

The SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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1997 Sinclair Lewis Conference at Lewis's Boyhood Home. Joyce Lyng is seated next to Sally Parry, bottom left. Jackie Koenig is seated next to Fred Betz, bottom right.

TRIBUTES TO JOYCE LYNG AND JACQUELINE KOENIG

Two of the original founding members of the Sinclair Lewis Society and former members of the Board of Directors, Joyce Lyng and Jacqueline Koenig, passed away earlier this year. Both had been very active with the Society, contributing material to the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*, attending multiple Sinclair Lewis conferences in Sauk Centre, and being generally supportive. Their wise counsel, as well as their enthusiasm for all things Sinclair Lewis, will be greatly missed.

JOYCE C. LYNG (1933–2018)

Joyce lived in the Sauk Centre area for most of her life and volunteered for many different organizations. She was named Volunteer of the Year by the Sauk Centre Chamber of Commerce. She was a stalwart member of both the Sinclair Lewis Foundation and the Sinclair Lewis Society and was named an honorary member of the Sinclair Lewis Society Board of Directors for

ON THE ROAD AGAIN: A REVIEW OF *ADVENTURES IN AUTOBUMMING* BY SINCLAIR LEWIS. OMO PRESS, 2017

Maggie Bandur

Every time I go in a bookstore, I look to see what books they have by Sinclair Lewis, knowing full well it will be *Main Street* and *Babbitt* and—depending on the political climate at the time—a periodic bloom of *It Can't Happen Here*. But a few years ago, I was at the giant corporate Barnes & Noble in the giant corporate outdoor mall The Grove—an architectural blasphemy of Italianate McMansion architecture, with a Las Vegas-inspired dancing fountain playing Frank Sinatra, bronze Huckleberry Finn-like urchin sculptures, and a Disneyland Main Street trolley—and was surprised to find a new book: Lewis's *Free Air*, published in 1919. I had not yet read his early work, and it was interesting to discover he had once written hopeful romances about kindred spirits finding each other. In that one, a socialite and a working-class man find love while motoring on the (newly) open road—though in true Lewis fashion the class differences are not as easy to surmount as they are in other love stories. For many months, I would keep buying copies to give to other people, and the Barnes & Noble would keep restocking them. (Looking back, I fear I missed a connection with a kindred spirit by never finding out who the bookseller was who was ordering that book!)

But now there is a truly new book out by Sinclair Lewis: the recently “discovered” *Adventures in Autobumming*. Also from 1919, it more fully explores this new age of the automobile with all its novelty and sense of adventure, all its hopes for the future and all its annoyances—many of which are distressingly familiar. It is full of forgotten details and a spirit of excitement for a time when, if you were driving in a Model T with a canvas roof, “Eat my dust!” was no idle threat.

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A NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

To receive an electronic version of the *Newsletter*, which includes color versions of the photos and images, e-mail Sally Parry at separry@ilstu.edu.

The SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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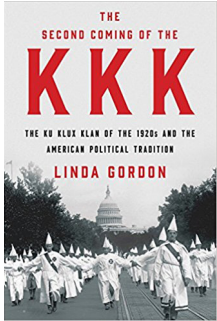
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POINTY HATS AND POINTED PURPOSE: HOW THE KLAN OF THE 1920S FULFILLED THE WARNINGS OF SINCLAIR LEWIS

Bob Ruggiero



For most, hearing the words “Ku Klux Klan” brings to mind masses of men in white robes and oddly shaped hoods, burning crosses, and the terrible lynchings of African Americans. But while many also seem to think of the Klan as a continual presence, it really had three ages of prominence.

The first was during its founding in the years after the Civil War, when disaffected Confederate veterans used it as an avenue to instill fear into blacks and keep them “in their place.” The more recent version of the Klan rose to prominence in the 1980s and now is mostly lumped in with their White Power and neo-Nazi brethren.

But as Linda Gordon details in her fascinating book *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (Liveright Publishing, 2017), it’s the Klan of the Jazz Age that actually held the most power in society and politics.

Gordon, Florence Kelley Professor of History at New York University, busts plenty of Klan myths. In the 1920s, the most active chapters were north of the Mason-Dixon Line, strongest in places like Indiana and (surprisingly) Oregon. Targets of their ire had expanded from just blacks to include Jews, Catholics, immigrants, bootleggers, and even jazz musicians.

Gordon demonstrates how membership dues, a multilevel leadership, and forced purchase of “official” Klan clothing and goods made the organization something of a pyramid scheme. She also details how leaders fought over control and sabotaged each other and how the Klan spread their message through the then-developing area of mass media—even hiring their own PR firm! There were loose coalitions with politicians and preachers, and hundreds of events known as “Klonvocations” which featured carnival rides, entertainment acts, and food and drink to draw families to their message.

Watching all of this with disdain, of course, was Sinclair Lewis. And indeed, Gordon mentions the author and quotes from his work several times in the book:

On the Klan as a fraternal/business networking group:

“The connections made through the Klaverns could lead to jobs, customers, investment opportunities. Sinclair Lewis noted this, writing in *Elmer Gantry* of ‘the new Ku Klux Klan, an organization of the fathers, younger brothers, and employees of the men who had succeeded and became Rotarians’” (182).



At “Klonvocations” the group had carnival rides, entertainment, and free food and drink to attract a crowd and deliver their message. Not sure if any members here had their hoods blown off by the wind!

On the Klan’s conformity of membership:

“Novelist Sinclair Lewis regularly made fun of the Klan type: George Babbitt, in the 1922 novel *Babbitt*, gave birth to a common noun that describes a close-minded, narrow-minded, conformist whose interests and ethics were confined to the business world” (21).

On the Klan’s racist/nationalist platform:

“Similarly, like fascism and especially its Nazi version, the Klan promulgated a racialized nationalism. . . . Sinclair Lewis warned that should fascism come to the United States, it would appear as patriotic and entirely American. In his 1935 novel *It Can’t Happen Here*, the fictional fascist senator Berzelius Windrip promises ‘to make America a proud, rich land again’” (201).

I spoke with Gordon by phone about her book, the Klan, Lewis, and what lessons we can learn from them even today.

How familiar were you with Lewis and his work and how it related to the Klan while writing?

I had read Lewis quite a long time ago. But as I was working on this, his phrases came back to my mind. In some ways, the labels that Lewis used are actually unhelpful, part of a trend at the time that I think was not constructive. His

——— Pointy Hats and Pointed Purpose *continued on page 13*

THE 2018 ALA CONFERENCE

Ralph Goldstein

The American Literature Association is a loosely organized body comprised of societies devoted to the study of American authors. While it sponsors symposia at different times throughout the year, the Association's main activity is the annual conference on Memorial Day weekend, convening on even-numbered years on the West Coast and odd-numbered years on the East. This year's conference was in San Francisco, attracting from throughout the United States and various places around the world about a thousand participants presenting papers or chairing panels. Most were university-affiliated but there were many independent scholars as well.

Except for the presenter of a paper on "Dictator Novels," I was Sinclair Lewis's sole representative at this year's conference. My purpose was to challenge the notion that Lewis in the 1940s was a writer in abject decline, asserting that three novels he produced in that decade exhibit his persistent concern over social and economic justice. His 1943 novel *Gideon Planish* involves the predatory influence of marketing in academia, philanthropy, and politics, portraying manipulation of the public good for private gain. *Kingsblood Royal*, written four years later, depicts a hero at odds with social conformity and racism. And in a rendering of the fractious encounter in nineteenth-century Minnesota between indigenous people and white evangelists, *The God-Seeker* (1949) reflects Lewis's annoyance with exploitation, racial and religious hubris, and environmental abuse. In the twenty minutes allowed me, I briefly detailed the plots, commented on the historical context surrounding the novels, and asserted that Lewis's work contributes to ongoing debates over values and rights.

Participants apply to the ALA either as a group or as individuals, in which case the conference organizers form a

panel of three or four related papers. Joining me on a panel the organizers dubbed "Beyond Modernism" were Trudi Witonsky from University of Wisconsin–Whitewater on poet and political activist Muriel Rukeyser, Robert Dale Parker from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on Depression-era writer Tom Kromer, and Owen Clayton from University of Lincoln (UK) on the Wobbly satirist T-Bone Slim. The common thread among us was the desire of our authors for justice, using poetry, the novel, and—in the case of T-Bone Slim—songs and graphics, to address various societal ills. Since their authors were at various times homeless wanderers, Parker's and Clayton's papers had the most in common, although Clayton told me he'd read Lewis's *Free Air* during his research on the American hobo. My link with Witonsky was more tenuous since



ALA's 30th annual conference takes place May 23–26, 2019 in Boston, MA.

Rukeyser had embraced Marxism while Lewis was skeptical of it. San Francisco served as a fitting backdrop with its extremes of exorbitant wealth and a large homeless population.

As president of the Sinclair Lewis Society I attended a business meeting of author society representatives, chaired by the ALA executive director who informed us that the 2019 conference will be in Boston, 2020 in San Diego, 2021 back to Boston, and 2022 perhaps in Chicago. I shared with this group our plans in 2020 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of *Main Street*, and as I was leaving told the Dreiser Society president that I wouldn't seek revenge for his author slapping mine.

ALA's annual conference has in the past hosted panels organized by the Sinclair Lewis Society, and it would be great if we could form a panel of three or four papers to present at the 2019 conference in Boston. The deadline for submitting proposals will be sometime in January of 2019, and I encourage you to contact me at goldsteins2002@sbcglobal.net if you're interested. ✍

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.

Thanks to Maggie Bandur, Frederick Betz, Ted Fleener, Ralph Goldstein, Linda Gordon, Cindy Kaplan, George Killough, Ray Lacoursiere, Richard Lingeman, Robert McLaughlin, Susan O'Brien, Bob Ruggiero, Preston Spoonland, and Jim Umhoefer.

