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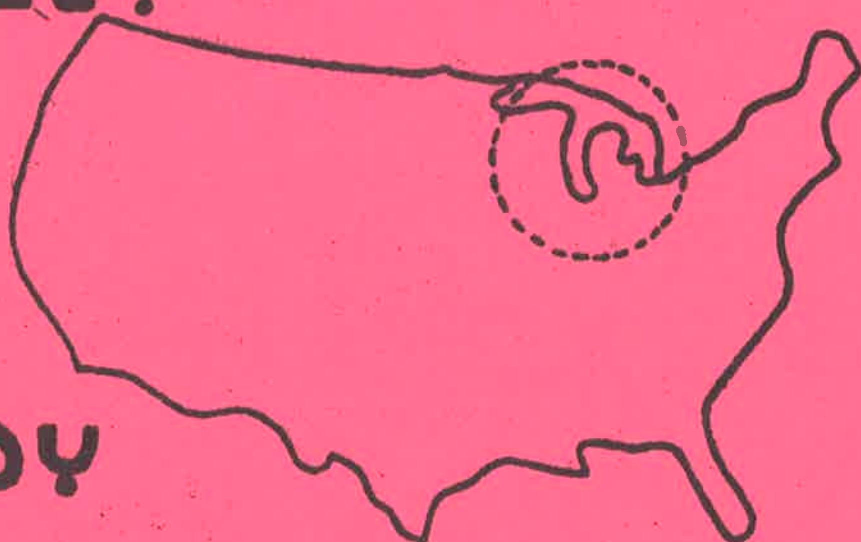

THE

STUDY

OF

MIDWESTERN LITERATURE

(MIDWESTERN MISCELLANY II)

M I D W E S T E R N   M I S C E L L A N Y   I I

Being Essays on Various Topics
For Various Occasions By Members
of the Society for the Study
of Midwestern Literature

Edited by David D. Anderson

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PREFACE

Interesting, informative, amusing essays on Midwestern writers and writing continue to accumulate and to demand dissemination, so another Miscellany makes its appearance.

This group of essays includes a fascinating footnote to Midwestern literary history by Gene Dent and four essays that grew out of the Society's second venture into an examination of "Midwestern Popular Literature" at the Popular Culture Association national meeting in St. Louis on March 20, 1975.

Future programs and meetings will continue to provide much of the content of future Miscellanies, but we invite submission of other essays on Midwestern writers and writing for future issues. We will continue to publish irregularly, as essays accumulate and demand an audience.

The Society and its publications continue to grow, and once more we dedicate the Miscellany to the members and others who have made it possible.

David D. Anderson
April, 1975

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WILLIAM J. NEIDIG: LITERARY SLEUTH

Gene H. Dent

The heat of the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy has cooled somewhat with the passage of years. Yet scholars, members of academe, and knowledgable laymen continue a search through the debris of ages seeking new insights, new bits of information that will shed light on the mysteries and ambiguities of the literary world. Sometimes these discoveries occur by happenstance: an ancient document is revealed, or an off-hand notation on a long-neglected civil document is spotted. Although we may never know the name of the man from Porlock or the Dark Lady of Shakespeare's sonnets, scholars will continue their play with shreds and scraps of information.

Most times, however, literary discoveries, as with most discoveries, come about after years of research. Men with intellectual curiosity, infinite patience, and methodical approaches unravel most of the riddles of mankind. Discovery of the dates of America's first dramatic productions was revealed in this manner. At times new revelations happen only because of scientific advancement and new technology. Such was the solving of the case of the false dates on Shakespeare's 1619 quartos, a mystery that plagued experts for 300 years.

William J. Neidig (1870-1955) was a Midwesterner who made two significant contributions in literary detection. Son of an Indiana newspaperman and politician, Neidig grew up in an environment of strict Midwestern religion and staunch Indiana Republicanism. Much of his adult life was spent in Chicago where he launched a successful career, at age 40, as a writer of popular mystery stories for the _Saturday Evening Post_, _Colliers_, _Liberty_, and _Century_. He also wrote a novel, _Fire Flingers_, which was later turned into a six-reel feature film by Universal Pictures. In 1905, he published a book of classical poems, _The First Wardens_, which garnered him critical acclaim and a nomination for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Neidig drew heavily on his Midwestern background for story plots and characters. He was one of those rare individuals endowed with a deep sense of literary understanding and appreciation, and a comprehensive knowledge of science and scientific research techniques. At times these elements warred within him to cause him frustration and aggravation. He had the unusual journalistic knack of sweeping the ambiguous academic smog from his writing. His writing skills sharpened while he edited several California weekly and monthly publications, notably the unorthodox and experimental _Wave_.

While on the English faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Neidig became interested in the question of when the first American drama was written and when and where it was first produced. In 1909, Thomas Godrey's _The Prince of Parthia_, along with a few other contenders, was considered the first American play written in America and acted on the American stage. Written before 1763--Neidig said 1759--and published in 1765, the drama was performed at Philadelphia in 1767. Today it is still considered the first "American" play; in his _Literary History of the United States_;[1] Robert E. Spiller, _et al_., lists it as the first American drama.

But Neidig in 1909 thought otherwise. To him, the problem seemed to center largely on the definition of "America". If America was taken to mean strictly the first "United States" play, the United States did not exist at the time it was written. Perhaps the authorities took it to mean the first play written in the English language. When viewed in the light of America as the North American continent, then several French and Indian dialect plays predated it by nearly a century. Neidig chose the geographical approach for his studies. He must have reasoned that, after all, England, France, and Spain had pretty thoroughly carved up the continent in the early 18th Century, and because of frequently shifting political and national boundaries, the geographical approach seemed the only reliable benchmark.

Neidig attacked the project with all the scientific thoroughness that marked all his work. He carefully analyzed existing texts, monographs and records, and he ran down each hint, every clue available to him. In January 1909, he published his findings in Nation.[2] A few weeks later The New York Evening Post[3] reprinted essentially the same information. Neidig, in his article, meticulously took into account the research accomplished up until that time. He cited the work of G. O. Seilhamer and Paul Leicester Ford, and he examined into the periodicals of the pre-Colonial era: The Virginia Gazette, The South Carolina Gazette, and The New York Gazette. He probed the diaries and publications of colonial contemporaries.

He then detonated what he thought would be a bombshell. "None of these plays," he conjectured, ".... was actually the first either to be produced or written in America; 1752 is not the earliest date to be attached to American stage authorship, nor 1732 the date of the earliest reference to a play acted in America, nor even 1702 the earliest date for either."[4]

Neidig charged that the earliest authorship dated back to at least 62 years earlier, perhaps even earlier than that. He claimed that in 1640 Father Paul Le Jeune and the Jesuit missionaries at Quebec had produced a French tragi-comdey with certain American scenes added to the playscript. "They did," Neidig reasoned, "what was probably the first dramatic writing to be done in what is now English-speaking America. Shakespeare had been dead 24 years.....Miles Standish was still in command of the Pilgrim force at Plymouth.....Quebec at this time was only 3 years old."[5] Pinpointing the exact author or title of the play, Neidig admitted, was impossible, but he suspected that it was Hardy's Alcestis or Corneille's Cid. Either play could have been easily adapted to the American setting by adding Algonquin scenes. He quoted an account of the play that was given by Father Le Jeune in Jesuits Relations dated Kebec, September 10, 1640:

> .....Monsieur Chevalier de Montmagny, our governor.....has had a tragi-comedy represented this year, in honor of this new born prince (the Dauphin), I would not have believed that so handsome apparel so good actors could be found in Kebec.....but in order that our Savages might derive some benefit from it, Monsieur the Governor, endowed with uncommon zeal and prudence, invited us to put something into it which might strike their eyes and their ears. We had the soul of an unbeliever pursued by two demons, who finally

> hurled it into a hell that vomited forth flames, the struggles, cries and shrieks of this soul, and of these demons who spoke in the Algonquin tongue.[6]

But Neidig conceded that this spectacle, unknown as it was, had been only partially altered and had not been totally written on the North American continent. His research revealed that Cid, mentioned by name, was produced at Quebec in 1646, and another play by Corneille was performed in 1651. In 1652 the Cid was again played.

In 1658 the Jesuit fathers and their French and Indian students, Neidig discovered, wrote and produced a play themselves which Neidig concluded was the first play to "have been wholly written in America; and perhaps it is our last example of genuine American writing--writing, that is to say, in a native tongue."[7] He quotes a 1658 entry in Jesuit Relations as substantiation of his claim:

> July 28, Monsieur the governor did us the honor, with Monsieur the Abbe quelus of coming to dine at our house. There he was received by the Youth of the country with a little drama in french, huron and algonquin, in our garden, in sight of all the people of quebec.[8]

Unfortunately the title of the play was never mentioned, but Neidig unearthed the cast of characters, all, of course, religious in nature. Although it was produced by a religious order, it was in "no sense a religious play, but a play more like one of our minor Jacobean masques--a compound of tableau, allegory and ballad."[9]

His work was largely overlooked or ignored by his colleagues. Whether literary national chauvinism came into play cannot be determined. Neidig made his point, supported it with solid documented evidence, and went on to other things. Soon he would find himself embroiled in the midst of the Shakespeare 1619 quarto controversy, and he would gain fleeting recognition for his work in solving the 300 year old enigma.

