend each successive album as a more or less coherent statement. About "Like a Rolling

Stone,” Brown observes: “Dylan aims his derision at those who live a life of cultural vampirism, sucking their sustenance from the buzz of stardom. And yet, the song is not simply contemptuous, for without ‘the complete unknowns’ — which every star was at some point — how could the stars be stars?” (40). And, giving serious analysis to an album that non-Dylanologists may find difficult to understand, Brown shows why the apparent simplicity of *John Wesley Harding* requires an allegorical approach to explain how its songs “offer twelve parts of a single statement,” with an enigmatic and prophetic subtext that “might be too awful if stated outright” (68,72). Without getting too highbrow about it, Brown’s attention to the coherent intertextuality of songs on a single album parallels the way William Butler Yeats composed each of his books around a central theme.

Most biographies of Dylan, understandably, focus less on his poetic acumen and more on the nitty-gritty details of his life story. The Dylan Industry, though not valued as highly as Shakespeare Incorporated, still plays a role in the economy, providing work for academics and journalists, because his *Destiny* fascinates us and entices us to explore how his unconscious inspired his work. For the ever-expanding library on Dylan, however, discrimination is required. We should not judge a book by its cover, but sometimes the title gives us a clue. Thus, Bob Batchelor’s *Bob Dylan: A Biography* is a primer for student essays. The indefinite “a” connotes humility, but risks having the volume consigned to “a” slush pile. In contrast, Dennis McDougal’s *Dylan: The Biography* attempts a no-holds-barred compendium of all things Dylan, the good, the bad, and the nasty. A definite “the” promises to deliver the final word but risks seeming presumptuous.

Rather than attempting a comprehensive account of “Dylan’s life or work,” Batchelor focuses on the “creation of a cultural icon” (xiii-xiv). The author bases his approach on “symbolic interactionism,” a methodology of philosophical pragmatism to explain “how people create” meaning and identity through “a constant negotiation, modification, and re-assemblage as they interact with others” (9). Batchelor’s strongest insights stem from his exploring how “being commodified” created the legend of Dylan and how Dylan manipulated his iconic image for monetary profit and personal camouflage. Thus, Batchelor illustrates how the fiduciary relationship between “the singer and songwriter of the age” and the “money machine

developing around him” confirms that the music industry “is first and foremost a business” (39-41).

In this analysis, Dylan’s decision in 2004 to participate in a television ad for Victoria’s Secret lingerie does not signify that “Dylan simply sold out for cash and the opportunity to mess with people’s image of him” but involves “how an aging rocker remains relevant in the 21st century” (85). In this view, Dylan adapted to a “converged society” of multi-media “information overload” and “a seemingly endless cloud of marketing, advertising, sales, and informational touch points demanding something from consumers” (105). By creating an indelible public persona, Dylan hid his private self. “Dylan did such a good job that the image replaced whatever became of the real person beneath it all” (122). Ultimately, then, it seems no more possible to define the real Dylan than the real Shakespeare.

Batchelor’s purpose is to write a useful resource for “school assignments and student research” (ix). He follows the formula of the Greenwood series of biographies on a variety of subjects in popular culture, including Miley Cyrus, Lady Gaga, Bono, and Stephen Colbert, among others. Perhaps the intended young adult audience accounts for the book’s stilted style and heavily expurgated content. On a deeper level, the author could have further pursued his logic to delve more into what Herbert Marcuse, using a Freudian-Marxist methodology, calls “repressive de-sublimation” that contains the energy of counter-cultural creativity into a one-dimensional commercial product, limiting the inspiration of the artist and diminishing the potential impact of the artist’s work.

In contrast to Batchelor, Dennis McDougal writes in the style of a reporter for *Hollywood Confidential*, an omniscient hipster with insider details at his fingertips. He provides information and debunks misconceptions. But this volume does not necessarily have the final word, if only because Dylan refuses to play by the rules of literal verifiable facts. Moreover, even the most lively and fresh tell-all biography may slip into a then-this-happened-followed-by-that chronology without much of a reason or rhyme, beyond changing circumstances, for the various twists and turns, rises and falls, of which Dylan has had many.

To make the biographer’s task more difficult, Dylan’s penchant for misdirection and fabrication must be sorted through recollections by others who may have their own tendency to self-aggrandizement or an ax to grind for offenses of the past. McDougal helps to distin-

guish the verifiable facts of Dylan's life from counterfeit allegations, except that he tends to give more credence to negative information about Dylan's worst tendencies. He portrays Dylan as a put-on artist who teases and mocks journalists and academics to create his own sense of identity. Tracking back to when Dylan was a teenager named Bobby Zimmerman, McDougal finds that he was "the undisputed master of *glissendorf*, a cruel adolescent game in which school-yard pals conspire to confuse an innocent third party with nonsense and misdirection for no other purpose than to humiliate" (10). The derivation of *glissendorf* is unclear, but the term well describes how Dylan has responded to personal inquiries, turning away scrutiny of his behavior by redirecting the discussion to the alleged misunderstanding of others.

Early in his career, Dylan told interviewers that he grew up as an orphan spending "six years on South Dakota's Art B. Thomas carnival circuit running Ferris wheels, manning midway booths, reading palms, and befriending freaks" (McDougal 67). Even after he had achieved celebrity, Dylan, in *Chronicles Volume I*, under the guise of a memoir, writes of characters who influenced him—although their existence has not been independently verified. For example, the opium-smoking "*eminence grise*" Ray Gooch and his female companion, Chloe Kiel, are portrayed as living together in an East Village apartment with a private library of the great books of civilization from Thucydides to Jules Verne (50). Also, there is Sun Pie, the Chinese proprietor of the meticulously described "King Tut's Museum: a roadside trinket emporium" (368). According to McDougal, the fascinating truth of these Dylanesque encounters seems based on fiction rather than fact.

Dylan has lived an entangled life as a man. A lot of the deeper mystery lies in his intimate relationships with women. Many of his songs are about love, deception and redemption between the singer and his (sometimes ex-) beloved. The biographers help, providing in-depth background about Suze Rotollo, the blonde woman who jilted Dylan; Joan Baez, the brunette he jilted back. McDougal informs us that Suze Rotollo—known for her charismatic cover photos on Dylan's second album, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*,—was a "'red diaper baby' of openly Communist parents" who educated Dylan about the poetry of Rimbaud and the poetics of Robert Graves and served as his guide to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (52-54). According to McDougal, Rotollo recalled "her first serious

boyfriend” as a self-promoter: “Every move he made was calculated” (471). But the singer of “Boots of Spanish Leather” and “Mama, You’ve Been on My Mind” does not seem quite so detached. A celebrity in her own right, Joan Baez was already a famous performer when she helped introduce the little-known Dylan to a wider audience at the Newport Folk Festival. For a season, they seemed like the uncrowned royalty of folk music. Dylan repaid her kindness on his 1965 tour of England by relegating Baez to “a corner of his hotel suite” and never inviting her to join him on stage (115). In recent years, they have reportedly renewed their friendship.

McDougal works overtime to verify the rumors and separate reality from the hype, putting the complexities of his subject’s love life under a microscope: Yet, how much do the details of Dylan’s private affairs, while intriguing as gossip, add to an understanding of his work? McDougal makes Dylan’s marriages, long-term relationships, and brief infatuations a major element of his book, revealing many facts about Dylan’s private world. He collates a comprehensive chronology of Dylan’s “hookups and mistresses” (537), which he dismisses with moralistic condescension as “indiscriminate rutting” (256). But the real secrets, the quality of his relationships with his wives, mistresses, and children, and how Dylan integrates personal experience into his art, remain secret.

While McDougal writes dismissively of Dylan’s splashy love affairs, he strives to show more sensitivity to Dylan’s relationship with his wife Sara and their years living out of the spotlight as the parents of four children and a fifth, whom Dylan adopted, from Sara’s first marriage. But aside from quoting Dylan as describing Sara as “saintly” (105), McDougal offers little evidence of what brought them together. Perhaps that is because the author had scant material to work with. He does provide more background on how the marriage ended, in a difficult divorce, noting that their settlement cost Dylan an estimated \$36 million and included a clause requiring Sara not to speak publicly about him (266).

Dylan married a second time, without publicity, to former back-up singer Carolyn Dennis, who became the mother of his daughter in January 1986. McDougal raises the possibility that Dylan may have had other secret marriages, and other children, but the facts are not confirmed (349). He does catalog the names and backgrounds of several Dylan paramours, usually with a snide quip. Also, he focuses in

depth on the \$5 million lawsuit for palimony filed in November 1994 by Ruth Tyrangiel. McDougal appears as a witness for the plaintiff:

The Bob Dylan she [Tyrangiel] described under oath was a far cry from the prophet of his generation. Here was the niggling effete who offered Ruth a 40 percent commission on his art if she could find a gallery to take it. Here was a profligate husband who blurbed the dust cover of a 1989 book on the need of orthodox Jews to exercise monogamy while he juggled multiple affairs, including ongoing trysts with Ruth. (415)

McDougal exposes Dylan's hypocrisy and polyamorous involvements across a wide spectrum of relationships, but he does not go behind the surface to question how Dylan's multiple loves relate to the multiplicity of perspectives in his songs. While acknowledging Dylan's seriousness about his responsibilities as a father, McDougal does not explain why Dylan has a different sense of himself as a husband and lover, or how the singer's deepest longings intertwine with his muse.

One of the strengths of this book lies in McDougal's filling in the details about a variety of secondary figures in Dylan's world. For example, he credits a trio of major backers who promoted Dylan to stardom. First in this triumvirate was John Hammond, the "independently wealthy great-grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt," who was legendary in the music business for being the first to introduce Billie Holiday and a long list of jazz greats to "mainstream white America." Hammond would also be credited for "discovering" not only Aretha Franklin but also Bruce Springsteen (56-7). The second major proponent of Dylan's early success was Robert Shelton, music critic for the *New York Times*, whose rave review of one of Dylan's early live performance at Gerdes Folk City "piqued Hammond's interest":

Although only 20 years old, Bob Dylan is one of the most distinctive stylists to play in a Manhattan cabaret in months. Resembling a cross between a choir boy and a beatnik, Mr. Dylan has a cherubic look and a mop of tousled hair he partly covers up with a Huck Finn black corduroy cap. His clothes may need a bit of tailoring, but when he works his guitar, harmonica, or piano and composes new songs faster than he can remember them, there is no doubt that he is bursting with talent. . . . (Shelton qtd. in McDougal 57)

The third major player behind Dylan's ascension was Albert Grossman, Dylan's manager. While his other godfathers promoted

Dylan mainly for glory, Grossman collected twenty percent off the top (337). McDougal leaves the question open whether Dylan could have made it without him.

Later in his career, Dylan also came under the influence of a different sort of mentor, an artist and teacher named Norman Raeben, the seventy-three-year-old son of canonical Yiddish author Sholom Aleichem (224). Raeben knew nothing of Dylan as a pop star when he accepted him as one of his students. A stern taskmaster, Raeben responded to Dylan's attempts at painting with harsh criticism. For his part, "Bob left his ego at the door and suffered Raeben's dismissive scolds and abuse" as he evolved a new visual world view that, Dylan later testified, "allowed me to do consciously what I unconsciously felt" (225). This perspective evolved into an effort to become a "conscious artist" in contrast to the intuitive method Dylan had relied on for his early songs, which he has said "just came through me" with almost entirely spontaneous inspiration (264, 477).

Another character in the saga of Dylan was Alan Jules Weberman, self-defined as the "first full time Dylanologist" with an intense love-hate fascination for the most negative aspects of his hero's life and career. This obsession with all things Dylan manifested in conspiracy theories, built on unorthodox techniques such as playing Dylan songs backward, "to extricate hidden meaning" (182). Weberman has been most notorious for picking through the garbage left outside of the Dylan family's brownstone residence in Greenwich Village, searching for hypodermic needles to prove a heroin addiction or any other incriminating evidence of Dylan's perfidy. When the Dylans realized what was happening, they added extra dog excrement and soiled diapers to their daily trash bag, but that did not diminish Weberman's zeal. Ultimately, Dylan had to track Weberman down, grab him by the neck, and beat his head on the pavement to persuade him to cease and desist (193).

McDougal emphasizes Dylan's split personality of "two distinct Bobs. Bob Zimmerman played chess, jammed and joked with friends, and poked at punching bags, but Bob Dylan was a brand-name enterprise" (433). He could also turn on a friend and sometime rival like Phil Ochs, who was "famously ejected" from Dylan's limo in a New York blink-of-the-eye (McDougal 241). His drug of choice was red wine. Did he take LSD? His fans did, and marijuana, though illegal, was prevalent. He must have taken a fair amount of amphetamines for the all-nighters he describes in song. Did he also use

cocaine, heroin, horse tranquilizer? Were you there when he did? Actually, except for “Rainy Day Women” and possibly “Mr. Tambourine Man,” he pretty much eschewed direct drug references in his lyrics.

For a more intimate perspective from somebody who knew Dylan as well as anyone, it is worth the reader’s curiosity to peruse *Another Side of Bob Dylan: A Personal History on the Road and off the Tracks*. This book packages a text within a text like Russian nesting dolls. Its rambling, hyperkinetic collage of interlocking vignettes comes thanks to some strange karma. Briefly, when his mother’s hippy palace burned to the ground, Jacob Maymudes, the son of the central narrator, discovered a trove of audiotapes from his father, which he transcribed and compiled into the adventurous memoir of Dylan’s on-again-off-again road manager, Victor Maymudes, providing provocative catnip for Dylanologists. According to McDougal, Victor Maymudes was “Dylan’s best friend, roadie, and chief confidante” (76). He also served as unofficial bodyguard and chess partner.

First meeting Dylan when the future icon was living hand-to-mouth, sleeping on people’s couches, and hanging out in coffee shops hoping for somebody to buy him a meal, Maymudes says he found Dylan deeply indrawn. “During our time together I learned how to master the art of silence, and in this area he was my teacher” (43). Over their forty-year friendship, Victor also saw the fallible side of an artist seeking sparks of “compassion, understanding and sympathy from others,” although these were the things he had “a hard time giving to anybody” (86). In February of 1964, he and Dylan and two other friends took off on a road trip in the manner of Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*. While the other voyagers bounced around in the back seat, Victor drove the van through the woods of North Carolina for a surprise visit to the poet Carl Sandburg. Victor is perhaps best known for first turning the Beatles on to marijuana, although he notes it “wasn’t actually their first time trying it, like everyone believes. . . . But until that night, they never had the rush” (108). He also claims to have been present with Dylan on his first LSD trip in April of 1964 (101).

After Dylan became a star, Maymudes had to pull him through a mob of fans: “I opened the door and when the crowd noticed him they all went nuts screaming and trying to grab him. I pulled Bob between my arms, put both my hands on the wall and slid down the hallway

slowly pushing people out of the way. I could feel pressure on my entire body from people pushing into us. There wasn't an inch of space. I was afraid of Bob being crushed by the weight of the crowd!" (43). Eventually, Dylan also learned to use protective camouflage to hide in plain sight: "He hunches over, he softens his body, curls his shoulders, and walks so innocuously that you don't pay attention to him" (104). Leading him in lockstep, Maymudes says he could conceal Dylan entering and exiting his concerts.