PUBLISH AND PERISH: THE REMARKABLY PARALLEL LIVES, AND DEATHS, OF SINCLAIR LEWIS AND STEFAN ZWEIG

Roy Lacoursiere

“Publish *and* Perish” can be contrasted with “Publish *or* Perish,” which implies that a scholar who publishes will remain alive academically. This successful continued “living” can occur even when the topic is about writers who published, and sometimes perished at their own hands. The list of these writers is too long, but includes, arguably, Sinclair Lewis, and certainly Stefan Zweig. Scholarly work about important deceased writers gives them continued life in our thinking and writing. Writing about creative people whose lives ended tragically can be part of grieving for our loss, maybe even while holding an autograph document of theirs. Additionally, this work allows a scholar to consider his or her own legacy and death.

In this essay, I will examine similarities in the lives of Sinclair Lewis (1885–1951) and his contemporary Stefan Zweig (1881–1942); my readings about them suggest a natural juxtaposition. They were two of the most popular Western writers in the first half of the twentieth century, yet their copious, successful publications did not immunize them against their actions to end their lives. Although it’s not clear how aware they were of each other’s work, there are some notable parallels.¹ *Newsletter* readers know of Lewis’s enduring importance, with, for example, his so prescient 1935 novel *It Can’t Happen Here*. Stefan Zweig is much less known, especially in America, but there is a resurgence of interest in his work in various genres: a rerelease of a biography by Dominique Bona; the English translation of another biography, *Three Lives: A Biography of Stefan Zweig*, by Oliver Matuschek; publication of letters by Zweig and his last wife (Davis and Marshall); a *New Yorker* article by Leo Carey; and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, a movie based on his oeuvre and life.

Noting similarities between two people is partly obvious and partly arbitrary. But are these similarities significant or are they merely meaningless coincidences? Do they sometimes, at a deeper level, elicit a sense of “that’s strange” or “uncanny” (Lacoursiere, “Uncanny Similarities”)? This essay, besides exploring Lewis’s and Zweig’s similar lives, will provide an introduction to readers unfamiliar with Stefan Zweig’s remarkable writings, life, and death.²

THEIR BEGINNINGS

Harry Sinclair Lewis was born in 1885, in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, the last of three children, all boys. His was a socioeconomically above-average family, with his father and maternal grandfather both physicians. His father was a fastidious man, not given to being affectionate. Unfortunately, Lewis’s mother had tuberculosis, and by the time he was three or four, she was so ill she had to be away in the southwest for months at a time. Consequently, as an infant and young child, Lewis formed only a tenuous bond with his mother (Lacoursiere, “Casting Newer Psychiatric Light”). She died when he was only six. When he was seven, his father remarried. Life did not begin easily for young Harry.

Stefan Zweig was born in 1881, in Vienna, the second of two children, both boys. His was also an above-average socioeconomic family, with a wealthy industrialist father. Zweig’s mother was also ill, becoming deaf soon after his birth. She was a socially conscious and climbing woman, very troubled by her deafness, and subject to rages. The care and cuddling of the young Zweig children would have been confined to a nanny and the nursery, and the children kept at



Stefan Zweig, standing, with brother Alfred, circa 1900.

a respectable distance from their parents’ daily lives. Stefan’s family life did not have a lot of tenderness, although he did not lack for anything material (Bona 34).

Neither child was socially well adjusted. Lewis was awkward physically and socially. He could be pushy in peer relationships and have temper tantrums when his desires were not met, especially when he was young. Sometimes his stepmother threatened to go away and never return, reactivating fears of his mother’s abandonment. During childhood, early adolescence, and later at Yale, the boorish Sinclair was often avoided by his peers, a trait copiously noted in Lingeman. But Lewis could also be very entertaining.

Zweig was a shy child, hesitant and withdrawn in social relationships, and uncomfortable with much authority, partly related to his father having terrorized him as a youngster (Bona 256). Although usually of a gentle nature, Zweig could be

————— Publish *and* Perish continued on page 14

Tributes continued from page 1

her constant support of activities connected with the Society. She was a docent at the Sinclair Lewis Boyhood Home and also greeted visitors to the Interpretive Center. She sometimes dressed as Mrs. Lewis (Dr. E. J.'s wife) and sat on the porch of the Boyhood Home, waving at the passersby during the Sinclair Lewis Days parades. Joyce was invaluable to the Society as a local contact when planning our conferences in Sauk Centre.

SOME REMINISCENCES OF JOYCE FROM OUR MEMBERS

I was very saddened to learn that Joyce Lyng had died on April 1, 2018. Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that Joyce passed away precisely on Easter Sunday, for while she had endured many operations as a result of rheumatoid arthritis since childhood, was ultimately confined to a wheelchair, and survived a stroke in 2012, she reportedly never complained or felt sorry for herself, but rather led an active life in raising a family, farming, gardening, singing with the choir of the First Lutheran Church, and, following the death of her husband, Herman, in 1981, volunteering herself regularly in support of her community and in promotion of the legacy of Sauk Centre's most famous son, Sinclair Lewis. Joyce became a board member of the Sinclair Lewis Foundation and ultimately served as president in 2012. She served as a guide both at Lewis's Boyhood Home on Sinclair Lewis Avenue and at the Sinclair Lewis Interpretive Center; she held offices at the Sauk Centre Historical Society and at the annual Sinclair Lewis Writers' Conference. In recognition of her many years of selfless service, Joyce was named Sauk Centre's Volunteer of the Year in 2013.

I first met Joyce at the Lewis Conference in 1997, and I was struck by her genuine modesty and her soft-spoken cheerfulness in talking with out-of-town Lewis scholars, who (but speaking only for myself!) knew far less than she about Lewis and his origins in Sauk Centre. I very much enjoyed conversations with Joyce at each subsequent Lewis Conference in 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2017. Joyce attended the keynote addresses and all the sessions, and she listened with great interest to all the papers and discussions of papers; she always enjoyed movie night, along with conference participants, watching *Babbitt* (1934) in 1997; *Cass Timberlane* (1947) in 2000; *Dodsworth*

(1936) in 2005; the world premiere of *Kingsblood*, a play by D. J. Jones, adapted from *Kingsblood Royal* (1947), in 2010; and *Elmer Gantry* (1960) in 2017.

Having last seen Joyce and enjoying her company at last year's Lewis Conference, I find it hard to think that I won't see her at the next one (being planned for the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Main Street* in 2020!). Joyce was a great friend and supporter of the Sinclair Lewis Society, in recognition of which she was named an honorary board member, a distinction she must have quietly enjoyed in the company of only three other honorary board members: John-Paul Sinclair Lewis, Patricia Lewis, and Richard Lingeman. There are lovely photos of Joyce in the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*, with other Sinclair Lewis Foundation members in the Fall 2015 and Spring 2017 *Newsletters*, and—perhaps the loveliest of

all—with many of the participants at the 2000 Lewis Conference in the Spring 2001 *Newsletter*. In this photo, Joyce is sitting next to Sally Parry on the front steps (and I am sitting third to the left on the front porch, and Marty Bucco is standing behind me) at Sinclair Lewis's Boyhood Home. It is nice to have such a photo to keep fond memories of Joyce Lyng!

Ever so modest, Joyce was a wonderful keeper of the flame for Lewis as Sauk Centre's most famous citizen, and Sauk Centre, the Sinclair Lewis Foundation, and the Sinclair Lewis Society will greatly miss her presence!

Fred Betz

Past President, Sinclair Lewis Society



In remembering Joyce, the first thing I recall is that in spite of some bad things having happened in her life with her health and losing loved ones, she was a happy person. When I first started to be involved with the Sinclair Lewis Society, she and Sally Parry were my main contacts. I would call her from time to time and we would chat about many matters. Perhaps the most touching conversations involved her nephew, whom she lost in Vietnam. She treated him like a son and remembered



Joyce Lyng meets Barnaby Conrad. Sinclair Lewis Conference, July 2000.

SINCLAIR LEWIS AND DAVE SIMPKINS: TWO OLD NEWSPAPERMEN

Jim Umhoefer
Special to Star Publications

“I’m an old newspaperman myself,” Sinclair Lewis used to say.

Lewis learned about deadlines, discipline, and writing while working on a variety of newspapers around the country before becoming a world-famous novelist and the first American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

It’s no surprise, then, that Dave Simpkins, who earned his living as a local newspaper writer, columnist, photographer, and publisher, would be interested in the life and career of Sinclair Lewis.

Dave, who passed away unexpectedly in February this year, was channeling his passion about Sinclair Lewis into a book entitled *Becoming Sinclair Lewis*. This work-in-progress focused on young Lewis and his growing-up years in Sauk Centre, his early manhood and blossoming writing career through to his emergence on the world literary stage with the publication of *Main Street* in 1920.

“I think that Dave started the book back in 2008,” Linda Simpkins, his wife, said. “In the fall of 2009, Dave and I visited Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, where they had a big archive on Sinclair Lewis. Dave wanted to sift through their collection to get a better grasp on original sources.”

Dave received a huge boost to his book ambition when he accepted a photocopy of Lewis’s diaries from author Richard Lingeman. Lingeman, from New York City, visited Sauk Centre several times while researching his biography, *Sinclair Lewis: Rebel from Main Street*. Dave and Richard became friends, and Richard gave Dave the diaries when his book was published. The diaries provided a wellspring of firsthand insights into Lewis’s life in Sauk Centre, his college years, and the rise of his writing career.

Dave became a sponge for all things Lewis. He reread Lewis’s books over the past ten years, most recently rereading

Main Street before his death. His favorite Lewis book was *Babbitt*. Linda said that Dave would often listen to a Lewis book while driving.

What was it about Sinclair Lewis that so grabbed Dave’s interest? What did Lewis mean to Dave?

Maybe it’s the similarities in each personality. If Sinclair and Dave grew up together, they might have been fast friends.

