

# The SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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FALL 2007

Libertarian Futurist Society  
Prometheus Hall of Fame Award  
*It Can't Happen Here*  
Author: Sinclair Lewis  
2007 World Science Fiction Convention,  
Yokohama, Japan

*Detail of plaque from the Libertarian Futurist Society*

## ***IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE* WINS LIBERTARIAN FUTURIST AWARD**

SALLY E. PARRY  
FOR THE SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY

The Sinclair Lewis Society has been informed that the Libertarian Futurist Society (LFS) voted the Sinclair Lewis novel *It Can't Happen Here* as a winner of this year's Prometheus Hall of Fame Award. This award is given to works that reflect the values of individual liberty and show the dangers of oppression. The novel *It Can't Happen Here* deserves this award as a cautionary warning of the rise of fascism.

Fred C. Moulton, LFS Programming Coordinator, writes that this award year was unusual in that there was a tie. The other work receiving an award was *True Names*, by Vernor Vinge.

The award was publicly announced at an award ceremony at the World Science Fiction Convention in Yokohama, Japan, on August 31. An acceptance statement from the Sinclair Lewis Society was read at the awards ceremony.

The LFS gives two awards: the Prometheus Best Novel Award for novels published in the past year and the Prometheus

## **SINCLAIR LEWIS AND IDA K. COMPTON CONFERENCE**

“‘The River Is a Strong Brown God’ — Iconic Places and Characters in 20th-Century American Cultures” was the second conference to be held in honor of Sinclair Lewis’s contributions to Midwest and American culture and letters and in celebration of his friendship with Ida K. Compton. The conference was held October 18–19, 2007, in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and sponsored by the College of Fine Arts and Humanities at St. Cloud State University.

There were sessions on icons, national myths, colonization/immigration, and rivers, as well as a session on Sinclair Lewis. The session on Sinclair Lewis was comprised of three papers. “Autodidacts and Scholars: Education in Sinclair Lewis’s Writing” by Sally E. Parry of Illinois State University focused on the tension in Lewis’s writing between those who learn for the love of learning and those who are educated at schools where the primary purpose seems to be to create standardized citizens. “The Jazz-Age Woman and Egalitarian Marriage in Sinclair Lewis’s *Dodsworth*” by Ellen Dupree of the University of Nevada-Reno looked at the portrayal of Fran Dodsworth and made connections between her and Edith Wharton’s Undine Sprague. The final Lewis presentation was on archival materials at St. Cloud State University by Constance Perry of St. Cloud State. She focused on the education aspects of the correspondence, including Lewis’s education and also Lewis’s interest in the education of his nephew Freeman, Claude’s son.

Among the invited speakers was Jean-Paul Lewis, grandson of Sinclair Lewis and Dorothy Thompson, speaking on “American Waterways and the Underground Railroad, Conduits toward Freedom.” Other invited speakers included Brenda Child, from the University of Minnesota, speaking on “The Granddaughters of Nokomis: Wild Rice in Ojibwe History,” and Shannon Olson, speaking on “Growing Up on Main Street.”

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## The SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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## A CITIZEN OF THE MIRAGE (PART IV)

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SINCLAIR LEWIS

SUMMARY PROVIDED BY MATTHEW COURT

*"A Citizen of the Mirage" is a short story written by Sinclair Lewis that was published in Redbook in 1921. Part I was published in the spring 2006 issue of the Newsletter, Part II was published in the fall 2006 issue, and Part III was published in the spring 2007 issue. Part I introduced us to a brisk young man by the name of Leonard Lamb Shanklin, Ph.D., a silver-tongued salesman. Shanklin stumbled upon Basil Quaero, the president of the University of Daily Life. Quaero's university was focused on practicality and educational freedom. It conferred no degrees and gave out no grades. It also had no students. Throughout Part II Shanklin convinced Quaero to let him take over the operations of the university with the promise of one thousand students in five years. Part III left off with the university booming but Quaero's vision of a school based on educational freedom fallen by the wayside. Shanklin has just decided to go over Quaero's head and petition the chief patron of the university for more money and more power. Part IV concludes the story.*

No letter from a new love was ever read more carefully than this unlover-like note. Leonard hoped that Pusey was testing him. But the man might be trying to trap him. Leonard copied his answer on his personal typewriter seven times before he let it go, and even then he made delicate marginal changes.

He wrote that Quaero had the virtues of Mark Twain, Phillips Brooks, Erasmus and John Brown, but for that very reason could not understand that running a college was a business, like any other, and consisted in getting the best of the tricky student-customers. He included select remarks on his own skill in administration, and his lifelong admiration of W. I. Pusey as a "constructive merchandiser."

For days he sat waiting for an answer which would say:

"You are right, Doctor. Tell Quaero to discharge himself, and you take charge of my University." But he received neither that nor any other response.

So, in the third year of the University, when there were eight hundred students, and Quaero seemed entirely to have withdrawn into tobacco smoke and dreams, Leonard had the genius-shot idea of getting even with W. I. Pusey by making somebody else chief patron of the University! Serve him right to lose the honor! Leonard thought of the great Theodore Schlogenboss as the new benefactor.

Mr. Schlogenboss was worth—well, if he wasn't worth, at least he had, fifteen million dollars. He speculated in real-estate, but the steady source of his bright millions was the famous remedy for consumption, influenza, pneumonia and mental depression, "Old Cabin Mammy's Cure for Coughs." You have seen, painted on country barns, the picture of good old Cabin Mammy administering her cough-syrup to De White Chilluns, and assuring them of its effectiveness and perfect purity. The alcohol percentage is fourteen, but it is said that in the new formula Cabin Mammy's cure contains scarcely any opium.

Schlogenboss wasn't in Leonard's legitimate territory for fund-raising, but he did live in the next State. Leonard traveled three hundred miles to call on him, and they became immensely chummy after Leonard had given, gratis, a brilliant suggestion for saving cost on the raw materials of the Cure. Leonard was a good chemist. His suggestion stood the investigation of the factory laboratory.

————— A Citizen of the Mirage *continued on next page*

### CONTRIBUTORS

*The editor of the Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue by writing articles or sending in notes.*

*These people include Rusty Allred, Frederick Betz, Ted Fleener, Russell Gollard, Rob Hardy, Laurel Hessing, Ahmed Abdul Hussein, Jim Kalmbach, George Killough, Jackie Koenig, Richard Lingeman, Robert McLaughlin, Jim Moffett, Fred Moulton, Suellen Rundquist, Dave Simpkins, Ed Tant, and Phyllis Whitney.*

A Citizen of the Mirage *continued from previous page*

By now Leonard knew that the only way to handle Schloggenboss was to be brutal. "Look here, old sport," he said, "you know how these society bugs here laugh at you when you say 'caint.' They think they're so darn superior just because you haven't much book-learning. It would be a good joke on them if you had a big college building named after you, and you were made an honorary Doctor of Laws!"

Schloggenboss rubbed his bartender jaw and grunted, "You're a good con-man, Doc. Sure, I could buy me a college. But no single buildings. Tell you what I'll do. I'll look over your knowledge-mill, and if I like it enough, I'll think about giving it four million dollars—providing the whole works is named after me. Not just one building. Nothing doing! Schloggenboss University—that's what I want, and my son is to go through and get a degree.... He ain't real bright some ways."

"Ungh!" gasped Leonard.

Schloggenboss would not yield. Leonard's fluttering pleas broke against the solid wall of four million dollars.

Three per cent of four million is one hundred and twenty thousand.

Leonard appointed the day following for Schloggenboss' visit to "look over the mill." He uncomfortably promised that President Quaero should show Schloggenboss around. "Because," said the creator of Cabin Mammy, "I figure out from the way you knock Quaero that he must be honest. I've heard your song and dance, and I'd like to get his slant on it. Tell this Quaero fellow to meet me at the depot, afternoon train, tomorrow. And tell him to look sharp. I ain't got a whole lot of time to waste in looking for chances to give away my money."

All the way back to New Ratersford, Leonard's brain was numb from inability either to believe that he was at last to have one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, or that there was any way of persuading Basil Quaero to look so very sharp in attendance on Mr. Theodore Schloggenboss. Ordinarily, before tackling a big sale, Leonard had been able to formulate

his arguments, but now he waited viciously and hoped that the words would be given to him.

It was a relief to know what the new name of the University was going to be—for in any case, the idiotic title "University of Daily Life" would have to be changed. It had been one of his worst obstacles in money-raising.

He went from the train directly to Quaero's study, though it was ten-thirty in the evening. The housekeeper, whom he had insisted on Quaero's engaging, admitted him with reverence. But Quaero, huge, brooding, smoke-fogged, a misty mountain that had dreamed itself alive, merely turned his head and nodded, and Leonard fancied that his shoulder-muscles twitched with dislike.

"Good—good evening—pleasant evening—my, what a handsome volume that book on jades is! Say, Mr. Quaero, uh, the fact is—Could you meet Theodore Schloggenboss tomorrow, the big manufacturer? He wants to see the University," Leonard blurted.

"I have heard of him! Why does he want to see this place?"

Leonard tried to think up a nice, high-minded, refined reason why Mr. Theodore Schloggenboss desired to view institutions of learning, but he couldn't make any of them fit Schloggenboss. Basil Quaero's eyes lost all gentleness. They became as unfeeling as the gaze of a heathen king calling for the torture of slaves. He blared: "Come now!"

"H-he would endow the University, if we named it after him!"

"Oh! Just that? Is that all he asks?" Quaero was mild again.

"Yes!" babbled Leonard, with an enthusiasm truly beautiful. It did not seem necessary to take up just now the detail

————— A Citizen of the Mirage *continued on page 6*

## NEW MEMBERS

*Welcome to the new members who have joined the Sinclair Lewis Society since the last issue.*

Neil Green  
Milwaukee, WI

Martin Levinson  
Forest Hills, NY

Chuck Lyons  
Rochester, NY

Mitchell Taylor  
Iola, WI

Christopher Zbrozek  
and Emily Beam  
Ann Arbor, MI

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**“A NOVEL FILLED WITH JACKASSES AND JACKALS”:  
ANIMAL IMAGERY IN *ELMER GANTRY***

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FREDERICK BETZ

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY—CARBONDALE

In his article “Sinclair Lewis and the Method of Half-Truths,” Mark Schorer finds *Elmer Gantry* (1927) to be “a work of almost pure revulsion” (126) and objects that in the novel “nothing is missing but all religion and all humanity” (119). For Schorer, *Elmer Gantry* is also “the noisiest novel in American literature, the most *braying, guffawing, belching* novel that we have,” and therefore, “if we are to have a novel filled with jackasses and jackals, let them, by all means, bray and guffaw” (123). *Elmer Gantry* is, indeed, replete with animal imagery, and it contributes significantly to the humorous effect of Lewis’s literary satire, for which, however, Schorer clearly has little interest or appreciation. It is not the purpose here to illustrate this effect with a systematic or exhaustive survey of examples. *Elmer Gantry* is, predictably, associated more often with animal imagery than any other character in the novel. He has, for example, a “beefy grin,” “meaty hands,” “paws,” and thick, “mane-like” hair. He is as “handsome as a Great Dane,” moves like a “panther” or a “bearcat,” and he *wolfs* down his food. He *bays, bellows, and roars*, and he *pants, pounces, and gallops*. *Gantry* is also called a “hellcat,” “hog,” “swine,” “a damn’ lying gospel shark,” and an “atheist in sheep’s clothing.” Toward the end of the novel, however, *Gantry* is simply called “this animal” (403).

The pervasive animal imagery in the novel contrasts ironically with the topic of *Gantry*’s first sermon in 1903, while still a student at Terwillinger College: “What is it makes us different from the animals?” (59), which also echoes the growing debate over divine creation versus evolutionary theory and anticipates the sensational Scopes Trial twenty-two years later. In his sermon, *Gantry* explains that what makes humans different from animals is “The passion of Love!” (59). On the topic of love, however, *Gantry* plagiarizes, at the suggestion of his college roommate Jim Lefferts, the nineteenth-century agnostic orator Robert G. Ingersoll (1833–1899) and uses his poetic answer, “Love is the Morning and Evening Star,” to great effect in sermons throughout his rising career in the Baptist and Methodist churches (see chs. 7, 10, 11, 20, 27, 30), while love to him personally is nothing but animal (sexual) instinct. This leitmotif also suggests comparison between Rev. Elmer *Gantry* and Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887), the most celebrated and controversial pulpit orator of his time in America, whom

*Gantry* studies in a public speaking class at Terwillinger College (ch. 1) and whose sermons (devoted primarily to the theme of divine love) *Gantry* later reads when he continues his theological studies at Banjo Crossing in 1913 (ch. 20).

