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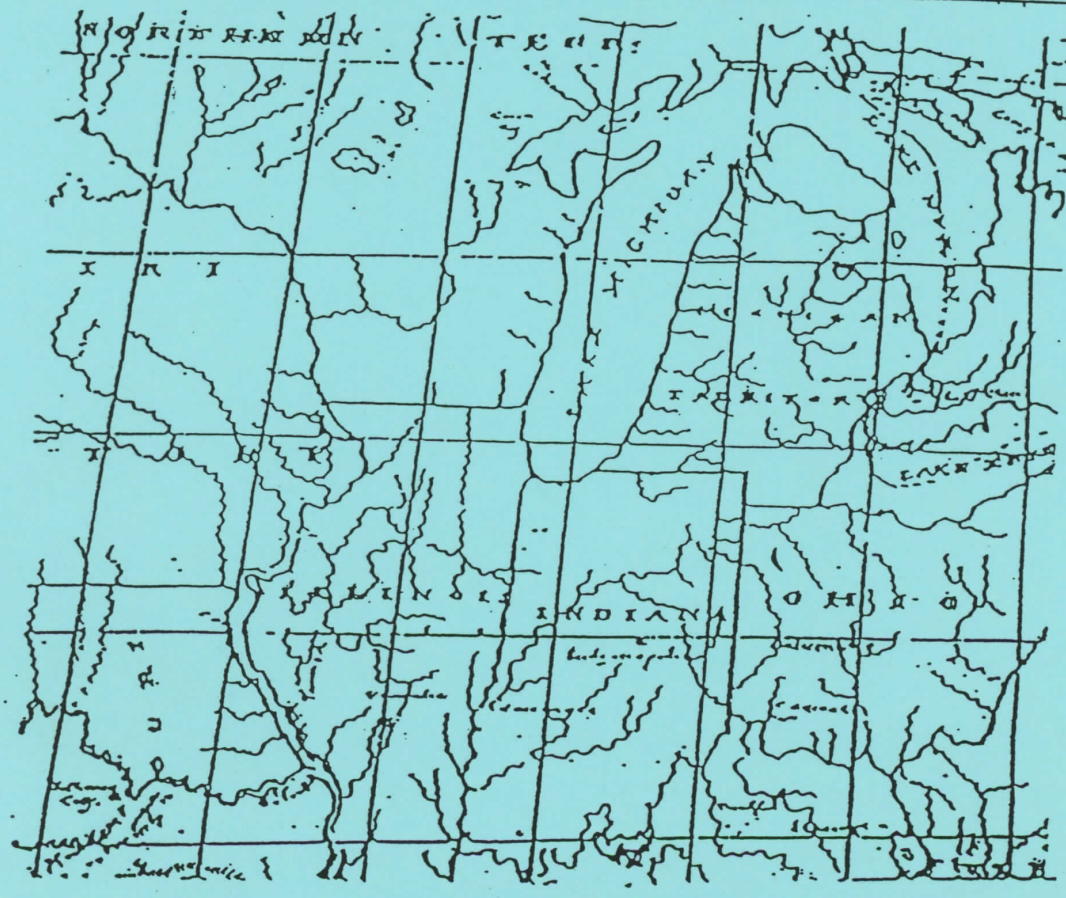
SSML NEWSLETTER



The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

The Center for the Study of
Midwestern Literature and Culture

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Newsletter

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Published in Spring, Summer, Fall

THE MIDWEST POETRY PRIZE
For the best poem read at the annual conference

1986	JOHN MATTHIAS
1987	SYLVIA WHEELER
1988	DIANE GARDEN
1989	MARIL NOWAK
1990	ALICE FRIMAN
1991	MARGOT LAGATTUTA
1992	DANIEL JAMES SUNDAHL
1993	SHARON KLANDER
1994	EDWARD HAWORTH HOEPPNER
1995	MARY ANN SAMYN

THE MIDWEST HERITAGE ESSAY PRIZE
for the best essay delivered at the annual conference

1986	PHILIP GREASLEY
1987	BRUCE BAKER
1988	MARCIA NOE
1989	KENNETH ROBB
1990	WILLIAM BARILLAS
1991	JAMES SEATON
1992	PAUL MILLER
1993	MICHAEL WENTWORTH
1994	RONALD F. DORR
1995	GUY SZUBERLA

THE MIDWEST FICTION PRIZE
for the best story read at the annual conference

1991	MARIA BRUNO
1992	ETTA ABRAHAMS
1993	LINDA RYEGUILD-FORSYTHE
1994	CHRISTOPHER STEIBER
1995	ROBERT NARVESON AND SAM LONGMIRE

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1996	JEAN STRANDNESS

THE MARK TWAIN AWARD

for distinguished contributions to Midwestern lliterature

1980	JACK CONROY
1981	FREDERICK MANFRED
1982	WRIGHT MORRIS
1983	JOHN VOELKER
1984	HARRIETTE ARNOW
1985	GWENDOLYN BROOKS
1986	JOHN KNOEPFLE
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1988	HARRY MARK PETRAKIS
1989	DUDLEY RANDALL
1990	JIM HARRISON
1991	DON ROBERTSON
1992	RAY BRADBURY
1993	MONA VAN DUYN
1994	WILLIAM H. GASS
1995	WILLIAM MAXWELL
1996	JEAN STRANDNESS

THE MIDAMERICA AWARD

for distinguished contributions to the study of Midwestern literature

1977	JOHN FLANAGAN
1978	RUSSEL NYE
1979	WALTER HAVIGHURST
1980	HARLAN HATCHER
1981	BERNARD DUFFY
1982	CLARENCE ANDREWS
1983	WALTER RIDEOUT
1984	DONALD PADY & ROBERT BEASECKER
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Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

Newsletter

Volume Twenty-Seven Spring, 1997
Number One

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The Mark Twain Award

Presented to Toni Morrison at

Michigan State University, April 2, 1997

David D. Anderson

Toni Morrison, distinguished novelist, native of Lorain, Ohio, and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature for 1993, lectured at Michigan State University on April 2, 1997. At that time she was presented with the Society's Mark Twain Award. The citation follows.

The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature was founded at Michigan State University in 1971 by a group of six members of the faculties of various universities. Its stated purpose at the time was "to encourage and assist the study of Midwestern Literature in whatever directions the insight, imagination, and curiosity of the members may lead." Twenty-six years and some 500 members later, the Society continues that course, and if we've learned nothing else in the past twenty-six years we've learned that the Midwest has produced, in its relatively brief history, a distinguished array of writers who not only explain the Midwest and its people to ourselves and to people everywhere, but, most importantly, do so in the living language that Mark Twain taught us is the only appropriate language of living literature. In the years beginning in 1980, the Society has recognized one of those writers annually, a living writer whose work continues in that tradition and who, at the same time, stands as surrogate for those writers we 've been unable to honor. Previous recipients have included Jack Conroy, Wright Morris, Harriette Arnow, Gwendolyn Brooks, Jim Harrison, Mona Van Duyn, and others, a distinguished array of writers who in microcosm represent the breadth and depth and richness of the writing that has come out of the Midwest to enrich the literary heritage of the nation and the world.

