

ANALYTICAL STUDY OF CARL SANDBURG
AS POET AND BIOGRAPHER

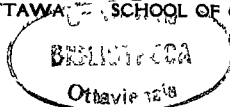
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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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INTRODUCTION

In spite of the barrage of criticism that has been heaped upon him and his style of writing, in spite of the dubiousness that surrounds his place as a poet, Carl Sandburg still has his claims upon an audience. The fact that he is the subject of research not only in published works, but in a number of unpublished theses, bespeaks his audience-hold. With the settling effect that comes with the passage of time, the perspective on him today is far clearer than that which the years of his literary production have offered. One is able to understand more readily now why the reading public of Sandburg's early works reacted as violently as it did to his non-conformist handling of poetry and to his non-poetic material. Though proud of their city's poetic experimentation in the first two decades of this century, Chicagoans were loathe to accept the labels Sandburg tagged on to their city: hog butcher, tool maker, stacker of wheat. The more genteel readers were stunned at his downright brutality and his effrontery of trying to pass mere colloquial wisdom as poetry. To be sure, they were willing to accept it as raw material for poetry, but in no wise to look upon it as the finished product.

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Undaunted by the reactions of the public, Sandburg continued to write in a style so individual that to this day he remains as one of the most controversial figures in the history of twentieth century American letters. Removal from the immediacy of his day has not altered the essence of his work; namely, a vigorous interpretation of the machine age. His poetic material is part and parcel of it: a midwest metropolis, its machinery, its ordinary people, its laborers, its brute strength, cruelty, and unbridled energy. To claim, however, that interpretation of the machine age was his primary purpose in writing his poetry is to run counter to his open admission of purpose at a talk given during the fiftieth celebration of the Chicago Public Library. Speaking of his Chicago Poems and Slabs of the Sunburnt West, Sandburg openly asserted that these were done with a deliberate theory that America will have a literature of her own. Its origins were taken from her soil, her speech, her winds and air.¹

Such conscious setting up of purpose to produce an indigenous literature is not new in the history of American letters. One needs only recall the literary goal of the Connecticut Wits in the eighteenth century. They, too,

¹ Sandburg, Carl, "Address and Reading," in the Proceedings at the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Chicago Public Library--1873-1923, Chicago, 1923, p. 45-6.

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endeavored to prove to the world that a politically independent country was ready to produce a similarly independent literature. History is there to indicate how short they have fallen of their goal. Native material does not, per se, produce native letters. Individuality in the treatment of it must be wedded to the material before the end-product becomes a characteristically different type. It is generally agreed upon that Sandburg fulfilled both requirements. But did his end-product live up to the claim he made about producing a purely American literature?

Accepting him as one of the experimenters in the school of "new poetry", America was willing to allow him to sing her songs in his individual way, hoping, that as time went on, he would mature to a true poetic status. She looked upon him as a poet of promise. But as the years went by, and his third published work, Smoke and Steel, was followed by three more volumes of poetry, America was forced to pass her judgment. Sandburg's poetic maturity was a never-to-be-realized goal. The growth of the artist in him was a stunted one. Time was to show that the irony of fate which twists man's dreams out of shape produced artistry not through the channel of poetry but that of prose. His place in the history of American letters was to be achieved not by his prolific verse output, but by his six-volume study of the great national figure of

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Abraham Lincoln. Yet this odd twist of results finds a rational explanation when the element of compatibility between biographer and his subject are brought into focus as Sandburg's personality evolves from his role as poet of the people.

The research preliminary to this study had yielded no comprehensive source of a detailed study of his literary style. The few popular books on Sandburg are too biographical to contain adequate evaluative material of his work. It is understandable that in books which treat the history of modern American letters he receives only a moderate amount of space. The number of periodical articles giving a critical evaluation of his work is small. The bulk of material on Sandburg is in the area of book reviews. But although all available material on him has been read, it is not intended that this work be a synthesis, a summary, or a review of the opinions of others. Rather, this study proposes to be a work of personal appreciation of Sandburg, based upon research and a personal criticism and evaluation of his specific works. It intends to study the qualities that went into the making of his style of writing, through a detailed analysis of his poetic technique and of his prose style as it is employed in the Lincoln biography. There will be an effort made to trace the degree of poetic growth that is visible through the choice and manner of treatment of the

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subject-matter of his poems and the comparative analysis of him as a biographer. Another purpose of this study will be to endeavor to reproduce the portrait of Sandburg-the-writer as he emerges from his prolific output. Whether he can justifiably be regarded as the spokesman for the American people will be a conclusion this study hopes to reach.

The work is divided into three parts, the first of which deals with Sandburg's poetry in general. Part Two is made up of a detailed analysis of his poetic themes and techniques, the results of which are tabulated in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively. Part Three of this work studies him in his representative work, the six-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln. The conclusions drawn from each successive chapter are then summarized and measured against those aspects which this study has initially determined as pivotal in determining its final objective.

PART I

SANDBURG'S POETRY IN GENERAL

However his reading public reacts to his poetry, Sandburg is generally conceded to be the American laureate of the machine age. He epitomizes the sociological and intellectual conditions of the changing life in America as it had unfolded in the middle West. But although he has written in the spirit and accent of a mid-westerner, he went well beyond these geographic boundaries and spoke for the country as a whole. America's mechanized farming and heavy industry, the unbridled energy and strength of a big city, the transient factories and eternal prairies, the earth and the sky, and the perdurable beauty of nature have resulted in the production of two distinctive types of poetry: his verse of social criticism and his descriptive verses.

Part I of this study, which will incorporate the first two chapters, proposes to subject each of these two broad divisions to a triple analysis, that of moods, tones, and themes. The concept of mood, or the temporary but pervasive temper of his mind as it is reflected in his themes in the different periods of his writing, will be seen to have changed in its intensity. But tone or the prevailing spirit and mental attitude in which Sandburg submerges the

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composite of his sociological and his lyrical verses is the same throughout. Since the elements of tones and moods are so intimately interwoven with the themes, it was considered impractical to tear them apart from each other in order to deal with each of these aspects separately. Consequently, each of the two major divisions of his poetry will have the triple focus applied to it simultaneously. Representative poems will be selected as illustrative of these three basic elements as they are characterized by Sandburg's individual temperament and mentality.

This first step in the study of his poetry will serve as an introduction to a more thorough analysis in the chapters which constitute the body of Part II of this dissertation.

CHAPTER I

SANDBURG'S SOCIOLOGICAL POETRY

More than one-third of his first-published verses surge with a social message. The prettiness of sunsets, flowers, and mists, present in so many little pieces, went by almost unheeded because of the impact of the crusade cry. In these sociological verses Sandburg remembered the years when, standing on bumpers between the cars, he rode the rails in search of adventure and financial betterment. Setting himself up as the writer of the teeming vitality of a modern midwest metropolis, Sandburg sought to do two things. First, he would capture the city's heartbeat in the life of its citizenry at work, at play, and at prayer; he would seek it out in the private and the public lives of its men and women. Secondly, he would pause in moments of quiet meditation and reflection to probe at the meaning of this perpetual surging forward of humanity in search of a happiness invariably elusive and transitory. But in the first sphere of his literary function--as spokesman for the masses of his fellow Americans--he almost always fails as a poet.

Chicago Poems.--A gleaning of his first volume of mature poetry shows that more than half of his work fails

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to meet the essential qualities of good poetry. Chicago Poems is heavily weighted with verbal husks, which bear little or no relation to acceptable poetic writing. In his preoccupation with the correction of social injustices committed against the masses of the working class, Sandburg was carried away by the passion and the zeal of his message. As a result his poetry of sociological nature, more often than not, lapses into flat prose diction, reportorial writing and loose prose rhythms. Just as "'Boes" reflects his hobo years, so "Government" contains the observations he stored up when he was Emil Seidel's right-hand man. During those Milwaukee days he had been as close as he ever was to be to see the inside workings of the political machine. The chicanery and corruption of those vested with power is laid bare with a satire that will occur time and again so long as Sandburg chooses to be the social crusader for the masses, against whom the rifles of big business and big industry are directed.

When Sandburg, the labor-reporter for the Daily News, listened to the story of injustice and exploitation the workers were subjected to, he translated those facts objectively into impersonal news stories; but the poet in him was gathering the outrage which surged in his heart and poured it out into verses jotted down, reportorial-fashion, on scraps of paper which he carried around in his coat

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pockets. From these notes grew the poems of protest which shook verbal fists at the hypocrisies and sham of the Jaspers who attend church on certain Sundays, "chanting the Nicene Creed," while starving their workers with a six-cent-per-basket-of-onions wage. To Sandburg, these Mrs. Giovannitti's of "Onion Days," the Italian shovel-man earning \$1.75 a day ("Shovel Man"), the muckers sloshing in the new gas-main ditch ("Muckers"), are the flesh-and-blood people who walked the streets of Chicago.

There are instances where Sandburg's fierce championing of the underprivileged reaches the point of pathos, as it does in "Anna Imroth," who failed to make the jump when the fire came. The poem ends on a note of tight-lipped satire: "It is the hand of God and the lack of fire escapes." Much profounder than this, however, is the pathos of "The Right to Grief," a poem which grew out of a reporter's assignment in Chicago's back-of-the-yards district. At the sight of the men and women with "hunger-deep eyes, haunted with shadows of hunger hands," Sandburg's sense of justice was stung to the core. The facts he found were not part of his reportorial assignment. In his words:

I was told that seven times as many children died
in the stockyards district as in Hyde Park, a
little more than a mile away. I seemed to feel

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that I had the sort of authentic incident that Poe might have made use of. Out of that idea I wrote "The Right to Grief."²

Outraged at the state of affairs, he set out to paint a realistic picture of the family weeping over the little pinched face of a scrawny three-year-old who ran up high doctor bills that had to be paid out of the \$1.70 a day the stockyards paid the father for sweeping hog's blood from the floor. And though the poem picks up the tone of Thomas Hood's "Song of the Shirt," it ends on a note of ringing defiance that was not known to the English poet:

I have a right to feel my throat choke about this
You take your grief and I mine--see?

Amy Lowell, reading the opening lines:

Take your fill of intimate remorse, perfumed
sorrow,
Over the dead child of a millionaire,
And the pity of Death refusing any check on the
bank
Which the millionaire might order his secretary
to scratch off
And get cashed,

accused Sandburg of being a propaganda mouthpiece for the poor, of being prejudiced against the wealthy to the point of being blind to any of their merits.³ Little did Miss

² Hansen, Harry, Midwest Portraits, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1923, p. 49.

³ Lowell, Amy, Tendencies in American Poetry, New York, Houghton, Mifflin, 1928, p. 221.

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Lowell know at the time of the hardships and unequal struggles that pursued the poet in his early youth. They were experiences he could never eradicate from his memory. And when as a poet of democracy he spoke for the stricken, he did so with as great a right in his domain as it was Miss Lowell's right to speak for the privileged ranks of the cultured. It was Sandburg's lack of restraint in the handling of the pathos in "Right to Grief" that paved the way for Miss Lowell's charge. Certainly its pathos is not handled with the same restraint as that in "Anna Imroth" or in "Mill Doors," one of the few good lyrics in the sociological group. "Right to Grief" hovers perilously over bathos, though Sandburg never quite plunges into it.

Among the early subjects dealt with in the sociological verses is that of child labor. Intent upon bringing this abuse into the consciousness of a society absorbed in the pursuit of material gain, the poet speaks his criticism of the big city:

Of my city the worst that men will ever say
is this:
You took little children away from the sun and
the dew,
And the glimmers that played in the grass under
the great sky,
And the reckless rain; you put them between walls
To work broken and smothered for bread and wages . . .
"They Will Say"

In a tone of softly spoken reproach he indicts labor for the worst social abuse; worst, because those exploited

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cannot protest; abuse, because those who have not yet outgrown their childhood were already put behind mill doors

. . . for--how many cents a day?
How many cents for the sleepy eyes and fingers
"Mill Doors"

There is pity when he speaks to the children themselves:

. . . I know they tap your wrists . . .
And you are old before you are young.
You never come back.
"Mill Doors"

With the same pathos and controlled emotion he charges those responsible for the pitiable working conditions and for providing no form of financial reimbursements to the workers and their families in the event of accident or death:

. . . Mrs. Pietro Giovanitti, whose
husband was killed in a tunnel explosion
through the negligence of a fellow servant,
Works ten hours a day, sometimes twelve, picking
onions for Jasper on the Bowmanville road.
"Onion Days"

Then the poet puts teeth into the satire when he speaks of the one directly responsible for the injustice in this particular case. The sting is achieved by contrasting the story of Mrs. Giovanitti with that of her employer:

Last week she got eight cents a box, Mrs. Pietro
Giovanitti, picking onions for Jasper.
But this week Jasper dropped the pay to six cents
a box because so many women and girls were
answering the ads in the Daily News.

The gentle sympathy he has for the poor working woman is abruptly changed to ironic contempt for the hypocrisy of

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her employer, who uses religion as a mask behind which he hides his despicable violations of social justice. Invariably Sandburg's tone is one of sardonic contempt for the men who exploit the laboring classes that their own selfish ends may wax on the blood and sweat of the poor. But the nadir of his disgust is reached when he sees man's most sacred trust, his religion, sacrilegiously used for the base purpose of anaesthetizing the crowds that the abuses of labor leaders may be accepted unquestioningly. No words are sufficiently harsh, ugly, or cruel to strike against Billy Sunday, who agreed to act as spokesman for labor leaders. The crude vituperations in "To A Contemporary Bunkshooter" have the effectiveness of shock.

To one who did not know Sandburg's preoccupation with the poor and his suspicion of big business, "To A Contemporary Bunkshooter"--the most explosive of his poems--sounds hysterical and senseless. But when one remembers the poet's first-hand opportunities of seeing dishonesty prevail over law, his convictions that unscrupulous heads of big business were using Billy Sunday as an instrument in their schemes, the poem takes on a different meaning. Sunday's iniquitous part in the process of keeping workers' minds off unionism by instilling into their hearts the excitement of emotional religion was a revolting misuse of the Gospel of Christ, at which the poet waxed indignant.