According to James M. Hutchisson, *Gantry* resembles several real-life evangelists with whom contemporary readers would have been familiar, such as the Rev. Billy Sunday, whom Lewis had already caricatured as Mike Monday in *Babbitt* (1922), Rev. William Stidger, whose book *Standing Room Only* (1921) inspired Lewis’s description of how *Gantry* attracts ever larger audiences to his services, or Rev. John Roach Straton, pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in New York, and famous for his vice-crusading. Hutchisson emphasizes, however, that *Gantry* was not based on any one preacher, but rather is a composite portrait of these and other real-life ministers (140–46). There are also remarkable similarities and parallels between Beecher and *Gantry*, both ruthless and hypocritical opportunists, who use their great personal charm and extraordinary oratorical skills to rise as ministers in their denominations, and who are guilty of habitual philandering and adultery, but survive public scandal in the end. These affinities were noted by reviewers of Lewis’s novel and Paxton Hibben’s biography of Beecher, both of which were published in the same year.

*Elmer Gantry* appeared in March 1927, and the invited reviews in the *New York Evening Post* on March 12 illustrate the polarized reception of Lewis’s “Preacher Novel” (as advertised in the *New York Times Book Review*, March 13). For Straton, the novel was “bunk” and the character “preposterously impossible.” For William E. Woodward, who had coined the term “de-bunking” (Martin 7) in his own novel *Bunk* (1923), the novel was “truth as a study of hypocrisy,” and he predicted that the “*Elmer Gantrys*” would demonize Lewis and dismiss his character as an “isolated” fabrication. In his review of *Elmer Gantry* in the socialist monthly *New Masses*, Hibben responded to Straton’s criticism by listing well-known debaucheries of American clergymen, beginning with Beecher, and concluding: “All of these cases are out of court records, my dear Doctor, where there are thousands like them. There never was an *Elmer Gantry, Doctor? Come now!*” (27).

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Animal Imagery continued on page 12

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## SATIRE AND SOCIAL REFORM

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Ahmed Abdul Hussein Chiyad, a master's student at Al Qadissiya University in Iraq, has been in contact with the Sinclair Lewis Society over the past year to gather information for his master's thesis on satire and social reform, which he completed this spring. Although he discussed a number of authors, the ones that he focused on were Charles Dickens and Sinclair Lewis. He sent a copy of his thesis in thanks. The third chapter, which focuses on *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, will appear in the spring 2008 issue of the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*. The following is a summary.

The thesis starts with definitions of the various kinds of satire and how it functions in literature: "In many cultures, the satirist is feared because he or she possesses the ability to use language to tear down and criticize. Normally the satirist does this to push his or her society toward change and reform, but that is not always the case, and it is possible to tear down with no attempt to rebuild." There follows a chapter on satire and social reform in Dickens's *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations*, a chapter on satire and social reform in Lewis's *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, a chapter comparing the two authors and their aims, and a conclusion. Here is a concluding section focusing on Lewis:

Similarly, the dilemma and the decline of the American dream are portrayed in *Main Street* and *Babbitt* by Lewis through a satiric style. Lewis sheds light

on the American society in the twentieth century and how Americans concentrated on money and trade but forgot their lives as human beings. Like Dickens, Lewis tries always to amuse people and satirize society at the same time. The best evidence of Lewis's career as satirist and social reformer are his novels *Main Street* and *Babbitt*; like Dickens, he blends comedy with tragedy in his exposure of the vices and follies of Man. Will Kennicott, Miles Bjornstam, Mrs. Bogart, Babbitt, Riesling, T. Cholmondeley Frink, and sometimes Carol Kennicott are presented as caricature figures in *Main Street* and *Babbitt* to embody Lewis's aims of ridicule and criticism. Beside the moral lessons that are reflected through these characters, there are always scenes of amusement that make the tragedies of the novels lesser than they are. Lewis achieves the mixture of tragedy and comedy by the use of caricature, irony, and parody in his novels. He shared with Dickens this quality of blending sadness and happiness at the same time in his novels, but what differentiates Dickens's style from Lewis's is the description of the impact of social problems and use of caricature. Dickens in his novels portrays the sufferings of human beings as if he is tortured by every disease in society, but Lewis describes calamities of people from a situation of a critic who sheds light on society and tries to present the main diseases in that society. ❧

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### A Citizen of the Mirage *continued from page 4*

about letting Schlogenboss' son through with an automatic degree. Leonard tentatively took a chair, the smallest one, and drummed on his hat.

Quaero mused: "Just change the name of the University. That would make your work complete. One by one you have wiped out every feature that gave this school its reason for existing. I don't know quite how you have done it. I haven't seen your hand in the petitions from students—that is, I haven't *always* seen it. I could have beaten you, but I am world-weary. I have been lazy. I have sat here hoping that if I remained true, there was still hope that we would make some experiments—so long as we retained the name University of Daily Life. Daily Life! What a lovely thing it is—its struggles and friendships, a husband's hand in that of his wife, the good trudging labor, children chattering, the processional of noon and twilight and the stars. But that's all to go, and we are to spend our days chanting psalms in praise of cough-syrup! I am too tired to

fight for my dreams. And they are sacred to me. If men cannot understand them—Oh, it's the old story of tired men: I must wait for another generation. But Doctor, I didn't suppose we needed an extra endowment. I thought old Pusey was pretty generous to me."

"Honest, Chief, I don't want to knock Pusey, but I know that he's been holding out on us. He's still mighty well-fixed. And if he had handed out all his money, the way he pretended to, then I'd feel we were under obligation to submit things like this to him. But if we can make a hit with Schlogenboss, we can be independent of Pusey, and you always say you think such a lot of independence and all that—"

"Perhaps. I feel tonight that I can never know practical affairs. I wonder—No. I couldn't start this place anew. I am spoiled. And I do like to see the young faces that you have

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A Citizen of the Mirage *continued on page 8*

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## THE TRAGEDY OF MARTIN ARROWSMITH: A PHYSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

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RUSSELL GOLLARD, MD  
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA

*Arrowsmith* is the archetypal American medical novel of the early twentieth century. The traditional reading of the satiric *Arrowsmith* places this novel in the tradition of coming of age sagas, only with a medical twist, and for this reason, *Arrowsmith* is a mainstay of medical humanities courses. I regularly teach medicine and literature to undergraduate students and have noted how undergraduates view Dr. Martin Arrowsmith, coming of course from the vantage point of premedical students. Sinclair Lewis shows the potentially transformative power of experience on the nature of a physician's choices in what he actually does in his professional life, and what he desires to do; *Arrowsmith* remains an important work for both medical students and practicing physicians, despite being written more than 75 years ago.

My students often saw Arrowsmith as a waffler who could not make up his mind about career choice or even choice of spouse. When, as a medical student, he is dating two women and cannot make up his mind over which one to marry, he simply invites them both for lunch. Arrowsmith's wanderings, which take him to numerous Midwestern towns over a period of years, allow him to dabble in a variety of medical ventures and to be exposed to a number of potential mentors, including scientists, academics, epidemiologists, and private practitioners. He is most successful in public health. By the end of the novel, Arrowsmith has settled down to a life of isolation as a bench researcher, a position for which he seems ill-prepared, but one which he seems to think he is fated for.

The age-old conflict of balancing passion and aptitude takes center stage in *Arrowsmith*, as it does in the career choices of the twenty-first-century physician; experience must be allowed to teach us about where our own talents lie.

Lewis shows how Arrowsmith's desire to return to basic science research causes him to attempt to alter the way he thinks about medicine and science. He goes back to master algebra so he may have a deeper understanding of the physical science of medicine. Initially, Arrowsmith appears to have little aptitude for bench research and sees the laboratory as an escape from social separation:

He turned emptily to the laboratory for vacation time.

He had so far displayed more emotion than achievement in his tiny original researches.... He played in the laboratory; he spent his time polishing glassware, and when he transplanted cultures from his rabbits, his notes were incomplete. (87)

Lewis depicts the growth of Arrowsmith's intellect, his ability to learn from mistakes or, in some cases, his inability to learn from them. When Arrowsmith fails to perform a tracheostomy on a young girl in respiratory distress and leaves the bedside in search of a new antidote, Lewis strongly implies that the clinical judgment of the protagonist is, at best, undeveloped.

Later, Arrowsmith conducts an experiment on a Caribbean island with a plague vaccine and hopelessly confuses the results of the study by inoculating everybody on the island. Still later in the novel, Dr. Arrowsmith has developed further as a researcher and seems more prone to isolation:

He had less ease but more passion. He hurled out hypotheses like sparks. He began, incredulously, to comprehend his freedom. He would yet determine the essential nature of phage; and as he became stronger and surer—and no doubt less human—he saw ahead of him innumerable inquiries into chemotherapy and immunity; enough adventures to keep him busy for decades. (445–46)

*Arrowsmith* resonates both for the trainee and practicing physician; life is about choices, some good ones, some bad ones, and about the ability to evolve through such choices. Arrowsmith's decision to pursue scientific truth in midlife is a noble attempt to evolve, to contribute, to reach back and pursue a purity of understanding that was elusive in the other fields of medicine he pursued.

### Works Cited

Lewis, Sinclair. *Arrowsmith*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925. ↵

Libertarian Futurist Award *continued from page 1*

Hall of Fame Award, which can be awarded to works of any format that have been published at any time. You can see the diverse list of previous award-winning works at the LFS website: <http://www.lfs.org/awards.htm>. Just scroll down to the Hall of Fame section. The LFS sent a press release to various media that cover speculative fiction after the public announcement in Yokohama.

Below are the remarks that were read at the ceremony:

***IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE* ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

On behalf of the Sinclair Lewis Society, I would like to thank the Libertarian Futurist Society for recognizing the searing social critique of Sinclair Lewis in his 1935 novel *It Can't Happen Here*.

Lewis wrote this novel in a white heat, in about six weeks, according to his biographer Mark Schorer, because he was so concerned about the growth of fascism both in the United States and throughout the world. It's an Orwellian-type world that Lewis created where military leaders assure the public that increasing the military will result in peace and that getting rid of labor unions, immigrants, and malcontents will lead to a more democratic nation.

Although Lewis's novel focuses on American society and its imperfections, the flaws that he reveals can

apply to many different countries where citizens look to others to make their country better. Paradoxically, his criticisms were a mixture of love and disgust; love of his country and the people within it, and disgust at the way in which the greedy and ignorant pervert democratic ideals. The journalist Dorothy Thompson called Lewis "a disappointed democrat" because he truly believed in democratic ideals but despaired that people were too lazy to live up to them.

In some ways I'm sorry that the novel is receiving this recognition. The fact that Lewis's ideas about a dystopian world where fascism can grow in a supposedly democratic country because of the indifference, greed, and fears of the populace can still be as pertinent today as it was over 70 years ago is very troubling. Although the novel, with its Minute Men and League of Forgotten Men, is part of a very distinct time and place, Lewis's more general observations about how easy it is for a country to slide into fascism still ring true. His warnings to people everywhere that to be a good citizen is to take on an active, not a passive role is still vitally important.

Novels like *It Can't Happen Here* need to be read and reread and taught to others so that the dystopian nightmare that Sinclair Lewis writes of can no longer happen. ✍

A Citizen of the Mirage *continued from page 6*

brought here. Go now, my boy,"—very gently—"and come to me in the morning, but not before ten."

At eight in the morning, when Leonard was agreeably awakening to thoughts about the kind of motor he would get out of his hundred and twenty thousand, he was disturbed by the President's housekeeper, who was wailing. "The President! He's gone! He's missing! He never slept in his bed at all last night!"

Leonard was instantly certain that Quaero had killed himself. He was frightened and peeped: "Have you telephoned to the railroad station?"

"No, sir."

Leonard learned from the night agent that President Quaero had taken the midnight train for Chicago. The housekeeper was relieved. But Leonard grumbled all through breakfast: "Now, what does the old fool want in Chicago? I'll get even with him for this. Schlogenboss will fuss over not seeing him."

