

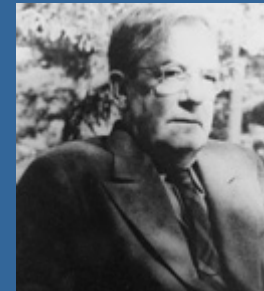


Sherwood Anderson

(1876-1941)

"The young man's mind was carried away by his growing passion for dreams. One looking at him would not have thought him particularly sharp. With the recollection of little things occupying his mind he closed his eyes and leaned back in the car seat. He stayed that way for a long time and 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 his dreams of his manhood."

(from *Winesburg, Ohio*)



Winesburg, Ohio

<http://www.bartleby.com/156/>

This collection of short stories allows us to enter the alternately complex, lonely, joyful, and strange lives of the inhabitants of the small town of Winesburg, Ohio.

Life

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/shanders.htm>

- Writer whose prose style, derived from everyday speech, influenced American short story writing between World Wars I and II.
- Anderson made his name as a leading naturalistic writer with his masterwork, **WINESBURG, OHIO** (1919), a picture of life in a typical small Midwestern town, as seen through the eyes of its inhabitants.

Life

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/shanders.htm>

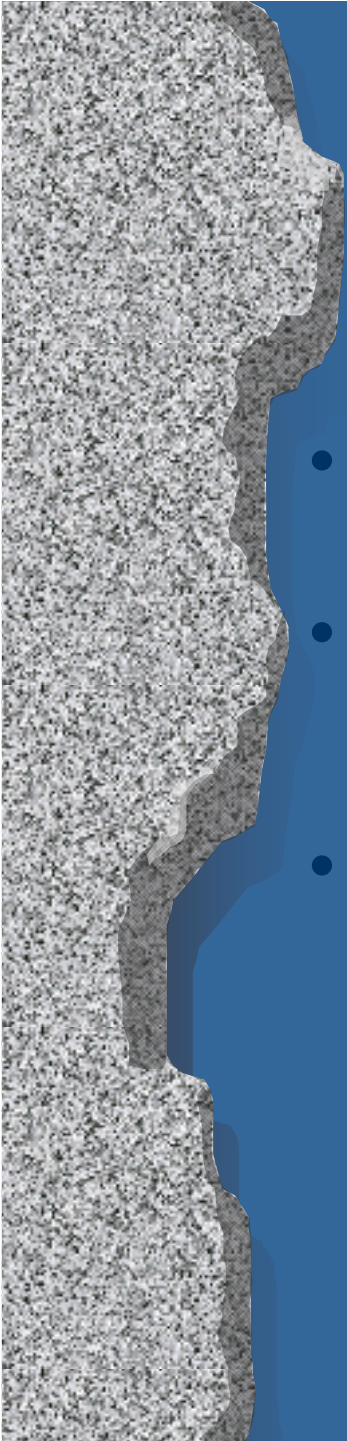
- Anderson's episodic *bildungsroman* has been compared often to [Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River Anthology](http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/emasters.htm). cf <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/emasters.htm>
- Bildungsroman: (German, from *Bildung* education + *Roman* novel.) A novel dealing with one person's formative years or spiritual education.



WINDY MCPHERSON'S SON (1916),
MARCHING MEN (1917), and

Winesburg, Ohio (1919)

- Anderson's two first novels both containing **the psychological themes of inner lives** of Midwestern villages, the pursuit of success and disillusionment.
- His third novel, *Winesburg, Ohio*, was "half individual tales, half long novel form", as the author himself described it.



WINDY MCPHERSON'S SON (1916),
MARCHING MEN (1917), and Winesburg, Ohio
(1919)

- It consisted of twenty-three thematically related sketches and stories. (**Episodic** sketches)
- Written in a simple, realistic language illuminated by a muted lyricism, Anderson dramatized crucial episodes in the lives of his characters.
- The narrative is united by the appearance of **George Willard**, a young reporter, who is in revolt against the narrowness of the small-town life and who acts as a counterpoint to the other people of the town.

Later life

- Anderson's best works influenced almost every important American writer of the next generation.
- He also encouraged William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway in their writing aspirations.
- Anderson died of peritonitis on an unofficial good-will tour to South America, at Christobal, Canal Zone, on March 8, in 1941.
- After his death, Anderson's reputation soon declined, but in the 1970s, scholars and critics have found a new interest in his work.

Anderson's Influence

- He wrote many tales depicting small-town life in the Midwest and had his first great success with *Winesburg, Ohio* (1916), an important work of experimental fiction set in a small-town environment.
- Anderson wrote simple, direct sentences, transferred his point-of-view to outside observers, and portrayed a slice of life rather than the large panorama of an epic tale; many subsequent writers, such as Hemingway and Faulkner, were influenced by his style. #



Questions for “Hand”

<<http://www.bridgewater.edu/~sgallowa/450/anderson/hands.htm>>

- “Hands” was published first in *Masses* 8 (March 1916): 5-7. At that time, many critics said that Anderson's fiction was pointless. From our modern perspective, what point can we find in the story?
- How does George Willard's role as a newspaper reporter suit him to hear Wing's story?
- Papinchak says that “Hands” “develops both theme of thwarted potential and Anderson's concern with sexual repression. In what ways do you see this happening?”