# THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY EXTENSION PUBLICATION

VOL. V

**APRIL**, 1939

NO. 3

Period.D

# ADVENTURES IN READING

TWELFTH SERIES

AGATHA BOYD ADAMS



CHAPEL HILL

MCMXXXIX

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

# STUDY OUTLINES

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# FOREWORD

"Tell me, Major," says Scali in *Man's Hope*, "how can one make the most of one's life, in your opinion?"

"By converting as wide a range of experience as possible into conscious thought, my friend."

And that seems as good a motto as it would be possible to find for this number of the series called "Adventures in Reading." The basis of choice has been an attempt to select books which really constitute an adventure in reading; books that because of unusual subject matter, or unusual spiritual perceptiveness, help to widen the range of individual experience and to convert it into conscious thought. No effort has been made to follow the best seller list; in fact, a best seller is sometimes not used on the assumption that it has probably already been read and discussed by the users of this series. An effort is made, however, to select books which are sufficiently rich in thought to provoke discussion.

Any such grouping of books for a given year is bound to reflect the spirit of the times. Almost any day's newspaper might furnish a sort of rough outline of what is herein contained; war in Spain, nationalism wild as a malignant cancer in Germany, depression and uncertainty in France, an America no longer sure of the future. These are realities which must be faced and if possible understood; if at times they seem oppressive we can find relief from them in the moments of beauty provided by such books as *Our Town*, *Out of Africa*, or *Beyond Dark Hills*. Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2014

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#### CHAPTER I

# OUR YESTERDAYS

We have been hearing for a long time about the great American novel. Its coming has been heralded time and again by false prophets. It has become as cheap as a chewing gum ad, and as mythical as the forgotten verses of the "Star-spangled Banner." But it remained for Clyde Brion Davis to use the catchphrase as an ironical title for a novel, and thus to double that irony back upon himself by almost succeeding in doing the thing he halfway mocked. For his The Great American Novel is as rich a cyclorama of American life for the late nineties and early nineteen hundreds as we have had in many a year. Rich is the first word that comes to mind, and yet it is a richness carefully disciplined, well-controlled within a difficult self-imposed pattern. The author has set himself the task of writing throughout like a mediocre newspaper man who never found time to write the novel he intended. Yet within this pattern he succeeds in giving such a history as only a newspaper man could write. One who has lived through this period reads it with a pleasure similar to that evoked by looking through an old kodak album, or by reading Frederick Lewis Allen's Only Yesterday.

It is a far cry from the America of William Jennings Bryan, of the opening chapters of *The Great American Novel*, to the America of Archibald MacLeish's *Land of the Free*. As a nation we have become introspective, self-critical. Perhaps the vanishing of the frontier has given us a sort of national psychosis, in which apprehension and insecurity have supplanted hope. The pictures and the poetic soundtrack accompaniment of *Land* of the Free show us an America of startling sweeps of beauty, of poverty and waste and ugliness, and above all, of uncertainty. In form and in spirit it is as poignantly of this era as a streamlined metal train.

### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

### 1. "TIME AS A STUFF CAN BE WASTED"

The Great American Novel, by Clyde Brion Davis.

The major influences in Homer Zigler's life are his ambition to write a novel, his love for Frances, and his marriage to Pearl. Sketch each of these. Show how his plan for his novel changes from the days of the Great Commoner to the days of the World War. Does the author ever write as himself, or does he consistently remain within Homer Zigler's limitations?

What prevents Homer from writing his novel? Discuss his appeal for all of the people who answer such ads as "How do you know you can't write?" Is Homer defeated by circumstances, or by himself?

In reporting on this novel, divide it into the periods covered in Buffalo, Cleveland, Kansas City, San Francisco, and Denver.

In discussing Homer's dream life, use this quotation from *Out of Africa:* "People who dream when they sleep at night know a special kind of happiness which the world of the day holds not, a placid ecstacy and ease of heart that are like honey on the tongue."

Discuss The Great American Novel as a commentary on American life during the period just before the World War, and connect it with Land of the Free, which may be taken as a sequel.

#### Additional Reading:

Peter Ibbetson, by George Du Maurier. Tomorrow Morning, by Anne Parrish. American Years, by Harold Sinclair. Land of the Free, by Herbert Agar.

#### 2. "Now That the Land's Behind Us"

Land of the Free, by Archibald MacLeish.

Discuss the effect of the loss of the frontier on American life. H. L. Davis' *Honey in the Horn* gives an excellent picture of frontier life in Oregon when the get-rich-quick dream still had validity.

Compare Land of the Free with The River, by Pare Lorentz. Notice that Pare Lorentz is more hopeful, since he believes in government control of erosion and the possibility of reclaiming waste land.

#### Additional Reading:

We Too Are the People, by Louise Armstrong. The Trouble I've Seen, by Martha Gelhorn. The River, by Pare Lorentz. You Have Seen Their Faces, by Erskine Caldwell & M. B. White. The People, Yes, by Carl Sandburg.

#### CHAPTER II

# A TEEMING NATION OF NATIONS

Several years ago a witty and gifted Frenchwoman who had written a clever little book about England was sent by her publishers to do the same thing for America. All up and down the Atlantic seaboard the lady wandered, wringing her delicately expressive hands, for she was far too intelligent not to realize quickly that no one can write a clever little book about America. "America is like a vast Sargasso Sea . . . a prodigious welter of unconscious life, swept by ground swells of half-conscious emotion," says Van Wyck Brooks. It is this "prodigious welter" which Louis Adamic attempts to describe and analyze in My*America*, distinctly not a clever little book, but a great hulking, uneven, rich and meaty book.

Louis Adamic's first popular book was *The Native's Return*, in which he described a visit to his homeland with such charming enthusiasm that the impressionable reader longed to start at once for Carniola. He brings the same qualities of delight, understanding, and an added seriousness, to his study of America. His position as an emigrant gives him a vantage point. All travelers know that as the familiar recedes it also becomes clearer; that which is confused at close hand is seen from a distance as having form and design. Louis Adamic is able still to see America from some distance, with something of the wideeyed awe of the emigrant; in a sense she has remained for him—

> "She of the open soul and open door With room about her hearth for all mankind."