Neidig had long been intrigued with the mystery surrounding the Jaggard 1619 Shakespearean quartos. During the summer of 1910, while doing graduate work at the University of Chicago, he had mulled over the problem with Dr. John M. Manley, then English department chairman. About 1907, Alfred W. Pollard of the British Museum, and Sir Walter W. Greg of Trinity College Library, Cambridge, had confirmed the first suspicions about the authenticity of the William and Issac Jaggard edition of the quartos. By comparing watermarks, Pollard and Greg demonstrated that nine of the plays had been printed at practically the same time. Their theory was scoffed at by Sir Sidney Lee, British Shakespearean scholar, who felt the imprint date was irrefutable proof of publication. The dispute raged back and forth for nearly 18 months with articles by both proponents appearing in Library, Athenaeum, and other prestigious journals of the day.[10] Athenaeum, apparently tiring of the argument, ultimately refused to print any further articles. Since both sides were represented by men of distinguished standing and scholarship, the dispute seemed irresolvable unless new evidence was brought to light. It was at this point that Neidig stepped into the middle of the debate.

Neidig, who grew up in his father's print shop and had a vast knowledge of typography and printing techniques, proposed to resolve the controversy by comparing the typography of the title pages of the plays in the quartos. He felt that a minute study of the typefaces, type sizes, and type placement would settle the argument once and for all. Dr. Manley agreed that Neidig's theory had merit and encouraged him to pursue it wherever it led. It seemed to Neidig that "not only might this exacter method of study result in an addition to our knowledge of old printing types, but that new knowledge of the books themselves might be gained by it."[11]

His problem was compounded by the crudeness and inexactness of Elizabethan printing presses. The same letter, for instance, might "have one appearance and sometimes another, according to the amount of ink upon the ink ball, the wetness of blanket and paper, and the strength exerted by the pressman's right arm."[12]

He proposed to solve the problem by using photography and precise mathematical measurements. This was no mean feat, for the cameras of that era were bulky, rudimentary contraptions. Neidig and Manley even went so far as to devise a special camera for more accurately photographing the texts. It was never built, however, because photographs were supplied by Mr. David A. Robertson of the University of Chicago, who had recently photographed the British Museum's quartos. Pollard's Shakespeare Folio and Quartos, published in 1909, contained two nearly complete facsimilies of the title pages. Neidig now had what he needed.

He was worried about possible photographic distortion, but solved it by using the printer's device as a unit of common measurement. Through this technique he was able to adjust any differences in the scale of photographic reproductions. In other words, any variation of size could be compensated for by the comparative size of the device. He relied on Joseph Moxon's Mechanix Exercises,[13] published in 1683, for type sizes used in the composition of the title pages. A close friend and colleague, John Rae Woolley, rendered valuable photographic assistance.

What followed were weeks and months of deliberate and patient study of the texts, with the net result proving that five title pages were, indeed, forged. Those Shakespeare quartos bearing the dates 1600 and 1608 "were not printed in those years, but were printed within a few days of the quartos bearing the date 1619."[14] It was, according to Neidig and other authorities, an unadulterated, bald-faced and successful attempt by the printers William and Issac Jaggard to avoid paying fees for publication.

Neidig published his results simultaneously in the October 1910 issues of Modern Philology and Century magazine.[15] His revelations threw book sellers into a turmoil. The New York Tribune of November 18, 1919 observed:

> Mr. Neidig's discovery seriously affects the price of those supposedly first editions, as hitherto it had been assumed by scholars that Shakespeare himself might have handled the book. Mr Neidig has shown that since they were printed in 1619, three years after the death of the great dramatist, he could

not have had personal contact with them. The copy of the "Merchant of Venice", dated 1600, recently sold for $3000.[16]

Plaudits for his work were not long in coming. Sir Walter Greg wrote: ".....I have read your article with the greatest of interest and heartily welcome your confirmation of the theory of the 1619 quartos."[17]

Pollard was even more effusive in his praise:

> .....you have supplied just the bit of purely external and non-literary evidence which was wanted to satisfy people who haven't time for other kinds..... They (photographs) have been very skillfully carried out. I particularly admire the ingenuity of photographing the measure along with the subject. I may borrow that idea someday....."[18]

He did.

Dr. W. H. Prescott, British historian who was in the midst of the Bacon-Shakespeare dispute, wrote Neidig and asked his help in determining the correct date of two imprints of the same book. Neidig cleared that one up, too, by pointing out that the printer simply removed the title pages of unsold earlier editions, thus enabling him to sell "old" stock as new.

Max Farrand, professor of English at Yale University and later Director of the Huntington Library and Museum, wrote:

> I read every word of the article with absorbed interest, and when I was through, I lay thinking it over until it was time to get up.
>
> I suppose you know that I am interested in questions of historical criticism, and this certainly is a pretty piece of work. I congratulate you heartily, for it is absolutely convincing, and is finished with a scholar's touch.
>
> .....I simply appreciate the method of your working, and I again thank you, no more sincerely but more intelligently than I did before.....[19]

Fernando Sanford, a former colleague and professor of Physics at Leland Stanford University, congratulated Neidig for his scientific approach and for his ability to write with clarity. "You have proved your hypothesis in a manner that can have no doubt in the mind of anyone. Many of the arguments of the literary critic are incomprehensible to me, but now you have a language that everyone can understand,"[20] he wrote.

Neidig's work apparently was quickly forgotten by the academic community. Ironically, his name is never mentioned or cited in discussions of the false dates on the Shakespearean quartos, or the dating of the first American drama. Men like Pollard, Greg, Lee, and Willoughby are all mentioned in the standard reference works as the pioneer experts in Shakespearean research. Yet without Neidig's devotion to scientific pursuits, these questions might still be hotly debated in the anterooms of the great universities. His contributions to popular fiction have been overlooked or forgotten, too. Neidig seems jinxed by the very Muses he sought to honor.

NOTES

[1]Robert E. Spiller, et al., Literary History of the United States, 3rd ed., (London: The MacMillian Company, Collier-MacMillian Limited, 1963), p. 185.

[2]William J. Neidig, "First Play in America", Nation, January 28, 1909, pp. 86-89.

[3]William J. Neidig, "First Play in America", New York Post, February 13, 1909, p. 2.

[4]Ibid

[5]Ibid

[6]Ibid

[7]Ibid

[8]Ibid

[9]Ibid

[10]William J. Neidig, "The Shakespeare Quartos of 1619", Modern Philology 8 (October, 1910), pp. 145-149.

[11]Ibid

[12]Ibid

[13]Ibid

[14]Ibid

[15]William J. Neidig, "False Dates on Shakespeare Quartos", Century 80 (October, 1910), pp. 912-919.

[16]"Forged Shakespeare Dates", New York Tribune, November 18, 1910, p. 1.

[17]W. W. Greg letter to W. J. Neidig, January 23, 1911.

[18]Alfred W. Pollard letter to W. J. Neidig, December 29, 1910.

[19]Max Farrand letter to W. J. Neidig, February 14, 1911.

[20]Fernando Sanford letter to W. J. Neidig, September 25, 1910.

ODD McINTYRE'S "COUNTRY TOWN ANGLE"

Eugene Huddleston

Oscar Odd McIntyre, who before he found his niche as a columnist once served as press agent for Flo Ziegfeld, should have worked for another showman, Bob Haldeman, in the days when he was creating Presidential images, for Odd unfailingly knew what would play in Peoria as demonstrated by his long career as the highest paid and most widely read newspaper feature writer of his time. His daily and Sunday 800-word column "New York Day by Day" delighted over 7 million readers in the 1920's and 1930's and his monthly article for Cosmopolitan maintained its popularity from 1922 to his death in 1938. Warner Bros. even planned a movie based on his life, which his sudden death aborted. Among the leaders of the Jazz Age columnists--Arthur Brisbane, Franklin P. Adams, Christopher Morely, and Heywood Broun--McIntyre occupied a prominent if not wholly deserved place.

In the days before television, his fascination with the white light nights of Broadway communicated itself to millions of people for whom NYC meant the ultimate in glamour and the exotic. Yet O. O. was an unabashed country boy, whose naivete and gaucheries were parodied in the New Yorker by Ring Lardner and elsewhere by Walter Winchell and Westbrook Pegler. The general tone of his column can be easily illustrated by his favorite lead-ins: Thoughts while strolling.....Whatever became of....Personal nomination for..... Bagatelles.....Dairy of a modern Pepys.....Purely personal piffle.....and Thingumabobs, a typical one of the latter being: "The painters George Bellow" and Ben Ali Haggin were born the same day and same month of the same year."

McIntyre's rise to the top of his profession is a lesson in perseverance. A school dropout, he sought fulfillment in newspaper work, and by 23 he was city editor of the Cincinnati Post. When his crusading boss Ray Long went to New York as editor of Hampton's Magazine, Odd went along as his assistant, only to see the journal fold before his duties had been clearly defined. Eventually he worked out the scheme that gained national recognition for "New York Day by Day." Setting up a mimeograph machine in his apartment, he typed "letters" for the folks in the hinterlands, interspersed with publicity for clients he had sought out. Sending the letters without charge to newspapers around the country, he began getting regular acceptances, which grew steadily until the column was syndicated nationally. McIntyre wrote compulsively day after day, year after year, never varying his letter to the homefolks approach and never losing his audience.

