

SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S VIEW ON THE GROTESQUE

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All Anderson's works contain his many autobiographical elements, or in other words, he wrote about the world of imagination or that of fancy on the basis of his life. To be more exact, he could not write any works exclusive of his autobiographical elements; that is caused by the pursuit of his mother's Imago because of his libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex, and his character of phantastic pseudology.

Anderson wrote his works with those who lived honestly and purely, clinging to a truth deduced from their past experience in the gilded age of American materialism as the subject matter. He calls them "the grotesques" but it seems to him that they are more good, innocent and likable than other normal citizens.

The reason why *Winesburg, Ohio* is called the epitome of Anderson's literature is that this novel contains various grotesques, that George Willard, the protagonist of this novel is the figure in Anderson's own youth, and that "Departure," the last episode means that George is at the starting point as a writer, and at the same time Anderson himself has entered into his career of a writer.

In the short stories of *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson treats isolation as a phenomenon of the individual rather than as a manifestation of social evil.

This paper tries to psychoanalyze each protagonist in the short stories of *Winesburg, Ohio* or to study the relations between George and the human grotesque like the twisted and gnarled apples.

The first of the sketches, "The Book of the Grotesque" serves as an introduction to the following stories in *Winesburg, Ohio*. The relation between Sherwood Anderson and the old writer in the first sketch is as follows. The old writer fixed the bed on a level with the window to look

at the trees when he awoke in the morning. Anderson lived in a boarding house at 735 Cass Street in 1915 when he began to write *Winesburg, Ohio* and "in his room his bed was raised high so that while lying in it he could have a full view of the Chicago he loved to romanticize."⁽¹⁾ Moreover the old writer's dream⁽²⁾ agrees with what Anderson mentioned as his experience.

"If I have been working intensely," he said, "I find myself unable to relax when I go to bed. Often I fall into a half-dream state and when I do, the faces of people begin to appear before me. They seem to snap into place before my eyes, stay there, sometimes for a short period, sometimes longer. There are smiling faces, leering ugly faces, tired faces, hopeful faces."⁽³⁾

Therefore the old writer in "The Book of the Grotesque" is Anderson's alter ego. Anderson defines one central thought in "The Book of the Grotesque" by having the old writer say:

That in the beginning when the world was young there were a great many thoughts but no such thing as a truth. Man made the truths himself and each truth was a composite of a great many vague thoughts. All about in the world were the truths and they were all beautiful.

The old man had listed hundreds of the truths in his book. I will not try to tell you of all of them. There was the truth of virginity and the truth of passion, the truth of wealth and of poverty, of thrift and of profligacy, of carelessness and abandon. Hundreds and hundreds were the truths and they were all beautiful.

And then the people came along. Each as he appeared snatched up one of the truths and some who were quite strong snatched up a dozen of them.

It was the truths that made the people grotesques. The old man had quite an elaborate theory concerning the matter. It was his notion that the moment one of people took one of

the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood. ⁽⁴⁾

The grotesque is a person who seeks something and as the result clings to a truth. To Anderson the word "grotesque" does not connote revulsion or disgust; instead, he indicates that the human grotesque is like the gnarled and twisted apples left behind in the orchards when the round perfect is picked. Small boys and the poor seek these apples eagerly because they know that into a little round place at the side of the apple gathers all of its sweetness. Only the few know the sweetness of the gnarled and twisted apples.

As the change from the age of agriculture to that of the machine industry in America, compared with that in Europe, was too rapid, that estranged their external life from their inner one to those who cling to the truth deduced from their experience. They cannot but separate their life into two sections, that is to say, the life of reality and the life of fancy. In the daytime they acquiesce in social life, and are more good and likable than other normal citizens, while in the nighttime their minds are, full of frustration. Some escape to the world of fancy ⁽⁵⁾; others wander about to seek love and understanding.

Anderson wrote in *Sherswood Anderson's Memoirs*:

When I wrote the stories in the book called *Winesburg, Ohio* I was living in a cheap room in a Chicago rooming house. I dare say that all of the tales in the book came out of some memory or impression got from my boyhood in a small town but, as I had lived in several such towns, I had no one town in mind. ⁽⁶⁾

Hence, George Willard, protagonist of *Winesburg, Ohio* is a figure in Anderson's own youth. George Willard is interested in understanding and loving the grotesques, and he employs empathy, compassion, and intuition. George's attitude toward the grotesques is what is called Anderson's. Anderson's sympathy for the grotesques would be fostered

in his home and living environment. One of the causes is found in "we were all of us—mother, father and the children—in some way outlaws in our native place and that thought was soothing to a boy."⁽⁷⁾

And besides, Anderson told us in *A Story Teller's Story*:

The new house was in some queer way a menace to me.⁽⁸⁾

The old house seemed smiling and calling to me.⁽⁹⁾

Went wandering back through the blood of my ancestors, through the blood of the ancestors of the men about me.⁽¹⁰⁾

According to these quotations, the conservative instinct, namely, the menace of new things and longing for old things is found in Anderson. His feelings of this sort were in antagonism with the arrival of a machine industry age, so he would sympathize with the grotesques who were made victims of that age.