He believes in America, and for that reason if for no other his book is good to read in this time of doubt and hesitation.

Here is a book in which most readers will want to skip, in which in fact skipping is recommended. The topics below are suggested as an aid to judicious skipping.

### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

My America, by Louis Adamic.

# 1. AMERICAN SOCIALISM AND LABOR

A comparison has been suggested between the story of Ed. Cantrell, especially his beginnings, and that of Jesse Stuart, as told in *Beyond Dark Hills*. Does Cantrell also suggest Norman Thomas to you? Read parts of his poem, pp. 39-40. Compare Adamic's story of the Los Angeles dynamite case with that told in Lincoln Steffens' Autobiography, in the chapter called "Dynamite."

Discuss the paragraph beginning "Forests have been cut . . . ." on page 38, and compare with the story of erosion told in Pare Lorentz's *The River*. Do you agree with Adamic about the "erosion of personality"?

#### 2. "I LIFT MY LAMP BESIDE THE GOLDEN DOOR"

Discuss "A Letter I Did not Mail," p. 191. Read Robert Haven Schauffler's poem "Scum of the Earth."

Compare Adamic's ideas on immigration with those of Edward Bok, of an earlier day. The first chapter of Eugene Lyon's Assignment in Utopia also has an interesting account of an immigrant boyhood.

Discuss his refutation of some of our current ideas about immigration and deportation.

Read some of the case histories of immigrants.

#### 3. The Depression

Compare Adamic's description of Tragic Towns of New England, 1930, with what you know of mill villages in your own section. See Mary Heaton Vorse, *A Footnote to Folly*, for a graphic firsthand account of conditions in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Read Family Life and Depression, 1930-32, the notes of a case-worker for the Home Relief Office in New York. See Louise Armstrong's We Too Are the People, which tells the same story for a different part of the country.

Discuss: "The New Deal was . . . fundamentally American—gloriously, preposterously American—well-intentioned, experimental, not thought-out, blundering, successful in spots to a degree, scandalously wasteful, and instinctively liberal and progressive."

#### 4. The Workers

Comment on the paragraph on page 520, beginning "You can talk about democracy. This was *it*, essential American communism and socialism."

Select for discussion some of the figures in the groups of Random Portraits; e.g., the poet, Robinson Jeffers; Phillip La Follette and the Wisconsin Idea; Arthur Morgan, Disciplined Pragmatist; or Black Mountain, an Experiment in Education.

What does Adamic mean by saying "I want America eventually to become a work of art"? What does he mean by the "Long Road"? "It is the American way, and I want to see that Road kept open"?

Additional Reading:

See references at end of Chapter I, "Our Yesterdays."

Our Country, Our People, and Theirs, by M. E. Tracy (A graphic comparison of conditions in this country, and in Italy, Germany, and Russia).

We Too Are the People, by Louise Armstrong.

Road to America, by Frances Frost.

#### CHAPTER III

# **RENOVATING HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

During the winter of 1937-38 New Yorkers crowded by subway, bus and taxi to see a very quiet little play called Our Town, a play without scenery and without rhetoric, without pretense or excitement, as far away from the usual Broadway success as spring water from champagne. It is not difficult to see in that success New York's homesickness for the way of life Our Town makes live again; that simplicity, that smell of snow and fern, not only lost but never to be found again in megalopolis. To come out into the streets of New York after seeing Our Town was like returning to the city from a forest in Maine. The camper, after long contact with mountain winds and sunlight and clear water, finds the city living underground, a pallid race of dehumanized anemic moles, burrowing anxiously in artificial light and air.

We have grown to accept without questioning these sprawling shapeless modern cities. We have even found a strange new beauty in the vertical planes, the "cloud-capped towers" of Manhattan. But Lewis Mumford questions the validity of the great city as a way of life. His questioning, backed up by years of study of the cities of the world, leads him to regard the city as the uncontrollable monster of Frankenstein who dominates and murders his creator. Mr. Mumford does not stop, however, as do most critics of our civilization, with a bill of particulars on the crimes of the City vs. Humanity, but goes forward with a plan for abolishing the hideousness and the human waste of metropolitan giants. His thought-provoking book is of especial interest to women, since many of the by-products of city congestion-tragic children, dark and uncomfortable and crowded housing are only a few-belong in the province of women's most effective work. No woman could fail to be interested in his history of the development of the idea of privacy, his remarks on furniture and house-planning and the need for gardens. Many women will be prodded by his challenge "to do something about it." "I want America to be a work of art," says Louis Adamic. Lewis Mumford suggests how this may be done.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### Adapting the City for Human Welfare

The Culture of Cities, by Lewis Mumford.

It will probably be found best to divide the book into sections, and have different people report on each. Do not fail to use the pictures, and the descriptive notes with them.

#### 1. THE MEDIEVAL TOWN

Describe the medieval town. Use pictures of Avila or Carcassonne to supplement this.

Explain "the colonization of New England was on medieval urban lines, as that of Virginia and South Carolina was on the typical feudal pattern."

Describe the Church as community center in the medieval town. This was the era of the building of the great cathedrals.

Note the automatic limitations on the growth of the medieval towns: limitations of water supply, and of transportation. Are these any longer operative?

#### 2. The Insensate Industrial Town

Describe its immediate predecessor, the Baroque town, with its survivals in Paris or Rome.

Account for the rise of the industrial town in the nineteenth century. What does Mr. Mumford think of the gridiron plan, which we are familiar with in New York? Contrast this with the Washington plan.

#### 3. RISE AND FALL OF MEGALOPOLIS

So far from representing adequately the forces of modern civilization, the megalopolis is one of the biggest obstacles to their fruitful human use. In what ways is this true? What alternatives lie before us?

Describe the difference between (a) producing cities, e.g., Pittsburgh, Lyons, Turin, Essen; and (b) consuming cities, e.g., London, New York, Paris, Berlin.