A self-avowed "outlaw" (i.e., claiming to live by a moral rather than legal code), Victor recounts how he once (and only once) drove 100 kilos of weed from California to New York to earn about \$30,000 for his family (Maymudes 160). Victor Maymudes portrays himself as, above all, a devoted servant to his friend: "If I had an ego, I would have thought what I provided was worth more. When everybody else was posturing, I was carrying the baggage. When everyone was jumping in the spotlight, I was jumping out of it to make sure we didn't miss our ride or to make sure we didn't lose anything. And I was having more fun than anybody and doing the job right" (62). Years later, having gone his separate way, Maymudes called his old friend out of the blue and begged for a job, desperate to support himself and his family: "I was running out of money rapidly and needed income. I gave Bob a call in my desperation. He answered and I simply said, 'Bob, I need a job.' He instantly replied, 'You're hired! Come out next week and we'll talk about the money'" (Maymudes 191). When the times were good, they were great. But the end was not nice. They had a major dispute over the coffee house in Santa Monica owned by Dylan and managed by Maymudes's daughter. The final break came when Maymudes, accused of sexually propositioning a minor, was summarily kicked off the bus.

For further perspective on Dylan's pilgrimage, Andrew McCarron's *Light Come Shining: The Transformations of Bob Dylan* focuses on three turning points in Dylan's development: his motorcycle accident in 1966, his religious conversion in 1978, and his comeback since the late nineties. McCarron's analysis may not click for everyone, but the book is valuable for the questions it poses. McCarron declares that he will not "get hung up on the historical accuracy" of biography. Instead, he focuses on a recurring pattern of behavior that he calls "*the destiny script*" (34 italics in original). Essentially, McCarron says the three key turning points in Dylan's career involve "a loss of identity and purpose that leaves him vul-

nerable to death and destruction.” The resolution of each crisis comes through Dylan’s return to the “songs and artists of his youth” (71). McCarron describes how each turning point reconfigured, for Dylan, the meaning of life.

McCarron claims that these recurring scenarios in Dylan’s experience signify “an increasingly religious form as time passes” (52). The motorcycle accident on July 29, 1966, however severe or slight in terms of physical injury, allowed Dylan the “means of figuring out who he was on a deeper level,” a hiatus that began about half a year after the birth of his first son in January of 1966 and encompassed the death of his own father in the spring of 1968. This period of retreat from the public sphere enabled Dylan to pursue a deeper return to the “annals of American musical tradition to determine who he was and where he was destined to travel next” (70-71).

The second awakening Dylan experienced came about a little more than a year after his “messy and tabloid-exploited” divorce in July of 1977 (77). McCarron points out the similarity between Dylan’s depiction of his mystical encounter and the experience of his motorcycle accident: “I felt my whole body tremble. The glory of the lord knocked me down and picked me up” (84-5). As a result of his conversion experience, Dylan became an avowedly born-again performer, adopting a fire-and-brimstone style that thrilled some Evangelical fans discovering Dylan for the first time while disappointing many long-time followers from his secular audience. Dylan has been fascinated, through much of his career, with the Book of Revelations and an apocalyptic sense of the End of Days. And even though his theological zeal gradually became less confrontational, McCarron argues, “Dylan has never entirely disavowed the change that began taking root in the Tucson hotel room” in November of 1978 (93).

What followed was a long decade of personal and professional stagnation, culminating in a third and final “reshuffled version of *the destiny script*” which inspired a rededication of himself as a conduit and creator of the American musical tradition. Citing an interview published in *Newsweek* a decade later, Dylan entered the third and final stage of his destiny script in 1987 with a realization from an inner voice: “I’m determined to stand, whether God will deliver me or not” (111-112). McCarron labels Dylan’s “annihilation anxiety” as the key to his transformations. He traces this syndrome to Dylan’s experience as a ten-year-old at the height of the Cold War when all

pupils had to crouch under their desks and cover their heads with their hands, a maneuver known as duck-and-cover, in a preparedness drill for the possibility of a nuclear conflagration. McCarron posits that this “terrifying experience” left a psychic scar on Dylan, further “strengthened by his knowledge of the Holocaust and its genocidal implications for Jews” (157). Yet, while dread of nuclear annihilation did obsess everyone during those years, in my recollection, these air-raid drills seemed not so much horrifying as absurd. The notion that we could be saved from the Soviets by a game of hide-and-seek gave me the sense that the people in charge had no clue what they were doing. Maybe this technique would be effective at the outer radius of a nuclear explosion. But what I recall most was a worrying sense of the world being ruled by great powers with very questionable authority.

McCarron seems to grasp for a Rosebud-like objective correlative on which to hang his overall theory of Dylan as a Proteus-like “transfigured” individual whose life reconciles two “distinct and at times contradictory” narratives. One subplot of this “destiny script” leads through “a world gone horribly wrong” in which “the self wanders lost and threatened.” Yet, “the second narrative involves a story of redemptive self-discovery. . . . driven by the drums of destiny to reinvent himself through song” (191).

Dylan was always a seeker of a deeper, basically mystical or quasi-religious awareness. But his faith, rather than directly informing his music, evolved out of the music he made and the musical tradition he built upon. He has refused to become a member of his own cult. On the other hand, in the long, drawn-out decades since his motorcycle accident, the quality of Dylan’s creativity rarely, if ever, has risen to the level of his earlier work. If his personal life took center stage during the later years of his career, perhaps that is because the songs have not been as original or as riveting. Unable to return to glory days, the artist, shark-like, still must keep moving. In his own words, “He not busy being born is busy dying.”

How important is it, finally, to make a decisive call on whether Dylan is ultimately a Christian Jew, or a Jewish Christian, or a Taoist follower of the *I Ching*, or all of the above wrapped in a tortilla with jalapeno peppers? Similarly, how crucial is it to calculate the number of women he slept with between shows or even how much alimony and child support he must pay? How much should his personal foibles matter when he turns out lines like: “The answer my

friend is blowin' in the wind," or "It is not he or she or them or it that you belong to," or "When your gravity fails and negativity can't pull you through," or "The ghost of electricity howls in the bones of her face," among a myriad of brilliant verses culled from a collective unconscious? Even if he is an exasperating partial poseur as a person, we can continue to draw inspiration from Dylan's poetics in "Mr. Tambourine Man," "Like a Rolling Stone," "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," "The Ballad of a Thin Man," and hymns of despair such as "Desolation Row" that could, metaphorically, indeed represent "T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound fighting in the captain's tower." His songs are what signify. They represent the reason why he won the Nobel Prize.

Shepherd University

COMPOSING WOMEN: WRITING, FEMALE IDENTITY AND FRONTIER LIFE IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

SUZANNE DAY BROWN

There are striking parallels between nineteenth-century writer Caroline Kirkland and twenty-first-century writer and blogger Ree Drummond (aka Pioneer Woman). The narrative qualities of the diary-style prose used by Kirkland in her book, *A New Home, Who'll Follow?*, and Drummond in her blog, *Pioneer Woman*, highlight the similarities of how women express themselves and their female experiences and also demonstrate how writing connects women across generations.

In Kirkland's autobiographical book, *A New Home, Who'll Follow?*, the female protagonist, Mary Clavers, is a pseudonym for Kirkland herself. Kirkland chronicles moving from New York to Detroit, Michigan, in the 1830s to homestead and settle the village of "Montacute" (now Pinckney, Michigan). Kirkland experiences firsthand the challenges associated with creating a whole new life in the untamed West of the Michigan frontier. Kirkland writes "letters" to friends and family that become the basis for her book and eventually reach a wider audience of readers throughout time (Kirkland 3).

Drummond, like Kirkland, chronicles her experiences leaving the comforts of a metropolitan lifestyle to live on a remote ranch on the prairie of the American West. She begins blogging as a way to keep in touch with her family and friends who live far away. Through her blogging discourse, she finds her identity as "Pioneer Woman" and documents the daily struggles of being a rancher's wife, mother, and community member and activist. Drummond's voice resonates with so many other isolated women in the twenty-first century, regardless of physical location, who crave connection and community in a space outside of their city limits—a new digital frontier. Drummond shows how isolation can come in the form of physical location (this is the

case for her, living on a remote ranch) or mental and emotional isolation (which applies to many of the women who participate in mommy blogging communities). In this way, Drummond lives up to her name as Pioneer Woman, not only in her real life, but also in her online life as she helps to pave the way for mommy bloggers to follow. The “mom-o-sphere” allows women of the twenty-first century to practice traditions passed on to them from their ancestral mothers, writers like Kirkland, for example, using the process of writing as self-expression and connection to community in a space that is created by them and for them: mommy blogs. Both Kirkland and Drummond use writing to create identity, process daily life, and build communities with other women, activities that demonstrate how composition links and empowers female writers across time, resulting in social reform in the time periods in which they write.

What these two women have in common is their use of writing to express themselves. Kirkland is a writer by profession and she uses her skills to write her autobiography. At first, she begins using the form of letter-writing not only to entertain herself, but to make connections with her family and friends in New York. Nathaniel Lewis says that Kirkland relied “on the letters she sent to her friends in the East, letters that served as a basis for her book” (63). She receives so much positive feedback that she decides to write her book based on her real-life experiences. In her book, *A New Home, Who’ll Follow?*, Kirkland states, “I have been for some time contemplating the possibility of something like a detailed account of our experiences. And I have determined to give them to the world, in a form not very different from that in which they were originally recorded” (3). Her narrative speaks directly to the reader at times, which makes it feel like an intimate conversation. Lewis asserts that “[l]etter writing . . . sustained the quality of private communication . . . explain[ing] the popularity of the form with many women writers of the antebellum period” (64). Lewis goes on to say that “[m]any authors explained that they relied on their own letters (and diaries, notes, and journals) written soon after—or even during—the related experience” (64). Therefore, letters were often another form of diary style or journaling prose that was used to chronicle life events. Regardless of the medium that she chose, Kirkland’s form of writing was an “inviting and empowering avenue for women writers” (Lewis 64). In her personal writings, she shares thoughts, anecdotes, and opinions that she normally wouldn’t share,

illuminating how the process of writing about one's experiences allows a writer to express self in a unique way.

Ree Drummond, twenty-first-century blogger and writer, began writing publicly for very similar reasons. Although not a writer by profession initially, Drummond uses her abilities to actively engage her audience as they read about her life as "Pioneer Woman." Drummond grew up "on the seventh fairway of a golf course," in the prairie state of Oklahoma ("About Pioneer Woman"). She left Oklahoma to attend college and work in California and, while there, she lived a fast-paced urban lifestyle that distanced her from the prairie state. When Drummond met and married Ladd Drummond, a cowboy and rancher, she returned to the heartland and forged a new life and identity for herself on a cattle ranch "on the frontier" in the middle of "nowhere" and began her "long transition from city girl to domestic country wife" ("About Pioneer Woman").

Drummond took the persona of "Pioneer Woman" as her blogging profile after becoming inspired by the stories of her husband's great-great-grandmother, Addie, who homesteaded on the family ranch with her husband Fred in the late nineteenth century ("A Slice . . ."). Drummond was inspired by their story, but especially by the pioneer fortitude she found in Addie. She writes in a post from November of 2006: "Then there was Addie . . . Addie was the bomb dot com; she really set the standard for future generations of Pioneer Women, present company included. She was so frugal, she used to save the blood from butchering her chickens and pour it over her vegetable garden as fertilizer. I buy Miracle Grow at Lowes." Drummond writes about having a mild obsession with "the original pioneer woman" in a blog post on November 30, 2006. "I go through periods of being quite consumed with Addie, The Original Pioneer Woman. I want to be her. I want to sell eggs to Indians and pour chicken blood over my asparagus plants" ("Me & Addie . . ."). As Drummond draws parallels (humorously and seriously) between herself and Addie, she finds an identity and place for herself in the frontier land of Oklahoma.

This metaphorical and regional identity of being the "Pioneer Woman" is important for Drummond for two reasons. First, Drummond's taking on the persona of "Pioneer Woman" links her to past generations and helps establish her own identity as a "country wife" living life on a remote cattle ranch in the Midwest, even if it is in the twenty-first century. Drummond sees herself sharing some

similar experiences with women like Addie and Kirkland from earlier generations and is able to connect to them despite time and distance. Despite the differences in technology and time, Drummond, like Kirkland, is a smart, willful woman making a living on the edge of civilization, simultaneously working an agrarian, labor-centric life that pits her and her family against the same snowstorms, droughts, and burning sun as any other pioneer while also making a life and an identity through the written word and establishing a relationship with her readers through that writing. She is a literal, physical pioneer making a life on the prairie as well as a feminist pioneer, carving new territory for herself in the digital world by growing a small, personal blog into a multimillion dollar multimedia empire based entirely around her pioneer woman persona.

Second, by identifying as a pioneer woman in the state of Oklahoma, Drummond is situating the region as a figurative frontier that she sees as emblematic of the great American dream. Although Oklahoma may not technically be considered “Midwestern” according to US Census standards in the twenty-first century, Drummond recognizes her experience is similar to those shared by her ancestors and sees this area of open land as the heartland of America where she is able to cultivate the land and herself. Oklahoma may not be strictly Midwestern, but it is certainly Midwest adjacent and shares both the agrarian heritage and, in many ways, the plainspoken common sense attitude for which the Midwestern states are known.

Although Drummond very much identifies with a nineteenth-century pioneer woman, Addie, she also acknowledges that she is a twenty-first-century woman. She says in a post written in November of 2006:

Soon, we'll compare and contrast Addie's Pioneer Woman to Ree's Pioneer Woman. Shoot, I bet you won't even be able to tell us apart. At all. Really. Yep. I don't see much difference between her and me. Nope. I'm practically a mirror image of the woman.

Keepin' it Real,
Ree

I Have Direct TV
And High Speed Internet
And Air Conditioning
And Toilets
And Four Wheel Drive
And Advil. (“A Slice”)

Drummond not only sees the cultural differences that separate her time periods from that of Addie, but also demonstrates her understanding of the technological differences, particularly when it comes to the medium with which she writes. She writes about her blog/web-site in her profile, "I love blogging. I love waking up, taking photos, and writing about what pops into my head as I continue [to] chronicle this bizarre, beautiful, and often very weird journey I'm on" ("About Pioneer Woman"). Blogs function very similarly to the "letters" (which by definition also include diaries, notes, and journals) used in the nineteenth century. According to Tracey Kennedy, "Weblogs evolved from early Web sites that functioned as early online journals or diaries" ("Personal Is Political"). In this way, Kirkland and Drummond use similar writing techniques and formats. Kennedy highlights blogs' unique capacity for self-expression, saying, "Many blogs are diary or journal style, serving to document events in everyday life. While seemingly mundane, this style of blog provides a useful way to express oneself, a place to unload and unpack feelings and situations" ("Personal Is Political").

Amanda Fortini gives a biographical sketch of Drummond in her article, "O Pioneer Woman!," featured in the *New Yorker* and says that Drummond's blog is a "chronicle of daily life on an Oklahoma cattle ranch" (27). She blogs about raising children, doing household chores, gardening, helping her husband work cattle, photography, homeschooling her children, and feeding her family. The specific experiences of life for Drummond and Kirkland may be quite different given the centuries they live in, but the ways in which they process their female experience through personal life writing can be viewed as quite stable. Both women write, using the technology or media of their time period to express self and the attendant issues of their lives as they establish homesteads on the frontier. From this we can observe how despite the evolving technology/media, the purpose for expression remains constant for both women. The means may change, but the end—women establishing identity through writing—remains constant.