Tonight we're honoring another distinguished Midwestern writer, one who, perhaps more than any of the others, has taught us to know and appreciate a rich dimension of our heritage. Born in Lorain, Ohio, on February 18, 1931, she has become a truly distinguished editor, educator, and writer. Her six novels, The Bluest Eye (1970), Sula (1973), Song of Solomon (1977), Tar Baby (1981), Beloved (1987), and Jazz (1992), draw on the richness of her Midwestern youth and the wisdom of her maturity so compellingly that in 1993 she received the Nobel Prize in Literature.

On behalf of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, I'm very pleased tonight to present the Mark Twain Award for 1997 to Toni Morrison.

Of course, you can't get away with one presentation; until this afternoon I wasn't sure that this would be available, but the printer came through, and I'm pleased to give you the first copy, hot off the press, of the special Toni Morrison issue of Midwestern Miscellany, edited by Professor Marilyn Atlas of Ohio University, a distinguished scholar of Toni Morrison's works.

THE POETIC MOOD

By Louis J. Cantoni

It is:

thrusting yourself through the waters of a clear pool, much at home.
a walk through woods and fields without a gun, a rod, or a reason.
dining alone, regretting the sumptuousness, the loneliness.
the impertinence of pen and paper on your nightstand.
humming the Magnificat unaware all your days.
balloons at a party for three-year olds.
the sanctuary of a deserted cathedral.
a silver flute played softly, slowly.
the "why" and the "yes" of a child.
the playmates of your early years.
sparrows hopping city sidewalks.
a harp waiting for its player.
a crocus in a daydream.
a cat eyeing its prey.

It knows:

nothingness consumes itself.
quiet talks are psalms that last forever.
the I-thou of today is the eternity of tomorrow.
You must lie fallow for an eternity of days, then stir to life,
knowing that the rootlets of your soul are grasping life, transmuting it,
making time and thought one being, one essence.
love and courage are beyond human assessment.
commitment sustains the stars.
God is an inward thrust.

It becomes:

a glory of words.
a scotching of cares.
a fusion of experience.
reasoned truth's antinomy.
arresting the flow of words.
the affirmation of the word in.
a kaleidoscope of intelligibility.
St. Francis talking with little birds.
Walt Whitman loafing, inviting his soul.
Dylan Thomas adrift on seas of loneliness.
untrammeled joy at the blossoming of an idea.
rending the dark to find your self's clear center.
a tattoo of syllables that garb themselves with meaning.
a thrust from calm through clouds of excitement to a new serene.

A Brief History of

The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature*

David D. Anderson

The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature was founded at Michigan State University in 1971 by a group of six members of the faculties of various universities. Its stated purpose at the time was "to encourage and assist the study of Midwestern literature in whatever directions the insight, imagination, and curiosity of the members may lead." The first issue of the SSML Newsletter was published in March, 1971, and it has been published three times a year, Spring, Summer, anJ Fall, ever since.

The first conference, a one-day meeting, was held at Michigan State University in October, 1971; the first issue of Midwestern Miscellany, an annual collection of critical essays, was published in 1973, and the following year, 1974, the first issue of MidAmerica, the Yearbook of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, was published. The early issues contained critical essays; the Annual Bibliography of Midwestern Literature, containing listings of both original and secondary works was added in 1975, and later, the prize-winning essay, poem, and story presented at the Annual Conference have been included.

In 1976, the annual conference was extended to three days, marking the Sherwood Anderson Centenary, and the following year it reverted to one day. But in 1978 it again became a three-day conference with two major divisions: the Cultural History of the Midwest, in which critical and historical papers are presented, and the Midwest Poetry Festival, in which original creative works are presented. In 1977 the Society adopted an annual award, the MidAmerica Award, to be presented to an outstanding scholar of Midwestern Literature. Recipients have included John T. Flanagan, Russel B. Nye, Walter Havighurst, and others, and the award, presented at the Annual Conference, continues.

*This brief history was written to renew the Society's relationship with the Modern Language Association as an affiliated organization. It is included here for the benefit of new members,

In 1980 the second major annual award, the Mark Twain Award, was founded, to honor a distinguished Midwestern writer. Recipients have included Jack Conroy, Wright Morris, Harriette Arnow, Gwendolyn Brooks, and others, and the award, also presented at the Annual Conference, continues.

The Society also presents three other awards for The Midwest Poetry Festival Prize Poem, The Midwest Fiction Award Prize Story, and The Midwestern Heritage Prize Essay, for the best presentation in each class at the annual conference. These awards were founded by Gwendolyn Brooks distinguished poet, Nobel Prize nominee and recipient of the Society's Mark Twain Award in 1985.

Currently, the Society is sponsoring and supporting a major research project, the Dictionary of Midwestern Literature. Completion is expected by late 1997 and publication in 1998. Other future plans include the establishment of a Center for the Study of Midwestern Literature to support research and the establishment of a perpetual endowment fund.

The Society has been almost entirely self-supporting since its beginning. Michigan State University has provided space without cost to the organization, but all support work has been entirely voluntary on the part of the members, each of whom pays his or her expenses for all Society and other functions. Members' dues, currently $35.00 annually and $22.00 for students, as well as donations by members, support the Society's publications. The annual awards are funded by conference fees.

THE FARM 1912-1940

William Thomas

From early spring till late fall the farm was a place of purposeful activity. First there was the plowing, in March or April, then the disking and harrowing, and going over the ground with the drag and the roller also if it were hard and cloddy--it got that way from being plowed either too dry or too wet. But, wet spring or dry or with just enough moisture in the ground, plowing had to be done in time to prepare the seed bed for planting corn (maize) in May. Between May 10th and May 20th was thought to be the best time for planting. Henry Jacobs, who liked to be first with everything, sometimes planted as early as the last week in April, but my father thought that altogether too risky. Either a cold spell or a wet spell after so early planting would leave many grains ungerminated, and the missing hills would have to be replanted with a jabber after the rest had sprouted.

My father erred in the other direction, and was invariably late with his planting. To plant in June (though he nearly always did it) was bad practice, for late-planted corn would not have time to mature before the first fall frost might be expected. Fall plowing would have advanced the spring work, and everybody believed in it; nobody, however, got it done, for winter was too soon come.

Corn was planted by the "check" method--in hills, four grains to the hill, the hills and rows being three and a half feet apart both lengthwise and breadthwise. That was the distance between the planter wheels, which pressed the soil about the grains after they were dropped from the seed boxes of the planter. The box mechanism had a revolving plate with slots which allowed four grains at a time to go through. Valves in a shoe at ground level were opened and closed by a check lever. A wire with knots at forty-two-inch intervals, the wire being the length of the field and staked at each end, was necessary, the knots pulling the check lever as the planter progressed. A marker at the end of a bar, which was turned alternately to one side and the other of the planter as its direction was reversed, showed where to center each double row.

As soon as you could see the corn sprouts--twelve or fifteen days after planting if there had been rain--you might start to cultivate it, for the weeds had to be got out (pea-vines and bindweeds would be thick in many places) and the soil kept loose about the roots. A horse-

drawn
cornplow straddled one row, tilling half the space between that and the one on each side of it. A field was plowed first lengthwise and then crosswise, and the more times it could be got over the better chance there was for a good crop. For cultivation there was just about the month of June, as by early July the stalks would be too high for the plow to go over them. To plow all the corn three times was the least to be expected; to get over it four times was doing well; to get over it five times was too much to hope for.