Comment on that "acceptance of a day that includes no glimpse of the sun, no taste of the wind . . . no spontaneous pleasure not planned for a week in advance and noted on a memorandum pad."

#### 4. REGIONAL OUTLOOK

Analyze the task of regional planning.

Notice the difference suggested between landscape regions and economic regions. Has the United States already taken any steps in that direction?

Study the modern house plans.

There is a good summary of the book on page 492; "the culture of cities is ultimately the culture of life in its higher social manifestations  $\ldots$ ."

# Additional Reading:

Our Town, by Thornton Wilder (for pleasure of contrast). American Regionalism, by H. W. Odum.

The Disappearing City, by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Manhattan Transfer, by John Dos Passos.

See also Mr. Mumford's own extensive bibliography, at the end of his book.

#### CHAPTER IV

# YOUNG MEN AGAINST THE WORLD

When a poet writes a novel we expect, as one critic has said, percipience. It is just that quality which makes interesting the two so different books grouped together here; the swift strokes of insight that cut through hampering words, the precise and unusual phrase, the extraordinary sensitivity to mood and emotion. The distance from Oxford and London to W-Hollow, Kentucky, is even greater spiritually than geographically, but Jesse Stuart and Cecil Day-Lewis have much in common, for they are both poets, and they are both young men facing the bewildering world of the past decade.

Starting Point, by Cecil Day-Lewis, describes the frustration of modern youth. "Listen," the author seems to be saying, "this is the way young men felt who graduated back in 1926. This is what happens to them." It is a very young book, and a very hopeless book, and the joining of those two adjectives spells tragedy. Not an optimistic picture this, for it shows youth frightened, crippled, afraid of marriage, afraid to dream, knuckling under to the powers of darkness, finding in war its noblest outlet.

There is encouragement in the fact that of the two books, the autobiography has the courage, the acceptance of reality, the love of life, which the novel lacks. *Starting Point* suggests a breakdown of youth, a profound neurosis, expressed in various forms of escape from life. *Beyond Dark Hills* gives us reason to believe that from the back country, the out-of-the-way places of the earth, will come young men untainted by the miasma of cities, with strength to face the problems of today.

For the reader who has watched dark hills in shadow and sunlight, who has drunk "lonesome water" in laurel-hung ravines, Jesse Stuart's book is full of delight. His mountains, as well as his people are real; his pages smell of balsam and woodsmoke and rain on leaves.

### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### 1. The Quest for Certitude

Starting Point, by Cecil Day-Lewis.

This is a parable of four young men against life. Describe each separately.

Show how Antony, the best of the four, was profoundly influenced by the General Strike of 1926, and how he gradually turned toward membership in the Communist party and enlisted in Spain.

Discuss the inevitability of Theo's tragedy, which was begun in his early childhood.

Show how John accepts compromise.

The Catholic Church, with its benevolent stability, is the logical refuge for Henry. Why could none of the others turn to the same refuge?

The author feels that the hidden enemy is capitalism. Is our present social system responsible for the defeat of the idealism of both John and Henry? What opportunities, denied by capitalism, would a communistic state have offered them?

Cecil Day-Lewis is one of an interesting group of English poets. The others are W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and Louis MacNeice.

#### Additional Reading:

In Praise of Life, by Walter Schoenstedt (a picture of German Youth of the same period).

Wolf Among Wolves, by Hans Fallada.

Poems, by W. H. Auden.

Poems, by Stephen Spender.

Letters from Iceland, by W. H. Auden & Louis MacNeice.

### 2. "PINE FRAGRANCE IN THE WINTER WIND"

Beyond Dark Hills, by Jesse Stuart.

Describe Jesse Stuart's ancestry, which is genuinely American.

Note the sure sense of rhythm throughout the book, as in the current refrain: "They would bloom again next April . . . My season came only once."

Describe Stuart's struggle for an education.

Comment on "In the hills a man goes forth to sow his grain in the seasons, and a man reaps his own grain . . . though his lot was hard among his hills, it was his own lot."

Summarize the qualities of character and personality which are apparent throughout this youthful autobiography.

### Additional Reading:

Black is My True Love's Hair, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. The Time of Man, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Swing Your Mountain Gal, by Rebecca Cushman. Cabins in the Laurel, by Muriel Sheppard.

#### CHAPTER V

# THE COMPLEAT FARMER

Long ago in the *Georgics*. Vergil painted a loving, tenderly realistic, if somewhat idealized picture of the Italian farmer's life. Granted the divergence of time, place, and methods, R. F. D. is not dissimilar in spirit-a sort of prose Georgic of southern Ohio. Not written at the behest of a patron, it nevertheless expresses the unconscious mandate of thousands of inarticulate people, that homesickness for the land which makes subway commuters pore over seed catalogs and nurse cindery and anemic plants on house tops. That dream of "a little place in the country" has seldom been better expressed than in John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men. Remember how Lennie was going to raise rabbits and feed them all they could eat? Well, Peggy and Allen Smart found their place, not very far from Chillicothe, where they could raise dogs and sheep and flowers and vegetables; where they could live independently and freely, with space and solitude and beauty about them.

In order to have these things they had to forfeit others. The story of their experiment is R. F. D., a Book of Hours of a not too successful farm. The record is set down with very little literary embellishment, yet because of its honesty and simplicity it moves at times close to genuine poetry. The writer not only knows but loves this familiar countryside, and makes us see it in sudden flashes, as swift changes of light color a dull landscape. Part of the pleasure of reading R. F. D. is derivative; if you have ever lived in the country you will find that especial corner of trees and fields, or creek and hills, comes between you and the printed page. And if your memory does not possess such pictures, you will find R. F. D. a satisfactory, if momentary, way of fulfilling that dream which returns each spring.

The older reader will perhaps reserve judgment a little, hoping to hear from the Smarts again, say ten years from now, when their experiment at Oak Hill shall have passed beyond the first delicious stage of adventure. Of course it is that very sense of adventure which gives this record its gusto and charm; that, and the very pleasant and unassuming candor of the telling.