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Within the lines of this emotional outburst, one hears Sandburg, the Wisconsin Socialist-Democratic leader, who is pounding out his words with a fury roused to a breaking pitch:

I won't take my religion from any man who never
works except with his mouth and never cher-
ishes any memory except the face of the wo-
man on the American dollar.

It was the memory of his hard-working father, his own struggles, the struggles of the laboring masses for whom he spent his life championing their cause--it was all these memories that hurled the challenge at the evangelist:

I ask you to come through and show me where
you're pouring out the blood of your life.

Yet for all the justifiability of Sandburg's anger, the piece has no poetic redemption. Its very subject-matter defies poetic treatment. What with its passionate anger, name-calling, careless use of slang and loose prose rhythms, the result is anything but poetry.

In his role as social reformer, it was obvious he would employ satire as a vehicle for his message. With a Christian Socialist's bitter contempt for the complacencies of the idle rich, he pits the little man's struggle for pennies against the economic waste of the wealthy who spend \$25,000 every year for flowers and the upkeep of a millionaire's tomb ("Graceland"), or with those who order an iron fence erected about their lake-front house, a fence which

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. . . will shut off the rabble and all vagabonds
and hungry men and all wandering children looking
for a place to play.

"A Fence"

Here the juxtaposition of the two extremes on the socio-economic ladder does not result in good poetry, however. In another sociological verse he contrasts the luxury of the sumptuous meal of the economically privileged against the bread-and-bologna meal of the Italian railroad-bed worker. In still another, the material comfort and decor of the Pullman train travelers is set against the ten-hour-a-day job of shoveling gravel. This song of protest continues in the "Child of the Romans." In none of his verses whose primary aim is the sociological message does Sandburg achieve any better results.

The poet's attitude toward the unskilled laborer is never tinged by a better-than-thou attitude. He never looks down upon a man because of the lowliness of his job. In the "dago working for a dollar six bits a day" the poet sees the man through the feelings of another:

A dark eyed woman in the old country dreams
of him for one of the world's ready men with
a pair of fresh lips and a kiss better than
all the wild grapes that ever grew in Tuscany.
"The Shovel Man"

In the humblest and meanest occupation the worker is looked upon in the light of his human dignity as a person. Sandburg views man separated from the professional capacity he

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may be in. If there was to be satire it would be limited to him in that profession. Of an official executioner for the state the poet writes impassionately:

I am the high honorable killer today.
 There are five million people in the state, five
 million killers for whom I kill
 I am the killer who kills today for five million
 killers who wish a killing.

Supping one day with a dynimiter, who

. . . laughed and told stories of his wife
 and children and the cause of labor and
 the working class,

Sandburg records that

His name was in many newspapers as an enemy of
 the nation and a few keepers of churches
 or schools would open their doors to him.

But the poet would always remember him

. . . as a lover of life, a lover of children,
 a lover of all free, reckless laughter everywhere
 --lover of red hearts and red blood the world over.
 "Dynimiter"

When he writes of working girls and women, he is
 gentle, tender, and understanding. Of them he writes:

Each morning as I move through this river of young-
 woman life I feel and wonder about where it is
 all going, so many with a peach bloom of young
 years on them and laughter of red lips and me-
 mories in their eyes of dances the night before
 and plays and walks.

"Working Girls"

There is profound pity, not condemnation, for those who
 have stooped to traffic with their bodies. Such a one he
 sees

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Smiling a broken smile from a face
 Painted over haggard bones and desperate eyes,
 All night she offers passers-by what they will
 Of her beauty wasted, body faded, claims gone,
 And no takers.

"Trafficker"

It is not condoning of moral wrong that makes him take this attitude; it is rather the principle of separating the sin from the sinner. It is because in the "loose" woman he sees a potential penitential Magdalene, as is demonstrated in one of his religious lyrics which will be treated in the following chapter. In saint or sinner, in wealthy or poor, he looked for and found the man, the person. And he never ignored the dignity that belongs to every individual. In one of his early sociological poems he writes of dining with a millionaire butter-man one night:

And his face had the shining light of an old-time
 Quaker, he spoke of a beautiful daughter, and
 I knew he had a peace and a happiness up his
 sleeve somewhere.

"Fellow Citizens"

In the same poem he records his contacts with other men, upon whom he rests his penetrating eyes and sees through their exterior into the depths of them as persons and to each he concedes the right of his kind of happiness. Sandburg was convinced, however, that true happiness was to be found among the simple folk for reasons that cannot be measured by money, influence, or prestige:

Down in Gilpin Place, near Hull House, was a man
 with his jaw wrapped for a bad toothache,

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And he had it all over the butter millionaire,
 Jim Kirch and the mayor when it came to
 happiness.

I thought he had a real soul and knew a lot about
 God.

There was light in his eyes of one who had conquered
 sorrow in so far as sorrow is conquerable or
 worth conquering.

Anyway he is the only Chicago citizen I was jealous
 of that day.

"Fellow Citizens"

Herein lies the key to Sandburg's attitude toward people: he always looks for the soul of man. And the nobler the soul, the greater the admiration and regard Sandburg has for him. This is why the poet's attitude toward others was always governed by what he saw through the exterior. This is why he would condemn not the person but the wrong-doing. His condemnation is reserved for the social wrongs because others are made to suffer as a result. Personal sin Sandburg passes by in silence.

Within the poem, "I Am the People, the Mob," is contained the embodiment of one of his fundamental beliefs; namely, that the remedy for the social ills of the masses lies in their realization of their needs and in their faith that the power to supply those needs lies within their own grasp.

At the time of its first publication, the title-piece of Chicago Poems was the most provocative. Without the background meaning which is provided by all the other

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sociological verses surrounding it, the key-poem, "Chicago" would remain purely descriptive, one whose deeper implications could never be arrived at from mere word connotation. Yet the complementary effect of these subsidiary poems to the whole is not the entire answer. Knowing the roots of its origins would clarify its spirit. Oscar Cargill⁴ makes the assumption that the source of the poem was Lincoln Steffens' muckraking article, "Chicago: Half-Free and Fighting On," originally appearing in McClure's Magazine, October, 1903, and published the following year as part of the book, The Shame of the Cities.⁵ In his article Steffens says:

Yes, Chicago. First in violence, deepest in dirt;
loud, lawless, unlovely, ill-smelling, irreverent,
new; an overgrown gawk of a village, the "tough"
among cities, a spectacle for the nation; . . .
I give Chicago no quarter and Chicago asks for
none. "Good," they cheer, when you find fault;
"give us the gaff. We deserve it and it will do
us good." They do deserve it. . .⁶

If poetry awakens associations, then the varied reactions to the poem were a duplication--claims Cargill--of those responses which were provoked by the findings and the exposés

⁴ Cargill, Oscar, "Carl Sandburg: Crusader and Mystic," English Journal, April, 1950, p. 178.

⁵ Steffens, Joseph, The Shame of the Cities, New York, Sagamore Press, 1948, 306 pp.

⁶ Steffens, Joseph, "Chicago: Half-Free and Fighting On," McClure's Magazine, October, 1903, p. 563.

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of the muckrakers some ten years earlier. Accepting Stef-fens' motivation for the poem, Sandburg's critical tough-mindedness, his insolence, and his vehemence appear in a clearer light.

The laughter of "Chicago", taken in isolation, can be interpreted as a "barbaric yawp" of joy, portraying the brawny roughness of a vast machine city lustily breathing in a machine age. In its relation to the whole volume, however, the yawp is the sound of hysterical laughter, one that is forced out of having to accept conditions that are far from satisfying. It is a laughter weighted with an awareness of the awful burden of destiny. The stormy, brawling laughter of industrial Chicago carries the flute descant wailing the sorrow of

. . . the Poor,
millions of the Poor, patient and toiling;
more patient than the crags, tides, and stars;
innumerable, patient as the darkness of the
night--and all broken, humble ruins of nations.
"Masses"

These are the people that the laughing "City of Big Shoulders" put

. . . between walls
To work, broken and smothered, for bread and wages,
To eat dust in their throats and die empty-hearted
For a little handful of pay on a few Saturday nights.
"They Will Say"

The image of laughter runs throughout the volume, but the nuances of it are varied as it runs the gamut of human emotions. Sometimes it is the weighted laughter of

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The worn wayfaring men
With hunched and humble shoulders

men who

Throw their laughter into toil.
"Subway"

At other times it is the carefree laughter of a growing boy as in "The Has-Been"; or the laughter of sheer joy in life and love as in "Jan Kubelik," "The Dynimiter," "Nigger," "Joy," "Shirt," "Working Girls," and "Gone". Then, too, there is women's laughter streaked with disappointment and remorse, as in "Broadway"; or with sadness, as in "Working Girls". There is the sensual laughter of woman-love in "White Shoulders". Irony and scorn ring in the laughter of "To Certain Journeymen" and "Silvernails". Laughter in the face of death sounds its grimness in "Iron" and in "Beachey". The smug self-satisfied laughter of the travelers on the "Limited" is the same as the feigned laughter of "Chamfort".

In so far as Chicago was the pulse of the nation, Chicago was America; and what melodrama of corruption and splendor, of viciousness and valor, was acted in the mid-west prairie metropolis, had repeat-performances throughout the country. The "tired empty faces" Sandburg contemplated morning after morning on the "Halsted Street Car" were those any man with keen sensibilities could see in every corner of the country where industry was belching its smoke into the lungs of men.

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Chicago Poems is weighted with a radical populism, an element which was to pervade all of his subsequent works, though the early radicalism was destined to disappear completely. Throughout, his social message is spoken authoritatively and forcefully. It is a speech torn out of the heart because the nuances of human anguish were too bitter to be endured in silence. The portraiture is done in broad, vital, unflattering strokes. In spite of all the ruggedness of subject and language, however, the spirit pervading this beating out of the joys and the sorrows of the little men is heroic.

Cornhuskers.--With Sandburg's discovery of the perdurable things in America: the love of the land and of its traditions, of the liberal spirit, his socialism lost most of its radicalism. But though his attitude toward social institutions has grown more tempered, he still retains his suspicion of courts, judges, and all those who represent the law. In "Palladiums" he says with no uncertain cynicism:

In the newspaper office . . .
 . . .
 speak softly--the sacred cows may hear.
 Speak easy--the sacred cows must be fed.

"Lawyer" vocalizes his distrust of that profession with perhaps less cynicism, but with effects just as strong:

When the jury files in to deliver a verdict after
 weeks of direct and cross examinations, hot

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clashes of lawyers and cool decisions of the judge,

• • •
A lawyer for the defense clears his throat and holds himself ready if the word is "Guilty" to enter motion for a new trial, speaking in a soft voice, speaking in a voice slightly colored with bitter wrongs, mingled with monumental patience, speaking with mythic Atlas shoulders of many prosperous, unjust circumstances.

Sandburg's early interest in democratic socialism is still present in his second volume of poetry, though this theme appears far less frequently now. He still revolts at seeing the little man always being a "no 'count Joe", while unscrupulous profiteers get the applause:

I who saw ten strong men die anonymously, I who saw ten old mothers hand over their sons to the nation anonymously, I who saw ten thousand touch the sunlit silver finalities of undistinguished glory--why do I sneeze sardonically at a bronze drinking fountain named after one who participated in the war vicariously and bought ten farms?

"Legends"

He is still concerned about the conditions of the laboring classes. There is a genuine sympathy for the "Girl in a Cage," for whom the monotony of counting out change

can make
the dollars keep on
in a sob or a whisper;

as there is for the "rolling-mill men" and the "sheet-steel men," those "brothers of cinders" whose song he sings in "Psalm of Those Who Go Forth Before Daylight". This does not, however, carry the strong emphasis of Chicago Poems,

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where his main desire was to place before the eyes of the smugly respectable middle-class tradesmen and the swaggering 'millionaires' a conception of the drudgery and the suffering of the social underdog.

Smoke and Steel.--In this, the longest of his poetry volumes, Sandburg left the streets and plains for the factory and the workers. Here he carries the story of the people into fire-illuminated mills and stuffy shops and there sings his songs of man-made machines and machine-made man. Many poems in this volume sing the good earth of the countryside, the city and its people; some are remembrances of his trip to Sweden and his travels across the country; still others echo his political contacts. Into this colorful spectacle of national growth, laughter, and tragedy, Sandburg brings a few snatches of his former distrust and dislike of the men who are in a position to lord it over the masses. He still champions the cause of the

. . . workmen wearing leather shoes scuffed
with fire and cinders, and pitted with little
holes from running molten steel.

"Mayor of Gary"

The early vehemence with which he reacted to the wall of injustice surrounding the laborer is present, though subdued, in the contrasting portraits of the workers and that of the mayor of Gary, whom Sandburg interviewed about the laborers' 12-hour day and 7-day week:

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And he wore cool cream pants . . . and white
shoes, and a barber had vixed him up with a
shampoo and shave . . .

His contempt for the dishonest men who represent the law is
needling as he repeats the question:

Why does a hearse horse snicker
Hauling a nawyer away?

"The Lawyers Know Too Much"

And again, of the crooked ways of other public officials,
he says:

What if we steal this city blind?
.
.
.
Harness bulls, dicks, front office men,
And the high goats up on the bench,
Ain't they all in cahoots?
"Cahoots"

This is Sandburg still the labor news-reporter talking; this
is the secretary to the mayor of Milwaukee talking; this is
the man who has seen so much dishonesty among the men who
stand for justice and honesty, that he cannot down the op-
probrium of it. From Sandburg's bulkiest poetry volume,
however, the radicals could claim only three out of the
one-hundred-ninety-three, as being left wing.

Slabs of Sunburnt West.--For the most part, this
volume is made of themes of national significance. Its
yield of the purely sociological is limited to a provocat-
ive poem entitled, "And So Today." Reactions to it among
reviewers and critics oscillated between pity and anger,
uncertainty and desperation. Written on the occasion of

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the burial of the unknown soldier in the National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia, the poem bristles with sardonic disgust at the individuals who tangle the skeins of life.