July was a full month. First there was haymakng. After cutting, the hay had to have three or four days--longer if rain fell on it--to cure. Putting too-moist hay into the mow would cause it to heat and ignite spontaneously; that was a frequent cause of barn fires. The cured hay was loaded onto the flatbottom rack of a wagon with the hayloader, and unloaded in the barn by means of a hayfork which ran to the mow in a carriage on a track suspended from the ridgepole. The forkful of hay was pulled up by a rope through pulleys at the top and the floor of the barn, one of the horses hitched to its free end. I had to lead this horse. By the time the hay was all in the barn the wheat was ready to cut. Sometimes hay-harvest and wheat-harvest came together (my father believed firmly that hay must be fully ripe before cutting), and only caprices of weather might decide which was to wait on the other.

Wheat, oats, and rye were cut with a binder and shocked by hand. The binder was the most complicated and troublesome of farm implements. It was big and awkward--so big that on the road it had to be drawn at a right angle from the way it went in the field; This meant that when you got it into the field you removed the tongue and carriage wheels; put the tongue on what had been its side, making that the front; and cranked down the "bullwheel", a big wheel with lugs which now supported and by means of gear, drove its mechanism. The grain fell onto a continuous canvas web which, running on rollers, delivered it to the binding apparatus. The binder was always giving trouble--but it is still a marvel, this machine that discharges a bundle of grain bound with a tightly knotted piece of twine.

My father drove three horses to the binder, cutting around the field of standing grain, a slowly diminishing rectangle. The shockers followed, but never shocking as fast as it was cut and bound. That was hard work, at the hottest time of the year, and I disliked it more than any other. A dozen or fifteen bundles stood on their butts made a shock, which was covered with a cap sheaf. Everybody hoped it wouldn't rain before the whole field was in the shock; after that it didn't matter.

As soon as all the grain in the neighborhood was cut and shocked, threshing began. Threshing was fun. The farmers joined in going from one farm to another, each contributing during the season about as much help as he received from all the others. There were two threshing outfits, the Oehlers' and Jesse Almendinger's. Each consisted of a big J. I. Case grain separator and a Huber steam engine, which burned coal. It was a sight to see the outfit going along the road, the engine puffing smoke and rumbling, the separator hitched to it, and the

water tank on wheels, hitched to the separator If I didn't see it first, my mother would say "Here comes the threshing machine", and I would run to watch until it had gone past.

It was a happy event when it turned into our lane, and that was likely to be late in the afternoon, after finishing at the neighbors'. In our barnyard the threshing crew would "spot" the separator and the engine before night, so as to have everything ready for an early start next day. Perhaps they would come in and eat with us, and then go out again to sleep in the barn. And what excitement there was in the morning! Wagons and pitchers in the fields before the dew was off, other helpers hauling coal and water to the engine, and still others making last preparations about the barn and the granary. And then that great moment when the engine-man threw a lever in the cab of the puffing engine, the power-wheel began to turn, the long belt began its "swish-swish", the separator rattled faster and faster, and the first sheaves were thrown in!

After I outgrew the job of water-carrier. my task was to pitch bundles onto the wagons in the field. That was not a hard job, for there were always enough pitchers that each had time to rest between loads, and all a pitcher had to do was toss, with a three-tined fork, each bundle to the loader, who placed it with his own fork. He had an easy job, too for when he had got a full load he still had a ride to the barn, where three or four wagons ahead of him were waiting to unload into the machine.

The job nobody wanted was stacking the straw; for on the stack you couldn't help getting into your eyes, nose, and mouth and down the neck of your shirt a goodly part of the dust and chaff that came from the blower. The real work, however, was handling the grain, which flowed out of a spout at the side of the separator. Two-bushel canvas bags were used to hold it, and a bushel of wheat weighs sixty pounds. The full bags were tied and loaded onto a flat rack for hauling to the granery or directly to the grain elevator to sell.

At noon the engine-man blew the whistle and shut off the power, and the noise stopped. Dinner for threshers! The women had been getting it ready during all the forenoon. The men, three or four at a time, having washed their hands and faces in a washtubful of water outside the kitchen door, dried them on huck towels, and in turn combed their hair at a mirror hung on a tree, filed into the dining room. Chicken and noodles, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas or green beans. pickled beets, cabbage or cabbage slaw, gelatin salad, celery, pickles, hot biscuits with jam or jelly, apple and lemon pie, at least two kinds of cake, and a limitless quantity of strong coffee. No farm woman was going to have it said she served threshers a slim meal. They got supper, too, if the job lasted all afternoon.

Most years the Oehlers did the threshing, but the three brothers quarreled among themselves and couldn't be depended on. Jesse Almendinger reigned several years, then he lost some money, and his creditors took his outfit. Charley Oehler, the business survivor of the trio, tried a comeback. but was not successful. The next thresher was Ben Solomon. But he was out

of the neighborhood, and could not come until he had finished threshing in his own locality. So a group of six farmers bought a small grain separator and a gasoline tractor. Each contributed three hundred dollars toward the purchase, and they elected a secretary-treasurer. Each paid into the treasury the whole charge for threshing his grain at the standard price per bushel; every year, after all costs were paid, he received a dividend. The partners gratified their wives by decreeing at the outset there would be no threshers' evening meal. It was a most happy arrangement, indeed the best example of neighborhood cooperation I have ever known of; it endured in harmony and accord for a dozen years. Then the practice of threshing was superseded by combining, and the outfit was sold.

Between the finish of threshing, at the end of August, and the start of corn-cutting there were manure-hauling, weed-cutting, and fence-building. There was never a time when work wasn't waiting to be done. There was always more work on a farm than one man could do; at least part of the year a farmer had to have a hand.

Once a grammar-school test asked for definition of the word hand, and I knowing the question didn't mean one's bodily extremity, set down "a workman on the farm". In time I learned the proper answer to be the unit of measure, four inches, and the teacher and other pupils seemed to think mine funny. It wasn't really so at all, for every one of them was more familiar with the term "hired hand" than with any manner of measuring a horse; it was simply a pretense on their part that the colloquial usage was not to be recognized on the higher level of schoolroom instruction.

To a farmer, the word hand oftenest means the hired man. A farmer without grown sons kept a hired hand all year. That ensured help during harvest, and in the winter there were always feed-hauling and wood-cutting to do, as well as events like applebutter-making and two or three butcherings, so the hand was never idle. His wage, twenty to twenty-five--later thirty-five--dollars a month, with "keep", was, in large part savable, and he was quite as well off, on the whole, as his city cousin. He had to be a bachelor, but if he were young he might marry, and then, if he had proved himself capable and steady, rent a farm on the third share, make enough money to acquire machinery and rent on the half share, and that was the way to eventual ownership. Many a substantial farmer had made his start, with no assets other than determination and his muscle, as a hired man.

There were seasonal laborers too, and from 1912 to 1920 most of them came from southern Ohio. They were "hillicans" --though the term was never used in their presence. They came at the beginning of corn-cutting season, early or mid-September, four or five together walking along the road in their ill-fitting dark suits, each carrying a reed or fiberboard suitcase containing his work clothes in one hand and a corn-knife in the other. When they reached a farm with a big acreage of corn, they asked for a job and nearly always got it. Sometimes a farmer seeing them coming would go to meet them in order to assure having them first, and if he had beds enough in the house would hire the lot of them. If he had not, he would send one or

two on to a neighbor who he knew would hire them. Once started in a community, they went from one farm to another by prearrangement, for every farmer wanted his corn in the shock as soon as possible after it was ripe for cutting. They were always fast and able workers, and several of them would cut fifty or sixty or seventy acres within a few days.