Then: "Lord! Suppose Quaero went to New England,

to tattle to Pusey! Pusey would skin me alive. Oh, Quaero wouldn't dare! But if he did—"

Though the season was May, it was hot and airless. And there was no Pullman on the local afternoon train by which Theodore Schlogenboss arrived at New Ratersford. He clumped out of the day-coach, flapping the dust from the grayed folds of his clothes, licking his dry and flaky lips, glaring at the baking red frame station.

Leonard fluttered up to him like an enlarged dove, and cooed: "I have a taxi ready for you, Chief."

"Huh! Horrible journey! Filthy cars! Stopped at every water-tank! Man in front of me smoking El Cabago! Couldn't get nothing but a ham sandwich for lunch, and a bottle of strawberry pop—of strawberry pop! I was a chump to come here! I got a cinder in my eye, too! Now where's that Quaero person? Huh?"

————— A Citizen of the Mirage *continued on page 10*



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## LEWIS SOCIETY AT WIKIPEDIA

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Sinclair Lewis has a presence in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinclair\\_Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinclair_Lewis). Below is the beginning of the page and the contents. The Lewis Society is listed as one of the external sources.



**Sinclair Lewis** (February 7, 1885—January 10, 1951) was an American novelist, short-story writer, and playwright. In 1930 he became the first American to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, “for his vigorous and graphic art of description and his ability to create, with wit and humour, new types of characters.” His works are known for their insightful and critical views of American society and capitalist values. His style is at times droll, satirical, and yet sympathetic.

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- 1.2 Early Career
- 1.3 Commercial Success
- 1.4 Private Life

#### 2 Bibliography

#### 3 Quotations

#### 4 References

#### 5 External links

### External Links:

- Online collection of works [from the University of Adelaide

Library]

- Works by Sinclair Lewis at Project Gutenberg
- Sinclair Lewis at the Internet Movie Database
- Sinclair Lewis at the Internet Broadway Database
- his vigorous and graphic art of description and his ability to create, with wit and humour, new types of characters. [this is his Nobel Prize speech]
- Sinclair Lewis Society
- Autobiography [from Nobelprize.org, the autobiography he wrote when he won the Nobel Prize]
- wbgpu.org WBGU-PBS documentary about Sinclair Lewis [this takes you to a sale site for *Sinclair Lewis: The Man From Main Street*. OEBIE Nominations 1986 Program of the Year.]

Here is a description from that link:

*Sinclair Lewis: The Man From Main Street* describes the life of satirical writer Sinclair Lewis. Narrated by Glenn Colerider on location in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, this program describes the famous writer while growing up and focuses on three of his major works: *The Man From Main Street* [sic], *Babbitt*, and *Elmer Gantry*. Various scenes from these novels are dramatized throughout this documentary.

Intended for general audience, *Sinclair Lewis: The Man From Main Street*, would also be a useful tool in the classroom. This program was funded by the Ohio Humanities Council and written by Gene Dent.

VHS 60 MIN. \$24.95

- Hutchisson, *The Rise of Sinclair Lewis, 1920–1930*, Penn State Press, 2001

Lewis allegedly had a deathbed conversion, but shortly before his death the person who satirized religions wrote of his naturalistic humanism. (from [http://philosopedia.org/index.php/Sinclair\\_Lewis](http://philosopedia.org/index.php/Sinclair_Lewis). Here’s an unusual excerpt from this link:

On his deathbed, Lewis reportedly said to the Catholic nurse, “God bless you,” leading to speculation that he had had “a death-bed conversion.” But columnist Dorothy Thompson, once his wife, unequivocally denied such had taken place, and she cited such evidence as the above-mentioned 3 June 1950 postcard. Lewis had been raised a Christian, she held, but became a non-believer after his sophomore year at Yale.) ✍

A Citizen of the Mirage *continued from page 8*

"He was called to Chicago. I'll show you about, and you can talk to any of the faculty you want to. You'd like to meet a chap named Bellings. Bright young chap. He will—"

"I told you I wanted the President! Wasn't he here when you got back?"

"Yes. That is—"

"You told him Theodore Schlogenboss wanted to see him?"

"Yes, but—"

"Wha' de he go Chicago for?"

"He had to see a—a—He had to buy some supplies."

"What, with you here on the grounds? You stand there and tell me you're letting any rake-offs get by you?"

For Leonard Lamb Shanklin, Ph.D., University Secretary, to endure this scorn from a fat-necked baby-killer was stinging as the gadfly, but he had to be quiet, for at the other end of the station platform a group of students were watching. He smiled, plucked at Schlogenboss' dusty sleeve, and tried to lead him to the taxicab.

The manufacturer knocked his hand away, brushed the sleeve as if the touch had been pollution, looked Leonard all over, and stormed: "I been thinking what an easy mark I'd be to let you get your hooks on my money. Now I'm sure about it! So your president is ashamed to meet me! Too good to be seen with Ted Schlogenboss, is he? Too good to take my polluted cash? Give him my compliments, and tell him I admire his nerve! But you, you feeble-minded rabbit—"

Schlogenboss stalked to a station jitney, ordered: "Drive me to Niemen Junction. Want to catch that train back east." Before Leonard could reach it, the car was gone. It was a flivver, and unpainted, but it carried four million dollars, including one hundred and twenty thousand rightly belonging to Leonard Lamb Shanklin.

Basil Quaero was missing for months. Inquiry in Chicago disclosed only that he had taken a ticket for California. No trace of him was found in that State.

Leonard was delighted. He had in his safe-deposit box the three-year-old document by which he was made attorney for Quaero in case of death, illness or absence. His hope was that Quaero was dead—painlessly but very permanently. He was astonished to find how much the student-body loved the President. He saw girls crying: saw crepe everywhere, and flags at half-mast. A mass-meeting led by the matter-of-fact captain of the football team voted two thousand dollars to further the search for Quaero. It was Leonard's own aide-de-camp, Joseph Bellings, who brought the money to him.

Leonard smiled at Bellings and guffawed: "So we're

to spend this on detectives, are we? Well, we'll pick out a citron!"

The treacherous Bellings put his hands in his pockets, strolled up with a sneer, and remarked: "The hell we will! We'll get the best detective in the country, and if any more money is needed, you'll furnish it personally! Mr. Quaero was a saint. When my kid brother went wrong, Prexy sneaked out, got hold of him, walked five miles with him. I don't know what he said, but ever since that day the kid has gone straight. Unless we find Mr. Quaero, I'll tell all I know—and God help both you and me if I do!"

Then the reporters came.

The Associated Press carried the story. The Sunday papers had pictures of Quaero, with speculations as to whether he had been murdered or had lost his memory. Leonard had to furnish the material, to look mournful. But despite Bellings' threat, he picked out a cheap divorce detective.

Leonard had to give up his vacation at the lake, and spend the summer at the University, to give the appearance of supervising the search. But that was merely annoying. The real anguish was in the letter from W. I. Pusey which arrived in mid-July. Leonard had carefully forgotten to inform Pusey of Quaero's irritating trick.

The letter looked so innocent in its envelope stamped with the name of Pusey's Boston lawyers, in its plump script of a girl amanuensis. Leonard, hot and relaxed in his summer-twang office, looked at it with eyebrows raised in interest, then with tongue out in horror:

*I do not read the papers much, so have just learned the Quaero has left you. I do not blame him. You must be a good deal on a mosquito. It has been my annual custom to renew endowment each year at this time, but this year have decided to give the money to an insane asylum. More I know of sane men like you, the better I like the insane. Elect yourself president of the University. I shall not bother you again till you try to sell the buildings or something, at which time you will hear from my attorneys. So far as I could learn from Quaero's letters, you took a vase which, good, bad or indifferent, was at least distinctive, and you turned it into a beer mug. I wish you joy of it!*

W. I. Pusey

Then did Leonard cause an astounded detective to be abruptly discharged from his delightful task of loafing through California and not worrying about Quaero. A de-

————— A Citizen of the Mirage *continued on next page*

A Citizen of the Mirage *continued from previous page*

tective who looked like a rather stupid clerk, and who had a habit of catching criminals, took the job. Leonard had to discover Quaero now. It was the only way of winning back Pusey's endowment—without which the University would fail ridiculously.

Desperately he wrote to Pusey his true opinion of Quaero. Leonard had always, he declared, loyally tried to cover up the man's ignorance and meanness. Quaero was an old charlatan, with whiskers instead of brains. He had neither knowledge nor honor. He had, for example, discharged Leonard's friend, the distinguished scholar Dr. Henry Drury, for telling the truth!

Pusey answered only: "You may be perfectly right about Quaero. I do not care to discuss it. I simply do not see why you should have my good money for your private school."

Leonard telegraphed to his detective: "Use city police through California. Will add one thousand to reward."

It was in early September that the detective discovered that Basil Quaero was living alone in a shack at the head of Canyon Doloroso, in the San Francisco Mountains.

Four days later Leonard was riding up that canyon. He did not like riding. You were so amazingly far from the ground, and a horse jerked so when it climbed a mountain trail. Darkness came on him two miles from the head of the canyon, and all night he crouched sleepless, and thought about rattlesnakes. He was up and riding at first milky dawn. As sunrise thundered across the peaks beyond the canyon's head, he saw a shack standing above him on a shelf of rock.

He left his horse and climbed softly on foot. He felt triumphant. He looked back. Below him was a creek that flickered down toward the redwoods. Fifteen miles behind him, at the mouth of the canyon, was the Pacific, a wash of purple, silver-veined. He felt poetic as he began to climb again.

The shack was of redwood, like a rough chest of cedar. Across it hung a sign-board lettered in capitals clumsy as the painful printing of a child: "The University of Daily Life."

While Leonard stared at it, he heard a vast voice crying, "My children!" He looked up. On a pinnacle of rock beside the trail stood Basil Quaero, his arms outstretched toward the sea. The red sun flamed on his white beard. He was in shabby corduroy trousers and laced boots, but round his shoulders was what was left of the ragged cassock in which Leonard had first seen him, four years before.

He was thundering: "My children, we open our eleventh year of this University, our eleventh of seeking the excellence of wisdom."

No one heard him except Leonard and perhaps a stray-

ing sheep from the ranges far below. He must have known it, for at last, though not kneeling, he incoherently broke into prayer: "Lord God, I have lost the fight; I have not kept the Faith. Sloth and ease beset me; in idleness I let age steal upon me. But here, in the splendor of Thy hills, I will find strength again, and fight on to the end. And if Thou wilt send me one student—just one—"

Then he saw Leonard. He gazed down as calmly as an old war-horse at graze. He turned toward the sea again, and for a long moment was silent, his hands clasped on his breast, his head back, his mighty beard outthrust.

He briskly climbed down from his rock pulpit, nodded to Leonard, and boomed: "Had your breakfast?"

"No sir!" Leonard said nothing more till he had restored courage to his cold and trembling stomach by wolfing six large wheat-cakes. Then he yearned:

"I have come to beg you to come back to us. Possibly I have been too headstrong. Hereafter you shall have your way."

"No, Doctor, no. Go back to Schlogenboss University. I belong here, at the University of Daily Life."

"B-but—I decided to kick Schlogenboss out. Told him I wouldn't take his dirty money. We're going to keep the glorious old name. Oh, Mr. Quaero, you'll never get any students way up here."

"Doubtless I sha'nt. But it's pleasant to be a hermit. It's a quiet, innocuous form of solitaire, and gives one a delightful conceited feeling of being superior to the men down there in the dusty plain."

"But we need you, we need you! In fact, sir—truth is, Pusey, the old pirate, wont renew the endowment unless you come back."

"Really? Why don't you talk up strong to him? You're not afraid of Pusey?"

"I am not! I've already told him just what I thought of him. Didn't mince matters. I'd go see him, if the old sneak would give me his address. Listen, Mr. Quaero! You write Pusey a letter, and tell him you're just here on a vacation—tell him you keep up your interest in the New Ratersford plant. That will bring him around."

