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Federal Writers' Projects in
the Midwest

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Born of adversity (the Depression and the high percentage of writers unemployed), the Federal Writers' Project helped restore faith and interest in America on the part of writers, intellectuals and the general public, after the alienation of many writers in the '20's.

Every county in every American state was studied in detail: landmarks, interesting buildings, historical sites, customs and folkways, unusual natural features, economic patterns, institutions, etc., were described by writers and researchers recruited for the task of producing guides to America.¹ The story of the Federal Writers' Project as a New Deal experiment, originally under the W.P.A., is known and becoming increasingly so as more and more books, dissertations, and articles appear on the subject. The purpose of this article is to highlight briefly what was done in the Midwest² under the Project and to list the present repositories for the Midwestern states of the voluminous manuscripts that were produced by the FWP, and its successor, the Writers' Program.

The continuing importance of the Federal Writers' Project is reflected in the fact that all of the state guides have been reprinted recently. A number have been revised, some as many as four times. Currently a project to revise the Indiana guide [c1941] is underway; it went through a second printing in 1945 and a third in 1973. Many of the other works published by the FWP have also been reprinted or revised. Though the guides are not generally cited in the Norton Bicentennial histories³ of the various states, the Indiana and Missouri guides are given high praise in the bibliographical essays at the back of the respective volumes on these states.⁴ Also cited in the Norton series are the Kansas and North

Dakota FWP guides among those of the Midwest.

The guides were originally conceived as a type of American Baedeker. Baedeker's United States of 1909 (the last published), under "general hints," admonishes foreigners about the general habit in America of spitting on the floor. It was felt by the early thirties that an updated image of America was badly needed. But, just as Baedekers of earlier years are still sought after and are classics of a sort today, so too, perhaps in a few years, will be the original FWP guides. The general criticisms of the work of the Project usually encountered are that some of the information gathered was inaccurate, that some was obtained second-hand (particularly in Wisconsin⁵) and that some was poorly written. However, such criticisms in no way apply to the entire production of FWP, which was amazingly prolific, particularly in Ohio, Illinois and Iowa, and in several of the more populous states in other regions.

In addition to the state guides for 48 states (and for Alaska and Puerto Rico), for which the Federal Writers' Project is best known, numerous large city guides (e.g. for Chicago, Cincinnati, Tulsa in the Midwest) and guides to small cities and towns, such as Leavenworth, Kans.; Mineral Point, Wis.; Dubuque, Ia.; Galena, Ill., etc, were either published or almost published. Then, there were histories of certain counties (e.g. Blue Earth, Minn.); particular facets of a certain community (e.g. government in Cincinnati); regional guides (e.g. the Calumet region of Indiana, Michigan's Thunder Bay region); ethnic and folklore studies (e.g. Italians in Omaha and many dealing with Indians), often based on material gathered firsthand from personal interviews; and many more. More than 1756 books and pamphlets relating to the Midwestern scene were published by the Federal Writers' projects in the 13 Midwestern states during the years of its operation.⁷ Nothing beyond the state

guide was published from the Missouri project, and from Indiana's only three published works appeared. North Dakota, also, was responsible only for a guide to Bismarck, beyond the inevitable state guide (by contrast, 16 works have been issued, under the Project, on South Dakota).

not inventoried,
but organized by
county

But, already by mid-1936, before a single book had been published under the Project, between 175,000 and 300,000 plus words had been produced for most of the Midwestern states.⁸ In Wisconsin, original manuscript files include never completed guides to Milwaukee and Madison (though guides to Shorewood and Portage were actually published), many unpublished biographical notes, etc. Incidentally, Wisconsin is one of only four Midwestern states to have its FWP manuscripts listed in the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (compiled by the Library of Congress, 1959-).⁹ The others are Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

The Indiana manuscript files are enriched by extensive material on the Ohio River flood of 1937, James Whitcomb Riley, and Creole French customs in Vincennes, for example, among material never published, and much of it was obtained firsthand. Fortunately, a number of states, not just in the Midwest, are now carefully organizing and indexing these files according to sound archival practices, or have done so in recent years. For an up-to-date list of Midwestern repositories of the original manuscripts (rather different from the original repositories of 1943) see the following table. Whether the collection is inventoried or not is also indicated for each state.

FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT REPOSITORIES MIDWEST

1. ILLINOIS¹⁰ Illinois State Historical Library
Old State Capitol
Springfield 62706
Inventoried
2. INDIANA Indiana State University
Cunningham Memorial Library
Rare Books and Special Collections
Terre Haute 47809

3. IOWA The University of Iowa
The University Libraries
Manuscripts Division
Iowa City 52242

Inventoried

4. KANSAS¹¹ Wichita State University
University Library
Special Collections Dept.
(53 counties only)
Wichita 67208

partially inven-
toried

Salina Public Library
301 W. Elm Street
(17 counties)
Salina 67401

partially inven-
toried

5. MICHIGAN records evidently
destroyed by fire in 1951

6. MINNESOTA Minnesota Historical
Society
1500 Mississippi St.
St. Paul 55101

Inventoried

7. MISSOURI University of Missouri
Western Historical Manu-
script Collection
23 Elmer Ellis Library
Columbia 65201

Inventory in
process

8. NEBRASKA Nebraska State Historical
Society
Manuscripts Division
1500 R Street
Lincoln 68508

preliminary
Inventory; final
Inventory in
process

9. NORTH DAKOTA State Historical Society
of North Dakota
Liberty Memorial Building
Bismarck 58505

not inventoried

10. OHIO The Ohio Historical Society,
Inc.
Archives-Manuscripts Division
The Ohio Historical Center
1-71 & 17th Avenue
Columbus 43211

Inventory in
process

11. OKLAHOMA The University of Oklahoma
Library
Western History Collections
401 W. Brooks
Norman 73019

inventoried

12. SOUTH DAKOTA The University of
South Dakota
I.D. Weeks Library
Vermillion 57069

not inventoried

13. WISCONSIN The State Historical Soci-
ety of Wisconsin
Archives Division
816 State Street
Madison 53706

partially inven-
toried

University of Wisconsin-
Green Bay
Library
Area Research Center
110 S. University Circle Dr.
(records of 4 county area--
may be sent to Historical
Society in Madison for
use, on request)

partially
inventoried

NOTES

¹Originally there were five regional guides planned to cover the entire United States, but it was later deemed to be more feasible to produce guides on a

state by state basis.

²The "Midwest" is herein considered to include the following: Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

³"The State and the Nation" series, New York: W. W. Norton & co., Inc., 1977-

⁴e.g., for Indiana: "... nothing has superseded the Writers Program, Works Projects Administration's Indiana, a Guide to the Hoosier State . . . it is a guide with many rare bits of local information," and for Missouri: "Although it is now a generation old, Missouri, A Guide to the 'Show Me' State . . . is still filled with insights and much useful information about the state's character and achievement."

⁵See: McDonald, William F., Federal Relief Administration and the Arts. Columbus: Ohio State University press [c 1969], p. 708.

⁶This does not include the volumes of slave narratives for Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, and Oklahoma, prepared later under the editorship of George Rawick from the FWP manuscripts, nor the various pamphlets or books on subjects not related directly to the Midwest. There were also several interregional and interstate studies published just in the name of the Federal Writers' Project, without individual state identification.

⁷Begun in late 1935, the Federal Writers' Project lasted until August 1939 under W.P.A. sponsorship. When the latter ceased, each state project acquired an official state sponsor and acted independently of all the others with official control from Washington lacking and Washington acting only in an advisory capacity. Also in 1939 the name was changed from Federal Writers' Project to Writers' Program. The Writers' Program ceased in 1943 because of war pressures. It is convenient here to lump both projects under the designation of Federal Writers' Project, or FWP, or simply, "the Project." A few works were prepared for publication by the FWP before 1943 but not actually

Such information as we have on Lincoln's own poetry comes largely from his intermittent correspondence with Johnston. On February 24, 1846, for example, he sent Johnston a copy of Knox's poem (Johnston at first thought Lincoln had written it himself). In this letter Lincoln mentioned a poem "of my own making." This, he said, "is almost done, but I find a deal of trouble to finish. . ."

He sent this piece to Johnston on April 18, 1846. He explained that while campaigning he had gone into the area of Indiana where he had been raised, "where my mother and only sister are buried, and from which I had been absent about fifteen years." That part of the country, he wrote, "is, within itself, as unpoetical as any spot of the earth." Yet, he added, "seeing it and its objects and inhabitants aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetry; though whether my expression of those feelings is poetry is quite another question."