For example, Dave loved Lewis’s enthusiasm for life. Through the diaries, Dave read the musings of a local boy growing into manhood who was exuberant, curious, intelligent, and goal-oriented. Lewis read often—absorbing rich stories that fired his imagination and fueled his desire to become a great writer.

Much the same can be said of Dave. Those who knew Dave in Sauk Centre saw a man who was eternally curious and enthusiastic. Dave was well read and his imagination and vision was obvious to all

who worked with him at Star Publications, the Sinclair Lewis Foundation, or the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation.

Both Sinclair and Dave saw the possibilities and value of building strong communities. To Lewis, writing in *Main Street*, life in Gopher Prairie could be so much more than what people expected. To Dave, thinking global and acting local was the mantra that he relied on throughout his decades of community volunteer projects.

Linda Simpkins, noting the temptation of complacency in community life, spoke of a “membrane that, for some, surrounds their town. Sinclair Lewis and Dave both saw that membrane and broke through it in their own ways. Through



Dave Simpkins poses beside a bust of Sinclair Lewis.

————— Two Old Newspapermen *continued on page 20*

NEW MEMBERS

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

Tad Howard
Washington, DC

Rebecca Pugsley
Staples, MN

Tributes continued from page 6

him every day until her own passing. He rests in Greenwood Cemetery, a little southwest of Sinclair Lewis, and not far from where Joyce was laid to rest. I finally got to meet Joyce at the Visitors Center out by the highway, the one that has been gobbled up by developers. We had a very good visit and it was nice to put a face with a name. She was the first member of the Society that I met, the second being Dave Simpkins. Joyce was smart, insightful, very knowledgeable on all things Lewis, and cared about others. The last time I saw her was at the Sinclair Lewis Conference in Sauk Centre in 2017. She was a kind and gentle soul and she will be remembered.

Ted Fleener
Past Member, Sinclair Lewis Society Board of Directors



Through the *Newsletter* over the years I learned of Joyce Lyng's many activities in support of the Society, and at the conference last July was fortunate to be among those she warmly welcomed to Sauk Centre. My condolences to her family and friends.

Ralph Goldstein
President, Sinclair Lewis Society



Thank you for the sad update. I got to meet her at the conference last summer. She will certainly be missed.

Cindy Kaplan
Member, Sinclair Lewis Society



It's sad that she's gone. She was a very loyal member of the Foundation and a big help to the Society. She will be greatly missed.

George Killough
Past President, Sinclair Lewis Society



Thanks for the interesting words about Joyce, whom I met on one of my several trips to Sauk Centre. My condolences to the family. Her passing is a great loss to the Sinclair Lewis community.

Richard Lingeman
Sinclair Lewis Biographer; Honorary Member, Sinclair Lewis Society Board of Directors



I seem to recall that Joyce was the only one among us at the 2010 conference who had actually seen Lewis. I believe he spoke at a church when he came to Sauk Centre and she was there. She was quite young at the time. I wonder if she preserved this memory anywhere.

I believe that Joyce showed a photograph of that Lewis lecture, and she was in that photograph. It is the photo on page 121 of Roberta Olson's book, *Sinclair Lewis: The Journey*. The caption reads, "Sinclair Lewis spoke at the Congregational Church 75th anniversary celebration — 1942." The photo shows what it would have been like at a Sauk Centre church lecture with Lewis. On page 107 there's a photo of Lewis greeting my cousin's uncle Dave Caughren of Sauk Centre, who looks very happy to be meeting the author after attending a Minneapolis performance of *Angela Is Twenty-Two*. Uncle Dave's expression is contrary to what some (many) of the other Caughrens felt about Lewis. Joyce knew about the Caughrens of Sauk Centre and Osakis and directed me to historical sources about them. Joyce would always answer my requests for information. (As an aside, there are photos in Roberta's book I have not seen anywhere else. I considered the book to be a real find at the 2010 conference.)

Joyce was very interested in Thorvale Farm in Williamstown, Massachusetts, as she had visited the property when the Carmelites owned it and they had kindly taken her through the big house. I wish Joyce could have read my article about Thorvale Farm. She was so interested in and enthusiastic about Thorvale, having visited it once; I was looking forward to her reaction. Very sorry she is gone.

In any case, as has been noted, Joyce's loss is a big one for the Society. She was passionate about preservation and did such a good job at the Interpretive Center with her encyclopedic knowledge of Lewis and "Gopher Prairie." She had in common with Dave Simpkins a no-ego approach; both were first and foremost committed to carrying on the legacy. Condolences to her family and friends.

Susan O'Brien
Member, Sinclair Lewis Society Board of Directors



I wish Joyce could have read the article about Thorvale Farm too. I remember her showing me a notebook full of pictures she took on her visit there and how enthusiastic she was

**DOROTHY THOMPSON AND GERMANY:
A REVIEW OF *DOROTHY THOMPSON AND GERMAN WRITERS IN DEFENSE OF
DEMOCRACY* BY KARINA VON TIPPESKIRCH. PETER LANG, 2018.**

*Frederick Betz
Southern Illinois University–Carbondale*

At the heart of this book by Karina von Tippelskirch, associate professor of German at Syracuse University (where the Dorothy Thompson Papers are held in the Special Collections Research Center), is Thompson's fight against Hitler and totalitarianism, her engagement on behalf of the democratic culture of Germany, and her numerous and varied collaborations with German-speaking writers and intellectuals who escaped, in many cases with Thompson's direct support, to the United States.

Tippelskirch's book is divided into five chapters, with an introduction, conclusion, and 19 photos—including a color photo of the Big House at Twin Farms. This was Thompson's summer place, where she brought together American and European intellectuals and artists, some of whom became regular summer guests or settled in the vicinity of Barnard, Vermont. Because of the prevalence of Central European refugees there, Sinclair Lewis, Thompson's husband, dubbed the area "Mittelvermont" (33).

In her introduction, Tippelskirch presents a critical review of previous publications on Dorothy Thompson. All discuss Thompson's relationship to Germany, especially her battle against Hitler and National Socialism, but none focus closely on Thompson's relationship to German culture or her work on behalf of German exiles. Tippelskirch singles out, as important for her own approach to Thompson, Kerstin Feller's article on Thompson but does not share her assessment that Thompson and the exiles were equally important to one another.¹

The first chapter considers the foundational influences in Thompson's upbringing, education, and early career, among them Methodism, women's education and the suffrage movement in upstate New York, and US constitutionalism. Tippelskirch argues that it is necessary to understand these early influences to make sense of Thompson's later embrace of the liberal culture of Weimar Germany and her strong opposition to any form of totalitarianism.

Chapter 2 surveys Thompson's first years in Europe, focusing on her journalistic posts in Vienna and Budapest. Although her marriage to Josef Bard, a fellow journalist and Hungarian Jew, lasted only from 1923 to 1927, it deepened Thompson's understanding of the problems (e.g., anti-Semitism, displacement) that Central European Jews faced at the

time. Tippelskirch also argues that friendship was a crucial element in the development of Thompson's political views. Particularly important was the influence of the Austrian-Jewish reform educator Eugenie Schwarzwald, who became a mentor and role model for Thompson in Vienna. At Schwarzwald's famous salon, Thompson was introduced to a diverse group of artists, writers, economists, and educators.

Chapter 3 covers from 1925 to 1928, when Thompson lived in Berlin, and focuses on her writings on the culture of the Weimar Republic. In Vienna, Thompson was part of Schwarzwald's entourage and one of many foreign correspondents in the city. In Berlin, she became renowned for her



Sinclair Lewis and Dorothy Thompson during their honeymoon caravan trip in England, 1928.

journalism and created a distinctive public persona. She also became the center of a growing network consisting of American expatriates, Central European celebrities, and German writers such as Lion Feuchtwanger, Thomas Mann, Ernst Toller, Jakob Wassermann, and

Carl Zuckmayer. In 1927 she attracted even more attention as a result of her relationship to Sinclair Lewis, whose novels had been translated into German and were well reviewed by German literary critics.

After she resigned her post to marry Lewis in 1928, Thompson returned to the United States and went through a period of reorientation, traveling and exploring the country she had not lived in for eight years. Married to Lewis, in high demand as a public speaker, and now able to write longer articles for prestigious media outlets, Thompson no longer depended financially on fast-paced, day-to-day reporting. While pregnant, Thompson translated Joseph Roth's novel, *Job (Hiob)*, into English, and soon after the birth of her and Lewis's son, Michael, in 1930, the couple traveled to Stockholm, where Lewis

——— Dorothy Thompson and Germany *continued on page 20*

about representing his hometown at his last US residence. I always admired how much she did despite all of her medical issues including an amputation of her foot. She didn't let it stop her though. At the conference last summer she came to pretty much everything, including the parade, and then Bob and I spent an afternoon with her after the conference was over. She was really a force of nature.

Sally Parry

Executive Director, Sinclair Lewis Society

JACQUELINE KOENIG

Jackie served on the Sinclair Lewis Society Board of Directors for many years, has been the main contributor to Collector's Corner since the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* started that feature, and provided the support that brought Barnaby Conrad, Sinclair Lewis's secretary in 1947, to the Sinclair Lewis Conference in 2000. She was a lovely and thoughtful correspondent, especially on all things literary and theatrical, and collected first editions of Sinclair Lewis, Jack London, Rick Moody, Joan Didion, John O'Hara, John Updike, Herbert Gold, Paul Theroux, Ray Bradbury, Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, Jessamyn West, John Steinbeck, Wallace Stegner, Robinson Jeffers, Tennessee Williams, and Barbara Kingsolver. She also served on the board of the Jack London Foundation. In person she was quiet and tended to stay in the background, but she was keenly observant. Her journals of the Lewis conferences she attended made it possible for those who couldn't come to get a taste of what they were like.

JACKIE KOENIG'S ARTICLES FOR THE *SINCLAIR LEWIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER*

"Reflections on Sauk Centre: Visiting Lewis's Hometown." *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* 4.2 (Spring 1996): 6-7.

