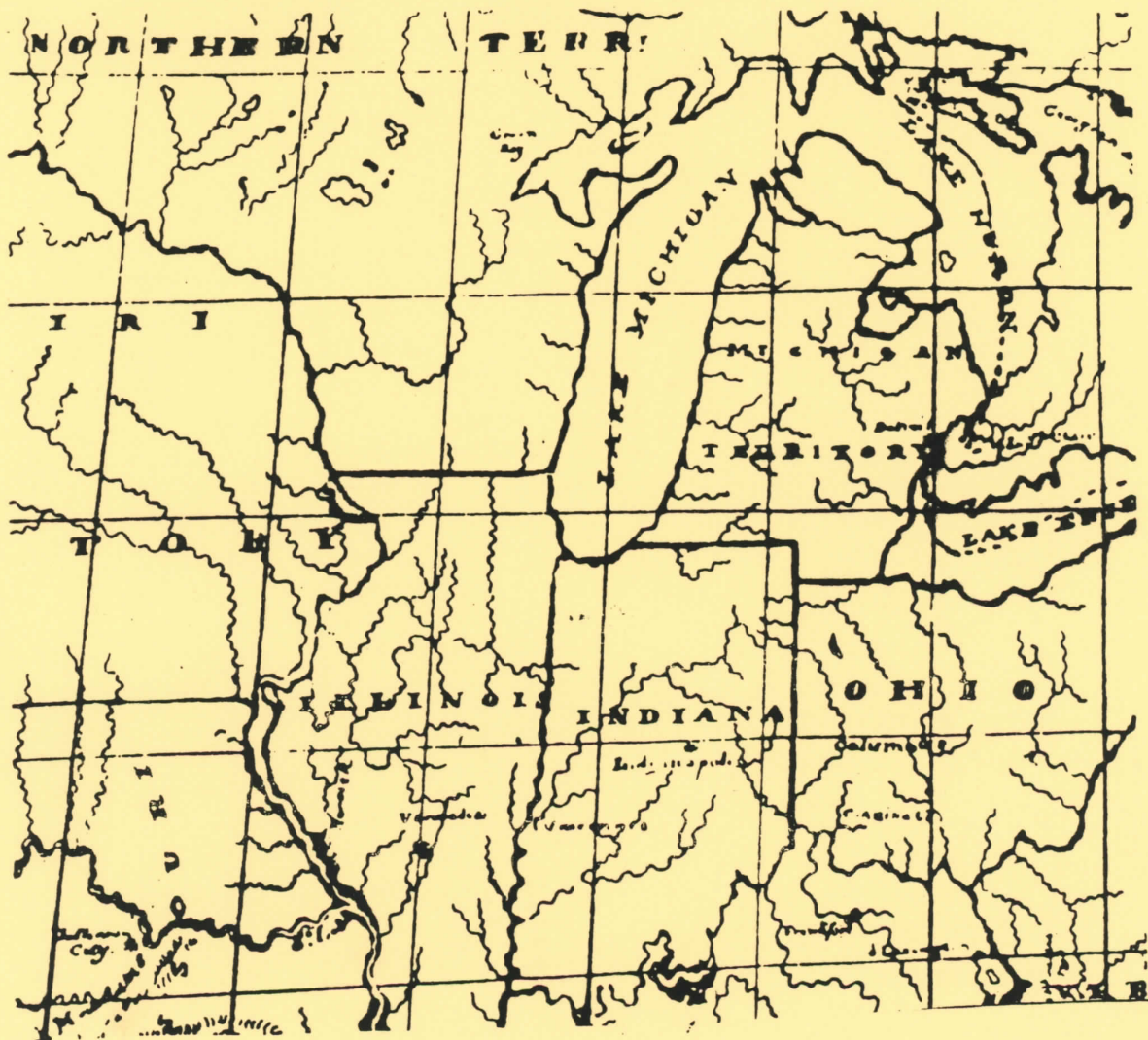


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Society for the Study of
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THE FICTIONAL WRITING OF RUSSELL KIRK

William McCann

Russell Kirk's prominence as an exponent of conservative thought has undoubtedly obscured his accomplishments as a writer of fiction. Those readers who are in agreement with his political and philosophical views are sometimes unaware of his other writings, while those who have little liking for his conservatism often enjoy his novels and tales.

In 1961, eight years after the publication of his best-known book, The Conservative Mind, Mr. Kirk's novel Old House of Fear came out and was widely hailed as a first-rate Gothic novel. "We follow him with dazed and delighted attention," wrote The New Yorker reviewer, "from the first muffled cry to the final midnight scream." Anthony Boucher in his N.Y. Times review found the novel "lovingly and thrillingly executed. "Kirk had turned his fertile fancy and vast knowledge of Scottish history (he wrote the volume on St. Andrews for the Batsford series) to the concoction of a gripping adventure yarn. It has witches and evil spirits, deep, dark cisterns, Russian spies, barren moors, precipitous cliffs, and the beautiful Mary MacAskival, whose "red hair descends to her supple waist and who wore a close-fitting suit of green tweed." And her dreamy eyes were green. There is eroticism, too, you see. Lust lurks on lonely Carnglass, a Scottish island garnished with heather and gorse.