Though reasonably polished, the verses are undistinguished. The second and third stanzas are quite as good as the work of any of the minor "bards" of the day:

O Memory! thou midway world
 'Twixt earth and paradise,
 Where things decayed and loved ones lost
 In dreamy shadows rise,

And, freed from all that's earthly vile,
 Seem hallowed, pure, and bright,
 Like scenes in some enchanted isle
 All bathed in liquid light.

Eventually, of course, the poet comes to the loss of old friends that proves the inevitability of death:

The friends I left that parting day,
 How changed, as time has sped!
 Young childhood grown, strong manhood gray,
 And half of all are dead.

Such contemplation of the pitiful was a recognized function for poetry in Lincoln's day, as required then, indeed, as hard-bitten, anti-sentimental rejection of the tender and consolatory is required today. Teary pathos was an extreme result of the degeneration of the humanitarian impulse into the senti-

mental-moralistic--though also, of course, an exploitation of feelings known to us all. But certainly the lines also express the "melancholy" temperament that seems to have been native with Lincoln.

Lincoln said that what he was sending Johnston was the first of "four little divisions or cantos." The second of these appears to be 13 stanzas Lincoln mailed to Johnston on September 6, 1846. These, he said, took as their subject "an insane man," a Matthew Gentry he had gone to school with. At the age of 19, Gentry had "become furiously mad"; later he "settled down into harmless insanity." Lincoln saw him during the 1844 visit, "still lingering in this wretched condition."

The first stanza sets the theme:

But here's an object more of dread
 Than ought the grave contains--
 A human form with reason fled,
 While wretched life remains.

The poem deplores the loss of Gentry's early "genius bright," talks of his "shrieks" and later "mournful song," and pictures the poet taking the unlikely step of stealing out before dawn so that, with all of nature, he can listen to the "song," can "drink its strains." It ends of course with an address to death, asking why it takes "more blest ones" but leaves so pitiful a sight "ling'ring here."

No one knows for sure what the third and fourth "cantos" were to be. No candidate for the fourth has ever appeared. Since the September 6 letter ends with the remark that "If I should ever send another, the subject will be a 'Bear hunt,'" editors print the third "canto" the stanzas under that title which Lincoln sent to Johnston on February 25, 1847.

This piece tells the story of a Midwestern hunt in awkward but fast-paced verse that takes the reader through the chase, cornering, and shooting of the bear. The poem ends humorously with an account of how a short-legged dog arriving late on the scene attempts to demonstrate that he has been the true conqueror. The poet comments:

Conceited whelp! we laugh at thee--
Nor mind, that not a few
Of pompous, two-legged dogs there be,
Conceited quite as you.

Though hardly matching in conciseness Alexander Pope's deft collar inscription ("I am his highness' dog at Kew / Pray tell, kind sir, whose dog are you?"), the poem does represent Lincoln's use of the frontier anecdote and his ironic sense of humor.

With Lincoln's permission, given in the letter of February 25, 1847, Johnston published "My Childhood-Home" and the stanzas on Gentry in the Quincy, Illinois, Whig. He did not heed Lincoln's request that "names be suppressed" because "I have not sufficient hope of the verses attracting any favorable notice to tempt me to risk being ridiculed for having written them." There is no record that Lincoln was ridiculed for his authorship.

Two pieces Lincoln wrote in 1858 in the autograph books of Rosa and Linnie Haggard, daughters of a Winchester, Illinois, innkeeper, are printed in Collected Poems and elsewhere. I suspect that Lincoln copied these from one or another of the gift books and annuals of the time. The two stanzas to Rosa start in the unhappy mood that in this age of the happy happy Little Golden Book seem somewhat adult to give to a child, but was typical of Lincoln:

You are young, and I am older;
You are hopeful, I am not--
Enjoy life, ere it grow colder--
Pluck the roses ere they rot.

The second stanza is more likely to be original with Lincoln, if only in that its last line is adapted to its addressee, advising the girl that she should tell her "beau" to "take thee, Rosa, ere she fade."

The sixth known Lincoln poem is a piece of doggerel trivia, which, according to Paul M. Angle, author of the introduction to Collected Poems, is recently discovered. The editor of CP entitles the piece "Gen. Lee's Invasion of the North, written by himself--." In four deliberately limping lines, the speaker

tells how he and "Jeff's Confederacy" headed for Philadelphia but received "h-ll" from the Yankees and "skedaddled back." The poem uses the vernacular, a lingo coming into use at that time, perhaps in part because of everyone's familiarity with the correspondence of the soldiery who took pen in hand without restraint from schoolroom rules of spelling and syntax. Angle says that Lincoln jotted the lines down on the morning of July 19, 1863, when Lee, defeated at Gettysburg early in the month, had retreated across the Potomac. It may be added that the Lincoln's mood was also heightened by Grant's conquest of Vicksburg on July 9.

Lincoln's admiration for such writers as Shakespeare, Burns, and the translators of the King James version has been often discussed, as has his almost non-existent acquaintance with Whitman. He knew by heart Oliver Wendell Holmes' "The Last Leaf," and recited it to visitors--a fact that Holmes took pains to verify, and found greatly pleasing. Lincoln, indeed, said of the fourth stanza of this poem that "For pure pathos . . . there is nothing finer . . . in the English language." (The stanza was also a favorite of another sometime poet, Mark Twain).

For those few who did not reread Holmes at the breakfast table this morning, I give the stanza:

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

Lincoln also was aware of poetry written merely for what was said to be beauty. Though he had not yet read Poe's "The Raven" when in the letter of April 18, 1846, to Johnston, he praised a parody of Poe's "The Raven" that Johnston had written, finding that it offered "several hearty laughs," though admitting that he had not read "The Raven" itself. Basler reports, however, that he later learned the poem by heart.

Like William Dean Howells, Lincoln accomplished far more in other endeavors

than he did in poetry. He did not have Howells' lifelong drive for recognition as a poet. But, like him, he enjoyed poetry, and the polish of the two pieces growing out of his 1854 visit to Indiana suggests that he wrote rather more of it than appears in his presently known papers. Neither Lincoln nor Howells rose out of the rut of worn romantic sentimentalism, a fact that argues against those who see one's poetry as a measure of his intelligence. Lincoln, Howells, and their contemporaries needed not more intelligence, but a different concept of poetry.

The pathos and humor that show in Lincoln's poetry became transmuted in his mature prose into a sense of the tragic. This underlay all irony that could flash with scorn, as in the Cooper Union speech, or direct forceful attention to truths that underlie pomposity and publicity-seeking, as in his letters to his generals, or give sad but resolute assertions of aims, as in the Second Inaugural. What we know of his verse can be regarded as nothing more than practice for a pen that had more significant matter to express.

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Howells as Tragedian

It would seem that the literary realist disbelieving in the heroic, the non-representative, would shun the writing of dramatic tragedy. But consistency is the hobgoblin only of little minds. William Dean Howells, large minded enough to be not only the theorist of realism for Americans but also a dramatist and poet as well as a novelist, did twice try his hand at tragedy for the stage.

Both ventures began as translations. The first of these, Samson (1874), is a literal version of Sansone by the Italian Hippolito D'Aste. The play retells the Biblical story, with Samson bringing the temple down on himself and the Philistine oppressors. Since little in Howells' version is original with him, criticism is scarcely called for. The blank verse play was produced from

time to time for a quarter of a century. It brought Howells, the author of unpublished dramas as well as of the 36 pieces collected by Walter J. Meserve (Complete Plays, 1960), the attention of theater people.

(Among those attracted to Samson was the well known actor Tommaso Salvini, who in the Chicago production spoke in Italian while the rest of the cast used Howells' English. But then, Chicago is the town where a man danced with his wife).

Howells' second attempt was Yorick's Love (1878), a considerably revised version of Un Drama Nuevo by the Spaniard Manuel Tamayo y Baus. A literal translation of the Spanish work ordered by the producer August Daly had failed in its New York staging in December of 1874. But Tamayo's play seemed worth another try. Howells and the then leading American male actor, Lawrence Barrett, worked together on a translation which opened in 1878 with Barrett, of course, in the starring role. This play was produced occasionally; the last performance on record was in 1898.

Tamayo had based his work on Hamlet's question: "What would he do, / Had he the motive and the case for passion / That I have?" (Act II, Scene 2, lines 511-13). Tamayo devised an action showing Yorick as the jealous husband of a young wife, a situation likely to lead to "passion" even in these our liberated years.