On the festivities connected with the 75th anniversary of the publication of *Main Street* in Sauk Centre in July 1995.

"A Diary of the Sinclair Lewis Conference." *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* 6.1 (Fall 1997): 7-9, 15. On the conference that celebrated the 75th anniversary of the publication of *Babbitt*

and the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Kingsblood Royal*.

"Sinclair Lewis and *Travels with Charley*." *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* 7.1 (Fall 1998). A short review of a play version of John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley*, produced in Salinas, California.

"Sinclair Lewis Conference 2000: A Journal." *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* 9.1 (Fall 2000): 3, 9-10, 13-16. A recounting of the conference, with a focus on the guest of honor, Barnaby Conrad.

"Sinclair Lewis Conference 2005: A Journal." *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* 14.2 (Spring 2006): 5-7. A reminiscence of the conference, including the visit by John-Paul Sinclair Lewis, grandson of Sinclair Lewis.



Barnaby Conrad, Sally Parry, and Jackie Koenig.
Sinclair Lewis Conference, July 2000.

Corner in the *Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter*, and attended several Lewis Conferences in Sauk Centre beginning in 1997, when I first met her.

I do not recall, if I ever knew, that Jackie was, as Sally further noted in her announcement, instrumental in providing the support to bring Barnaby Conrad (1922-2013) to the Lewis Conference in July 2000, when he gave the keynote address on his "Six Months with Red." Those six months were in 1947, when Barnaby Conrad served as Lewis's secretary at Thorvale Farm outside Williamstown, Massachusetts. Following the conference, I struck up a correspondence with Conrad, focusing gradually on his finally writing *Thus Ever to Tyrants*, a counterfactual version of the life of John Wilkes



I was very sad to learn for the third time this year (following the passing of Dave Simpkins in February and Joyce Lyng in April) that a wonderful member of the Sinclair Lewis Society had passed away! Jackie Koenig was, as Sally Parry observed in her announcement on the listserv of the Sinclair Lewis Society (July 19, 2018), one of the most active and supportive members of the Society, having served on the Board of Directors, collaborated on the Collector's

Tributes *continued from page 10* —————

Booth, which Lewis quickly conjured up and outlined for the young Conrad to write up in 1947. As Conrad recalled in his memoir, *Fun While It Lasted* (1969), he balked at the idea, protesting that he didn't know enough to write about Booth. Conrad was struggling to write his first novel, *The Innocent Villa*, which appeared in 1948. Lewis read the manuscript and told Conrad to throw out the first 75 pages, which ploddingly led up to the actual plot. Conrad ignored Lewis's advice, but learned from Lewis how to focus his next novel, *Matador*, on the dramatic presentation of one decisive day in the life of the great bullfighter, Manolete, who, past his prime, is mortally wounded in his last bullfight. Published in 1952, *Matador* became a national best seller.

In 2005, Conrad sent me the manuscript of his version of *Thus Ever to Tyrants*, which he now called *Redemption*. It was a rather short novel, which I thought was quite good, but needed fleshing out, which no doubt other readers suggested as well. Conrad did just that, and five years later his novel, now entitled *The Second Life of John Wilkes Booth*, appeared. I had in mind doing a Lewis conference paper on "Poetic Justice or Redemption: Lewis, Conrad, and *The Second Life of John Wilkes Booth*," but other projects have taken precedence in the meantime. Perhaps I should try for the Lewis Conference in 2020, even though the focus will no doubt be on the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Main Street*.

So, it turns out that Jackie Koenig was instrumental in making it possible to have an interesting and fruitful

correspondence with Barnaby Conrad. Looking through Conrad's letters, I found (again) in a "PS apropos of nothing" (!) to his letter of March 25, 2005, an anecdote, which I don't believe he related in his keynote address at the Lewis Conference in 2000 or mentions in his memoir, *Fun While It Lasted*:

Recently the great band-leader, Artie Shaw died. I remember once in 1947 when I was working for Mr. Lewis he came into my little office at Thorvale and said "I've a little exercise in writing for you!" (He regularly did this.) He brandished a bunch of typewritten pages he'd just received in the mail. "Eight goddam single-lined pages! I want you to read this, find out what the SOB wants, and reduce it to two sentences!"

It was from Artie Shaw [whom Conrad would write about in *Name Dropping: Tales from My Barbary Coast Saloon* (1994)]. He wanted to know if he sent a copy of *Arrowsmith* would SL autograph it.

I will also remember Jackie Koenig from the photo Sally attached to her announcement of Jackie's passing. The photo is from the Lewis Conference in 2010. Jackie is standing next to Sally and behind me sitting on the front porch of Lewis's Boyhood Home at 810 Sinclair Lewis Avenue. It is somehow appropriate that Jackie stands out in her white pantsuit, which I believe she wore at every Lewis Conference!

Fred Betz

Past President, Sinclair Lewis Society ✍

On the Road Again *continued from page 1* —————

The book is made up of three articles previously published in the *Saturday Evening Post*. The first tells of Lewis's adventures driving cross-country; the second is a review of the types of characters met on the road; and the third is an oddly persnickety clarion call for better customer service. Unlike his novels, these essays are written to be primarily light and humorous—though the foibles of Americans don't escape his sharp, satiric eye. He describes an "expensive girl" riding with a big shot as having "that silken, cynical amusement which in novels is attributed to vampires but in real life fits no one but cafeteria cashiers" (47). When an accident strands him in one town, he observes a decades-long theological debate between the town agnostic and the Sunday-school superintendent: "but trouble is with you fellows you don't never stop and consider the effect on other folks. 'Sall right for you and me to think what we like, but let me tell you right here, they ain't everybody

can think for themselves, like you and me" (30). Recalling this conversation, Lewis thinks, "I have never seen this so clearly put though just now I cannot remember whether it was the superintendent or the town agnostic who said it" (30). And after another breakdown, he perhaps pinpoints why Americans would, decades later, have such a problem believing in global warming. Deciding the car is overheated is "always a safe explanation, because it rarely means anything and doesn't hurt anyone's religious prejudices. It's like climate. Any remarkable climate can be explained by one of three things: Either it's the Gulf Stream or it's the humidity or it's a lie" (18).

But what primarily strikes you as you read is the excitement and new sense of freedom that came with the automobile.

————— On the Road Again *continued on page 12*

On the Road Again *continued from page 11*

“The joys of the road, the zest of travel intensified because you yourself are guide and you wait neither for train nor tide—that exhilaration so far outweighs discomforts that once you have made a long motor trip through new lands the first dry road of every coming spring will coax you out to Northern forest, Western prairies, Southern mountains or Eastern streets” (33). This self-reliance is intoxicating. Even when trapped in the middle of a flooded road, “I sat in the car and felt like an outdoor person and a hero—which is the chief reason why indoor typewriter-pounding people, such as writers and shipping clerks and the President, like to go motoring” (39).

The book is full of fascinating and forgotten details. In our modern age of constant commuting, it is easy to forget early motorists were pioneers. Both the cars and the roads were unreliable, leading to a reliance on the kindness of strangers and a need to constantly stop at garages for repairs or gas or that free air—required with such frequency that you begin to wonder whether, in fact, it was really so different from having to stop to water the horses? Lewis also goes on an unexpected and fascinating diatribe blaming the time-saving convenience of the frying pan for destroying American cuisine.

But there are glimpses of our modern world. Already Lewis jokes about the test of a marriage being a road trip and the reluctance of men to ask for directions. Is this the dawn of a century of now-stale jokes? Or were these already old saws even by 1919, ten years into the reign of the Model T? He warns of thieving garage men and, worst of all, the pleasant, expensive lies of the mechanic from the dealership. He notes that everyone wants good roads, but no one wants to pay the taxes for them and describes the irrational anger at a crappier car passing you on the highway. And who knew that, even in the days just after the First World War, people were already longing for that mythical transportation panacea: the monorail.

Most poignant are Lewis’s hopes for the democratic potential of car travel as a social equalizer. Leaving his hometown and his job where he is known, the average citizen, Lewis predicts, will learn that he is not as important as he thought.

Enough dust even obscures class. “At first he won’t like it. He will take hours and hours in telling his wife—sitting beside him and unable to escape without kicking off the switch and crawling out over six suitcases on the running board—that, outside of their home town, people have no friendliness. But after ten days he will revel in being part of the land, of long roads and quiet fields and sloping lovely hills and placid people content to live alone. . . . And when he comes back all men will

wonder at his jolly, whimsical modesty—for minutes and minutes they will” (11). He celebrates the people met on the road, as varied as the scenery: the foul-mouthed grump who becomes a guardian angel and fast friend, the itinerant blowhard who explains to Lewis how good writing works, the act of charity almost immediately regretted, and the cowboy who stops for tea and lady fingers. He is excited for the connections that motoring forms. “It was that fellowship which seemed to vanish forever when trains came in and passengers, unwillingly crowded in the long, narrow, swaying room, sat silent and suspicious till the journey’s end or talked only of safe, vague, heavy things in pompous banalities. Not merely to Montana had the autohoboes driven, but to chivalry rediscovered—for Sir Philip Sidney sat with Baron Munchausen in front of the fire” (73).

He envisions a revolutionary new society. These people he met, “They were and they remain our neighbors. To the real motor fanatic the only requirement for neighbors is that they live not more than ten miles from a passable road. The fact that they are also a thousand miles from his home is only incidental. The autohobo, a little weary of one street and one drug store and one movie theater, enlarges his neighborhood till the people he loves and daily remembers, are scattered from Spokane to Jacksonville; and the street he lives on is all of three thousand miles long—and ends at the Inn of Romance” (71–72).

Plus, Lewis dreams “Somewhere in these states there is a young man who is going to become rich. He may be washing



The “Disneyland Main Street trolley” at The Grove in LA.