"No, Doctor, no. I don't believe a letter from a miragedweller like Basil Quaero would have much effect on an old sneak like W. I. Pusey. You see, Doctor, I've carried this crazy name of Quaero for only about twelve years. Till I retired from business, I was known as W. I. Pusey. In fact, my lawyers still forward some amusing letters addressed to me as Pusey, and I try and answer 'em, in my simple way. Let's see. Are you going to walk down the canyon, Doctor, or have you a horse?" ❧

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Both Schorer, in his biography of Lewis (476), and Hutchisson (162) mention Hibben's review, but not his "de-bunking" biography of Beecher, which appeared in September 1927. Just as *Elmer Gantry* had been called "the [novel] sensation of the season" (Van Doren), it was called "the biographical sensation of the year" in the *New York Times Book Review* ("Henry Ward Beecher Hungered"), a year in which other "de-bunking" biographies such as Heywood Brown and Margaret Leech's *Anthony Comstock: Roundsman of the Lord* (March) and Herbert Asbury's *A Methodist Saint: The Life of Bishop Asbury* (April) also appeared to controversial receptions and comparisons with *Elmer Gantry*. Reviews of Hibben's Beecher biography carried titles that could also have served as titles of reviews of Lewis's novel, for example, "Actor-Precacher" in the *Nation* (Woodward) or "Henry Ward Beecher Hungered for Love and Power" in the *New York Times Book Review*, a title taken directly from Hibben, who wrote: "All his life, two terrific, compelling, dynamic forces had strained and throbbed and seethed and flamed in Henry Ward Beecher; two turbulent, overmastering desires: his hunger for love...and his hunger for power" (*Henry Ward Beecher* 286). H. L. Mencken, who had urged Lewis in the first place to write a satirical novel about the Man of God or the Professional Good Man in America (see "Man of God: American Style," *American Mercury* Apr. 1927), and to whom Lewis had dedicated his novel, "with profound admiration," entitled his review of Hibben's biography: "An American Saint Even Worse than Elmer Gantry."

Gantry also resembles Beecher in a seemingly minor, but telling, detail of animal imagery. Just as Beecher, according to Hibben, "affected the long mane sweeping his coat collar" (49), Gantry permitted his "thick hair" to "hang, mane-like, just a bit over his collar" (318). And although men commonly enough wore their hair long in Beecher's time, the association of "the long mane" with a horse or a lion suggests the virile or predatory nature of these two preachers who hunger for love and power. Beecher may well have served as a historical model contributing to the composite portrait of Gantry, but since Hibben's biography appeared six months after Lewis's novel and four months after his review in the *New Masses*, it is also possible that Lewis's literary satire had some influence on Hibben's "de-bunking" portrait of Beecher.

The animal imagery in Lewis's novel is most powerfully—that is, seriously rather than humorously—ironic, however, in a rarely discussed episode (part 9) in chapter 29, which neither Schorer nor Hutchisson mentions. Here Frank Shallard, who had been forced (with help from Gantry) to resign as pastor of his Methodist church in Zenith, is on a lecture tour in 1926 under the auspices of a liberal, pro-evolution group and lecturing in a city

in the southwest on the topic "Are the Fundamentalists Witch Hunters?" "America," he begins, "in its laughter at the 'monkey trial' at Dayton, did not understand the veritable menace of the Fundamentalists' crusade" (390). Shallard refers, of course, to the Scopes or evolution trial, which had been held in Dayton, Tennessee, in July 1925. In March of that year, the Tennessee state legislature had made it unlawful for public schools "to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man had descended from the lower orders of the animals" (Hays 25). John Scopes, a high school biology teacher in Dayton, volunteered to test the law and was subsequently arrested.

William Jennings Bryan, former presidential candidate, secretary of state in the Wilson administration, and eloquent defender of fundamentalism, volunteered to help with the prosecution, while the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) sent its attorney, Arthur Garfield Hays, and his law partner, Dudley Field Malone, for the defense. Mencken urged that the defense also engage Clarence Darrow, the prominent attorney who had successfully defended the teenagers Nathan Leopold, Jr. and Richard Loeb, scions of Chicago millionaires, in their sensational murder trial the year before by convincing the judge to give them each a life sentence instead of the death penalty. As Mencken told Darrow, however: "Nobody gives a damn about that yap schoolteacher. The thing to do is to make a fool out of Bryan" (Manchester 164); or, as Mencken recalled in his memoir *Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work*: "Above all, the thing to do was to lay all stress, not on Scopes, who was a nobody, but on Bryan, who was an international figure—to lure him on the stand if possible, to make him state his barbaric credo in plain English, and to make a monkey of him before the world" (137).

Whether Mencken, who had already coined such terms as the "Bible Belt" and the "booboisie," actually coined the term "Monkey Trial" remains unclear, however. Scopes recalled in his memoir *Center of the Storm* that Mencken had "labeled it the Monkey Trial, a title that was to stick" (66). S. L. Harrison claims that "the derisive term was H. L. Mencken's" (46), and Richard Lingeman writes: "The 'Monkey Trial,' as Mencken had christened it, served as a catalyst for Lewis's preacher novel..." (266). However, neither Harrison nor Lingeman gives any source, and, indeed, it is not to be found in any of the dispatches Mencken sent back to the *Baltimore Evening Sun* in July 1925 or in his subsequent memoirs. Moreover, major studies devoted to the Scopes Trial do not attribute the term to anyone in particular.

Mencken may or may not have coined the term "Mon-

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key Trial,” but he did use animal imagery extensively in his dispatches on the Scopes Trial. His dispatch of June 29, 1927, entitled “Homo Neandertalensis,” refers, for example, to the ignorant, uneducated “masses of men” or “mob” as “such immortal vermin” (Joshi 165), and observes that the membership of the “so-called religious organizations” is “recruited, in the overwhelming main, from the lower orders...” (Joshi 166). On July 10, Mencken notes that “Bryan has been oozing around the country since his first day here” (Joshi 175–76). In his dispatch of July 13 about a revival meeting of Holy Rollers in the mountains outside Dayton, Mencken describes a woman who “was bounding all over the place, exactly like a chicken with its head cut off,” and “[e]very time her head came up a stream of yells and barkings would issue out of it” (Joshi 185). The next day, he describes Bryan as “a bit mangy and flea-bitten” and notes that “Bryan has his fishy eye” on “larger birds to snare—larger and juicier” (Joshi 188–89). On July 16, Mencken refers to Bryan as “[t]his old buzzard,” who, “having failed to raise the mob against its rulers, now prepares to raise it against its teachers” (Joshi 197). The next day, Mencken writes that “Bryan has been roving around in the tall grass for years” and that “he knows the bucolic mind” (Joshi 199). On July 18, he observes: “The Scopes trial, from the start, has been carried on in a manner exactly fitted to the anti-evolution law and the simian imbecility under it” (Joshi 202). Moreover, the case “serves notice on the country that Neandertal man is organizing in these forlorn backwaters of the land, led by a fanatic...” (Joshi 203). In his obituary in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* (27 July 1927) for Bryan, who died suddenly several days after the end of the trial, Mencken recalls the “malicious animal magnetism” that “seemed to radiate from him” (208), and concludes: “Thus he fought his last fight, eager only for blood... He bit right and left, like a dog with rabies” (Joshi 209).

Mencken’s daily bulletins from Dayton were, according to Lingeman, “no doubt read avidly” by Lewis (266), who must have been amused by Mencken’s reference to “the Dayton Babbitts” in his dispatch of July 15 (Joshi 192), and who may have drawn some inspiration from Mencken in his satirical use of animal imagery in *Elmer Gantry* in general and in the episode of Frank Shallard’s lecture “Are the Fundamentalists Witch Hunters?” in particular. When Shallard arrives in the “roaring modern city in the Southwest” (389), he finds all the posters announcing his lecture defaced, and at his hotel there is an anonymous typed note signed by “The Committee”:

We don’t want you and your hellish atheism here. We can think for ourselves without any imported “liberals.” If you enjoy life, you’d better be out of this decent Christian city before evening. God help you if you

aren’t! We have enough mercy to give warning, but enough of God’s justice to see you get yours right if you don’t listen. Blasphemers get what they ask for. We wonder if you would like the feeling of a blacksnake across your lying face? (390)

In spite of this threat and a telephone tip-off from a brother preacher in town, Shallard defiantly and rather foolishly goes to the lecture hall to give his lecture. In response to Shallard’s opening sentence, “a leonine man” in the audience, “who was either an actor, a congressman, or a popular clergyman,” shouts: “Outrageous!” (390). Shallard nevertheless proceeds to quote “the Fundamentalist who asserted that evolutionists were literally murderers, because they killed orthodox faith, and ought therefore to be lynched...” (391), alluding perhaps to Bryan, whose “ranting about the Leopold-Loeb case,” according to Mencken’s dispatch of July 17, 1925, on the Scopes Trial, culminated “in the argument that learning was corrupting—that the colleges by setting science above Genesis were turning students into murderers” (Joshi 199). “Think how they [the Fundamentalists] would rule this nation,” Shallard pleads, “and compel the more easy-going half-liberal clergy to work with them, if they had the power!” (391). In the audience there are “constant grunts” of “That’s a lie!” Shallard now sees “marching into the hall a dozen tough young men,” who “stood ready for action, looking expectantly toward the line of prosperous Christian Citizens.” “And you have here in your own city,” Shallard continues, “a minister of the gospel who enjoys bellowing that any one who disagrees with him is a Judas.” “That’s enough!” cries someone in the back of the hall, and the young men “gallop” down the aisle toward Shallard, “their eyes hot with cruelty, teeth like a fighting dog’s, hands working—he could feel them at his neck” (391).

Shallard is thrust through a door into a half-lighted alley and then into a car, which heads to the countryside. One of the men in the car, a bartender, says: “We told you to get out of town. We gave you your chance. By God, you’ll learn something now, you God damned atheist—and probably a damn’ socialist or I.W.W. too!” (392). Then, he “gouged Frank’s cheek with his strong fingernails.” Struggling to rise, Shallard feels the “fingers—just two fingers, demon-strong” of the leader of the group, characterized as “the gaunt fanatic,” “close on his neck,” while the bartender’s fist smashes his jaw (392). When the car stops by a large tree at the edge of a cornfield, the bartender suggests hanging Shallard with a tow-rope, but the gaunt man gives the order: “Just hurt him enough so he’ll remember, and then he can go back and tell his atheist friends it ain’t healthy for ’em in real Christian parts” (393). Shallard is taken out in the cornfield,

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where the gaunt one snarls: "This'll do." While the bartender holds Shallard, the gaunt one whips him repeatedly across the face with "a coiled black leather whip, a whip for mules" (393). An hour later, a motorcycle policeman finds Shallard "in the ditch, in half delirium." "Another drunk!" says the policeman, but as he stoops and sees Shallard's half-hidden face, he whispers: "Good God Almighty!" The doctors tell Shallard later that "though the right eye was gone completely, he might not entirely lose the sight of the other for perhaps a year" (394).

Schorer views Shallard as a good but weak character who "presents no challenge to Elmer" and "serves only to illustrate the ruthlessness of Elmer's power" ("Sinclair Lewis and the Method of Half-Truths" 120). But Schorer misses the supreme irony of Christian fundamentalists, defending divine creation against the Darwinian descent of man from the mammals, by behaving like vicious animals attacking and nearly killing Shallard, the only major character in the novel with whom no animal imagery is associated at all. The "animal" Gantry, to be sure, survives a potential public scandal to become pastor of the Yorkville Methodist Church in New York City and executive director of "Napap" or the National Association for the Purification of Art and the Press. "Here," according to Lingeman, "Lewis is extrapolating into the future his vision of what might happen if fundamentalists gained the power to regulate morality, art, and education in America," for "Gantry's personal goal is to become the moral dictator of America—an 'American Pope' like Rev. John Roach Straton" (306).