In *Winesburg, Ohio* Anderson points out that all men share the common bond of humanity, and they must recognize this kinship and avoid its distortions if they are to survive.

Anderson feels that in order to recover mental and spiritual health men must learn to live more natural lives. He also asserts that in order to restore the true ties of fellow men or to find a more natural and instinctive life men must make deliberate efforts to attain empathy through compassion, love, sex, and above all, through intuition.

Anderson insists on the restoration of the preindustrialization, wants the recovery of humanity and writes *Winesburg, Ohio* with the true ties of fellow men as its theme.

"Hands" shows that the language of the remarkably active and expressive hands of Wing Biddlebaum, and old recluse in the town is misinterpreted, his truth is distorted into falsehood, and finally he can not choose but become a grotesque.

Anderson tells us:

In his youth Wing Biddlebaum had been a school teacher in a town in Pennsylvania. He was not then known as Wing

Biddlebaum, but went by the less euphonic name of Adolph Myers With the boys of his school, Adolph Myers had walked in the evening or had sat talking until dusk upon the schoolhouse steps lost in a kind of dream. Here and there went his hands, caressing the shoulders of the boys, playing about the tousled heads. As he talked his voice became soft and musical. There was a caress in that also. In a way the voice and the hands, the stroking of the shoulders and the touching of the hair were a part of the school-master's effort to carry a dream into the young minds. By the caress that was in his fingers he expressed himself. He was one of those men in whom the force that creates life is diffused, not centralized. Under the caress of his hands doubt and disbelief went out of the boys and they began also to dream.

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And then the tragedy takes place. Wing Biddlebaum has been accused of making homosexual advances to his students because of the actions of his hands likened to "the beating of the wings of an imprisoned bird."⁽¹²⁾ He flees, taking refuge in Winesburg. His hands have become a source of shame to him, and in Winesburg he tries to keep them hidden. In the town he is a pitiful and fearful creature, always expecting the spontaneous action of his hands to be misinterpreted.

Wing Biddlebaum is a sexual pervert. Freud defines "perverse" as the following:

We actually describe a sexual activity as perverse if it has given up the aim of reproduction and pursues the attainment of pleasure as an aim independent of it.⁽¹³⁾

And besides, to put it concretely it is as in the following:

What in adult life is described as "perverse" differs from the normal in these respects: first, by disregarding the barrier of species (the gulf between men and animals), secondly, by

overstepping the barrier against disgust, thirdly that against incest (the prohibition against seeking sexual satisfaction from near blood-relation), fourthly that against members of one's own sex and fifthly the transferring of the part played by the genitals to other organs and areas of the body.⁽¹⁴⁾

Why has he grown up into a sexual pervert? Because in his infancy, over an abnormally extended period of time, he must have had the extraordinary satisfaction of the sexual impulse by having been caressed by his mother's hands and having thrown himself into his mother's arms, so that he has gotten into the habit of the caress by the hands and, therefore, he must have felt the satisfaction of the sexual impulse only through the agency of the hands. The reason why he has fixed upon juniors of the same sex for the objects of sexual perversion is his libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex. He must have made his mother his own and grown by having received only her love. Hence, he has lived in close dependence on her and his ego ideal wishes to incorporate the two of them in one body, or in other words, he identifies himself with her. In his mind he is a woman. He has done to juniors of the same sex as he would have his mother do to him, that is to say, he has caressed them with his hands. He has grown up, but in a strict sense of the term he can not love the opposite sex, so doesn't marry. George Willard, a young reporter on the *Wiensburg Eagle*, is fascinated by the old man's hands, and they become friends.

In "Paper Pills" the relationship between a man's hands and his inner being is written again. Doctor Reefy is as cut off from effective communication with others as Wing Biddlebaum is in "Hands". Since he recognizes his inability to communicate his thoughts without being misunderstood, he writes them on bits of paper and puts them into his pockets.

One by one the mind of Doctor Reefy had made the thoughts. Out of many of them he formed a truth that arose gigantic in his mind. The truth clouded the world. It became terrible and then faded away and the little thoughts again.⁽¹⁵⁾

Hereupon Anderson emphasizes that the truth is nowhere and there is only the thought, and moreover means that one has made the truth of the thought. Doctor Reefy knows that he must be misunderstood if he communicates thoughts directly, so that he has written only thoughts on scraps of paper, and the scraps of paper become little hard round balls, which he throws playfully at his friend, the nursery man. This story has been interpreted by Waldo Frank⁽¹⁶⁾ as representing the ineffectuality of isolated and fragmented human thought. However, Anderson indicates that there is no shortcoming in the thoughts themselves. Doctor Reefy could communicate these thoughts to the girl whom he married, but he knew that words could not convey them to others, so he could not help throwing hard little balls playfully at the nursery man. His repressed feelings find a slight vent in his act of throwing them, crying "that is to confound you, you blithering old sentimentalist,"⁽¹⁷⁾ shaking with laughter. However, the true meaning is that even while he throws them playfully at his friend he hopes they will be seen as the expression of his soul. But the friend sees only the appearance, the work of Reefy's hands. After his wife's death no one understands the thoughts that Reefy writes on scrap of paper, so he can not help becoming a grotesque.