McIntyre's formula was in his own words to "write from a country town angle of a city's glamour." Born in Missouri and raised by a grandmother in Gallipolis, Ohio, he absorbed the grass roots values of turn of the century rural America. But like other American writers--Floyd Dell, Thomas Wolfe, and Sherwood Anderson, among many others--his aspirations would not fit within the narrow limits of small town life. Ostensibly, after leaving it, he always wanted to return to his home town, but he knew that even though he professed the values of a small towner, he could never be happy in Gallipolis, even in retirement. He was well aware that his credibility as a man about town was reinforced by his simple and homely origins, which were proof of his sincerity and honesty. Even though his column was mostly filled with observations of Manhattan or London or Paris (if he was traveling), he was always at pains to preserve images of himself consistent with Midwestern rural and small town folkways.

This point of view--call it rural, Populist, or Arcadian--so colored his treatment of material that instead of classifying him with metropolitan journalists who were his contemporaries, one should place him with a broad class of humorists of the post World War I period whose forte was rural simplicity--e.g., Kin Hubbard, Opie Read, Will Rogers, David Grayson (psuedonym for Ray Stannard Baker), Irvin S. Cobb, and at a somewhat later date, Ernie Pyle. McIntyre's own popularity and the popularity of contemporaries with essentially the same mental caste attest to the importance of Populism as a way of thinking in pre-World War II America. Populism here is the belief that small town and rural values promote social well being and personal happiness. These values include simplicity, naturalness, reverence for the past, individualism, and anti-intellectualism.

McIntyre's own writings consistently illustrate these qualities. About the virtues of simplicity it is difficult to tell whether McIntyre is sincere or merely giving lip service to the widely held belief in grass roots America that whatever is simple is good; whatever is complex is to be distrusted. Continually McIntyre tried to sell the idea that the rich hate being rich and that they are always ready to testify as to the "ephemeral joy of material things." Typical is this anecdote from his essay "The Simple Rich":

> In the kid glove district of upper Fifth Avenue is a mansion whose occupant is many times a millionaire. In the basement is a complete cobbler's outfit. Reporters descended upon him one evening regarding some first-page business deal. He was pegging away at an old pair of shoes. This was his method of recreation. A box at the opera awaited him. He had his choice of a hundred good plays, a dozen luxurious clubs, a night tennis and squash court on his roof garden--yet he preferred the simple pleasure of shoe pegging in the bleak loneliness of his cellar.

During the Great Depression McIntyre observed that some who lost everything in the Big Town found moving to small towns "not half bad." An example is the man who moved from New York because of losses and debts to an Indiana town of 4,000 where he accepted a "humble clerkship in a small store owned by a "college mate, a class failure." McIntyre adds, "Of the New Yorker's supposed friends, the Hoosier was the only one to extend the helping hand." Finally succeeding on his own in the small town, he visited New York to "Straighten a few tangles" and was offered a much higher paying post than he held, but "he turned it down" in favor of the simple life. This renouncing of the big city seems to contradict, on the surface, one of McIntyre's favorite devices in his column: Cataloging small towners successful in the city; for example, "Dorothy Parker, a West End, New Jersey girl, who made good in the city" or "Bob Reud, theatrical press agent who hobnobs with the Vanderbilts and such, used to drive cows to pasture in Hickory, N. C." McIntyre must always have seen himself in the same situation, and it gave his ego a lift to think that he could both appreciate small town ways and yet succeed in the Big Town.

McIntyre's obsession with simplicity sometimes produced writing clearly conveying the Arcadian idealism that colored his perception of life. In his column for August 18, 1932, for example, he extolled the ripened paw-paw, "the poor man's banana," and the mulberry, found in "forest glades of the creek hollows," and he contributed a little item to Ohio folklore in re-counting how on a mulberry picking expedition he came home with a "measuring worm" acrawl on his coat collar, "a superstition that a new suit was being made, grandma explained." And he would unabashedly mix in the same column gossip about Gypsy Rose Lee (nothing ever malicious, as his friend Irving Cobb said of him) and Edward R. Stettinous, Jr., with such random observations as "Memory: The string of red peppers on the kitchen wall."

Simplicity, innocence, naturalness--they were synonymous to McIntyre and his best and worst writing is in memory of Gallipolis as it was in his youth. Sometimes his nostalgia was merely sentimentalism. In his column he often posed some simple pleasure of chilhood as outshining his adventures as a sophisticated world traveler; and one might add, childhood was where his security really lay. For McIntyre's main problem in coping as an adult was emotional immaturity. Having married his childhood sweetheart, he could use the institution of marriage even as a source of nostalgia, as he did in the essay "The Only Girl":

> Life has splattered my path with many exciting and memorable footprints. I have stood where Lindbergh landed in France, lighted the Prince of Wales' cigaret from the end of my own while waiting at the hat-checkers in a London night club, spent a ghastly night in a cut-throat water-front hotel in Antwerp, waved to the Kaiser at his Doorn exile and stood ankle-deep in water that flooded a top-deck cabin on a supposedly sinking Atlantic liner. Yet the emotional wallop that stands out most vividly is that late afternoon when I, a stone-bruised lad, hobbled along carrying Her books home from school!

Since the McIntyre's were childless, he could not idealize for his readers childhood capers relived in his offspring, but he could achieve the same kind of gross sentimentality by writing about his dog. "To Billy in Dog Heaven" was his most acclaimed single column. Billy, the Boston Terrier with the McIntyre's for thirteen years, was addressed endearingly in human terms as a companion and peer who had shared with his master trips to Europe and who wanted to be informed now of what's happened since he "faced the Last Terror with such magnificent valour." Billy, as well as Rainbow and Nimble, provided lots of copy. In another column on Billy, Odd lets his readers in on his attitude towards children amid bromides on loyalty, the empathy between dogs and masters, and the impermanence of affection: "I concede," he wrote, "it is far more admirable to bestow such affection [as that producing the agony he felt when his dog was killed crossing the street] on a child, but I have no children and as much as I love them I have so far shrunk from the responsibility of adopting one. Perhaps some day I shall and then maybe I'll realize how mawkish has been my devotion to a dog."

Since Odd was the eternal child himself, playing the role of a father would have been difficult for him. One believes him when he writes from Venice (October 14, 1932), "Of all nights I've seen this is the most stupendous .....It's goofy but I itch to roll my pantaloons and go wading." Or take a column on dancing. Here the sophisticated man-about-town holds to the same attitudes he possessed as a pre-adolescent. Looking to the Gallipolis of his childhood, in the name of "wholesome simplicity," he indulges "a high-nosed sniff or so over the glowing decadence of the dance of today":

> I watch the modernists on the tightly packed postage-stamp dance floors clutching each other in strangle holds, wriggling their hips and rolling their eyes in epileptic seizures, and I sigh for the days when dancing was--as Editor Sibley expressed it--"the poetry of motion" and not a sickly convulsion. I see young collegians, with suspicious hip-pocket bulges, and kitten-eyed flappers, puffing cigarets, imitating the suggestive shrugs and sensuous shivers of the wildest honky-tonks of the old Barbary Coast.....I see people of respectable families, reared in culture, rubbing elbows with gamblers.....and dope fiends in the fashionable jazz mosques. I see blacks and whites dancing together in the fetid dives of Harlem. Finally, I see the drama of an ancient and riotous civilization bursting forth in a new fling of sense and sex. It is not a pretty picture and that is why I find myself climbing upon a soap box to hot-gospel a lot of prattle such as this. After all, we did have such nice clean fun in the dear dead-and-gone dancing days. We went after our girls in a huge horse-drawn carryall and we had our elderly and circumspect chaperons to see that everything was right and proper..... There was no cheek-to-cheek snuggling and the turtledove vacuous facial expression of a dog scratching a flea..... It would all perhaps seem as intensely prim and Victorian as a lacey valentine today, but the memory of it in contrast with the pagan didos of the modern dance floor cuts through the muck like the vivid flash of the Apocalypse..... Looking back, what impresses most of us mossbacks about our dancing days is the charm of their wholesome simplicity. We dwellers on the plains danced all evening for a cost of perhaps one dollar a couple.....

McIntyre's feelings about Gallipolis might have been sentimental, but one suspects they were sincere. He could not posture about his hometown, about which he felt ambivalent. Once he wrote (1933): "I often awake from a dream that I'm back in Gallipolis where I belong, and they are on to me." Or again, "I know my sentimental nexus to the small town would snap if I ever lived in one." But the Gallipolis of his memories provided an imperishable ideal. Reverence for the past in McIntyre's writings usually meant nostalgia. In a typical vignette he takes an imaginary visit to the old home town after twenty years absence:

> Then that glorious green escape, the public square, with a forbidding cannon in each corner, squeaky town pump and chained rusty tin cup. The latticed benches overlooking the river. Packets from Paducah. Sidewheelers from Cincinnati. Towboats from up Kanawha. Baz Cliff's coal float. Across in West Virginia hills the cowling rise of Alum Rock. Most important, too, the perky tumbelbug ferry Champion. The boys are likely gathering at the Park Central Corner now.

Forty years after Odd wrote this, the Park Central Hotel is still in business, and Gallipolis (7000 pop. in 1933) is still much the same as it was when he grew up. It literally borders on being a Southern--or border state--town, and its origin is distinctive in that it was founded in 1790 by Frenchmen, mostly writers, artists and artisans, who in acquiring their titles to the land they held such hope for had been swindled by land speculators. McIntyre left Gallipolis just about for good when he was 17, but like that other sensitive Ohio youth Sherwood Anderson, he acquired not only the essence of his character in his small town but also the capital in substance he needed as a successful writer.