Lingeman alludes here (cf. Lingeman 268) to an article entitled "The Fundamentalist Pope," which had appeared in Mencken's *American Mercury* in July 1926, when Lewis was working on his novel (cf. Hutchisson 143); no doubt Straton's vice crusades (Walker 260) in Mencken's hometown Baltimore (1908–1913), Norfolk, Virginia (1913–1918), and New York (after 1918) influenced Lewis's portrayal of Gantry's vice crusades in *Zenith* (starting in ch. 23). Bryan had planned to call Straton as an expert witness for the prosecution at the Scopes Trial, but Straton's testimony was not needed. However, "when the Lord called Bryan from the scene of battle," as further noted in the article, "the mantle of the Fundamentalist leader was grasped by Straton," and "the foes of the evolution heresy could have no better leader," for "long before the Scopes trial he was hard at it." Straton visited, for example,

the infidel Museum of Natural History in New York and reported that [it] was poisoning the minds and corrupting the morals of children with an exhibit of skulls in the Hall of the Age of Man. "That exhibit," he said, "is treason to God Almighty and a libel on the human race." He suggested that instead of the skulls

there should be an exhibit starting with a Bible open at Genesis, with a red arrow pointing to the first verse. (Walker 263)

The editor of the *American Mercury* and the author of *Elmer Gantry* were, themselves, widely caricatured with animal imagery, as documented most cleverly for posterity in Mencken's collection of invectives against himself, quoted from diverse published sources (mostly newspapers), in *Menckenianna: A Schimpflexikon*, published by Knopf in 1928. Arranged in various categories, the *Schimpflexikon* begins with "zoological" references (1–10), in which Mencken is called, among other things, a weasel, maggot, buzzard, jackal, tadpole, toad, man-eating tiger, mountain-goat, ape, dog, pole-cat, hyena, fly, mosquito, pig, skunk, parasite, mangy mongrel, and, of course, monkey. Lewis is named with Mencken in a number of quotes in other categories, but the "zoological" references include one, where it is noted: "To further the mysterious processes and purposes of life such human beings as Lewis and Mencken have their ordained place, together with the jackals and the weeds, the vermin and the microbes" (3), the "microbes" alluding perhaps to the recently published book *Microbe Hunters* (1926) by Paul de Kruif, who was Lewis's collaborator in writing *Arrowsmith* (1925). Of course, it is ironic that Mencken and Lewis are given "their ordained place" among lower forms of life, while their evangelical opponents insist on the divine origin of human beings. But Straton supplied their rationale when he lectured in August 1925 on the topic of "Monkey Men and Monkey Morals" and argued that by denying the divine origin of the Bible evolutionists were allowing mankind to slide into atheism and gross immorality (Walker 262).

Mencken defended *Elmer Gantry* in 1927 by clarifying the author's intention: "Lewis does not argue in it that *all* evangelical clergymen are like his grotesque hero; he merely argues that such men exist" ("The Rev. Clergy"), as demonstrated, for example, by Hibben, whose biography of Beecher in the same year would, in Mencken's words, "afford instructive but extremely unpleasant reading to those defenders of the sacred cloth who [had] been bawling that...Lewis's *Elmer Gantry* [was] a libel" ("An American Saint"). "Gantry lives," Mencken proclaimed the following year, "and I believe that he will live longer than those who most dislike him" ("Babbitt Redivivus"), for example, Straton, who died in 1929, or Schorer, who died in 1977.

Indeed, Gantry is the forerunner of such modern televangelists as Jimmy Swaggart or Jim Bakker, and that is why, according to Hutchisson, "*Elmer Gantry* remains a readable and relevant novel" (148). In *Elmer Gantry*, Lewis played, as

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Lingeman puts it, the role of “Paul Revere, attempting to rouse the country against fundamentalist fascism” (307). Lingeman finds, however, that “in a time of errant televangelists and evolution-banning creationists, [Lewis’s] charges against Gantry are hardly shocking” (307). Nevertheless, “Fundamentalism is,” as Charles Fecher noted in 1999, “bigger and more powerful, and infinitely richer, than it ever was in 1925” (14), when Darrow and Mencken made a fool or “monkey” out of Bryan at the Scopes Trial. In light of the increasing intrusion of religion into politics, science, and public education in America today, the threat of a “fundamentalist fascism” should not be dismissed entirely as something that “can’t happen here,” and certainly the terrifying episode in chapter 29 of *Elmer Gantry* serves as a powerful reminder of the intolerance and violence of extreme Christian fundamentalists, who defend divine creation against the evolutionary descent of man from the mammals, but who are capable of behaving like vicious animals when they physically attack or even kill those who disagree with them.

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## IT CAN HAPPEN HERE

Richard Lingeman has brought to our attention *It Can Happen Here: Authoritarian Peril in the Age of Bush* by Joe Conason (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2007).

The following is an excerpt:

Can it happen here? Is it happening here already? That depends, as a recent president might have said, on what the meaning of “it” is.

To Sinclair Lewis, who sardonically titled his 1935 dystopian novel *It Can't Happen Here*, “it” plainly meant an American version of the totalitarian dictatorships that had seized power in Germany and Italy. Married at the time to the pioneering reporter Dorothy Thompson, who had been expelled from Berlin by the Nazis a year earlier and quickly became

one of America's most outspoken critics of fascism, Lewis was acutely aware of the domestic and foreign threats to American freedom. So often did he and Thompson discuss the crisis in Europe and the implications of Europe's fate for the Depression-wracked United States that, according to his

biographer, Mark Schorer, Lewis referred to the entire topic somewhat contemptuously as “it.”...

If “it” denotes the police state American-style as imagined and satirized by Lewis, complete with concentration camps, martial law, and mass executions of strikers and other dissidents, then “it” hasn't happened here and isn't likely to happen anytime soon.

For contemporary Americans, however, “it” could signify our own more gradual and insidious turn toward authoritarian rule. That is why Lewis's darkly funny but grim fable of an authoritarian coup achieved through a democratic election still resonates today—along with all the eerie parallels between what he imagined then and what we live with now....

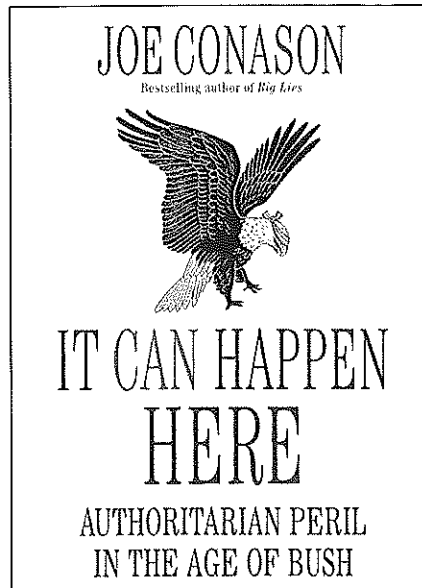
For the first time since the resignation of Richard M. Nixon more than three decades ago, Americans have had reason to doubt the future of democracy and the rule of law in our own country. Today we live in a state of tension between the enjoyment of traditional freedoms, including the protections afforded to speech and person by the Bill of Rights, and the disturbing realization that those freedoms have been undermined and may be abrogated at any moment.

Such foreboding, which would have been dismissed as paranoia not so long ago, has been intensified by the unfolding crisis of political legitimacy in the capital. George W. Bush has repeatedly asserted and exercised authority that he does not possess under the Constitution he swore to uphold. He has announced that he intends to continue exercising power according to his claim of a mandate that erases the separation and balancing of power among the branches of government, frees him from any real obligation to obey laws passed by Congress, and permits him to ignore any provisions of the Bill of Rights that may prove inconvenient.

Whether his fellow Americans understand exactly what Bush is doing or not, his six years in office have created intense public anxiety. Much of that anxiety can be attributed to fear of terrorism, which Bush has exacerbated to suit his own purposes—as well as to increasing concern that the world is threatened by global warming, pandemic diseases, economic insecurity, nuclear proliferation, and other perils with which this presidency cannot begin to cope.

As the midterm election showed, more and more Americans realize that something has gone far wrong at the highest levels of government and politics—that Washington's one-party regime had created a daily spectacle of stunning incompetence and dishonesty. Pollsters have found large majorities of voters worrying that the country is on the wrong track. At this writing, two of every three voters give that answer, and they are not just anxious but furious. Almost half are willing to endorse the censure of the president.

Suspicion and alienation extend beyond the usual disgruntled Democrats to independents and even a significant minority of Republicans. A surprisingly large segment of the electorate is willing to contemplate the possibility of impeaching the president, unappetizing though that prospect should be to anyone who can recall the destructive impeachment of Bush's predecessor. ✍





## DEPARTMENTS

### SINCLAIR LEWIS NOTES

Good news. The film adaptation of *Babbitt* is now available from the video dealer Hollywood's Attic. Here's their description:

*Babbitt* (1934)

Aline MacMahon, Guy Kibbee, Claire Dodd, Maxine Doyle. *Babbitt*, Sinclair Lewis's satirical novel of the American "middle class," was first filmed as a silent in 1924, then as a talkie ten years later. In this second version, Guy Kibbee portrays George Babbitt, a small town businessman whose sense of self-importance has turned him into a pompous ass. Only Babbitt's loving wife (Aline MacMahon) sees the decent man behind the fatuous facade.

Here's the link to order: <http://www.hollywoodsattic.com/shopping/Pricelist.asp?special=yes&prid=3944>

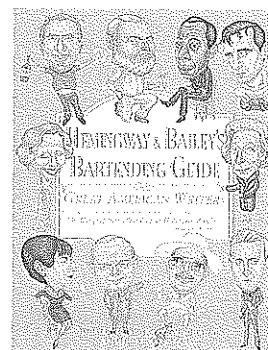
Julia Keller of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote an essay on the Great American Novel (GAN) on Sunday, July 1, 2007, in the Arts and Entertainment section. I sent her the following, promoting Sinclair Lewis as the author of the GAN:

I read your article in the *Sunday Tribune* and found it thought-provoking. My nomination for the GAN is Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*. The term is still in use all over the place and it describes the tension between small-town America and the rest of the country. When I teach it, my students find it both true and annoying, because the idea of the small-town mentality is very present, even in larger communities. My other two suggestions are also Lewis novels: *Babbitt*, a story of the businessman in America, and again still very true; and *It Can't Happen Here*, about a fascist who is elected president. It always scares my students into voting. Thanks for bringing the conversation forward.

Her response was very gracious: "I was thinking about Lewis recently; the movie version of *Dodsworth* aired, and I was reminded of how adept he was at a sly but telling social criticism.

A much underrated writer, I think. *Main Street* really holds up as a novel, even though times have (ostensibly) changed so very much."

*Hemingway & Bailey's Bartending Guide to Great American Writers*, by Mark Bailey with illustrations by Edward Hemingway, Ernest's grandson, has been published by Algonquin. The book was featured in the Quality Paperback Book Club promotions for spring 2007. Described as "A true toast to the literary class," it includes a quote by Sinclair Lewis, "What's the use of winning the Nobel Prize if it doesn't even get you into speak-easies?" It includes 43 classic cocktail recipes with snippets of literary history and prose as well as portraits of a number of writers, including Dorothy Parker, James Jones, and John Cheever.



Reviewer Scott Stossel speaks admiringly of *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* by Sarah E. Igo (Harvard UP, 2007) in the *New York Times Book Review* (Jan. 21, 2007:10). Igo's thesis is, according to Stossel, "that the advent of new techniques of measurement not only helped give birth to the modern social sciences but also changed the way America thinks of itself." Igo examines *Middletown* by Robert and Helen Lynd, as well as the rise of the Gallup and Roper polls, and the Kinsey reports, as feeding the intense interest Americans have about themselves. Stossel does note however, "You can learn as much about life on Main Street from Sinclair Lewis as from the Lynds."

Langdon Hammer has edited *Hart Crane: Complete Poems and Selected Letters* for the Library of America (2007). In a review of this collection in the *New York Times Book Review* (Jan. 28, 2007: 18-19) critic William Logan discusses Crane's relatively short, unhappy life and astute poetics. Logan writes,

Crane was no innovative genius like Whitman; he

was perhaps closer to a peasant poet like John Clare, an outsider too susceptible to praise and other vices of the city. Defensive about his lack of education, a Midwestern striver out of a Sinclair Lewis novel, Crane tried to make it among the big-city literary men, gripping a rum in one hand and a copy of *The Waste Land* in the other. Had beauty been enough, he might even have succeeded.

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An inscription found in a copy of *They Still Say No* by Wells Lewis (his only novel): "For Elaine Boylan, who knows her Southwest—and writes about it. With the appreciation of the author's mother, Grace Hegger Lewis. April, 1939."

## SINCLAIR LEWIS SCHOLARSHIP

Killough, George. "German Catholicism, Sauk Centre, and Sinclair Lewis." *American Literary Realism* 39.2 (2007): 109–25.

German Catholicism surrounded the teenage Sinclair Lewis in Sauk Centre, Minnesota. As a deeply Old World culture with rich learning and splendid architecture, it nourished Lewis's youthful imagination. Because he was grateful for this influence, the brief references to the Catholic Church in his novels are respectful and positive—a remarkable fact, given his distaste for organized religion. More important, his experience with German Catholicism helped him see what the Protestant Midwest lacked and simultaneously gave him reason to hope that the great American experiment in the vast American continent might one day express its soul in an elegant material way as the Old World already had.

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McGuire, David. "An Empty Vision: The American Dream on *Main Street*." *Midwestern Miscellany* 33 (2005): 55–72.