On the Road Again *continued from page 12*

milk bottles in a dairy lunch. He is going to start a chain of small, clean, pleasant hotels, standardized and nationally advertised, along every important motor route in the country” (86). It seems so prescient—even as Lewis points out the surprising detail that, even in 1919, most businesses already have national, standardized chains.

Lewis died a few years before the advent of Eisenhower’s Interstate Highway System. Would he really have enjoyed all those standardized hotels or the concrete flyovers that hide the towns they serve? Would he have been disappointed by the hermetically sealed cars with their own entertainment and climate and by the credit card-ready pumps that leave no need to stop and meet people? Even he could foresee that “properly marked and made roads may deprive you of asking directions, which is the soundest topic of touring conversation!” (43). Would he feel stifled by the endless traffic?

(But perhaps traffic is not always without benefits. I realized my first exposure to Sinclair Lewis was when I was thirteen and public radio played a full recording of *Babbitt*, starring Ed Asner, on Thanksgiving. My grandmother lived an hour away

on a good day—car trips in Los Angeles never being described in distance but in expected time—but the traffic was so bad that day, I feel like I heard the whole fourteen-hour broadcast.)

The origins of The Grove reflect all this automotive history. The Los Angeles land it is on was once dairy farms. When oil was found in 1900, the Gilmore brand grew, and would soon create the first self-service stations—places where one did not have to talk to a local for any longer than it took to pay. In 1934, the land became LA’s now famous Farmers Market, where, as Lewis predicted, farmers could bring their wares from far and wide on reliable roads. Soon the land would also house a drive-in and Los Angeles’s first sports teams. But now The Grove has risen up in that space, dwarfing the somehow still extant Farmers Market. Now, people drive in from long distances, only to park their cars in the giant concrete structure, then lounge on the Astroturf lawn beside the street car and the singing fountain to enjoy a bizarre re-creation of Main Street. I would probably wish for Sinclair Lewis to be spared the LA traffic, but I sure would want to know what he thought of The Grove. ✍

Pointy Hats and Pointed Purpose *continued from page 3*

disdainful attitude about the Klan [painted them] as if they were just a bunch of uncultured, uneducated people. That was not the case. And it merely confirmed the Klan’s resentment of the people that they resented.

You write about the Klan as a sometimes collegial group of conformists, as did Lewis. What do you think membership in the group gave people that they didn’t have in other parts of their lives?

I can’t really know about that. But all social movements, whether for good or for bad, have the potential to make people feel as if they’re a part of a community and attract people who also want to be involved in that. For many of the Klan’s members, they were already members of white Evangelical churches, so for them the Klan was merely an extension of that.

On the other hand, they were absolutely masterful in



Klan rally in Chicago—the most active and populated chapters were north of the Mason-Dixon Line. The Klan made great use of terrifying imagery, and members felt more emboldened by the anonymity afforded by wearing the hoods and robes.

making people feel part of something larger than themselves, and to use the attractions of that feeling to recruit. They were absolute masters of using technology, mainly radio.

Recent political developments in this country have increased interest in the plot and themes of Sinclair Lewis’s It Can’t Happen Here, along with some ideas espoused by Klan ideology. Have you been surprised by that?

I was surprised by the intensity and spread of it. It’s been a long underlying stream in American history that started with nativism in the nineteenth century, when

people were convinced that immigration was a terrible thing. I wasn’t surprised, but I was definitely disappointed.

Pointy Hats and Pointed Purpose *continued on page 14*

Pointy Hats and Pointed Purpose *continued from page 13*

Finally, what do you think the work and views of the “social realist” novelists of the early twentieth century—writers like Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, and Frank Norris—can teach us today?

Oh gosh. Well, first of all, Sinclair Lewis is always a great read, so it’s really delightful to be immersed in one of his novels. I think that ways in which those writers can be useful today is that now we are confronting a period in which people are uncomfortable about diversity. And they feel that security will come when we don’t have so much dissent and so many different points of view. And that was a fundamental theme of the Klan. They could not tolerate diversity, and to them diversity meant pollution and disorder. And that’s why

they were very suspicious of big cities, because by definition, those are places where you have a lot of diversity.

I think that’s useful for people to rethink and get in touch with because the kind of bigoted and nativist rage we are seeing today rests on fear. And the people who traffic in it are experts at revving that up and making people feel threatened. It’s really a remarkable trick. Because with the Klan, it represented the dominant group of Americans: white, native-born Protestants. And so trying to make them feel frightened of groups that were both smaller and more disadvantaged took quite a bit of demagoguery. But it shows how that fear can be created and exploited in a very, very damaging way. ✍

Publish and Perish *continued from page 5*

obstinate, and from his early years had fits of temper. He did not like the strictness of school; he preferred to immerse himself in Vienna’s cultural and literary life with male school friends (Prater 6–10). After the Gymnasium, he attended university in Vienna, living away from home while continuing to frequent the city’s literary cafés.

The early behavior patterns of these two brilliant youths stayed with them all their lives: Lewis pushy and boorish, Zweig excessively shy.

WRITING CAREERS

They both began their careers during their adolescent years. By late high school, when Lewis was 16, he worked at the local newspaper, which published his article on his high school graduation. He also submitted poems to national magazines, including to *Harper’s*, but none were accepted (Schorer 34–36). His first published poem was in Yale’s literary magazine in 1904, when he was 19 and a student there (Schorer 74). In 1907, the year before he graduated from Yale, he reviewed new German books and translated stories from the German for *Transatlantic Tales*. His first adult novel, *Our Mr. Wrenn* (1914), was published when he was 29. The novel that presented him to a wider public was *Main Street* (1920), when he was 35. Lewis was well on the way to the creative, bountiful publishing career that would lead to the Nobel Prize in 1930.³

Zweig had his first poems published by age 16, in 1897, in *Die Gesellschaft*, the leading magazine of the moderns in Berlin (Prater 10). He published many poems by the time he was 20, when a collection of them appeared; his first short story was published the next year (Prater 16–17). These works

were well-enough received to afford him entry into Viennese literary circles. By the end of his life Zweig had written much in multiple genres: biographical essays on Émile Verhaeren, Romain Rolland, and Sigmund Freud; biographies on Erasmus, Marie Antoinette, and Maria Stuart; the play, *Jeremias*; an opera libretto (with Richard Strauss); many short stories and novellas including “Amok” (1922) and “Confusion of Sentiments” (1927);⁴ one novel, *Beware of Pity* (1938); lectures; essays on his autograph collecting; and translations.⁵ Besides German, Zweig mastered French and had some ability with a number of other languages, including English (Matuschek 305, 319). There is general agreement that while his writing was admired, he did not write at the high level of those he emulated (cf. Prater 347).

Both writers were prodigious publishers and lecturers, especially Zweig, who undertook multiple reading tours, including to the United States.

THE WRITERS’ MALADIES

Both writers were affected by what I call their maladies. Although Lewis had some personality problems that broadly affected his life, his alcoholism was more serious. He drank excessively from his youth, a behavior that progressively accelerated and seriously aggravated his social relations and marriages (extensively indexed in Lingeman). In 1937, under conditions of severe alcohol excess, he was admitted to the Austen Riggs Sanatorium in Stockbridge, Massachusetts,

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where the diagnoses included personality problems (Lingeman 420–21).

Zweig's major malady was depression, which undermined his general mental stability. During the Great War, his duties were limited because of a "nervous complaint" (Matuschek 146). In 1919 his mother, well aware of his fragility, was pleased that a very solicitous woman would become his wife (Prater 109; Bona 185–86). It would not be long before this woman noted that there were times when Zweig was in a "rage of despair" and violent even in front of others (Prater 120).

In the late 1920s, although he repeatedly agreed to lecture commitments, he simultaneously wanted to withdraw from it all (Matuschek 235). By 1931, in spite of his parents' longevity, Zweig dreaded turning 50, and his premonitions about his future became darker each year (Matuschek 256–57). Twice when deeply depressed, he tried to get his first wife, Friderike, to join him in suicide (Prater 346). When his mother died in 1938, he had a "serious nervous collapse" (Matuschek 316–17). In spite of his problems, he is not known to have received any psychiatric treatment.⁶

UNSETTLEDNESS, WANDERLUST, AND TRAVELING

Both writers found it difficult to maintain relationships with women. They shared trouble with intimacy, often manifested as wanderlust. They were inveterate travelers. Lewis wrote to Stuart P. Sherman, "I have to combine being settled and working with having a taste of new lands. Fortunately I am one of the people who can in three hours feel as though a new desk in a new room had been mine always. I change my plans—at least to residence—so often that I hate to announce them" (Lingeman 242). While with his wife, Lewis would have the urge to leave her and go somewhere else, but then feel miserably lonely, return, and repeat the cycle. This sense of unsettledness was one of the factors that led his first wife Grace to divorce him. Although he could long have afforded to do so, he purchased his first residence only during his second marriage, when he was 43 (Schorer 509). Lewis resided in many places within the United States, including on both coasts, and traveled to the Soviet Union and many times to Europe.

Zweig was described by a friend as seeming to always have a suitcase in the next room packed for departure. Similar to Lewis, he purchased his first home later in life, at the age

of 36, when preparing for his first marriage. But he was often away from home for presentations or to write at a place he considered more conducive to his creativity. "His deeper feelings, of friendship for his fellow men and of love for [his first wife] Friderike, seemed actually to flourish at a distance and to dwindle with proximity. [And then]... the most minor of irritations often served to induce his 'black liver'" (Prater 121). Zweig traveled widely within Europe, to India, and to North and South America. In 1909 he wrote to a friend that the whole world was his homeland and that he could



Stefan Zweig, standing in back, and Friderike, sitting center, among others, 1937.

not die without having known it all (Bona 86), a statement he would not be so comfortable with years later.