The author of We Farm for a Hobby and Make it Pay writes convincingly enough of farming to make every reader want to try it, not only as an escape from economic depression, but as a delightful way of life. No one can read his descriptions of food at Medlock Farm without a watering at the mouth, a hankering for scrapple and home-cured hams and cherry pies and mushrooms, and for the comfort and assurance of which they are the outward and visible signs.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### 1. PROSE GEORGICS OF SOUTHERN OHIO

R. F. D., by William Allen Smart.

The author's delight in the landscape of southern Ohio is evident throughout. Describe the setting of Oak Hill, its nearness to Chillicothe, and its associations for the author.

The author says that if none of Peggy's beauty "appears in these pages, the book is a dud." Does it appear? Discuss Peggy's part in the success of the enterprise.

Give some description of the life at Oak Hill, both its discomforts and its rewarding moments.

Note the characteristic blend of prose fact and essential poetry in the descriptions of sowing grass.

Mr. Kincaid is one of the most important characters in the book. Discuss him as an independent personality and in his relationship to the Smarts.

## 2. A HOME-USE FARM IN PENNSYLVANIA

We Farm for a Hobby, by Henry Tetlow.

Describe Thanksgiving Day at Medlock Farm, which fittingly sums up the years' achievements. "Even if it did not pay I would like it."

Discuss the three factors in successful farm management.

Discuss the reasons for diversified farming.

Comment on "There is a great and fortifying satisfaction in the assurance that you can feed yourself and your family. There is good mental and nervous discipline in the tempo of the work."

Do you agree with the following statement: "an equal number of women here in the United States hope to get through life without ever doing an honest day's work"?

# Additional Reading:

Land of the Free, by Herbert Agar. Land of the Free, by Archibald MacLeish. The Culture of Cities, by Lewis Mumford. My America, by Louis Adamic. Out of Africa, by Isak Dinesen. Under Green Apple Boughs, by Lucile Grebenc.

#### CHAPTER VI

# EUROPEANS IN AFRICA

In the minds of most of us the northern rim of Africa belongs to Europe, to ancient history, and to modern pleasure cruises. South of that the continent stretches away vaguely, a huge misshapen swollen pear floating on two oceans. There are patches of color on a map memorized in childhood, names-Tanganyika, Transvaal, Rhodesia, Cape Town-without any of the associational values of European place names.

Africa has had few literary spokesmen. During the past year, however, several writers have begun to invest those dim place names with color and connotations. In the recent books with an African setting, the reader is immediately struck with certain rather obvious parallels between South African history and United States history, present day problems in Rhodesia and in the South Atlantic states. The pioneering Boers of Stuart Cloete's The Turning Wheels and Francis Brett Young's They Seek a Country had blood brothers in the covered wagons that trailed westward over the United States. An understanding of the race problem inherited by the descendants of those Dutch and British pioneers may help to broaden our sympathies in dealing with our own difficulties of racial adjustment. The natives whom Henry Ormandy longed blunderingly to befriend. and whom Isak Dinesen understands with her affections, have descendants and cousins in the United States today.

Over and over again in *Out of Africa* there recurs the metaphor of being under clear cool water; the air in the African highlands is so limpid that one feels washed, buoyed, and changed as if in a different element. A similar transmutation awaits the reader who sees Africa through the clarifying lens of Isak Dinesen's sophisticated and civilized perceptions. The details of life on a coffee farm, which might be drab and gross, are invested with magic by the author's sensitivity to the forest world, to mountains and night, to animal and human suffering, and to the tragedy latent in all human affairs. She has described her life in Africa with such reticence and rightness that one hesitates to smirch with comment the result. Her book offers a rare experience to the perceptive; it belongs with such books as W. H. Hudson's *Green Mansions*, into which the reader either never finds the way, or enters as an initiate into an unforgettable refuge of the spirit.

SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

# 1. A ROMANTIC IN AFRICA

What Hath a Man? by Sarah Gertrude Millin.

Show that Henry Ormandy is a true romantic, in that he never completely accepts reality. In this lies his tragedy.

The story is a representation, a playing-out in terms of one man's life, of the somber passage from *Ecclesiastes* from which the title is taken. Discuss Henry's father's influence.

The two major influences on Henry's adult life are the Catholic Church and the idealism of Cecil Rhodes. Trace the interwoven threads throughout the novel.

Comment on the description of Dorothy's housekeeping methods; "those people without any economic sense, who in the name of economy, wasted sweet life itself in niggling."

Discuss Henry as a defender of unpopular causes. His attitude towards the natives?

Additional Reading:

Starting Point, by Cecil Day-Lewis (a similar story of a young man's quest for certitude).

The African Witch, by Joyce Carey (British civilization against a jungle backdrop).

The Turning Wheels, by Stuart Cloete.

They Seek a Country, by Francis Brett Young (these two historical novels of African colonization provide a background for What Hath a Man?).

Cecil Rhodes, by S. G. Millin.

### 2. AFRICA DISTILLED

Out of Africa, by Isak Dinesen.

Use a map to locate the Dinesen farm, remembering that it is in sight of the Njong hills, and not far from Mt. Kilmanjaro. Describe briefly the life on the farm.

What do you learn of the character and personality of the author? Discuss the traits which lend an unusual quality to her life. What is her relationship with the natives?

"Lulu made my house one with the African landscape, so that nobody could tell where the one stopped and the other began." Show how this applies to the whole book.

Select some of the episodes to describe in detail, such as the ceremonial dance, the visit of the Hindu priest, or the burning of charcoal.

Discuss the training of Somali maidens.

### Additional Reading:

Black Laughter, by Llewellyn Powys.

God's Stepchildren, by S. G. Millin.

Green Mansions, by W. H. Hudson.

The Story of an African Farm, by Olive Schreiner (another woman's experiences in Africa, in an earlier day).