This essay follows the work of Glen Love and James Marshall in examining the role of the pioneer in Carol Kennicott's drive to improve Gopher Prairie. McGuire sees Carol as representative of the shortcomings of the American Dream. Her best attributes, ambition, confidence, and sensitivity, are also those traits that lead to her failure. Unlike pioneers who wanted to make something out of the "nothing" they saw as the virgin

land, Carol wants to transform Gopher Prairie. And because her desire to make changes is seen as arrogant or misguided by many of the townspeople, Carol is often disliked or ignored. The novel exposes two truths about the people of small towns. One is that they are dull and unimaginative, and two, they are unwilling to change, even when they realize their limitations. Seaton discusses Carol's attempts to make changes on both an aesthetic and spiritual basis, but the pioneer stock of 50 years ago has devolved to the Champ Perrys who look back to the past. Miles Bjornstam is the closest to the pioneer spirit, but his independence from the rest of the town is also what leads to the destruction of his family and his eventual isolation. McGuire sees in "Main Street's Been Paved!" the final defeat of Carol because she has become so timid, even to the extent of wanting to vote for Coolidge for president. I wonder if he would revise his conclusion any on knowing about "Main Street Goes to War," where Carol not only seems more active in the community but has also developed a more affectionate relationship with her husband, Will.

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Seaton, James. "Religion and Literature in Sinclair Lewis and Willa Cather." *MidAmerica* 32 (2005): 31–37.

Seaton compares the presentation of religion in Willa Cather's *The Professor's House* and Lewis's *Elmer Gantry*. He notes that Cather shows how "art and religion bring order and meaning to life" (32) while *Elmer Gantry* "not only fails to give meaning and order to life, but also fails so completely that an observer of that world—a reader—would have to agree with H. L. Mencken that only boobs and morons could possibly fall for it" (33). It is clear that Seaton disapproves of Lewis's portrayal of religion, evident even in a typo in which he states, "*Elmer Gantry* itself is dedicated to H. L. Mencken 'without [*sic*] admiration'" (33). Seaton wants to make a close correlation of the beliefs of Professor St. Peter to Cather and Frank Shallard to Lewis. This is a simple-minded and naïve assumption, especially since Seaton uses it to claim that *Elmer Gantry* "seems dated while *The Professor's House* is as fresh as ever" (37). Because he notes that Shallard is boring and not a strong preacher, his "well-meaning theological liberalism" is not relevant to human life while the conviction of St. Peter that art and religion both make human happiness possible has a greater moral weight.

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Other Lewis Scholarship:

Bunge, Nancy. "The Minnesota School: Sinclair Lewis's Influence on Frederick Manfred." *North Dakota Quarterly* 70 (2003): 118–25.

Delton, Jennifer. "Before the White Negro: Sin and Salvation in *Kingsblood Royal*." *American Literary History* 15 (2003): 311–33.

Duclos-Orsello, Elizabeth Ann. "Bonds of Fellowship: Imagining, Building, and Negotiating Community in St. Paul, Minnesota, 1900–1920." Diss. Boston U, 2003.

Thompson, Graham. *Male Sexuality under Surveillance: The Office in American Literature*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2003.

## WEB NOTES

*Over 84,000 people have accessed the Sinclair Lewis website in the last two years since the website was revamped. There has been a lot of interest in Lewis's political views, especially on fascism, as well as his general interest in popular culture. The website has been receiving lots of interesting e-mails, several connected to Lewis's Welsh heritage, including one from an artist in Anglesey, Wales and another from the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. And, of course, there are more queries about that elusive quote, "When fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the flag and carrying a cross." Here are some of the questions that have been received recently.*

I am writing with a question about Sinclair Lewis, whose path may have crossed that of Ayn Rand, whom I am currently researching. I initially wrote to Richard Lingeman, who was not able to answer my question, but thought you might be able to help.

In the archives of her papers, I saw that Sinclair Lewis had autographed a book to Ayn Rand, and that she had drafted a long letter to him. She ordinarily kept carbons of her letters; in this case, there is no carbon, only a hand-written draft. There is no reply. (But of course he could have replied by telephone.) Therefore, I do not know if the letter was ever sent or received. I do not see her listed as a correspondent in the Beinecke papers. Nor do I know how they met—although there are several people they both knew, including H. L. Mencken, Melville Cane, and Gouverneur Morris.

I have read with interest and admiration several of Sinclair Lewis's novels, including later ones, but I am not a Sinclair Lewis scholar. That is why I am seeking advice. Do you know of any connection between them in the mid-1930s in the New York area? Would you be able to tell me how to

find out if her undated letter (probably 1935 or 1936) was sent and received?

I would be grateful for any advice and direction you can offer me.

With hope,

Shoshana Milgram Knapp

Associate Professor of English

Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061

dashiell@vt.edu, office telephone: (540) 231-8462

I'm looking into the possible Welsh connections of Sinclair Lewis. I've checked ancestry.com and as yet I am unable to find a connection. There are a few references on the web but I cannot find any proof. I wondered if you could throw some light on this?

[Sinclair Lewis was of Welsh ancestry. According to a biographical sketch he wrote in the early 1930s, his ancestors on his father's side were Welsh miners but this would have been seven or eight generations before him. I do know that his father's family was in the United States from the early 1800s on.]

I am an opinion columnist for the *Athens Banner-Herald*, the daily newspaper here in Athens, GA. Sinclair Lewis quotes often appear in my columns like this one. Hope you enjoy it. Have been a Lewis lover since my college days in the '60s and back in 1985 I had an article about Lewis printed in the "Main Street Remembers Sinclair Lewis" booklet published in his hometown of Sauk Centre, MN, during the Lewis Centennial. This column appeared June 23 in the Athens paper and was reprinted in the anti-Bush Smirking Chimp website out of New York City. Keep up the good work with the Lewis Society. Will contact you about becoming a member. Please view my website, edtant.com.

Here's an excerpt from the column:

"True Conservatives Standing Up to Bush" by Ed Tant

"When fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the flag and carrying a cross," vowed Nobel Prize-winning novelist Sinclair Lewis more than 70 years ago. Today's America, more and more misled by George W. Bush and his Bible-brandishing base of faux conservative followers, is indeed becoming more and more like some sort of high-tech fascist state, as the president thumbs his nose at the U.S. Constitution while the courts and the legislative branch usually show little resistance to the dictatorial

mindset of the Bush/Cheney White House crew.

Writer Lewis knew what he was talking about when he spoke of fascism coming to a nation that claims to be the land of the free. When Hitler came to power in Germany, the satirical and iconoclastic novels by Lewis were thrown into the flames during book burnings there. Lewis rightly considered it a high compliment that he was disliked by fascists, and as Hitler and his henchmen consolidated their power in Germany in the 1930s, the writer penned a powerful novel of an America under the iron heel of a dictator.

Titled *It Can't Happen Here*, the 1935 novel tells the tale of an America ruled by a homegrown Hitler, President Buzz Windrip, a smiling, glad-handing politico in the mold of Sen. Huey Long of Louisiana. In real life, Lewis was the target of spying by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, along with other American writers like Ernest Hemingway, Upton Sinclair and John Steinbeck. One doesn't have to look too far to see that a police state can indeed happen here, if we let it happen.

To read the full story, go to <http://www.smirkingchimp.com/thread/8266>.

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Just been reading Claud Cockburn's autobiography *I, Claud* and came across the amusing episode where (in Berlin, I think) SL rendered his parody of the song "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier": "I didn't raise my boy to be a bourgeois; I raised him to be the Third International's pride and joy. But the son of a bitch has gone and gotten rich, my boy! my boy! my boy!"

Is this recognized as part of the SL oeuvre? Is this all there is of it? And when was SL in Germany?

Any info gratefully received, Paul (in Wales)

[Thanks for writing. I hadn't heard the parody before, but it doesn't surprise me. Lewis could extemporize at the drop of a hat and often did it in other voices or other languages. I'll have to pass this on to the folks at the Lewis Society.

Lewis traveled a lot in Europe and actually died in Rome in 1951. He visited Berlin in 1925 with his first wife and traveled all around Germany, including Munich, Nuremberg, and other parts of Bavaria, on that trip. He was back in Germany in 1927 where he met the journalist Dorothy Thompson who would become his second wife the following year. She was thrown out of Germany by Hitler in the early 1930s after her book, *I Saw Hitler*, was published in 1932. He returned to Europe after WWII but I don't know whether he went back to Germany or spent most of his time in England and Italy.]

Thanks for that. Actually, maybe that parody wasn't SL at all. Claud Cockburn says: "The German guests wished to start a discussion of trends in modern world literature. Lewis, for his part, was anxious to give a rendering of a song he had just heard or just composed, a parody of 'I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier.'"

Whoever it was, I rather like it!

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Is there a good account of the visit that Sinclair Lewis and Dorothy Thompson paid Franz Werfel and Alma Mahler-Werfel in Austria during the summer of 1933? Is there anything by Lewis or Thompson? I am researching a book about Alma's daughter with the architect Walter Gropius, Manon. Perhaps Lewis or Thompson took notice of her. [Unfortunately I have not been able to find any references to the trip in any biographies of Lewis. Franz Werfel is mentioned briefly as one of a number of people that Lewis socialized with in Hollywood in 1943 in the biography of Lewis by Mark Schorer (1961).

There are two major Thompson biographies. Marion Sanders's *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time* (1973) mentions Alma only in connection with her leaving Walter Gropius to marry Franz Werfel. *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson* by Peter Kurth (1990) mentions her twice, once as socializing with DT in 1925 and a second reference about Alma and Franz coming to lunch in 1935 at Lewis and Thompson's farm in Twin Farms, Vermont.]

Thanks very much! If I find something, I will pass it on. Do you think that SL or DT were in Vienna in April 1935? I think they were back in the U.S. if memory serves correct. I will be looking at the signature book for Manon Gropius's funeral later this year. [Probably not. They were together in Bermuda in February 1935 and had a falling out (which they often did). The Schorer biography has them returning to Bronxville, NY, after Bermuda and then sailing to Europe on August 31, 1935. In between he wrote the antifascist novel *It Can't Happen Here*.

From what I can tell from the Thompson biographies, Dorothy was doing a lecture tour in the spring, interrupted only by her trip to Bermuda with Lewis.]

One last thing, I wanted to ask you if Werfel's character in *Hearken unto the Voice (Höret die Stimme)* Dorothy Cowell ("a journalist," "very well known in the corridors of the League of Nations," "black hair with a grey streak in it") might be based on Dorothy Thompson? Pages 3ff., the first chapter might be enough and it suggests the personality ("independent and rather domineering"). I am rereading this book for its *Totenbeschwörer* subtext that is not really that *sub-vis-à-vis* Werfel's stepdaughter, Manon Gropius. [I wouldn't

be at all surprised. The physical description and personality are quite similar. Lewis represented Thompson in several of his novels, most unflatteringly in *Gideon Planish* where she is called "The Talking Woman." As the relationship between Lewis and Thompson deteriorated, he specifically noted how her strong political opinions and constant discussion of them got on his nerves. He once quipped that he was going to name Hitler as the correspondent in their divorce since she talked about him so frequently.]

The "love" interest in this novel—which has a long flashback to the book of Jeremiah—is between Dorothy and a widower character that Werfel loosely based on him but incorporated his grief for Manon Gropius if not his desire. In the German version he is misnamed Jeeves instead of Reeves, which was done to save the novel from any association with P.G. Wodehouse! Usually, Werfel's books are taken from life and he must have had some sidelong affection for DT for DC is not disparaging.

I hate to bother you with a trivial question but when I was in college (25 years ago) I read a book about prisons that I believe was written by Sinclair Lewis. I am not able to remember the title and hope that you might assist me, either by telling me the title or that Lewis was not the author. I am interested in rereading it for professional reasons. A colleague in probation and parole said that the theme, as I remember it, reform or punishment, was no longer relevant. Any assistance would be appreciated. [Thank you for writing. I think that the novel you're referring to is *Ann Vickers*. Lewis wrote it in the early 1930s after receiving the Nobel Prize. The title character starts out in settlement work and later in life runs a women's prison. There are some very provocative ideas about prison reform and some of the critiques of penal institutions are unfortunately still true. Hope you enjoy the novel. Do let me know what you think of it.]