WOMEN, INTIMACY, AND CHILDREN: EARLIER YEARS

Not only was Lewis often socially inept, he was not a very attractive man, with unruly red hair and severe, lifelong facial acne. He was often awkward in his relationships with young women. In late 1912 he was smitten with Grace Hegger, whom he married in 1914, when he was 29 (Schorer 205–15); in 1917 they had a son, Wells. While their marriage technically lasted ten years, it began to deteriorate after a few years. He married journalist Dorothy Thompson in 1928, and they also had a son, Michael. From the beginning, Lewis's drinking, wanderlust, and other problems affected this marriage. Although they spent years separated, they did not divorce until 1942. Not only did Lewis adapt poorly to being a husband, he was also an inadequate father. Regarding children, he later wrote, "And it is true that I, nervous, absorbed in work, cranky, cannot endure much of children" (Lingeman 291).

Zweig also had significant problems with intimacy with women and with children, but these problems manifested themselves differently. Shy Zweig distanced himself from reciprocal give-and-take relations with women, instead frequenting prostitutes. It was only when he was almost 31, in 1912, that his first significant courtship began, due to the nontraditional assertiveness of Friderike Maria von Winternitz, a married mother of two daughters who pursued him (Matuschek 109, 113–25).⁷ From the beginning, Friderike was deferential to Zweig and his various inclinations, including infidelities—he could manage

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fleeting affairs more than long-term commitments. Although he and Friderike began to share a residence earlier, because of complicated divorce laws, they married only in 1920 (Prater 126). While preparing for this marriage with Friderike, his mistress in Paris became pregnant and had an abortion (Bona 135). Zweig did not want children, and “allegedly threatened to shoot himself if she [Friderike] became pregnant” (Matuschek 213). Although he financially supported his stepdaughters, he was less emotionally supportive of them, letting their mother deal with family stresses (Matuschek 212–13).

COMMONALITIES

Both writers had notable and enduring male relationships. Among Lewis’s main relationships were those with H. L. Mencken, the literary and societal critic; Allan Updegraff, a friend from Yale; and publisher Alfred Harcourt. These relationships were sometimes associated with considerable drinking, which was not appreciated by Lewis’s wives. Zweig had long-term peer relationships, but he also cultivated long-term ones with older writers he emulated, notably Émile Verhaeren, the Belgian poet, and Romain Rolland, the French poet, essayist, novelist, and 1915 Nobel Literature Laureate (Prater 50–52).

Lewis and Zweig were both generous in aiding other writers, including at times writing favorable reviews, and Zweig opened his purse, something that was particularly needed for Jewish writers after the Nazi prohibition of their publications. Zweig also translated texts, including some by his emulated older colleagues, and helped popularize their work.

WOMEN AND INTIMACY: LATER YEARS

In 1939, at 54, Lewis began a relationship with 18-year-old Marcella Powers, an aspiring actress; he was still married to Dorothy Thompson, although he had asked her to file for divorce (Schorer 645–47). Their divorce occurred at the beginning of 1942, with their son, Michael, in her custody (Schorer 684). Although Lewis did not lack for money, he was reluctant to provide either financial or emotional support for Michael. The affair with Powers lasted for several years while he helped her career, but he needed her much more than she needed him. During a period of Lewis’s extended sobriety, Powers made this clear, and he flew into a drunken rage necessitating emergency medical treatment (Schorer 673–74). Eventually he tolerated her freedom more, but by late 1946 she was ready to sever their relationship to marry Michael Amrine (Schorer 752). Lewis had a hard time with the end of this relationship (Schorer 754–55).⁸

Similarly, while married to Friderike, in 1934 the

52-year-old Zweig began an affair with a much younger woman, Charlotte (Lotte) Altmann, a 26-year-old émigré in London from Germany. She, like Zweig, was fleeing Nazi oppression (Prater 225–27). She began as his secretary, but Zweig soon found her uncritical acceptance of him more congenial than the demands from his wife and her children. Lotte invigorated Zweig and they became inseparable. Friderike agreed to divorce Zweig in 1938, partly because she was concerned that he was becoming unbalanced again. Her divorce testimony noted that he habitually locked himself in his room and refused to speak to the family (Prater 271). Zweig and Lotte married in September 1939 (Prater 277).

THEIR DEATHS: AWAY FROM HOME, AMIDST STRANGERS

We often think of our life span relative to the longevity of our parents, but neither Lewis nor Zweig would live nearly that long. While Lewis’s mother died young when he was six, his stepmother, whom he considered his mother, died in 1921, at age 69 (Schorer 313). His father died in 1926 at age 87 (Schorer 461), and Lewis mourned his death in destructive fashion. In the subsequent months, his drinking exacerbated, he threatened to jump out of a hotel window, had Delirium Tremens (DTs), and spent several days in a sanatorium (Schorer 465; Lingeman 296–98).

After the 1946 breakup with Powers, Lewis’s drinking became worse once again. The quality of his writing also gradually deteriorated. Nonetheless, in 1948 he prepared for *The God-Seeker*: “For this work, he wrote a plan of 206 single-spaced pages, a document . . . itself the length of a substantial novel. He worked out the plot scene by scene. . . . Besides this, he compiled a complete catalogue of character sketches to guide him, and lists of names, male and female, first and last, together with a breakdown by nationality” (Schorer 768). In spite of the groundwork, *The God-Seeker* was one of his least popular books (Schorer 780). In the late 1940s “He had enough work planned to take him well beyond the eighty-six years he had predicted he would live in his mock obituary, ‘The Death of Arrowsmith,’” written in 1941 (Lingeman 523). But in 1949, for the book that would become the posthumous *World So Wide*, he made only a 21-page plan (Schorer 778). That summer, when changes to the book were suggested, he became furious. As summer passed, his despair grew deeper, his drinking increased, and he again had DTs (Schorer 783–84).

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The last two years of his life were tumultuous ones. Lewis traveled to Europe and then returned to Thorvale Farm in Massachusetts, with Marcella's mother as a companion. She assuaged his loneliness, although Lewis often implored her to remain silent while seated near him. He also had a strained financial and emotional reconciliation with son Michael, who would be a major benefactor of his estate. He unsuccessfully courted another young woman, Ida Kay, but when that relationship didn't work out, he decided to sell the farm and return to Italy. His brother Claude and Mrs. Powers accompanied him; they sailed in September 1949 (Schorer 782–85; Lingeman 518–23). Lewis would die in less than a year and a half, at age 65.

By now Lewis was showing the deleterious effects of excessive alcohol, with an impaired gait and a ruddier complexion than usual. Claude and his wife spent some time with him during their European sojourn, but early in 1950 they left for home. During this time, Lewis met a young man, Alexander Manson, who would become his constant companion for the last year of his life, and who both facilitated his drinking and got him some help. During the first few months of 1950, Lewis's drinking diminished while he finished *World So Wide*, but afterward he returned to excessive drinking, at times as much as a quart of whiskey per day (Schorer 795). Physicians' admonishments had limited effects. With Manson, Lewis traveled around Europe, staying for a time in Zurich. There Ida Kay saw him while she was touring; she was struck by his physical deterioration. Details of subsequent months are often contradictory, but not the fact that Lewis was dying (his demise is recounted in Schorer 788–814 and Lingeman 534–47). In Zurich he had one or more episodes

called heart attacks, but they may have been myocarditis due to alcohol excess (Schorer 795, 803; Lingeman 537). Lewis and Manson then proceeded to Rome, where Lewis continued heavy drinking, apparently supplemented with drugs in an attempt to control his drinking and DTs.

Near Christmas 1950, Lewis had another strained meeting with Michael. Finally, on New Year's Eve, Lewis reportedly spoke his last coherent words as he became acutely delirious. He was admitted to a local hospital, where diagnoses included pneumonia and another heart attack (myocarditis?). His condition fluctuated over the next few days, with apparently transient rationality, and he died January 10, 1951, with a final diagnosis of *paralisi cardiaca*, "paralysis of the heart" (Schorer 814).

In light of family longevity, Zweig, like Lewis, could have expected to live into his eighties. His father died in 1926 at age 80 or 81 (Prater 161;

Matuschek 220), and his mother in 1938 at age 84 (Prater 268; Matuschek 23, 25, 317). But from a much younger age Zweig was concerned about his physical deterioration and loss of vitality, which Lotte helped counteract, as did hormone shots (Prater 317).

From 1933 until his death in 1942, Zweig undertook extensive travels that progressively exiled him from Austria. He was a strong advocate of Pan-Europeanism, but the rise of the Nazis in the 1930s made such European unity a pipe dream. Worse, he found Nazi anti-Semitism, the *Anschluss*, book burnings, and severe limitations on the ability to publish in his



A Stolperstein for Stefan Zweig, his first wife, and her two daughters in Salzburg, Austria, memorializes those who lost residency or work due to Nazi terror. © 1971markus@wikipedia.de

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preferred German language extremely oppressive. In mid-1936 he went to Brazil, where he was received like a chief of state (Bona 341), and “the star of European literature” (Prater 253, emphasis in original), with huge audiences for his lectures. He returned to London, then toured in North America in late 1938/early 1939 (Prater 272). In the last two years of his life he spent some time in the United States, with his second wife Lotte, before settling down in Petrópolis, north of Rio de Janeiro (Prater 305). In some six months Zweig would be dead at age 60, and Lotte with him at the much younger age of 33.

By now Zweig’s notable depression and nervousness had become obvious to a number of observers (Prater 300–05). On one of these occasions, before leaving New York for Brazil, Lotte was heard to say “she had no idea what was wrong with him, and said she felt powerless to help. ‘What can I do in fact for him,’ she asked sadly, ‘except allow myself to be dragged along with him?’” (Prater 304–05). It is thought that by this time Zweig possessed the means of ending his life (Prater 303; Matuschek 327). Lotte’s health was impaired by asthma, which affected their interdependent relationship. These were also very difficult times for Jews, and Zweig diligently helped several of them, including with the proceeds from his lectures. He could not easily say no to such requests, but they became draining and irritating. A number of his friends had also died, including by suicide or through alcoholic excess (Prater, e.g., 298).