The scene of the play is not the Danish court where one might expect to find Yorick, but the London theater of a company of Elizabethan players. Howells' opening, much altered from Tamayo's, begins with a comical exchange between two characters he has added, the elderly servingman Gregory and the saucy young servingwoman Dorothy. In their banter and in the ensuing conversation among the leading characters, the audience discovers that Yorick is not aware that his wife Alice and the young man he has raised as a son, Edmund, are in love.

Alice is a faithful wife, however. Nothing "has happened," as they put it

In the soap operas. As the play opens, Yorick is concerned only with his desire to broaden his reputation, to get away from his well known role as a comedian by playing the lead in a tragedy.

Some of Howells' various changes may be improvements. One revision made necessary by the bardolatry of the age was omission of the character Shakespeare, who in Tamayo's play was friend and confidant to Yorick. No doubt Howells thought that to put Shakespeare on stage would strike English-speaking audiences as sacrilegious. He substituted the character Heywood as Yorick's adviser, though he had personages allude to Shakespeare as a familiar in the company.

But Howells' changes in the ending of the play are unfortunate. Tamayo's ending required Yorick to live with the knowledge that in killing Edmund after discovering the affair between him and Alice, he had not only slain the man he loved as a son but also, presumably, had wrecked any chance of reconciliation with Alice.

He had realized too late that Alice and Edmund had not violated the prevailing moral code. The effect of the murder and consequent guilt was to expose the wickedness of that code's call for revenge, and to ask compassion for everyone caught up in the system.

But Howells has Yorick, after recognizing his guilt, commit suicide (as in Daly's version). This action presumably guarantees damnation for him and satisfies the moralistic urges of an American audience. The effect of the alteration is to redirect audience sympathy toward Yorick, turning the play into an illogical and sentimental account of meaningless killing.

Faithful to realism, Howells, like Tamayo, presents Yorick as a commoner, not a man of high condition, and his love for his wife as an entirely personal concern, not an affair involving matters of state. Howells has Yorick allude to Othello, thereby suggesting comparison with that tragic Moor, but one must conclude that though Yorick may be one tenth Othello, he is nine tenths

melodramatic ninny.

Howells' prose is excellent. He uses taut dialogue, often achieving an apt "poetic" language that rings true as speech while attaining by its suggestion of artifice some of the elevation expected of poetry. But the approximately one sixth of the play that is in blank verse--principally speeches by Yorick--is poor. Though the style remains good, the representation becomes sentimental because the focus is wrong. Yorick bemoans the death of Edmund, for example, in language that emphasizes not the state of Yorick's own mind, as it should, but the pathos of the death. There is more of Paul Dombey than of Othello in such speechifying.

Howells' often direct and tense style, and his professionalism in stagecraft, are overshadowed by the faulty conception. The play remains unhonored, one more specimen of the "heroic" American works of the period. Perhaps this lack of success reinforced Howells' objections to the exaggerated in literature. He wrote no more stage tragedies.

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* * *

Review: Steuding, Bob. Gary Snyder
Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976

Gary Snyder once said that "as a poet. . . I hold the most archaic values on earth. They go back to the late Paleolithic: the fertility of the soil, the magic of animals, the power-vision in solitude, the terrifying initiation and rebirth, the love and ecstasy of the dance, the common work of the tribe." Implicit in this definition of self is a radical criticism of American Civilization, an emergent technocracy well advanced as an ecological and spiritual wasteland that views the experience if not the rhetoric of transcendence as suspect and threatening, as an obstacle to achieving mastery over nature or attaining ever higher levels of material production and consumption. Snyder's then, is a prophetic voice, a call from the wilderness for cultural rejuvenation. And his experi-

ential sources as prophet-poet are varied and deep: the back country of the Pacific Northwest; direct contact with Amerindian culture; Reed College; work experience as a fire watch, logger, and seaman; long years of training in a Zen Buddhist monastery in Kyoto; scholarly background in Oriental languages and culture; communal life in a primitive Japanese island; and membership on Jerry Brown's California Arts Council.

We are fortunate that such a seminal thinker and synthesizer of values essential to man's wholeness and cultural evolution toward full humanity has emerged at just this critical juncture in America's development. And we are likewise fortunate that a literary scholar of Bob Steuding's acumen and depth has given us a reliable and illuminating guide to Snyder's poetry and major ideas. For Steuding has ably fulfilled with a mindfulness any good Buddhist would admire the stated aim of his introduction: "to compile information, suggest guidelines, and offer a point of reference whereby one may read with pleasure and understanding the works of this strikingly different poet."

Moreover, Steuding's book fulfills Snyder's own definition of constructive criticism as opposed to critical oneupmanship: "It ought to be a mode of feedback, a return from the people you're singing to. The critic, someone who has a fine ear and sensitive mind, could pay more attention than most people and have something to say to the artist. A useful critic can identify weaknesses and strengths; that's what I appreciate in criticism that comes to me." Snyder, in fact, has pointed to Steuding's book as particularly useful to him even while observing in a recent interview in East-West that Steuding errs a bit on the side of charity: "Steuding's maybe a little too approving of my poetry; he should be a little harder on me." If this is to be taken as a criticism of Steuding, then he is in good company, for he's representative of a growing galaxy of Snyder critics, among whom the negative voices are few and are generally irrational responses to Snyder's version of what Leo Marx in The Machine in the Garden defines as

"complex primitivism," what essentially is a civilized man's attempts to deal with the discontents of civilization. Given this qualification regarding Steuding's book, an appreciative reader will conclude that Steuding's intelligent and sensitive exegesis of Snyder's poetry, his particularly careful tracing of influences on Snyder's development, and his superb grasp of Snyder's synthesis of Eastern and Western cultural traditions will be an essential resource for Snyder students and readers until such time a definitive study appears.

On reading Snyder with Steuding's guidance, one comes to see that what is at stake for Snyder is whether or not a once stunningly beautiful continent will survive the current onslaught against the natural environment, a manifestation of Western man's alienation from nature that is in turn related to alienation from the Ground of Being (the Tao, the Godhead, Brahman), from Others and from the Essential Self that exists prior to the socially conditioned persona. From Snyder's Buddhist perspective that sees all life forms and manifestations of energy as inter-related, alienation in one dimension of existence points to alienation in other dimensions as well.

Can the continent regain its wholeness? Can America, "man's last best hope," fulfill her potential of evolving into a model of a creative, open, democratic, egalitarian society, consciously patterned to nurture the fullest potential of all its members? On reading Snyder, one detects the prophet's sense, that of a "saving remnant," that America really can save herself from technocratic nihilism and general malaise through the cultivation of a consciousness that experientially "knows" that a violation of any strand of the web of life means lowering of vitality for the whole. Consciousness, then, is the focus of Snyder's concern. We are creatures of consciousness as well as its creators. And what we create is our destiny. Snyder concludes from his study of psychology and anthropology and from years of Zen meditation that "there is nothing in human nature or the requirements of human social organization which

Intrinsically requires that a culture be contradictory, repressive and productive of violent personalities." We want to believe him and do so in our best moments; such is Snyder's power as shaman-healer-poet.

Literary historians will appreciate Steuding's well organized, chronological treatment of Snyder's published works, as well as his careful tracing of literary influences. An early chapter, one especially useful for students of an evolving post-modernist poetics, discusses the characteristics of Snyder's style in detail, pointing to its sources in Pound, Williams, the Chinese Tang Dynasty poets, the Japanese Haiku and Noh play, the rhythms of physical work, and life experience in the Pacific Northwest and the Orient. What most characterizes Snyder's poetic style is organicism and imagism. Romantic organicism allows a cluster of feeling, imagery, and ideas to find its natural form in contrast to classical formalism's imposition of form on poetic materials. And Imagism is disciplined in its objective rendering of an image which conveys sense experience; for the image rather than a philosophizing poet should carry the poem's "meaning."