Could you please inform me if Sinclair Lewis wrote a book based in a Mexican housing block. I read this book in the early seventies and I would like to read it again. Could you please send me the title if it exists. [I have no knowledge of a book with that description. Upton Sinclair wrote a book in the 1930s called *Co-op* which dealt with cooperative housing in California and included a variety of ethnic groups, but that's the closest I can think of to that theme.]

I am responding to your Sinclair Lewis website. I would love

to visit Sauk Centre and enjoy the city of Sinclair Lewis. Do you have any suggestions re hotels etc. to get into the spirit of the visit? I believe Sinclair worked at one hotel as a night clerk. Thanking you in advance for any suggestions. [I'd definitely recommend the Palmer House. That's the hotel where Lewis was a night clerk (before he got fired for reading on the job). The rooms have been modernized but the lobby maintains the old-fashioned feel of a hotel in the early 1900s. There are even some artifacts connected with Lewis. The hotel has a very nice restaurant and also a bar. It's within walking distance of the Sinclair Lewis Boyhood Home. Hope this was helpful and that you enjoy your visit.]

I am writing a book on Scots Americans and Scotch-Irish Americans in Minnesota. Do you know if Sinclair Lewis was of Scottish descent? His name is very Scottish but could also be Welsh. [Sinclair Lewis's ancestors on his father's side were definitely Welsh, although supposedly his father's mother was descended from Peregrine White who sailed to the U.S. on the Mayflower. His mother was of Yorkshire descent.]

To what extent did Sinclair Lewis have a knowledge of the medical profession and its practices at the time of his writing of what I consider his best novel, *Arrowsmith*? [Lewis had a pretty good knowledge of medical practices at the time. His father was one of the most respected doctors in Sauk Centre and his brother Claude was a doctor as well. Even the scene in *Main Street* where Dr. Kennicott does an emergency operation out at a farm in the middle of the night is based on something that happened when Lewis accompanied his father. I know too that *Arrowsmith* is often taught in medical schools to give students a sense of the development of medicine at the beginning of the twentieth century.]

Can you still get the hardcover book *Hike and the Aeroplane* from YaleBooks??

[Two members responded:

Yale published a limited edition in 1999. There are several copies available through vendors on [www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com). They start at about \$229. Hope this helps. Whether Yale has copies in stock, I don't know, but it is doubtful.

Try also [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com). In my search, a moment ago, I found one for \$140. This edition is, I believe, a bound reproduction of the original. The search also includes some Pastore editions for \$200+, and some originals for \$4,500+.]

## A CONVERSATION ON LEWIS AND CATHEDRALS

A query was posed on the Lewis Listserv about cathedrals:

I was wondering if you know the source or origin of the quote attributed to Mr. Lewis regarding Cathedrals. It states: "He who has seen one cathedral ten times has seen something; he who has seen ten cathedrals once has seen but little; and he who has spent half an hour in each of a hundred cathedrals has seen nothing at all." It is a quote widely attributed to Sinclair Lewis, but I can find no reference to where it originally appeared.

The following are excerpts from our members' responses:

I did find a web site that uses that quote and attributes it to Sinclair Lewis in *Dodsworth*. (Phyllis Whitney)

Not sure of it being in *Dodsworth*; it has been so long since I read it. Reading *Main Street* again. The quote appears in some ways to be a symbolic representation of a deeper meaning, with the cathedral analogy as the literary focal point. It appears to be about life or art. It gets a person to thinking. (Ted Fleener)

There is more to the quote...

"He who has seen one cathedral ten times has seen something; he who has seen ten cathedrals once has seen but little; and he who has spent one-half hour in each of one hundred cathedrals has seen nothing at all. Four hundred pictures on a wall are four hundred times less interesting than one picture; and no one knows a café till he has gone there often enough to know the names of the waiters." I think he's using it as a disparaging remark in reference to American travelers. (Phyllis Whitney)

You can say that again. Americans don't travel, they blitz. This is why Lewis fell in love with Italy and what he was trying to say in *Dodsworth*. I spent two weeks in a villa north of Florence taking tiny, brief trips into town to eat, visit museums and enjoy the culture.

Since then, I've tried to take all my trips the same way. Lewis would be proud. (Dave Simpkins, *Sauk Centre Herald*)

York Walks provides photographs of one cathedral, ten times: York Minster photographed in early 2004. "He who has seen one cathedral ten times has seen something; he who has seen ten cathedrals once has seen but little; and he who has spent half an hour in each of a hundred cathedrals has seen nothing at all." —Sinclair Lewis [http://www.yorkstories.co.uk/york\\_walks-](http://www.yorkstories.co.uk/york_walks-2/minster_views.htm)

[2/minster\\_views.htm](http://www.yorkstories.co.uk/york_walks-2/minster_views.htm) (Laurel Hessing sent this great website that displays the quote.)



*One Cathedral, Ten Times: York Minster*

The Lewis cathedral quote makes me think in more general terms about the appeal of cathedrals to Americans and to American writers like Sinclair Lewis, in particular. Think of Henry Adams writing about Chartres or Nathaniel Hawthorne, who writes about both Lichfield and Lincoln Cathedrals in his book about England, *Our Old Home*. Hawthorne says:

A Gothic cathedral is surely the most wonderful work which mortal man has yet achieved, so vast, so intricate, and so profoundly simple, with such strange, delightful recesses in its grand figure, so difficult to comprehend within one idea, and yet all so consonant that it ultimately draws the beholder and his universe into its harmony. It is the only thing in the world that is vast enough and rich enough.

As an American, Hawthorne is fascinated by the cathedral's vast age and by its symbolism of a lost medieval world view—so different from the American view of the world. He is constantly remarking on how old everything is in England; it amazes him to think of families occupying the same village for hundreds of years, generations of them walking the same footpaths and filling the same churchyards. America, by contrast, is so young and feels so impermanent.

Lewis must have been inspired by similar thoughts. The state of Minnesota is still only 150 years old; I wonder to what extent Europe fed Lewis's hunger to create a history for his fictional Minnesota, especially in *The God-Seeker*.

Hawthorne says that Lincoln Cathedral "took possession" of him. I confess that I recently took not ten, but fifteen photographs of Lincoln Cathedral's west front. (Rob Hardy) ✎

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## PART OF LEWIS'S LIBRARY FOR SALE

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Ingrid Lin of *Between the Covers Rare Books* writes that a collection of 45 books from Sinclair Lewis's library is being offered for sale. Each one bears his signature or initials and many are of biographical importance. None have their original dust jackets, if issued with such; Lewis apparently did not care to keep them. There is a range of subject matter represented in this selection, which provides a nice insight into Lewis's literary and academic interests. The collection is being sold for \$12,500.

Lewis is described by the bookseller as an important writer, depicting American life in a nonsentimental, critical, and even satirical light. He did not shy away from controversial topics and many of his novels were banned. His own temperamental personality, fueled by his alcoholism, usually ensured that he was always involved in some quarrel or drama, whether professional or personal.

The following description of the collection is by the bookseller:

Among the most important books in this collection, are H. G. Wells's *The History of Mr. Polly*, Joseph Conrad's *Youth*, and a pictorial travel book on Scandinavia.

When Lewis graduated from Yale in 1908, he earned his living writing short stories for various magazines and selling plots to Jack London. His first published book was a Tom Swift-styled potboiler which he wrote using the pseudonym Tom Graham, *Hike and the Aeroplane* (1912). His first serious novel published under his own name was *Our Mr. Wrenn: The Romantic Adventures of a Gentle Man* in 1914. According to his biographer, Mark Schorer, *Mr. Wrenn* owed quite a big debt to H. G. Wells's novel, *The History of Mr. Polly*:

Yet for all the oblique resemblances in character and the direct resemblances in experience, the central figure of the novel is drawn not so much from life as from the fiction of H. G. Wells. The title that comes at once to mind is, of course, *The History of Mr. Polly*; and, more generally, one thinks of H. G. Wells's *Atlantic Monthly* article of January 1912, "The Contemporary Novel," in which, stating his aspirations for fiction, he probably helped Lewis formulate his own....

In 1941 Sinclair Lewis wrote a brief

foreword to a new edition of *Mr. Polly*....  
(Schorer 210)

Lewis greatly admired Wells, to the point that he named his firstborn son, Wells Lewis, after the older writer.

Joseph Conrad's *Youth* is of a particular poignant importance. It was Wells Lewis's own copy, a gift from his father on his thirteenth birthday. Wells was Sinclair Lewis's first child with his first wife, Grace Hegger. Though Lewis was a remote father and seemed hardly involved with Wells's life, their relationship was not unfriendly. Upon hearing that his father won the Nobel, Wells wrote from Phillips Academy at Andover: "*Dear Father*, I couldn't write yesterday because I had both eyes closed with poison ivy. Its wonderful wonderful wonderful about the Nobel prize. The only one you wanted. Oh how proud and happy I am. Eeeeeee! Love and love and love and lots of love from *Wells*" (Schorer 545). Wells Lewis was killed by a sniper in 1944 while serving in WWII.

The copy of *Scandinavia* was presented to Lewis while he was in Stockholm to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. It was a big event, lasting several days with much partying and touring. It was the highlight of Lewis's life and career, but it was an event that was not untouched by controversy. Lewis was the first American to receive the prize, which caused some resentment in Europe. In American literary circles, there were some who grumbled that he did not deserve the distinction and it should have been awarded to Theodore Dreiser. However, despite these negative undercurrents, it was a triumph for Lewis and for American literature:

If Sinclair Lewis's reception of the Nobel prize was the historic event—and his spokesmanlike acceptance of it only the marker of the event—its historic import was not merely in its putting American literature on a par with any other literature in the world, but also in its acknowledging that in the world America was a power that, twenty years before, it had not been, and that, until now, Europe had been reluctant to concede it was. In December 1930 Sinclair Lewis was

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Lewis's Library continued on next page

Lewis's Library continued from previous page

bigger than America knew; proud as he may have been—and he was proud, above all, because he was regarded as of equal importance with three eminent scientists—he was bigger than even he himself knew, or would ever know. Or should one say that he was a smaller writer than he thought and a larger symbol? (Schorer 553–54)

Though these three volumes are stand-outs by virtue of their literary or biographical importance, the remaining volumes of Lewis's personal library each have their own appeal. Howells's *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, though a reprint, was an early addition to Lewis's book collection, having been acquired in 1910. Howell was the first president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a respected figure in the American literary scene of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lewis met Howells in 1916 while both were travelling in Florida:

Among the tourists whom Lewis in fact encountered in St. Augustine were William Dean Howells and his daughter. The occasion is interesting not only because less than fifteen years later the famous Sinclair Lewis was to treat Howells rather unfairly in his remarks about him in the Nobel address, but more particularly because in fact Howells's middle-class liberal optimism was so much like Lewis's own, his social criticism, again like Lewis's, deeply tempered by it. Both, steering a clear line between a surly proletariat and a stuffed plutocracy, wished to assure the middle class that the promise of American life lay in its best values. Savage and boisterous as Lewis's writing was sometimes to be, his reticences about sex and the turmoil of the subjective life were Howells's too. (Schorer 230–31)

At the time of their meeting, Lewis felt differently about Howells and presented the older author with a copy of his second book, *The Trail of the Hawk* (1915).

Other books represent Lewis's wide-ranging interests, from contemporary genre novels by peers or fellow writers whom he knew, to travel books (Lewis was a restless soul his entire life) to research materials for his own works (books on economics, biographies). There is also a selection of Scandinavian literature,

the interest in which might have been inspired by his winning the Nobel Prize.

These volumes from Lewis's library offer a view into his personal interests and tastes and show what some of the influences were on his worldview and subsequently his writing.

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### The Sinclair Lewis Library

(This is the complete list. For a description of the condition of each book and descriptions of the authors, contact Between the Covers.)

*The Twentieth Century New Testament: A Translation into Modern English.* Made from the original Greek (Westcott & Hort's Text) by a company of about twenty scholars representing the various sections of the Christian Church. Revised Edition. New York: Revell, 1904.

*Scandinavie: Danemark, Suede, Norvege, Finlande [Scandinavia: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland].* Stockholm: A.-B. C. E. Fritzes Kgl. Hofbokhandel, 1924.

Adams, Herbert. *The Sloane Square Mystery.* New York: Dial, 1931.

Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Père Goriot.* Paris: Calmann-Levy. French text.

Barnes, Margaret Ayer. *Westward Passage.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931.

Bechofer-Roberts, C. E. *The Mysterious Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: The Life & Work of the Founder of the Theosophical Society. With a note on her successor Annie Besant.* New York: Brewer and Warren, 1931. First edition.