Kirk demonstrated his mastery of the Gothic genre. Listen to him: "A legend less incredible," he says, "relates that the skeleton is that of an illicit lover of a lady of MacAskival, seized at his abode in North Ulst,

transported to Carnglass, subjected to indescribable torment, and at length drowned in the brine of the oubliette. What the Duke of Clarence suffered in a butt of malmsey, some obscure chieftan of the barbarous Hebrides may have endured in a darksome pit filled to its brink with pickled herring." Pickled herring indeed!

Old Duncan MacAskival, who acquired from his Michigan iron works several million dollars and two coronaries, sends young Hugh Logan to purchase Carnglass Island, "a heap of gray stones," beyond the Outer Islands of the Hebrides. Duncan wants to retire to the Old House, to exchange a lifetime of servitude in a law office for "one crowded-hour of glorious life." In his efforts to get the island for old Duncan and Mary MacAskival for himself, Logan has many crowded hours, glorious and otherwise. He matches wits and brawn with a cashiered British Army officer, an I.R.A. bomb thrower and philosopher named Seamus Donley, a diabolically cunning Communist agent, and as creepy an assortment of lesser antagonists as you are likely to encounter anywhere. All this in a setting of "hill and glen, boulder and peat bog, bracken and heather, waterfall and burn." Russell Kirk narrates his story in stylized, old-fangled prose exactly suited to its subject and effective enough to send Old House of Fear into numerous editions.

His second venture in fiction was The Surly Sullen Bell (1962), a collection of ten tales and sketches he described as "unabashedly Gothic." In them, he says, the reader may find "hints of M.R. James, Henry James, and even Jesse James." His flashes of fancy indeed are suitably fiendish, his evocations of mood suitably gruesome. However, the tales are not overly weighted with

significance, political or otherwise. Kirk reminds us that "the fun of the Gothick is the fun of the roller coaster or the crazy house at the county fair." His stories are best read perhaps in the light of a candle flickering in a gust of air from a window we thought was shut.

Perhaps the two best stories in the collection are the title story, "The Surly Sullen Bell," an artfully fictionalized account of an actual murder by poison that occurred in Columbia, Missouri, and "What Shadows We Pursur," a tale about books and a bibliophile, the factual seeds of which may be recalled by a few readers in Lansing, Mich. Vincent Starrett called it "one of the best 'book stories' I have read in years."

The only "true" narration in the volume is "Lost Lakes," a fine descriptive sketch of the village of Mecosta (pop. 394) and its eerie surroundings in central Michigan. The author and his family have resided there in the ancestral home for years. "Mecosta," he writes, "is an impoverished and forgotten village, set in a township that has only two real farms still cultivated. A mile-long stretch of wide street faced with false-fronted white frame buildings as in a western movie set: that is Mescosta." (Incidentally, Mecosta's rural environs have been movingly depicted in From the Land and Back, an excellent book by Curtis Stadfelt, an Eastern Michigan University professor.) Appended to the tales and sketches is Kirk's perceptive piece on the ghost story in English literature, previously printed in "The Critic." In it he recalls James Thurber's favorite monster, the Todal, "a creature sent to punish evil doers for having done less evil than they should." It can be said that the Todel has no need to punish evil doers in The Surly Sullen Bell. Mr. Kirk believes in ghosts, of course, and his own Mecosta houses are inhabited by them.

The third book of fiction, a novel titled A Creature of the Twilight (1966) reminds one of Evelyn Waugh's novel Scoop (1938). Africa is the setting of both books, both are satiric and flavored with caricature and burlesque. Also the authors' points of view are similar; they are on the side of tradition and the old order; they are enemies of modernity and "progress." The protagonist is a sinister adventurer named Manfred Arcane, who is satiated with women and money. He relieves his tedium by master-minding a counter-revolution in a new African state, Hamnegri. He seeks to restore to power a Sultan, who has been displaced by a "democratic" uprising, fostered with awesome ineptitude by Russian and U.S. agents. "It is the American policy," declares the U.S. envoy, "to sympathize with, and extend aid to, the liberal, forward-looking, middle-of-the-road Progressive movement."

As the Sultan's shield against Progressive reformers, Arcane has bugled together a motley assemblage of mercenaries called "Interracial Peace Volunteers." Besides, he has gathered around him a weird collection of non-military characters. Among them are Arpad Nemo, a eunuch and homicidal maniac, a Sicilian beauty of mysterious origin, a dauntless Lady Grizel Fergusson, and Dr. Mary Jo Travers ("doctor of philosophy in communication skills, University of Kentucky--after four years at Sweet Briar"). Mary Jo's animated innocence appeals to long-buried remnants of romance in Arcane's complicated nature.

Arcane's adversaries as well as his adherents describe events for us. Newspaper dispatches from two hyper-thyroid journalists, Jack Symonds of the Global Press and Helen Miramar of the N.Y. Courier-Argus are used with humorous effect, a device which Waugh, too, often employed. Kirk skillfully maintains suspense through his book, which he calls a "baroque romance." And baroque it is in the elaborate ornamentations of style and the contortions of plot.

In 1979, two of Kirk's books of fiction were published--one was The Princess of All Lands, a collection of tales, ghostly and disturbing, and, the author says, with "theological or transcendental implications." Yet he claims to write as an entertainer, hoping to "discomfort an old man on a winter's night, or a girl in the bloom of her youth." The second volume, Lord of the Hollow Dark, was described by William F. Buckley, Jr., as a "spiritual thriller, a tale of 'Evil and Sin,' and other unpleasant facts. But also of Hope. In short, the old-fashioned Romantic (and hence a Christian) mixture."