The new organicist, post-modernist aesthetic one finds increasingly among contemporary poets, and which is especially reflected in Snyder's work, unites, according to Steuding, "the materialistic scientism of Imagism and the visionary aspects of Romanticism." This results in what Steuding and others suggest is an altogether new mode of perceiving reality. Thus "vision and craft. . .blend to create a new synthesis, one that is similar in many ways to Romanticism but is essentially anti-Romantic." Because the Romantics' perceptions were governed by such mental constructs as "Truth," "Beauty," and "the Eternal," Steuding notes, "they were hopelessly caught up in a linguistic relationship to the universe." The post-modernist Snyder, however, at once a mystic and a rigorous, fact-oriented empiricist, who harkens in a disciplined way to William Carlos Williams' "no ideas but in things," creates a lean, concrete, imagistic poetry that is also an inspired rendering of a consciousness cultivated

by years of Zen meditation to perceive the phenomenal world as directly as possible and thereby to illuminate its noumenal significance. Snyder, ostensibly, a Romantic, nevertheless goes beyond Romanticism and Classicism alike to a transcendent, organicist aesthetic whose poetry has the effect of resacralizing the realm of the temporal and the ordinary.

Steuding then turns to Myths and Texts, a book of poems not immediately accessible to readers unfamiliar with Amerindian mythology. Steuding tells us that his work reflects the wisdom quest of a Jungian "creative hero," an archetypal figure treated at length by Joseph Campbell in The Hero With a Thousand Faces. The creative hero, the poet-persona in Myths and Texts, undergoes a psychic journey involving separation from ordinary life, initiation into non-ordinary states of consciousness, and return with a "boon" that enhances the life of the community. Thus the reader expects that these three phases of the wisdom quest will correspond directly with the three sections of Myths and Texts: "Logging" and "Burning." They do not, however. As Steuding points out, Snyder's adaptation of Campbell's mythic "structure is sketchy, and it does not order the poem." Moreover, "there is little linear movement in the poem." One wishes there were. Indeed, this may be an instance in which Steuding could have been "a little harder" on Snyder, for one senses Steuding's hesitance to come to grips with what may be structural problems in the poem.

In any case, Steuding is on firm ground when discussing logging, hunting, and burning as metaphors which unify the work. Thus the first section, "Logging," conveys Snyder's sense of complicity in ecological destruction through his work as a logger and extends the metaphor of logging to exemplify civilization's logging or violation of nature. "Hunting," the second section, is a cluster of poems reflecting Snyder's involvement in the mythological lore of Amerindians whom Snyder respects for their ecological and psychic integrity. Finally, "Burning" treats the tests the creative-

hero must undergo, such as the exorcizing of the demonic portions of the unconscious through meditation so that the consciousness might be cleared and rendered capable of receiving the boon of love and compassion the shaman-healer-poet takes back to the community, in this instance our psychically wounded civilization.

Literary historians particularly concerned with the evolution of literary consciousness will value Steuding's careful tracing of such influences upon Snyder as T. S. Eliot, Walt Whitman, Kenneth Rexroth, D.H. Lawrence and Robinson Jeffers. Particularly interesting is the Eliot influence, for it is not immediately obvious. Although Eliot and Snyder share an interest in myth, archaism, and mysticism, they differ radically as to what constitutes a healthy culture: for Eliot is essentially as patrist as Snyder is matrist in his orientation. Just as Eliot affirms a patriarchal theism and a hierarchical social ordering principle, so Snyder tends to Earth Mother paganism, pantheism and egalitarianism. Yet for Myths and Texts Snyder found in "The Wasteland" a model of how myth could be used to reveal the depths of contemporary spiritual malaise.

A chapter on Mountains and Rivers Without End treats the Whitman influence, for Snyder too is in spirit a man of the open road who identifies with all things and perceives their essential unity. Steuding's treatment of The Back Country points to Thoreau's influence and develops accordingly one of Snyder's major themes: that the wilderness is an extension of the unconscious and that the health of one affects the health of the other. And because of his important influence on Snyder, Kenneth Rexroth is properly revealed as the elder statesman of the 1960's Cultural Revolution. He was a model for Snyder with regard to social ideology, as a proponent of Chinese poetry, and as the originator of "mountain poetry" (bearshit-on-the-trail poetry) that Snyder was to develop to a still higher level of artistry and significance.

The chapter on Regarding Wave develops at some length Snyder's understanding that energy in William Blake's sense is in no way inconsistent with modern microphysics.

Steuding Elaborates on the connections Snyder makes among: energy, voice, poetry, the breath, vibration, sexuality and the continuum of material and spiritual reality. In this context, Steuding discusses the influence of D. H. Lawrence, whose primitivism is seen as an energizer rather than as having had a direct intellectual impact on Snyder. For Snyder, unlike Lawrence, is a socially responsible primitivist as is especially apparent in Earth House Hold, a collection of journal entries and essays that could be said to provide the spiritual underpinnings for the Whole Earth Catalogue and the Co Evolution Journal, as well as being an anticipation of Turtle Island, Snyder's latest book of poems and prose, a winner of the Pulitzer Prize.

Turtle Island reveals Snyder as having drawn on the energy of his cultural radicalism to become an effective eco-activist, as exemplified in such essays as "Four Changes," a call for a steady state economy. As Snyder writes: "We have it within our deepest powers not only to change our 'selves' but to change our culture. If man is to remain on earth, he must transform the five-millennia-long urbanizing civilization tradition into a new ecologically-sensitive harmony-oriented wild-minded scientific-spiritual culture. "Wildness is the state of complete awareness. That's why we need it."

Finally, cultural and intellectual historians will value Steuding's book, particularly as they come to realize Snyder's importance as a harbinger of an emerging cultural paradigm along with such figures as Abraham Maslow, Erich Fromm, Aldous Huxley, and Alan Watts, all of whom affirm the Perennial Philosophy while rejecting religious orthodoxies as well as the Apollonian excesses of secular humanism. Not only do they reject such forms of religious authoritarianism as "one way" fanaticism, biblical idolatry, the repression of sexual and spiritual ecstatic experience, doctrinal dogmatism, and supernaturalism. They also reject secular humanism's Apollonian glorification of the cult of analytical reason at the expense of intuition, holistic cognitive processes that generate creativity and foster

integrated states of consciousness and being in relation to both the self and the environment.

What we have here, then, is a new humanism, a radical humanism that grows out of and beyond an older secular humanism. The established secular humanism is rooted in what may be called the old naturalism of the 19th century whose universe is mainly mechanistic materialistic, orderly, and amenable to quantification even if not responsive to man's sense of cosmic chill and aloneness in the world. This humanism has effectively laid to rest the worst excesses and irrationalities of western religious orthodoxy, a commendable achievement, indeed a necessary prelude to a future advance in consciousness. And it has applied its best minds and energies to significant material progress and the often stated and sometimes realized goal of social justice. But at what ecological, psychological, and spiritual cost? Hence the gradual emergence of a new consciousness, a new humanism reflected so effectively in Snyder's poetry, thought and mode of living, all of which share the old humanism's concern for social justice, but which also maintains that real human needs can be met without repressing a major dimension of man's Being, the non-rational complement to his Reason that includes intuition, feeling, sensory awareness and non-ordinary states of consciousness that deepen and complete human existence. Accordingly, the new humanism moves away from the old naturalism of the 19th Century and affirms a new naturalism, one rooted in a post-Einsteinian, organicist science, which is also ancient and universal. For the new naturalism is implicit in the great esoteric psychologies of the East, such as Taoism, Zen Buddhism, and the Hindu Vedanta, as well as the Western esoteric traditions of Jewish and Christian mysticism, all of which transcend doctrinaire belief constructs and point to their experiential knowledge that man is not, after all, a lonely alien in the universe, a Being cut off from Ultimate Reality, Nature, Others, and Self.

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* * *

John Dos Passos, Ralph Chaplin
and

The Centralia Conspiracy

The struggle of the Industrial Workers of the World to build One Big Union marches through the pages of John Dos Passos' trilogy USA. The people and events marking that struggle symbolized for Dos Passos the broader struggle of modern man to find justice in a U.S.A. dominated by corporations. I.W.W. strikes and free speech fights provided dramatic settings for the confrontation between the common man and the establishment. The heroes and leaders of the struggles stand larger than life in his terse, understated snapshot biographies. Eugene V. Debs, Socialist leader and founder of the I.W.W., is the subject of the first biography in the trilogy, and "Big Bill" Haywood, founding spirit and leader of the I.W.W., and Joe Hill, balladeer of the I.W.W., follow apace. In each case Dos Passos' sympathy lies with those who attempted to resist corporate power. The U.S.A. had abandoned freedom for corporate discipline and the consequence is tragedy. The most brutal tragedy of all in 1919 is the lynching of "exsoldier" and Wobbly, Wesley Everest, in Centralia, Washington, November 11, 1919.