"Mother" deals with the relationship between George Willard and his mother, namely, the Oedipus complex. The story explores a theme that Anderson took from his own experience. Because of the discord between his mother and father, she has turned her affection not to her husband but to George, while George also loves his mother and hates his father: that means George's libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex. Moreover, he has maintained her love by identifying with her. Therefore, he grows up to be a reporter but acts like a gawky girl. Moreover, he has felt the resistance to go out of doors because he wants to exist with his mother who seldom goes out. In this story Anderson suggests that one should pursue pleasure and peace to lead to a life worthy of man, namely, true warm contact with human beings through love and understanding. She has won against her husband who is regarded as the incarnation of the American business and industrial civilization, but at the same time something has snapped within herself. Both his mother and George want to

promote mutual understanding in each mind, but like a boat in the ocean they don't know what to do, so there is a wall between them. As she has lost the only person of understanding, she can not choose but become a grotesque.

Doctor Parcival, the protagonist in "The Philosopher," is a large man with a drooping mouth covered by a yellow mustache, his teeth are black and irregular and there is something strange about his eyes, so he is not as grotesque as he appears to be, and his mind is very innocent. To write a book is the object of his coming to Winesburg to live. He may leave his family in his home town as Anderson left his family and disappeared from Elyria to write books. At night when there is no need to be afraid of the eyes of the world and its sneers, Doctor Parcival approaches a young newspaperman George Willard to form an intimate friendship with him. Doctor Parcival tells George fragments of stories out of his past. After refusing a needless request to attend a child who has been victimized by the railroad, the symbol of the business and industrial civilization, in fear of his life, Doctor Parcival tells George his belief: his compassion for man and his inability to save him have convinced him that "...everyone in the world is Christ and they are all crucified."⁽¹⁸⁾ In "The Philosopher" George Willard performs the role as an ear into which the grotesque pours out his frustrations.

"Nobody Knows" shows Louise Trunnion to seek out George for a moment of love and George's first experience of sexual activity. In this story no grotesques appear. Louise Trunnion is a girl below grotesques, for she is a worldly-minded person and her desire is unattainable to something spiritual. Because such a girl was the object of George's sexual activity, he only experienced not the pleasure of the emotion but that of the flesh, so that he realized the emptiness of the sexual activity. George muttered doggedly "she hasn't got anything on me. Nobody knows"⁽¹⁹⁾; hereupon it is thought that he has only the moral consciousness of a worldling that he will be unconscious of a sin if it is not laid bare. On the contrary, there is much self-reflection in his mind. All day he had been trying to make up his mind to go through with the adventure, and yet there had been no decision. Soon the night fell and he acted on animal instinct

because his id raised its head. There is a false show of power caused by both self-reflection and a feeling on unrest for fear of detection of the event. This story describes the process of George's growth through the medium of Louise Trunnion.

In "Godliness," a four-part tale, Anderson shows the passing of pioneer innocence and the rise of materialism. Jesse Bentley is dominated by the Calvinistic interpretation of God's favor being manifested in material wealth; as he grows richer he becomes convinced that he is God's chosen instrument to work His will, that is to say, he labors under a delusion of possession. Jesse Bentley's delusion of possession is caused by his libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex. Judging from Anderson's saying, Jesse Bentley has been able to reach an understanding with his mother, and loves her and has respect for her. His ego ideal has wished to incorporate the two of his mother and him in a body. His mother's death was very sad for him, so to approach the heavenly spirit of his mother he must have wanted unconsciously to be a minister of the Presbyterian Church unconsciously, or in other words, he has unconsciously identified the spirit of his mother with God. Therefore he has believed that it was by the order of his mother, namely, by that of God that he had to come to the farm and take charge of things. No one understands him in human society but it is only his mother, that is to say, God that understands him; so he wrestles with the spirits of his mother, namely, God when he is in some trouble or other. To John Hardy, Louise, the only daughter of Jesse Bentley, wrote a note that "I want someone to love me and I want to love someone"⁽²⁰⁾ so they got married soon after that. However, they were always at discord with each other and she flew into half insane fits of temper: that is why she didn't love him. After her mother died, she was brought up entirely by her stern father, so her desire was repressed. Therefore, she was rebellious and distorted. She impulsively acted offensively to remove her frustration. In spite of hankering after love she could not earn any one's love. Soon she could earn John Hardy's love. But the love that she wants was not the appetites of the flesh but the very affection that she showed for David who came home from missing. The reason why she wrote a note to John Hardy is not that she loved him, but that she wanted