His powers of observation sometimes transcended his prejudices. Sketches of town characters, some with such unlikely names as Ormsby McTavish and Dunc Devac, achieve artistry through humorously rendered detail. "Pedro Joe" showed up several times in his writings, and seems to have just stepped out of Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn. In each of three separate accounts, there are differences in detail and even a contradiction, not serious but of the kind that led Odd's detractors to claim Odd was careless with facts. In one account Pedro Joe was carried off by a racking cough at 91 and in the other by smallpox at 89. Whatever the facts were, Pedro Joe, or Whitewash Joe, "played tunes on peach leaves and exuded a strangling frowst of raw whiskey and venomously strong tobacco. He also foretold fortunes with spider webs." The most fully developed sketch is in "Folks Back Home":

> Some said he was a Spaniard, and others said he came from Austria. He talked with an accent and was a steady drinker. He lived in the stable in the alley back of Schreck's meat shop and loafed about Kerr's drug store. He used to be up every morning at 4:30 o'clock, and was the first customer at the Blue Goose. There had been stories that he killed a man once, but he seemed harmless and very fond of children. He used to cut baskets out of buckeyes for them, and he could make a noise like a sheep and imitate a saw-mill buzz-saw. In the spring Pedro Joe used to go back of Reservoir Hill, on the lower river road, and gather herbs, and he hung them to dry outside his shack.

> There was talk that Dr. Cromlish got his famous recipe for Cromlish's great blood restorer from Pedro Joe.

And so on.

A significant component of the Populist mentality illustrated in Odd's writing is his belief in rugged individualism. During the early days of the Great Depression he wrote: "I am conscious a lot of worthy fellows are out of jobs and it is a tough break. But tears would be crocodilian. I have been out of work myself, both from being deservedly fired and through no fault of my own. In each instance I landed a better job, and so likely will you." Although McIntyre seldom ventured into politics, as he usually steered clear of controversy or any subject requiring complexity of treatment, his innuendoes against New Dealers and liberals in general was enough to disclose his essential conservatism. On Dec. 17, 1932, he commented, "Clarence Darrow strikes me as a bit of a poseur." A few days later he called F. D. R. a "fence straddler," and he admitted voting against the buoyantly liberal Mayor LaGuardia even though he described himself as "a Democrat by heredity." His political learnings were determined more by a native anti-intellectualism than by adherence to a particular political, social, or economic ideology. A high school dropout who was educated in the school of hard knocks, McIntyre professed "polite indifference" toward college education, and often bragged about his informal and ungrammatical writing style, as well as his vernacular speech: e.g., "My wife was many years stopping me saying "rich millionaire," but I still say "eyetalyan" and accent "po" in Policeman." He especially distrusted the New Deal Brain Trust--the college professors brought to Washington as Roosevelt's advisors. After remarking that H. L. Mencken and Sinclair Lewis are regarded as "deflators of Babbittry," he reports hearing that "Mencken does not believe the Rotarian spirit he so hooted, is as foolish as the Brain Trust nonsense and that he "believes the professors must be eliminated or there will be a march on Washington."

MrIntyre's views on men and manners throughout his voluminous writings reflect over and over again the Populist mentality as it has existed from William Jennings Bryan to George Corley Wallace. Its prevalence in America in the 1920's and '30's is attested by the enormous popularity of Odd's writings. Indeed, in the first half of the twentieth century so many writers on the level of popular culture (mostly journalists) promulgated views similar, if not identical, to those of McIntyre's that they constitute a so-far unrecognized school of writers. Those who, like McIntyre, had been able to capitalize on their understanding of the Populist mentality to develop significant careers for themselves included Irvin S. Cobb, Will Rogers, George Ade, Opie Read, Ray Stannard Baker, Kin Hubbard, and Ernie Pyle. Undoubtedly during the period a number of other writers--particularly novelists and short story writers--also possessed the same insights, but the foregoing belong together by dint of their journalistic backgrounds.

The one of this group having the most in common with Odd was Irving S. Cobb, a personal friend and a fellow country boy from Paducah, Kentucky, a few hundred miles down the Ohio River from Gallipolis. Temperamentally quite different from Odd, he nevertheless owed his success as a humorist to his ability to play, in Mark Twain fashion, the homely philosopher unhumbled by big city sophistication. Will Rogers, a lifelong friend of Cobbs', was highly admired by McIntyre but was not a personal friend, even though he brought up Rogers' name so often in "New York Day by Day" that Rogers once jokingly thanked Odd for being his unpaid press agent. Since McIntyre admired people with either wealth, celebrity status, or a country background they had overcome, it's no wonder that he idolized the cracker-barrel philosopher with the little-boy innocence and insouciance from Oologah, Oklahoma. George Ade, roughly contemporary with McIntyre, was another journalist-humorist utilizing a small town-rural background for a career as a humorist. A native of Kentland, Indiana, Ade capitalized on the themes of rural simplicity and innocence in much the same way as McIntyre. His biographer said of him that "he stripped the city of its gaudy front so that the farm could see the city, and he made the city smell the dung and feel the calluses of the farm."

As a young newspaperman in Chicago, Ade had been a colleague of Opie Read and Ray Stannard Baker. Read, from Gallatin, Tennessee, made his mark in life with the periodical The Arkansas Traveller. According to his biographer, Read "was a grownup plowboy who had made his way in the world despite hell and high water." McIntyre, even though he never knew Read personally, was an obvious admirer by the number of times he dropped Read's name into New York Day by Day. Ray Stannard Baker, born in the then small town of Lansing, Michigan, in 1870, was taken when he was five to rugged Wisconsin frontier country where he was raised. His lifetime love affair with nature found a focus in the David Grayson essays, where this middle class and latter version of Henry David Thoreau spun his homely philosophy. I quote, as an example, from chap. XIV, "The Harvest," in David Grayson's Adventures in Contentment:

> An honest, hard working country training is the best inheritance a father can leave his son. And yet a farm is only an opportunity, a tool. A cornfield, a plow, a woodpile, an oak tree, will cure no man unless he have it in himself to be cured. The truth is that no life, and least of all a farmer's life, is simple--unless it is simple. I know a man and his wife who came out here to the country with the avowed purpose of becoming, forthwith, simple. They were unable to keep the chickens out of their summer kitchen. They discovered microbes in the well, and mosquitoes in the cistern, and wasps in the garret. Owing to the resemblance of the seeds, their radishes turned out to be turnips! The last I heard of them they were living snugly in a flat on Sixteenth Street--all their troubles solved by a dumb-waiter. The great point of advantage in the life of the country is that if a man is in reality simple, if he love true contentment, it is the place of all places where he can live his life most freely and fully, where he can grow. The city affords no such opportunity; indeed, it often destroys, by the seductiveness with which it flaunts

> its carnal graces, the desire for the higher life
> which animates every good man.

If David Grayson was the cultivated seeker turned farmer, Kin Hubbard's image was more the tobacco chewing rube. His alter ego, Abe Martin of pleasantly rustic and hill enclosed Brown County, Indiana, regaled readers of the Indianapolis News for years with his bits and pieces of wry observation on men and manners, accompanied by his own very special line drawings. The eulogy in New York Day by Day for August 2, 1932, was typical of the regard that Odd held for "his favorite humorist;" "Outside of Mark Twain, no humorist is so lamentably missed. With Divine naivete, he transferred the philosophy of the sullen ploughlands into rib-crackling humor. Under his magic, the awkward cornstubble became a graceful floss of silk."

McIntyre and Ernie Pyle never knew each other, but leaders of the syndicate handling Odd's column gave Ernie the best chance among feature writers to capture the enormous audience that existed for Odd on his sudden death in 1938 at age 53. Before Ernie's reputation skyrocketed as a war correspondent, he had traveled around the country reporting on whatever interested him. A native of the flat farmlands of west central Indiana, Ernie, who bore a strong physical resemblance to Odd, believed that the success of his column depended, in his own words, "on that personal homey touch in the writing."

McIntyre's popularity must be measured against the popularity achieved by not only such writers as Pyle, David Grayson, etc., but by practically any writer or entertainer with a Populist bias from 1900 to World War II. Since Populism embraced a set of attitudes rather than an ideology, one may find Populists who are compatible with McIntyre in some areas and incompatible in others, especially in economics and politics. For example, Ray S. Baker, a Progressive, Muckraker, and biographer of Woodrow Wilson, could hardly have agreed with mcIntyre on the major social issues of the 1920's and '30's. And Populism today embraces both George Wallace and George McGovern, whose irrelevance on the political scene is made apparent by the irrelevance on the popular culture scene of writers like McIntyre and company, whom I shall dub the Arcadian Humorists, to distinguish them from "Populist" as a solely political appelation. Populist values may have made America what it is, but they will have to be replaced by new values if America is to continue fulfilling its promise. Not much longer can "John Boy" Walton continue to hold the fort alone.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Patricia A. Anderson

In his book Lincoln Reconsidered (1956), David Donald points out that a folklore has grown up around Lincoln in the years since his death and that it is this folklore Lincoln who "has become the central symbol in American democratic thought" and "embodies what ordinary inarticulate Americans have cherished as ideals."

Since Americans have always hoped to instill their ideals in the young, it is not surprising that there have been more juvenile biographies written about Lincoln than about any other American. In a 1969 bibliographic study, Lincoln Today, Victor Searcher lists 81 such biographies in addition to over 60 plays and recitations for children; and these numbers do not include the many juvenile novels in which Lincoln appears, either as a main character or a minor one. In these books Abraham Lincoln emerges as a folklore figure who is a mixture of the defied, martyred president with an earthy, frontier hero. He also emerges with certain qualities which Americans have traditionally tried to instill in their young. For example, Americans have long believed in education as a means of rising in the world, and all the children's biographies stress the fact that Lincoln had the same belief and largely educated himself through reading. The books written for very young children, seven or eight year olds, are quite obvious about this. In Gertrude Norman's A Man Named Lincoln (1960), the author has Nancy Hanks say:

> "Abe, you must learn to read. I want you to be somebody when you grow up."