The components of both Kirkland's and Drummond's daily struggle expressed in letters, diaries, journals, or blogs are essentially the same: how to keep a house, how to raise and educate children, how to feed a family, and how to deal with interpersonal relationships with family and friends. However, they also comment on the larger social and cultural issues of their time. Kirkland comments specifically on

the complexities of homesteading customs and traditions, very much like Drummond, who comments on the challenges of ranching in the Midwest.

The real difference, then, is the medium with which they write. The process of writing, therefore, as a format to express self, is central to both Kirkland and Drummond and speaks to a larger social conversation. Kennedy states that diary-style blogs are “particularly valuable to women. An important lesson from the Second Wave movement, which emerged out of consciousness-raising groups, is encapsulated in the slogan ‘The personal is the political’” (“Personal Is Political”). The “seemingly mundane” chronicle of daily life for women, whether in the nineteenth or twenty-first century, accomplishes the same purpose—giving voice to a population that is sometimes otherwise marginalized or diminished. Through better understanding women’s discourse throughout time, readers can appreciate how these stories are essential to our cultural history.

Through her writing, Kirkland creates personal identity, indicating how a woman reacted to the new republic’s basic rights of Individualism (Aliaga-Buchenau 65). Individualism is prevalent in the time period, which encourages expansion and movement, an early ideal of the “American Dream.” While men strove to get ahead and discover the frontier, their women were forced to follow. This constant upheaval created more work, emotional trauma, and suffering for women such as Kirkland and, in spite of these circumstances, she (and others) learn to be self-reliant, thus empowering and liberating themselves (Aliaga-Buchenau 66). According to Kelli Larson, “women were little ‘American Eves,’ who created gardens to refine the wilderness, to regain a sense of home” (qtd. in Aliaga-Buchenau 65). Larson explains that because men were often outside the home and the community, either hunting or working, women were left alone for long periods of time (65). Women thus became more independent and self-sufficient in domestic duties and child-rearing. In the process, women discovered themselves.

Dawn E. Keetley notes how Kirkland manages to discover her identity outside of the “fixed space” ideal that was common among nineteenth-century women (17). As a result of her displacement and movement West, her ideals are “jarred out of the web of social relationships and familiar spaces that formed her distinct identity” (18). Therefore, she becomes a “mobile or ‘liminal’ subject, potentially able to slip between distinctly marked gendered and racial identity

categories” (Keetley 18). Kirkland is between two ideologies: “an interior, home-bound domesticity and an exterior, free-ranging frontier individualism” (18). As a result of these two ideologies present in her life, she is able to create a new identity. Aliaga-Buchenau says that Mary Clavers, “learns to be a little more independent than she ever thought she could be” (67). She discovers that she (and the other women in her community) are capable of so much more than what their home sphere dictates.

Kirkland’s identity continues to develop in reaction to the situations she is confronted with during her transitional experiences in the frontier. According to Keetley, “Women not only made the home, in both a material and an emotional sense, they also defended it, shored up its walls against the incursion of “savagery” . . . [she was] not only the mistress of her cabin, but in most instances its defender” (19). John Frost talks about the “heroism of woman” that demonstrates how a woman is capable of heroic acts in order to protect and provide for her family (qtd. in Keetley 22). In needing to establish food for her family, Mary Clavers may not go out and shoot a bear (as Keetley and Frost rightfully imply that she very well could), but she does start a garden. She is pleased to discover that she has quite a hand at this, and says, “your incipient Eden will afford much of interest and comfort before this work is accomplished, and I sincerely pity those who lack a taste for this primitive source of pleasure” (79). Initially, out of necessity for her family, Mary discovers her own talents and abilities in a way she might not have without the homesteading experience. Through her writing, the reader is able to see her personal growth and how her identity on the Western frontier is being created.

Kirkland became a widow early in life and had to step outside her home to become the provider for herself and children. Zagarell states that “[i]n the fall of 1846 William Kirkland died unexpectedly . . . the devastation Caroline felt was overwhelming” (xix). In addition to feeling lost without him, she recognizes that she is also “economically stranded” and that she must work to produce her “earnings principally” (xix). Kirkland goes back to work as a teacher and later becomes a professional writer. The experiences of both Clavers and Kirkland illustrate the author’s belief that women are capable not only of defending their homes, but also of purposefully creating and maintaining them in all facets—physically, emotionally, and financially if necessary. This belief in female competence contributes to

the author's strong sense of self and provides a positive female role model for her readers. The experiences from Kirkland's unpublished personal life, as well as from Clavers's public life, illustrate her belief in the tenets of the American Dream and prove that women are capable of achieving it.

Discovery of personal identity also occurs in Drummond's blog, *Pioneer Woman*. In contrast to Kirkland's experience of being left alone to establish home and family (customary in the nineteenth century), Drummond enjoys an equal partnership with her husband, Ladd. Drummond's mother, Gee, says of their marriage, "They've always been a team . . . And this coming from a Western culture in which the men have traditionally been the kings" (qtd. in Fortini 30). The Drummonds' marriage represents the ideal "egalitarianism" in a twenty-first-century marriage, which contrasts with the Clavers' nineteenth-century union. Ladd's insistence on taking the children to work the ranch with him during the day is what prompted Drummond's entry into the blogosphere—her own virtual frontier. "Drummond recalls, 'It was literally the first time I had been alone in the house for a several-hour period' . . . [and] she decided to 'start one of those blog things' . . . she thought it seemed like a fun, efficient method of keeping in touch with her mother" (Fortini 28).

Drummond's early blog posts allow her the freedom of expression to begin her "online diary" of "personal nothings" that she saw "as an enormous digital scrapbook" (Fortini 28-29). In the process of creating her identity, she discovers more about who she is, including her interests, talents, and an authentic voice that resonates with her audience. According to Fortini, "Her site includes sections for 'Confessions' (personal anecdotes and diary-style content), Cooking, Photography, Home & Garden, and Homeschooling, as well as an online recipe-sharing forum called Tasty Kitchen" (27-28). Some of these interests are born out of necessity, such as cooking, gardening, and educating her children, and are similar to those of Kirkland; others represent the interests and hobbies available to twenty-first-century women, such as photography. It is necessary for her to cook for her family, educate and care for her children, but Drummond also shows how it is important for women to continue to take time for themselves and cultivate interests and hobbies that offer identity to women outside of their motherhood, a stance which displays the third-wave feminist characteristic of being a woman who can have it all—the marriage, the kids, and the career. Through Drummond's

entrepreneurial spirit and feminist attitude, she shows how caring for self and not losing one's identity in the midst of motherhood are important.

In this way, she teaches a valuable lesson about self-reliance that is of particular importance to her twenty-first-century readers. She proves to her readers, like Kirkland, that achieving the American Dream is possible for women. This is evident in the ways that she begins her blog as a way to keep in touch with friends and family and, as a result, produces a brand and an empire in the process, all while continuing to cook for her family and homeschool her kids. Drummond discovers that women of the twenty-first century are capable of achieving so much more than what their home sphere dictates.

As a result of developing personal identity both in terms of caring for her family as well as herself, Drummond's identity is strengthened and this is evident to her readers. In a post written in May of 2010, Drummond relates to her readers by reminding them of "who she is," which she has already established through her personal narratives:

Hi! (Waving) It's me! / It's me. / It's me . . . Ree? / You know . . . your old pal Ree? Middle child? Lover of butter? Scratcher of Basset ears? Sniffer of babies' heads? Ignorer of laundry? Wearer of Spanx? Cooker of fatty meats? Drinker of Diet Dr. Pepper? Watcher of Real Housewives of Orange County, New York, and New Jersey but not Atlanta because my family staged an intervention before that season could start? Worshipper of yoga pants? Grower of pickling cucumbers? Destroyer of toothpaste tubes? Eater of cheese? Forsaker of exercise? Non-maker of beds because I don't feel like it? ("First Things First")

Her readers understand her textual allusions because they have read and understand who she "really" is. Both Drummond and Kirkland use their writing platforms to showcase their lives and selves to an audience of readers. In blogging communities, women use this medium to figure out who they are—what they are interested in and good at. Women are able to develop personally and, as a result, influence their communities to identify themselves and grow as well.

In her book, Kirkland processes and records her life experiences, commenting on the "truth" of how daily life really is for a woman of her time period undertaking the task of settling a village, establishing a community, and building a home in the frontier. Kirkland her-

self “expresses an awareness that materials reflecting everyday life contain important social and personal information” (Zagarell xxv). It is precisely this honesty that gives voice to other women’s experiences and creates a tight-knit community of reciprocity and support. She journals about daily life—including the “‘common-place occurrences’ and the ‘gossip about every-day people’” (3).

For her readers, this personal perspective of her thoughts and feelings creates intimacy because they can find parallels between her experiences and their own. Despite generations of time separating them, Kirkland’s readers can identify with the struggles of daily life as a woman and/or as a mother. Kirkland’s pseudonym, Mary Clavers, speaking about the amount of work to be done in the frontier, describes the many roles a woman must play: “Each woman is, at times at least, her own cook, chamber-maid and waiter; nurse, seamstress and school ma’am; not to mention various occasional callings to any one of which she must be able to turn her hand at a moment’s notice” (73).

This is a timeless issue with which women from both the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries struggle. For readers, being able to identify an empathetic voice giving them validation is affirming. Lori Merish points out that this technique used by Kirkland is a “rhetorical device to establish intimate, emotional engagement between reader and writer” (494). She explains that even though her intended audience is her family and friends (the recipients of her “letters”), she also “conceptualizes her narrative as an ‘opportunity’ to ‘inspire’ them [her frontier neighbors] with a ‘levelling upwards’” (494). Because of her “engaging narrative,” as well as her sometimes blunt openness and honesty, her readers identify with her in important ways (Merish 494).

Fortunately and unfortunately for Kirkland, this blunt openness and honesty result in positives and negatives. In some situations, Clavers and Kirkland experience cultivating special friendships with neighbors and the unique bonding that occurs in communities of like-minded struggling women on the frontier; however, in other situations Kirkland’s satirical commentary on life in the frontier alienates herself from the community she strives to build. Not every reader happily joins the reciprocal circle. In fact, as in Kirkland’s case, some readers not only don’t want to join the author’s circle, they don’t want the author living within their city limits.

This writing of truth, or processing of life, can also be seen in Drummond's blog, *Pioneer Woman*, particularly in the section devoted to "Confessions." The title alone alludes to a certain vulnerability and candor inherent in her narratives that speak directly to the readers and create a public intimacy. According to Webb and Lee,

Women who feel isolated or alone in the mothering process often turn to blogging to acquire social support. One mommy blogger, Ayelet Waldman of *bad-mother.blogspot.com*, described blog support saying, "The blogosphere is the perfect place for women to find advice and support, especially mothers . . . [blogging is] a remarkable phenomenon to meet thousands of strangers who lend each other emotional support." (Qtd. in Webb and Lee 251)

Drummond cultivates a community of readers who feel strengthened as a result of reading about her life, which is much different from the experience of Kirkland.

This happens for Drummond for a couple of reasons. First, Drummond's subject matter is less focused on satirical commentary and never addresses in a negative way the behaviors of specific people who are part of her physical or online community, which shows the difference in their personalities because both writers come from similar backgrounds; both are born into educated, middle-to upper-class families who enjoy a certain level of privilege. What we learn about these writers' personalities through reading their narratives is that they are both very funny but find humor in different ways. Therefore, the choices they make in their subject matter are entirely individual. Second, Drummond is less directly affected by the reactions of her readers because of the distance between her and her audience, due to both her physical, remote location as well as her medium, writing in an online space where face-to-face contact is not the norm.

Kirkland is physically surrounded by her community, so she is unable to escape the social implications of her candor/criticism and this alienates her from her community and makes it very difficult to stay in her village long-term (Zagarell xvi). This is not to say that Kirkland's writing should be disqualified from women's discourse based on the reactions of her community. Her "innovative" writing of "truth and novelty" is what commentators have described as "pioneer realism"; Edgar Allan Poe admired "the complexity and 'life-like' quality of her character sketches" (Zagarell (xi). Looking back,

Kirkland was one of the first to capture what life was really like for women homesteading in the nineteenth century, which positions her as a pioneer woman in her own right, creating a community of readers which moves beyond her physical neighbors to a different time and region.

Drummond has a unique writing style that creates empathy with her audience. For example, in a post from December of 2006 she talks about her feelings of isolation during a snowstorm and turns to her blogging community for support: "Frightful. It was a long, snowy day on the ranch yesterday. We've had a foot of the cold, fluffy stuff so far . . . and it's still snowing. And curiously? Yesterday was one of the few times I've ever actually wanted to leave my house. Figures. The one day I can't go anywhere is the one day I want desperately to flee. I'm a study" ("Trapped in a Blizzardy Hell . . ."). In turn, they offer her support and feedback through blogging's unique ability to interact. One of her readers, a woman named Jackie, replies to her post with the following comment: "Thank you for the note. I know you're bored, but that snow is gorgeous. I've never seen snow like that, layered in thick white sheets. I'm from the Dallas area and the one time a year it snows an inch, the whole metroplex shuts down and it's all like STOCK UP ON CANNED GOODS THE APOCALYPSE IS APPROACHING" (comment "Trapped in a Blizzardy Hell . . ."). Webb and Lee talk about this interactivity:

The specialized content and the interactivity among fellow bloggers as they post on her blog creates a blogging community, where members give and receive support, and, in turn, form friendships. The interactivity of these factors comes full circle as a woman's identity is impacted by being a member of the blogging community and by having a space to share ideas and thoughts. As she blogs, she may discover additional things about herself that impact how she thinks about herself. (254)

The friendships and community that develop in online blogging spaces are unique and powerful, proving that writing has the ability to connect women regardless of place or time.

As evidenced in both Kirkland and Drummond's writing, women play an important role in the formation of a community, and it's the "community of women who creates the values and norms of society" (Aliaga-Buchenau 70). In nineteenth-century Montacute, "egalitarianism," or the idea that everyone is equal, plays a large role (Aliaga-

Buchenau 70). This belief provides a basis for the women in the community to reach out and support each other. In the book, there is an example of Mary Clavers and Mrs. Rivers taking a meal to the Titmouse family, who is ill and in need of assistance. Despite Mrs. Titmouse's constant refusal (more out of pride and propriety than necessity), the two women insist upon helping. At last, Mrs. Titmouse relents and accepts their assistance. "When we had done what little we could, and were about to depart, glad to escape her overwhelming protestation of eternal gratitude, her husband reminded her that the cow had not been milked since the evening before" (117). The ladies try their best to perform the duty (although not exactly successful) and promise to return tomorrow. This example highlights the close community support that exists in the frontier village and Aliaga-Buchenau agrees: "Helping those who suffer or need help is another aspect of Montacutian society which adds to the making of a close-knit community" (71). Zagarell states that Kirkland "is aware and involved with both civic movements, *as well as plights of the household*" (xxiii).