The wage was eight or nine cents a shock, sometimes more, seldom less, depending on the growth of the corn and whether there had been windstorms to blow some of it down, but always that established by general consent at the beginning of a season. There was never much discussion about it and never haggling; the farmer paid what was asked even if he thought it high, for an additional penny was negligible compared to the benefit of having the corn cut when it was ready. If allowed to become overripe, the stalks and blades would be brittle and the fodder too dry to make good winter feed for cattle. A shock was usually "twelve hills square"; but in the three-year rotation winter wheat always followed the corn crop and was sown with a drill after corn-cutting, and some farmers thought it better to cut their corn "ten by fourteen"--the advantage being debatable, however. The substructure of a shock was the stalks of four hills, bent together and twisted, waist-high. This was a "gallus", and gallus-tying was a preliminary to the cutting.

The corn-cutters often stayed on or came back for corn-husking, which began any time after the wheat was sown. A fast corn-cutter was often not a fast husker, but there was no haste about the husking (the hillicans called it "shucking"), which might go on, if necessary, into the winter. So, for four or five cutters on a farm a few days, there would be one or two huskers staying five or six weeks. The wage for husking was seven or eight cents a bushel. My father depended on this source of labor, and the same men came back to him year after year. Newt Darling and Walter and Stanley Massie came many years to cut corn; Newt, Walter Massie, and Riley Dye came to husk. Walter worked a while by the month. I liked them. They were big, honest, stout-hearted men, shy and reticent at first acquaintance, but later more willing to engage in talk of an evening, telling me about coon-hunting with hounds over the hills of Lawrence County. Yet I never quite visualized how they lived there, for they were carefully vague about their houses, lands, occupations, and families; I only knew their way of life was very different from ours. Walter Massie and Riley Dye both sent us their photographs, made by a professional photographer in Ironton. Newt Darling, who impressed my father well, eventually took a bold step for a hill man: he accepted my father's offer to rent him the Boyd place (our other farm) and moved his family. They lived there four years. Then Newt decided he wanted, and secured, a larger farm.

Of the year-round hired hands, the most memorable was Willie Bens. He worked for a regular wage a few years, and after Newt Darling moved away took over the task of farming the Boyd place for my father, keeping bachelor's house there. At the age of fifteen, Willie, the oldest of four brothers, had run away (one heard of runaway boys as earlier generations heard and spoke of runaway slaves) and nothing was known of him till he was discovered working for a

farmer in another community, not far off, The trouble, to be sure, was not with Willie, but with his home life, and it is understandable that he should wish to escape his tyrannical father. With us he was a likable youth. strong and capable, and as a farm hand satisfactory, His avidity for girls was boundless, his discrimination nill. Eventually he established a connection with the older of two
sisters living in the fringe of our neighborhood, and their liaison went on for several years. Monday morning, as on every other morning, he was up early and ready for work--he knew he had to be or suffer my father's displeasure.

People thought surely Willie and the girl would marry, for her father must have known and condoned their intimacy; but Willie believed it foolish to alter a situation that gave him the benefits of marriage without its responsibilities. He sought larger horizons, and, while continuing to live with us, became a railway mail clerk, thus being enabled to make acquaintance with amiable women in Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, and Chicago. At last the girl at home married someone else, and so did Willie, and each had a big family.

Willie had the mechanical bent that finds high delight in tinkering with motors. Once there was towed into the barnyard a contraption that had some time been a motor car. It was a "runabout", with a single seat and open body, 1910 or 1911, and had its name, "Little", stamped on the ends of the cylindrical gasoline tank, strapped behind the seat. For weeks parts of it--even the motor block was taken out--lay strewn about the granary and corn cribs, while Willie labored in his spare time (that is, Sundays) to put it in running order. On a bright summer Sunday the Little chugged down the lane and onto the road. Willie had some trouble getting it back, but that is irrelevant. He had made it run. He polished its nickel and brass, and painted it red. Soon he traded it on another, and thus began his ownership of a series of motor cars, each of which underwent only slightly less thorough overhauling.

During the later 1920s the farm hands could make more money in the shops, and became industrial workers. The economic depression of the 1930s did not bring them back to the farm. A man of competence could never again accept the farm wage scale, and the dearth of labor hastened this century's agricultural revolution. In the place of the hired man came machines. After that the only men who worked on farms for wages were those who loved the soil or those who couldn't adapt to anything else. For a dozen years I was apart from the farm activity, and when I came back in 1940, the man of all work was George, who qualified on both counts. He was a willing fellow, good with livestock, but not long on wit, and he regarded money as a token to exchange for beer. With his assent, my mother withheld a portion of his wage every week until he had enough owing him to buy a suit of clothes or something else he needed; for he also went on the assumption that if one bottle of beer is good several bottles are better--and all George's experience to the contrary never convinced him this is a fallacy. Thinking to do better elsewhere, George left, and the last time I saw him he was just out of the hospital recovering from having mistaken a bottle of turpentine for a bottle of whisky. Some day

he will die like the hired man in Robert Frost's poem.

Before 1925 there were also men who worked "by the day", bachelors or widowers without families, living through the winter in some thriving household or in a hut or shack in a woods or the corner of a field. They were old or aging, decrepit and unfortunate men, who had lost or never accumulated property, whose eventual refuge must be the county home, the "poorhouse". If life offered them little, their requirements were few; they cooked pancakes and cornmeal mush, and the wages they received procured chewing tobacco and whisky. They were not all drunkards, but Byron Graham was, and of these day-laborers I remember him best. A "booze-fighter", my father called him. Sober, "By" was a good carpenter and a good ditch-digger and did farm carpentry and ditching for my father. He stayed with us one winter, and his indulgence was then restrained and decorous. He could play both violin and piano "by ear", and of an evening often entertained us with one or the other. A vivid snapshot of memory is of By's broad back and shoulders as he sat at the piano, his huge hands loitering over the keys. Once he let me accompany him on the piano while he played his fiddle, and said I could soon learn to second, but I never did. Later By lived in a little building on the Redd farm. One night it burned, probably because of By's negligence, but he got out in his underwear, unhurt. After that he reappeared in the neighborhood at intervals, when drunk. One Sunday morning in the summer of 1917, By and some companions, prolonging a Saturday-night carouse, went swimming in the Scioto, and By drowned. "'Tis a vile thing to die, my gracious lord, When men are unprepared and look not for it."

Before this I had been encouraged to look long and well at the sot, as object lesson. Any summer day you might see one of those unfortunate men staggering from one edge of the road to the other, maybe crossing the ditch to lean against a telephone pole or a fence post and there to drink from the bottle he carried. Sometimes he couldn't go farther, and would recline in stupor till time and the chill of evening restored his senses. One day I reported to my father that a man was asleep by our fence corner. He, perhaps recollecting the time he found a corpse, went to look; seeing this man only drunk, he told me to look well. "That," he said, "is what booze does."