Kirk's most recent Book of Fiction is Watchers at the Strait Gate (1984) another collection of mystical ghost stories, published, as was Princess of All Lands, by Arkham House, of Sauk City, Wisconsin. Since the days of its founder, August Derleth, Arkham House has published weird and ghostly fiction by that strange writer H.P. Lovecraft and other authors. In the introductory essay to Watchers at the Strait Gate Kirk learnedly discusses the history, psychology and ethics of his Gothic genre, which he described as "experiments in the moral imagination."

The author of some twenty serious works of non-fiction, including such important books as Eliot and His Age (1971), John Randolph of Roanoke (1951), The Roots of American Order (1974), Edmund Burke (1967), Decadence and Renewal in Higher Education (1978), The Intemperate Professor (1965), and Confessions of a Bohemian Tory (1963), Russell Kirk born in Plymouth, Michigan, in 1918. He graduated from Michigan State University, earned his M.A. at Duke University, and received a doctorate from St. Andrews University in Scotland. From 1946 to 1953 he taught at Michigan State.

Marquette and East Lansing, Michigan

EDMUND LOVE'S MICHIGAN

Theodore R. Kennedy

When two world wars and several hundred million automobiles exhausted the rich iron ore of the great Mesabi range, methods were found to extract an even richer ore from common taconite. Great segments of Midwestern life have been portrayed--exploited, if you will--by such authors as Theodore Dreiser, Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis, and numerous others. But the literary raw material continues to be inexhaustible.

Illustration of this lies in three works by Flint, Michigan's Edmund E. Love who has exploited the "taconite" found in the lives, adventures and misadventures of typical Midwestern people living during the first half of this century.

Strictly speaking, Edmund Love is not a novelist but a story-teller. Mark Twain's Roughing It would certainly not be called a novel, nor a literal narrative; but it does give the full spirit and flavor of the mining frontier era. Love's work achieves the same result in the modern era. For example, his most successful work, Subways Are For Sleeping, depicts curious, eccentric, and always interesting characters he had known whose modes of life were unusual, even by the standards of New York City.

Given the story-teller's license to embellish, adorn, and manipulate for the sake of interest and clarity, Love has written three books of vital Michigan social history, told with color, detail, wit and drama.

The first of the three books, The Situation In Flushing, published in 1965, depicts life in the small town of Flushing, Michigan, between the years

of 1915 and 1925--a period of profound change in the lives of the people of that town and of the nation.

The initial charm of the book derives from a child's consuming fascination with the steam locomotives which labored through Flushing many times a day. Flushing lies in a valley, and the engines of that era were so limited in power they had to back up and get a running start to get out of Flushing and on their way north to Saginaw or south to Durand, Michigan.

Some people may doubt that a six-year-old could identify a steam locomotive just by hearing its whistle a half-mile distant. But not one who was a child in that pre-electronic era.

Before radio and later television came along to pre-empt the imagination of children, youngsters lived in closer contact with reality and with the adult world. Surprisingly often the interests and activities of children and adults overlapped: the children of Flushing would ride their sleds down the steep city streets during the daytime; the adults might do the same at night.

Mr. French, the owner of the Flushing hardware store, discovered that six-year-old Edmund Love's great fondness for pumpkin pie had given rise to a profound concern that his grandfather had not planted enough pumpkin seeds. Mr. French then sold young Edmund, at a bargain price, an ample supply of seeds. The hardware merchant thereby enjoyed a two-week head start on everyone else in Flushing in laughing over the gradual appearance of pumpkin vines from every garden, flower bed, flower pot, and every cultivated segment of sector of the town.

Those whose preference in literature runs strictly to acid or tragic narrative will not care for Mr. Love's book. True, it details instances of

meanness, even villainy, but these seem softened in the narrative, as perhaps they were softened in the reality of that long-ago, gentler era.

But for a portrayal of village life in Mid-America during that decade when the automobile worked a profound transformation in American life, one can do no better than to read, or re-read, The Situation In Flushing.

Though the last of Love's Michigan trilogy to be published, A Small Bequest, comes second in chronology. This book is a narrative of the adventures and misadventures of two 17-year-old young men and their \$25 automobile.

The story turns on the investigation of some lakeside property which Edmund and his brothers had inherited from their grandfather. Such a bequest would whet anyone's interest, but Michigan has thousands of lakes and the adjoining property, consequently, varies widely. The two teen-agers meet with such hardships as bees, rain, skunks, bears, snakes, and--worst predators of all--camp operators who prey on tourists and gullible boys.

There is some relief to the misery, most notably in the form of a youthful goddess with a penchant for swimming in the nude. Eventually the boys are rescued, deus ex machina, because older brothers do, sometimes, appear suddenly and helpfully on the scene.

A Small Bequest is perhaps more a character study than a social picture or literary achievement. But it shows a great deal about attitudes and behavior patterns of a half-century ago. Anyone who has been a teen-age boy, or felt some attachment to a teen-age boy, can read it with enjoyment.

Strangely enough, Love's best book was commercially the least successful of the three. Its fate illustrates, if illustration is needed, the critical role of editor and publisher. Even the title, Hanging On, could probably

have been improved; while accurate, it does not rouse a book-buyer's curiosity.

In this book the setting shifts ten miles from Flushing to Flint, Michigan, and occasionally on down to Ann Arbor. The story begins in 1929 and extends through the following decade, the era of the Great Depression. In the opening scene a 17-year-old Ed Love asks his father, the owner of a combination lumber yard and coal business, if he is a millionaire, a word he had just encountered in the newspaper. His father reflected a minute or two and then, with a smile, conceded that he probably was.