Formation of community as well as the development of friendship is central to Kirkland's subject matter. With so much work to do in their homes, the women turn to each other and find support and friendship within their community. Mrs. Danforth helping Mary to develop a home of her own is one such example. Even though these two women don't necessarily develop a kindred friendship, they come together to accomplish a task. At the same time, the possibility and need for kindred friendship occur when Mary meets Anna Rivers, who becomes her dear friend and neighbor. She identifies with Anna in a unique way and their friendship fills an emotional need for both of them. Both of these relationships strengthen Mary and enable her to handle the daily tasks that are required of her. These examples of tightly knit communities of support as well as reliable friendships are ways that Kirkland expresses the "egalitarian ideal" and the notion that "the core of the community [is] the community of women" (Aliaga-Buchenau 73). These are a few examples of how Mary Clavers builds community in *A New Home, Who'll Follow?*; however, Kirkland's mistreatment of her community by criticizing and gossiping about their affairs backfires in her personal life.

Unlike her *nom de plume*, Mary Clavers, Kirkland struggles in her personal life as a result of her satirical commentary on homesteading in a small village in the Midwest. While Kirkland writes

about Mary's experiences—building community delivering meals and helping to milk a neighbor's cow—she also satirizes the living conditions, financial situations and decisions of the people in neighboring Tinkerville, and the “indigenous” customs of her Midwestern neighbors. She goes so far as to use a distinct dialect when writing dialogue between herself, Mary Clavers, and women who are native to the village of Montacute or Pinckney. This narrative strategy proves problematic for Kirkland; after her book is published, her community discovers her true feelings about them and as a result she is estranged and alienated from them (Zagarell xl-xlii). This estrangement is quite difficult for Kirkland, who initially chronicled her experiences to narrate an authentic homesteading experience for a woman of the time period. Even though she accomplishes this goal by literary standards, in terms of building community, Kirkland experiences disappointment personally.

This is one way that Kirkland and Drummond diverge. Kirkland uses writing as a way of documenting and clarifying the community she builds, although to disappointing and destructive ends, while her twenty-first-century counterpart uses her writing in a different way: to establish relationships physically and figuratively. Pioneer Woman's actual, physical involvement in her local community is well documented. Pioneer Woman figuratively and literally participates in her community, both the town that she lives in, as well as her online blogging community. Drummond is heavily involved in civic duties and regularly visits with friends, neighbors, and family in her community outside of Pawhuska, Oklahoma (Osage County). In a post from December of 2011, she documents how she and her family spend the day baking cinnamon rolls to take to loved ones for Christmas, which demonstrates her participation in her community (“Decorating Cinnamon Rolls . . .”).

Another example of her community involvement can be seen in how she and her husband are devoted to giving back to the community in which they live. Many blog posts written in 2016 documented the purchasing of a structure for a historic building in Pawhuska and the laborious restoring of it to a beautiful artifact for the town to enjoy and use as a community relic. These are a few of the ways that Drummond participates in and builds community in her actual physical location in the interior state of Oklahoma, which supports what Aliaga-Buchenau says about Kirkland and other frontier women of the nineteenth century “creating the values and norms of society”

(70); however, more importantly, what sets Drummond apart from her nineteenth-century counterpart is how she builds her community as “Pioneer Woman” in the digital frontier of the twenty-first century.

Drummond uses her writing to establish communities that wouldn’t otherwise exist in her online community by regularly interacting with fellow bloggers as well as her readers. She offers links and “shout-outs” to fellow bloggers, sometimes featuring “guest bloggers” who write on subjects related to the topics her blog contains. Like Kirkland, Drummond goes on virtual “visits”—referencing other bloggers on her page and showing her support of other women in the digital frontier. For her readers, she holds contests and awards prizes: “Drummond gives away products she likes—iPads, KitchenAid mixers, and Nikon digital cameras . . . [she says] ‘Ladd and I joke that it’s like tithing’” (Fortini 29). She also conducts surveys and polls, and offers a place for homeschooling moms to have a forum of ideas/questions/concerns. She provides recipes in “Tasty Kitchen.” When she writes the first draft of her novel, “Black Heels to Tractor Wheels,” she uses her blogging community as her first editors. Fortini says of Drummond, “she closes the gap by interacting with her audience” (31). This interaction is truly what makes blogging communities unique and powerful.

For women blogging in the early days of the Internet, Drummond truly lives up to her persona of “Pioneer Woman” in the ways in which she forges strong communities of fellow bloggers, mothers, writers, and like-minded women craving connection and validation in a space that isn’t entirely egalitarian, even by twenty-first-century standards. Drummond shows how “mommy bloggers” (a term that is sometimes used as a marginalized pejorative) are capable of so much more than simply writing about mundane, quotidian facts of everyday life. Because of this, many blogging critics disregard and scrutinize their capabilities as well as their life choices. Drummond shows how women can empower themselves through using the technology of the period to develop themselves into whomever they aspire to be—in her case, an entrepreneur. Drummond paves the way for other mommy bloggers to pursue their passion and do what they want to do, whether it be writing, photography, cooking, or homeschooling children—all while continuing to blog—expressing self, sharing experiences, and supporting one another in the process. Drummond, like Kirkland, shows that women are the core of this online blogging

community and pioneers of a new digital frontier where women support and empower each other.

The striking parallels between Kirkland and Drummond do not just begin and end with two women discovering their personal identities through writing or sharing those experiences with communities of women. The implications of their actions are what is noteworthy, especially when seen through the lenses of feminist theory and consciousness-raising movements. Zagarell states that Kirkland “began her literary life as an innovator”; truly this description applies to her protofeminist leanings throughout her discourse, both in her writing and in her personal life (xi). Kirkland pushes beyond the simple expectations for women of the time period, proves that there is more important work for women to do, and invites them to join the cause to discover what they can achieve.

Aliaga-Buchenau comments on how Kirkland writes “from a woman’s perspective and focuses to a large extent on the actions and thoughts of women on the frontier . . . provid[ing] another side that is the feminine point of view of American expansionism and that of those women writers who question issues of class and gender” (64). This is evident in Mary Clavers’s world as she takes control of homesteading responsibilities and makes decisions regardless (or possibly in spite) of her husband or having a “man’s” blessing. Another protofeminist character is introduced with Cleory Jenkins, “the eccentric schoolteacher who comes to see Mary Clavers, smoking her customary pipe” (67). Cleory Jenkins, who has purposefully never married, works to support herself and rejects traditional expectations for her appearance or behavior. Certainly, the emphasis on these details could be interpreted as a stylistic decision intentionally made by Kirkland to support protofeminist ideologies. Aliaga-Buchenau asserts that Kirkland’s *New Home* is “a significant contribution to an emerging feminism in the nineteenth century” (76). Not only does Kirkland debunk and reject myths about life in the Midwest, she does so using a uniquely valid and authoritative female perspective, positioning herself as a contributor to the early stages of feminism.

Similarly, Drummond positions herself through her writing as a defender of feminist ideologies, and believes in the potential for women to take control of their domestic, community, and business spheres. Drummond’s discourse may not represent second-wave feminist ideals; she labels herself a “country wife” and devotes the

majority of her time to raising her children and caring for the domestic duties of the household. However, Drummond does demonstrate third-wave feminist ideals in that she shows that women can have it all—the marriage, the kids, and the career.

Moreover, Drummond's discourse also demonstrates that writing not only has the capability to express self and create identity, it also has the power to unite communities and garner support and validation to an otherwise marginalized population of stay-at-home mothers both online and offline. This is evident in her popular blog, *Pioneer Woman*. Drummond's story as a stay-at-home housewife and mother speaks to this marginalized population because this is who she is at her core. What Drummond accomplishes throughout the history of her blog is to show how a stay-at-home mother can do something she loves and build an empire. Drummond's blog touches on her struggles with the daily rigors of domesticity and the ways in which she takes whatever circumstances she finds herself in and turns them around in an almost exhausting display of optimism. The subtle power of her discourse shows women how to channel passion and commitment into a "thriving business" (Fortini 29). Fortini describes Drummond as "a very savvy businesswoman . . . who's quietly, insanely ambitious" (29). No one knows this better than her audience, her community of readers as well as her consumers.

Drummond's entrepreneurial talents extend from her personal blog to published books—several cookbooks, a book, children's books—to a popular cooking show, *The Pioneer Woman*, picked up by the Food Network—to branded merchandise available at Wal-Mart stores nationwide, to a magazine publication. Drummond's example shows how women have the capacity to be whomever they aspire to be, and it's her friendly, approachable attitude that inspires her audience to believe her. Fortini quotes Drummond in an interview reflecting on her popularity saying that "maybe I inspire women because I'm an example that you should never assume that where you are in life or what you're doing is going to remain exactly as it is forever. If this can happen to me, who knows what you might be capable of doing?" (qtd. in Fortini 31). This is precisely what inspires her readers and raises consciousnesses about stay-at-home mothers' capabilities of contributing to their communities as well as society. Drummond is an apt example of third-wave feminism because she shows how a woman is capable of so much more than society or second-wave feminists dictate or impose. Through her discourse and

example, she gives voice to the disenfranchised few and validates the woman's cause.

What these two female writers accomplish together is to unite communities, particularly female communities, and help them to understand female roles in domestic and societal spheres. Kirkland expresses this in the preface to *New Home* as she presents her "cloudy crayon-sketches of life . . . a veritable history; an unimpeachable transcript of reality; a rough picture, in detached parts, but pentagraphed from the life" (1). Zagarell asserts that Kirkland "expresses an awareness that materials reflecting everyday life contain important social and personal information—an approach that, though it would have been unthinkable to such political historians . . . has become fundamental to twentieth-century social history" (xxv).

Similarly, Drummond expresses her awareness of women's issues and concerns in her blogging discourse. According to Fortini, Drummond "closes the gap by interacting with her audience" (31). She reaches her readers in ways that nineteenth-century writers could not imagine because she participates with them in online communities. According to Tracey Kennedy, blogs are particularly suited to this kind of activism. She explains how early feminists recognized that telling stories was often only the beginning of a larger feminist process of engaging collectively to pursue social reform. She helps to illustrate how blogs can raise consciousnesses for feminist purposes by comparing them to town hall meetings.

When compared in this way, one can understand how blogs allow the expression of everyone to "get the experience of as many people as possible in the common pool of knowledge, and getting closer to the truth. It was to hear what she had to say. The importance of listening to a woman's feelings was collectively to analyze the situation of women, not to analyze *her*" (21). Kennedy points out how blogs also raise awareness of larger social inequalities including those pertaining to race, class, ethnicities, sexuality, new forms of feminism, ethnocentrism . . . etc. Kennedy believes that blogs offer feminist advocates a more convenient venue to enact social change; some might say this is "third wave" or "cyber" feminism, but regardless of the name, using virtual spaces to transcend physical borders with the goal of inciting collective action and social change can build bridges between women globally. "From our homes, offices, or schools, the Internet permits us to do what feminist consciousness-raising groups

did in the 1960s and 1970s—cross boundaries and make connections among and between diverse feminists, diverse women.” (21).

Ree Drummond uses a tool developed through twenty-first-century technology, the blog, to accomplish social reform in her online communities which expand to affect those who become aware of her in popular culture. She is essentially practicing traditions passed on to her from women writers in earlier time periods such as Caroline Kirkland, who pursued similar goals of social reform with pen and ink. Despite the differences in technology and time periods, the ways in which these women use their writing and public platforms help to raise awareness of women’s issues and prove that the personal is political.

The repeated image of a circle is an interesting symbol that connects these women and their mutual cause. Aliaga-Buchenau believes this is true of Kirkland in her article, “‘The Magic Circle’: Women and Community Formation of a Frontier Village in Caroline Kirkland’s *New Home—Who’ll Follow?*” The “magic circle” she is referring to is described by Kirkland herself in the following passage from *A New Home*: “[it] is the prime dissipation of our village, the magic circle within which lies all our cherished exclusiveness, the strong hold of caste, the test of gentility, the temple of emulation, the hive of industry, the mart of fashion, and . . . the fountain of village scandal, the hot-bed from which springs every root of bitterness among the petticoated denizens of Montacute” (172). In the village of Montacute, the magic circle is the female community because this is the place where women come together—to socialize, to work, to gossip, to support and lift one another in their trials and hardships: “it is proof of the tightness of the female community in Montacute” (Aliaga-Buchenau 75). Understanding how this nineteenth-century community functions helps to raise consciousness about woman’s place in society, no matter the century.

These communities still exist and continue to serve the same function of creating “magic circles” where women’s voices are heard, validated, and raised to inform and affect the societies to which they belong. Their stories need to be heard through generations of time. Drummond continues to carry this torch through her blogging discourse. The story continues, as does the symbolic circle. Drummond’s voice gives validation through a twenty-first-century “magic circle”—that of the “mom-o-sphere.” The Momosphere refers to a specific group of blogs related specifically to motherhood

that are centered on families (Husbands 71-72). They are part of the larger “blogosphere” which originates from “webrings” that “began to create the community and dialogism that characterize blogs and social networking sites on today’s Internet, but it took some time before they shared a common name” (Friedman 7). Morrison continues to extend the symbol of the circle in her article, “‘Suffused by Feeling and Affect’: The Intimate Public of Personal Mommy Blogging,” explaining how the Momosphere works through networks to connect its readers. Morrison says that “networks work on reciprocity participation: reading and writing, not triangular, but circular” (43). All of these insights lead to the interesting conclusion that nineteenth-century author Caroline Kirkland and twenty-first-century author Ree Drummond are not just part of a long, straight line with distinct beginnings and endings that trace historical women’s discourse, but instead function circuitously—connecting and perpetuating female stories across generations of time in an act of reciprocity that continually refreshes and reminds readers of where they’ve been and where they’re going.

About her writing, Kirkland says, “I shall try to do some good with my pen” (xxiii). Zagarell comments on her unique style, saying that “[m]uch of her writing adapts popular forms—the essay, the sketch—to promote liberal social reform . . . her work promotes greater social responsibility and a more communal culture” (xxiii). So how does Kirkland’s writing extend itself to women writers today? According to Lori Lopez, in order to answer this question, it is important “to look at the history of women’s diaries and journals, as the modern phenomenon of blogging can be seen as an extension of women’s earlier forms of narrativizing personal experience,” (735).

Drummond’s writing on her popular blog, *Pioneer Woman*, also appeals to a greater social responsibility and starts conversations about current issues facing women and mothers today. Jill Walker-Rettberg quotes Viviane Serfaty:

. . . blogs are also a part of a larger context. They are part of the history of communication and literacy, and emblematic of a shift from uni-directional mass media to participatory media, where viewers and readers become creators of media. Blogs are also part of the history of literature and writing. A path can be traced from early autobiographical writing through diary writing and memoirs up to the

confessional and personal diary-style blogs of today. (qtd. in Walker-Rettberg)

Mommy bloggers write commentaries on what is happening in society and the world at large. Their opinions can be published globally. These blogs focus on inherently female issues, as well as politics, domestic issues, and current events. Their opinions attract scrutiny and criticism, as well as create a dedicated readership that supports and networks the issues at hand. Like diary-style narratives from the nineteenth century that contain the voice of an individual woman's plight, mommy blogs contain vital cultural understanding for this demographic of women. Lopez writes,

This connection between blogs and other forms of women's writing cements the necessity of examining the contributions of women to the blogosphere, as their exclusion must be noted and remedied. Also, it is important to continue to ask how this exclusion manifests itself in unexpected ways, as it is critical to assess the ways that women express themselves and make their voices heard. If the internet provides both a forum for the broadcasting of women's voices and the community to support that voice, then we should be paying much more attention to the work that is happening on these websites. (735-36)

Kirkland and Drummond write self-expressive narratives that create identity, process their life experiences, create communities of support, and make political statements about woman and motherhood empowering women and encouraging female writers to continue this legacy. These efforts result in social reform in the time periods in which they write. The narrative-style prose written by these women confirms identity and validates experience, not only for the writers, but also for the audience of women reading about their experiences. They are able to connect their own experiences with those of women who are currently living through similar things, or with those of women from the past. This interconnectivity helps them to process the difficulties as well as the triumphs of daily life.