Despite his travels and lectures, Zweig remained a prodigious writer. In 1935 he published a biography of Maria Stuart in English; by the end of the year, sales in America had reached 200,000 (Prater 236). There were also other biographies and a book on Brazil as the land of the future. But the best was yet to come, his only novel, published in 1938: “It seems incredible that with such a deeply troubled spirit, and in the face of . . . cataclysmic events in Europe, he could complete a 400-page novel. Begun after his return from South America . . . in 1937, it was worked and re-worked . . . (no fewer than eleven volumes are extant of his notes, manuscripts, and successive drafts)” (Prater 271). The book’s themes “were a profoundly personal expression of his two obsessions: nostalgia . . . for his homeland, and his regard (in which pity played a part) for Lotte” (Prater 271). German editions were published in Stockholm and Amsterdam as *Ungeduld des Herzens* (“The Heart’s Impatience”), and in England and America as *Beware of Pity*, one of his most successful books in English (Prater 272). In their new residence in Brazil, Zweig continued writing, including on the autobiography that he had started in 1940 (Prater 282). It was called *Die Welt von Gestern/The World of Yesterday*; it would be published posthumously.

Unfortunately, all of Zweig’s writing and publishing gave him little happiness. The path to the end seemed unavoidable to him. On January 20, 1942, he wrote Friderike: “It is becoming increasingly clear to me that I shall never see my own house again, and that wherever I go I shall just be a wanderer on the face of the earth. Those who can start a new life wherever they are can count themselves fortunate. [. . .] The only path open to us now is to quit the scene, quietly and with dignity” (Matuschek 351, ellipsis in original). Over the next few weeks he and Lotte made their final preparations. On February 23, 1942, they each ended their lives with a fatal drug. Two days before his death, Zweig wrote Friderike, in English: “[Y]ou cannot imagine how glad I feel since I have taken the decision” (Matuschek 354). He then added that he was pleased for his friends who had previously committed suicide and avoided the current ordeals.

PUBLISH AND PERISH

“To love and to work,” apocryphally attributed to Freud, suggests that life has meaning when we have work *and* love. If we have one and not the other, or if work becomes our (primary) love, something is lacking; for most of us we do not imagine our deathbed wish to be, “I wish I had written another book/article.”

Lewis certainly wrote and published, but as Ida Kay said, reflecting the opinion of many, “His writing and his life were one. Without the writing Lewis ceased to be. It was his definition of being” (Lingeman 523). The other part of life’s purpose, to love, often eluded him. Without sustained love, his writing was inadequate to make a sufficiently meaningful life. While Lewis certainly published *and* perished, it is arguable whether his death was at his own hand or not. Unlike Zweig, whose death was so calculated, it is not as if Lewis said to himself, “I think I’ll become an alcoholic and drink myself to death.” In Lewis’s time, part of the difficulty of getting alcoholism under control was the primitive state of understanding for what we now consider a disease.⁹ Schorer’s discussion of Lewis’s treatment reflects these early years of not very effective treatments, when, for example, the substitution of weaker forms of alcohol was considered curative. And Lewis’s likely condition, alcoholic cardiomyopathy or myocarditis, was hardly known at that time. With all these provisos, I leave open the question of whether Lewis died at his own hand.

Friderike told Zweig's biographer Prater that Zweig calmed his inner restlessness by seeing new places and people, adding, "Without such change he could not maintain his extraordinary application to the work which was his whole life. With friends, or with those he loved... he could never establish a quiet and peaceful relationship without quitting them at frequent intervals" (347). In Zweig's goodbye letter to her, he acknowledged the riches she had but he did not: her children, "large interests," and the ability to wait and "see still the better time" that with his "black liver" ("melan-chole") he could not.

In the end, we can wonder whether writing and publishing helped delay the deaths of these two great writers because it gave meaning to their existence. Such speculation provides some solace, but the painful conclusion remains that a great writer can publish much and yet perish at his or her own hand.

Notes

¹ My investigation of selected sources indicates that Lewis and Zweig never met. None of their biographers mentions the other writer in their biographies. Neither the extensive Lewis archival holdings at Yale, nor the Lewis material at Sauk Centre (Simpkins), mention Zweig. Similarly, the largest North American archival collection of Zweig material has no obvious mention of Lewis. Although a Wikipedia article mentions that Lewis's second wife Dorothy Thompson may have met Zweig, no such encounter was found in a Thompson biography (Kurth) or in her archives.

² My main sources are biographies of Lewis by Schorer and Lingenman, and of Zweig by Prater, Bona, and Matuschek.

³ His publications list in Schorer occupies twelve double-columned pages (815–26).

⁴ These are two of Zweig's most well-known stories. "Amok" is a well-crafted tale of a doctor's unrequited love, his guilt over not helping the woman in a desperate situation, her death, and his associated suicide. "Confusion of Sentiments" (called merely "Confusion" in a recent publication) deals with the late-recognized love of a male student for a male professor and the confusion of feelings.

⁵ Prater's index of Zweig's publications is five and a half double-columned, small-print pages (371–78).

⁶ There is also unconfirmed information that Zweig exhibited himself and took part in homosexual behavior (Matuschek 285–88; Prater 184n), and the theme of homosexuality is present in some of his writing.

⁷ Similar to Lewis's first spouse, Grace Hegger, she would later write about the relationship with her famous husband (Matuschek 369).

⁸ During these years Wells was killed in the fighting in France, October 1944, another serious loss for Lewis.

⁹ For example, Alcoholics Anonymous began only in 1935.

My appreciation to Liz McKamy and Philip R. Beard who improved my essay.

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Two Old Newspapermen *continued from page 7*

Lewis's novels and Dave's newspaper columns, they both wanted others to see a bigger picture."

Dave often said that Lewis had an uncanny ability to observe and capture the mannerisms, speech patterns, and details of any person or location. This made his novels real to the point that people saw themselves in Lewis's work or took exception to some of Lewis's portrayals of social conditions that could be improved.

Though Dave's own writing captured our thoughts and emotions, encouraging us to think and act in positive ways, he did not consistently stir up controversy like Lewis did.

Yet they both were authentic in their work and in their active approach to life.

One of Lewis's female friends related that Sinclair was fun to be with, but that if he went to a circus, he would insist on "riding the elephant." Though we don't know if he actually did, her comment shows that Lewis did not just want to see the show, he wanted to be part of it.

"Riding the elephant" reflects the lives of these two men, generations apart, yet both full of passion, insight, and action.

As a tribute to Dave and his decade-long research project on Lewis, his work is being carried on by a handful of Lewis scholars who knew Dave personally. Sally Parry, the Executive Director of the Sinclair Lewis Society out of Illinois State University and a friend of Dave's, has gathered a "brain trust" that includes Richard Lingeman and other Lewis experts. They are reviewing the chapter drafts that Dave had written and are doing the painstaking work of citing his sources and checking for accuracy.

So the legacy of the two old newspapermen lives on, riding their elephants into the sunset.

[This article was originally published in the local Gazette, a special paper distributed during Sinclair Lewis Days, July 18-22, 2018.] ✍

Dorothy Thompson and Germany *continued from page 9*

became the first American author to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. From there, they returned to Berlin. Thompson stayed two more months in Europe, and after that frequently visited Germany and Austria; in 1932, she even considered relocating the family to Vienna.

There, she fell in love with another woman, Christa Winsloe, author of *Girls in Uniform (Mädchen in Uniform)*, which became the source for the most popular film of the Weimar era alluding to lesbianism. In Chapter 4, "Transatlantic Traveler," Tippelskirch discusses the relationship between the two women in terms of gender, sexuality, and cultural transfer. She argues that Thompson explored her lesbian tendencies more freely while in Europe. When she and Winsloe returned to the United States in May 1933, the relationship became increasingly difficult. While Thompson pursued her journalistic work, and in particular her fight against Nazism, Winsloe struggled to establish a career, eventually returning to Europe in January 1934.

Thompson's writings during those years focused increasingly on the situation in Germany and on the victims of National Socialism. These writings included her interview with Hitler, published in 1932, and her substantial articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* between 1931 and 1934. She also wrote an extensive series of articles in the *Jewish Daily Bulletin* in 1933, which exposed the violent anti-Semitism of the Nazis. These articles and Thompson's dismissive interview

with Hitler were the main reasons for Thompson's expulsion from Germany in August 1934.

The last chapter covers from 1935 to 1945, when Thompson became one of America's foremost journalists. Tippelskirch provides an overview of the various outlets Thompson used to reach an increasingly large and diverse readership, including speeches and public lectures that she gave around the country following her expulsion from Germany; her popular column, *On the Record*, published from 1936 to 1939 in the *New York Herald Tribune* and later in the *New York Post*; a monthly column in the *Ladies' Home Journal*; radio broadcasts; and scholarly articles on Germany in *Foreign Affairs*. In 1938, the year of the Austrian Anschluss, Thompson published *Refugees: Anarchy or Organization*, attempting to influence American immigration policy on the eve of the Évian Conference, which, however, did not result in the admission of more refugees to the United States.

At the heart of this chapter is the little-known PEN World Congress of Writers, which took place in New York City from May 8 to 10, 1939, at the same time as the World's Fair. Tippelskirch argues that Thompson, who was the current president of the American PEN Club, organized this event following the annexation of Austria to appeal to the American public and the

———— Dorothy Thompson and Germany *continued on page 21*

Dorothy Thompson and Germany *continued from page 20*

world on behalf of the victims of National Socialism. A second crucial goal was to bring as many exiled writers as possible to the United States. Tippelskirch discusses invitations that were successful, for example, those of Annette Kolb and Thomas Mann and family, as well as failed attempts, as in the case of Lajos Hatvany, Joseph Roth, and Alice Herdan-Zuckmayer. Annette Kolb's *Glückliche Reise* (1940) is an important literary representation of the congress, her stay at Thompson's home, and the White House visit with President Roosevelt that Thompson organized for writers attending the PEN congress.