Obviously, then, this is not a "proletarian" novel, though it does to some extent depict people in every social and economic class. But where this book stands out is in showing exactly how the mechanics, so to speak, of the Great Depression grindingly affected the great majority of the American people.

The classic novel of the depression era is generally considered to be Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath. Yet the Oakies were a minute fraction of the population, even of the State of Oklahoma. While events in that novel are more or less accurate, they do not show the experience of vast majority of the people. Even reading the Studs Terkel interviews leaves one who lived through the 1930's paraphrasing T. S. Eliot, "It wasn't that way at all."

But reading Love's Hanging On has one who remembers the precarious plight of the middle class saying, "Yes, this is how it was. This is how it happened."

Ed Love's father did not buy stocks on margin, nor any other way. He had a sound, well-financed, well-managed business buttressed by a husky savings account. Yet his business, like countless others, was eventually sucked under by powerful economic forces which no one seemed able to understand, let alone control.

What happened? As the book's title suggests, Ed's father "hung on" as long as he could. The ingenuity of his struggle--the patience, forbearance and courage shown by him and so many others--the fundamental comradeship instead of recrimination among people--the short-sightedness of so many then-esteemed leaders--these insights must stir astonishment and admiration, perhaps even disbelief, in those who did not experience them.

To those born after 1930, the most surprising aspect of the Depression was the stoical valor of almost of the the American people. Unhappiness? Yes. A questioning of old economic and political assumptions, yes. Listening--for a time--to peddlers of social nostrums such as Father Coughlin, Huey Long, and Dr. Townsend, yes. But overthrow the system? Revolution? No. Not among the vast majority of Americans.

In 1932 the voters turned their backs on President Herbert Hoover and the Republican Party. They found themselves charmed by the new voice which spoke to them all, using a new phenomenon, the national radio carrying the voice of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. However ineffectual the efforts to recover prosperity, the voters continued to heed that voice for the next decade.

And what was young Ed Love doing through this trying period? Mainly trying, by a variety of ingenious expedients, to get enough money to see him through another semester at the University of Michigan. How re-assuring to know that even during such difficult times college students still managed to get into mischief, fall in love, and accumulate some hilarious memories. Ed Love "hung on" and became a teacher in a Flint high school. Nor did he lose heart despite an almost merciless succession of obstacles.

As an example, when school funds ran out, the Flint School Board simply

ended the year, never mind that only seven months had elapsed instead of nine or ten. Ed's wages for the first six months were required to pay off debts and supply essentials. The last three months' salary therefore made a huge difference. And these were the ones lopped off by the school board.

Such adversity led to a job in the Buick plant in Flint where Ed observed first hand the auto workers' shift in attitude from proud identification with the Buick Division and the Buick car to the bitter, modified civil war of the mid-1930's sit-down strikes.

Why has not one heard of this book which gives such an accurate, comprehensive and engrossing picture of the Depression? Why didn't it sell? The answer is the persistence of the same kind of fate that dogged so many people during the '30's--misunderstanding, strange turns of circumstance, and just plain bad luck. Also, one suspects a decided lack of respect for the Midwestern experience in provincial Eastern editorial attitudes.

All during 1930's--while Ed Love was getting his bachelor and master's degrees from Michigan, while teaching school, scouting high school football teams, fending off (most of the time) over-sexed pupils--he was also struggling to become a writer. In time he succeeded. And in succeeding he has shown again that the lives of ordinary Midwestern people, described in detail with understanding and respect, are the raw material of immensely valuable and, one hopes, enduring literature.

Michigan State University

The Way It Was, Remembered

Thomas P. Linkfield

Though distrusted by some academics, oral history can add a valuable dimension to a watershed event in a region's or nation's history. Holiday: Minnesotans Remember the Farmers' Holiday Association, edited by David Nass and published by Plains Press at Southwest State University (1984), is a good example of this. The book contains twenty-one interviews, collected during the mid-1970s, of Minnesotans who were either active in the Holiday Association during the 1930s or who were good eyewitnesses to the agricultural scene during the Great Depression. It is the result of a project funded by the Minnesota Historical Society and Southwest State University. Holiday also contains a valuable foreward by Lyndon Johnson, an index, several photographs, and a short, but good, bibliography. Because oral interviews by themselves do not provide a reader with the broad sweep of historical currents, Johnson's foreward is especially valuable because it furnishes the reader with an excellent background and places the event of the interviews in their proper context.

The National Farmers' Holiday Association, organized in Iowa in 1932, was a short-lived, but important, force in the Midwest argicultural scene. It was the activist, radical wing of the National Farmers' Union, and it was the last of a long series of Populist protests that began in the 1870s. The farm community had not shared in the Republican prosperity of the 1920s, and when the Great Depression settled on farmers, they faced considerable hardship and financial ruin. The Holiday sought precisely what its name implied -- a holiday, or moritorium, on farm foreclosures in Iowa, Minnesota, and other states. On the one hand, Holiday was an attempt to preserve the endangered

species of the self-sufficient, family farm, while on the other hand it wanted to influence farm legislation on the state, regional, and national levels. On the state level, Minnesotans found a sympathetic ally in Governor Floyd Olson, and on the national level the New Deal measures of FDR provided substantive relief. Though the Holiday Association existed until 1937, it had ceased being a political force in 1933.