Central Michigan University

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BECOMING JAMES PURDY:
THE “NEW” STORIES IN *THE COMPLETE SHORT
STORIES OF JAMES PURDY*

MICHAEL SNYDER

The seven stories that appeared for the first time in *The Complete Short Stories of James Purdy* (2013), spanning the breadth of his career, are invaluable gifts. Even the pieces that were neither accepted by editors nor chosen by Purdy himself to submit for publication make for rewarding reading.¹ A carefully sequenced analysis of these stories interwoven with biographical detail allows us to fashion a narrative illuminating Purdy’s path toward becoming an acclaimed author. James Otis Purdy (1914-2009) was reticent about his biography, even deceptive, tossing out red herrings concerning even the most basic details of his life, such as his birthdate and birthplace. Enough is now known about Purdy’s trajectory, however, to allow us to espy how these seven “new” stories elucidate his development as a writer. A biographical approach to this trove of newly published work reinforces and builds upon research by Paul W. Miller, Frank Baldanza, Parker Sams, and myself showing how crucial are Purdy’s Midwestern roots and life experiences to his literary development. Purdy drew heavily from the people and places he knew throughout his life, but especially those of his youth, in three Midwestern locales: the northwestern Ohio soil of his upbringing, Chicago, and Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin. Although Purdy lived in Brooklyn Heights, New York, for nearly fifty years, it was primarily these rich Midwestern experiences, beginning in his childhood and ending with his departure from his teaching position at Lawrence College in 1956, that shaped him as an artist and gave him material that sustained his lengthy and remarkable career.

One shared principle guiding the creation of these stories is Purdy’s literary pursuit of “the impossible.” During the 1940s and 1950s, James Purdy grew increasingly frustrated with the difficulty

he experienced in getting his short stories published (“James Purdy” *Contemporary* 300). He therefore began to write not so much for publication but rather just for himself and a small circle of his friends and admirers, including the first draft of his breakthrough novel, *Malcolm* (Sjoblom). As a result, he began to take far more risks with his work. Early on, therefore, Purdy was drawn to subjects that, as he said in 1971, “bristle with all kinds of impossibilities” (qtd. in “Out with James Purdy” 73). The only subjects he could approach authentically were “impossible” because of their emotional difficulty or outrageous nature. Any easy subject would not be worth his trouble because writing about it would seem trivial to him (Lane 73). In a 1958 letter to Welsh novelist and critic John Cowper Powys, Purdy wrote that “the only things I seem to be able to do are the impossible things! I never could do any of the things that seemed the possible things. But if I didn’t try the impossible things, my life comes to an end.”

NORTHWESTERN OHIO: “A CHANCE TO SAY NO,” AND *THE NEPHEW*

Hints of such impossibilities bristle amid the previously unpublished story, “A Chance to Say No.” Buddy and Hilda are a recently engaged young college couple, seniors on the verge of graduating, who had planned a postcollege trip to Europe back in their freshman year. Buddy balks, however, upon learning that Hilda has capriciously ripped her hated photograph out of her passport and plans to use her lookalike sister Corinne’s passport instead. The title of “A Chance to Say No” suggests rippling connotations of Buddy’s refusal. Thrown into question upon Buddy’s repeated insistence that he “CAN’T” go are not only the trip itself, but also Buddy’s entire relationship with his fiancé (Purdy 641). Buddy has found his “chance to say no,” to the trip, “no to everything” (646), which raises questions not only about the integrity of this relationship in particular, but also even about his own presumed heterosexuality more generally. Perhaps this ambiguity reflected Purdy’s own emerging understanding of his same-sex preference.

This collegiate story reads as if it were composed very early, possibly as early as the mid-1930s, the work of a budding writer. Purdy wrote stories while still a student at Findlay High School, including the first draft of his first published story, “A Good Woman,” and throughout college. He began submitting manuscripts soon after he

graduated from college in the spring of 1935 ("James Purdy," *Contemporary* 300; Link 62). Purdy informed interviewer Richard Canning that most of the stories collected in *Color of Darkness*, his first commercial book published in 1957, were written when he was in his twenties, "but no one would publish them. They said they were terrible" ("Following" 21). Purdy placed only two stories from 1935 to 1954. In this light, the title of "A Chance to Say No" becomes a reflexive in-joke, as though the story itself represents a chance, offered to some slick editor, to say no to Purdy's offering. Although "A Chance to Say No" may be a youthful work, it reveals that a hallmark of Purdy's early style, his heavy use of nuanced dialogue reverberating with significance, is already in place. Purdian touches of the outrageous appear, such as the purple hair and fingernails and the name of Hilda's blasé mother, Mrs. Wormley (644).

Like Purdy's evocative story, "Encore," which was published in March of 1959 in *Commentary* and collected in *Children Is All* (1962), "A Chance to Say No" draws from Purdy's three undergraduate years at Bowling Green State Normal College. Today called Bowling Green State University, it sits in his father William Purdy's hometown of Bowling Green in northwestern Ohio. Purdy rarely if ever mentioned Bowling Green, which is consistent with his silence on his birthplace, the idyllic hamlet of Hicksville; and the small city in which he was raised, Findlay. Living with his father William, his Aunt Cora Purdy, and, at first, his grandmother, Catherine Mason Purdy, James attended Bowling Green from 1932 to 1935 and earned a teaching degree in French. He lived in the white house on 135 Ridge Street on the northwest corner of Ridge and Prospect (Baldanza to Moore), at first intermittently, after William and Vera Otis Purdy's painful divorce in 1930 ("James Purdy," *Contemporary* 299). Purdy's parents were divorced while he was still in high school; he dramatized the separation in the semi-autobiographical novel *Jeremy's Version* (1970) and in the play *Brice* from *Selected Plays* (2009). Not long after James commenced his studies at Bowling Green, in October 1932, Catherine Mason Purdy died; her funeral was held in the Ridge Street home, where she had lived with James's grandfather, Boyd Wallace Purdy ("Mrs. B. W. Purdy").

Purdy's classic novel *The Nephew* (1960) is in some ways a roman à clef, reflecting his experiences in Bowling Green. Purdy fictionalized the lives of several real people and places there. Yet while *The Nephew* may at first appear to be familiar Midwestern realism, it

becomes quite odd and funny, bursting unexpectedly into moments of Purdian outrageousness, extending his Ohio predecessor Sherwood Anderson's deployment of the grotesque. One example is the deranged Mrs. Laird's racist, xenophobic rant ("shoot to kill!") as she watches television, winding down with her patriotic salute to the flag (96-99). Novelist and screenwriter Terry Southern, in his positive review of the novel, referred to another such scene as "a genuine surprise" exemplifying "the difference between the creative and the merely literary" (381). Purdy borrowed a few names drawn from real life and invented names similar to those of their models. For example, using the scenario of William and Cora Purdy, an elderly brother and sister living together on Ridge Street, Purdy wrote of sibling characters Boyd and Alma Mason, who live on Crest Ridge Road (1). James's father William, a well-known realtor in Bowling Green, was given the first name of Boyd like his own father, but he always used his middle name. Even the setting of *The Nephew*, the fictional college town of Rainbow Center, suggests Bowling Green, since a rainbow's center is literally green. In the novel, Alma Mason attempts to write a memoir of her nephew Cliff, who is missing in action in the Korean War; she finds, to use the idiom of the book, she has bitten off more than she can chew. Alma runs up against the problem of how little she actually knew Cliff and even the epistemological question of to what degree can we truly know another person (173). One of Alma's discoveries is Cliff had "homosexual" friends, intimating he may have been gay himself, though Purdy leaves this issue ambiguous (Purdy 158-59, 171-72). The topic of same-sex love and desire was edgy for a novel published nine years before the Stonewall Inn protest.

The absent and self-exiled gay author James Purdy was himself then the nephew, who in the novel is missing in action and presumed gone for good. After Purdy left for Chicago in mid-1935 for graduate work, he very rarely returned to Ohio. Thus, following Purdy's departure to Chicago and every place thereafter, to his family members he must have seemed to be MIA. James was, of course, literally nephew to his Aunt Cora, who, like her fictional counterpart Alma, had been an educator in another state and run a small gift shop (Baldanza to Moore). Cora Purdy, however, earned a Master's degree from Columbia University—as another nephew, James Purdy's younger brother, Robert Purdy, of Berea, Ohio, would also go on to do—and she was an instructor and theorist of physical education at

the University of Indiana in Bloomington ("Mrs. B.W. Purdy" 2). Cora was the model for Bess Byall, the teacher in *Moe's Villa*, and Aunt Winifred Fergus in *Jeremy's Version*. While Purdy's departure for Chicago was not truly made "at an early age," as Purdy repeatedly claimed and the dust jacket copy of *The Complete Short Stories* iterates, it is possible that James "lit out" to Chicago as a teenager during a summer between school years.

Characters in *The Nephew*, neighbors and professors, were based in part on real people, who were sometimes upset by their presumed portrayal. The publication of the novel in October of 1960 caused commotion in Bowling Green about which fictional character was based on which local resident (Baldanza to Moore). Dr. Bernard Frederick Nordmann, history professor emeritus who taught at Bowling Green from 1931 through the mid-1950s, was said to be the real-life model of the character Professor Mannheim, the focus of chapter four, "The Professor." In the novel, Professor Mannheim is the subject of enduring small-town scandal and rumor (51-56). Mrs. Van Tassel tells Alma Mason in detail about how she accidentally discovered Mannheim and a coed in *flagrante delicto* in a dark cemetery long ago. After Mannheim's first wife died, he married a former student and lived quietly (52-54). Dr. Nordmann also remarried a younger woman after his first wife died. In July of 1961, nine months after the publication of *The Nephew*, sadly, Nordmann committed suicide by hanging ("Dr. Nordmann"). Eerily, in the novel, Alma tells Mrs. Van Tassel, "Professor Mannheim doesn't look very strong or well," and if "he doesn't take care of himself, he won't be with us much longer, I fear" (54). Dr. Nordmann's obituary stated he had been ailing from heart trouble for several months and had been increasingly ill and despondent ("Dr. Nordmann"). Professor Mannheim had at least one staunch defender in Faye Laird, who tells Alma that Mrs. Barrington tried to get him fired long ago for charges of "moral turpitude" that were never proven because "he wrote all those articles on Marx" (92). Faye concludes that "nobody in Rainbow Center has treated him as he deserves to be treated, as a scholar deserves to be treated. Certainly the college never had the decency to promote him, despite his achievements" (93).

Prior to his college years, Purdy received his public schooling in the small city of Findlay, Ohio, the county seat of Hancock County, where his family moved from Hicksville when James was about five, later graduating from Findlay High School in 1932. Three months

shy of eighteen, senior James Purdy won first prize in the annual Justamere Club party contest with his poem, "Expose." The verdict was made by a committee of six that included James's favorite teacher, "Miss Mildred Dietsch, sponsor" of the club ("Poetry Contest"). "I really loved her," Purdy told Findlay journalist Parker Sams in a letter of August 24, 1984. "It was not until high school that I met a teacher who thought I was doing something creditable. She predicted, rather worriedly, that I would become a writer" ("James Purdy," *Contemporary* 300). Findlay is most prominently the model for the town of Fonthill in the 1984 novel, *On Glory's Course* (Sams). Findlay, however, was almost entirely absent from Purdy's biographical record. Part of the reason he concealed data and misled inquirers about his upbringing and prewriting career was to prevent scholars from making concrete links between his biography and his fiction, and thus obviating nosy inquiries and lawsuits. Probably Findlay also went nearly unmentioned because James felt that he and his family were looked down upon by his more privileged contemporaries, whose families had benefited from the local oil and gas industry of the early twentieth century. James's brother Richard worked in the Ohio Oil Company office as a "Bill Stop" before moving to New York City in 1941 to pursue his acting career ("Lights Out"). James felt humiliation about his parents' divorce and the fact that his mother turned their home into a boarding house to make ends meet (Purdy to Sams, August 24, 1984). Purdy's youthful sense of economic inferiority plus his emerging sense of his gay sexuality caused him to identify with outsiders and the marginalized in his life and work. These outsiders included the working class, the elderly, Native Americans, and African Americans.

CHICAGO: "TALK ABOUT YESTERDAY" AND "EVENTIDE"

An involving tale with a shocking conclusion, "Talk About Yesterday" lifts us out of Purdy's "own postage stamp of native soil," to borrow Faulkner's phrase, of Ohio small towns, lush forests, tall cornfields, and rolling hills, and sets us down in a Chicago jazz bar. Fairfield is an African American barkeep at the Music Box jazz club who tells a favorite story to regulars of a job he had, an unpaid one, fighting spiders in the posh yet infested South Side residence of the wealthy and predacious Madame Sobey. "Talk About Yesterday," with its dark humor, its symbolic white spiders, and its surprising

explosion of violence, moves us closer to the quintessentially Purdian in its expression of the outrageous and "impossible." It also evidences the importance of jazz and African American culture to the development of Purdy's work. Although it is narrated in a bartender's colloquial voice that uses phrases like "her TV machine" (664), it does not read as an attempt to create a Black vernacular voice. Purdy's experiences as a young adult in the South Side of Chicago provided him with copious material. Chicago looms large in Purdy's early work as the setting of *Malcolm* (1959) and *Eustace Chisholm and the Works* (1967). Sixty-third Street of 63: *Dream Palace* (1956) was known to be a hotspot of jazz improvisation (Miller, "James Purdy's *Gertrude*" 28). Purdy had arrived in Chicago by late summer 1935 and begun graduate studies in English at the University of Chicago. He earned his master's degree in 1937, writing a thesis on the English high-camp novelist Ronald Firbank (Luchetti 1).

Soon after his arrival in Chicago, Purdy met and befriended two creative types whose inspiration was enduring. First, James met the surrealist painter and jazz aficionado Gertrude Abercrombie, who introduced James to the writer Wendell Wilcox (Miller, "Chicago" 151). Abercrombie and Wilcox socialized with Chicago novelist and playwright Thornton Wilder and met modernist icon Gertrude Stein, who was crucial to everyone in this Chicago scene (Burns and Dydo 100, 103, 293; Miller, "Chicago" 153). Wendell Wilcox, a successful short story writer who in the 1940s published in the *New Yorker* and other prominent magazines, was a bee in Purdy's bonnet, becoming the model for Parkhurst Cratty in the novella 63: *Dream Palace*, the astrologer Mr. Cox in *Malcolm*, the writer Curt Bickle in *Cabot Wright Begins* (1964), and "Ace" Chisholm himself in *Eustace Chisholm and the Works* (Purdy to Baldanza). Wilcox became a long-time correspondent with Gertrude Stein, who helped him to find a publisher for his only published novel, *Everything Is Quite All Right* (1945), set in Chicago (Miller, "Chicago" 153).