to seek spiritual rest. In spite of having continued seeking love and understanding to live seriously, she could not have them; so she was obliged to become a grotesque. As David, Jesse's son, has been brought up entirely under domestic discord, his mind has separated into two, that is to say, he has hesitated as to whether he will be in his father's favor or in his mother's. That is why a child does not want to lose both the father and mother. Therefore, his mind is in a state of "ambivalence," so his character is irresolute and apparently obedient. The tragedy and the isolation of both Jesse and David stem from the new false God of materialism, a God that depends for its success upon the continued isolation of human beings that Jesse Bentley has erected.

In "A Man of Ideals," Anderson states that Joe Welling catches the manic state caused by his libidinal fixation with the oral phase. Joe Welling makes good use of the manic state; he organizes the baseball club because he wants to be a coach and achieves a great thing of winning consecutive victories, or he falls in love with Sarah King and in order to marry her he, who is eloquent and cheerful, has a friendly talk with her father and brother who are feared by people.

"Adventure" demonstrates that the story of Alice Hindman is a typical instance of the anal character through Freudian theory. At the age of 16 Alice, the protagonist of this story, fell in love with Ned and became engaged, while he was attracted only to a large city that was getting more and more prosperous. However, she remained faithful to him for eleven years without succumbing to temptation. That is why she acquired the anal character, namely, the desire of fixation or the tendency of adherence; in other words, Alice's libidinal fixation to the anal phase. Alice began saving money as one means to go to see Ned, but before long saving money itself became her purpose. She saved money by economizing without buying the necessities of life, bespeaking the character of frugality or the desire of collection caused by her libidinal fixation to the anal phase.

It is necessary to examine her mental state in order to study why she has given a square refusal to wooers. Alice's id always wants the pursuit of carnal pleasure and presses her ego for the sufficiency of desire, while her super-ego strictly forbids her ego to be attracted by men except Ned

because of her libidinal fixation to the nal phase. Then her super-ego examines the actual phases of human life and mediates between the id and and the super-ego, so that her ego approves of her super-ego's claim, or in other words her ego is never attracted by men except Ned.

If that is the case, why did Alice undress in the darkness, run down-stairs through the dark house and out into the rain and call softly to a man? That is why the id unconsciously controls the mind more than the ego or the super-ego in the darkness, though her id's desire seemed to be repressed by her super-ego completely, that is to say, it was the strength of her id that let Alice do such a deed. However, as soon as the man asked again "What? What say?"⁽²¹⁾ suddenly Alice recovered her senses, or in other words, the controller of her mind has shifted from her id to her ego.

She crawled on hands and knees through the grass to the house, got into bed and buried her face in the pillow; her very figure was the miserable figure of her ego that was exhausted by the dilemma between the id and the super-ego. This story describes the selfishness of a man, and the perseverance and the deep affections of a woman. Ned reminds us of Anderson's irresponsible father and Anderson shows Alice's enduring loneliness to be a woman formed on the basis of Anderson's mother.

"Respectability" describes Wash Williams as a grotesque physically and psychologically. He once had a wife and loved her with strong affections. However, because of his unchaste wife he was obliged to divorce her, he hated her and he hated life whole-heartedly, with the abandon of a poet. His strong feelings to hate women and to pity men dominated his life. He saw George Willard who became intimate with a girl and told him of his past to warn him by his own failure. George knew the reason why Wash began to hate woman and became twisted into the grim figure that Winesburg knows. "In imagination, he (George Willard) also became old and shapeless."⁽²²⁾ George understood Wash's grotesque manner.

In "The Thinker" Anderson sets Seth Richmond's inability to communicate his hunger for life to others against George's ability to talk quite freely to everybody. "I (Seth Richmond) am made to go to work. I may be able to make a place for myself by steady working, and I might as well be

at it,"⁽²³⁾ and moreover "I'll get out of here. What good am I here? I'm going to some city and go to work. I'll tell mother about it tomorrow,"⁽²⁴⁾ Seth decides. He meets Helen White, the banker's daughter whom he regards as a symbol of purity and innocence, and begins to regret his decision to get out of town. However, he can not communicate his mind to her. He parts from her with a lack of understanding between the two and fears that she will eventually marry the articulate George. Seth's character is caused by having been brought up by his excessively protective mother. He is well aware that he bears the character of strong dependence on his mother, antisocial speech and behavior, shyness and so on. He was depressed by the thought that he was not a part of the life in his own town, but the depression did not cut deeply as he did not think of himself as at fault, so he felt pride in his character rather than suffering from that:

"Everyone talks and talks," "I'm sick of it. I'll do something, get into some kind of work where talk don't count. Maybe I'll just be a mechanic in a shop. I don't know. I guess I don't care much. I just want to work and keep quiet. That's all I've got in my mind."⁽²⁵⁾

Even if he got out of his own town, he would live a lovely and innocent life because of a lack of understanding.