Holiday demonstrates the advantages of the oral interview as a historical source. The interviews, which reflect a wide range in quality, do inject a certain vitality to events in rural Minnesota during the desperate years of the early 1930s. This vitality is missing from standard history texts, which rely on other types of sources. The alarming plight of the small-family farmer becomes clearer when the reader comprehends the interviews with Roy Peterson and Percy Meehl. It is easy to identify with some of these tough, hardy farmers as they reminisce about their struggle for social and economic justice during the hard years of the Great Depression. Each interviewee's personal insight adds a different dimension to this social and economic phenomenon, known as the Farmers' Holiday Association, and brings to the reader a clearer understanding that history, in the final analysis, is the collective story of human beings. This last point frequently becomes lost in scholarly history texts that focus more on general trends, political parties, and celebrity figures or emphasize trendy techniques and methodology. Holiday focuses on the dilemma of the average human being -- the Minnesota farmer caught in a "Catch-22" of fixed rents and interest rates and sharply decreased prices for his crops and livestock.

On the other hand, Holiday also demonstrates the disadvantages of the oral interview as a historical source. Each interview is, by its very nature, a

personal recollection of past events -- in this instance events forty years in the past. Some of the interviewees' memories seemed clouded and unable to focus on certain events. In a few instances, it was difficult to decide whether the interviewee was remembering his own experiences and ideas or what the interviewer wanted him to remember. The tendency to lead the interviewee becomes a little strong at times. It is tragic that several of the important members of this rural movement died before this particular oral history project began, but even so, a few of the interviews are short and cryptic and end very abruptly, leaving the reader puzzled as to why they were even included.

In the final analysis, however, David Nass's Holiday is a good book. The interviews at the beginning (Roy Peterson) and at the end (John Bosch) are excellent, thus giving the collection of twenty-one a nice balance. Both reflect sharp, clear minds that actually challenge the reader. Much to editor Nass's credit, he refrains from discarding any critical or uncomplimentary opinions about the Association itself and of the farmers who were the driving force in the movement. He permits each interview to stand on its own, and the result is a balanced collection of personal opinions and recollections. The reader does receive a good, and sometimes very colorful, picture of events on the local level in rural Minnesota. But on a broader scale, the reader also comprehends a universal truth about humans: men made desperate by hard times and cruel forces will resort to desperate measures to preserve the last ounce of dignity for themselves and to guarantee some measure of justice for their families.

THE MYTH OF ESCAPE AND FULFILLMENT

in

THE SUN ALSO RISES

and

THE GREAT GATSBY

Thomas Cornellier

Over time, history often lends itself to a rather liberal interpretation. Historical facts become the seeds from which sprout myths and legends. Usually containing a fragment of truth, myths often become symbols which form a nation's particular character, and evolve to become preceptors inculcating confidence, a sound work ethic, and patriotism to its citizens. Two prevalent American myths, escape and fulfillment, find their roots in American history. In its earliest capacity, the United States was a sanctuary for those seeking freedom from tyrannical rule and oppression. Throughout its history, America has come to symbolize the chance for a better life and the opportunity to move, attempting to satisfy a hunger for change and amelioration. This belief has evolved into a myth that escape is always possible and that regimented class stratifications do not exist. Disappointment in life need not lead to despair since the opportunity to move means rectification elsewhere. This purports the second myth: fulfillment. It is not enough just to escape, but to escape to something better. History, in unison with the Horatio Alger myth, forms a glowing promise to all: that escape and fulfillment are often inseparable. Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises and F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby use the myth of escape and fulfillment to examine the human condition not only in the post World War I era, but as a statement of the human predicament in all generations.

In her salon in Paris, Gertrude Stein, in a conversation in which Hemingway was present, reiterated a phrase she heard a disgruntled garage owner utter as part of his diatribe concerning two young employees when they failed to report for work: "you are all a lost generation", she quoted. Hemingway uses this declaration as the first of two epigraphs in The Sun Also Rises, the second being taken from Ecclesiastes: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever . . . The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose . . . The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits . . . All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." Together, these epigraphs comment on the nature of the escape and fulfillment myth found in the novel. Hemingway uses the passage from Ecclesiastes to reveal that it is not just generation that suffers, as Gertrude Stein suggests, but all generations. Ecclesiastes implies that man's quest for fulfillment in virtually all forms: merit, riches, and pleasures all prove inconsequential because life is purely an enigma impossible for man to decipher. Moreover, Ecclesiastes suggests that the only semblance of happiness or fulfillment comes from work. "To eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of all his labor is a gift of God." Man's capacity as intellectual is stripped to the barest minimum. To understand life more than the toils of daily existence and its relatively meager rewards is, in the words of Ecclesiastes, to chase after the wind.

The Great War, reflected upon by those who were involved in its vast destruction, becomes much more than its cursory history book treatment. Despite

American "victory", Jake Barnes and his fellow expatriots suffer poignant defeat in their attitudes and feelings. As victims of the war, their wounds dig deeper than any physical injury, effecting previously held ideals and conceptions regarding meaning and fulfillment in life. World War I crushed many of the old ideas of young men and women, ideas found in an innocence which the war deemed intolerable.