The jazz milieu of "Talk About Yesterday" became familiar to Purdy through his friend, the bohemian artist Gertrude Abercrombie. She regularly held jam sessions at her Hyde Park home, turning it into a salon for painters, writers, and jazz musicians. She hung out with African American musical luminaries such as her good friend, Dizzy Gillespie, Erroll Garner, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Max Roach, Sarah Vaughan, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and Sonny Rollins (Weininger 15), and Purdy soaked it all in. "Purdy lived here for quite

a long time,” Abercrombie stated in 1976. “He used me as a model in several of his works” (“Gertrude Abercrombie”). Purdy evokes his lively milieu in multiple scenes from *Malcolm* and Gertrude was the model for the painter Eloisa Brace. Pianist George Lewis of the Modern Jazz Quartet is likely the model for George Leeds, who, after sharing a bed with Malcolm, poetically says, “You see, Malcolm, I just stick to the piano. And the rest of the world and the people, too, even nice people like you, well, I just let them go, if you don’t mind me saying so” (104). In Chicago, Purdy once accepted the invitation of the legendary singer Billie Holiday to sit upon her lap. Holiday was a mutual friend of the watercolorist and department store heir, Norman MacLeish, who is the model for Reuben Masterson in *Eustace Chisholm and the Works*, and the brother of poet Archibald MacLeish. Billie, who is said to have influenced the characterization of the singer Melba in *Malcolm*, remarked to Norman: “You brought me a *nice* boy this time” (Uecker). A few decades later, tenor saxophonist Rollins wrote Purdy a letter, prompting Purdy to reply with an inscribed copy of his novel *I am Elijah Thrush*, which uses an African American narrator (Purdy to Abercrombie). Abercrombie was also the model for the artist Maureen O’Dell in *Eustace Chisholm and the Works*, and, decades later, similar to Cliff in *The Nephew*, she became the absent center of Purdy’s late novel *Gertrude of Stony Island Avenue* (1998), the subject of a perceptive essay by Paul W. Miller. Through the influence of Abercrombie and her circle of Midwestern Magic Realist painters such as Karl Priebe and the bebop hepcats who held jam sessions and stayed at her Hyde Park home, James Purdy received profound lessons in creating art by making use of one’s own native materials.

The model for Madame Sobey in “Talk About Yesterday” is surely the wealthy divorcee, Marian Bomberger Bard Andreas, who used the sobriquet “Miriam.” Paul W. Miller called Miriam Andreas a “high-flying, heavy drinking, occasional painter, literary connoisseur, and amateur musician” (“Chicago” 151). Miriam was the model for multiple Purdy characters such as Grainger, the Greatwoman in 63: *Dream Palace*, and Madame Girard in *Malcolm* (Miller, “Chicago” 151). Miriam introduced James to her future ex-husband, the businessman and literary critic, Osborn Andreas, who had published books on the novels of Henry James and Joseph Conrad (“James Purdy” *Contemporary* 300). Because Purdy struggled with publishing his short fiction, in 1956 *Don’t Call Me by My Right Name*

and Other Stories was printed with the financial assistance of Osborn Andreas, who became a model for the character Girard Girard in Purdy's signature novel, *Malcolm* (1959). "Talk About Yesterday" is an intriguing tale of race, class, gender, and power, and its two main characters serve as precursors to Albert Peggs and Millicent De Frayne in Purdy's glittering camp allegory, *I am Elijah Thrush* (1972).

Remarkably, the Music Box also figures in "Eventide," an early story using dialogue in Black vernacular between two sisters. "Eventide," which helped bring Purdy success, was completed by 1946. The next year, the *New Yorker* rejected "Eventide" with a discouraging comment: "You don't even know how to write." Yet by 1959 "Eventide" was so highly regarded that it was selected for the classic anthology, *Understanding Fiction*. In "Eventide," Mahala laments to her sister Plumy that she has "lost" her son, Teeboy, who has left home and is not coming back. It is revealed that Teeboy has left to pursue playing the tenor saxophone in his jazz band, which performs at the Music Box club where Fairfield tends bar, and travels to other cities for gigs (Purdy 55). This loss allows her to empathize with her sister Plumy's final loss of her own son, George Watson, at the age of four, seventeen years earlier. Purdy also shows, however, that Mahala is turning her still living son into a frozen memory, as though he were dead. The late critic Joseph Skerrett, Jr. argues that in so doing, Mahala closes herself off to "any further experience of the reality of her loss," or any future reunion with her son, because she "converts herself into an ikon, the Madonna of sorrows" (83).

Skerrett, who was African American, found "Eventide" convincing. In his landmark 1979 essay, "James Purdy and the Black Mask of Humanity," Skerrett concluded that it is "not a story about white experience done up in blackface. It is fully imagined in terms of a black situation" (83). Skerrett deftly surmised that the "powerful and unusual images" of African American characters found across Purdy's oeuvre had their origin in his "intense emotional identification with the powerless, the stigmatized, and the frustrated. For Purdy's most successful black characterizations are not effective because of sociological or even psychological accuracy as much as because they are emotionally convincing" (81). Skerrett's title riffed on Ralph Ellison's famous essay, "Twentieth Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity," which was written in 1946 and published in 1953. Ellison, Purdy's exact contemporary, wrote that "it is unfor-

tunate for the Negro that the most powerful formulations of modern American fictional words have been so slanted against him that when he approaches for a glimpse of himself he discovers an image drained of humanity" (3). Writing of Purdy, however, Skerrett states: "I do not know of another white American author who has created so satisfying a gallery of black portraits without resorting to history or sociology" (88).

Purdy was given the courage to recreate African American voices that he had heard growing up through the artistic success of Gertrude Stein's breakthrough novella, "Melanctha," from *Three Lives* (1909), which centers on a young woman who is a domestic worker (Purdy, "Following" 19). Young James originally listened to the voices of two African American sisters in Findlay but placed them in Chicago (Purdy to Sams, 9 Aug. 1984). In *The Dialect of Modernism*, Michael North criticizes Stein for focusing on the sensuality of Melanctha, which he finds stereotypical (76); likewise, Sieglinde Lemke labels "Melanctha" a primitivist fiction by a white author romanticizing Blacks as "uninhibited, dynamic and free" (25). North claims Stein's dialect is "so clearly inauthentic" (North 25), but despite this, North argues that Stein, like several of her white modernist peers, succeeded in projecting a compelling "black" voice that was constitutive of modernism itself. "Melanctha" evidences North's larger thesis that modernists such as Conrad, Stein, T. S. Eliot, and Van Vechten appropriated Black speech to innovate and energize language, freeing themselves from literary orthodoxy and notions of "pure English," with the goal of creating a fresh twentieth-century style (North 61; Lemke 11-12). Stein's novella earned high praise from Nella Larsen and James Weldon Johnson, authors of the Harlem Renaissance movement (Pavlovska 34). Moreover, "Melanctha" directly influenced Chicago novelist Richard Wright to create sentences approximating the speech of Negroes he heard around him in his daily life (Karem 18). Gertrude Stein, whose Parisian salon was a spiritual antecedent of Gertrude Abercrombie's jazzier salon, cleared a path for Purdy and so many other writers.

Purdy was a member of the next generation inspired by modernists such as Stein, Sherwood Anderson, the young Hemingway, and John Cowper Powys, and in 1957 he was taken under the wing of novelist, critic, photographer, and Harlem Renaissance patron Carl Van Vechten himself in New York. Thus Purdy can arguably be placed into a late modernist group that shares motivations and atti-

tudes similar to the high modernists that North analyzes, all of them inspired by Black speech and music. Purdy, however, differed from them in the degree to which he took freedom of expression and artistic license in his pursuit of the outrageous and impossible.

"Eventide" was singled out for praise by several readers who had been sent a copy of Purdy's independently published story collection, *Don't Call Me By My Right Name* (1956), including no less than Elizabeth Bishop, Thornton Wilder, and Alice B. Toklas. Several well-known literary figures, those who had read Purdy but had not met him, found Purdy's use of Black vernacular authentic, most importantly his early patrons. Purdy claimed that English poet Dame Edith Sitwell, British novelist Angus Wilson, and Van Vechten at first believed Purdy to have been African American. Not only Van Vechten but also his friend Langston Hughes initially thought that James Purdy was Black, Purdy believed, because of Purdy's use of vernacular in "Eventide" and even because of the title "Color of Darkness" ("James Purdy," *Conversations* 199, "Audio Interview"), which is corroborated by a letter Van Vechten wrote to Purdy on November 9, 1956: "I wish you would read *Giovanni's Room* by another Negro friend of mine, James Baldwin." Before meeting Purdy, Van Vechten had solicited more information and a photograph from him. In a letter of December 6, 1956, the older man wrote: "I don't mind TOO MUCH your NOT being a Negro. The reasons your Washington friends think you ARE is doubtless because you make frequent references to matters like 'passing' but doubtless you do it to tease or terrify." As a gay man during the homophobic Cold War period, Purdy may have been referring to "passing" as straight. In an undated 1957 letter, Van Vechten jocosely writes, "Whether you are white or colored doesn't make too much difference to me, but I am a little prejudiced in favor of COLOR!" When James arrived at Carl's Manhattan apartment for the first time, Van Vechten apparently held out hope that Purdy had at least a little African American "blood," because when Purdy walked in the door, "Carlo" looked him up and down and quipped, "I don't think you have a drop," as Purdy told radio interviewer Don Swaim in 1987. ("Audio Interview")

APPLETON, WISCONSIN: "DR. DIECK AND COMPANY" AND "THAT'S
ABOUT ENOUGH OUT OF YOU"

The setting of "Dr. Dieck and Company" represents a jump forward to James Purdy's Wisconsin years (fall 1946-spring 1956), although it was not composed until 1986. After the Second World War, James Purdy found employment teaching Spanish at Lawrence College (later University) in Appleton, called Stapleton in the story. Although Purdy studied French at Bowling Green, he traveled to Spain in 1937, and in the 1940s, he was trained in Spanish during his spell working for the United States government as an educationist in inter-American relations from 1943 to 1944, at the University of Chicago, again from 1944 to 1945, and at the Universidad de las Américas Puebla in Mexico in summer 1945 (Auer C12, Morrow 105). Uncle Sam placed him with a job teaching English at the Ruston Academy in Havana, Cuba, from 1945 to 1946. Known for his collection of large bullfighting posters that he hung in his classrooms, Purdy taught at Lawrence for nine and one-half years and became an assistant professor of Spanish (Auer).

As for our hapless hero, Dr. Dieck, the novelist-professor is a victim of campus gossip who never had a mistress, even though everyone else in town, including his wife, thought otherwise. Dr. Dieck is based upon author and critic Warren Beck (1928-2000), a respected professor of English and Faulkner scholar at Lawrence College for over forty years who published several novels and short story collections during the 1940s and 1950s. Beck was born and educated in Richmond, Indiana, not far from Purdy's homelands. In 1964, Purdy responded to a letter from critic Webster Schott, who was preparing an article on Purdy for the *Nation* and had inquired about Warren Beck and Purdy's career at Lawrence College. Back in spring 1956 Purdy left Lawrence, and by September of that year he had moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania, joining his partner, Jorma Jules Sjoblom. Jorma, who died in 2015, was a Lawrence colleague, a chemistry professor who became an intimate friend. He found a better job in Pennsylvania. Then in August 1957, Purdy moved to New York City with Sjoblom, who landed a research job at New York University (Sjoblom). By March 1959 Purdy had settled into his permanent home, a walkup at 236 Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights. Purdy told Schott that at Lawrence, he had read his stories to Warren Beck and the latter had encouraged his writing. Beck, however, had advised him against having his stories privately published and against leaving teaching to devote himself to his writing.

Had Purdy taken Warren Beck's advice to remain at Lawrence College and not to publish independently, Purdy's prose surely would not have reached the hands of Dame Edith Sitwell, who dubbed Purdy a genius and declared that Purdy would "come to be recognized as one of the greatest living writers of fiction in our language" (Sitwell). Hailed as a masterpiece by Sitwell, Purdy's second private publication, the novella *63: Dream Palace*, was financed by Sjoblom. James and Jorma lived together for extended periods in Appleton, Allentown, and New York City, where the couple socialized with Van Vechten and had dinner with James Baldwin more than once (Sjoblom). In a note of March 9, 1960, Baldwin, having returned to New York, wrote Purdy to tell him that he was "back in the zoo and feeling very strange." He said they should get in touch; he was "looking forward to seeing" Purdy. After the stories in *Don't Call Me By My Right Name* and *63: Dream Palace* prompted Edith Sitwell to help Purdy become published in England, they were collected as *Color of Darkness* (1957) by New Directions Press in America, which added two new stories. Purdy told Schott that he had mailed Beck copies of three early books, but Beck's response was "polite but cold"—absent, or lacking understanding at best. In his 1962 review of Purdy's story and play collection, *Children Is All*, for the *Chicago Tribune*, Beck offers some praise but reveals his lack of perception of Purdy's treatment of broad American themes, insisting that Purdy's world is highly personal.

Given the narrator's cruel remarks about Dr. Dieck's novels, perhaps the story remained unpublished due to its title character being too recognizably modeled on Warren Beck. "Dr. Dieck and Company," like *The Nephew*, dramatizes the effects of gossip in a small college town. It also satirizes a type of academic realist writer that Purdy derided as overly safe and conservative in his aesthetics, which is the opposite of the Purdy principle. Purdy parodies Beck as a strict formalist who fails to take risks, a rule follower. The president of the college in the story reputedly quipped that no one ever finished a novel by Professor Dieck, except for the students to whom he assigns them. But often, the narrator adds, not even them. This president, called Dorsey in the story, is modeled on Nathan M. Pusey, who had studied literature at Yale. As President of Lawrence during the early 1950s, Pusey was a staunch opponent of the anti-communist scare tactics of Senator Joseph McCarthy, battling the Wisconsin senator from the latter's hometown of Appleton. Despite his liberal

politics and his embrace of the Civil Rights movement, after Pusey took a position as President of Harvard College, he unfortunately later became better known for his opposition to late 1960s student radical protestors.

Purdy seems to have written "That's About Enough Out of You" while in Wisconsin in the early-to-mid 1950s. The style and the subject matter, however, seem derived from earlier experiences, perhaps dating back to Findlay, Ohio. Like his early published stories, this story is driven by tense dialogue, but the speeches of George and Pete are more effusive than those of most of the characters found in his earliest published stories. Concerned with masculinity and sexual norms, "That's About Enough Out of You" reads like the work of a young man. Purdy seems to have updated an older draft with a contemporary reference to the Korean War. Manuscript evidence strongly suggests that Purdy took the subtext of an older story draft, hand-labeled "Fumigator Story," that hinted at the desire of a young man for a much older woman, and developed it into the focus of "That's About Enough Out of You" (Uecker). This story, like *Eustace Chisholm and the Works*, deals with the pain and strife we experience in accepting our desires as they are suddenly revealed to us and our desperate need for acceptance from our peers. George offers counsel to his wound-up friend in urging him not to *see himself* when he thinks, which taken too far is defined as narcissism, but to *see life* in all its chaotic beauty (Purdy 662).