Historians have returned to that bleak, overcast Armistice Day in 1919, to the events and interpretations of them. Much has been written to explain it, or to explain it away. Finally, however, one stands aghast, appalled at man's capacity for brutality attracted Dos Passos' attention. He saw the grim irony in the sadistic lynching of a veteran by other veterans and patriots imbued with faith in an America welded to corporate order. And he looked to a spokesman for the victims, the I.W.W., for fact and sensibility about the death of Paul Bunyan.

In 1920, shortly after the trial and conviction for second degree murder of seven Wobblies who had been in the I.W.W. hall when it was attacked on Armistice Day, Ralph Chaplin, socialist, Wobbly and journalist published an account of the Centralia tragedy titled: The Centralia Conspiracy. The pamphlet,

published in Seattle, was financed, according to a note on the back cover, by "loggers of the Northwest (who) dug down in their pockets and paid for its publication. These men were convinced that the Centralia tragedy has been criminally misrepresented by the press." This pamphlet, I feel certain, was the source for John Dos Passos' snapshot biography of Wesley Everest, the "Paul Bunyan" in Nineteen Nineteen.

Since I do not intend to write a history of the Centralia tragedy here, but rather to compare Chaplin's and Dos Passos' accounts of the affair, I will dispense with a description of the events. They will, at any rate, rise from the comparison. Suffice it to say that units from a 1919 Armistice Day parade sponsored by the Centralia Chamber of Commerce and the Centralia post of the American Legion attacked the hall occupied by the Industrial Workers of the World. The commander of the Centralia post of the American Legion and a participant in the raid was Warren O. Grimm. It is with Chaplin's and Dos Passos' accounts of him that I will begin my comparison.

Dos Passos:

A young man of good family and pleasant manners, Warren O. Grimm, had been an officer with the American Force in Siberia; that made him an authority on labor and Bolsheviks, so he was chosen by the businessmen to lead the hundred per cent forces in the Citizens' Protective League to put the fear of God into Paul Bunyan.¹

Ralph Chaplin:

Warren O. Grimm came from a good family and was a small town aristocrat....He had been with the American forces in Siberia.... Posing as an authority on Bolshevism on account of his Siberian service Grimm had elaborated on the dangers of this pernicious doctrine.²

Warren O. Grimm, a man of "good family" and self-declared "authority" on Bolshevism is cast in both accounts as the leader of the attack, but the man of central interest is Wesley Everest.

Don Passos:

Wesley Everest was not much of a talker; at a meeting in the union hall the Sunday before the raid there'd been talk of the chance of a lynching bee; Wesley Everest had been walking up and down the aisle with his O.D. coat on over a suit of overalls, distributing literature and pamphlets; when the boys said they wouldn't stand for another raid, he stopped tracks with the papers under his arm, rolled himself a brown paper cigarette and smiled a funny quiet smile....Not a thing in this world Paul Bunyan's scared of.³

Ralph Chaplin:

"If they raid the hall again as they did in 1918 the boys won't stand for it," said a logger....

Wesley Everest laid down his few unsold papers, rolled a brown paper cigarette and smiled enigmatically....His closest friends say he was never afraid of anything in his life.⁴

The anticipated raid occurred and after the initial attack was repulsed most of the Wobblies in the hall hid in an unused refrigerator room in the back. Four men from the parade lay dead or dying outside. Everest, who had been armed with a rifle and who might have killed one of the attackers, fled out the back door. The two accounts of that pursuit follow:

Don Passos:

As he ran he broke through the crowd in the back of the hall, held them off with a blue automatic, scaled a fence, doubled down an alley and through the back street. The mob followed. They dropped the coils of rope they had with them to lynch Britt Smith the I.W.W. secretary. It was Wesley Everest drawing them off that kept them from lynching Britt Smith right there.⁵

Ralph Chaplin:

In the yard at the rear of the hall the mob had already reorganized for an attack from that direction. Before anyone knew what had happened Everest had broken through their ranks and scaled the fence. "Don't follow me and I won't shoot," he called to the crowd..., displaying the still smoking blue steel pistol in his hand....The mob surged in pursuit....There was a rope in the crowd....The chase that followed probably saved the life, not only of Britt Smith, but the remaining loggers in the hall as well.⁶

The pursuit did not last long. Everest headed for the Skookumchuck River where he made his dramatic stand:

Dos Passos:

Stopping once or twice to hold the mob off with some scattered shots, Wesley Everest ran for the river, started to wade across. Up to his waist in water he stopped and turned.

Wesley Everest turned to face the mob with a funny quiet smile on his face. He'd lost his hat and his hair dripped with water and sweat. They started to rush him.

"Stand back," he shouted, "if there's bulls in the crowd I'll submit to arrest."

The mob was at him. He shot from the hip four times, then his gun jammed. He tugged at the trigger, and taking cool aim shot the foremost of them dead....

Then he threw his empty gun away and fought with his hands.⁷

Ralph Chaplin:

This kind of running fight was kept up until Everest reached the river.

...The boy started boldly for the comparative security of the opposite shore....Suddenly Everest seemed to change his mind and began to retrace his steps to the shore. Here he stood dripping wet

in the tangled grasses to await the arrival of the mob....Everest had lost his hat and his wet hair stuck to his forehead....Eye witnesses declare his face still wore a quizzical, half bantering smile when the mob overtook him....

"Stand back!" he shouted. "If there are bulls in the crowd, I'll submit to arrest; otherwise lay off me."

No attention was paid to his words. Everest shot from the hip four times,-- then his gun stalled....Everest was tugging at the gun with both hands. Raising it suddenly he took careful aim and fired....Two more shots were fired almost point blank before the logger dropped his assailant at his feet. Then he tossed his empty gun and the mob surged upon him.

Everest attempted to fight with his fists but was overpowered and severely beaten.⁸

Wesley Everest was dragged to the jail by the angry mob. Severely beaten, he lay on the cell floor until dark when the mob, now safe under cover of darkness surged to the jail to complete their work.

Dos Passos:

That night the city lights were turned off. A mob smashed in the outer door of the jail.

"Don't shoot, boys, here's your man," said the guard. Wesley Everest met them on his feet, "Tell the boys I did my best," he whispered to the men in the other cells.

They took him off in a limousine to the Chehalis River Bridge. As Wesley Everest lay stunned in the bottom of the car a Centralia businessman cut his penis and testicles off with a razor. Wesley Everest gave a great scream of pain. Somebody had remembered that after a while he whispered, "For God's sake, men, shoot me... don't let me suffer like this." They hanged him from the bridge in the glare of the headlights.⁹

Ralph Chaplin:

Later, at night, when it was quite dark, the lights of the jail were suddenly snapped off. At the same instant the entire city was plunged in darkness....There was a hoarse shout as the panel of the outer door was smashed in. "Don't shoot, men," said the policemen on guard. "Here is your man." Everest...arose drunkenly to meet them. "Tell the boys I died for my class," he whispered brokenly to the union man in the cells....

Wesley Everest was thrown, half unconscious, into the bottom of an automobile....Raising himself slowly on one elbow he swung weakly with his free arm, striking one of his tormentors full in the face....It must have been the glancing blow from the fist of the logger that gave one of the gentlemen his fiendish inspiration. Reaching in his pocket he produced a razor. For a moment he fumbled over the now limp figure in the bottom of the car. His companions looked on with stolid acquiescence. Suddenly there was a piercing scream of pain. The figure gave a convulsive shudder of agony. After a moment Wesley Everest said in a weak voice: "For Christ's sake, men; shoot me--don't let me suffer like this."¹⁰

Dos Passos' terse reconstruction of the event adds force to its impact, but in an important way it also distorts. The basic difference between the points of view of Dos Passos and Chaplin is illuminated by two key words Dos Passos drops from the Chaplin account.

Dos Passos, like other writers of the "lost generation," had retreated to individual integrity as the last hope for modern man faced with corporate power and corporate ruthlessness. To die well was perhaps all that remained. Class, unions, politics held no hope. Ralph Chaplin, on the other hand, found hope in "Solidarity," his great union anthem which declared that no "force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one. The Union makes us strong!" For Chaplin, then, Everest's

class consciousness was the crucial ingredient, legitimizing him as an authentic martyr in the class struggle, a struggle which promised freedom and dignity for the individual. Everest's last words: "Tell the boys I died for my class," are spoken to "union men in the cells." Dos Passos weakens that vision when he transforms Everest's final words to a statement of personal integrity, "I did my best," spoken to a vague group of "men in the other cells." Clearly Dos Passos was not attracted to the I.W.W. as an organization, but to the individuals who were attracted to the I.W.W. and "did their best."