Hemingway's expatriates in The Sun Also Rises each seek out ways to escape, to find a form of fulfillment the war and society has left void in them. Attempting to put behind them the ravages of a war-torn wasteland, they find themselves as victims again not only of the war but the materialistic wasteland which has emerged to replace it. Hedonistic pleasures, at first glance, seem the most convenient form of escape, but in fact act as an expression of their profound yearning for fulfillment. All the characters (except perhaps for Robert Cohn) have a proclivity for drink, but only Mike Campbell continuously seeks the transitory feelings of fulfillment and escape found in the bottle. Certainly most of the others find themselves "tight", but sobriety loses its meaning primarily during the vacation in Spain and the fiesta of San Fermin at Pamplona. Drinking is not out of the ordinary during a vacation, especially a seven day fiesta, but it is Mike who is often roaring drunk in situations where the others are not.

Lady Brett Ashley, accommodating the new sexual freedom of women, attempts to escape the wasteland primarily through sexual encounters. The brief glimpse into Brett's past, however, reveals a life clouded by disappointment, fear, regret, and finally a virtual surrender and admittance that she will remain impelled to escape, yet will never find fulfillment. Her

former husband, a naval officer who christens her with the title of aristocracy, does not treat her as the title might demand and as she may have expected from life. Making them sleep on the floor, he with a loaded service revolver, threatening her life, the experience begins the spiralling descent of her hope for fulfillment. During the war, her love for young Jake Barnes is thwarted by a tragic wound she cannot accept. In the novel she refuses to accept any further defeats. She uses sex as a transitory escape, fearing any form of commitment either to Mike, Jake, Robert, or Pedro Romero, and subsequently resigning any search for fulfillment.

Jake Barnes, the one most physically victimized by the war, comes closest to realizing the nature of his own predicament and in turn the predicament of humankind and the myth of escape and fulfillment. The irony of his wound, one which renders him impotent physically, but not in his desire, forces Jake into a decision tantamount to his mental survival. He comes to realize that the wound is a fact of his life; no amount of thought or attempt at understanding the reasoning behind it will change or remedy it. Throughout the novel Jake struggles with these feelings about his body. Finally, with the end of the novel comes his realization that unlike the others, Jake knows that there is no escape from the wasteland and fulfillment comes only through a dignified acceptance of life as it is. Jake comes to an understanding in congruence with Ecclesiastes: fulfillment and meaning resides in one's work and the small rewards it offers such as the escape to Spain.

Those readers with a tendency to view the characters in The Sun Also Rises as shallow, or simply hedonistic, must not confuse the symptoms with the disease. All the characters are victims of a way which has deceived them and their

ideals. It is in their attempt to wade through the wasteland, to escape and find meaning and fulfillment that they fall as victims again to a post-war society struggling to its feet. Jake's response to Brett, the last line of the novel, "Yes, isn't it pretty to think so", succinctly sums up Jake's new-found awareness. He knows his only choice is to accept life with a resolute dignity and this acceptance replaces the torturous attempts at understanding the nature of his wound and society's.

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, Gatsby constructs a destiny of himself and seeks fulfillment in order to manifest it. Seeking escape from an insignificant past, fulfillment for Gatsby does not come at college nor, as he first suspects it might, on Dan Cody's yacht. It comes to rest, finally, upon the figure of Daisy Fay. He assembles his riches in order to have her, to be worthy of her and yet he never can be. In his innocence Gatsby holds ideals as truths. He fervently believes that true love exists in a crystalline state. We see that he is doomed to fail when Nick relates that Jay Gatsby "sprang from his Platonian conception of himself." Knowing this, his ideas of fulfillment through Daisy is impossible. When seeking to manifest his ideal of Daisy, to make her his, he is bringing Daisy down from the Platonian ideal he has conceived of her and in that state fulfillment for Gatsby cannot exist. His fragile ideals crumble under the weight of society's harsh realities. These realities ultimately come down on Gatsby in the form of Mr. Wilson. Gatsby dies, a firm believer in his ideals, never recognizing society's declaration that they are now archaic.

Fitzgerald uses the myth of escape and fulfillment not just to portray its effects on Nick and Gatsby, but as a key element of a broader, more

uniquely American myth and its effects on those who pursue it. Gatsby, in effect, speaks as a metaphor to those who feel the necessity of dreaming to become something greater than they are. He is a symbol of those individuals who hold ideas as truths and whose innocence falsely protects them from society's harsher elements. In all probability there is some germ of Jay Gatsby residing in the minds of all people. The tragic nature of his death does not camouflage his unerring belief that time, space, people, and objects can be constructed, assembled, disassembled and transformed into a perfect reality. A prospect most people feel in themselves when they are sure that destiny is something controlled by them.

By the end of the novel, Nick, who is an innocent himself, though not nearly as much as Gatsby, comes to the realization that escape and fulfillment exist purely as myth. He knows it can never be found in the nature of the Buchanans or their money. It did not exist for Myrtle who dies in the same ash heaps she strove to escape from. Nor does it exist for Nick, who as observer and participant, becomes sickened by the carnage of the myth and society's role in its destruction. In the last page, Nick reflects upon what he feels must have been the last time escape and fulfillment existed in the eyes of men as a truly ultimate and meaningful challenge . . . "for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder." Although Nick sees escape and fulfillment as purely myth, he realized the nature of its importance. Not only to Gatsby, but in turn to everyone for it symbolized a quest unique to America and the principles which

form the crux of its foundation.