Drunkenness was either commoner than now or oftener seen and heard about. The village had its several sots, and two saloons. I never knew what the saloons were like inside, for because of Mail Pouch tobacco posters and grime on the windows, you couldn't see more than ten or fifteen feet of the way in the daytime, and I never got there at night. Murray Wheeler's was on a corner, and had a side window a tall man might have looked through; I could stretch enough from the curb to see a pair of snowshoes high on the opposite wall, and tobacco smoke enveloping them in a blue haze. I thought in spite of what anybody said that it must be a jolly, friendly place, and wished I could really see into it. Yet I knew that on a Saturday afternoon or night a man might be thrown out of this saloon, or the other, possibly even lodged in the village jail. On a Saturday afternoon I saw a man put out of the other saloon, Mike Rider's, by the

bartender. He was a small man and berated the big bartender for propelling him forcibly out the door. "You--you--young man!." he shouted. The bartender looked quite old to me, thirty-five or even going on forty; he wiped his hands on his apron, went back in, and closed the door. His victim lurched into a stairway and, leaning there, shouted and mumbled his drunken tirade to the world.

Till I started to high school my visits to town were oftenest in the company of my parents, who went in the buggy on Saturdays to do their "trading"--that is, to exchange the week's gatherings of eggs for groceries and give or take the shortage or overage in money. From these weekly visits I learned slowly about the larger life; but I had more striking hints of it from the tent shows that came in the summer, some of which, like Uncle Tom's Cabin, by machinations that must have been extraordinary, I managed to see. The last performance of the week's repertory was a "white slave" play; the significance of the adjective evaded me, and I had to wait years for answers to my questions, so alien to that beneficent world my parents lived in as if there were no other.

Peddlers came walking along the road with big fiberboard cases held on their backs by packstraps, which when opened exhibited pins, needles, thread, hairpins, combs, mirrors, shoelaces, and a dozen other household necessities. My mother always bought something from a peddler even if she didn't want it; she thought it would have been a pity for him to carry that heavy pack all the way up the lane for nothing. At rare intervals a tramp appeared at the kitchen door and asked for food, and it was given him. If it were late in the day, he might ask to sleep in the barn. My father was fond of recalling the time when he, having worked in the field till dusk, went into the haymow after dark and nearly put his fork into a big Negro. The Negro, thoroughly frightened, shrieked: "Don't stick me, boss! Don't stick me! I'll go!" My father convinced him no injury was intended and let him stay.

But even in my earliest childhood a walking peddler was an anachronism, and tramps and drunks disappeared from country roads when motor cars came onto them. When the corn ripens in September no hillicans come nowadays, the wheat turns golden under the July sun but never stands in the shock, and the threshing outfit no longer rumbles into the lane in the August dusk. The time is past when a farmer prided himself on the straightness of his furrow and the amount of handwork he could do, and you might visit a hundred farms without finding a horse. Corn is harvested by means of a self-propelled picker and sheller; hay is cut earlier and greener and baled in the field; wheat, oats, and other small grains are headed and threshed in the field in one operation by a combine. The business of farming is based on mechanical power.

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Through Midwestern Eyes: Some Images of the Pacific and Asia in Childrens's Books*

Patricia A. Anderson

Growing up in the Midwest, before and during World War II, I saw many pictures of Asia, pictures in newspapers and magazines, in newsreels and movies, but my most vivid image of Asia, one I remembered for many years, came from a book I read. Frances Burnett's The Secret Garden (1910) may have had an English setting, but its heroine, Mary Lennox, was in England because her parents had died of cholera in far-away India. The author's description was so vivid that it was still in my mind many years later when my husband and I lived in Pakistan, travelled in India, and faithfully got cholera shots.

What images remain in a child's mind from the books that he or she has read? No one except that child and the later adult can really know. The early writers for children were not going to take chances, however, and most of the early children's books were full of moral instruction.

But as science and technology made travel easier, American writers began to create books about other lands for America's children. This began slowly in the 19th century, then speeded up, and continues to this day.

Books about Asia and the Pacific were especially popular during the first half of this century. Looking at lists of the books chosen to receive the Newberry Medal, an award started in 1922 to honor an author for the most distinguished contribution to American Literature for children, one finds many books about Asia and the Pacific. I'll name only a few of them: Shen of the Sea by Arthur Chrisman won the Medal in 1926; Gay-Neck by Dhan Mukerji, set in India, in 1928; The Cat Who Went to Heaven, set in Japan, by Elizabeth Coatsworth, in 1931; Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze with a Chinese setting, by Elizabeth Foreman, in 1933; and Call it Courage, with an island setting, by Armstrong Sperry, won in 1941. Many runners-up or Honor Books also had Asian or Pacific settings.

But this study is titled Through Midwestern Eyes, and I'm going to focus on three Midwestern writers who wrote about Asia and the Pacific. Why? Why Midwestern? Do Midwesterners see the world differently than, say, New Yorkers or Southerners? One might think so if one believes the media. Only last October (Oct. 15, 1996) the New York Times contained an article headed "Asterix, France's Superman and Ego" in which Albert Uderzo, the creator of the French comic strip character Asterix, is quoted explaining why he thinks Asterix has never been published in the United States. He says: "I think the problem is cultural. An American in the Midwest has probably never heard of France, let alone the Gauls." Well! Enough said, and now

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I'd like to focus on three Midwestern writers who wrote books for children.

The first writer is Lucy Fitch Perkins, born in 1865 in Indiana, who began her very popular Twins Series for children ages eight to ten in 1911 with The Dutch Twins and went on to write and illustrate twenty-five others, including The Japanese Twins (1912), The Filipino Twins (1923), and The Chinese Twins (1935). She wrote, by the way, The French Twins in 1918, thus proving that at least one Midwesterner had heard of France!

Educated at home and in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Perkins wanted to be an artist, and at eighteen she started to attend the Museum of Fine Arts School in Boston. Later she taught from 1887- 1891 at the art school at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. In 1891 she married Dwight Perkins, a Chicago architect, whom she had met in Boston. and the couple returned to Chicago to live.

In Chicago Perkins was an illustrator for the Prang Educational Company from 1893-1903. Perhaps the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 helped to create her interest in other places, but she says in The Junior Book of Authors (1934) that a publisher friend suggested that she write and that she was "deeply impressed with two ideas....One was the necessity for mutual respect and understanding between people of different nationalities if we are ever to live in peace"....The other idea was to present "a really big theme" for children in "a way that holds their interest and engages their sympathies." Her series was the earliest to present such information for young children.

She writes, too, in this brief biographical sketch, of a visit to Ellis Island and a visit to a Chicago school, a school attended by children of twenty-seven different nationalities. Both experiences stirred her ambition to write what she did.

In her Twins Series Perkins told quite realistic stories and presented information about the world's children, something that this Midwesterner can attest to since most of the books could be found at the public library in the Ohio town in which I grew up. I delighted in them and longed to travel. When I say realistic stories, I must qualify the word realistic; they were rosy stories with happy endings.

The Japanese Twins was Perkine's second in her series. In Children's Literature in the Elementary School, 3rd edition (1976), Charlotte S. Huck comments that "Unfortunately, stereotyped characters prevailed." (p. 77) This is certainly true, but the book offered a calm, comforting picture of upper class Japanese life as it described meal times, birthdays, schools, and other things of interest to children. From a 1990s viewpoint, however, the picture is too comforting. This is from the introduction:

> Away, away, ever so far away, near the western shores of the Ocean of Peace, lie the Happy Islands, the Paradise of Children.
>
> Some people call this ocean the "Pacific" and they call the Happy Islands "Japan," but the meaning is just the same. Those are only their grown-up names, that you find

them by on the map, in the geography.