The facts of the Centralia lynching are sufficiently well known, one might argue, to account for the striking similarity of detail between Dos Passos' and Chaplin's accounts. There was, after all, a concrete historical event in Centralia that Armistice day. Wesley Everest was in the hall. He was pursued by a mob and he did have a pistol, although some remember it as a revolver and not a "blue automatic." He was taken from the jail by a mob, emasculated and hung from the Chehalis River bridge where the mob riddled his dead, battered body with rifle fire. But the facts seem insufficient to account for the similar treatment in the two accounts. That Wesley Everest's flight saved Britt Smith and the other loggers from lynching may be fact, but it is difficult to interpret the intent of a mob so precisely. The image of Wesley Everest rolling a "brown paper cigarette" remains. And after all the facts are counted, one still confronts Wesley Everest's "funny quiet," "enigmatic...quizzical, half bantering" smile.

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NOTES

¹ Dos Passos, John, "Paul Bunyan," Nineteen Nineteen; The New American Library (New York, 1969), p. 454.

² Chaplin, Ralph, The Centralia Conspiracy: (Seattle, 1920), p. 42.

³ Dos Passos, p. 454-5.

⁴ Chaplin, p. 52.

⁵Dos Passos, p. 455.

⁶Chaplin, p. 58.

⁷Dos Passos, p. 455.

⁸Chaplin, p. 58-59.

⁹Dos Passos, p. 456.

¹⁰Chaplin, p. 60-63.

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THE MIDWEST AND THE AMERICAN MAINSTREAM:
Three New Books by Members of the Society

American Humor in France, by James C. Austin. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1978.

From Main Street to State Street, by Park Dixon Goist. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1977.

Spiritualism and Nineteenth-Century Letters, by Russell M. and Clare Goldfarb. Rutherford, N.J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1978.

As members of this Society are well aware and their works, including the three books that are the subject of this essay, demonstrate clearly, the study of many of the characteristics of American literature and culture must often begin or end or both in the examination of the American mainstream of which they are a part. Each of the three books examines a phenomenon, series of events, or interpretation that is not uniquely Midwestern--in some cases not even uniquely American--yet each of them in its own way not only incorporates material important to the study of Midwestern subject matter, but each provides insights that might be impossible to provide in a narrower context.

Of the three works, James C. Austin's study of the reaction to American humor in France is perhaps the most revealing for its examination of the French reaction to the writer whom we like to regard as the foundation upon which Midwestern literature--indeed, modern American literature--is built. The writer is, of course, Mark Twain, and

the attitude Austin demonstrates. Invariably, French critics have seen Twain as typically American and unfortunately so. Perhaps we might add, as Professor Austin does not, that much of Twain's reception in France has been typically French, as summed up in the comment on The Innocents Abroad made by Professor Charles Cestre, the first significant French scholar of American literature, in 1945. He wrote, "The tone of disparagement spiced with gross pleasantries toward the art galleries of Italy and the palaces and cathedrals of France and England, which amused the farmers of the Mississippi valley, seems unfortunate to us."

It is well to remember, however, that Twain himself had commented on the French understanding of his work when he discussed the French translation of "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." "In French the story is too confused, and chaotic, and unreposeful, and ungrammatical, and insane; consequently, it could only cause grief and sickness--it could not kill."

Professor Austin's overview, ranging from Franklin to our own day (including a concluding chapter by Daniel Royst of the Universite de Clermont-Ferrand), makes one wonder whether humor is, indeed, translatable, but the future (possibly the result of what the French deplore as the Americanization of France) seems hopeful. Perhaps one day we'll find Ring Lardner in the bookstalls as "Vous Connaissez Moi, Alphonso."

Park Dixon Goist's From Main Street to South Street is the most Midwestern of the three--even his title makes that clear. The book, however, deals with a phenomenon perhaps more readily observed in Midwestern literature than elsewhere, but is nevertheless observable in the change that has marked and continues to mark the American experience. Professor Goist explores the decline of the towns, the simultaneous construction of an American myth of the town, and the role of the automobile in creating city and suburbs, in neither of which community has yet evolved, and finally the attempts to create new communities in

the context of the new urban complexes.

Professor Goist explores the transitions thoroughly, drawing for most of his evidence upon the work of Midwesterners ranging from Booth Tarkington to Jane Addams, from Sherwood Anderson to Robert Park. The result is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and valuable examination of a transition yet unfolding, and which may yet take unforeseen turns in the future. Yet, interestingly, Goist, like Austin, is optimistic, and he sees much of the social ferment of the sixties and seventies as an intensified search for a sense of community in our lives and a return, in myth and faith if not in fact, to the past that Americans increasingly see as an ideal that very nearly became real and that may once again approach reality.

Russell and Clare Goldfarb's analysis of spiritualism as it influenced and provides subject matter in nineteenth-century American and British writing. Much more pertinent and I think interesting to members of the Society is the book's exhaustive, fascinating, and well-written account of the course of spiritualism: its archetypal pattern in the past and its sudden resurgence in the religious ferment of frontier upstate New York in the mid-nineteenth century. It was this latter wave, as the Goldfarbs point out, that led more than ten million Americans, including uncountable Midwesterners, to embrace the new faith with varying degrees of enthusiasm in the eighteenth century sense and our own.

Interesting, too, is the Goldfarbs' account of the reaction against spiritualism in the American community of letters. Many of the attacks, such as Orestes Brownson's The Spirit-Rapper: An Autobiography (1854), become as strident as the remarks of the defenders of the cult, in Brownson's case, lumping together spiritualism, Mormonism, "women's rightism," and all the other movements that he sees as evils of the age.

Each of the three books provides insight into the intellectual and aesthetic currents that shaped the literature

and culture of the Midwest in the past and continue to shape and be shaped by them in the present and future. Each of the works has its pertinent relevancies, and each makes clear a pertinent fact too often ignored or overlooked by those who for one reason or another misunderstand the nature of regional studies. One must approach the study of an area, a work, a time, or a culture within the context of the whole of which it is a part if the study is not to be accused justly of an inherent provincialism.

David D. Anderson

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highland haven

continued from Fall, 1978

VII

I suppose there is only one word for it, but that had ceased to have any but an academic meaning for me, and if I had sought an excuse I might have reasoned that my conduct was no more reproachable than Hubert's.

She loved me in a placid way, and expressed no wish to change our status or to make our relationship other than it was. We went to the woods a number of times after that, to the same spot and to others. I didn't take any more time on the road than was necessary, and chose spots I thought least known, for I suspected Florence and Hubert were doing the same thing. But I knew several places I was sure Hubert would never find.

The children were not concerned enough to wonder or remark about our afternoon absences, and I thought it wouldn't matter if they did. Sometimes we went first to Fairmount and had beer, and once we went to a movie. The picture was Of Human Bondage, which Ellen insisted she wanted to see. I didn't encourage the notion, for I had read about how Mildred was presented, with her disease change from syphilis to tuberculosis, and didn't want to witness the death scene with Ellen by me, wished not to be with Ellen when she saw it, if she must. But there was no escaping, for Ellen could be imperious when she chose, and I had no plausible argument to oppose her demand with. At the moment when Bette Davis stared out of the screen with her awful face and terrible eyes, Ellen gripped my hand a little tighter.

Our afternoons as lovers, two or three a week, began early in August, and the middle of September our adventure ended. We were never discovered at tryst, never observed on the way, and it remained unknown to everyone but ourselves. But I felt like the lover of Berenice, or Ligia, or some other Poe heroine. Ellen was become so ill that even small exertions fatigued her, and, though I never believed that what we did was

extremely bad for her, it is understatement to say it didn't do her any good.

She was past doing good for. In spite of her optimism and determination, I had been sure a long time that she would never get better. Earlier she might have been saved by the thoroplastic operation. But Hubert had no money for that, and my little savings would no more than begin to procure the services she needed. To get her back into the Indianapolis sanitarium was impossible, since it had a long waiting list and her status was changed by change of residence. I opened the subject with Hubert, but we could only voice the same thoughts and arrive at the same hopeless conclusion. And I was so certain that she had only a few months to live that after she thought herself unable to leave the house I didn't propose that we go out, and tried in all ways to conform to her wish. We had been friends, and become lovers; now we were friends again.