In "Tandy" a drunkard comes to Winesburg from Cleveland. He wants to cure himself of the habit of drink, and thinks that by escaping from his city associates and living in a rural community he will have a better chance in the struggle with the appetite that was destroying him. However, his sojourn in Winesburg is not a success. The dullness of the passing hours leads to his drinking harder than ever; however, his drinking is nothing but the psychological mechanism of "escape." Though he is in need of a loving woman, he has no chance to meet a woman as he wishes, so he drinks in order to escape from loneliness. He talks to Tom Hard and Tom's daughter, who sits up very straight on her father's knee, with tears in his eyes on a drunken impulse so that he may have them understand him. He staggers off down the street, and a day or two later he gets aboard a train

and returns to his home in Cleveland. Tom's innocent and unspoiled daughter understands the drunken man and decides to become the woman whom he wants. Her mother is dead and she is given but little attention by her father, so that she wants to be a woman worthy of the beloved. This story indicates the sadness of a child who hankers after love and the importance of love and understanding.

The two most closely interwoven narratives in *Winesburg, Ohio* are "The Strength of God" and "The Teacher," in both of which a minister and a schoolteacher interpret their personal loneliness and need for love as sin.

"The Strength of God" is the story of the id that aims at the pursuit of carnal pleasure and the sufficiency of desire. The devout Presbyterian minister, Reverend Hartman sees Kate Swift lying in her bed and smoking a cigarette while she reads a book in the upper room of the house next door, and wants to reach her ears and to delve into her soul through his sermons. On a Sunday morning with a stone he breaks out a corner of the window of the room in the bell tower and sees her bed through it. In a short time he falls into the temptation of the carnal desire to look at her body. Though he has thought himself fortunate in marriage, he thinks of his wife and for the moment almost hates her who regards the pursuit of carnal pleasure as a disgraceful behavior:

"She has always been ashamed of passion and has cheated me," "Man has a right to expect living passion and beauty in a woman. He has no right to forget that he is an animal and in me there is something that is Greek. I will throw off the woman of my bosom and seek other women. I will besiege this school teacher. I will fly in the face of all men and if I am a creature of carnal lusts I will live then for my lusts."⁽²⁶⁾

When he peeps into her bed, the naked woman throws herself upon the bed, lying face downward she weeps and beats with her fists upon the pillow. With a final outburst of weeping she half arises, and the woman of sin begins to pray. He thinks that in the lamplight her figure, slim and strong, looks

like the figure of the boy in the presence of the Christ in the leaded window and that she is an instrument of God, bearing the message of truth. It seems that "The Strength of God" was a short story that was written on the theme of Freudian words that "it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going of unconsciously in its mind,⁽²⁷⁾ or in other words, that the title of "The strength of God" may be changed to "The Strength of the Id."

"The Teacher" reveals the source of Kate Swift's anguish, and she has been George Willard's teacher. Kate Swift is in the habit of wandering, so she often wanders about the streets in the dead of night. Aimless wandering seems to be an outlet for a lonely life of a thirty-year-old spinster; in other words, she hankers for love and understanding. She regards George as an object of love and understanding; "As she looked at George Willard, the passionate desire to be loved by a man, that had a thousand times before swept like a storm over her body, took possession of her."⁽²⁸⁾ She lets him take her into his arms, but for a moment she comes to herself. She runs home to pray, and the result is the sight the minister has seen in "The Strength of God." The figure that is praying earnestly is the very figure of her ego that is begging God for the pardon of her id that has found love and understanding in her former pupil.

"Loneliness" describes a twofold manifestation of human isolation so severe that it drives the protagonist Enoch Robinson into the supposed security of a single room and then denies him even that security. The cause of Enoch's loneliness, Anderson says, is that "he never grew up and of course he couldn't understand people and he couldn't make people understand him."⁽²⁹⁾ It is because of his libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex that Enoch preserves the character of a child in spite of an old man, and furthermore the cause why "he cannot understand people and he cannot make people understand him" is attributable to his character of self-centered narcissism, namely, a narcissist.