They are truly Happy Islands, for the sun shines There so brightly that all the people go about with pleasant, smiling faces, and the children play out of doors the whole year through without quarreling. And they are never, never spanked! Of course, the reason for that is that they are so good they never, never need it! Or maybe their fathers and mothers do not believe in spanking.

I have even been told--though I don't know whether to think it's true or not--that Japanese parents believe more in sugar-plums than in punishments to make children good!

Anyway, the children there are very good indeed. (p. 3)

There are also discomforting moments for today's reader when Perkins writes of the place of boys and girls, men and women, in Japanese society. Taro, the boy, and Take, the girl, are shown the sword of their grandfather, a Samurai, and their father explains that one day Taro will received this badge of honor and "should keep his life clean and shining like the sword. And he must always do what is best for Japan, whether it is best for him or not." (p. 34)." Then later Take asks, "Father, am I not a child of the Samurai, too?" (p. 37) "Yes, my daughter," her Father answered, "but you are a girl. It is not your fault, litt1e one," he added kindly. "We cannot all be boys, of course. But to the keeping of the Sons is given the honor of the Family. It is a great trust."

When the father tells Take that she must mind her elders and her brothers, "Japanese girls must always mind their brothers!" (p. 38), and will only have her turn when she marries and has a daughter-in-law, Take sighs and says, "It's a very long time to wait..." (p. 38)

I don't remember these aspects of the book disturbing me as a child, probably because there were so many other customs described. I remember it as a happy book about interesting people.

The Filipino Twins (1923) was a more realistic story and the twins were from a peasant family rather than an upper class family Here, too, Perkins begins with the setting. She writes:

> This is a picture of the little farm-house where the Filipino Twins live. It stands right on the shore of Manila Bay. A river runs by it and empties itself into the bay. There are fish and turtles and crabs in the river. There are more and bigger fish in the bay. (p. 3)

Perkins uses black and white line drawings and after more description of the setting, she introduces the twins Ramon and Rita and their parents and then the animals, Dingo the dog, the caraboo, the pigs, the goats, and finally the ducks. The book is esentially the story of one day when the family went fishing together, a typhoon hits, and after an all-night struggle, the family survives and are picked up in Manila Bay. They are shown to be a loving, optimistic family, with parents who are protective and loving and children who are obedient and hopeful.

Someday I hope to be able to read The Chinese Twins, which Perkins wrote in 1935. It is not part of my own collection, the used book dealers I know did not have it available, and I didn't have time enough to ask the university library to try to borrow it. I read The Filipino

at the University of Minnesota Library when my husband and I were there last November. Children's books tend to wear out or be discarded by libraries and schools. Some of Perkin's books were reprinted in the 1960s, but I don't find those either.

Years ago, in a second-hand book store, we ran across a book by another Midwesterner, Eunice Tietjens. It was titled China, but one didn't know that by the book's cover or even the main title page. Those read "Burton Holmes Travel Stories." It was published in 1930 by the Wheeler Publishing Company in Chicago, edited by William Wheeler and Burton Holmes, the latter described as "world traveler and lecturer." Holmes's photographs served as the illustrations. There was a second title page, however, which contained the information that Tietjens had written China with the collaboration of Louise Strong Hammond.

We bought the book chiefly because Tietjens had been associated with the Chicago literary group which flourished during what came to be called the Chicago Renaissance. This group included such writers as Sherwood Anderson, Floyd Dell, George Cram Cook, and Harriet Monroe, the founder of Poetry magazine. Tietjens wrote poetry and was associated with the magazine throughout her life. But in between she travelled, saw the world, and wrote from her experiences.

Born in Chicago in 1884, Eunice Tietjens first visited Europe when she was about fourteen, after her father's death. She studied in Germany and in France. In 1904 she married Paul Tietjens, with whom she had two children, one of whom died in childhood. The couple later divorced and in 1916, she and her mother visited China where her sister Louise was a missionary. This Chinese experience provided material for her book Profiles from China (1917), described as sketches in free verse of people and things seen in the interior and also for an anthology, Poetry of the Orient (1928).

Tietjens led a busy life which included being a war correspondent in France in 1917-1918, and then she remarried, this time to playwright Cloyd Head, with whom she had two children, one dying in infancy. Travelling continued and for a while the couple and their child lived in North Africa and then in Tahiti, staying for ten months on the island of Moorea. Here she wrote her book Boy of the South Seas (1931) which became a Newbery runner-up in 1932. Unfortunately I haven't located a copy to read and discuss here.

China, however, is an instructional, well-written book for children, one perhaps meant for ten to fourteen-year-olds. The contents include such topics as "The Geography of China," "Tea", "The Charm of Pagodas," "Games, Rhymes and Stories". There are 408 pages. The book was designed to be a supplementary textbook, but Tietjens makes good use of her own interests and experiences and the book is much more than dry facts. For example, she begins a chapter on work and workers in this way:

> China has many voices, many strange sounds. Some of them are...beautiful, but

many of them are sad with a kind of patient sorrow...(p. 100).

She goes on to describe the hard work of the coolies with great sympathy, saying that "The city of Canton alone wears out countless lives," (p. 101), and "These men are killing themselves little by little and they know it." (p. 101)

At the beginning of the book Tietjens lets the reader know how she feels about other cultures when she points out unusual customs but writes, "But customs, after all, are only superficial. The more a man travels, the more he becomes convinced that in the deeper things of life,
we are all remarkably alike." (p. 10)

American children who read this book in the 1930s could only feel a great interest in China and her people, and at the end of the book Tietjens concludes that "There is much of wisdom and of beauty that we may receive from China....It would be foolish to think that we can only give... .We hope rather that East and West will together choose what is best from both storehouses." (p. 408)

The third Midwestern author comes by way of the Netherlands. When The House of Sixty Fathers was published in 1956, its author Meinert De Jong was praised for creating a memorable character, the Chinese boy Tien Pao, who, having been separated from his family during the Japanese invasion of China, had managed to survive through great courage and the help of Chinese guerrillas and American airmen (the 60 fathers). He and the family pig, a comforting companion during the long ordeal, are finally reunited with his family at the end of the novel.

De Jong, like so many other Midwesterners, had always been a traveler. Born in the Netherlands in 1906, his family immigrated to America when he was eight years old, settling in western Michigan. He began to write during the depression years of the 1930s after trying to support himself in a variety of ways: grave digging, teaching, poultry farming. His first children's book The Big Goose and the Little White Duck was based upon the latter experience.

The House of Sixty Fathers, which was a Newbery Honor Book in 1957 and won the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1962, was based upon De Jong's experiences in World War II when he served with the Chinese-American Composite Wing of the Fourteenth Air Force in the Chungking area of China.

When the Japanese attack Tien Pao's village, the family escapes by boarding a drifting sampan. Tien Pao with his father, mother, and baby sister along with the family pig and a dishpan holding three ducklings struggled to reach safety, going up many rivers, pushing inland and away from the invaders.

De Jong shows loving Chinese parents. Tien Pao's mother pushes him to the floor of the sampan when he tried to take the oars. "'No! 'she'd whispered fiercely. 'children must live.'"

Standing with the oars he might be a target.