Ellen hadn't been able to give the children proper attention, and she gave up the effort altogether. Hubert concerned himself with them as little as possible, and they undressed and went to bed at night, got up and dressed themselves in the morning, appeared at the house for the evening meal and sometimes for lunch (oftenest cold cereal and milk), and at other hours were playing in the neighborhood with other children or were off somewhere by themselves. They had, of course, been forbidden to stay habitually in Ellen's room or any length of time in her presence; and it was natural enough that they should develop a resourcefulness of their own. Whenever I saw them I thought them surprisingly clean; but their clothing needed replacement and repair; and they were entirely without normal family life.

When school began Jane got herself ready and went alone; Hubert gave her money for her immediate needs, and that was all he did. Jimmie was then at a loss to entertain himself. I brought him some new toys, a poor substitute for what he ought to have had. Ellen worried because she could not do more; and Hubert, at last admitting he had to make some provision, arranged with

his parents again to take Jimmie, and with Ellen's sister Margaret to take Jane.

I didn't see Hubert's father, who was a streetcar motorman in Indianapolis, when he came; but I saw Margaret and Mrs. Cavanaugh. Margaret and her husband lived in Youngstown, where he was accountant for a steel manufacturing company. Margaret was driving a new Buick. After I had talk-d to her, I could guess that they would bring up Jane to be a perfectly respectable little snob. Ellen's parents, who lived in Missouri, were distressingly poor, and Mrs. Cavanaugh was a religious fanatic. She prayed over Ellen's bed several times a day, and almost the first thing she asked me was if I had made my peace with God. I don't remember how I answered that, but I remember thinking it would be painful to have her about all the time.

The children were gone, the waitresses moved out, and Ellen was alone in the house throughout the forenoons. I came every afternoon and nearly always cooked the evening meal, though I couldn't often consult with Hubert about it, for he never came to the Highland Haven office any more (for that matter, I was seldom there either), and was never at his own when I telephoned. His soapboxing had lost him all but a few advertisers, and, though he didn't say anything about it to me, I was sure he continued to get out The Independent only with a struggle. All Ellen knew about it was that now he never had any money. He brought sugar and cereal and coffee to the house, and other staple groceries (which he took in exchange for advertising space) and I suppose paid the milk bill and others; but if we had meat for dinner it was I who brought that.

As for anything not an immediate necessity, the house no longer saw it. Ellen, I think, hadn't got any new clothes since the first week she was in Moorton, and she was feminine enough to have a woman's liking for them. That was a fact I could perceive, whereas Hubert, married to her ten years, was oblivious to it. Caring little about possessions for himself, he was prone to regard as

a foible such a want on the part of anybody else.

Our Thursday nights continued. Florence was always there, and Ralph Gorenflo. We played bridge--Florence and Hubert and Ralph and I--or Hubert and Ralph played chess, with Florence looking on, while I sat by Ellen's bed. So much was unchanged. Ralph was madly in love with Florence, and worshiped her with all the adoration a boy can have for an older woman; her smiles and her hands' touches were caresses he was avid for. She and Hubert were as thick as ever, and I was sure he was seeing her on other nights when he went out to speak, two or three times a week; for no matter how late I stayed on those evenings, so long as I was there Hubert did not return.

That's the way things went until they petered out for me all around. Ellen couldn't leave the house, but was lonely and dependent on me for companionship; and being a friend to a woman is an unsatisfying state compared to that of being her lover. I knew something had to happen to save The Independent; and I was sure that if it folded Hubert couldn't find a job in Moorton. I couldn't help wondering what the winter would bring.

Highland Haven went on with fanfare, and the sunken gardens and the chimes tower were built (neither fulfilled expectations engendered by the architect's drawings); but I hadn't sold a lot since my sale to the Gorenflos, and it looked like a waste of money and effort to keep on trying. The cash I had laid by was gone now, having been replenished only by my few small commissions, and I broke my last twenty-dollar bill. I didn't resign my place on the Highland Haven sales staff; I simply ceased to be a member of the organization. Lloyd Barlow maintained his grudge, and I seldom saw him any more; I guess Pierce was disappointed in me too. Thinking of cashing my postal savings and going to Washington, I wrote to Congressman Fahey for a letter to the Democratic National Committee, and made several civil service applications.

A situation can drag on a long while

after you begin thinking an end must soon come. There is no resolution, no climax, nothing really happens. At last you find that you have got something of what you wanted, or (more likely) you haven't; a new situation confronts you, and the old no longer exists. That is the way it might have been with Ellen and Hubert and Florence and me. But something did happen. Ralph Gorenflo was killed.

VIII

Highland Haven was a promotion scheme; and if I didn't clearly perceive it to be so in the beginning I can only plead lack of familiarity with such matters. The first group of investors made a great profit, and the second did exceedingly well. People who came in late were victimized. They were left out-right owners of a number of burial lots sufficient to bury everybody who would die in Moorton and vicinity during the next fifty years and few of which they themselves could ever hope to sell.

A couple of lawsuits were brought by dissatisfied purchasers, but they had no case, for the contracts were legally drawn, and the Highland Haven Memorial Park Association agreed only to offer their lots for resale, not to sell them within a specific period. Highland Haven vanished from the newspapers, and agitation for a new airport and municipal ownership of the city's water system and supply provided other subjects for controversy. Pierce repeated his success in Wildwood Glen, and went on to other cemeterial ventures. However much one may condemn his motives, I still think him a remarkable man.

The Moorton Independent was bought by the Democratic party a few weeks before election time. There were go-betweens, and only names of individuals under the masthead, but the money was provided by or through the country Democratic Committee. The Democrats needed a campaign sheet, for The Tribune was die-hard Republican, and The Beacon was strongly conservative although it called itself politically independent. After election, at which the Democrats won all the city and county offices except that of county surveyor, and re-elected

Fahey Representative to Congress and the incumbent governor, they abandoned the paper.

If Hubert took more than a hundred dollars out of the deal he was lucky, but he didn't seem perturbed about his situation. I was at the house as much and Hubert as little the week after his connection with The Independent ceased as before. He talked to workers' groups daily, and some more Communists were down from Cleveland, and I believe his expenses were paid by the Communist Party. He showed little concern about Ellen, and I had the fancy that he might be tacitly relinquishing her to me. And if Ellen had been well, if I had had a job or an income, if some other things-- But I have to tell of what was.

We didn't see anything of Ralph for three weeks after school began. He had got an old car, a Model T Ford roadster, and I no longer brought him to the Marshes' or took him home. Florence missed coming a couple of Thursday nights, and Ralph, learning she was not to be there, absented himself also. I had wondered why she continued to come to the Marsh house at all, sure as I was that she and Hubert were meeting other times, and I would have supposed she might wish to avoid seeing Ellen. I believe she came for the sake of Ralph. I think she enjoyed feeling her power over him. She was indifferent to me, or strove to appear so, and I suspected such studied disregard may have been because she sensed my capacity to analyze her. She must have known I'd perceive her motive with respect to Ralph; but his adoration gratified her ego, and her fostering it was a thrust at me. Ellen and I once thought Ralph to be getting over his crush on Florence; that only shows how much we'd forgotten about the tenacity and violence of juvenile love.

On the afternoon of the last Saturday in September I had been in Fairmount and was home when Hubert telephoned me. What he said was plain enough, but it sounded incredible.

"I'm in jail."

"What for?"

"Come in and I'll tell you."

"Tell me now."

"Ralph Gorenflo is dead. He got shot. He was going to kill me."

"My God! What do you mean?"

"Come on in and I'll tell you."

As soon as I got to Moorton I bought a Tribune, but by that time I was thinking more about Ellen than about Hubert, and I went to the Marsh house first. Ellen had seen the paper too. She acted with dignity.

"Would you like me to take you to see Hubert?" I asked her.

"No. That won't do any good."

"Is there anything you want me to say to him?"

"No."

So I went by myself, without any message from her, and Hubert had none to give. He merely asked me to look after her, and I said I would. I went back to the house and got dinner, and slept on the couch in the living room that night.

The circumstance of Ralph's death was common knowledge the next day, but after all relevant facts had been set forth I think there were only four people-- Florence and Hubert, Ellen and I--who could rightfully feel they knew the approximate truth. Ralph was tramping by himself in a woods, carrying his target pistol, either to practice marksmanship or in a reversion to boyish pleasures. He had habitually tramped the woods; but I think this time he may have wished only to be alone and perhaps write verses to Florence. (One was found in his pocket, beginning "Dearest, if all earth's loveliest things . . ."; the papers' printing it mocked what I knew to be genuine emotion.) He came unexpectedly--it could not have been otherwise--on Florence and Hubert.