Later, after Nancy dies, Sarah Bush Lincoln is described as helping Abe to read because "she, too, wanted him to be somebody."

With this much proding from both his mother and step-mother, it is not surprising that Abe is usually pictured with his nose in a book. In most of the biographies this bothers his father Tom who feels that Abe will not require quite so much education in his frontier life. This difference between Lincoln's parents is often presented in the books. For example, in Frances Cavanah's Abe Lincoln Gets His Chance (1959) Sarah Bush Lincoln is quoted as telling Tom Lincoln:

> "Maybe the Lord meant for young ones to be smarter than their parents.....or the world might never get any better."

In one biography, however, Tom Lincoln is shown to be very concerned with young Abe's education: Augusta Stevenson's Abe Lincoln: Frontier Boy (1932), one of the Childhood of Famous American Series. This series published by Bobbs-Merrill, the Indianapolis firm, has had great popularity with children, but in recent years adults have criticized the books as biographies, and rightly so, since much of the content is pure fiction. For example, here is one conversation between Nancy and Tom as they watch their two children to to school. Nancy has tears in her eyes as she says, "It's so far for them to walk. Three miles every day and the path is rough." Tom answers, "It can't be helped, Nancy. They are lucky to go to school at all. There are several children around here who can't afford it." When Nancy says that they can't really afford it, Tom quickly answers, "I'll do extra work this winter, carpenter work. I think I'll make enough to pay the schoolmaster .....they must learn."

Although the children's biographies are not themselves always honest, they are, however, full of stories concerning Abe's honesty. Again, in A Man Named Lincoln the author tells the story of how Abe collected six pennies more than necessary from a woman who bought apples and how he walked miles to pay her back. The author says, "After that, everyone called him 'Honest Abe.'"

A similar story appears in Genevieve Foster's Abraham Lincoln (1950), only this time Abe lets a woman go home with not enough tea. The author says that he quickly "wrapped up a quarter of a pound and walked four miles.....to take it to her." Still another variation appears in Cavanah's Abe Lincoln Gets His Chance. This time it is a woman buying calico whom Abe had overcharged by six cents and he walked six miles to give her the money. But perhaps the first indication of Lincoln's honesty was when he returned the rain soaked biography of George Washington and repaid the book's owner by giving three days of work. This story is a favorite in children's books about Lincoln.

Americans have always been conscious of appearance, and this is very evident in the children's books about Lincoln, many of them profusely illustrated and showing Lincoln at many ages and in many moods. One, Abraham Lincoln by Ingri and Edgar P. d'Aulaire won the Caldecott Medal in 1939 for being the best illustrated children's book of that year. The five-color lithographs in this book take Lincoln from a bare-footed frontier lad to a gauntly-handsome president.

Genevieve Foster in her Abraham Lincoln (1950) describes Lincoln as a baby as seen by Dennis Hanks:

> The boy took one look and the eager light faded from his face. Was this a baby? This little thing all red and wrinkly like a dried-up apple? All he could say was, "He won't come to much, I reckon."

One of the more complete biographies, Abraham Lincoln: Friend of the People (1950) by Clara Ingram Judson, has both pen drawings and also kodachromes from the Lincoln dioramas at the Chicago Historical Society. These kodachromes show a very idealized, almost handsome Lincoln. Judson doesn't have much to say about Lincoln's physical appearance. She does, however, often comment on his dress. When Lincoln is about ten years old she says:

> He wore a coonskin cap, a deerskin shirt, homespun breeches, low shoes, and short socks. His breeches were always too short, perhaps because he was growing so fast.....and his bony ankles were often blue with cold.

Earlier Judson had described Nancy Hanks calling Abe and his sister to see an elegantly dressed man on horseback who wore a tall beaver fur hat, "a smartly cut coat, short breeches, stockings, and shoes with big silver buckles." Nancy explained to her children that the man was a lawyer. She told them, "See his fine clothes.....A lawyer is a great man, children..... he kin read 'n write, and he knows the law of the land."

According to Judson when Lincoln was first elected to the Illinois legislature he borrowed $200.00 to outfit himself because for the first time in his life Lincoln thought about his appearance and realized that his shabbiness would not be a credit to the people he represented. Later at his inauguration as president, Judson is careful to describe his dress. "His suit was well made, his tall hat shone, his shirt bosom was white, his boots new, and he carried a shiny ebony cane topped with gold." He is almost the picture of the lawyer whom Nancy Hanks had pointed out so many years before.

Throughout the Abraham Lincoln Joke Book by Beatrice de Regniers (1965) the illustrations show Lincoln as a cartoon character with the main emphasis on his long legs. One group of jokes deals with his being so tall; another with his "looks." de Regniers writes that a visitor to the White House wrote that he was the ugliest man he'd ever seen, while still another visitor called him the handsomest. de Regniers asks, "How could the same man look ugly and handsome?" and answers by saying that so many people had seen Lincoln and described him that, while they disagreed about his being ugly or handsome, they all agreed that "when Lincoln smiled, his whole face changed. It seemed to light up and become beautiful." It is perhaps typical of a folklore character that his features can no longer be described. So often has he been pictured and described that the real man seems to elude one.

In a juvenile novel More Than Halfway There (1970), written by the Indiana-born author, Janet Ervin, the young store-clerk Lincoln plays an important role in the life of another young Indiana boy. Lincoln is described here as having "a face plain as an old shoe.....a large head with thick, bushy, black hair.....skin.....brown and leathery.....gray eyes..... deep-set under heavy eyebrows.....high cheekbones and a strong jaw which gave him something of the look of an Indian."

A younger Abe comments on his own appearance in Frances Cavanah's Abe Lincoln Gets His Chance (1959). Looking in a mirror just after his stepmother has cut his shaggy hair, Abe says:

> I still ain't the prettiest boy in Pigeon Creek..... but there ain't quite so much left to be ugly. I'm right glad, ma'am you cleared away the brush heap.

As Abraham Lincoln took on the qualities of a folk hero, both his mother Nancy Hanks Lincoln and his step-mother Sarah Bush Lincoln took on madonna-like characteristics. Each plays an important role in accounts of Lincoln's boyhood and Nancy Hanks Lincoln is herself the subject of children's books. In one of the more complete biographies Abraham Lincoln in Peace and War (1964) by Earl S. Miers, a volume which is profusely illustrated by a good collection of Lincoln art, including photos, paintings, and cartoons, the author says that Sarah Bush Lincoln was "determined to make Abe outshine Little Pigeon Creek like her $40.00 bureau." Later, just before Lincoln left Illinois for his inauguration, Miers says that Lincoln paid a visit to his stepmother. "Some people claim" says Miers, "that Sarah Bush Lincoln cried out, 'Abe, I'll never see you alive again. They'll kill you.'" The biographies all stress her encouragement of Lincoln, her desire to see him learn, her desire to see him succeed.

It is Nancy Hanks Lincoln, however, who is most mythologized. In a biography called Nancy Hanks of Wilderness Road (1949) by Meridel LeSueur, Lincoln's birth is strongly reminiscent of the Nativity:

> ".....men don't know a thing about birthing a baby alone, far even from the granny woman, in the dead of winter, with the wolves howling and the hungry deer drumming on the frozen earth looking for corn. No man ever had it like Nancy Hanks on a cold day, birthing a great man in a new nation, a little old swamp baby in a badly chinked log cabin, bare keeping out of the wind."

Later as Abe grew Nancy taught him "the different meanings of strange wisdoms she had heard or found for herself.....Abe listened and never forgot, and made up his wisdom from the many wisdoms of.....Nancy Hanks." Although she was not to live long, Nancy was not sad, "for she had given him, like the deer at the spring's mouth, the green life of the bough, and the long prairie eye, seeing beyond."

In an old children's book Oft-Told Tales of Lincoln (1928) the author Mollie Winchester says in her foreward that Lincoln "has taken.....the place of the heroes of ancient epics and legends: he is our Beowulf, our Charlemagne, our King Arthur." Lincoln has, it is true, taken on characteristics of all of these; and yet, in another book, this one a novel Cyrus Holt and the Civil War (1964) by Anna Hall, Lincoln is something else typically American.

In this book two young boys are speaking and one says, "Philip's seen President Lincoln!"

"Where'd he see him? When?" The excitement of the boy is obvious. "What'd he say about him? Didn't he think he was wonderful?"

The other answers, "Sure I asked him, but what he said was awfully queer.....He said.....he said, he couldn't see but what he looked just like any other man."

Lincoln may be our chief American folk hero, embodying the most desirable characteristics, but perhaps, ultimately, democracy demands that he look, as the small boy remarked, "like any other man."

COMMERCIAL FILM ADAPTATIONS OF MIDWEST LITERATURE: "PALATABLE POPULARIZATION"?