As in many Midwestern works, rivers are important in De Jong's novel. Rivers are paths of escape from the Japanese invaders, and later they are the racing and raging waters, the force, the current which carries Tien Pao and his pig and the ducklings away from his parents, away from the river town where they'd hope to take up a new life. But it is the river, too, which helps the boy find his family again. Throughout his separation he looks for the river. He would follow it to find his family. He asks his pig, "Maybe you know where the river is....Maybe you can smell it. The people are running and the sky is on fire and I don't know anything any more." (p. 108)

Tien Pao does know that he must hide from the Japanese soldiers. When his sampan had reached a shore, he had hidden in caves, climbed into the mountains, and helped a wounded American airman. The two were finally found by Chinese guerrillas who carried away the American to nurse him and then led Tien Pao on the way back to the town where he'd last been with his parents. From this point he has no river to follow. He thinks that "The railroad track had to be his guide, it was the only thing to give him some sense of direction. He would have to follow it, the way he had followed the river." (123) In many Midwestern novels, railroads are often points of departure; here the railroad is the point of return, and at the novel's end he is reunited with his family. His mother offers the hope that "there will be no more shooting... There will come a day when the family of Tien will go back to their little village and live in peace" (p. 189)

De Jong has written an exciting story to entertain children, but in the adventures of Tien Pao he provided also strong character education, moral education you might call it. Courage is stressed, but honesty, love of family, respect, and compassion and faith are also there for the reader.

These three Midwestern writers provided images of Asia for the children who read their books. From this brief look at some of the things they said, I believe that they provided sympathic images. Lucy Fitch Perkins's Twins books broadened the world for American children. Hers was multicultural education at its earliest for the very youngest Americans, and like Tietjens and De Jong, she hoped to foster world understanding and peace. Not bad goals for three Midwesterners. Not bad at all.

Mark Twain, Reticent Anti-Imperialist

David D. Anderson

Mark Twain's literary reputation and his public persona--and, one might argue, his private self-image as well--were and remain firmly rooted in the Middle Mississippi Valley of his youth, the area that he left permanently for far places at the age of 21 in July 1861. Clearly his identity results from the fact that his most popular, most durable, and most critically accepted works, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876), Life on the Mississippi (1883), and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885) are firmly rooted in the place and time of his youth, as are the people and the language he knew then and gave in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the new American literature emerging in and from that region. Whether Mark Twain was a Midwestern, a Western, or Southern writer--and all three regions can, I think, rightly claim him, even as the East can claim, as Fred Lewis Pattee insisted, that that region made him as a writer--the substance of his work has long-reaching effects in the American literature of this century and the works of this century's major novelists--Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Saul Bellow, and even the most recent Midwestern American Nobelist, Toni Morrison. Mark Twain is perhaps the most important and the most authentic if not the greatest of American writers of his age and ours.

But lost in the dimensions of Mark Twain's accomplishment, his reputation--or reputations--as a humorist and lecturer as well as a serious writer, and the popular and academic myths that have grown out of his accomplishment and his reputation is one important fact: by 1861 he had left the region of his work, with his reputation and his myth still ahead of him; by early 1867 he had become an Easterner; and, after the publication of The Innocents Abroad in 1869, he spent a total of 13 years--about one-third of his remaining years--abroad, including extensive stays in England, where he truly enjoyed a major reputation and following, as well as in Vienna and elsewhere on the continent, culminating in nearly two years in Florence, Italy, where his beloved Livy died in June 1904. Perhaps his proudest moment came on June 28, 1907, in the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford, where that university awarded him the degree of Doctor of Letters.

For more than half of his life--certainly beginning with his trip to what were then known on the mainland as the Sandwich Islands--including impressive moments not far from this spot*--in March through August, 1866, Mark Twain was, in his personal life and interests, if not in his major work, truly an internationalist and, during much if not most of those years, truly an Anglophile as well, even after the devastating English reception of A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court in 1889 and a consequent loss in sales if not in personal popularity in England for several years. His international interests reached their apogee in the

*Honolulu, Hawaii, where this paper was presented.

months between August 1895 and July 1896, the year of his around-the-world lecture tour which resulted in the publication of Following the Equator in 1897.

That volume is rightly defined as the last of Mark Twain's great travel books, and in it there are echoes of Roughing It (1872), Life on the Mississippi (1883), and The Innocents Abroad (1869) in his concern for the gaudy, the spectacular, the colorful, the tall tales and grotesque sketches, the occasional diatribes--especially delightful is his acid assault on those who built up his anticipation of the Taj Mahal and his consequent inevitable and massive disappointment. But in the earlier works dealing with his American travels, there is a decided lack of sympathy for the American Indians he encounters, no matter how desperate their conditions. In Following the Equator, however, a Twain more sympathetic to aboriginal inhabitants and more hostile to the whites who exploit them emerges: in Queensland, Australia, he equates the recruiting of Kanaka field workers as slavery and denounces it bitterly; his most barbed satire is directed at a white man who poisons a group of aborigines with arsenic in a pudding; he sympathizes with the natives in Tasmania in their war with white settlers, and he sympathizes, too, with the Maoris in New Zealand; he comments that India is "the most extraordinary country that the sun visits on its rounds, he records a new and surprising observation that "Nearly all black and brown skins are beautiful, but a beautiful white skin is rare;" he denounces the Christian missionaries in China, as he was to do in essays and in The Mysterious Stranger, which he began in Vienna in 1897 and added to in 1900, and which was published with others of his last works after his death. Most important in the light of his future attitude is his defense of the South African Boers, already the target of British attacks on their reputation.

What Mark Twain had encountered in those far-off corners of the globe was another manifestation of both the slavery he had denounced so bitterly in Huckleberry Finn and the dehumanization of the native Americans that he accepted as a matter of course, but in so much of the world, he noted that human exploitation had become institutionalized and sanctified as an instrument of European national policy. He had begun to notice, although he couldn't name it yet, the imperialism that marked much European foreign policy and was going to infect American policy as well at the end of the nineteenth century--Twain's century, as he commented on a number of occasions--and the beginning of the twentieth. These were the years of the Boer War or the South African War of 1899-1902, Britain's successful conquest of the Dutch settlers in South Africa, the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the ensuing Philippine Insurrection or Philippine War of 1899-1902, and the Boxer Rebellion against Westerners in China of 1899-1900.

These were the years, too, of some of Mark Twain's most bitter work--"The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" (pub. 1900), What Is Man? (pub. 1906), The Mysterious Stranger (pub. 1916), the latter two of which Mark Twain was reluctant to have published in his lifetime, and these were the years, too, of his deeply-felt, albeit at times oddly reticent anti-imperialism, a

reticence, however, punctured at infrequent moments by statements that were both public and barbed.

Perhaps handicapped or inhibited by his awareness that, as he said in 1900, "I have been forced by fate to adopt fiction as a medium of truth," Mark Twain's early anti-imperialism is most evident in his letters to friends--William Dean Howells, Joseph H. Twitchell, and Henry Huttleston Rogers. In a note written to himself in England on that country's ultimatum to the Boers and the subsequent outbreak of the Boer War, he was blunt:

> London, 3.07 P.M., Wednesday, October 11, 1899. The time is up! Without a doubt the first shot in the war is being fired today in South Africa at this moment. Some man had to be the first to fall; he has fallen. Whose heart is broken by this murder? For, be he Boer or be he Briton, it is murder, & England committed it by the hand of Chamberlain & the cabinet, the lackeys of Cecil Rhodes & his Forty thieves, the South African Company (1095).