Speaking of his feeling about the war, Sandburg told Hansen on one occasion:

It is as if some great majestic storm had gone whirling by and played hell with a community, and then the solemn, sour-faced men, untouched by the war, who had their three square meals a day, gather for a ceremonial, the object of which they do not understand. I want to know what it's all about.⁷

To Sandburg the eulogizing of an unknown boy by the clap-trap of ceremony enacted by the respectable and smug men who have fought the war from their armchairs at most, was kind of blasphemy. The core of Sandburg's argument was one of clash between principle and fact. The poet says, in part, that if the boy could rise and tell those gathered for the occasion that at the time of his draft into service his personal sentiments were, "I am ready to die. . . . My country, take me" then all this pomp is for him. But in as much as the government officials made up his mind, saying:

You are a citizen of the Republic and a sound
animal
in all parts and functions--the Republic takes
you--

then the ceremony is all for the Republic.

⁷ Hansen, op. cit., p. 54.

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"And So Today" contains the burden of the finest piece of satire Sandburg has produced:

The honorable orators

•
•
•
Buttoning the buttons on their prinz alberts,
Pronouncing the syllables "sac-ri-fice,"
Juggling those bitter, salt-soaked syllables--
Do they ever gag with hot ashes in their mouths?
Do their tongues ever shrivel with a pain of fire
Across those simple syllables "sac-ri-fice"?

In a similar satiric vein, Stephen Vincent Benet wrote a few years later in his epic portrayal of America of the Civil War years,

The congressmen came out to see Bull Run
The congressmen who like free shows and spectacles.⁸

And from the mouths of the fighting infantry come words that sting with a reproach much like the one Sandburg has uttered in his provocative eulogy. Benet writes:

Ave, Caesar! Ave, O Congressmen,
We who are about to die,⁹
Salute you, congressmen!

But Sandburg was not to repeat--either in this poem or in any other of his poems--the mastery of handling of satire as he used it in the instance just examined. The let-down of his satiric art is visibly present in the following example from the same poem:

⁸ Benet, Stephen V., John Brown's Body, New York, Rinehart, 1928, p. 79.

⁹ Loc. cit.

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Look--who salutes the coffin--
 lays a wreath of remembrance
 on the box where a buck private
 sleeps a clean dry sleep at last--
 look--it is the highest ranking general
 of the officers of the armies of the Republic.

And he still dipped low into the well of crudity of language
 and image in this "parody of Whitman's threnody on Lincoln,"¹⁰ when he used expressions like:

Feed it to 'em
 They lap it up,
 bull . . . bull . . . bull.

But this can be forgiven him when one accepts the explanation that he could find no other outlet for his brooding, savage irony, except through his rough and powerful language. According to Carl Van Doren, Sandburg deliberately chose to hoot "lest he weep, reminding the mourners of the skeleton orator who stood by, almost silent."¹¹

It has been noted earlier that Sandburg never satirizes persons except in their official capacities. As in the flamboyant "To A Contemporary Bunkshooter," for example, so too in the poem under present consideration, "the honorable orators" are satirized as men wearing the robes of office.

¹⁰ Sherman, Stuart P., Americans, New York, Scribner & Sons, 1922, p. 242.

¹¹ Van Doren, Carl, "Flame and Slag: Carl Sandburg, Poet with Both Fists," Century, September, 1923, p. 792.

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That a mellowing process of his early pugilistic aggressiveness is taking place can be seen when the sociological poem, "Ready to Kill," of Chicago Poems, is placed alongside "And So Today." In the earlier poem, Sandburg--contemplating a bronze statue of a famous general in one of the city's parks--was at first urged to reduce the entire thing to a pile of scrap. But his acceptance of it is pivoted on "the people":

After the farmer, the miner, the shop man, the
 factory hand, the fireman and the teamster,
 Have all been remembered with bronze memorials
 . . .
 When they stack a few silhouettes
 Against the sky
 Here in the park,
 And show the real huskies that are doing the work
 of the world, and feeding people instead of
 butchering them,
 Then maybe I will stand here
 And look easy at this general of the army holding
 a flag in the air,
 And riding like hell on horseback
 Ready to kill anybody that gets in his way,
 Ready to run the red blood and slush the bowels
 of men all over the sweet new grass of the
 prairie.

"Ready to Kill"

"And So Today" has a wealth of emotional appeal in the simply-stated discussion of the things for which the soldier died; things which, according to Sandburg, were never realized. In a meditative tone the five-line theme recurs throughout the poem, beating out its slow time on human hearts:

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And so today--they lay him away--
 the boy nobody knows the name of--
 the buck private--the unknown soldier--
 the doughboy who dug under and died
 when they told him to--that's him.

Such superb control of feeling Sandburg was incapable of achieving in his early sociological verses.

War Verses.--In the 1920's the bitter disillusionment that came as an aftermath of the war appeared in the writings of many authors, all of whom agreed on the war's futility. Sandburg also spoke strong words against it when he voiced the people's cry for the millions of lost lives. At the outbreak of it, when the wail of its cry was filtered through the salty sea miles of the Atlantic, Sandburg could be self-controlled when he expressed his attitude toward the war:

Seven nations stood with their hands on the jaws
 of death.
 It was the first week in August, Nineteen Hundred
 Fourteen,
 I was listening, you were listening, the whole
 world was listening
 And all of us heard a Voice murmuring:
 "I am the way and the light,
 He that believeth in me
 Shall not perish
 But shall have everlasting life."
 Seven nations listening heard the Voice and
 answered:
 "O Hell!"

"Jaws"

And when the "guns on the battle lines pounded . . .
 a year between Brussels and Paris," Sandburg could show
 concern over the destruction of the world's architectural

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art masterpieces in the cathedrals of France, as he does in "Salvage". Yet, to say that he was unconcerned about the waste of human lives because the war still did not lay its finger upon America, is to warp the picture of the poet. In "Buttons", one of his early war poems, he gives an eloquent formula which translates the impersonal aspects of war into a flesh-and-blood equation. When he stopped to study the war map posted in front of the newspaper office, a young man climbed up to fix

. . . a yellow button an inch west
And follows the yellow button with a black button
one inch west,

to the soul of the poet the buttons cried out their true meaning:

(Ten thousand men and boys twist on their bodies
in a red soak along a river edge,
Gasping of wounds, calling for water, some rattling
death in their throats.)

The emotional control of these lines is resumed with even greater drama in the poem, "Killers":

I never forget them day or night:
They beat on my head for memory of them;
They pound on my heart and I cry back to them,
To their homes and women, dreams and games.

I wake in the night and smell the trenches,
And hear the low stir of sleepers in lines--
Sixteen million sleepers and pickets in the dark:
Some of them long sleepers for always,
Some of them tumbling to sleep tomorrow for always,
Fixed in the drag of the world's heartbreak

. . .

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But as the carnage was growing and the futility of the war was being impressed more and more upon the world, when America joined the war-to-end-all-wars, Sandburg gave vent to uncontrolled emotions about it, in the poem "Four Brothers." Reminiscent to a degree in its vituperative tone to the earlier sociological poem, "To A Contemporary Bunkshooter," the piece is charged with hate and the brutality and horror of war. Alongside the poetry of such lines as:

Three times ten million men say:
 God is a God of the People.
 And the God who made the world,
 And fixed the morning sun,
 And flung the evening stars,
 And shaped the baby hands of life,
 This is the God of the Four Brothers;
 This is the God of bleeding France and bleeding
 Russia;
 This is the God of the people of Britain and
 America

he stoops to crude name-calling and vulgar images. "Death for the one-armed mastoid kaiser," "God waits with a broom and a dustpan," and "the kaiser will go onto God's great dustpan," are demonstrative of the depths of vulgarisms to which he is still able to descend.

His philosophy on war was one of tolerance, not of approval, since "There is only one way now, only the way of the red tubes and the great price." But though "the crimson thumb-print of this anathema is on the door panels of a hundred million homes,"

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I say now, by God, only fighters today will save
the world . . .

By the God of morning glories climbing blue the
doors of quiet homes, by the God of tall
hollyhocks laughing glad to children in
peaceful valleys, by the God of new mothers
wishing peace to sit at windows nursing
babies,

I swear only reckless men, ready to throw away
their lives by hunger, deprivation, desperate
clinging to a single purpose imperturbable
and undaunted . . .

Only fighters gaunt with the red brand of labor's
sorrow on their brows and labor's terrible
pride in their blood, men with souls asking
danger--only these will save and keep the
four brothers.

His open profession of faith in the Providence of God is
rarely expressed as directly as it is done here:

Out of the wild finger-writing north and south,
east and west, over the blood-crossed, blood-
dusty ball of earth,
Out of it all a God who knows is sweeping clean,
Out of it all a God who sees and pierces through,
is breaking and cleaning out an old thousand
years, is making ready for a new thousand years.
The four brothers shall be five and more.

Sandburg's most strident war poem is the one en-
titled "The Liars". It contains his bitter contempt for
hypocrisy in general, but more particularly for those who
sell out the people. In a song "hard as a riveter's
hammer," he tells the tale the liars concocted when they
met behind closed doors:

Across their tables they fixed it up,
Behind their doors away from the mob.
And the guns sent seven million off the map.

. . .

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Across their tables they fixed it up,
The liars who lie to nations.

This tone gives way to a calmer pronouncement of the same idea in the following: "Yes, the Dead Speak to Us," "Crimson Changes People," "Prayer After World War," and "A. E. F." The reverie quiet in the last mentioned poem is especially effective and makes the idea of the futility of war even more impressive:

There will be a rusty gun on the wall, sweetheart,
The rifle grooves curling with flakes of rust.
A spider will make a silver string nest in the
darkest, warmest corner of it.

Effectively summarizing the poet's feeling about the war is the quiet irony present in the last line, when the poet addresses the spider: ". . . Go on, you're doing good work."

In the war poems discussed so far, as well as in the remainder that treat this theme, he makes no argument of the futility of fighting; he merely gives his emotional reaction to wholesale slaughter. The battle front is never so far away from him as to make the killing of his fellow men an impersonal thing. War is looked upon as a reality which man faces because he has to:

We shall do the necessary
We shall meet the inevitable.
"The Unknown War"

There are things in life which must be bought with strife and blood; these are precious gifts because they cost the

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supreme price. Sandburg has the prairie speak this theme:

Appomatox is a beautiful word to me
 and so is Valley Forge and the Marne and Verdun
 I who have seen the red births and red deaths
 Of sons and daughters, I take peace or war, I say
 nothing and wait.

"Prairie"

The tone pervading his war poems can best be summed up in the poet's words when he writes his tribute to the people:

The first world war came and its cost was laid
 on the people.
 The second world war--the third--what will be
 the cost?
 And will it repay the people for what they pay?
 "The People, Yes"

This all-important question hovers over all of his war poems: "will it repay the people for what they pay?" It is this thought that gives reasons for his rantings at heads of state who sought their selfish ends at the cost of human lives. But when he speaks of the war itself, of its anguish and gore, Sandburg never rants. His tone is that of patient endurance of the suffering from whose fires and ash will rise the living flame of human freedom.

In his verses on economic industrialism on the whole, one is faced with a one-sided picture of the poet. The technique of free verse wedded to his individual style resulted in racy speech, slang, vigorous language, and bold imagery. But the fist-pounding Sandburg shouting his vituperations against Billy Sunday is the same Sandburg who was able to create the hushed mood of the shadows of ships that

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Rock on the crest
 In the low blue lustre
 Of the soft and inrolling tide . . .
 "Sketch"

or the lonely call and cry of a boat whistle piercing the
 quiet of the lake fog,

Like some lost child
 In tears and trouble
 Hunting the harbor's breast
 And the harbor's eyes.

"Lost"

Or yet, the quiet of a city at night:

Here is a thing my heart wishes the world heard
 more of
 I heard it in the air of one night when I listened
 To a mother singing softly to a child restless and
 angry in the darkness.

"Poems Done on a Late Night Car"

Whatever merit there is to Sandburg's poetry, it must be
 sought after outside his verses of social message. It is
 this "other" Sandburg that will be subjected to an analysis
 in the following chapter. It is in this "other" Sandburg
 that one can find redemptive qualities to counter-balance
 and out-balance the unsavory elements of his sociological
 verses.

CHAPTER II

SANDBURG'S LYRIC POETRY

Passing from the sphere of Sandburg's sociological verses into the area of his lyric poetry is like leaving the congestion of big city slums for the wide vistas of life in the open. His lyrics are the product of the poet's reflection on the meaning of life, the passage of time, the mutability of creation. They are the artist in him sketching descriptive miniatures of the beauty of nature. They are the soul of the man capturing the fleeting moments of poetry in the drab diurnalities of man's struggle for existence. Their imagery, their diction and their rhythmic control produce a total effect of visual and verbal artistry. The pervading atmosphere of his lyric poetry is that of sheer joy of living. In freeing himself from the self-imposed purpose of writing for a cause, he expanded his poetical horizons. This widening of poetic scope automatically increased the variety of themes which he utilizes.

Sandburg responds equally to city and country. For the city and factory he reserves the strenuous and strident notes; for the pastoral pictures of the prairie he uses the softer notes. From the city clatter of the "Blue Island Intersection," where

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Six street ends come together . . .

Men with shovels, women with baskets and baby buggies.

The policeman whistles, the trolley cars bump:
Wheels, wheels, feet, feet, all day

the poet is able to re-create the soft quiet of a country morning:

Open the barn door, farm woman.
It is time for the cows to be milked.
The smell of the barn is let out to the pastures.
Dawn lets itself in at the open door.
A cow left out in the barn yard all the night
Looks on as though you do this every morning.
"She Opens the Barn Door Every Morning"

Repeatedly Sandburg expresses the quiet of the wide, open spaces of the prairie as a friendly, soothing sea. His sensitive response to the grandeur of the Grand Canyon, which will be discussed in the following chapter, is present on a small scale in the nuances of light and shade playing whimsically on the blending of earth and sky. This intermingling of the lowly and the exalted is his leading theme in the nature poems of the open prairie stretches of the midwest. In complete quiet and with no emotional strain he is able to write:

Cabbages catch at the moon.
It is late summer, no rain, the pack of the soil
cracks open, it is a hard summer.
In the night the cabbages catch at the moon, the
leaves drip silver, the rows of cabbage are
series of little silver waterfalls in the moon.
"Nocturn Cabbage"

Its companion-piece of the city achieves the same tone in

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an environment diametrically opposed:

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond
in the night.

"Nocturne in a Deserted Brickyard"

Through the four seasons of the year the poet sees the changing of the countryside and the people of the soil ready to start their work in an endless cycle.