Writers with whom Thompson directly collaborated and whom she personally supported included Fritz Kortner, with whom she co-wrote the play, *Another Sun*; Hermann Budzislawski, the former editor of the *Die neue Weltbühne*, who served as her research assistant; and, most importantly, Carl Zuckmayer, her close friend, to whose autobiography, *Second Wind* (1940), she contributed the foreword. Tippelskirch demonstrates in detail the interconnectedness of these individuals with each other and with Thompson.

Thompson was also engaged with three aid organizations between 1935 and 1941: the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom, the American Committee for Christian German Refugees, and the Emergency Rescue Committee, which she helped to found. At the same time, Thompson continued her radio work, in particular, a series of shortwave broadcasts to Germany, published later as a book, *Listen, Hans* (1942). Thompson's marriage to sculptor Maxim Kopf, who was born in Vienna and grew up in Prague, brought her even closer to the Central European émigré community. The chapter concludes with Thompson's first visit to Germany since her expulsion from Berlin in 1934. In the spring of 1945, she and Kopf traveled as war correspondents, first to the Middle East, and then to Italy, Austria, and Germany. At the end of World War II, Thompson fell out of favor with the American public when she maintained that Germany was not synonymous with National Socialism. She became even less popular when she became supportive of the Arabs in Palestine.

Tippelskirch ends her book with a survey of literary representations of Thompson after 1945 in works by the German writers closest to her. In his novel, *Das große Halleluja* (1959), a kaleidoscopic panorama of American society after World War II, Johannes Urzidil devotes a chapter to "Elmtree Farm," in which the figure of Barnabe Nichols, a political journalist who is also known as "die berühmte

Frau" (the Famous Woman), is at the center of a group of friends who regularly gather at her house in Vermont. The fictional characters include representations of Vincent Sheean, Carl Zuckmayer, Johannes and Gertrude Urzidil, and Maxim Kopf. Alice Herdan-Zuckmayer's *Die Farm in den grünen Bergen*, published in English translation, *The Farm in the Green Mountains* (1968), is a literary representation of the life of her family as farmers in Vermont. Her book and Carl Zuckmayer's autobiography, *Als wär's ein Stück von mir*



A 1935 press photo featuring Sinclair Lewis, Dorothy Thompson, and their son, Michael.

(1966), both pay extensive tribute to Thompson and the importance of their friendship with her for their families. A year after Thompson's death in 1961, Carl Zuckmayer published "Die Geschichte von Dorothy Thompson," which concludes with the loving tribute: "Wer sie gekannt hat, wird immer dankbar sein, dass es sie gab. Wer ihr Freund war, darf ihrer mit Stolz gedenken. Ihr Leben und Wirken ließ, in finsterner Zeit, eine Leuchtspur zurück, die dennoch Hoffnung bedeutet für ein menschlicheres Geschlecht" ("Those who knew her will forever be grateful that she existed. Those who were her friends can remember her with pride. Her life and work left in dark times a shining path, which still gives hope for a more humane mankind") (qtd. in Tippelskirch 259).

Notes

¹ "Dorothy Thompson: Eine Schlüsselfigur der Welt des Exils" (in *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur seit 1933* [Zürich: Saur, 2005] 364–409), based on Feller's master's thesis, "Dorothy Thompson im Spiegel der deutschen Emigration und Exilliteratur nach 1933: Quellenlage und kulturelle Leistung" (München, 2000). ✍

DEPARTMENTS

SINCLAIR LEWIS NOTES

Frank Trentmann devotes two of his 862-page *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* to *Babbitt* and Lewis, about whom he states, “Sinclair Lewis was too good a novelist not to capture some of the positive feelings that attracted people to standardization” (242).



Preston Spoonland writes: I live near Park River, North Dakota, and was told the house I live in was built for Mr. Lewis and was curious of the history behind it. From what I’ve been able to find on Internet searches and by word of mouth, he never lived here. I understand you have studied his life and would appreciate any information you have about this place and the history behind it. Unfortunately I have not read any of his work but I am becoming more interested the more I learn of him. Thank you in advance for any information you may have. [Richard Lingeman writes: I checked in my book and didn’t locate anything relevant to the house. However, I do have a memory that he did buy a farm or farmhouse there as an investment, but never got around to living there—not being one to settle down in many places, especially in North Dakota (nothing against N. Dakota—beautiful state). If I do come across anything more specific I’ll let you know but I’m pretty sure there was such a place and that you may own it.]



In the March 25–26, 2017, *Wall Street Journal*’s regular book feature, “Five Best: A Personal Choice: Will Englund on America a Century Ago,” lists *The Job* by Sinclair Lewis (1917) as Number 3 on his list (C 10). Englund, an editor at the *Washington Post*, is the author of *March, 1917: On the Brink of War and Revolution*.

He gives a brief synopsis of the book and notes, “Possibly the first novel built around the selling of New York property, *The Job* concerns the rise of a career woman.” His other picks:

- (1) *A Book of Prefaces*, H. L. Mencken (1917); (2) *There’s Always Tomorrow*, Marguerite Harrison (1935); (4) *How We Advertised America*, George

Creel (1920); and (5) *Red Harvest*, Dashiell Hammett (1929).

Above the column is this quote: “Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.” H. L. Mencken



From Jane Mayer’s 2016 book *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires behind the Rise of the Radical Right*, we find this quote about the Koch brothers’ political education:

Charles Koch was so enthusiastic about the Freedom School he talked his three brothers into attending sessions. But Freddie, the outlier in the family, who had spent more time than the others studying history and literature, disparaged the curriculum as bilge. He said that LeFevre [the founder] reminded him of the con artists in Sinclair Lewis’s novels. (45)

The notes in the back indicate this as the recollection of an unnamed source close to the Kochs.



In a review of yet another new Hemingway biography, *Hemingway* by Mary V. Dearborn (Knopf, 2017), critic Adam Gopnik in the *New Yorker* (“A New Man,” July 3, 2017: 61–66) notes that Hemingway’s hairy-chested masculine style often made him come across as “a self-absorbed blowhard.” “The real American masculine style, as Sinclair Lewis shrewdly saw, is not tight-lipped-stoical but wheezy-genial” (63).

IT CAN’T HAPPEN HERE NEWS

One of the episodes in *It Can’t Happen Here* that is sometimes met with derision is when Mary Jessup Greenhill crashes her plane into the aircraft carrying Effingham Swan in order to kill him. The action seems melodramatic, although Mary has thoughtfully been planning some sort of revenge against Swan ever since he had her husband, Dr. Fowler Greenhill, killed by the Minute Men. Mary is like a kamikaze pilot, desperate to inflict damage, yet aware that the pilot and the plane have to act as one to be a weapon of war.

It Can't Happen Here is prescient about this. Senior Lieutenant Yekaterina Zelenko, a member of the *Bombardirovanny Aviasty Polk* or bomber aviation regiment of the Soviet Air Force, took similar action. The only aviatrix to participate in the Winter War between Russia and Finland (1939–1940), she was decorated with the Order of the Red Banner for her aviation prowess. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Zelenko's squadron destroyed German troop trains and a battalion of infantry, which led to her receiving the Order of Lenin. On September 12, 1941, she was ordered on a bombing mission, and after it was successfully completed, her plane was badly damaged by German fighter planes. Rather than parachute out, she flew her plane into a Messerschmitt and caused it to crash, before her own plane dove into the ground and was destroyed. Her fate was not known for years, but on May 5, 1990, she was posthumously awarded the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union. [Information on Lieutenant Zelenko comes from the article "Yekaterina Zelenko Became the Only Woman to Destroy an Enemy Plane by Ramming It," *World War II 16.4* (2001): 84, 86, 88.]



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

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AUGUST MISCELLANY 2017

79. Lewis, Sinclair. *John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1926. \$250.

First edition. One of 975 numbered copies. Fine copy in glassine dust jacket (glassine chipped). Uncommon in the original glassine.

80. —. *Elmer Gantry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927. \$2750.

First edition. First issue binding with *G* resembling a *C* on spine. Rear hinge expertly repaired. This copy signed by Lewis on flyleaf and dated Washington "10/16/34."

81. —. *The Man Who Knew Coolidge*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928. \$850.

As one might guess, numerous writers during the 1930s engaged in alternative history, as Lewis did with *It Can't Happen Here*. Stephen Vincent Benét, the brother of Lewis's college friend William Rose Benét, wrote such a story in 1943, "A Judgment in the Mountains." The short story is a dream, but set in an America that has been taken over by the Nazis. Some Nazis, including Lon Stacey, a quisling-like man of the mountains, enter a small town in Appalachia to confirm that the people in the area are supportive of the new government. Stacey realizes that good Americans still exist in the hills—and pays the ultimate price for this knowledge, since they execute him for betraying American democracy.*

Stephen Vincent Benét was an American poet, short story writer, and novelist, best known for his book-length narrative poem of the Civil War *John Brown's Body*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1929. He also adapted the Roman myth of the rape of the Sabine women into the story "The Sobbin' Women," which was later adapted into the movie musical *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. [*This story was reprinted in *A Treasury of World War II Stories* edited by Bill Pronzini and Martin H. Greenberg. New York: Bonanza Books, 1985. 469–84.]



COLLECTOR'S CORNER

First edition. Fine book in a nearly fine dust jacket with only a few nicks at edges. Attractive copy of this increasingly uncommon book.

82. —. *Ann Vickers*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1933. \$300.

First edition. The first printing of this novel was limited to 2350 copies. A fine copy with none of the usual fading to the spine of the book, in a near fine dust jacket.

83. —. *Selected Short Stories of Sinclair Lewis*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1935. \$450.

First edition. Fine fresh copy in dust jacket with some very minor wear at edges. Uncommon title.

84. —. *Gideon Planish*. New York: Random House, 1943. \$250.

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