As for Enoch's marriage his id wants to intermarry with his mother whom he loves passionately because of his libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex, while his super-ego strictly forbids him to intermarry with his mother according to public morals. His ego mediates between

his id and his super-ego by examining closely the actual phases of human life, so that his ego makes him get married to a woman who is not related to him by blood. Therefore, his marriage is nothing but the satisfying of his id's desire, that is to say, in order to satisfy carnal self-indulgence he gets married to a woman:

He began to get lonely and to want to touch actual flesh-and-bone people with his hands. Days passed when his room seemed empty. Lust visited his body and desire grew in his mind. At night strange fevers, burning within, kept him awake. He married a girl who sat in a chair next to his own in the art school.⁽³⁰⁾

There are the spiritual ties between him and his mother unconsciously, namely, in the spirit he gets married to his mother. Therefore, after satisfying his id's desire, namely the satisfying of carnal self-indulgence, nothing but divorce waits for him. After the divorce the room in which he lives in New York is long and narrow like a hallway, and there he lives among the people of his fancy playing with them, talking to them, happy as a child is happy.

Though Anderson says that "the story of Enoch is in fact the story of a room almost more than it is the story of a man,"⁽³¹⁾ what do his words indicate? That seems to indicate Freudian womb-phantasy. In his thesis, "Civilization and Its Discontents," Freud explains this subject:

The dwelling-house was a substituted for the mother's womb, the first lodging, for which in all likelihood man still longs, and in which he was safe and felt at ease.⁽³²⁾

He is a paranoiac and depersonalized dreamer that indulges in day dreams and lives a retired life far away from the noise-ridden town, that is to say, he entertains unconsciously the return desire of the mother's womb. He escapes to the long and narrow room like a hallway that symbolizes the mother's womb and seeks the satisfying of desire in a day dream. His ego is caught between his id and his super-ego in regard to a good woman, a

musician with whom he has become acquainted.

His feelings that "I wanted her and all the time I didn't want her"⁽³³⁾ is nothing but ambivalence, that is to say, that "I wanted her" are his id's words on the basis of the pursuit of carnal pleasure and that "I didn't want her" are his super-ego's words on the basis of the emptiness of carnal self-indulgence, the guilt complex caused by his once divorce and Eros' prohibition caused by his libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex.

What do his words mean: "out she went through the door and all the life there had been in the room followed her out, she took all of my people away, and they all went out through the door after her,"⁽³⁴⁾ or in other words, why have the people of his fancy, his visions vanished? That is why he has been conscious of passionate love for a woman who exists in this world, or in other words, the woman has completely captivated his mind, so that his visions that have satisfied his mind has completely vanished. Enoch is all alone and wonders about to seek someone that understands him, and finally he regards George Willard as the object of his understanding. It is not by chance that he has not chosen a woman as the object of his understanding, that is to say, behind that there is the miserable figure of his ego that is tired out in a dilemma between his id and his super-ego.

"An Awakening" demonstrates that one must read another mind calmly in the case of a romantic attachment between the two. Belle Carpenter gets acquainted with George by her egotistic thoughts and vanity and uses him so far as he can be useful. George believes that Belle is deeply in love with him. George seeks her out one night to tell her of his growing insight into life. But in a moment he takes her in his arms, and the inarticulate bartender who had been pursuing Belle jumps out of the bushes and assaults George. Slinking home in bewilderment, George does not comprehend that for a moment he had been close to breaking the bonds of isolation, but thinks that he allowed himself to be tricked into thinking that the power he felt was sexual rather than the force of insight. He hates himself. He hates the fate that has brought about his humiliation. Finally, the tower of his many happy memories with Belle built by George's one-sided misunderstanding falls to pieces noisily.

In "Queer," the story of Elmer Cowley, one of the grotesques again

assaults George Willard. Just as the others see George as the symbol of liberation, Elmer sees George as a manifestation of the society that rejects him. Elmer thinks that the people in Winesburg condemn the Cowleys to queerness and that George is laughing at him; moreover, Elmer thinks George represents public opinion and decides to challenge the people through George. Elmer has what is called a delusion of persecution. That is caused by his libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex, so he bears the character of unbelief, caution enmity, the tendency to punish others, to be quarrelsome, and the like. There is another human being, a half-witted old fellow named Mook to whom he can explain himself. However, he thinks that he will get out of Winesburg so that he may put an end to all of his unhappiness, or in other words, that is nothing but the psychological mechanism of escape. Elmer calls George on the platform, strikes out and hits George, a guiltless man, blow after blow on the breast, the neck, the mouth. Springing aboard the passing train, Elmer sees George rolling over on the platform and cries proudly: "I showed him. I guess I showed him. I ain't so queer. I guess I showed him I ain't so queer."⁽³⁵⁾

The following is in his mind:

He knew that a local freight train passed through Winesburg at midnight and went on to Cleveland, where it arrived at dawn. He would steal a ride on the local and when he got to Cleveland would lose himself in the crowds there. He would get work in some shop and become friends with the other workmen and would be indistinguishable. Then he could talk and laugh. He would no longer be queer and would make friends. Life would begin to have warmth and meaning for him as it had for others⁽³⁶⁾

Though he parts from his one and only friend, Mook, he pictures a bright future to himself. He wishes himself good luck on his departure so that he may seek out the truth. However, as he is unconscious of his libidinal fixation to the phase of the Oedipus complex, he can not break himself of the delusion of persecution and of his peculiar character. The

same life as he has lived an unpleasant life in Winesburg is probably waiting for him in Cleveland.