His poems on city and factory are sketches of crowded stores, traffic, raucous noises, street and strike violence, coarseness and brutality. The stoical much-enduring farm people of the prairies are in sharp contrast with the hot-headed, hot-blooded laborers of industry. The aspirations and ideas common to industrial workers the world over are not unknown to Sandburg. From their point of view he paints pictures of plebeian life in America: a sketch of a saloon in "Jungheimer's"; a picture of Chicago Negroes in "Singing Nigger"; a box-car fantasy in "Work Gangs"; a street incident in "A Teamster's Farewell"; construction gangs at work on an American railroad in "Near Keokuk"; a colorful picture of a city park in Omaha, in "Band Concert". He sees the variegated population of America's industrialized towns and cities as only a poet's eye can view them.

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His "poetry of manners" reveals the mixed races of European extraction as they live under the peculiar presence of America's industrialized society. How deeply entrenched they were in his human fibre he realized keenly when he was removed from the crowds during his voyage to Norway:

Seven days all fog, all mist, and the turbines
pounding through high seas.

. . .
Fog and fog and no stars, sun, moon,
Then an afternoon in fjords, low-lying lands
scrawled in granite languages on a gray sky,
A night harbort . . .
And a circle of lights blinking: Ninety thousand
people here.
Among the Wednesday night thousands in galoshes
and coats slickered for rain,
I learned how hungry I was for streets and
people.

"Baltic Fog Notes"

Sometimes he blends his themes, as he does when he gives a "soul" to the skyscraper and views the world through it with as much poetic dreaminess as he sees the moon over the prairie ("Skyscraper"). The skyscraper itself is a symbol of the machine age. And though he strongly objects to that force which taps the life-blood and the joy of living out of the workers' veins, he realizes that there is no such thing as rejecting it. It is an accomplished fact. He hates it and rebels against it only when it twists and hampers the lives and hearts of men.

Sandburg's dominant interest is always the people as they are, with their human limitations, foibles, faults,

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and sins. It is not the idealized vision of humanity that pervades his work; he is too much a realist to expect to find it. He sees man as a mixture of slime and stars, of the saint and the sinner:

One man killed another. The saying between them
had been "I'd give you the shirt off my back."
The killer wept over the dead. The dead if he
looks back knows the killer was sorry. It
was a shot in one second of hate out of ten
years of love.

"Hate"

Of this destructive tendency in man he writes:

This is the hate my father gave me, this was
in my mother's milk, this is you and me
and all of us in a world of hoodlums--
"Hoodlums"

His plea is for mutual understanding between men and an acceptance of each person as he is. But understanding, the poet underscores, is more than a common tongue:

So long as we speak the same language and never
understand each other,
So long as the spirals of our words snarl and
interlock
And clutch each other with the irreckonable gutturals
"Useless Words"

each man will remain alone in a world of men:

I have seen a loneliness sit
in the dark and nothing lit up.
I have seen a loneliness sit
in the dark lit up like a Christmas tree,
a Hallowe'en pumpkin.

"Canadians and Pottawotomies"

This "lighting up" will be unachievable unless men concede each other the privilege of differing. This maturity of

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accepting others as they are is demonstrated in the story he weaves around three men standing before a zoo elephant. One of the men questions the animal from the prosaic angle of factual data; the second sees his elephantine proportions figuratively; the third looks upon him as an epitome of strength. The poem ends thus:

They didn't put up any arguments.
 They didn't throw anything in each other's faces.
 Three men saw the elephant three ways
 And let it go at that.
 They didn't spoil a sunny Sunday afternoon;
 "Sunday comes only once a week," they told each other.
 "Elephants Are Different to Different People"

This philosophy lies at the core of the poet's general attitude toward people. If it is traceable in the diversity of themes that are dealt with in his short lyrics, it can be expected to dominate the people-portrait he has painted in The People, Yes, which will be considered in Chapter IV of this study. It is there that the poet's testament:

I have had my chance to live
 with people who have
 too much and the people who have too
 little and I chose
 one of the two and I have told no
 man why

"Testament"

will become more intelligible and his reasons fully answered.

Even a minimal submergence of self into Sandburg's lyric poetry brings one face to face with his concealed mysticism pervading his work. The mysticism of the metaphysical meditation done on a grand scale in one of his finest long

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poems, "Slabs of the Sunburnt West," is scattered sometimes in wisps of hints and pervasive overtones, sometimes in generous handfuls through the shorter lyrics. Pulsating through them is man's timeless reaching out for an all-embracing, eternally-lasting good which is unattainable within this bourne of temporality:

Beat, old heart, these are old bars
 All struggles have beat against.
"Beat, Old Heart"

And again:

Beat at the bars
 Cry out your cry of want
 . . .
 Cry your cry, let yourself out if you can.
"Bars"

In another lyric he asks:

Who put up that cage?
 Who hung it up with bars, doors?
 . . .
 Why is this endless, useless beating of baffled
 wings at these bars, doors, this cage?
"Money, Politics, Love, and Glory"

At times the mystic identification of self with the 'other self' stands in full bloom, as it does when he identifies himself with truth, "the most elusive captive in the universe":

My head knocks against the stars.
 My feet are on the hilltops.
 My finger-tips are in the valleys and shores of
 universal life.
 Down in the sounding foam of primal things
 I reach my hands and play with pebbles of
 destiny.

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I have been to hell and back many times
 I know all about heaven, for I have talked with God.
 "Who Am I?"

Occasionally there is a mystic humanitarianism openly identifying the poet with industry when, for example, he prays the "Prayers of Steel":

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
 Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
 Let me pry loose old walls.
 Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

• • •
 Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike
 Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper
 together

• • •
 Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through
 blue nights into white stars.

For this mystic sense of the brotherhood of man, which identifies him with his fellow-men and the environment that surrounds them, for his resentment of the wrongs done to his brothers as being done unto himself, Blankenship¹² sees in Sandburg the counterpart of John Woolman, Thoreau, and Whitman. But this theory of self-identification with others has its roots even beyond the Paulinian concept of the oneness of men in the Mystical Body of Christ. It reaches down the ages to the Incarnate Word of God, from Whose mouth the world first heard the strange message: "Whatsoever you have

¹² Blankenship, Russell, American Literature As An Expression of the National Mind, New York, Henry Holt, 1931, p. 612.

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done to these the least of My brethren you have done unto Me."

Into the sphere of Sandburg's mysticism enters the whole concept of man's existence. His metaphysical speculation reaches down the abyss when he still was not:

In the loam we sleep
In the cool moist loam
To the lull of the years that pass
And the break of stars.

"Loam"

Until the day decreed from eternity,

From the loam . . .
The soft loam,
We rise:

We stand . . .
To a whiff of life
Lifted to the silver of the sun
Over and out of the loam
A day.

"Loam"

This "day" is filled with hopes and dreams and man spends it working out those dreams:

Every man spins a web of light circles
And hangs this web in the sky
Or finds it hanging, already hung for him,
Written as a path for him to travel.

"Webs"

Then when the "summers of rain" and "winters of drift tell off the years,"

. . . they go back
Who came soft--
Back to the sod,
To silence and dust
Gray gamblers,
Handfuls again.

"Handfuls"

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Sandburg has been censured by his critics for failing to attempt to make any answers to the mysteries with which he sees himself surrounded. He poses his why's and whereto's and wherefrom's in the face of life's beginnings, its end, its vagaries; yet he leaves the questions pending in complete suspension. But it is this very mystic quality in his poetry which accounts for the absence of explanations. In the chapter devoted to an analysis of his long lyrics, this characteristic is also very pronounced. Here, as well as in his long lyrics, he is unchangeably a poet who tells what he sees and leaves interpretations to his readers. He realizes that he cannot clear the mist that has its roots in his inherited Scandinavian mysticism. He admits this in the poem, "Flying Fish": "I have lived in so many half-worlds myself . . . and so I know you." These mysterious half-worlds can be provoking to a mind geared to looking upon the world realistically. An epitome of the poet's metaphysical questionings is the litany of queries which he poses in "Brass Keys":

are we near or far? . . . is there anything
 else? . . . who comes back? . . . and why
 does love ask nothing and give all? . . .
 and why is love rare as a tailed comet shaking
 guesses out of men at telescopes ten feet long?
 why does the mystery sit with its chin on the
 lean forearm of women in gray eyes and women
 in hazel eyes?

. . .
 the answers are not computed and attested in the

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back of an arithmetic for the verification of
the lazy

there is no authority in the phone book for us
to call and ask the why, the wherefore, and the
howbeit
it's . . . a riddle . . . by God.

Sandburg, the poet of industry; Sandburg, the lover of humanity; Sandburg, the mystic, is also a troubadour of human love. Gentle and tender, his love lyrics are characteristic of the soft-spoken, tender man that he is as a person. He speaks of love as being the mysterious, magic key that opens the doors of joy, devotion, sacrifice, work ("Circles of Doors"). With it, the humdrum grind of everyday life of husband and wife and their children is transformed by its mysterious aura so that "they never get tired of each other" ("A Couple"). Without it, a married couple are complete strangers to each other ("Two Strangers"). Love in the ideal, says the poet, is "one in a thousand"; but when it exists "it burns clean and is gone leaving a white ash" ("White Ash"). Yet though man blunders and stumbles in the pursuit of it, the poet says,

Let love go on; the heartbeats are measured out
with a measuring glass, so many apiece to
gamble with, to use and spend and reckon;
let love go on.

"Let Love Go On"

In a poem of nine couplets he tries to capture the spiritual essence of love, each of which is a facet of it, but is not love in its essence. Realizing man's inability

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to circumscribe the uncircumscribable, the poet says in the last two couplets:

There are explanations of love in all languages
and not one found wiser than this:

There is a place where love begins and a place
where love ends--and love asks nothing.
"Explanations of Love"

Characteristically Sandburgian, the poem stops on the threshold of all his metaphysical reasoning. The veil of mystery is never raised; he merely leads his readers close enough to touch it.

Sandburg's rambunctious sociological verses have raised such clouds of dust about his writing that they completely shrouded those lyrics that mirror the gentle soul of the poet. To the group of his love lyrics belongs the delicately sung "Dream Girl":

You will come one day in a waver of love
Tender as dew, impetuous as rain,

You will come with your slim, expressive arms,
A poise of the head no sculptor has caught
And nuances spoken with shoulder and neck,
Your face in a pass-and-repass of moods
As many skies in delicate change
Of cloud and blue and flimmering sun.

Like the element of love, which is nowhere underscored in discussions of Sandburg's poetry, his use of religious themes is given no consideration at all, or is categorically negated as, for example, by Mr. Blankenship. To accept his statement that Sandburg "is the interpreter of

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mechanical and scientific laws, and holds in utter defiance all spiritual obligations,"¹³ one faces the fact of the poet's religious themes that openly deny such categorization. It is more than a mere acceptance of God's existence as it is spoken through the lips of a poor "wealthy boy" hungry for more than material wealth:

There is a God, there must be a God,
how can there be rain or sun unless there
is a God.

"Boy and Father"

Between the poet's profession of the omnipotent power of God, expressed in the words:

When God scooped up a handful of dust,
And spit on it, and molded the shape of man,
And blew a breath into it and told it to walk--
"They Ask: Is God, Too, Lonely"

to his modest portrayal of God's infinite immensity touched upon in the following lines:

Out of the whirling womb of time come millions
of men and their feet crowd the earth and
they cut one another's throats for room to
stand and among them all are not two thumbs
alike.

Somewhere is a Great God of Thumbs who can tell
the inside story of this.

"Personality"

runs the gamut of his religious poems. Some of them carry a single theme, as do those that are dominated by holy

¹³ Blankenship, op. cit., p. 612.

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reverence for all symbols of Christian beliefs. In one of them he writes:

The pot of gold at the rainbow end
is a pot of mud, gold mud,
slippery shining mud.

Pour it in the shape of a holy cross,
fasten it on my shirt for me to wear
and I will have a keepsake.
I will touch it and say a prayer for you.

"Gold Mud"

Far more tender and reverent than this is a single stanza lyric meditation on a carving of the dead Christ:

Body of Jesus taken down from the cross
Carved in ivory by a lover of Christ,
It is a child's handful you are here,
The breadth of a man's finger,
And this ivory loin cloth
Speaks an interspersal in the day's work,
The carver's prayer and whim
And Christ-love.

"Loin Cloth"

Somewhere in the diversity of material written about the poet, there appeared an incident which in its unassuming simplicity characterizes Sandburg, the man. During one of his weekend stays with his friends, the hostess called out at the foot of the stairs to her guest, inquiring if he has everything necessary. "All that I need and more than I deserve," came Sandburg's reply. This same appreciation and gratitude--but more profoundly intense and reverent--appear in three of his lyrics. In "Fire Dreams," when he remembers the gratitude of the

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Pilgrims in tall hats,
Pilgrims of iron jaws

who sang their thanks "for life and soup and a little less
than a hobo handout today," the poet says:

And so
In the name of the iron-jawed men
I will stand up and say yes till the finish is
 come and gone.
God of all broken hearts, empty hands, sleeping
 soldiers,
God of all star-flung beaches of night sky,
I and my love-child stand up together today and sing:
 "Thanks, O God."

In the lyric, "Our Prayers of Thanks," his gratitude is for
the gladness of sunshine, the laughter of children, for sun-
set and stars, for love of woman, the help-mate of man, for
life and death. And he weaves into this his profession of
faith in Divine Providence:

God,
The game is all your way, the secrets and the
 signals and the system; and so for the break
 of the game and the first play and the last
 Our prayer of thanks.

"The Glass House Canticle" is his litany of praise to God
for the things mankind takes for granted. But the sensitive
soul of the poet blesses God for the sky, the night mist
over the skyscraper, the miracle of light. The last stanza
epitomizes this praise:

Bless Thee, O Lord for the laws Thou hast ordained
 holding fast these tall oblongs of stone and steel,
 holding fast the planet Earth in its course and
 farther beyond the cycle of the Sun.