R. F. D., by William Allen Smart (for a contrasting picture of an American farm).

#### CHAPTER VII

# LAND OF POETS AND PHILOSOPHERS

Ever since George Ticknor and Edward Everett of Boston spent that year at the University of Göttingen which Van Wyck Brooks so brilliantly describes in *The Flowering of New England*, German scholarship and German learning have been aureoled with light in American eyes. Thanks to this voyage and many others of later scholars, Germany remained a sort of fatherland of culture until the events of 1914 made the idea of Kultur abhorrent. But the old undercurrent has persisted in our literature, the influence invisible yet undeniable of that lovable and now forever lost Germany of the poets, the fairy tales, the austere and creative universities, the pioneers of thought. We still find incredible and nightmarish this modern Germany which burns her poetry and exiles her philosophers.

Phyllis Bottome's novel, *The Mortal Storm*, tells the story of such an exile against a background of homesick appreciation for the older Germany. The novel has so much charm and such emotional warmth that we might be inclined to doubt its accuracy, were it not guaranteed and checked by the astringent facts of Eva Lips's *Savage Symphony*. The latter book recounts the actual fate, under the Third Reich, of a scientist who, like Dr. Roth, could not become a Nazi.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

### 1. A HOUSE DIVIDED

This Mortal Storm, by Phyllis Bottome.

The family life of the Roths is described most attractively. Discuss the elements which made it happy and civilized.

Within this ideal family life there were latent the elements of tragedy. Show what the elements of division were, and how Nazi policy brought on the family crisis.

Discuss the attitude of the parents toward their children. Do you think Freya and her brothers had been given too much freedom? Does Freya prove herself worthy of this confidence?

Does Freya's love for Hans Breitner seem plausible? Is his peasant home too much idealized? Discuss the symbolism of the episode of the trapped hare.

Notice that the novel gives you pictures of life within three types of homes, the aristocratic castle of the Junkers, the independent mountain farm, and the well-to-do cultured professional class. Which group suffers most under the Third Reich, and why?

Note the beauty of the author's prose style, her descriptions of skiing and hiking in the mountains. How are these descriptions integrated with the story?

### 2. ANTHROPOLOGY VS. ARYAN SUPREMACY

Savage Symphony, by Eva Lips.

Notice that this true story begins, as did the novel studied above, with a picture of gracious and civilized living. Discuss the calibre of the Lips's life in Cologne.

What was Jules Lips's crime against the Third Reich? Discuss in detail his reasons for refusing to use the museum for propaganda.

After reading this book, are you left with the feeling that there is any dissenting minority within Nazi Germany of those who both hate and fear Hitler? Notice that the Lips were helped by Nazis on several occasions. What basis for hope for the future of Germany can you find?

#### Additional Reading:

Mein Kampf, by Adolf Hitler.

Lost Heritage, by Bruno Frank (a novel with a similar story of an exile from Germany).

Conquest of the Past, by Hubertus zu Loewenstein.

My Austria, by Kurt Schuschnigg.

The Nazi Primer, by H. L. Childs.

Our Battle, by Hendrik W. van Loon.

#### CHAPTER VIII

# A CHALLENGE TO WOMEN

Some years ago Virginia Woolf made herself the spokesman of all women who have ever wanted to write. In a little book whose importance was out of all proportion to its size, *A Room* of One's Own, she very convincingly set forth the theory that no woman could become a successful writer without an independent income and a room of her own. No matter how easy it may seem to refute this theory with stories of women who have written successful books under the most incredible disadvantages, nevertheless the idea remains a suggestive one, the basic need for independence and privacy before important work can be done. In her latest essays Mrs. Woolf continues the same line of thought in a series of musings on the education of women, and the responsibility of women in a world increasingly threatened by war.

The theme of *Three Guineas* is more vital and more farreaching in its implications than that of *A Room of One's Own*; surely no subject is more worthy the attention of thoughtful women than the prevention of war. To its discussion Virginia Woolf brings the resources of her mature and philosophical mind, the charm of her intricate yet translucent prose. She has the poet's gift of suggestiveness, so that all her phrases evoke thoughts and indicate new bypaths of investigation, yet the whole is as rounded, as finished, as a well-turned sonnet. Her three essays here are subtly interlaced, the thought flowing from one to another like those curiously changing spirals one watches on the surface of running water, yet at the end the theme is clear.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

### 1. LYSISTRATA IN BLOOMSBURY

Three Guineas, by Virginia Woolf.

Give some account of Mrs. Woolf's other works, with the emphasis on A Room of One's Own.

Tell how the three guineas are to be given.

Discuss the four qualities which Mrs. Woolf feels are the peculiar heritage of women and how they may be useful in preventing war.

Discuss her theories about a new kind of college for women.

Do not miss the notes, which are as good reading as the essays themselves. The references to biographies will suggest interesting additional reading.

#### 2. AN ANSWER FROM AN AMERICAN WOMAN

Political Guide, by Dorothy Thompson.

Refugees, by Dorothy Thompson.

Dorothy Thompson is a woman after Virginia Woolf's own heart, the rare woman who is gifted intellectually, knows how to write, and is financially independent.

Tell something about Dorothy Thompson's experience and work. Do you feel that her writing is as unbiased as Virginia Woolf would have it?

Discuss the definitions in the first chapter of Political Guide.

Discuss the chapter called the "Dilemma of a Pacifist," and compare it with some of Virginia Woolf's theories.

In *Refugees* Dorothy Thompson suggests a plan. Is it workable? Give some outline of what the refugee problem is.

Refer to some of the other books studied in this course, notably Savage Symphony and This Mortal Storm, for some background for the threats to world peace which both Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Thompson discuss.

#### Additional Reading:

A Room of One's Own, by Virginia Woolf.

The School of Femininity, by Margaret Lawrence.

Savage Symphony, by Eva Lips.

This Mortal Storm, by Phyllis Bottome.

The Nazi Primer, by H. L. Childs.

Mein Kampf, by Adolf Hitler.

Review of Three Guineas in the Forum for November, 1938, by Mary Colum.