Jenifer Banks

In an age when there is an increasing reliance upon film as a substitute for reading we are obliged to consider the impact of such a change on popular culture. Whatever valuable innovations this medium may offer, there is still the controversial question: does the adaptation of literature into commercial film offer the non-reading public a visual equivalent to the original? Certainly the visual and dramatic form of film will affect the manner in which the source material can be presented. But does this necessarily mean that the material on the screen will be of an intrinsically "different order of things from the traditional heritage of the "intellectual"?[1] Sinclair Lewis apparently resigned himself to this difference when he gave the adaptor and director, Richard Brooks, carte blanche to make his own film version of Elmer Gantry. But James T. Farrell was not prepared for the essential changes made in his Studs Lonigan, and denounced the film, without ever seeing it.

These are but two examples of a consistent pattern of change found in film adaptations of MidWest literature which projects a sense of environmental determinism. Whether the original setting was MidWest urban or small town/rural, on the screen it is reduced to, at best, a mere backdrop for the action. The result is a loss of the authors' sense of the social or universal milieu as a major factor in the protagonists' problems. The changes cannot be ascribed merely to the technical problem that a film cannot afford as much time as literature to develop fully a sense of place. Nor can the loss be attributed to a reduction of the original description of the MidWest as though all of it were essential to an appreciation of the authors' concepts. Rather, it is the film's evasion of the idea of environmental determinism which distorts the central social and philosophical issues integral to the literature. While the authors focus on forces beyond the individual's and sometimes even society's control, the film industry all too often diminishes the problem by tracing it back to a more localized source. As a result, resolutions can be easily provided, whereas the impossibility of finding such solutions is integral to the literary concept.

That these film adaptations are of "a different order of things" from the literature, seems to result from the film industry's concept that their public prefers a certain type of "escapist entertainment", a temporary "escape" from their personal cares. This concept is clarified by Fritz Lang's suggestion that "the audience's apparent preference for happy resolutions is more accurately described as a preference for affirmative resolutions, as a desire to see dramatized the rightness of its ideals and the eventual achievements of its hopes. The death of a hero if he dies for an acceptable ideal is not a tragedy. The death of a protagonist, if he dies because he lives counter to an ideal, is affirmative."[2] As Lester Asheim reminds us, escape per se is not necessarily a negative concept. Aristotle's definition of catharsis in tragedy is of an essentially escapist nature. It is the kind of escape provided on the screen rather than the escape itself which makes these adaptations of "a different order of things." For the environmental determinist there can be no eventual realization of man's desires. For the commercial film audience there is a confirmation that their hopes and ideals will be sustained.

This pattern of "escapism" is particularly evident in film adaptations of the works of environmental determinists associated with the MidWest, e.g. Elmer Gantry, Native Son; "The Killers"; Studs Lonigan. In all of these, the changes made because of certain technological features of film must be acknowledged. In none of them can these fully account for the drastic differences in the final theses of the works.

One major problem inherent in the film adaptation of literature is that viewers, unlike readers, cannot dictate the speed at which they must assimilate the more significant and complex concepts essential to an understanding of the main plot. Clarification is, therefore, one of the director's primary goals. In "Elmer Gantry" Richard Brooks wished to ensure that his viewers would distinguish between Lewis' indictment of fundamentalism and institutional sin and his own less provocative and disturbing contention that "revivalism can corrupt and mislead, that while it plays a big part in American religious life it can be very dangerous." He therefore opened the film with a note explaining that "certain aspects of revivalism are open to criticism" (italics mine). His goal was "to deal with the revivalist side of religion, expressed through Gantry" whom he sees "as a typical American boy: ..... interested in money, sex and religion.....and to show that Sister Sharon Falconer.....is a kind of unrealistic visionary."[3] Should the viewer fail to appreciate Brooks' note, Sister Sharon alligns herself to those "certain aspects" by declaring to Gantry that she is a true believer and spending much of the film trying to convince herself that this is true. She dies for her misguided zeal. Gantry, on the other hand, realizes that such evangelicism is both unsatisfactory for him and harmful to others, repents his ways, and returns to "the real world." The audience is reassured that his return to their world is a sign of strength and honesty.

It is not the bold statements of intention which deny the audience much of the power of Lewis' attack, but the "popular" reduction of a complex issue into two mutually-exclusive and personal sides--Sharon's pathetic sincerity and Gantry's perceptive insight. The film's weakness lies in its failure to explore Lewis' exposure of the society's blind, ecstactic acceptance of its clergy and the varied causes for revivalism in the Bible Belt (e.g. the size of the nation; the need to feel one belongs to something larger than rural community; and the desire to find a respectable outlet for repressed emotions).

"Popularization" of the subject under the guise of clarification is also achieved in "Elmer Gantry" by reducing secondary plot lines and the number of secondary characters. Far from highlighting Lewis' indictment, this serves to modify it to "certain aspects." Lewis' gallery of hypocritical promoters and businessmen is condensed into one evangelical character, the sweaty, small-time real-estate agent, George F. Babbitt. He alone adamantly affirms that Christianity should become a "business, a success, a going concern." Since he bears the whole burden of the commercial argument, he is the scapegoat, ideologically far removed from the local ministers. Lewis' attack, drawn directly from the careers and writings of two famous American divines, Dr. William L. ("Big Bill") Stidger and Dr. John Roach Straton, is thus reduced to the exposure of an individual layman's sin.

The main plot of a film adaptation is also clarified by minimizing the author's description of the external factors which shape the protagonist's existence and circumscribe his personal control over his destiny. With all, or most of the political, social, and economic elements of the original background eliminated, the audience is presented with the main action-filled events which provide only a single-line study of specific individuals in their peculiar dilemmas. This erasure of the wider, more complex significance of the events integral to the literary conception, assures a more "popular" version. Plot complications can be resolved by individual solutions and "affirmative resolutions" more readily provided.

This is evident in Richard Wright's own adaptation of his Native Son. In the novel images of a rat trapped in a cage, of the tenements with black windows like blind eyes in skeletons, and the maze of chimney pots which hinder Bigger Thomas' roof top flight, combine to evoke a recognition that Bigger can never fully escape the labyrinth of the twentieth-century social forces which deny him his human liberty. His "escape" can only be through the internal satisfaction of having responded actively against oppression. The police who hunt him down are as fearful and uncomprehending as Bigger. Their force represents both the actively oppressive white society and the passively resigned ghetto community, who, together have made Bigger what he has become. They all are the villains. Even those who wish to aid Bigger are blind to his situation and his needs. It is ironic that Mr. Dalton, who tries to help him by employing Bigger in his wealthy home, is himself also Bigger's exploitative ghetto landlord.

Bigger's complex situation is so simplified in the film that it appears to be merely the personal problem of one black youth who "went wrong." The camera too rarely focusses on the Chicago ghetto to convey its multi-level forms of oppression. And the final chase scene, one of the few derived directly from the novel, is exploited only for its suspense. Bigger is a criminal, and thus the villian who must be captured to vindicate the powers of law and order. His death is an affirmation that those who follow ideals contrary to the well-being of the majority should and will be suppressed.

The visual and dramatic nature of the film requires that many of the complex and subtle ideas in the original be presented through specific scenes and characters in action. Thus, as in some literature, abstract concepts are personified, motives acted out. That this technical necessity for concrete and explicit expression does not wholly account for the subsequent distortion of the author's intention, is evident in two films called "The Killers," based on the basic situation in Hemingway's short story of the same name, and directed by Siodak in 1946 and Siegel in 1964. A comparison of these three works illustrates that such concentration tends to oversimplify and thus wholly distort the original. In Hemingway's story the peace and security of Nick's small-town world is shattered when he has his first encounter with naked, impersonal evil. The businesslike and unavoidable violence of the hired assassins is destructiveness in its purest form. Nick longs to run from the scene of this unmotivated wickedness, and from his helplessness, wrongly assuming that the savegery revealed in his formerly benign world, is located only in the two killers.

In both film versions the source of the evil is particularized in the aberrations of specific people. Once the problem has become a personal one, its solution lies merely in the destruction of the villains. The audience is spared the discomfort of contemplating the basic source of the conflict as it pertains to their world. Siodmak so amplified Hemingway's version with a mass of specific detail that he produced a melodramatic story of obsession and gang betrayal. Through the opening shots, filmed from the rear seat of the killer's car, the audience is thrown into the chase. However, the mystery surrounding the pursuit is gradually resolved through the device of an insurance agent. He pieces together the details of Ole's obsession with the Siren-like Kitty, who had persuaded him to double-cross his fellow robbers and then betrayed him to the gang. The story is reduced to a mere murder investigation, in which the violence is contained within a clear pattern of cause and effect. The victim's guilt within the gang is justification for a rather crude form of justice. With his death the violence and evil come to an end. On the screen he is afforded none of the dignity of Hemingway's Ole who is heroically resigned to the inevitable. Rather, he appears mesmorized as his killers burst into his room and shoot him down. Siegel's translation of "The Killers" to the screen is a study of obedience and loyalty within a gang. The killers are of central interest as they break the gang rules and investigate their victim for themselves. In so doing they reveal their own psychotic propensity for violence, and the uneasy unity among the gang members who have hired them to kill. Thus, while the audience remains securely outside as observers of the gang's world, they are reassured of their hope that disloyalty will be punished.[4]

A comparable state of immunity is also ensured when the past-time setting is exploited for the sake of nostalgia. The audience can view the action from a safe distance, reassured by the pattern of resolutions that the issues are locked securely in the past of one individual or social group. The elaborate detailing of specific aspects of "Studs Lonigan" offers the audience such an opportunity to indulge in nostalgia and thus to avoid a direct encounter with the troubling and persistant problems exposed by Farrell.