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To the claims that Sandburg is the poet of only the here and the now, a poet capable of metaphysical speculation only in so far as it has a toe-hold on the material, there are the arguments of his religious lyrics vested with deeper meaning than a mere surface reading of them can yield. In a simple lyric that resulted from the poet's contemplation of a prairie farm scene on Christmas day in 1917, his soul echoes the idea of Joseph Plunkett's "I See His Blood Upon the Rose," though the tone is distinctly the tone of Sandburg. In the lives of the commonplace he is able to read the divine: "Jesus in an Illinois barn early this morning, the baby Jesus . . . in flannels" ("Rusty Crimson"). This same theme is pursued in the lyric "Crimson Changes People." The fundamental thought of the poem is the idea that every human life is a "dusk Golgotha." In a self-examination, the poet poses the questions: did I see Christ in my neighbor? did I see the transformed Mary Magdalen in every fallen woman? did I see in every man the thousands who have paid with their lives for the peace and freedom that I enjoy? This theme of seeing the lives of people as an extenuation of Christ's earthly life has been handled by writers of spiritual books. One of England's popular writers of spiritual books in this century, Caryll Houselander, has developed this particular theme in her book, This War Is the Passion.

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To his religious poems having the palimpsest character belongs "Early Lynching," a poem rich in spiritual symbolism:

Two Christs were at Golgotha.
 One took the vinegar, another looked on.
 One was on the cross, another in the mob.
 One had the nails in his hands, another the stiff
 fingers holding a hammer driving nails.
 There were many more Christs at Golgotha . . .

• •
 The Christ they killed, the Christ they didn't kill,
 those were the two at Golgotha.

• •
 The slum man they killed, the mountain man lives on.

Under this symbolism are two layers of meanings. One hides the concept of St. Paul, the mystical presence of Christ in every human being; the other, an avowal of the poet's belief in Christ's dual nature: divine and human. His divinity is succinctly suggested in the figure of the "mountain man".

His status among men is amplified in these four lines:

The smell of the slums was on him.
 Wrongs of the slums lit in his eyes.
 Songs of the slums wove in his voice.
 The haters of the slums hated his slum heart.

This same belief is given a two-line utterance in "Precious Moments":

Ecce Homo had meanings: behold the Man! Look at
 him! Dying he lives and speaks!

"Early Lynching" is also one of the two poems in which Sandburg makes a reference to the Mother of God, yet the tenderness of all the earth's mothers and the strength of all the earth's martyrs is in this four-line portrait:

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Pity, pity, the bones of these broken ankles.
 Pity, pity, the slimp of these broken wrists.
 The mother's arms are strong to the last.
 She holds him and counts the heart drips.

In another contemplation of the world's greatest historical event he introduces Her in the Nativity scene:

Shall we look up now at stars in Winter
 And call them always sweeter friends
 Because this story of a Mother and a Child
 Never is told with the stars left out?
 "Special Starlight"

And as this poem progresses in a series of rhetorical questions, the theme of the meditation unfolds on the world's hallowing because of Christ's having been born into it.

Through the lines echoes the poet's hope for a world where all men will be brothers under the Fatherhood of God:

Shall they yet gather with no clenched fists at all,
 And look into each other's faces and see eye to eye,
 And find ever new testaments of man as a sojourner
 And a toiler and a brother of fresh understandings?

Into this contemplation he injects his hopes for a reconstruction of men's sense of values, arranged in a hierarchy of basic Christian virtues:

Shall plain ways and people held close to earth
 Be reckoned among things to be written about?
 Shall tumult, grandeur, fanfare, panoply,
 prepared loud noises
 Stand equal to a quiet heart, thoughts, vast dreams
 Of men conquering the earth by conquering themselves?
 . . .
 Is there a time for stripping to simple childish
 questions?

The deceptively simple lyric, "Epistle," which describes Jesus as a lover of sunsets, of fishing boats and

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of fishing men, contains in its closing lines the provocative statement:

When Jesus said: Good-by, good-by, I will come again:

• • • the good-by and the promise meant all or nothing.

Alone, the statement seems to imply the poet's hesitancy in accepting the Scriptures. Yet, placed side by side with his religious beliefs as they are unfolded in his other religious lyrics, there is no room for doubting Sandburg's acceptance of Christ's divinity and the truth of His words.

The theme of another lyric merits consideration here because of its multiple symbolism. "Broken Tabernacles" is obviously a self-scrutiny. The "tabernacle" image yields itself to two interpretations. One admits the denotative meaning of a material temple; the other implies a connotative reference to the Paulinian metaphor: "Know you not that you are temples of the Holy Spirit?" If this interpretation is accepted, then Sandburg projects himself into the position of the wealthy who erect imposing churches at the price of the sweat and blood of the underpaid workers:

Have I broken the smaller tabernacles, O Lord?
And in the destruction of these set up the greater
and massive, the everlasting tabernacles?

Then the poet's voice speaks for himself:

--why did the hypocrites carve their own names
on the corner-stones?

• • •
Who lays any blame here among the split corner-stones?

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Does the poet mean "split" in its literal sense? or is the word a metaphor for "carved"? Whatever the meaning here, it does not weaken the structure of the body of the poem, the basic idea of which is handled in another lyric of self-scrutiny:

Have I done any good under cover? Or have I
always put it in the show windows and the
newspapers?

"Questionnaire"

To keep this study within reasonable length limits, the minor themes of Sandburg's lyric poetry--which are offshoots of the major ones--will not be considered here separately. As part of the whole, however, they help round out the poet's search for pathos and color in the lives of the commonplace. They are interesting as a study in calculated simplicity. In modulated repetitions of colloquial cadences, Sandburg keeps both, feeling expressed and medium of expression free from any sophistication. In the naivete of the two aspects in his descriptive lyrics he adroitly creates a charming means of a temporary escape from the world of reality on the wings of fancy. But whether he is attempting a contrast between the truly great and those who are not, or whether he endeavors to alleviate the sense of grimness in human existence, his lyric poetry is everywhere permeated with his personal faith in the fundamental goodness of man, in his joy of being alive, and in his wholesome

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realistic outlook on things: that the moon and the stars can be reflected in the dirty waters of a humble street puddle.

Sandburg's lyric vignettes discussed here, however, do not give a full-length portrait of him as a poet. To get that view, he will be subjected to a more thorough analysis of six of his long lyrics, and finally that of his book-long poem, The People, Yes.

PART II

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF SANDBURG'S POETRY

The study begun in Part I of this dissertation will be further pursued by a more detailed analysis of Sandburg's poetry in general. In as much as the preceding chapter merely opened the door to his lyric art, it was considered almost necessary to show the quality of his lyric poetry as it is developed in the longer poems. For the most part, the short lyrics demonstrate his descriptive ability, their length too slight to give an appreciable sampling of his characteristic poetic style. The poems which constitute the body of the next chapter are considered sufficiently long and varied to give a cross-section of what one can expect to look for and find in Sandburg's handling of lyric themes. The sequence of their arrangement here will follow the chronology of their appearance in his poetry volumes, except for the poem, "Many Hats". Because its theme is an extension of "Slabs of the Sunburnt West," it was considered more logical to have the last mentioned poem followed immediately by its companion piece.

From the analysis of his longer lyrics to his book-long poem, The People, Yes, is but a step forward in the same direction. Because of its length it was considered impractical to incorporate it with the preceding long poems.

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Its analysis will constitute the body of Chapter IV. Since The People, Yes is a vast living canvas of the people themselves, it is to be expected that it contains the germ of their national traits. The tracing of these characteristics will be the burden of Chapter V.

With the nature of his lyric art looked into, it was considered practical as a next step in this analytical process to examine the literary techniques that the poet employs. Chapter VI will go into the detail of color, symbols, figures of speech, line and stanza patterns, and the element of language as each of these are utilized in Sandburg's poetry.

After The People, Yes he wrote only occasional verse, published at different times in current periodicals. These scattered poems have been gathered and published as a section entitled "New Poetry" in the volume of his collected poems. These have been included in this study in the two preceding chapters. Having accomplished the analysis of his poetry, the next step will be to determine the factors that went into the making of Sandburg's literary style. Chapter VII, the last in Part II, will look upon his style partly from the standpoint of history, partly from his own personality, and partly from the writer's own deductions drawn from an intensive reading into Sandburg. Chapter VII,

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however, has not been intended to serve as a filter for the diverse opinions of the critics and reviewers of Sandburg. Part II of this dissertation will bring to a close the examination of his poetry and lead into an analysis of his prose art as it is demonstrated in his prose masterpiece, the biography of Abraham Lincoln.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF LONG LYRICS

Except for the first volume of his poems, each of the subsequent volumes contains at least one long lyric, which sets the tone for the book, or which amplifies that tone when it is already established by a previous long poem. Since the short lyrics examined in Chapter II give only a fragmentary view of the poet's manner of handling his themes, it was considered essential to hold up larger mirrors to reflect the poet if one is to get adequate amplitude of the reflection needed to give a composite view of Sandburg's individuality as a writer.

To get some notion of the development of his style, the lyrics have been arranged here in the order of publication appearance. This order has been sacrificed in only one instance, and that in favor of theme development. "Many Hats" in its non-chronological order does not, however, distort the picture of style development. There is not that much growth in the poet, as will be noticed in the following pages.

"Prairie."--The seventeen-page poem establishes the mood of Sandburg's second poetry volume, Cornhuskers. The poem is an ecstatic eulogy of the land that nurtured him; here he sings his grateful acknowledgment to the earth that

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mothered him in his formative years. The softness of the opening image, the first descriptions of the prairie slowly increase in force then again descend into a soft playing out of a mood submerged in the hush of twilight. This accomplished, Sandburg puts a song into the mouth of "mother prairie" and retains this personification almost to the end. The song of the prairie is a series of montages tracing the progress of civilization over the level stretches. Thus, there are portrayed the coming of the pioneers in their covered wagons, their life in the wilderness, the disappearance of the Indian, the growth of small towns, the coming of the railroad, the industrialization of an agrarian society and the growth of large cities. No object of prairie life is too common for him to glory in. The overland passenger train, the cornhuskers, the towns on the Soo Line, the wigwags, the log house, the skyscraper, wagons, horses, flatboats, smokestacks, the Limited crossing Wisconsin--all of these appear in the vision which the poet creates. According to Amy Lowell, the readers received more than just a slice of 'mother earth': "it was Mother Earth cherishing her children."¹⁴ Through all these changes there is only one changeless feature--the prairie itself, which holds the

¹⁴ Lowell, Amy, Poetry and Poets, New York, Houghton, Mifflin, 1930, p. 156.

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dust of the singing women and their sons of a thousand years ago. The prairie says of itself: "I hold the dust of these amid changing stars." Flashed before the mind's eye are fast-moving close-ups of farm life during the changing seasons, done with the artistry of color and tone, of image and rhythm. But before the prairie finishes its song, Sandburg --charged with an emotion that refuses to be restrained-- interrupts the prairie with his four-line apostrophe to the land:

O prairie mother, I am one of your boys.
 I have loved the prairie as a man with a heart
 shot full of pain over love.
 Here I know I will hanker after nothing so much
 as one more sunrise or a sky moon of fire
 doubled to a river moon of water.

Then the tone changes to one of chiding. It is as though the poet is reproving the prairie for this romanticising of what was, and rousing her to the more sensible outlook of being practical. He says in part:

I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes.
 I tell you yesterday is a wind gone down,
 a sun dropped in the west.
 I tell you there is nothing in the world
 only an ocean of tomorrows,
 a sky of tomorrows.

The controversial "I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes" need not necessarily connote Sandburg's disregard of history; it may just as well suggest that the past is something on which to build, but not with which to construct.

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Is there any social significance present in the thoughts of this pictorial psalm of his homeland? One could, perhaps, read into it Sandburg's conscious awareness of a historical sequence to which he succumbs when he considers the progressive growth of the prairie from its pioneer past to its present development. Beyond this trace of possible social connotation, the poem has nothing of Chicago's populism. Its thematic thought--the good power of American land--which Sandburg traces here and in a number of smaller poems, was a positive force in American writing. Cargill makes the claim that it "not only contributed to, but changed the direction of the poetry of Hart Crane and Archibald MacLeish, who had begun as Decadents."¹⁵ This generative influence of Sandburg's theme, however, goes back to an even earlier piece, "Onion Days," of Chicago Poems, which is also of the "good earth" family.

"Smoke and Steel."--Sandburg's most ambitious effort in poetizing the machine age is the five-page poem, "Smoke and Steel," appearing in his poetry volume of the same title. True to his fashion of presenting a theme in sharply lit flashes, the poet suggests the still untamed energies of the American industrial system. Not mere metal is being

¹⁵ Cargill, Oscar, "Carl Sandburg: Crusader and Mystic," English Journal, April, 1950, p. 181.

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manufactured, and not only is there mere toil of men in its production. Here is man's impulse to pour his very life into the creation; here is the welding of human life with nature's product: "Smoke and blood is the mixture of steel." Continuing the principle of suggestion, the poet develops the far ramifications of what that creation means: that all modern life is permeated with steel--from the flight of the pilot, to the plowing of the field by the farmer. Over the whole concept broods the awful reality of the human cost of modern industrialism. It is not only the actual spilling of blood in accidents that Sandburg concerns himself with, but with the emotional effects that the working conditions which surround the making of the bar of steel have on man. This idea of man's life being poured into the essence of steel is powerfully presented in the poem "Prayers of Steel":

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
 Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
 Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper
 together
 Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central
 girders.
 Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper
 through blue nights into white stars.

This personal identification comes from the human remnant in steel which the intimate blending of man's spirit and effort with the material ingredients of the earth brings about. In "Smoke and Steel" the thought is repeated in many ways, but its ring is always identifiable:

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And always dark in the heart and through it,
 Smoke and the blood of man.
 Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary--they make their
 steel with men.

All of Sandburg's steel-mill poems, says Mr. Hoffman, "are in the nature of an appeal to those who use the machine not to forget that it is the product of human sacrifice," and that the human beings who have something to do with its mechanical perfection "will . . . survive its breakdown, and . . . eventually triumph over the economic conditions under which they suffer in its manufacture."¹⁶ In the meantime, the workers react differently to the role they must play:

One of them said: "I like my job, the company
 is good to me, America is a wonderful country."
 One: "Jesus, my bones ache; the company is a liar;
 this is a free country, like hell."
 One: "I got a girl, a peach; we save up and go on
 a farm and raise pigs and be the boss ourselves."
 And the others were roughneck singers a long ways
 from home.
 Look for them back of a steel vault door.