"The Untold Lie" is written as his theme of the difficulty of understanding, much less communicating, the ambiguous meaning of experience. Ray Pearson has induced a girl who waits on trade in his father's shop to go with him and something has happened. He thinks how it has affected his whole life and he is sorry for his marriage. However, Hal Winters, one of his friends, Ray knows, is also going to follow the same fate as he. His experience and all the beliefs of the people he knows will approve, but for the life of him he can not say what he knows he should say. He shouts a protest against his life, against all life, against everything that makes life ugly into the empty spaces that lie about him:

"There was no promise made," "I didn't promise my Minnie anything and Hal hasn't made any promise to Nell. I know he hasn't. She went into the woods with him because she wanted to go. What he wanted she wanted. Why should I pay? Why should Hal pay? Why should anyone pay? I don't want Hal to become old and worn out. I'll tell him. I won't let it go on. I'll catch Hal before he gets to town and I'll tell him."⁽³⁷⁾

Hal has already decided to marry the woman when Ray meets him. Ray feels like laughing at himself and all the world but, finally, he can not choose but say softly: "It's just as well. Whatever I told him would have been a lie."⁽³⁸⁾ Ray's last words have a very deep meaning. As Ray is a quiet, rather nervous and altogether serious man, he has held himself responsible for having committed a fault. However, he regrets marrying his wife because of his loveless marriage. But he thinks that his regret is hardly worth consideration compared with his children who have every confidence in him and are at play purely and innocently. Hal's character is diametrically opposed to Ray's one. Hal, who is looked upon by everyone in Winesburg as a confirmed old reprobate, will marry the woman and regret his marriage soon. However, Hal will enjoy, Ray thinks, true happiness through the medium of his coming children.

In "Drink" Tom Foster has lived in a neighborhood where gangs of tough boys prowled through the streets. However, he bears a gentle and quiet character, and has never asserted himself. There is nothing to eat in the house, and so he steals a dollar and seventy-five cents out of the drawer of a harness shop on a side street. Later he is caught and his grandmother settles the matter by offering to come twice a week for a month and scrub the shop. However, he is unaware of a guilt complex. His character is caused by having been brought up to be an overprotected man with his grandmother's love. His grandmother has played the part of his mother. Therefore, his libido has fixed to the phase of the Oedipus complex. He has lived in much dependence on his grandmother and his ego ideal wishes to incorporate the two of her and him in one body, and at the same time, he must feel much sympathy for his grandmother who has become a half wornout old woman worker, scrubbed the floors in an office building and then gotten a place as dish washer in a restaurant, and whose hands have been all twisted out of shape. Hence, he thinks that he should experience the same troubles as his grandmother's one.

He falls in love with Helen White, daughter of the man for whom he has worked. He lets himself think of Helen White whenever her figure comes into his mind and only concerns himself with the manner of his thoughts. He thinks that whatever he may do to earn her love he must hurt her or someone's feelings, so he gets drunk to overcome a violent emotion of love. In Tom's feelings is felt the beginning of humanity.

"I don't know how it was. I was happy. You see how that was. Helen White made me happy and the night did too. I wanted to suffer, to be hurt somehow. I thought that was what I should do. I wanted to suffer, you see, because everyone suffers and does wrong. I thought of a lot of things to do, but they wouldn't work. They all hurt someone else."

(39)

He is too innocent to be condemned merely because he is at once possessed by an impossible dream of understanding. But George, schooled

by experience, condemns Tom's drunken dreams of Helen White, whom George, like Seth Richmond in "The Thinker," loves for her innocence and purity; nevertheless, George is drawn to Tom who wants to experience everything—except hurting others.

As described in "Mother," Elizabeth, George's mother married Tom Willard without love; hence, their married life is a struggle to promote their hatred in "Death". Ostensibly Elizabeth goes to see Doctor Reefy because of her health, but on the half dozen occasions when she has been to see him she has primarily wanted love and understanding. Each time she comes to see Doctor Reefy she talks a little more freely and after an hour or two in his presence feels renewed and strengthened against the dullness of her days. This is a kind of catharsis on the summer afternoon in the office when Elizabeth and Doctor Reefy hold each other tightly and he is on the point of becoming her lover, heavy feet come tramping up the office stairs. The heavy noise brings his courtship quickly to end and at the same time, her love and understanding also to end. It is nothing but death that she hungers for; to her the figure of death is a strong black-haired youth running over the hills or a stern quiet man marked and scarred by the business of living. George is overwhelmed by his sudden knowledge of the ultimate isolation of death by his mother's death. Her death makes George decide to leave Winesburg.