TRANSGRESSIVE PORTRAITS: "THE PUPIL" AND "ADELINE"

Circa 1956, Purdy penned "The Pupil," a startling, frankly homoerotic story. Set in a boys' preparatory school, it is a story of fascination between a young male teacher and coach at his first teaching position and a teenaged Cuban student named Gonzalez. The son of a deceased Cuban consul, Gonzalez is a budding artist who gazes at his Adonis-like teacher reverently as he sketches him during class. This mutual staring suggests that "The Pupil" also refers to the organ of sight. This sketching leads to the teacher posing nude for Gonzalez and the playing out of gay locker room fantasies, plus a shocking conclusion. "The Pupil" stands apart from anything else from this period in its explicitness, foreshadowing the climax of *Eustace Chisholm and the Works*. Long before Purdy, Henry James also published a story called "The Pupil" (1891). It told of the affectionate relation-

ship between Pemberton, a tutor, and Morgan, his eleven-year-old student. Suffice to say, the latent queer desire and sadomasochism that some modern readers have detected in James's story beneath the teacher-pupil dynamic are manifest in James Purdy's "The Pupil." The stark and frank portrayal of taboo desire, especially in a mid-1950s Cold War cultural context, is subversive and surprising. In 1957, Purdy submitted the story to Rudolph Burkhardt, editor of the Swiss homophile publication, *Der Kreis*, but it was apparently not published (Guide).

Given the subject matter, one cannot help but wonder whether "The Pupil" was inspired by Purdy's experience at his first brief teaching position from 1942 to 1943, teaching French at the all-male Greenbrier Military School in West Virginia. Also, the Cuban student, Gonzalez, may have been drawn from Purdy's experience from 1945 to 1946 teaching English at the bilingual Ruston Academy in pre-Castro Havana, where he taught both American and Cuban students. In addition, consider that, like the fictional teacher, James's younger brother, Robert Purdy, was a coach and teacher who in his youth had curly hair (Purdy 675). Bob Purdy became an athletic administrator in Berea, Ohio, not far from Cleveland. The recipient of many community honors and awards, Robert Purdy authored a book, *The Successful High School Athletic Program* (1973), which was dedicated to his wife Dorothy. In 2006 the gymnasium at Berea High School was named in his honor and his photograph is prominently displayed. Robert, the youngest of three brothers, was a Christian and a conservative family man. He led a life different from those of his actor brother Richard and writer brother James, who were both gay men. Bob and James were not close and Bob did not follow his brother's literary career closely. It is odd but possible that James might have perversely drawn from his straight-arrow brother's early career, along with his own queer life, for "The Pupil."

Late into his long career, Purdy continued to produce handsome stories exploring new genres and tonalities, evidenced by *Moe's Villa and Other Stories* (2000 UK, 2004 US). Fittingly, the two late stories included here, "Vera's Story" and "Adeline," are most welcome. Not only does each story create its own unique world, but together they produce a sense of closure and resolution, forming the capstone of a stunning career. The two later stories are gemstones, showing that Purdy was still writing enchanting and, in the case of "Vera's Story," very personal stories late in his life.

Written in 2003, “Adeline” is a glimmering piece that resembles “The Pupil” in its use of the romantic trope of the artistic portrait and its limning of the theme of strange desire. In its exploration of gender fluidity, “Adeline” was ahead of its time. In this story, a teenage character is the subject rather than the executor of a portrait. Master Bruno is a very old artist who becomes enraptured with Adeline, a beautiful and mysterious fourteen-year-old. Like “The Pupil,” “Adeline” is a typically Purdian story in the way that its protagonist grapples with unexpected desire. In its lighter tone and happy ending, it would have fit in with the appealing *Moe’s Villa and Other Stories* collection, the final book issued during Purdy’s lifetime. A satisfying resolution is achieved in “Adeline,” with its implicit message of categorically accepting beauty in all of its unexpected forms. Radiating a gemlike purity, “Adeline” is fabulous, as in both fable-like and wonderful.

FULL CIRCLE: “VERA’S STORY”

“Vera’s Story,” composed during late 1999 and early 2000, is a very long and personal family story that draws deeply from a well of memory of the Purdy and Otis families. Purdy mythologizes and memorializes family members and others that he knew, loved, and fought during his Ohio youth. The story is set after Vera’s sons have moved away from home or, in Richard’s case, died. We have already met James’s mother, Vera Otis Purdy; his father, William Purdy; and Vera’s antagonist in her story, Aunt Cora Purdy. The surname Patterson replaces Purdy, but otherwise, the Christian names of James’s family members are left intact. Although the older brother, Richard, is deceased in the present of the story, he and his memoirs are the center of the dénouement.

Richard Purdy (1909-1967), the eldest of three Purdy brothers, was an actor who appeared on early television drama programs such as the prestigious *Studio One*, and upon major New York stages in his heyday. Richard made an auspicious debut as Zametoff in the New York production of *Crime and Punishment*, and trod the boards alongside legends John Gielgud and Lillian Gish during 1947 and 1948. Richard was versatile enough to appear in productions as diverse as a transcontinental *Hamlet* and the touring musical *Can-Can*, working alongside major midcentury stars such as Walter Matthau, Maurice Evans, David Niven, and Roddy McDowall

("Lights Out"; "Richard Purdy"). Sadly, just like Richard in "Vera's Story," James's brother allowed alcohol to ruin his professional career, sending him packing back to Findlay and, ultimately, to a Toledo flophouse. Differing from the Richard in "Vera's Story," Richard Purdy, who died in 1967, outlived Vera, William, and Cora, who all "joined the choir invisible" between 1962 and 1966.

Along with Richard, we learn of Minnie, who is based on James's maternal grandmother, Minnie Mabel Cowhick Otis (1866-1947). Minnie and her own mother, Nettie Cowhick, were wellsprings of story and inspired James's Midwestern novels in the Sleepers in Moon-Crowned Valley series. Minnie was the second wife of the Civil War hero and prosperous businessman George K. Otis (1844-1908), who owned a grand showplace home in Hicksville that lingered in Purdy's memory and fired his imagination ("James Purdy," *Contemporary* 299). That impressive manse was a model for Vera's grand boardinghouse in the short story, which differs greatly from the relatively modest two-story real house on 115 Lima Street in Findlay that Vera Purdy operated as a rooming house. Dr. Ray of Gilboa is modeled on family friend Dr. Charles J. Ray of Gilboa, Ohio, whom Vera Purdy used to see and referred to fondly as "Doctie Ray." The model for several of Purdy's physicians, Dr. Ray, who prescribed special herbal remedies, lived for decades with "his companion Ed Scanland," a man over thirty years his junior (Barton 1). Fond of the Purdys, Dr. C. J. Ray possessed a library that James found enchanting, borrowing such eye-opening titles as Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Dr. C. J. Ray was an important intellectual mentor and friend to James and his mother Vera.

In "Vera's Story" James Purdy enacts a familial fantasy of bringing his parents back together. This, of course, never happened in reality. This reunion is hinted at by the conclusion of the play *Brice*, which suggests a possibility for reconciliation of the grief-stricken parents in the wake of Brice's lighting out for freedom like his beloved wild horses. Always affected by his parents' 1930 divorce, Purdy time and again dramatized broken families coping with alienation and displacement. Contrastingly, at the close of this final story, to our surprise, James Purdy finally reunites his parents with a simile of the sun piercing thunderclouds (715). In doing so he clears himself with his family, his long-departed "sleepers in moon-crowned valleys," and resolves something within himself that had occupied him over the course of nearly seventy years. Lending a sense of clo-

sure to a long literary career that often drew from his early years and his family history, “Vera’s Story” suggests a motto of Mary, Queen of Scots quoted by T.S. Eliot: “In my end is my beginning.” It is touching and poignant. Upon finishing it, I feel as poet James Merrill did upon finishing *The Nephew*: “as though I held a prism in my hands.”

Oklahoma City Community College

NOTE

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CATHERINE BARKLEY'S RELIGIOUS CRISIS AND *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*

JOHN FENSTERMAKER

*The Sea of Faith,
Was once, too, at the full . . .
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar . . .*

*Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! For the world . . .
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and
flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.
—Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"*

*But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive:
for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts . . .*

—George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

*...the men of the First World War were heroes as great as the cast of the Iliad,
yet their words destroyed the concept of themselves, of all warriors, and of war itself, as
heroic.*

—*New Yorker* blurb for Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*

The American Library Association ranks *The Sun Also Rises* (#18), *A Farewell to Arms* (#20), and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (#30) among the top one hundred banned and challenged American classics. Objections have collected across rubrics: linguistic, political, religious, sexual, sociocultural. In Hemingway's lifetime, challenges to *A Farewell to Arms* centered on ethical/religious beliefs: "un-American acts" (e.g., desertion); brutality and violent deaths; debauchery; a universe godless or indifferent to human suffering.¹

Following Hemingway's death in 1961, through the 1980s, the focus of nay-saying narrowed but continued among many professionals—critics, scholars—and, importantly, teachers. Their voices

increasingly decried hurtful female portraits throughout Hemingway's fiction, not least in *A Farewell to Arms*. Asserts Leslie Fiedler, "[Hemingway cannot] quite succeed in making his females human Only the dead woman becomes neither a bore nor a mother Catherine must die, killed . . . by childbirth!" (316). Judith Fetterley and Millicent Bell concur, the latter finding Catherine "a sort of inflated rubber woman available at will to the onanistic dreamer" (114). Wayne Booth specifically addressed the classroom: ". . . any teacher who teaches *A Farewell to Arms* without inviting . . . consideration of Hemingway's heroes as human ideals, and of his portraits of women as reflecting a peculiarly maimed creative vision, and of his vision of the good life as a singularly immature one—is doing only half the job" (301). Despite such critiques, other voices have continually highlighted Hemingway's female characters thinking, feeling, doing (see Beegel, Kale, Moddlemog, Sanderson, Spanier), their clarifying lenses producing sensitive portraits of women—even Brett Ashley and Margot Macomber—sympathetic in their humanity.

Today, while depiction of women continues to be a staple subject among Hemingway commentators, intertextual overlays and newly published manuscript materials—allusions and literary parallels, manuscript variations and deletions—have reintroduced religion into *A Farewell to Arms* criticism (Nickel; Hemingway Library Edition). Notwithstanding recent readings drawing upon such materials, Hemingway's text, published September 27, 1929, and never edited or revised later by the author, centers specifically on Frederic's seeking coherence—contextualizing events, clarifying meanings—among the shards of Catherine's existence scattered across his memories. Albeit unintentionally, Frederic certainly participated in Catherine's religious crisis, making the centrality of religion in his narrative both indisputable and crucial. Purposefully, he shaped critical action; unwittingly, he prompted spiritual growth.

Guilt-ridden after her fiancé's death, Catherine abandoned traditional religion. Gradually at first, then more steadily, she becomes again whole by redefining the spiritual in human terms: "to do for, to sacrifice for, to serve." She discovers both self and purpose committing to the emotionally stunted Frederic—spiritually, the two becoming one. Moreover, understood broadly, Catherine's spiritual crisis in *A Farewell to Arms* directly addresses a (the?) central Hemingway

question: How does one discover in a world of discredited or otherwise destabilized values the way to live now?

RELIGION IN *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*

Religion appears early. A jaded Frederic, introduced among irreligious, amoral fellow officers, recognizes a young priest as both an officer and a gentleman. This cleric also appreciates the American, inviting Frederic to take his leave in Abruzzi, the priest's homeland, among crisp winter scenes offering fine hunting, the young man's distinguished father hosting. Although genuinely attracted, Frederic opts, instead, to spend his time among urban whores.

Religion also centers Catherine's introduction. Distinctly unlike Frederic, she, nevertheless, shares with him an emotional stunting. Catherine's childhood religious teachings—ensuring “an explanation for everything” (15), underpinning an eight-years' engagement (16), and inspiring patriotic wartime commitments—now have been, with her betrothed, “blown all to bits” (17).²

Two years at war, nearly a year since her fiancé's death in the ghastly Somme offensive, Catherine has begun to re-establish equilibrium. In their first meeting, Frederic, some years her senior, appreciates Catherine's forthrightness. Soon her words become personal, coalescing into a singular visual image: her hair. British, born in the 1890s, Catherine is “tall,” “tawny-skinned,” “beautiful,” “blonde” (16), and *Victorian*, a culture fetishizing hair—from locks of dear ones, living and dead, to women's luxuriant hairstyles (in America, realized in the “Gibson Girl”). Crushed by her fiancé's death, she planned “to cut [hers] all off,” essentially self-mutilation, “to do something for him . . . I didn't care about the other thing . . . he could have had it all” (16).

Catherine's vulnerability entices Frederic. During a second visit, an explosive slap abruptly thwarts his advances. Catherine's apology immediately following, however, encourages his rough embrace and kiss, her tears, and the surprising, “Oh, darling . . . You will be good to me, won't you . . . ? Because we're going to have a strange life” (23). At Frederic's next visit, Catherine follows up unexpectedly: “You did say you loved me . . . ?” (26).

Tentatively exploring commitment with Frederic, like her deceased fiancé a “nice boy,” Catherine directs him: “Say, ‘I've come back to Catherine in the night’” (26). Observing, “You don't pro-

nounce it very much alike,” she presses on: “You have come back . . . You won’t go away again?” (26). Agreeing, thinking her “crazy,” Frederic plays along. Then, the mood collapsing, “not mad,” not “gone off” (27), Catherine characterizes these moves “a rotten game.” Frederic must return, she directs, but need no longer claim to love. Inviting a simple handshake, she breaks from his kiss (27).

Unsurprisingly, while not in love with Catherine, Frederic nevertheless gives her play in his erotic imagination. Going to a hotel, “she would pretend that I was her boy that was killed. . . . we would not wear any clothes . . . we would drink the capri and the door locked and it hot and only a sheet and the whole night and we would both love each other. . .” (32). Linda Wagner-Martin perceptively characterizes this fantasy scenario, without a trace of genuine affection, as merely “random sexuality, a . . . male sexual experience that exists quite separate from its ostensible love object” (61).

Absent a valid emotional bond, Catherine continues distancing. Frederic appears; she does not, sending apologist Ferguson (35). The next day Frederic must deploy. Catherine “sheds” another religious trapping, giving him a St. Anthony medal that “Catholics” consider “very useful” (37). (Later, Frederic, too, effectively “sheds” this religious artifact when St. Anthony, an intercessor regarding things “lost,” even causes, ironically disappears amid the chaos surrounding Frederic’s wounding.) Now, faced with his deployment, Catherine responds ambiguously: “No, not good-by Be a good boy No, you can’t kiss me here” (37). Encouraged, denied, Frederic departs.

Separation prompts reflection. A virginal, twenty-something Catherine now painfully judges her abstinence with her fiancé as blameworthy: “...he could have had it all.” Committed to the “here and now” of treating wounded soldiers—but a volunteer only, a V.A.D. lacking nurse’s training—she craves purpose. Her wait for direction proves brief.