They laugh at the cost
 They lift the birdmen into the blue.
 It is steel a motor sings and zooms.

It is still the "Chicago" laugh, one that is hurled into the air because there is not much that men can do about the conditions yet. That they are far from being satisfied is sung again in "Five Towns on the B. and O." by

¹⁶ Hoffman, Frederick J., The Twenties, New York, Viking Press, 1955, p. 259.

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. . . hungry smoky shanties hanging to the
 slopes . . . crooning:
 We get by, that's all.
 . . . the shanties in clumsy shadows. . .
 almost the hills shaking . . . all crooning:
 By God, we're going to find out or know why.

This dissatisfaction is given an ironic tinge when Sandburg writes in "Do You Want Affidavits?":

--for now we stand amid the great wishing
 windows--and the law says we are free to be
 wishing all this week at the windows.

But Sandburg's dream of the millenium continues. There is hope in his heart that one day the myth of The People will be translated to reality. Through the mouth of the three tailors of Tooley Street, Sandburg says:

Cross-legged, working for wages, joking each
 other as misfits out from the cloth of a
 Master Tailor, they sat and spoke their thoughts
 of the glory of The People, they met after work
 and drank beer to The People.

"Three Ghosts"

In the panorama of the building of cities with the blood of men, contained in "Smoke and Steel," is Sandburg's first acceptance of machinery and all that it implies. Through it runs the current of common sense thinking: What cannot be cured must be endured.

"The Windy City."--This poem is Sandburg's second salute to his favority city. Externally, it is a poetic counterpane of heterogeneous verse patterns, which are effective in portraying the diversity that go into the making of so vast a city. Far more comprehensive than its early

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companion-piece, "The Windy City" contains greater power in its expression of Chicago's expansiveness and continuous striving for self-improvement.

Its opening section traces the birth of the city from the nucleus of a small gathering of the first pioneers who have given the city its name. The etymology of it is woven into the laughing pattern noted in the first Chicago poem:

Early the red men gave a name to a river,
 the place of the skunk,
 the river of the wild onion smell,
 Shee-caw-go.

Out of payday songs of steam shovels,
 Out of wages of structural iron rivets,
 The living lighted skyscrapers tell it now as a name,
 . .
 I am Chicago, I am a name given out by the breaths of
 working men, laughing men, a child, a belonging.

Poetizing its geographical setting, Sandburg proceeds, in fast-moving montages, to give a cross-section of the people that go into the making of the fibre of a large city. But whether he reaches far back into its history, or whether he looks at the here-and-now, he notes that the governing principle in all instances is strength. Strength was the determinant among the tribes of the Blackhawks, the Pottawatomies, the Illinis; strength triumphed when the white man came to the midwest; strength triumphed when the machine came into industry. And in the twentieth century the principle remains unaltered. Now the battle of strength

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takes the form of prison escapes, hunger strikes, the cost of living, the price of dying. Of all this, Chicago has its share. In its pursuit of material progress, however, the city neglected to follow a commensurate intellectual and cultural growth. And Sandburg points an accusing finger on the city, saying:

It is easy to listen to the haberdasher customers
hand each other their easy chatter--it is easy
to die alive--to register a living thumbprint
and be dead from the neck up.

Then in a series of conversation sketches he intensifies the independent philosophy of the city's character:

It is easy to come here a stranger and show the
whole works, write a book, fix it all up--
it is easy to come and go away a muddle-
headed pig, a bum and a bag of wind.
Go to it and remember this city fished from its
depth a text: "independent as a hog on ice."

The picture of the metropolis is focused from various angles: from the pavements, from the bridges, from the girders of steel. Whatever the focus, it presents a city of action; a city ever wielding the pick-axe and the shovel; a city built up and torn down and erected again; a city of men and women working to stay alive, men and women never tiring of their pursuit of material betterment. To Sandburg the noise and disorder of the city were symbols of its power and its freedom. Here, as in all of his earlier poetry, his fascination is for the raw materials of existence--and of them, he found an unmatched bulk in the city of Chicago.

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In the verbal creation of sights, sounds, and smells, Sandburg captures the spirit of the city as it was during his day, a spirit no longer true to the same degree now that Chicago's adolescent days are a thing of the past.

His grasp into a symbolic verbal image of the apparent aimlessness and confusion belongs to the essence of the whole poem. Though isolating examples from the entirety to illustrate certain aspects tends to weaken the impact of their total surrounding, the lone examples still hold their ground. Chicago, then and now, is a city of contrasts and economic inequality. In Sandburg's style this fact appears as follows:

Forgive us if we work so hard
 And the muscles bunch clumsy on us
 And we never know why we work so hard--
 If the big houses with little families
 And the little houses with big families
 Sneer at each other's bars of misunderstanding;
 And believe at first we understand
 And later say we wonder why.

This same tone of apology is carried through the whole of section five. Yet in the one immediately following, the mood changes to one of exhilaration, of sheer physical joy at seeing the face of the city changing, improving, and changing again. The undercurrent of this emotional instability has been hinted at in the image built up in section one: "I am a child, a belonging." It has its roots also in the adolescent independence of which the city boasts in the slogan: "Independent as a hog on ice."

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Though all of Sandburg's work is aimed at one goal, namely, at protecting the reality of the people, this purpose is nowhere so directly expressed as it is here. In language at once rhythmical and strong, the reality of the people stands out in low-relief:

It is wisdom to think the people are the city.
It is wisdom to think the city would fall to pieces
and die and be dust in the wind.

It is wisdom to think no city stood here at all until
the working men, the laughing men, came.
It is wisdom to think tomorrow new working men, new
laughing men, may come and put up a new city--

A little earlier in the poem that same idea appears in different images:

"I will die as many times
as you make me over again,
says the city to the people.
I am the woman, the home, the family,
I get breakfast and pay the rent;
I telephone the doctor, the milkman, the undertaker;
I fix the streets
for your first and your last ride--
Come clean with me, come clean or dirty,
I am stone and steel of your sleeping numbers;
I remember all you forget.
I will die as many times
as you make me over again."

In its epical underbody, "The Windy City" captures the American temperament. Perhaps the best epitome of this temperament is contained in the words spoken by the pauper: "Let every man be his own Jesus--that's enough." The theme of each man saving himself is expressed in any number of ways. Basically it seems to suggest the interpretation

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that each man must develop his whole personality in the capacity for which he is most suited by nature. Thus, every type of profession, every type of occupation finds its place in the diversity of ways Chicagoans strive to improve themselves and the little world of their private lives. Their very colloquialisms throw light upon their temperaments. "Put it over, shoot it across" bespeaks their directness in dealing with each other. Lovers of fair-play that they are, they are indignant at seeing it violated: "Beat up the short-change artists. They never did nothin' for you." Dislike of pretense and of the better-than-thou attitude is echoed in "And who do you think you are?" Their lack of restraint and the neighborliness; their humor and good-natured railery; their shrewdness and love of the easy dollar all find their echoes throughout the poem. But they are found most direct in the vernacular of the people, to which the whole of section three is devoted: "It ain't how old you are, it's how old you look"; "You poor fish . . . You ain't got the sense God gave an oyster"; "Bring home the bacon" and "What we want is results, results and damn the consequences." Though lyrically such vernacularisms add nothing poetical to the poem, they are, nevertheless, essential to the establishment of the atmosphere of the entire piece.

For sheer lyrical beauty, one needs only to turn to section nine, the night imagery of which will be discussed

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in a subsequent chapter dealing with the poet's symbolism. Or again, one may turn to section ten, in which is contained the apostrophe to Chicago. Light and fresh as the wind itself, colorful and limpid as the waters of the lake, the imagery in the apostrophe is developed in a series of progressions, until it is epitomized in the closing lines of the poem:

Winds of the Windy City,
Winds of corn and sea blue,
Spring wind white fighting winter gray.
Come home here--they nickname a city for you

Of the movements contained within this poem, Miss Monroe wrote as she reviewed Sandburg's fourth poetry volume:

We feel a big poet-spirit going along with the founding of the city and the lifting up "the living sky-scraper", going along with all the sweeping irony for the comfortable people who profit by these labors in their smoothly ordered lives, and for the superior people who criticize the results. And then the city-spirit rises and shakes off these little encumbrances with a grin.¹⁷

It is doubtful that in the hands of a dainty versifier, the spirit of Chicago could have been captured. The theme itself called for a spokesman of Sandburg's calibre to handle it with firmness and ease.

¹⁷ Monroe, Harriet, "Review of Slabs of the Sun-burnt West," Poetry, September, 1922, p. 335.

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"Slabs of the Sunburnt West."--More than he did heretofore, Sandburg achieved in the title poem of his fourth volume a mystical quality that came as a reaction to his coming face to face with the silence of a vast, uninhabited terrain. Facing the eloquently silent grandeur of the Grand Canyon, his poet-spirit submerged itself in a metaphysical meditation on nature, on man, and on God. Characteristically, Sandburg opens the poem with his favorite sector of the 24-hour cycle, the night. As the overland passenger train counts off the miles, Sandburg begins his meditation with imagery at once playful and colorful:

Stand up, sandstone slabs of red,
 Tell the overland passengers who burnt you.
 Tell 'em who shook you by the heels and stood you
 on your heads,
 Who put the slow pink of sunset mist on your faces.

This leads directly into the image of prayerful reverence, which the rapidly changing scenery from a moving train presents to the eye:

Panels of the cold gray open night,
 Gates of the Great American Desert,
 Skies keeping the prayers of the wagon men,
 Panels, skies, gates, listen tonight while
 we send up our prayers on the Santa Fe trail.

The rider, through whose eye and mind the concepts are filtered, is submerged in the physical aspects of color and form. Confounded by the sea of color, he cries out for release from his confinement to the physical senses and prays

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for freedom of the spirit:

Cheat my eyes, fill me with the float
Of your dream, your auburn, green, and purple.

. . .
Out to the last violet shimmer of the float
Of the dream--and I will come . . .
Singing a song and letting out hallelujahs
To the doorsill of the last footprint.

Actually Sandburg never succeeds in freeing himself from his confinement to the five senses and that is why his meditation never really soars. Whether he probes into the mystery of his own being, or that of his beginning and his end, the poet never leaves the "five crutches". In this poem lies the secret of his perpetual floundering in the sea of wonder. The answer is openly confessed in these lines:

The power and lift of the sea
and the flame of the old earth fires under,
I lift their meanings of sand in my fingers.
I send out five sleepwalkers to find out who I am,

. . .
They come back, my five sleepwalkers; they have
an answer for me, they say; they tell me:
Wait--

In the indefinite password Wait, and in the image of sand lies the key to the poet's failure in never being able to concretize his metaphysical speculations. This characteristic is noticed throughout all his lyrics in which he tries to do more than just describe or create a mood. That he is aware of this deficiency and that it pains him to be so incapacitated is also answered in this poem. No matter how profoundly the depth of his soul may feel, his poetic

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limitations refuse his soul's release. In the poem this admission reads:

Repeaters, repeaters, come back to my window-sills.
 Some are pigeons coming to coo and clean their
 tail feathers and look wise at me.
 Some are pigeons coming with broken wings to die
 with pain in their eyes on my window-sills.

Particularly strong is the pathos in the image of the pigeons with broken wings coming to die with pain in their eyes.

That image--if it can be accepted as the poet's admission of his literary limitations--reveals how keenly he suffers at the incongruity between his profound feelings and his inability to arrive at their depth. Acceptance of this theory will help clarify why, especially in his earlier poetry, he had so often allowed his feelings to run wild at the price of lyric quality.

Even in the meditative speculations that are found in this poem, Sandburg's reliance on the visual and the power of imaginative handling of the concrete play a pronounced role. These characteristics appear here in much the same way as they do in his shorter lyrics, where he depends to such a great extent on their function. The paintbrush technique in "Slabs of the Sunburnt West" appears as follows:

The weavers of light weave best in red,
 better in blue.
 The weavers of shadows weave at sunset;
 the young black-eyed women run, run, run

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to the night star homes; the old women
sit weaving for the night rain gods,
the night luck gods.

Even though the meditative mood has enveloped the poet, Sandburg's poetic personality, however, stands untransmogrified. He seems unable to forego the use of the vernacular, of imagery taken from common, daily life, and of cataloguing lists of objects. What could be developed by another talent, for example, into a poetic apostrophe to sleep, from his paintbrush emerges in this style:

Sleep, O wonderful hungry people.
Take a shut-eye, take a long old snooze,
and be good to yourselves;

or again, this same vernacular appears when he complains of the restrictions placed upon him by his senses:

I ask why these five cripples
limp and squint and gag with me,
why they say with the oldest frozen faces:
Man is a poor stick and a sad squirt;
if he is poor he can't dress up;
if he dresses up he don't know any place to go.

The old Sandburg comes forth in his use of imagery, also. In his speculations on God, for example, he creates images of Him as a proud and cunning Bricklayer, a Boss and a Watchman always watching. When he is facing the mysterious formations of eighteen stones, his fancy re-creates a baseball game in all its reality of physical movements; a game in which the position of umpire is attributed to God and to the devil. Other aspects of the canyon are given a

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rapid Whitmanesque cataloguing, albeit transformed by the poet's fancy and imagination.

Yet for all this concentration and analysis of the weaknesses present in the different sections of the poem, the entirety has an undeniable greatness. In its feeling for the sky, the ocean, the winds, and all the imposing aspects of nature; for vastness in time and space; in all this there is profound emotion of wonder and awe. Its theme and its affirmation of man's inability to comprehend the grandeur of God, has a certain Biblical solemnity. Commenting on the parallels existing between the poem and certain passages in the Book of Job, Mr. Whipple says: "Sandburg's poetry is in truth a veritable Psalm of Life--for he is essentially an accepting Psalmist."¹⁸ This acceptance of life--circumscribed by its industrial aspects--has already been noted in "Smoke and Steel." Here, however, the area of acceptance has been considerably extended and the poet succeeds in professing this attitude remarkably well. "Slabs of the Sunburnt West" is an achievement surpassed (in the collection of this title) only by the tribute paid to the unknown soldier in "And So Today," a poem treated in the preceding pages.

¹⁸ Whipple, Thomas, Spokesmen: Modern Writers and American Life, New York, Appleton, 1928, p. 181.