Cannan, Gilbert. *Mummery: A Tale of Three Idealists.* New York: George H. Doran, 1919. First American edition.

Chesterton, Mrs. Cecil. *My Russian Venture.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1931. First edition.

Conrad, Joseph. *Youth and Two Other Stories.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page, 1927. This book was presented by Lewis to his oldest son as a gift, with his inscription on the front free endpaper: "To Wells on his birthday, SL, July 26, 1930." Wells was 13 at this time. A particularly poignant item.

Duguid, Julian. *Green Hell: Adventures in the Mysterious Jungles of Eastern Bolivia.* With a foreword by His Excellency Marques de Merry Del Val, G.C.V.O. Illustrated from photographs taken by members of the expedition. New York: Century, 1931. First edition.

Lewis's Library continued on next page



Lewis's Library continued from previous page

- Fuller, Robert H. *Jubilee Jim: The Life of Colonel James Fisk, Jr.* New York: Macmillan, 1928. First edition.
- Gray, Peter. *Pillar of Salt*. New York: Minton, Balch, 1934. First edition.
- Hart, Moss, and George S. Kaufman. *Once in a Lifetime: A Comedy*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1930. First edition.
- Hersch, Virginia. *Woman under Glass: Saint Teresa of Avila*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930. First edition.
- Howells, William D. *The Rise of Silas Lapham*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884.
- Ibsen, Henrik. *Rosmersholm, The Lady from the Sea, Hedda Gabler*. Edited by William Archer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906.
- Jennings, Walter W. *A History of Economic Progress in the United States*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1926.
- Johnson, Owen. *The Tennessee Shad*. New York: Baker & Taylor, 1911. First edition. Johnson was also an usher at Lewis's wedding to his first wife, Grace Hegger, in 1914.
- Kastein, Josef. *Sabbatai Zewi: Der Messias Von Ismir*. Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt Verlag, 1930. First edition. German text.
- Lagerlöf, Selma. *Charlotte Löwensköld*. Translated from the Swedish by Velma Swanston Howard. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1929.
- Landshoff, Rut. *Die Vielen und der Eine [The Many and the One]*. Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt Verlag, 1930. First edition.
- Larsen, Hanna Astrup, editor. *Sweden's Best Stories: An Introduction to Swedish Fiction*. Translations by Charles Wharton Stork. A Selection of Short Stories by Topelius, Strindberg, Ahlgren, Geijerstam, Heidenstam, Levertin, Lagerlöf, Hallström, Molin, Söderberg, Bo Bergman, Engström, Nordström, Elgström, Siwertz, Sillén. New York: Norton, 1928. First edition. Possibly taken by Lewis to Sweden in 1930 to receive his Nobel Prize for Literature: "Carrying a book called *Swedish in Ten Lessons*, a volume of Swedish short stories in translation, and a book about Alfred Nobel called *Dynamite and Peace*, [Lewis] told reporters further that 'he had been expecting [the prize] for years'" (Schorer 550).
- Leonard, Jonathan. *Sympathetic to Bare Feet*. New York: Viking, 1931. First edition.
- Lindemann, Hermann. *A Pocket-Dictionary of the English and German Languages*. Giving the pronunciation according to the phonetic system of Toussaint-Langenscheidt. Second Part German-English. Berlin-Schöneberg: Langenscheidtsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1911.
- Marshall, Bruce. *Father Malachy's Miracle: A Heavenly Story with an Earthly Meaning*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1931. First edition.
- Morris, William. *The Earthly Paradise: A Poem*. Part III. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1870.
- Nazhivin, Ivan. *The Dogs*. Translated from the Russian. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1931. First edition of this novel about the Russian Revolution as seen through the eyes of dogs.
- Onions, Oliver. *Mushroom Town*. New York: George H. Doran, 1914.
- Oppenheim, E. Phillips. *Stolen Idols*. New York: A. L. Burt, 1925. First edition.
- Osborn, Paul. *The Vinegar Tree: A Play*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1931. First edition.
- Owen, John. *Many Captives*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1930. First edition.
- Pater, Walter. *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*. New York: Macmillan, 1908.
- Pavlovna, Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia. *Education of a Princess: A Memoir*. Translated from the French and Russian under the editorial supervision of Russell Lord. New York: Viking Press, 1931.
- Seabrook, William B. *Jungle Ways*. Photographs by the Author. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931. William Buehler Seabrook was an American Lost Generation occultist, explorer, traveler, and journalist. He and Lewis were friends and drinking buddies.
- Seldes, George. *Can These Things Be!* New York: Brewer and Warren, 1931. First edition.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*. With a preface by Mrs. Stevenson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.
- Tarkington, Booth. *Claire Ambler*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1928. First trade edition.
- Topsoe-Jensen, H. G. *Scandinavian Literature: From Brandes to Our Day*. Translated from the Danish by Isaac Anderson. New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation/W. W. Norton, 1929. First edition.
- Undset, Sigrid. *The Son Avenger*. Translated from the Norwegian by Arthur G. Chater. New York: Knopf, 1930. First American edition.
- Wegerer, Alfred von. *A Refutation of the Versailles War Guilt Thesis*. Translated from the German by Edwin H. Zeydel. Introduction by Harry Elmer Barnes. New York: Knopf, 1930. First American edition.
- Wells, H. G. *The History of Mr. Polly*. New York: Duffield, 1910. First American edition.
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. New York: Bigelow, Smith, 1909.
- Williams, Ben Ames. *An End to Mirth*. New York: Dutton, 1931.
- Wright, Richardson. *The Bed-Book of Travel: Short Pieces to be Read (Preferably in Bed or Berth) by Those Who Have Been Places, Those Who Are Going Somewhere and Those Who Have Wanted to Go*. Together with Seven Travelers' Tales. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1931. First edition.
- Wynne, Anthony. *The White Arrow*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1932. First American edition. ⚡

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## SALE OF A COPY OF *MAIN STREET*, AUTOGRAPHED BY BILL KENNICOTT

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The Sinclair Lewis website recently received this message: "Just dropping you a note that may interest you. I posted a copy of *Main Street* on eBay this week that contains what I find to be a quite unusual inscription from Sinclair Lewis and Will (or Bill) Kennicott. The implications are somewhat obvious and I leave them to you. Hope I'm not troubling you, just wanting to spark interest."

I wrote back: "Thanks very much for the information. What an intriguing copy of *Main Street*. The other signature is probably that of William L. Stiger, an evangelist and friend of Lewis who was also one of the ministers he relied on when researching *Elmer Gantry*."

The volume in question sold for \$264 on eBay. The description that follows is adapted from the eBay website.

This is an exceptionally rare find, signed and inscribed by the author, et al. The book is known as the Photoplay edition, published by Grosset & Dunlap, containing several beautiful lithographs from the Warner Bros. screen classic. The book is in excellent condition.

The inscription reads as follows: "To Mark & Hazel Hopkins, with fraternal greetings from William L. Slidge [somewhat indecipherable]—D.D./ P.D.O—B.I.L.L./ Bill Kennicott M.D./ Sinclair Lewis, M.D., Litt. D."

There are several exciting details about the inscription; however, of premier importance is the signature of Bill Kennicott, a real life doctor whose wife Caroline (Carol in the novel), seems to be the basis for the novel, at least in name. [A bio has been supplemented at the end of this description.] Another rare detail of the inscription is the signature of Sinclair Lewis, who, seemingly after signing his name at the end of a list of other doctors and such with detailed titles, added his own titles "M.D., Litt. D." in jest.

The book was acquired directly from the estate of Mark Hopkins, to whom the book is inscribed.

This is an extremely rare find, linking fact with fiction and exhibiting the wit and humor of Sinclair Lewis, the United States' first Nobel Prize winner for literature. The following is a short biography of Kennicott taken from the website [www.drizzle.com/~jtenlen/bios/kennicott.txt](http://www.drizzle.com/~jtenlen/bios/kennicott.txt):

Guy William Kennicott, M.D.: Dr. Guy William Kennicott, proprietor of the Chehalis General [Washington] Hospital and one of the leading physicians

and surgeons of that city, was born on the 29th of January, 1859, in Chicago, Illinois, and is a son of Dr. William H. and Caroline (Chapman) Kennicott. His grandparents came to this country from England and were of English and Scotch descent. It was as early as 1831 that the doctor's father became a resident of Chicago, where he began the practice of medicine two years later. He was the owner of nine hundred and sixty acres of land situated fifteen miles from the courthouse in Chicago and now within the limits of that rapidly developing city. He became well known throughout that locality and died there in 1862. His widow long survived him and was making her home with her oldest son in California at the time of her death in 1912.

Dr. Kennicott of this review completed his literary education at Northwestern University of Evanston, Illinois, and later entered Rush Medical College, from which he was graduated with the degree of M.D. in 1885. For ten years he engaged in practice in Chicago but in the meantime visited the Sound country in 1893 and finally located in Chehalis in 1895. At that time the city contained a population of only about one thousand and the district round about was wild and unimproved. Very few roads had been laid out and few bridges built and in his early practice here the doctor rode horseback, carrying his medicines and instruments in old-fashioned saddlebags. No matter what kind the weather he never failed to answer a call and was often forced to make his horse swim the streams in the time of high water. He was called upon to minister to the sick throughout a wide territory and in this way he gained a very large acquaintance. The nature of his practice being largely surgical, Dr. Kennicott saw the need of a hospital at Chehalis and in 1900 erected what is now known as the Chehalis General Hospital, which is well equipped and can accommodate about fifteen patients. It is in charge of graduate nurses of experience and it admits cases of all kinds, being well patronized by people on the Pacific coast. At different times Dr. Kennicott has taken post graduate work in the east but recently his time has been so fully occupied that he has been unable to take a vacation or spend any time away from his work in Chehalis. ✍

—Collector's Corner features catalog listings from book dealers as a sampling of what publications by Lewis are selling for currently. [Thanks to Jacqueline Koenig for her contributions to this section.]

## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

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Email: joepro@silcom.com

LIST 63

147. Lewis, Sinclair. *A Letter to Critics*. Brattleboro: American Booksellers Association, 1931. \$1000.

Three-column broadside. Elephant folio. One of total edition of 375 copies printed by the Stephen Daye Press. Designed by Vrest Orton. These broadsides were given away and few seem to have survived. Included is a letter from Lewis (TLS dated October 5, 1931) in which he grants the Stanford University Press permission to reprint the broadside. It is unlikely that such an edition came to pass because Lewis bibliographer Harvey Taylor was unable to locate a copy, and Lewis asks specifically in his letter that five copies be sent to Taylor. A fine copy (with only the very slightest of creasing) in a specially designed cloth portfolio. Rare.

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187. Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1921. \$1150.

Later printing. Inscribed by the author in 1929. Recipient's bookplate; the typed letter requesting the autograph, endorsed by Lewis, is tipped in. Very good.

188. —. *Babbitt*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922. \$2000.

First edition; first state. A small hole in the front hinge; minor edge spotting; a very good copy. Presentation copy; inscribed by the author: "To Carlton and Hazel Miles, with memories of Minneapolis, Kent, London & Rome, from Grace & Sinclair Lewis." The recipient was a playwright and Minneapolis journalist. In a custom cloth slipcase.

### Robert Dagg Rare Books

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END OF SUMMER MISCELLANY 2006

141. Lewis, Sinclair. *Bethel Merriday*. New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1940. \$150.

First edition. Fine copy in a bright unfaded dust jacket with some very minor wear at edges.

142. [—]. *History of the Class of 1907: Yale College*. Vol. II. Ed. Thomas A. Tully. New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor, 1913. \$150.

First edition. Contains on pages 180–181 a 31-line autobiographical statement by Lewis, who at that time was employed by the New York publishing house of Frederick Stokes. Lewis ends by saying "Stokes will publish a boy's book of adventure [*Hike and the Aeroplane*] by me in the fall, but it is not written under my name; concerns aeroplanes. Still have the same desire to do the 'Great American Novel'—realistic and high-brow." Some light wear and spotting to cloth. Otherwise a very good copy.

143. [—]. *They Still Say No* by Wells Lewis. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939. \$175.

First edition. Inscribed on flyleaf by Grace Hegger Lewis, the author's mother, and dated 1939. A near fine copy in a very good dust jacket with some chipping along top edge. A novel by the son of Sinclair Lewis. Uncommon.

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