"Sophistication" provides the final lesson that leads George Willard into complete manhood. His mother's death urges George to stand on his own legs, so he is fast growing into manhood. To his mind his new sense of maturity sets him apart and make him a half-tragic figure. He wanders about wanting someone to understand his feelings. As Alice in "Adventure" has recognized the fact that many people must live and die alone, so George knows that man must live and die in uncertainty, as a thing blown by the winds or as a thing destined like corn to wilt in the sun. He has learned that the distortion of the human soul can only be cured by searching out moments of compassion, of empathy, of love. When the moment of sophistication comes to him, his mind turns to Helen White, the Winesburg banker's daughter. He now sees her as Seth Richmond in "The Thinker" and Tom Foster in "Drink" have seen her, as a symbol of spiritual fulfill-

ment rather than as an object of physical love. George's feeling of loneliness and isolation has been both broken and intensified by the presence of Helen, and what he felt has been reflected in her.

They had both got from their silent evening together the thing needed. Man or boy, woman or girl, they had for a moment taken hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible.⁽⁴⁰⁾

In "Departure" George Willard leaves Winesburg seen off at the station by more than a dozen people and given his father's words: "Be a sharp one. Keep your eyes on your money. Be awake. That's the ticket. Don't let anyone think you're a greenhorn."⁽⁴¹⁾

The serious and larger aspects of his future life don't come into his mind, and the recollection of little things in Winesburg occupies his mind. As he leaves Winesburg he takes with something of each of the grotesques who sought him out, and he knows that he can find understanding and fulfillment only in moments of uncomplicated acceptance and love.

Wherever he may go, the grotesques in the new land are probably lying in wait for him wandering about seeing love and understanding.

In "Sophistication" and "Departure" Anderson tells us:

There is a time in the life of every body when he for the first time takes the backward view of life. Perhaps that is the moment when he crosses the line into manhood."⁽⁴²⁾

When he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood.⁽⁴³⁾

If these words apply to him, George in "Departure" is at the starting point for a writer though he is a reporter by profession, and Sherwood Anderson himself has entered into his career of a writer.

Notes

- (1) Irving Howe, *Sherwood Anderson* (California: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 68.
- (2) Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio* (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), pp. 24-25.

In the bed the writer had a dream that was not a dream. As he grew somewhat sleepy but was still conscious, figures began to appear before his eyes. . . . You see the interest in all this lies in the figures that went before the eyes of the writer. They were all grotesques. . . . For an hour the procession of grotesques passed before the eyes of the old man, and then, although it was a painful thing to do, he crept out of bed and began to write. Some one of the grotesques had made a deep impression on his mind and he wanted to describe it.
- (3) Malcolm Cowley, "Introduction to *Winesburg, Ohio*," *Winesburg, Ohio* Edited by John H. Ferres (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), pp. 360-361.
- (4) Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, pp. 25-26.
- (5) Anderson refers to his *A Story Teller's Story* (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), p.80.

An insane fear of the flesh, a touch of transcendentalism, a reaching always up into the sky. In the ground underfoot there is only fear, poverty, hardship. One must look upward, always upward.
- (6) Sherwood Anderson, *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs*, Newly Edited from the Original Manuscripts by Ray Lewis White (The University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill, 1969), p.346.
- (7) Anderson, *A Story Teller's Story*, p.6.
- (8) *Ibid.*, p.126.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p.127.
- (10) *Ibid.*, p.129.
- (11) Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, pp.31-32.
- (12) *Ibid.*, p.28.
- (13) *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1963), vol. XVI, p.316.
- (14) *Ibid.*, XV, p.208.
- (15) Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p.37.
- (16) Waldo Frank, "*Winesburg, Ohio* After Twenty Years," *The Achievement of Sherwood Anderson*, Edited with an Introduction by Ray Lewis White (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1966), p. 118.
- (17) Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p.36.
- (18) *Ibid.*, p.57.
- (19) *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- (20) *Ibid.*, p. 94.

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- (21) *Ibid.*, p.120.
 - (22) *Ibid.*, p.127.
 - (23) *Ibid.*, p.137.
 - (24) *Ibid.*, p.136.
 - (25) *Ibid.*, p.141.
 - (26) *Ibid.*, p.154.
 - (27) Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XVI, p. 285.
 - (28) Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p.165.
 - (29) *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.
 - (30) *Ibid.*, p.171.
 - (31) *Ibid.*, p.168.
 - (32) Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XXI, p. 91.
 - (33) Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, p. 176.
 - (34) *Ibid.*, p.177.
 - (35) *Ibid.*, p.201.
 - (36) *Ibid.*, p.199.
 - (37) *Ibid.*, p.207.
 - (38) *Ibid.*, p.209.
 - (39) *Ibid.*, p.219.
 - (40) *Ibid.*, p.243.
 - (41) *Ibid.*, p.246.
 - (42) *Ibid.*, p.234.
 - (43) *Ibid.*, p.247.