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"Many Hats."--In having its theme built around the Grand Canyon, this poem stands as a companion piece to the earlier "Slabs of the Sunburnt West." But with this objective affinity the relationship between the two poems ends, and "Many Hats" stands as a distinct entity in its own right. The key to it is found in a question Sandburg poses in the first stanza of section two: "Why do they come and go here and look as in a looking-glass?" and in the amplification of this query found in the closing lines of section eleven, where the last hombre appears on the scene and says:

. . . For each man sees him-
self in the Grand Canyon--
each one makes his own Canyon
before he comes, each one brings
and carries away his own Canyon--
who knows? and how do I know?

The indefiniteness expressed in the last line has been met before, when Sandburg's metaphysical speculations were under discussion. With him speculation stops in silent wonder as the query is left quivering in the air. It is present just a few lines earlier when, through the mouth of the same hombre, Sandburg asks: "Who is God and why? Who am I and why?" It is with just such philosophical incompletions that many a critic of Sandburg was irked.

This concept of individual interpretation of the same thing is developed in twelve sections, the first and last of which follow the conventional stanzaic pattern.

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These two sections are to the body of the poem what a coda is to a musical composition. With but slight rearrangement of order, they repeat the thought that irrational creation praises God by obeying the natural law; or, in the words of the wind: "Good Lawd, I done done what you told me to do." The body of the poem is contained in the ten central sections, each bearing the paragraph structure of prose writing --a reminder of Sandburg's early days of form experimentation. But rhythmically, they are examples of definite phrase control, a loud reading of which produces the type of music which most of Sandburg's poetry is based upon. From the context of these prose paragraphs flows the diversity of reactions to the natural wonder. The Canyon is seen through the eyes of sensitive women, of tough-spoken men, of an old railroader, of a rambler. Subsequently, as the line of those who come to the scene grows, they lose their individuality and the poet refers to them by the impersonal term "hombre." Each of them contributes his impression, and the imaginative interpretation of these impressions is flexibly handled by the poet. Thus, the Canyon is spoken of as being hacked out by a big broadaxe of God and then fixed and embellished into an irregular stone pattern by the hand of the same God. Or it is seen as the wreck of the Garden of Eden after the first sin of Adam and Eve. Then again it is regarded as the Devil's brickyard, where the kilns to make the

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Kitchens of Hell were once found. Section six is the portrait of the Canyon overgrown by the phantasy of the tall tales of the folk.

These sections are interspersed with descriptive passages, in which Sandburg's greatest poetic ability is concentrated. Outstanding for its rareness in his art is the liturgical symbolism on which the whole of section nine is built:

Steps on steps lift on into the sky; the lengths count up into stairways; let me go up for the Redeemer is up there; He died for me; so a Spanish Indian was speaking--and he asked, When the first French Jesuit looked from Yavapai four hundred years ago, did he murmur of a tall altar to go on a mile-long rock shelf down there on a mesa? did he whisper of an unspeakable tall altar there for the raising of the ostensorium and the swinging of censers and the calling up of the presence of the Heart of the Living Christ? And he went on, Where the Son of God is made known surely is a place for the removal of shoes and the renewal of feet for the journey--surely this is so.

To have quoted less than the whole section were to chip a stone most rare in all of the poet's output. The image of God is scattered with irregular frequency throughout all of his poetry volumes, but nowhere does he achieve the same degree of religious reverence and awe that are present here. There is in it a pronounced affinity to the vestment-clad imagery so characteristic of Francis Thompson.

Sandburg's dedication to the people, not as an abstraction, but as a distinct personal entity, has been

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asserting itself time and again in his earlier poetry. This personalization of the masses is breaking through in this poem also. When he sends in the lean, hungry-looking mid-west farmer to face the splendor of the Canyon, Sandburg --speaking through him--says:

Yes, let this be . . . a memorial to the Human
Family which came and went; let it stand as a
witness of the short miserable pilgrimage of man-
kind, of flame of faiths, of blood and fire . . .

This personalization the reader meets on a grander scale in The People, Yes, where it constitutes the burden of the book and is handled with strokes at once firm and defined.

"Good Morning, America."--Just as in "Windy City" Sandburg sought to capture the spirit of Chicago, so in "Good Morning, America" he is in search of the spirit of the entire nation through the soul and the idiom of its people. At its core, the poem is a hymn of praise to the accomplishments of man, "the little two-legged joker" who built the nation with his hands, his ingenuity, his curiosity, his daring and adventure. It is a poem sung in the language of the little man who gave the nation and its speech its particular character. This theme is established in section one, where the poet silhouettes the skyline of a modern city against the red of the setting sun:

In the evening there is a sunset sonata comes
to the cities
There is a march of little armies to the dwindling
of drums,

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The skyscrapers throw their tall lengths of walls
 into black bastions on the red west.
 The skyscrapers fasten their perpendicular alpha-
 bets far across the changing silver triangles
 of stars and streets . . .

and then he asks who made the skyscrapers? From these perpendicular alphabets Sandburg then reads the story which those little armies have written on the face of America. Flipping through the pages of history, he selects snatches from the days of early Colonists on the Atlantic seaboard; from the westward movement during the Gold Rush of 1847; from the years of America's transformation into an industrial economy; and finally to years of World War I, when she assumed the status of a world power. Through all these he traces the role played by the average American in his country's growth.

It is difficult to detect a pattern in the divergence of images which appear and disappear throughout the poem. But perhaps it will be acceptable to tie up sections two through seven, in the repetitive image of facts. Into this image Sandburg crowds two large categories: matter and idea. Under matter is included everything tangible and measurable, whether it be man-made or God-made. In the second, he places the world of spirit and of ideas and ideals. Of the first he says that those facts are fastened; of the second, that they fly with phantom bird wings. In the first category are placed all of natural life, historical

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developments, the men who made history, and the advancements of modern civilization. Into the second are placed man's groping for God, and man's confusion at the mystery and unpredictabilities that surround the beginning of life. In his poetic image, the first of the last two concepts is spoken of as, "Anxious earthworms hunting for a home"; and the second, as "the secret tracteries of eggs" and "beginnings that fail to divulge the design." Using this last concept as a spring-board, he proceeds in sections eight through sixteen to trace the historical growth of America from its incipient stages to the present. Section eight considers the past. He is able to cover vast and multi-angular sweeps of history through fast-moving images that often only suggest a historical fact. Turn back, he says to the reader, and look at those men

. . . in velvet knickerbockers, in silk stockings,
in slippers with silver buckles . . . meet-
ing carpenters who . . . drove handwrought
nails.

Look back; they are pinching their fingers in
silver and gold snuff boxes . . . and the
jail doors cling to their brass locks
holding the dregs, the convicts of debt.

In similar fashion he sweeps through the era of the covered wagon, the Mississippi steamboat, the invention of the telegraph, the steam-engine. Feeling around in the past, he comes upon the fact of war, which he calls an interlude in the life of a nation. This interlude he refers to as a

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phantom, a reality of the clash of ideas and ideals. How far he has gotten away from his early emotional outbursts whenever he spoke of war, is especially evident in the calm and almost classic restraint of the following lines:

And the saddest phantom of all stood up at
Gettysburg
And tried to tell right from wrong and left
the most of it unsaid, in the air.

His handling of the second phantom, that of World War I, has less of this poetic artistry, but it is done well, none the less. Here he relies on a graphic portrayal of war scenes:

Again the Four Horsemen take their laughter.
Men walk on air and tumble from the sky.
Men grapple undersea and soak their bones along
rust-brown, rust-flaked turbines on the sea
bottom.
Men bite the dust from bullets, bombs, bayonets,
gas . . .

In the same realistic vein he captures the hollow meaninglessness of a struggle that was so promising of its reach for the ideal at its inception. He writes of the men who:

Came back from the oversea vortex,
From the barrages of No Man's Land,
Saying with gleams deep in their eyes,
"There is nothing to say, ask me no questions."

The last line has the strain of the same emptiness which T. S. Eliot produced in his "Hollow Men."

This brings the poem to America's modern position in the world as its leading power. Rapid flashes of the confusion of modern civilization, America's economic and industrial growth, the standards of present-day living, her

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population growth and the consequent social problems tumble in rapid sequence one upon another. It is here that he speaks of the forming of a new people, of a national character. In simple words he says: "Between two seashores comes a swift interweaving of blood and bones." On this image the subsequent portions of the poem are pivoted. Around this new people springs a new life, a fresh outlook on old problems and spoken of in an idiom as unpretentious as the people from whose mouths it has sprung. These new voices he introduces in section ten. In sections eleven through thirteen he succeeds in making articulate the speech of the men and women who are never heard because they cannot speak for themselves; they are the men and women who make up the inarticulate masses whose voice Sandburg has chosen to be. With these new people, says the poet:

A code arrives; language; lingo; slang;
Behold the proverbs of a people, a nation. . .

and there follows a long litany of their talk in which they reveal themselves and establish their peculiar type of national temperament. This has been done on a smaller scale in "Windy City" and will reappear on a still larger scale in his last book of poetry, The People, Yes.

What better way is there to capture the zeitgeist of a nation and an age than through the intimacy of the idiom of its people? And yet how is one to gather all the

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intricate intonations of its speech? in all the nuances of thought wrapped in the way a people expresses itself? Often, because there seems no other way to define the quality of popular speech, Sandburg resorts to giving examples of it. He dips into the endless current of American slang, for with no other level of language could he ever have rendered even the surface--much less the spirit--of his contemporary life. Through a crossing and a recrossing of the slogans and the cant, the worn by-words and the new-minted slang, the jargon which quickens the speech of ordinary men and women, he succeeds in still another area. Though at the price of an apparent straining for effect, he was able to grasp the spirit of dissolution that pervaded America in the post-war years.

First, then, from the homespun of the vernacular of the people, unfolds the character of the nation as a whole. Here appears their refusal to accept defeat; their disgust at seeing an underdog being taken advantage of; their love of fair play; their fundamental decency; their common sense; their recognition of true greatness in a person; their humor and wit; their fencerail logic. The disillusionment and despair shot through the wisdom of the folk are intensified by the disparate portrayal of objects, persons, and events, and by posing a series of unanswered and unanswerable questions. This second area of thought forms the burden of sections twelve through eighteen. Theoretically, what he

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does in section twelve hearkens to the sociological poetry of Chicago Poems. He sets up an image of economic contrast: that of the lean years of the pioneers, versus the fat years of plenty when the newly-rich stood baffled and "bewildered by the silence of their tall possessions." Then in the surprisingly same tone of his early contempt he puts these words into the mouth of the people:

Stuff your guts
and strut your stuff
strut it high and handsome
when you die you're dead
and there's no comeback . . .

The stanza immediately following employs contrast again, but this time it is contained in his literary technique. With an almost tender softness he addresses the earth:

Old timer, dust of the earth so kindly,
Old timer, dust of our feet and days.
Old time gravel and gumbo of the earth,
Take them back kindly.

And here the mood changes abruptly as he punches out his emotions:

These pigs, these swine,
The bones of them and their brothers blanch
to the same yellow of the years.

The post-war dissolution of American life in its multiple aspects: its business and its social institutions, its industry and its economy, and the private lives of its people are handled with a realism that appears to belie the tragedy of the situation. Not until section seventeen is

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the impact of the whole situation given a dramatic unfolding however. It is there that the image of the Sleepwalker appears, the Sleepwalker who "goes walking and talking". The sleepwalkers are those who sow distrust, confusion and fear in the minds of the people. They are the ones who thrive materially in the midst of chaos. At the vortex of this economic, social, and spiritual maelstrom stand the masses, those upon whose fundamental good will and common sense depends America's return to an equilibrium. These are the people who try to wrest a meaning from life and inject into it a spark of hope for a better tomorrow. These are the sturdy backbone of America, who accept the truth about her but refuse to have their faith in her shaken:

Perhaps while they ride and gamble on the new
transcontinental sky paths, perhaps we may
ask and murmur--
Good morning, America.
Good morning, Mr. Who, Which, What.
Good morning, let's all of us tell our
real names.
Good morning, Mr. Somebody, Nobody,
Anybody-who-is-Anybody-at-all.
Good morning, Worms in the Dust, Eagles
in the air, Climbers to the Top
of the sky.

In the last three sections Sandburg salutes the generations of Americans yet to come. To them he offers the land he loves so well in spite of her shortcomings. And of his own generation he asks:

Let us make pioneer prayers,
Let working clothes be sacred . . .

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To the generations of tomorrow he would give, not a land of promise, but one of fulfillment. Because Sandburg in his own life had touched the face of America at so many points, he was able to sing her faith and her soul with assurance and authority.

What in his literary profuseness and diversity he had said of and for his people to this point, finds its recapitulation and amplification in The People, Yes. If this book-long poem offers nothing new in its message, it compensates for by its sharp focusing on the protagonists: the people themselves. Their drama is re-enacted as if to imply that one must make assurance doubly sure that the people are heard, heeded, and understood. The People, Yes will be studied in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE PEOPLE, YES

The task begun in "Good Morning, America" finds its amplification and more intensive analysis in Sandburg's book-long poem dedicated to his beloved people. It represents the unending quest of the American people--and those of the world as well--for truth and happiness. It is Sandburg's testament of faith in their will to survive. Everything that had been written by him from the outset finds its completion here. But the popular sayings, proverbs, riddles, wise-cracks, yarns and superstitions of the people, that go into the making of this tribute are not merely thrown and heaped together as has been charged by the Gregory team.¹⁹ Admittedly, the pattern is not tightly knit (and what is in any of Sandburg's work?) but there is a certain thematic scheme between the 107 sections that comprise the book. There has been an attempt made here to bring this material to some form of organization, though this arrangement makes no claims to final definitiveness. Discussion and analysis of the whole poem will follow this breakdown:

Frame One. Sections one to thirteen. The first two sections establish the theme of the divergency of national

¹⁹ Gregory & Zaturenska, A History of American Poetry, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1946, p. 248.

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origins of the people that went into the making of America during its westward expansion. Sections three to eleven, inclusive, throw light upon the characteristics of the people of this nation, and trace the hardships of pioneer life.

Frame Two. Sections twelve to twenty-six. Sandburg's faith in the fundamental goodness of man is developed in sections twelve to sixteen. From section seventeen to twenty-six, inclusive, is contained Sandburg's final attempt at answering the question, What is the people?