What Ralph saw no one knows; the

prosecutor did not dwell on the point. And whatever validity lies in the term "temporary insanity", there can be no doubt as to how it affected him. When he saw there the woman he loved, worshiped, idolized, saw her in Hubert's arms, he went mad. According to Hubert's statement, he pulled his pistol and advanced on them, saying "Prepare to die, for I'm going to kill you both." (These words were taken to prove his act not premeditated, for the pistol, .22 caliber, was a single-shot.) Hubert rushed him, and they struggled. The pistol was discharged while Hubert grasped Ralph's wrist, the bullet entering Ralph's neck. He was dead when his body struck the ground.

Hubert did the most sensible thing. He got Florence, frightened witless, into her car, drove to the Laing house, and made her go in. (What she said to Christian Laing then is between themselves.) Thereupon Hubert walked to where his car was parked, drove to the sheriff, and two deputies came and got Ralph's body. One of the deputies drove back Ralph's Ford.

Hubert tried to shield Florence, and, while admitting her presence on the scene, refused to state her name. But one of the sheriff's deputies talked to Ellen without telling her what had happened, and within an hour both the sheriff and the prosecutor knew all that was essential for them to know. With Florence's identity revealed, Hubert admitted their relationship--which it would have been mistakenly gallant and foolish to deny. So did Florence when it was clear that denial was no use.

IX

The charge against Hubert was manslaughter. His bond was set at \$2500, but he made no effort to get it and remained in jail during the six weeks before his trial. Florence was released but summoned as a material witness. While Hubert was in jail I saw him frequently, taking him cigarets and books and other things he wanted. After the first few days he seemed not greatly disturbed, and spent much of the time reading Karl Marx.

Hendrix defended Hubert, brilliantly, for nothing, and it seemed clear that he was not directly blamable for Ralph's death. The prosecutor was a decent chap, whose effort from the beginning was to establish truth rather than to secure punishment; but people smirked, there was a lot of moral indignation, and Hubert's character, including his CP membership and soapboxing, was dwelt on at length. Christian Laing sat throughout the proceedings with Florence, slumped in his chair with his hand over his eyes while she gave her testimony. I had to testify too, as a character witness for the defense; Hendrix asked whether I had ever observed any indication of an improper relationship between Mrs. Laing and the defendant, and I said no. I was fearful of the cross-examination, but the prosecutor asked me only one question: did I know the defendant to be a member of the Community Party? Hendrix did not object, and I said yes to that.

Ellen was not required to appear in court, but had to make a deposition. The prosecutor gave his summary and the judge his instructions to the jury late in the afternoon of the fourth day, and the jurors, ten men and two women, deliberated seven hours. That evening reporters from the newspapers were standing outside the jury room, and when I first talked to the Beacon man at seven o'clock he said they stood nine to three for acquittal. I went to stay with Ellen, and came back after ten.

"It's eleven to one," he said. "There's a possibility of a hung jury."

A few minutes before midnight the jury returned a verdict of acquittal.

Ralph was buried on the lot I sold to the Gorenflos. I hated to think what would happen to his possessions in their hands, and made an offer for the books, tools, and photographic equipment. It was worth more, but my offer was probably better than they could have got from anybody else, and they were glad to have the money.

I packed the things in boxes and stored them in the farmhouse attic. I found more manuscript verses in his desk, and

took them, thankful that they had escaped the eyes of the reporters who had been there before me.

Family Welfare got Ellen into the county hospital. Christian Laing bore his cross privately, and made no outward action. I have an idea that he worshiped and adored Florence in somewhat the way Ralph had done, and nothing could make him put her away from him, not even what is presumed to be the worst thing a woman can do to a man who loves her. I should be the last to say Christian Laing ought to have done differently. As soon as the trial was over he took her and their child to Florida, and in the winter moved there permanently.

Hubert's furniture was yet unpaid-for, and the dealer came and got it while Hubert was in jail, having the grace to wait until Ellen had been taken to the hospital. There were left only Ellen's bed and the kitchen stuff, and Hubert asked me to sell it. The mattress had to be burned, but the county health authorities attended to that, and I got fair enough price for everything else, which just about satisfied the landlord for his back rent.

I didn't see Hubert after his release, for he made no effort to find me. He went to the hospital and told Ellen he was going to Indianapolis and would try to get her back into the sanitarium there. I was never sure how she felt about Hubert--empty, perhaps--and possibly she was never sure herself.

"I'm done with him," she said once. But the next time I saw her she said: "When I'm well I'll join him wherever he is. No other man can be what he's been to me." And then: "Oh, Lewis, I'm sorry! I didn't mean to say that, I didn't. I mean a man and a woman make something that's different from what either would make with somebody else, and you strive to recapture it even when you know it's gone forever. It's just too hard to--to--"

"To have done?"

"Yes. That's what I mean. I ought to hate him, but I can't."

Women like Ellen cannot hate; there is too much love in them. I think what hurt her more than any action of Hubert's was his refusal to put the welfare of his family ahead of this political principles and activities. She knew as well as I that if he had not antagonized so many people he could still have had a business or a job and could have provided for her and their children.

I took a radio to Ellen in the hospital, a bed cushion, and books and magazines. Margaret came to see her once, with Jane, bringing various things. But her parents did nothing for her, and maybe they couldn't. I knew she had no money, and once I clipped a five-dollar bill to the flyleaf of a book, and when she saw it a look of pain and then tears came into her eyes, and she handed the book back to me without a word.

"Ellen," I said, taking her hand in mine, "there must never be misunderstanding between you and me. Only love. Love that endures, cherishes, and understands all things." I laid the book on the table by her bed.

I was the only friend she had now, and nobody else, not even Margaret, thought to provide her with means to get cold creams, powders, toothpaste, writing paper and stamps, and the other small things even a dying girl needs money for. Thereafter I left her small amounts regularly, and she would thank me without words by squeezing my hand the next time I came. Once she kissed it; I was momentarily embarrassed, and then, regardless of bacilli, I took her in my arms and kissed her on the mouth. I knew I loved her, and that was a fact nothing could change.

Ellen wanted the thoroplastic operation. The physicians said she could not stand that; one of the staff surgeons gave her the phrenic, but it did no real good. She had reasonably good care, but became discontented, as tuberculosis patients do anywhere until they have stayed a long time. It was a cheerless place, and she said the food was poor. I learned from a nurse that she had hemorrhages frequently, though she never told me. She decided she wanted to go to her parents' home in Missouri, thinking that

after she was there a while she might be admitted to the state sanitarium.

I determined to go to Washington. I'd had no response from my civil service applications, and decided to seek a government job in person. Ellen's parents had promised to send a car for her, and if I could not see her I wished to be anywhere but in or near the places where we had known a little joy and now had only sorrow, for our meetings were becoming painful to us both. I saw her just before I went in February. As I left the hospital, she walked with me to the elevator, and entered it with me. Our kiss lasted all the way down.

"I love you," I said.

"You'll always love me?"

"Always."

"When here is nothing of me but the memory, you'll love me?"

"Yes, Ellen."

"And I'll love you, Lewis. I'll love you from my grave."

That was the only time she admitted to me that she knew she was going to die. I could not see her. I had no thought of a moment like this when I wrote that stuff about eyes blinded by tears.

As I more than half expected, I didn't get the kind of job I hoped to get in Washington. I visited every governmental agency which had my application on file--and was told it was on file--and accomplished no more by daily visits to the office of the Democratic National Committee. I didn't try to get in touch with Fahey, for I had his letter of recommendation, and it was all that was to be expected of him. I was determined not to leave, and after some futile efforts to sell newspaper subscriptions and electric sweepers I applied to the big department stores, and that day happened to be the day when Woodward and Lothrop needed a man in the shipping department. The job was endurable, and paid enough for me to get along on.

I sent books and magazines to Ellen in Missouri, and from there she wrote pathetic letters, filled with pleas for remembrance, stern resolve to live, and intimations of how distasteful her family were--they prayed over her, I inferred, every day--alternating with what the doctor said and what she was gling to do to get well. Hubert had been to see her, she wrote; he was in Indianapolis, had had a couple of small jobs and lost them both, and had no prospects of anything better.

It was hard to write to her--words of love become conventional and cold--for what meaning has love to the dying? She usually wrote a letter to me within a week, never more than two weeks, after receiving mine, and through the spring and the summer they were the same. Then four weeks went without a letter from her, and when I reached my lodging house on Saturday afternoon there was a telegram from her mother.

"Ellen wants to see you. She can't live much longer."

to be continued