Catherine’s childhood religious background failed to “explain/justify” her betrothed’s being “blown all to bits.” Now Frederic, too, is blown up, producing a brief out-of-body experience. Momentarily, before “sliding back,” he believes that he dies—his unfocused consciousness rushing from him, briefly, before floating back (47). Avoiding further analysis, he folds this event into the larger horror of war violence he witnesses this day, underscoring his personal role as insignificant, certainly unheroic, initiated quite fortu-

itously when “blown up while we were eating cheese” (55). St. Anthony disappears (37), and for Frederic, as for Catherine, war’s woundings neither express nor shape positive religious import. Frederic’s plea, “Oh, God . . . get me out of here” (48), his admission to the priest that he does “not love God” but . . . “is afraid of Him in the night sometimes” (62), even his desperate prayer later, “Don’t let her die” (282) merely reflect his childhood religious training, now neither belief nor fear, simply very human moments illuminating war’s universal truism: “There are no atheists in foxholes.”

The wounded Frederic, essentially unchanged, admits to the priest, “I don’t love much.” Now his hospital reunion with Catherine confirms that statement and justifies the priest’s concerns: absent religion, the traditional spiritual, Frederic also misunderstands the spiritual potential in genuine human love, conflating Catherine’s developing affection with his own base “passion and lust” (62). Amid her emotional unsteadiness, the injured Frederic—at hand, medically needy, the first man ever to touch her—overwhelms.

Predisposed toward Frederic but now a woman neither naïve nor innocent, Catherine initially embraces him more rationally than emotionally. Repeatedly demanding, “You do love me?” she purposely shapes meaning with this second “good boy.” Determined not to fail as earlier, she pledges to outperform Frederic’s prostitutes (even as he lies about them), consciously liberating her previously latent libido (91-92). Regardless, Catherine’s commitment, albeit physical and increasingly emotional, is unquestionably self-aware.

A quick study, Catherine has learned that death “is the end of it” (16); “anybody may crack” (17); “nobody can help themselves” (110). She avers, “life isn’t hard to manage when you’ve nothing to lose” (119); then, broadening that truth, she corrects Frederic. He: “Cowards die a thousand deaths.” She: “The brave dies perhaps two thousand deaths if he’s intelligent. He simply doesn’t mention them.” Frederic reassures, “Nothing ever happens to the brave”; prescient here, Catherine delivers the perfect squelch: “they die, of course” (121-22).

Soon pregnant, Catherine accepts godlessness, re-centering personal meaning, her “now,” in Frederic: “There isn’t any me anymore” “You’re my religion” “You’re all I’ve got” (92, 100). She remains faithful to this pledge, except twice, briefly, when taken aback by traditional religious judgments: early, with Frederic in a Milan hotel, reflected in multiple mirrors, she imagines herself a

where (133). Later, dying, momentarily frightened, she recoils from Frederic's touch (282).

LOVE AND WAR

A Farewell to Arms tracks love in war, love *and* war. Frederic, formerly an architecture student and fluent in Italian language and culture, commands an ambulance unit. He knows Milan hotels, San Siro horse tracks, wartime issues/probabilities. He effects the lovers' escape to Switzerland. He is respected by his drivers, fellow officers, and knowledgeable others: Dr. Valentini; Emilio in Stresa; Simmons the opera singer; even intelligent, sensitive women—Miss Gage, Ferguson. Rinaldi, the priest, and Count Greffi offer positive character witness.

Early, Frederic's war parallels Catherine's—bringing loss, confusion, a center that will not hold: “. . . we did not do the things we wanted to do; we never did such things” (11). Later, combat experienced, his vision darkens: “abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages . . . the numbers of regiments. . . .” (161). Finally, homely metaphors, baseball and campfire ants, image his despair: “caught off base” and destroyed, cast into the fire and burned, what difference whether the deity is malignant or indifferent (280)?

How, finally, to grasp Frederic: first-person narrator / lover / warrior? Characterizing Frederic, critics have sometimes emphasized dark hues. Robin Gajdusek describe him as “a callow young man . . . [variously] a fraudulent lover, an unconvincing liar, a bad officer, a deserter” (South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference, 2002). From a certain perspective, arguably most accurate among Gajdusek's descriptors is “bad officer.” Albeit capable, Frederic can and does act badly. Unthinking: helps a soldier fake a wound to avoid returning to the front (30). Uninvolved: believes he will “not be killed”; the war “did not have anything to do with me” (31). Unpatriotic: routinely ignores his men's treasonous anti-war rants (42-44). Unprofessional: falsely claims to have killed “plenty” of Austrians (82); wears unearned medals (144); ignores Bonello's desertion (188). Unaware: allows Aymo's sexual overtures to frighten the displaced teen sisters (170-71). Undisciplined: shoots an unarmed sergeant unattached to his command who refuses work and

then runs away (177). Unconscionable: explicitly directs Bonello's killing the sergeant and looting his belongings (177).

Notwithstanding these questionable (even in war) judgments and actions, broadly speaking, Frederic strives to produce his ambulances on scene, to protect his men, to perform his defined duties. (More, he will ignore Bonello's desertion in order to shield the young man's family.) Finally, Frederic, too, deserts. His ambulances lost, he flees imminent, unjust execution by the Battle Police.

Ironically, amid the chaos of the Caporetto retreat, Frederic's new best self has emerged. Earlier, discussing love, the priest had rejected Frederic's "passion, lust," hopeful that Frederic would come to know love as the selfless impulse (like his own love for God) "to do things for . . . to sacrifice for . . . to serve" (62). Now, asleep in the driving rain, Frederic, dreaming, speaks: "Good-night, Catherine . . . If it's too uncomfortable, darling, lie on the other side. I'll get you some cold water . . . I'm sorry he makes you so uncomfortable. Try . . . to sleep, sweet" (172). Henceforward, Frederic commits to Catherine selflessly, in effect accepting the priest's exhortations—"doing for, sacrificing for, serving."

Soon, fleeing execution by the Battle Police, Frederic joins Catherine in Stresa. Praising her courage in controlling the challenges of her pregnancy, Frederic comprehends, nevertheless, that within their lover's reality (" . . . never lonely and never afraid when we were together") lurks a dark truth: "The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places . . . But those that will not break it kills" (216). Another perspective, worldly-wise Count Greffi's, also captures Frederic's attention. Discussing disappointments, the ninety-four-year-old Count (formerly in the diplomatic service of both Austria and Italy and renowned for his birthday parties) reports his failure to become devout. Frederic, also without religion, when queried by the Count about what he values most, responds, "Someone I love." Later, returning to their shared agnosticism, Greffi reminds Frederic: " . . . you are in love. Do not forget that is a religious feeling" (226-27).

Soon, warned by barman Emilio of imminent arrest, Frederic initiates the lovers' dramatic nighttime "voyage" to Switzerland. This treacherous journey to safety involves rowing nearly thirty-eight kilometers through Italian waters in rain, wind, and darkness. Certain details centered in Frederic—particularly his blistered hands (mentioned five times) and, with these damaged hands outstretched,

his using an umbrella for a sail—have suggested to some commentators religious images, especially those of Christ crucified. The couple's ruse before Swiss authorities—he an architecture student, she an art student, they seeking “winter sport”—prompts Frederic's mention of Mantegna. Catherine objects to so “bitter” a figure. Frederic accepts “bitter,” but stresses Mantegna's deceased Christ: “Lots of nail holes” (241). Later, Catherine examining his hurt hands, Frederic alludes to Mantegna: “There's no hole in my side.” She responds dismissively: “Don't be sacrilegious” (245). Earlier, the umbrella “crucifixion” image finds Frederic, arms widespread, holding an oversize umbrella at its outer edges, briefly effecting a sail. Catherine, again dismissive of religious import, laughs. “You looked so funny holding that thing . . . It was awfully funny” (235).

Safely lodged outside Montreux in a “cold,” “clear,” “dry” landscape suggesting the priest's beloved Abruzzi (251), the couple's idyll begins. Emphasizing oneness, Catherine seeks spiritual union—serving, merging. She: “I want you so much I want to be you too.” He: “You are. We're the same one” (257). “[N]early crazy” when they met, she is “not crazy now” (258). Frederic becomes her religion early; importantly, in extremis later, she requires no traditional religious elements—marriage, church, priest— “just you” (282).

Some holistic frame seems necessary to contextualize the narrative's concluding details, particularly the unexpected deaths of Catherine and the baby. James Phelan understands doom in this novel to be “a condition of existence, not the responsibility of any human agent” (178). Within that larger darkness, Robert Martin interjects *chance*: a blindly directed mortar wounds Frederic but kills Passini; friendly fire fells Aymo; the Battle Police execute haphazardly; the child is stillborn . . . or, more positively, a stray timber saves Frederic; wind secures the Switzerland landfall. Certainly Catherine's death makes no religious, moral, rational case, nor is it affected by Frederic's panicked petition: “Please, please, dear God, don't let her die” (282). Martin adds that Catherine “does not die from disease,” nor from “sexual promiscuity,” nor from “traveling with a deserter during wartime,” nor from “small hips,” nor from “the caesarian” . . . but from “a spontaneous hemorrhage occurring randomly in women” (173). At novel's close, must Catherine, a lifeless “statue” (284), and Frederic, walking alone in the rain, be the reader's final, iconic visuals? At Catherine's hour of death, Frederic's touch

triggers her, "Don't touch me!" (282)—moral judgment regarding unsacralized love surfacing as in the hotel earlier. Catherine balks only a second, however. Neither deathbed repentance nor return to traditional religion follows. Rather, she reaffirms human love—not in her repeated, earlier queries, "Do you love me?"—but now in the command to embrace, to merge: "Poor Darling. You touch me all you want." Dying, "not a bit afraid," her personal last judgment: death is "just a dirty trick" (283).

FREDERIC'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A Farewell to Arms traces Catherine's expiation for leaving her eight-years' marriage promise unfulfilled and unconsummated. After her betrothed is "blown all to bits," Catherine's atonement produces salvation and new life: her commitment to Frederic develops his emotional and spiritual humanity; it enhances in each partner the capacity to love fully—saving both during their time together. Following Catherine's death, what of Frederic? Did a devastated Frederic backslide, resurrecting the opportunistic liar who whored nightly, wore unearned medals, shot the sergeant?

Fortunately, Frederic comprehends much—subconsciously. Thus, unsurprisingly, the exhortation to seize life epitomized in Catherine continues for him—initially, perhaps unutterable because inchoate, but finally accessible, increasingly articulable: "I never think and yet when I begin to talk I say the things I have found out in my mind without thinking" (157). In Frederic's retelling (retellings?) of their story, Catherine's death potentially allows him, as her fiancé's passing had allowed her, to move forward—for Frederic, amid meanings still unfolding: life-affirming, *spiritual*, grounded in *human* love. For the reader, Catherine's death completes a secular parable addressing that central Hemingway conundrum: How does one discover in a world of discredited or otherwise destabilized values the way to live now?

Florida State University

NOTES

¹ *Scribner's Magazine* serialized *A Farewell to Arms* from May to October 1929. For the publisher's contemporary response to general censorship issues of the day (*Scribner's Magazine*, April and May 1930), see below: Bates ("Comstock dead is a more powerful enemy of freedom and liberal thought than he was when alive": takes up Federal Customs Service and police censors in Boston); Anonymous (a female girls' high school teacher

opposes censorship, advocating for supervised classroom discussion of unexpurgated classic and contemporary texts deemed worthy overall, despite objectionable passages—one of her examples, *A Farewell to Arms*); and Redman (censorship of pornography, obscenity—"sex-censorship"—is essentially impossible). For initial challenges specific to *A Farewell to Arms*, particularly the banning in Boston of the second installment, June 1929, affecting the novel's final text as published, September 1929, *see below*, Donaldson and Trogdon. For broader contemporary assessments of the published novel by major critical voices—e.g., Davidson, Dos Passos, Ford, Mencken, Priestley—*see below*, Meyers.

²A conservative Protestantism also shaped the childhood of Catherine's creator. Fearing youthful immorality, Oak Park's (and the Hemingway family's) renowned Congregational pastor William E. Barton opposed dancing, swearing, smoking, and drinking while continually exalting the patriotic "male hero." During Hemingway's high school years, *Oak Leaves* newspaper editorials (e.g., "The Sex Dance Rampant," October 1913) blasted contemporary music, dancing, youthful attire—even singling out by way of dramatic example words of popular songs: "... everybody's 'doing it, doing it'" (Reynolds 8). Similarly, a typical evening lecture at the Nineteenth-Century Club (March 20, 1915) bemoaned contemporary girls' clothing: "worn by girls fourteen, fifteen...cut excessively low and slit high... [that] encourages advances." Hemingway's sister Marcelline recalled paterfamilias Clarence's corporal Christian disciplining of his children often including a strop: "spanked hard," then "told to kneel down and ask God to forgive us." Her personal spanking experiences included being "compelled to pull down her undergarments" even into her teens (Burwell 192, n. 10). Growing up in this strict, explicitly religious environment, Ernest mastered *Pilgrim's Progress* at eleven. He joined the vested choir at thirteen, the Christian Endeavor Society at fourteen (with Marcelline, reading the entire King James Bible), and the Plymouth League at sixteen (recruiting Christian speakers for the Boys High School Club). Despite different nationalities and sects, even allowing that "social" impulses undoubtedly prompted young Ernest's undertaking of certain church roles, adult Hemingway clearly understood how a late-nineteenth century religious culture could nurture years of purely virginal intimacy between young "lovers"—like Catherine Barkley and her intended.

³Perhaps the most succinct denial of the religious in these images: "Henry's stigmata are just blisters. There is no hole in his side, he's given cold water to slake his thirst, not vinegar, and he climbs an umbrella, not a cross" (Peter Hays, HemList, 18 Feb. 1999).

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ANNUAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MIDWESTERN LITERATURE, 2015

ROBERT BEASECKER, EDITOR
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

This bibliography includes primary and secondary sources of Midwestern literary genres published, for the most part, during 2015. 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 2015; and periodicals published for the first time in 2015 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.

Not included in this bibliography are the following types of material: works only published in electronic format; reprints or reissues of earlier works, except for some new or revised editions; baccalaureate or masters theses; entries in reference books; separate contents of collected essays or *Festschriften*; audio or video recordings; electronic databases; and internet websites which have the tendency to be unstable or ephemeral.

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

A	Anthology	jrn	Journalism
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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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Studies in Midwestern History. Vol. 1- (March 2015-). Irregular. Jon K. Lauck, general editor. Midwestern History Association, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

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Dictionary of Midwestern Literature Volume 2

Dimensions of the Midwestern Literary Imagination

Edited by Philip A. Greasley

A project of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

The Midwest is often thought of as the most American of the nation's regions. Its literature and culture reflect its locales, landforms, and history while remaining vibrant, evolving entities that partake fully of national and international trends. Midwestern literature and culture are sophisticated, complex amalgams marked by diversity, egalitarian values, and emphasis on education.

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PHILIP A. GREASLEY is a retired Associate Professor of English, Dean, University Extension, and Associate Provost for University Engagement at the University of Kentucky. He has served as General Editor of the *Dictionary of Midwestern Literature* and has published widely on Midwestern writers, the Chicago Renaissance, and modern poetics.

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