Later, in a letter to William Dean Howells he called the South African War a "sordid and criminal war" and said that every day he wrote articles denouncing it in his head. Nevertheless, he concluded with his Anglophilia and his reticence still intact:

> But I have to stop with that. Even if wrong--& she is wrong--England must be upheld. He is an enemy of the human race who shall speak against her now. Why was the human race created? or at least why wasn't something creditable created in place of it?.. .I talk the war with both sides--always waiting until the other man introduces the topic. Then I say, "My head is with the Briton, but my heart & such rags of morals as I have are with the Boer--now we will talk, unembarrassed and without prejudice." And so we discuss & have no trouble.
>
> I notice that God is on both sides in this war; thus history repeats itself. But I am the only person who has noticed this; everybody here thinks He is playing the game for this side and for this side only (1096-97).

Nevertheless, one article, or, more properly, a letter critical of British imperialist policy was written, to C. Moberly Bell, editor of the London Times. In it he concluded with the somber statement that "The future is blacker than has been any future which any person now living has tried to peer into"(15). But, although Mark Twain appended a letter requesting anonymity if it were published, telling Bell, "Don't give me away, whether you print it or not. But I think you ought to print it and get up a squabble, for the weather is just suitable" (1097), neither anonymous letter nor appended note were ever mailed, and they were left for Mark Twain's biographers and critics to speculate about.

In January 1900, in a letter to his friend Joseph Twitchell he took notice at the same time of the post Spanish-American War controversy over the future of the Philippines, which, it appeared, were to become part of a new American empire in the Pacific:

Dear Joe:

Apparently we are not proposing to set the Filipinos free & give their islands to them & apparently we are not proposing to hang the priests & confiscate their property. If these things are so the war out there has no interest for me (1095).

But the fate of the Filipinos could not be dismissed so easily. As the Clemens family sailed for New York on the Minnehaha on October 6, 1900, he gave an interview to the New York World, which was printed in that paper on October 14, 1900, the day before he landed in New York. In it, although he declared that he was "at the disadvantage of not knowing whether our people are for or against spreading themselves over the face of the globe" (17, 59), nevertheless he disagreed strongly with current western foreign adventures.

....We have no more business in China than in any other country that is not ours. There is the case of the Philippines....I thought we should act as their protector--not try to get them under our heel. We were to relieve them from Spanish tyranny to enable them to set up a government of their own, and we were to stand by and see that it got a fair trial....a government that represented the feeling of the majority of the Filipinos, a government according to Filipino ideas. That would have been a worthy mission for the United States. But now--why, we have got into a mess... (59).

The mess was, of course, what was then known as the Philippine Insurrection, now, perhaps, more properly, the Philippine-American War, which went on between 1899 and 1902. The peace treaty between Spain and the United States on April 11, 1899, had transferred ownership of the Philippines to the United States, resulting in the insurrection led by Emilio Aguinaldo, casualties of all sorts totaling perhaps 10,000 American and 1,000,000 Filipino, Aguinaldo's capture by General Frederick Funston in 1901, the subsequent petering out of the war, and a more or less major issue of debate in American politics for nearly forty years. But on his arrival in New York on October 15, 1900, Mark Twain declared simply, "I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land" (17). With this, Mark Twain placed himself firmly on the side of many American intellectuals and liberals, including William Jennings Bryan, as well as his fellow Midwestern humorists, Eugene Field, George Ade, and Finley Peter Dunne. He promptly became Vice President of the Anti- Imperialist League.

His views received a good deal of popular and intellectual support--America was neither comfortable nor happy in an imperialist role--but his views on Christian missions and missionaries were made public in such essays as "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," which appeared in the North American Review in February 1901. In that essay he attacked the Western powers for assaulting less fortunate peoples and countries with the "banner of the Prince of Peace in one hand and its loot-basket and its butcher-knife in the other." Consequently, he was bitterly attacked in the missionary press, to which he responded with "To My Missionary Critics." But throughout Mark Twain's anti-missionary period and its repercussions, the imperialist press of William Randolph Hearst and others was almost totally

silent.

Most telling during the months after his return from Europe was the New Year's message that he wrote on November 27, 1900, for publication in the New York Herald on December 30, 1900. Called "A Greeting from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century," as "taken down in short hand by
Mark Twain" (22), it was later reprinted and distributed by the AntiImperialist League. In the note, he wrote:

> I bring you the stately nation named Christendom, returning, bedraggled, besmirched, and dishonored, from pirate raids in Kiao-Chou, Manchuria, South Africa, and the Philippines, with her soul full of meanness, her pocket full of boodle, and her mouth full of pure hypocrisies. Give her soap and towel, but hide the looking-glass(1127, 23, 51).

Although he had returned to a great deal of public and private recognition, Mark Twain's stay in America was cut short. His daughter Suzy had died in 1896, and neither his daughter Jean nor his wife Livy were in good health, so in 1903 the family went to Florence to live, where Livy died in June 1904. Mark Twain's bitterness continued. Its focus became both more personal and immediate and more directed, but he did not ignore policies he continued to see as not merely misguided but evil. In an address at the Berkeley Lyceum he was particularly and typically outrageous as he concluded a speech on the Boxer Rebellion:

> Why should not China be free from the foreigners who are only making trouble on her soil?.. .We do not allow Chinamen to come here, and I say in all seriousness, that it would be a graceful thing to let China decide who shall go there.
> ...The Boxer is a patriot....I wish him success. We drive the Chinaman out of our country; the Boxer believes in driving us out of his country. I am a Boxer, too, on those terms (1121).

Later he introduced young Winston Churchill,fresh from his journalistic exploits in South Africa, to a New York audience as our "kin in sin" (50) in an enterprise which brought both England and the United States the riches of the East" in firecrackers and tea." But,during those months he did not neglect the American outrage in the Philippines, in such essays as "The Philippine Incident," "The United States of Lyncherdom," and "A Defense of General Funston," a vicious satirical attack on the man who captured Emilio Aguinaldo by trickery. But with Livy's death, his own aging, his pondering the question without an answer: "Would you do it again if you had the chance?" (1256), his anti-imperialism had largely run its course. Perhaps its death blow was delivered on June 26, 1907, in the splendid pageantry that made him a Doctor of Letters (Oxonian). He died quietly three years later.

One footnote remains, perhaps suggesting a further dimension of his reticence that very nearly was not. In the Atlantic Monthly for April 1992 appears a remarkable essay called "Mark

Twain and American Imperialism." In it is included a reconstructed review essay by Mark Twain entitled "Thirty Thousand Killed a Million," reconstructed from fragments in the library at Berkeley of what appeared to be a highly favorable but never printed review of Edwin Widman's biography Aguinaldo. As reconstructed by Jim Zwick, it appears that Mark Twain had bowlderized his own review essay in order to put together "A Defense of General Funston." The latter is outrageous; the review essay, had it been published, would have been brilliant and devastating.

Michigan State University

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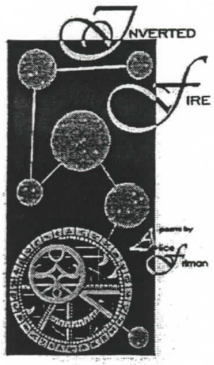

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>
> "There were people everywhere, thousands, millions of people wanting their stories told. They didn't want it glossed over, made glamorous. That, in the end, only hurt and made life more difficult.
>
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Ray Lewis White is Distinguished Professor of English at Illinois State University. He is Editor of the Norton Critical Edition of *Winesburg, Ohio* and has written many books about Sherwood Anderson. He also has published extensively on the American short story and on an array of modern and contemporary writers.

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