Both Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises and Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby use the myth of escape and fulfillment not only for its effects on the novel's characters, but as a predicament typical of all generations. In The Sun Also Rises, escape and fulfillment straddle a tenuous line of pre World War I idealism and innocence and the post-war shift to a materialistic wasteland. Jake Barnes comes to the belief that fulfillment exists in the ability to face the day to day toils of life with dignity and realization that the meaning of life does not endure on any philosophical or elevated plane, but only within the given 24 hours. In The Great Gatsby, Gatsby's quest to manifest his ideal conception of escape and fulfillment in the form of Daisy arouses the wrath of the post-war wasteland. Jay Gatsby dies just as all things that become obsolete must perish. While Nick sees Gatsby and himself as victims of this turbulent society, he knows that Gatsby symbolizes both the myth of the American dream and humankind's necessity to pursue it. Both novels make poignant statements for all generations who lay claim that they are lost. As societal orphans, the myth of escape and fulfillment becomes a reality, the life-blood, and perennial quest for an answer and a meaning to life.

Ohio and The Demon

by

David D. Anderson

No state has had a more enviable--or despicable --record than Ohio in the nation's nearly century-long struggle against the hard-drinking tradition that flourished in 19th century America. That tradition began when frontier farmers learned that their corn was more easily transported and perhaps more profitable when measured in gallons instead of bushels, and it ended with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment. Whether post-frontier Ohio had inherited a harder drinking tradition than other states--a doubtful proposition--or Ohioans were more virtuous--an even more doubtful premise--Ohio has always been in the vanguard of the battle against the demon rum. Not only were the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League founded within its borders, the latter the instrument that ultimately gave us a clear headed America, but some of the most spectacular arrests under the Volstead Act, the enforcement arm of prohibition, were made in Ohio. Perhaps the most noted was that of George Remus of Cincinnati, arrested in 1922, who had forty-four prohibition agents on his payroll at \$1000 each a month, and who boasted at his trial that "I never poisoned anybody." And, of course, Ohio can claim the late Attorney General Harry Daugherty and his collector, Jess Smith, both of Washington Court House and the Ohio Gang of the Harding Administration. They were perhaps the wettest--and greatest profit-making--dries during the thirteen years of the Eighteenth Amendment.

But in the entire history of Ohio's love-hate relationship with the demon, no chapter is stranger than the dramatic relationship in the thriving Clinton County community of New Vienna between Eliza Daniel Stewart, known to her contemporaries as "Mother Stewart," and John Calvin Van Pelt, owner of an

establishment called "the Dead Fall," who was proud of his hard-earned title; "The Wickedest Man in Ohio."

The relationship between Mother Stewart and "The Wickedest Man in Ohio" had its inception in the visit to Ohio in late 1873 of Dr.--self-conferred--Diocletian Lewis, temperance lecturer, physical-culture pioneer, and homeopathic practitioner. Author of the popular book called "Our Girls," in it he advocated that women wear suspenders instead of belts in order to "free the pelvis"--for what purpose he didn't say, and he recommended nude sun bathing; he denounced the fashionable wasp waists because they mortified ladies by causing their "bowels... to make a gurgling, glug-glug noise" He started and quickly closed a girls' school in Boston and then in Lexington, Massachusetts, where his pupils were unsupervised and, it was rumored, promiscuous. But he was best known and most effective as a temperance speaker, and his most popular talk, "The Duty of Christian Women in the Cause of Temperance," was given more than 300 times.

Dr. Dio, as he was known, knew his subject well; his father was a drunk, his mother a long-suffering Christian women who ultimately turned to sustained bouts of prayer to dry up both her husband and the saloon that he frequented. "Ladies," Dr. Dio would conclude, "you might do the same thing here if you had the same faith." When he brought the technique and his challenge to Ohio in December, 1873, he had an impressive record behind him: in Battle Creek, Michigan, 50-odd saloons were prayed shut after he spoke; in Dixon, Illinois, 39 were prayed shut in a week.

But Ohio being Ohio, his visits brought no such isolated incidents; Ohio responded instead with what became known as the "Women's Crusade." It began on Christmas Eve in 1873 in the quiet Ohio town of Hillsboro, population 5,000, with thirteen saloons and eight hotels and druggists dispensing alcohol. Under the

leadership of Mrs. Eliza Jane Trimble Thompson, daughter of ex-governor Trimble, seventy-five ladies heard Dr. Dio speak and then marched and prayed--and they applied economic and legal sanctions and they created nuisances. Early in the new year the town was dry. On December 27, Dr. Dio found Washington Court House a "very drunken town," with 3000 residents, eleven saloons, and three drug stores selling liquor; by January 2, 1874, the town was prayed dry by its devout women.

In Xenia, on February 1, Dr. Dio and the ladies found forty-one saloons, nine in a single block on Whitman Street. They were known by such names as "Shades of Death," "Certain Death," and "Hell's Half Acre." Bands of women and girls stood and knelt in front of each, praying and singing. In front of the "Devil's Den," the young ladies of Miss Laura Hick's class sang, "Say, Mr. Barkeeper, has father been here?" They started at nine in the morning; at three the "Shades of Death" capitulated, the first of four that day. By the end of the week twenty-nine saloons closed their doors.

In February, 1874, the Women's Crusade, now under the leadership of Mother Stewart, came to New Vienna. Mother Stewart, of Springfield, had earned her title while nursing wounded soldiers during the Civil War. A Methodist and a school teacher, she proclaimed with her customary optimism and confidence that there was "no place so hardened the Crusade cannot reach it." Further, she insisted, "There was no place so given over to drunkenness and its accompanying vices but was greatly blessed... It looked as if we were going to take over the world."