#### CHAPTER IX

# EXPLORING THE SOUTH

Here are two very different books about the familiar yet enigmatic South. Jonathan Daniels' A Southerner Discovers the South and Allen Tate's The Fathers are based upon widely divergent temporal concepts. One looks forward, the other backward. In the summer of 1937 Jonathan Daniels set out to discover for himself the South of which he had been writing in his newspaper. His exploration had to do with the South of here and now, and to come. Also in 1937, and for some time before that, Allen Tate had been thinking and brooding over the past of the South. His exploration was made within the walls of his own study, but in a way he goes farther and probes deeper and his findings help to illuminate the conclusions of Daniels' book.

Oddly enough both books start at the same place, that ambiguous, debatable, and once tragic region, the northern section of Virginia, which was at once profoundly southern and yet inextricably linked to the nation. Jonathan Daniels, standing on the long bridge out of Washington, saw the white columns of Arlington as the symbolic gateway of the South; here it was appropriate that he should begin his journey. But he went through that gateway to no cemetery of the mighty dead, but onto the highways and into the towns of the living South. Allen Tate went through the same gateway, not into the present but into the past, for like his famous "Ode to the Confederate Dead" his novel is also a delving into the mind and the long-dead emotions of that border line country. What then, is its importance for us? Shall we not agree with Daniels that the South has too long glorified her past, and therefore discard The Fathers as having no validity for the present? But Daniels toward the close of his book reminds us that the aristocratic ideal, that "pattern in the stone," may mean more for the future than "the stir of Atlanta or the sweat of Birmingham." What is that pattern in the stone? Tate defines it for us with the precision of the skilled poet.

# SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

# 1. THE PATTERN IN THE STONE

The Fathers, by Allen Tate.

Notice that here, as in Cecil Day-Lewis' *Starting Point*, we have a poet's novel. The result is not easy reading, but suggestive and stimulating.

The Fathers is built up around three focal points:

a. Pleasant Hill: Describe the place, and discuss its meaning for the Buchan family. Is this characteristic of southern life?

Discuss the funeral as an opening of the story; the family gathered there; the way of life of the Buchans and the Poseys.

Discuss the advantages of the method of telling the story from the point of view of fifteen-year-old Lacey Buchan.

b. The Crisis: The word as used here has a double meaning, suggesting both the national and the personal crisis. Show how they were interwoven.

c. The Abyss: The story of horror here has more of Poe than of Faulkner. Compare Tate's old house in Georgetown with Poe's House of Usher.

Trace the rôle of Yellow Jim throughout the novel. Is he symbolic of the complex relationship of the two races? "That which they had thought of as property suddenly behaved like a human being."

Contrast Lewis Buchan and George Posey. George is the man without roots, without a place. Is he in a sense also the modern man?

Summarize the characteristics of the Buchans. Do you think they represent what Jonathan Daniels means by the enduring quality of the aristocratic tradition?

Additional Reading:

Selected Poems, by Allen Tate. The Sheltered Life, by Ellen Glasgow. So Red the Rose, by Stark Young. And Tell of Time, by Laura Krey. The House of Connelly, by Paul Green.

# 2. Economic Problem or Economic Hope

A Southerner Discovers the South, by Jonathan Daniels.

Trace Mr. Daniels' journey through the South, noticing how skilfully he picked out significant places and people.

Mr. Daniels has a gift for condensation similar to Mr. Tate's. His sentences are boiled-down crystallizations of thought. Often they may be expanded into long discussions. Probably the best way to present his very diverse book will be to pick out for discussion some of these suggestive sentences.

Summarize Mr. Daniels' findings: Problems, faults, and reasons for confidence in the future. Comment on "tyrants and plutocrats and poor all need teaching; they are in the dark together, white man, black man, big man. None of them will ever get to day alone." What evidences did Mr. Daniels find throughout the South of cooperation among men of good will?

#### Additional Reading:

The Wasted Land, by Gerald Johnson. Forty Acres and Steel Mules, by Howard Nixon. Southern Regions, by H. W. Odum. Human Geography of the South, by Rupert Vance. This Body the Earth, by Paul Green.

#### CHAPTER X

# QUIET PLACES

Most people feel at one time or another the need for a cloister, an escape from the tangled noises of every day into a place of quietude and beauty. In a civilization older than our own such retreats may more often be places of singular architectural beauty, enriched by the many generations which have turned to them for the comfort of loveliness. Such comfort is to be found, however, not only in ancient abbeys and great cathedrals, but in hushed and remote places out of doors; perhaps the far end of a lake, the stillness of hemlocks and birches, the blue valley folded between mountains. Our own time has an especial need for such escapes.

Roger Vercel's hero in *The Tides of Mont St. Michel* escapes from unemployment and the futility of his own defeated spirit into the cloistered beauty of a medieval abbey. His first need is the basic one of a job, but the abbey gradually wakens in him the still stronger need of beauty.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts lives withdrawn and dwells on beauty. She disregards the clamor of critics who would force every novelist to handle what are called significant themes, which in other words would make every novelist a propagandist for the right or the left. Black Is My Truelove's Hair is as timeless as a stanza from the Greek Anthology. It is classic in the sense of the French seventeenth century classicists, in that it is removed from temporal circumstances and deals with the unchanging qualities of the human heart. The truck which Bill Langtry drove is a concession to modernity, but it roars past, and the Glen is no more disturbed than a deep forest pool by a passing wind. Dena's story might belong to any age or time. She is a figure out of legend with the reality of folklore. The novel moves forward in a succession of pictures in clear colors, accompanied by the sound of waters, of little winds, of women calling chickens, of plovers and doves, and of the mill grinding corn.

# SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

### 1. THE HABIT OF BEAUTY

The Tides of Mont St. Michel, by Roger Vercel.

A print or a photograph of Mont St. Michel would add to the interest of the discussion. If possible have someone who has visited the Mount describe it. If not, read about it in a guide book or encyclopaedia, and describe it in some detail. Notice that the Abbey dominates the book as it does the island and the small lives of André and Laura.

Do you feel that either André or Laura is significant or important? Tell their story briefly.

Discuss the character of Hulard. Trace the gradual steps in the increase of the Abbey's hold on André. Why did not Laura respond to it in the same measure?

Describe the influences of wind and tide and mist on the progress of the story. Is there any symbolism in the title?