Farrell conceived of the novel as a story of an American destiny in our own time, of the tragic waste of human potential. Studs is doomed by the moral, sexual and political jungle of America. He dies of physical exposure while job hunting, a shattered, opinionated, fascist-minded man. However, Irving Lerner, the director of "Studs Lonigan," has substituted the spiritual poverty of Farrell's world with his concept of the excesses and vitality of the era. The environment becomes the attractive protagonist, Studs, an immature, lusty and prejudiced daydreamer, the antagonist. Lerner explained he "didn't want 'Studs Lonigan' to be just a representation of Irish-American life in South Chicago. It could be anyone of that period.....We've tried to be /accurate/ in re-creating the mood of the times.....We wanted to symbolize the era rather than to make things specific...../In/ the images before me now, the smokey scenes of lust, jazz and the faces of the Twenties, there is just the possibility that Farrell will recognize the world he made for literature, brought again excitingly to life."[5] (Farrell did not!) Although Lerner planned to make certain concessions "with various montages of news reel clips" to integrate Farrell's social history, his own favorite scenes are those which bring out "the whole feeling of the Twenties and the decadence of Prohibition days.....the feeling of nostalgia, of people milling around getting drunk...../and/ a fantasy scene, in which Studs visualizes Miss Miller /a school teacher introduced to "represent Studs' conscience"/ as a stripper in a burlesque house." For him Studs Lonigan is not anti-clerical, so he presented the priest as a positive force on the weak Studs. Studs' mother, while lacking insight is an extremely pious woman, so she's "rather less formidable than in the novel." As a result, Studs himself emerges as another whining member of the Lost Generation; the romantic; pleading "Somebody's got to love me" and pining for a girl who never did.

Lerner chose to compress Farrell's trilogy into a street-corner perspective "only Studs' world," but asserted that "'Studs Lonigan' is not a juvenile delinquency film in the usual sense. There are no gang fights, for instance. The violence is expressed through prejudices, through the youth's violent attitudes towards non-Catholic girls, the influence of the Prohibition upon moral degradation, and also through Studs' own fantasy life." The latter was used to illustrate Studs' immaturity. Clearly, all he needs to do is to transcend his fantasies and enter Lerner's exciting twenties.

The obvious "happy ending"--the reconciliation of the lovers, or the vindication of the wrongly accused--has long been criticized as part of the "Hollywood formula." But when "popular entertainment" purports to depict serious problems integral to literary originals, and then evades the issues through "affirmative resolutions," it is "escapist" in the worst sense. It deceives the non-reading audience by purporting to offer them part of their traditional literary heritage, while affording them only "escapism" under the guise of "significance." Film is a versatile medium. The causes of such distortion of literary originals are not integral to its art. Let the commercial cinema show the same respect for the public as the mid-West authors did when they challenged them to face the issue of environmental determinism. Let both art forms be entertaining and ultimately challenging.

NOTES

1 Lester Asheim, "From Book to Film: Simplification," Hollywood Quarterly, 5, No. 3 (Spring 1951), 289.

2 "Happily Ever After," The Penguin Film Review, 5 (January, 1948), 28. Quoted in Asheim, "From Book to Film: The Note of Affirmation," Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television, 6, No. 1 (Fall 1951), 60-61.

3 Richard Brooks in an interview, quoted by Albert Johnson, "'Studs Lonigan' and 'Elmer Gantry'," Sight and Sound, 29, No. 4 (Autumn 1960), 175.

4 For a fuller discussion of both versions of "The Killers," see Colin McArthur, Underworld USA (New York: Viking Press, 1972), pp. 160-1.

5 Johnson, p. 176.

MINNESOTA'S SEVEN-STORIED MOUNTAINEER

David D. Anderson

Minnesota is a state of which its people, Department of Tourism, Chamber of Commerce, and Democratic Farmer-Labor party are justly proud: it is the land of sky-blue waters, of 10,000 lakes, of Minnesota Irish and the Minnesota Vikings, of Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy; more recently it has become a significant and perhaps ultimately decisive battleground in the war between environmentalists and exploiters as well as the hunting grounds of Mary Richards and, until recently, of Rhoda Morgenstern. In short, Minnesota has everything--well, almost. For better or for worse, Minnesota does not have mountains.

However, the lack of mountains has never prevented Minnesota from producing more than its share of mountaineers--mountaineers, however, who rather than resign themselves to the lack of piles of rock and rubble, have determined instead to storm the forbidden fastnesses of rhetoric and ideology. Perhaps the most skilled and versatile of these Minnesota mountaineers was Ignatius Donnelly, who, for reasons that I hope will become evident, I hold to be the first among his fellow Midwestern Alpinists; in fact, he is Minnesota's seven-storied mountaineer.

Born in Philadelphia in 1831 to Roman Catholic parents of Irish ancestry--his father, Dr. Philip Donnelly an immigrant and his mother, Catherine Gavin a second-generation American--Ignatius Loyola Donnelly--he later dropped the Loyola together with his Catholicism--was influenced in his formative years by three factors: his Catholic background and the intense anti-Catholic atmosphere of Philadelphia and the country at large during his youth; the excellent public schools of Philadelphia in which he was educated; and the intellectual, social and political ferment of a time that produced works as diverse as <u>Moby-Dick</u>, <u>The Origin of Species</u>, the emergence of the Republican Party, and the movement Westward.

The first was largely responsible for his life-long championship of the underdog--the slave, the immigrant, the industrial worker, the farmer--that was to shape his political career; the second made him first a lawyer and a poet and ultimately the rational interpretor of mysteries of the grave, the universe, and beyond; the third took him to Minnesota in 1856, two years before its admission to the Union as a state forever free.

The first of the mountains Donnelly sought to master was not only the largest, but his attempt was very nearly life-long. Although he conquered a number of its lesser peaks in the course of a fifty-year career, he never managed to climb a major peak, much less the summit, and there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that for Donnelly the assult had far more significance than standing on the peak, however high it might be or heady the experience.

This first and longest assault was on the rhetoric and ideology of American politics, beginning in 1852 with a phrenology-inspired attack on Horace Greeley and ending in 1900, a few months before his death shortly after midnight on January 1, 1901, when he sought the Vice Presidency of the United States as candidate of the Populist Party. In the more than fifty years between the two events, Donnelly was successively a Democrat, largely because Whiggery was tainted by Know-Nothingism, voting for Buchanon and Breckenridge in 1856; a Republican in 1858 as the Democracy became the party of appeasement; a Radical Republican as the Lincoln faction promised easy reconstruction; a Liberal Republican as the Radicals moved from opposition to excess; and then, in succession, a Granger, a Greenback Democrat, a member of the Farmer's Alliance, and finally a Populist, as he sought a power base for the battles against power and privilege that he was determined to continue to fight, in the political arena and out of it.

During these years Donnelly served as Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota as a Republican, three terms as a Republican Congressman, and various terms in the State Legislature as a member of various economic-based parties. But his greater goals--the governship, the Vice Presidency, even, perhaps, a secret goal of the Presidency, eluded him. For the more than fifty years of his active political career Donnelly exercised a great deal of power as state and national spokesman, party philosopher, and editor, but he was never able to transmit that power into high political office.

Perhaps the major reason why Donnelly was unable to climb the peak of high political office was his preoccupation with other interests: in the 1850's and 60's he was concerned with emigration, settlement, land speculation, journalism, and the War, all of them demanding, time-consuming interests, each of which he resolved with relative although not overwhelming success. Yet in each he became a significant spokesman for those whose interests were greater than their political power or their eloquence.

However, as these interests diminished and his political interests changed from Republican to rural economic radical in the late 1870's and the next two decades, Donnelly sought an even greater goal than that of high political office; he determined to assault, with all the rational and imaginative power as well as eloquence at his command, the secrets that had plagued man perhaps from the beginning: those, in turn, that would penetrate the nature of the world, the universe, the grave, and the future. In so doing, he attempted to climb the six highest peaks of his mountaineering career.

By early 1881 Donnelly was working on his first attempt to unravel the complex data man had asassed in centuries of accumulated legends, folklore, scientific treaties, literary works, religious suggestions, and mythology. Out of this mass of material Donnelly extracted his first book, Atlantis, completed just before his fiftieth birthday. The work and its remarkable reception were largely responsible for Donnelly's later statement that

> One thing is certain: --my books have lifted me out of the dirty cess-pool of politics, nasty enough at all times, but absolutely foul to the man who does not win.

Even more importantly, Atlantis: The Antediluvian World, which, in less than ten years, was published in twenty-three American, twenty-six English, and dozens of translated editions, made him an international celebrity, a seriously-regarded scientific theorist, and a significant figure in the evolution of a variety of occult movements and cults.

Essentially, however, Atlantis is neither a scientific treatise nor an exercise in the occult. Instead it is the attempt to argue, out of the mass of wide-ranging detail that he amassed, that the Atlantis of Plato had actually existed, that it marked man's first civilization, and that it was the foundation of later mythology. After having planted the seeds of civilization elsewhere in the world, he argued, it disappeared beneath the sea in the course of a natural cataclysm that reordered the surface of the earth.