In New Vienna, population 700, the Women's Crusade and Mother Stewart seemed to count martyrdom or to seek notoriety, or were convinced of their power in their siege of Van Pelt and his "Dead Fall." A tall, solid, knobby-headed man with a red nose, Van Pelt threatened to hang, draw, and quarter the women if

they came near his saloon; he decorated one window with flasks of whiskey, the other with an axe dripping with blood. In the doorway was a huge Jug labeled "Brady's Family Bitters." Over all, Van Pelt loomed, brandishing an axe handle; with a black flag waving in the breeze from the roof, the "Dead Fall" seemed impregnable.

Nevertheless, a group of ladies--some say forty, others fifty--led by Mother Stewart, forced their way in and knelt to pray "May the Lord baptize them with the holy spirit." Van Pelt baptized them with a bucket of dirty water. When they refused to withdraw, he baptized them again with a bucket of beer, whereupon they withdrew to the street to kneel in the snow and pray, while Van Pelt shouted obscenities at them.

Public indignation brought about Van Pelt's arrest, and when he was freed a week later, he was furious to find the women camped next to the Dead Fall, on railroad property. He cursed them in their prayers and attended their meetings in the Friends Meeting House to argue formidably, eloquently, and profanely with them.

But his right to his title as "The Wickedest Man in Ohio" was no more clearly evident than when he invited Mother Stewart and the ladies into the saloon to pray, on condition that he give every other prayer. Delighted, the ladies accepted. After their initial prayer, however, he prayed in blasphemous terms to God to rid the world of the brutes known as women, who, with neither wisdom nor understanding, brought sin to the world. Shocked, the ladies finally gave up for the day, but in succeeding days, the continued confrontation between the forces of good and evil began to attract national attention to the town.

Finally, on February 3, the New York Tribune declared to the nation

that the notorious Van Pelt had capitulated the day before, that the women, triumphant, had taken him to their collective bosom, and that he declared he was yielding to their love. He then took an axe to various barrels, striking them open, and poured whiskey, cider, and beer into the gutters, declaring, "This is the same weapon with which I used to terrify the ladies. I now use it to sacrifice that which I fear has ruined many souls." He joined the women in prayer and in hymns of thanksgiving, and, in the Christian Church that evening, he showed considerable talent as a temperance lecturer. A changed man, he pleaded that others forsake the demon. Ohio folklore, assisted by Henry Howe in his Historical Collections, declared that he became a great savior of souls from besotted sin.

The Crusade went on, to its successes in Ohio and beyond, meeting their greatest challenge--3000 saloons, breweries, and distilleries grossing \$33,000,000 a year--in Cincinnati. The battle opened on Good Friday, 1874. Singing "Rock of Ages" and "Jesus the Water of Life Will Give", forty-three strong, the ladies met the ultimate indignity; they were arrested for blocking the sidewalk and forced to spend four hours in jail.

Tactics changed; in groups of five or six, they hung about saloon doors, asking thirsty clients if they loved Jesus and urging them to sign the pledge. But saloons, as their customers know well and apparently the ladies did not, have back doors, and for the most part, trade flourished. Cincinnati proved as intransigent for the ladies as it was to be for the Prohibition laws of a later age.

Elsewhere in Ohio, however, the Crusaders, in spite of inflicted indignities, continued, although they were spattered with mud and rotten eggs in Clyde, Ohio

(crying out "Oh, Lord, we are now baptized for the work"), harrassed by hoodlums made special deputies in Bucyrus, Ohio, where a new ordinance prohibited street prayer and where an elderly Crusader was thrown down a flight of stairs, smoked out of Bellfontaine.

There, according to Mother Stewart, a miracle occurred: a praying woman was harangued obscenely by a saloon keeper's wife. The Crusader prayed, "Lord, silence this woman," whereupon she was struck dumb. Their prayers and the powers of intimidation prevailed.

Nevertheless, the Women's Crusade lasted only a litter more than a year before the women, stung by increasing criticism, often from the pulpit, that they were neglecting their families, gave up the struggle. In that time, however, the Women's Crusade closed 17,000 saloons, drugstores, and hotels in small-town Ohio; eight of Ohio's largest distilleries suspended operations; several hundred breweries went out of business, all costing the state and federal governments more than a million dollars in lost tax revenues. Of most importance, the ladies had secured more than a thousand actions under Ohio's Adair Act, which allowed wives and mothers of drunks to sue saloon keepers for civil damages.

But the victories were fleeting; as the women returned to their children, churches, and kitchens, saloons reopened, distilleries began again to produce the demon, breweries flourished. Within a year it was as if the Crusade never had been.

And John Calvin Van Pelt? Was his conversion from vice to virtue a permanent result of the Crusade, as Howe and others report? Unfortunately, Mother Stewart records in her Memories of the Crusade, published in 1890, that

He was heard of afterwards in Wilmington, keeping a low, disreputable place, and was suspected of setting fire to the house of the Friends minister who had attempted to prosecute him. The last I heard of him he was in a Western penitentiary. Alas, the seed had not the depth of earth.

Or, perhaps more accurately, one may waver, momentarily weaken, even surrender momentarily to virtue. But such a title as Van Pelt possessed so proudly was not to be surrendered as easily as the women in their righteous armor had anticipated, and John Calvin Van Pelt, "The Wickedest Man in Ohio", properly belongs, together with Johnny Appleseed, the Lost Dauphan, Simon Kenton, and the seven Presidents, collectively and individually insignificant, in Ohio's Pantheon of folk heroes.