Discuss the final solution of André's problem. Is it due to the Abbey, or to an extraneous circumstance? Does it seem to you irrelevant to the main theme? Does this weaken the ending?

#### Additional Reading:

Mont Saint Michel and Chartres, by Henry Adams.

#### 2. FAR AWAY IN THE MOUNTAINS

Black is My Truelove's Hair, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

Sketch the story briefly, then select passages to present in detail, or to read aloud; Dena's talk with the miller, for instance, which has the charm and simplicity of a folksong, or the scene in the miller's garden, when Polly accepts Dena as one of the Elliott family.

The scene in the garden is the high point of Dena's rehabilitation. What forces in her character brought about her rehabilitation? How are we made to realize her courage and decision as well as her generosity of spirit?

Cambron Elliott suggests the theme of emigration from Virginia to Kentucky which has always interested Miss Roberts. See *The Great Meadow*.

Discuss Miss Roberts' withdrawal from present day realities. Do you think her themes are significant ones? By way of contrast, a brief sketch of Wessel Smitter's F. O. B. Detroit might be given; here is the machine age with all its dependence on machines and its human waste.

Compare Black is My Truelove's Hair with Jesse Stuart's Beyond Dark Hills, which has a similar feeling for remote mountain places.

#### Additional Reading:

The Great Meadow, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

The Time of Man, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

"Holy Morning," by Elizabeth Madox Roberts, in *Harper's*, December, 1938.

Beyond Dark Hills, by Jesse Stuart.

F. O. B. Detroit, by Wessel Smitter.

### CHAPTER XI

# FICTION OR REALITY

At its best the novel may be an illumination of life; it extends the boundaries of actual experience and while creating an illusion of reality its implications stretch beyond reality. But such novels are rare. One thinks of the great Russians, of Cervantes, of Hardy, of the Somerset Maugham who wrote Of Human Bondage. In contrast to such interpretations of human life, the ordinary human life seems pallid; on the other hand, the competent but commonplace novel is frequently surpassed by a genuine record, however unliterary, of a vivid human being.

Last year Francis Brett Young had the misfortune to bring out a novel about the Boer Trek—*They Seek a Country*—at exactly the time when there appeared a considerably more vigorous novel on the same theme, Stuart Cloete's *The Turning Wheels*. And this season bad luck has again followed Mr. Young, for his novel *Dr. Bradley Remembers* came out almost simultaneously in this country with Arthur E. Hertzler's *The Horse and Buggy Doctor*. And here is a notable instance of a case in which the record of a real life surpasses fiction both in vividness and in human feeling. It is interesting to remember that Francis Brett Young is himself also a doctor; but in his novel about a doctor he is more novelist than doctor.

Dr. Hertzler's modest title might lead us to forget that he is a very successful physician, the founder and head of the Hertzler Clinic in Halstead, Kansas, and the author of a great many books on medicine. His reminiscences, set down without literary pretensions, furnish an absorbing history of the progress of American medicine in the last fifty years; but more than that, they reveal the struggle of an ambitious, forthright, courageous human being, and they suggest a stimulating commentary on the practise of medicine as it is today. Many of us who can remember the horse and buggy doctor of our childhood will feel that no amount of aseptic tile and chromium, no glittering clinic or hospital full of specialists, can quite take the place of the old friend who knew not only our own ailments but those of all our family as well.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

### 1. MEDICAL PRACTISE IN THE BLACK COUNTRY

Dr. Bradley Remembers, by Francis Brett Young.

Throughout the novel the mellow and gentle mood of an old man's reminiscences is sustained; do you think that this subdued introspection tends to blur the sharpness of possible drama?

The author is a doctor; does he dramatize any of Dr. Bradley's cases? Is he more interested in Bradley's professional or personal life?

Is the novel in any measure a history of medical practise in England from the middle of the nineteenth century?

As Dr. Bradley looks back on his life he finds it good. Trace the elements of tragedy in his life, the qualities that brought it richness, and see if you can agree with him.

Compare Dr. Bradley Remembers with The Citadel, which is more intense, more focused. Is it also more tractarian? Is any indictment of the British medical system implicit in Dr. Bradley Remembers?

Compare Brett Young's description of the growth and spread of the Black Country over Sedgebury with Lewis Mumford's account of the growth of the Industrial City in *The Culture of Cities*.

## 2. MEDICAL PRACTISE IN KANSAS

The Horse and Buggy Doctor, by A. E. Hertzler.

Dr. Bradley Remembers covers a slightly earlier period, though there is some overlapping. Contrast medical practise in the early days in Kansas with that in England.

In contrast to the novel, Dr. Hertzler is more concerned with the progress of medicine than with his own personal life. Does his book gain or lose interest on that account?

Comment on Dr. Hertzler's early struggles for an education, and his continuance of his education in adult life.

His picture of the German universities is worth emphasizing just now, when we are apt to think of Germany as a country gone temporarily mad.

Compare Dr. Hertzler's book with Alexis Carrel's Man the Unknown. Both these doctors tend to stress the limitations of medical knowledge.

Choose some of the other books by or about doctors suggested below, to compare with the two books studied here.

### Additional Reading:

Arrowsmith, by Sinclair Lewis. The Story of San Michele, by Axel Munthe. The Citadel, by A. J. Cronin. I Swear by Apollo, by W. E. Aughinbaugh. The Healing Knife, by George Sava. Young Dr. Galahad, by Elizabeth Seiffert.

#### CHAPTER XII

# THE ALTERED SKY

Barcelona, which was Carthaginian before it was Roman and Catalonian, has fallen. General Franco's Italian and Moorish and Spanish troops marched into the devastated city on January 27th. No one, however, who has followed the bitter history of civil war in Spain can believe that any real victory or lasting peace has yet been won. Nor can any thoughtful person doubt the significance to the rest of the world of that struggle, at once local yet far-reaching in its implications.