The work is documented impressively, if unevenly. Its basis in the new science is evident, but so is its debt to psuedo-science and to the new agnosticism. More impressive, however, and largely responsible for its success are its style and its format. The evidence is presented with a good deal of vigor and force, its nature that of the debator or orator rather than of the scientist, and in essence it is presented much as a lawyer or a politician makes his case before a jury or the electorate. Consequently, the book is subject to a good deal of criticism--it ignores contradictory evidence, distorts other evidence, and fails to evaluate or judge all of it except as support for his thesis. The result was sensational if not scientific and certainly persuasive, so much so that his old political enemies on the St. Paul Pioneer Press called it "an instance of what marvelous force may be imparted to any theory by the simple application of intellectual power." A four-page complimentary letter signed W. E. Gladstone, postmarked London, led Donnelly to speculate on "the appearance of the man who, in this little snow-bound hamlet, was corresponding with the man whose word was fate anywhere in the British Empire.....The leg of my pants was torn; my coat was nearly buttonless..... I could have uttered a war hoop of exultation."

Atlantis was virtually devoid of political commentary, containing only a single reference to the foolishness of gold worship, and by the spring of 1882 he was already at work on a second book, which he finished in less than two months. This was the story of the cataclysm that had destroyed Atlantis; it was called Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Gravel.

Deriving its title and its inspirations from the ancient Norse myth of the twilight of the gods, Donnelly again amassed great amounts of uncritically accepted evidence from the same diverse sources that he had tapped for Atlantis; the result was argument for his theory that the great deposits of sand, gravel, clay, and stone, so evident in Minnesota and much of the rest of the Northern Hemisphere, were not the result of glaciation, as Louis Agassiz insisted, but instead were the residue of a collision or near-collision of the earth and a comet. This event, occurring in pre-historic time, was the foundation of much ancient myth and legend. Interestingly, Donnelly linked his new argument to a traditional religious concept he had ignored or denied for years: that of the natural catastrophe as the punishment of sinful men by a wrathful, conventional God.

If the reception of Atlantis had enabled Donnelly to climb to the heights, the reception of Ragnarok scarcely enabled him to emerge from the valley. Not only was it rejected by Harper's, his publishers, but it was also rejected by Scribners, foreshadowing the adverse immediate reaction and then silence with which it was greeted. The theory upon which it was based was soundly rejected by critics and the scientific community, although the Chicago Tribune, among others, commented favorably upon his industriousness if not upon his scholarship. Nevertheless, the book did continue to sell slowly, largely to cultists. Convinced that a non-professional could not receive a hearing from American scientists, he returned to politics and to speculation, in politics to the unsuccessful Farmer's Alliance, and to speculation on the authorship of Shakespeare's plays.

As early as 1873 he had begun to speculate on their authorship, becoming convinced that Shakespeare's education and background could scarcely have prepared him to write them. By 1878 he had become convinced that somewhere in the plays a cipher or cryptogram might be found that would indicate their true authorship, speculating that they were the work of a brilliant but anonymous Elizabethan. Finally he turned to Francis Bacon, himself interested in ciphers, as the author. Even while working on Atlantis and Ragnarok he continued his speculation (in the former he called Bacon "a profoundly wise and great man" and in the latter he made clear his scepticism concerning Shakespeare's authorship).

On September 23, 1882, he recorded in his diary that he had discovered the key to the cipher. For more than a year after that he worked intensely, at the same time corresponding with others who supported Bacon's authorship. For the first and last time, Donnelly sought support from a cult. The resulting book, The Great Cryptogram, was published, in tight security but with a good deal of advance publicity, by R. S. Peale in the Fall of 1887.

Responses were twofold: a great deal of publicity and notoriety, resulting in a tour of England and Ireland and a successful American lecture tour, and a significant lack of sales. Although Donnelly's work in the book was critical and meticulous, admitting the existence of imperfections that he was certain he could remove in time, the major effect of the book was to please Baconians, amuse undergraduates in debate at Oxford, and contribute further evidence to his growing reputation for eccentricity. Angry and discouraged, yet determined that ultimately the cipher would reveal itself to him completely, he returned to politics. Yet he was still determined to vindicate himself.

After an unsuccessful campaign in the winter of 1888-1889 as Farmer's Alliance candidate for the United States Senate, Donnelly, on the day after his defeat, January 19, 1889, began to write what he called his first and perhaps his last novel, which he finished less than five months later. After a series of rejections by Harper's, Scribners, Houghton Mifflin, and Appleton, it was published in 1890 by F. J. Schulte and Co. as Caesar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century, under the pseudonym Edmond Boisgilbert.

Caesar's Column draws much of its inspiration from Henry George's Progress and Poverty and Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward, but rather than a plea for reform or a vision of hope, it is a confession of the failure of the present and of the reform activities to which Donnelly had devoted his life. Written in epistolary form as letters written by a young man traveling in America in 1988, the book contains Donnelly's vision of the technological wonders of the late twentieth century, and its hero experiences wild chases and narrow escapes from melodramatic villains. But overshadowing it all is his vivid picture of the failure of reform--the rich growing richer and more powerful, the working class driven into poverty, and the poor reduced to barbarism. The novel culminates in the class warfare predicted by Marx but with a viciousness unpredictable in the cloistered reading room of the British Museum. Nor could Donnelly see the emergence of classless society that was so clear to Marx; instead he could see nothing but chaos.

Interesting sidelights of the novel are Donnelly's portrayal of the ruling moneylending class as Jewish and his insistence that the tragedy of the future was the triumph of Hubert Spencer. In the former case Donnelly has unjustly been accused of anti-Semitism (actually he insists that the Jew had learned his tactics from the viciousness of the Christian and one of the three leaders of the revolt is a Jew); in the latter he sees Spencerian evolution as the substance of a new anti-social gospel.

The response to the book was predictable: it was of "revolutionary not to say inflammatory character;" it attempted misguidedly to be prophetic; it became a best-seller; by 1899 it had sold 230,000 copies in the United States and nearly half a million abroad. Even while the press speculated, with mixed attitudes, about the identity of the author, Donnelly refused to confirm the speculation that it was he.

Once more active in the close-in fighting of the campaign of 1890, Donnelly was nevertheless quite pleased with the reception and sales of Caesar's Column, and he determined to follow it up with another. This was Doctor Huguet, neither argument nor prophecy, but a fantasy based on the adventures of a brilliant young white Southern physician, a radical supporter of racial equality, whose soul and mind are exchanged with those of an evil, brutal black. Ultimately Dr. Huguet reclaims his own body when the black in the white body kills his own body, thus freeing the Doctor.

Like Caesar's Column, Dr. Huguet was a shocker, particularly of a kind which offended sympathizers and opponents alike. As an attack on the political and moral duplicity of a social structure rapidly being stratified by Jim Crow legislation, it was powerful, but in its sheer power it was for the most part ineffective. But among the small minority who saw beyong the fantastic device Donnelly employed, the effect was overwhelming: "/It/.....assaults prejudice like a tempest....." wrote one correspondent; "Any white man who can afford to speak out in such unmistakeable terms for a race who have so little with which to reward him, is to be praised by every colored man," wrote another.

Nevertheless, the book did little to enhance either Donnelly's fortune or his reputation, but at the same time he immersed himself in the Populist campaign of 1892, writing the preamble to the Omaha Platform in which he proclaimed the opening shots of what he called in the keynote address "the battle of mankind." In the midst of the hard-fought campaign that followed--Donnelly was the People's Party nominee for the governorship of Minnesota--he wrote his third and last work of fiction: The Golden Bottle, another fantasy, this one optimistic as it presented the future as it would be after a Populist victory.

The story concerns the adventures of a Kansas farm boy who is able to turn base metal into gold through the use of a liquid he has acquired. Thus able to create fiat money, the young man rises ultimately to the Presidency of the United States, and the emergence of a monetary system responsive to the social ills so graphically described in the book--rural poverty, and decline of the farms, sweatshops, exploitation of women, dishonesty in journalism--creates a society enjoying temperance, women's suffrage, nationalized railroads, free, broad education, and more. Finally the United States emerges as a world leader ready to extend its revolutionary doctrine to the rest of the world, and in the war that follows (although all good Populists oppose war) the nation joins with the oppressed peoples everywhere to form a new world organization, the headquarters of which were in the Azores--the mountain tops of the Atlantis Donnelly had documented a decade before.

In the final days of the campaign Donnelly described his activities in detail: "I have conversed with 10,000 persons, I wrote a novel, prepared two 'broadsides' of eight pages each; carried on a large correspondence and supervised the whole campaign. I hope to win....." But he did not, and although Populism made the inroads elsewhere that were to send messages to the Democratic leadership, Donnelly, in disgust, determined to be done with politics. He returned to his cipher and in the next eight years edited and published the _St. Paul Representative_. In 1896 he supported Bryan for the Presidency; and in 1899 he published his last work, _The Cipher in the Plays and on the Tombstone_. But the book was redundant, it was rash in its assertions that Bacon was not only Shakespeare but Marlowe and Cervantes as well, and it passed virtually unnoticed. Donnelly was reduced to giving free copies of the book to new subscribers to the _Representative_. Almost in desperation he proposed a new work, "Ben Jonson's Cipher," but no publisher was interested. In 1900 he ran for the Vice Presidency in a Populist Party whose reform energy had largely been absorbed by the Democrats, and, together with the nineteenth century, he died, shortly after midnight on January first, 1901.

The mountains that Donnelly sought to ascend were those that perhaps can never be conquered completely: those of one's time and his nature, of prejudice and human freedom, of exploitation and justice. Most of all he sought to ascend the mountain envisioned by Moses and Christ, by Jefferson and Lincoln, that of the perfectability of man and the completeness of his knowledge. And in this, Donnelly, like his illustrious predecessors, found that the attempt rather than the failure is the only significance. Nevertheless, his place among those who sought to magnify man's humanity is small, but it is secure in the history of his time and his nation.