Of the hundreds of books which have so far been written about the war in Spain, it is not surprising that the best should be by a Frenchman, and an airman. Any Spaniard of sufficient depth of feeling to write such a novel is too poignantly involved in the struggle to achieve that distance which makes literature possible. We do not write of personal grief at the moment of its sharpest impact. Malraux, interested enough in the cause of Spanish democracy to risk his life for it, is nevertheless not writing of his own land, his own people. He can be more detached. It is not too fanciful perhaps to link that detachment with his habit of viewing the world from the air. *Man's Hope* is distinctly an airman's novel; the best of it lies in the series of pictures from the air, the sense of space, of stars, of great swooping winds, the roads and burnt gold plains and strangely violet mountains of Castile viewed from a great height.

# SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### 1. AN AIRMAN'S NOVEL

Man's Hope, by André Malraux.

Use a map of Spain to point out places mentioned in the book.

Although the novel seems at first episodic, chaotic, it is not without a formal design: The beginning of the War in Madrid, in Barcelona, in the Sierra; the Siege of Alcazar, in Toledo; the Siege of Madrid; Victory at Brihuega.

Notice the method; many men of various types give in conversations their reasons for fighting on the Loyalist side. Comment on the international character of the war as brought out in the novel.

Man's Hope is full of episodes of amazing vividness. Select some of these episodes for special emphasis.

Additional Reading:

The Life and Death of a Spanish Town, by Elliott Paul. The Spanish Tragedy, by Allison Peers. Counter-Attack in Spain, by Ramón J. Sender. The Olive Field, by Ralph Bates. The Fifth Column, by Ernest Hemingway. The Politics of Modern Spain, by Frank A. Manuel. A Diary of My Times, by Georges Bernanos. Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain, by Felix Morrow.

### 2. HAWK'S AMBUSH

Air Raid; a verse play for radio, by Archibald MacLeish.

The Spanish war has proved in hundreds of unbearably vivid demonstrations that the entire character of warfare has changed. Modern war comes out of the sky, to which man once looked for peace, and its objectives are not armored forts and trenches, but small quiet villages and fields and homes. Such is the idea which Archibald MacLeish has dramatized in his poem, *Air Raid*.

The scene of *Air Raid* might be anywhere; but notice the sense of space, of the wheeling curve of the earth, which is the way one sees it from the air.

The poem is too short to be divided, and its significance needs no commentary. If time permits, read it aloud as a corollary to Malraux' pictures of airfights in Spain.

#### Additional Reading:

The Fall of the City, by Archibald MacLeish. The Planets, by Alfred Kreymborg (also a verse play for radio). Listen! the Wind, by Anne Lindbergh.

# SPECIAL REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Bottome, Phyllis	This Mortal Storm. 1938. (7)	Little	2.50
Daniels, Jonathan	A Southerner Discovers the South. 1938. (9)	Macmillan	3.00
Davis, C. B.	The Great American Novel. 1938. (1)	Farrar	2.50
Day-Lewis, Cecil	Starting Point. 1938. (4)	Harper	2.50
Dinesen, Isak	Out of Africa. 1938. (6)	Random	2.75
Hertzler, A. E.	Horse and Buggy Doctor. 1938. (11)	Harper	2.75
Lips, Eva	Savage Symphony. 1938. (7	Random	3.00
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Millin, S. G.	What Hath a Man? 1938. (6)	Harper	2.50
Mumford, Lewis	The Culture of Cities. 1938. (3)	Harcourt	5.00
Roberts, E. M.	Black is My Truelove's Hair. 1938. (10)	Viking	2.50
Smart, W. A.	R. F. D. 1938. (5)	Norton	2.50
Stuart, Jesse	Beyond Dark Hills. 1938. (4)	Dutton	3.50
Tate, Allen	The Fathers. 1938. (9)	Putnam	2.50
Tetlow, Henry	We Farm for a Hobby. 1938. (5)	Morrow	2.00
Thompson, Dorothy	Political Guide. 1938. (8)	Stackpole	1.25
Thompson, Dorothy	Refugees. 1938. (8)	Random	1.00
Vercel, Roger	Tides of Mont St. Michel.	Random	2.50
Woolf, Virginia	Three Guineas. 1938. (8)	Harcourt	2.50
Young, F. B.	Dr. Bradley Remembers. 1938. (11)	Reynal	2.75

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# Numerals refer to chapters in which the titles are used.

	•		
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Agar, Herbert	Land of the Free. 1936. (6)	Houghton	3.50
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Auden, W. H.	Poems. 1934. (4)	Random	2.50
Auden, W. H. &	Letters from Iceland. 1937. (4)	Random	3.00
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Aughinbaugh, W. E.	I Swear by Apollo. 1938. (11)	Farrar	3.00
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Carey, Joyce	The African Witch. 1936. (6)	Morrow	2.50
Childs, Harwood	The Nazi Primer. 1938. (7, 8)	Harper	1.75
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Cronin, A. J.	The Citadel. 1937. (11)	Grosset	1.39
Cushman, Rebecca	Swing Your Mountain Gal. 1933. (4)	Houghton	2.50
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Du Maurier, George	Peter Ibbetson. 1891. (1)	Harper	2.50
Fallada, Hans	Wolf Among Wolves. 1938. (4)	Putnam	3.00
Foster, Michael	American Dream. 1937. (1)	Morrow	3.00
Frank, Bruno	Lost Heritage. 1937. (7)	Viking	2.50
Frost, Frances	Road to America. 1937. (2)	Farrar	2.00
Gelhorn, Martha	Trouble I've Seen. 1936. (1)	Morrow	2.50
Glasgow, Ellen	Sheltered Life. 1932. (9)	Doubleday	2.50
Grebenc, Lucille	Under Green Apple Boughs. 1936. (5)	Garden City	.89
Green, Paul	House of Connelly. 1931. (9)	French	2.50
Green, Paul	This Body the Earth. 1935. (9)	Harper	2.50
Hemingway, Ernest	The Fifth Column. 1938. (12)	Scribner	2.75
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Johnson, Gerald	The Wasted Land. 1937. (9)	U. N. C. Press	1.50
Krey, Laura	And Tell of Time. 1938. (9)	Houghton	2.75
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