Frame Three. Sections twenty-seven to thirty-four. In the first three divisions Sandburg traces the pattern of the ways in which the spirit among the people has been renewed down the years. In sections thirty through thirty-four, the poet attempts to give a psychological portrait of the people as it grows from their sayings.

Frame Four. Sections thirty-five through forty-seven. The body of this sector, contained in sections thirty-five through forty-six, is divided into three topics: the existence of social and economic inequality among the classes; recovery from economic depression, from want, hopelessness and fear; and the growth of current folk sayings. Section forty-seven presents the only full poem on a single subject, namely, Paul Bunyan. Though its theme could be tied with the preceding division, it was thought more logical

to regard it as an independent unit by virtue of its being the lone example of a complete tale in the book.

Frame Five. Sections forty-eight through fifty-eight. The first three sections develop the growth of life in modern industrial America as well as the growth of folk humor, wit, and idiom. In sections fifty-one through fifty-five the populist theme is carried beyond the geographic boundaries of America. The poet develops the concept that people the world over are fundamentally alike. Sections fifty-six through fifty-eight, which form the closing theme of this frame are built around the image of the perpetual renewal of the stream of humanity and of the new generations' picking up the struggle where the preceding one left off. In lending themselves to the consideration of the need of leadership, these concepts naturally lead to the discussion of Lincoln. To him the whole of section fifty-seven is devoted.

Frame Six. Sections fifty-nine through eighty. The twenty-one sections that make up this frame are worked out in the following breakdown: sections fifty-nine through sixty-six flash pictures of men's struggle to earn a living; the growth of folk anecdotes, wit, and humor, in spite of this struggle; and Sandburg's speculation on the impermanency of power, of wealth, of life itself. In their presentation of the complexity of modern life, sections sixty-seven

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through sixty-nine show the distortion of the sense of values that results from the confusion of multiple attacks on the human mind. Sections seventy to seventy-three, inclusive, are built around the people concept, and point out the people as the soil out of which spring history and the leaders who sit in judgment of their fellow-men. Like Frame Four of this thematic breakdown, sections seventy-four through eighty of this frame also are sociological in nature. Sandburg speaks of the existing economic discrimination as an arrangement which the people are constrained to and will endure only to a time.

Frame Seven. Sections eighty-eight through ninety-eight. The first eight sections show man searching for the ideal, the closest answer to which he thought he had found in democracy. But being composed of people, democracy often falls short of its promise. Sections eighty-nine through ninety-eight show the masses, which--though willing to toil in humble conditions--do not accept this as a permanent condition. Their hopes and their dreams of a better world are given voice in their sayings.

Frame Eight. Sections ninety-nine through 107. The first four sections show how hopelessness and corruption set in a society which is constrained to obey without understanding why. In the remaining sections men's dissatisfaction is likened to a sleep in which men toss before their final

awakening. In spite of the odds against them, men will continue to dream of attaining the ideal. It is on this dream that their minds are nourished.

It will be noted that in the above breakdown there is a certain ascendancy of sequence in themes, the totality of which embraces a picture too complex for a single-focus picture. How this multi-dimensional folk portrait looks in the eight frames suggested above will be considered in the following pages.

Frame One--The Diversity of National Origins.

The keystone of the 107 separate stones in this monument to the people is contained in an image which closes section two:

This is the tale of the Howdeehow powpow,
One of a thousand drolls the people tell of
themselves,
Of tall corn, of wide rivers, of big snakes,
Of giants and dwarfs, heroes and clowns,
Grown in the soil of the mass of the people.

As a "Howdeehow powpow" it already admits a diversity of themes and a certain looseness of relationship of the parts to each other. The "powpow" image was first implied in section one, where it was applied to the gathering of the people of the then-known world, and who met to build the Tower of Babel. From this concept to the lines immediately following in section two is a natural curve of the blending of antiquity with the present. The smoothness in the

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transitional curve is prominently present. The lines from section one present the first arc in the curve:

From the four corners of the earth,
 from corners lashed in wind
 and bitten with rain and fire,
 from places where the winds begin
 and fogs are born with mist children
 tall men from tall rocky slopes came
 and sleepy men from sleepy valleys,
 their women tall, their women sleepy,
 with bundles and belongings,
 with little ones babbling . . .

There is in these lines a mystery of the beginnings of man-- a theme Sandburg returns to every so often with always the same sense of mystification. And his favorite way of handling mystery is to shroud it in images of fog and mist. Here it does still another thing--it helps create the sense of the far-distant past.

When he slides into the second curve of the concept of time, the not-too-distant past, Sandburg retains but little of this notion of mystery, and the original image of the gathering of peoples continues. The second arc of the curve appears in the opening lines of section two:

From Illinois and Indiana came a later myth
 Of all the people in the world at Howdeehow
 For the first time standing together:
 From six continents, seven seas, and several
 archipelagoes,
 From points of land moved by wind and water
 Out of where they used to be where they are,
 The people of the earth marched and traveled
 To gather on a great plain.

America, then, is a gathering of the people of the earth;

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its national origins respect no boundaries. The exodus of the people of the world converges on the crossroads of America into a mélange of common human aspirations and democratic dreams. The vastness of the western expanses of America are aptly suggested by section three, in the image of a rider coming from a far way off to the panhandle of Texas:

The wind brings "a norther"
to the long flat panhandle
and in the shivering cold they say:
"Between Amarillo and the North Pole
is only a barbwire fence,"
which they give a twist:
"Out here the only windbreak
is the North Star."

In section four begins the development of the difficulties which marked the lives of the early pioneers. Parching heat, freezing cold, and prolonged drought were part and parcel of their existence. Speaking for her fellow-pioneers, a woman summarizes these hardships, saying:

"the first year you don't believe
what others tell you
and the second year you don't
believe what you tell yourself."

Sandburg's ability to use merely suggestion for reality is present here, par excellence, in saying by implication what the south-west really is:

The east is where trees come
between you and the sky.

This is far more eloquent than a description of the local surroundings, stressing the barrenness of the Arizona

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desert. The cheerfulness of the people's acceptance of the hardships is the single image of section five. Here Sandburg turns to the people he knew in his native Knox County in Illinois. The description of the farm scene ends with, "And the barn was a witness, stood and saw it all." Then in the vernacular of the people comes the dialogue which reveals their spirit:

"That old barn on your place, Charlie,
was nearly falling last time I saw it,
how is it now?"

"I got some poles to hold it on the east side
and the wind holds it up in the west.

To read through sections six through eleven is to meet short sketches of individuals who went into the making of the American people. Apparently disconnected, these portraits find their unification and psychological interpretation in the following lines taken from section eight:

There are dreams stronger than death.
Men and women die holding these dreams.
Yes, "stronger than death": let the hammers beat
on this slogan.

Within this thought, and wedded to Sandburg's understanding of his fellow-men,

Blame the frustrate? Some of them have lived
stronger than death.
Blame only the smug and scrupulous beyond
reproach . . .

is his fundamental approach to people. It has been present unchanged in Chicago Poems, above all; but it appeared in all his subsequent volumes as well. Only the expression of

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his feelings toward the subject had undergone a leveling that comes with maturity. The thumbnail sketches of people and their way of thinking bring to an end the theme of Frame One. The tapering off of the theme is effective in introducing the central ideas of Frame Two. The impression of the rapid passage of time and of men is carried in two triplets:

And this was in the old days
and they are a fine smoke
a thin smoke.

The people move
in a fine thin smoke,
the people, yes.

Frame Two.--The Fundamental Goodness of Man.

No doubt that his research into Lincolniana had a marked influence on his choice of poetic concepts of the people. Certainly it is present in the 'arch' metaphor, upon which the short, introductory section twelve is constructed. Its ending reads:

"The arch never sleeps."
Living in union it holds.
So long as each piece does its work
the arch is alive, singing, a restless choral.

This is Lincoln calling for the preservation of the Union, but here speaking in the voice and accents of Sandburg. This is Sandburg wearing borrowed robes. But in the very next section he is his own natural self again, seeing the pattern of human struggle for existence duplicated in the

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whole of creation. Whether it is in the area of plant life,
bird life, human life,

or the structural weave of the universe
Witnessed in a moving frame of winter stars--
These hold affidavits of struggle.

Struggle, then, is the common language of men, spoken
in a diversity of tongues; yet "what everybody says is what
we all say." Language notwithstanding, the human struggle
does not vary because men's needs and their wants are the
same. And the poet again touches upon a subject he could
never accept as reasonable, i.e., war. The conflict, in the
poet's mind, revolves about the artificiality of national
boundaries. Fundamentally, he says, they are "one land, one
people," and "the earth belongs to the family of man." When
he places his finger upon hate as the underlying cause of
all conflicts, he does more than include only bloodshed
between nations. In these lines:

Hate is a vapor fixed and mixed.
Hate is a vapor blown and thrown.
And the war lasts till the hate dies down
.
.
.
Though the hate of the people dies slow and hard.
Hate is a lingering heavy swamp mist . . .

are included the fratricides begun in the Biblical past by
Cain; wars of political ideologies; clashes between good and
evil in the area of morality. All of them have their roots
in hate. And thus the struggle of man continues in its end-
less efforts for survival, physical, moral, and spiritual;

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And after the strife of war
begins the strife of peace.

This strife-of-peace theme prevailed in Sandburg's poetry since the first time "Chicago" made its public appearance. But as far back as then until now, Sandburg never succumbed to despondency or despair even though conditions in America and the world at large were far from satisfying. But like the people for whom he set out to speak, Sandburg never feared to look reality in the face and see it for what it is. Like them, he realizes the therapeutic value of hope. And in section sixteen, the hope that permeates all of his poetic output is removed--as it were--from its setting, to receive its merited eulogy:

Hope is a tattered flag and a dream of time.
Hope is a heartspun word, the rainbow,
the shadblow in white

· · ·
Hope is an echo, hope ties itself yonder, yonder.

Upon this foundation of the people's dream of tomorrow, he plants the fundamental question, "Precisely, what is the people?" Instead of attempting his own definition, he says simply, "Let the nickels and dimes explain." And the answers, coming in flash pictures of the people at the prosaic business of their daily struggle are far more eloquent than any formal definition could be. Because the only one "who knows this people from pit to peak" is the people themselves, it is they who are able to analyze themselves. From

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their own mouths and in their vernacular pour their words of self-evaluation. Between sections seventeen and twenty-five this portrait of the people by the people, grows. In the same spirit in which he broke through the song of the prairie, crying: "O prairie mother, I am one of your boys," he asserts himself here again as "a child and a belonging." Sandburg stands in the portrait of the people as "the painter and the thing painted," saying of himself:

One of the early Chicago poets,
One of the slouching underslung Chicago poets,
Having only the savvy God gave him . . .

Then he makes a public assertion of his faith in the people:

"I am credulous about the destiny of man,
and I believe more than I can ever prove
of the future of the human race
and the importance of illusions,
the value of great expectations . . ."

With his familiar emphasis on the value of the present, Sandburg brings to a close this second division of the book with section twenty-six, in which he says,

You can drum on immense drums
the monotonous daily motions of the people
. . .
You can blow on great brass horns
the awful clamors of war and revolution
. . .
and cross out what was
and offer what is on a fresh blank page.

On this was and is he then proceeds to build the next division of theme progression.

Frame Three.--Pattern of Renewal of Spirit.

Opening the third phase of this extended portrait
with the hush of the silence of history:

In the folded and quiet yesterdays
Put down in the book of the past . . .

Sandburg seems deliberately to avoid the bravado tone in recalling the list of struggles that went into the lives of the past generations of the human family. But the drum-beats grow louder as he begins to recount the struggles of the people in the formative years of this country. It is as if to alert the reader to realize that in the assertion of the rights of every man as opposed to the privileges accorded to "men of 'solid substance,'" rose the waters of severe opposition. And the poet grows taut, and the lines grow crisp as he deals with the sentiment of the aristocratic Hamilton, who says, "Your people, sir, is a great beast." To this Sandburg answers:

The testament came with deliberation
Cold as ice, warm as blood,
Hard as a steel hand steel-gloved,
A steel-foot, steel-shod
for contact with another testament:
"All men are born free and equal."

In no other area more than in the area of protest against the discrimination thrown in the face of the people is Sandburg most at home. But instead of letting irrational feeling be his directive force, in section twenty-eight his deliberate control of feeling plays the leading role.

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Aligning this section with any of his early sociological pieces, one fact is evident: the emotional impact of a given poem grows stronger in proportion to his restraint. Yet the gain is not restricted merely to impact; it can also be noted that the greater emotional control, the poem gains proportionately in lyrical artistry and in a closely knit compactness.

The Hamiltonian metaphor of the people as "a great beast" is not categorically denied by Sandburg. He is too much a realist to accept the ideal for actuality. And so he says in section twenty-nine:

The people, yes--
Born with bones and heart fused in deep and
violent secrets
Mixed from a bowl of sky blue dreams and
sea slime facts--
A seething of saints and sinners, toilers,
loafers, oxen, apes,
In a womb of superstition, faith, genius
crime and sacrifice--

Within these lines is contained Sandburg's realistic analysis of the people whose cause he has espoused. Yet, he reminds the reader over and over again, that they are the soil from which springs "the living flowing breath of the history of nations." This image is followed by a development done in big, sweeping strokes, in rapidly succeeding images of the progression of time, the passing away of individuals and the patiently unchanging soil of humani bringing forth new men to take up the old struggle.

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And in the midst of their daily tussle with "passion
and poverty and crime" grow their

. . . shrewd and elusive proverbs,
The have-you-heard yarns,
The listen-to-this anecdotes . . .

Then, as an introduction to the parade of folklore, which
constitutes the body of sections thirty through thirty-five,
comes a Whitmanesque cataloguing of the multitudinous sources
of the people's wisdom:

Out of dirt, barns, workshops, timetables,
Out of lumberjack payday jamborees,
Out of joybells and headaches the day after,
Out of births, weddings, accidents,
Out of wars, laws, promises, betrayals,
Out of mists of the lost and anonymous,
Out of plain living, early rising and space
belonging . . .

Sandburg will have recourse again to such and similar Whitmanesque devices as the multi-faceted story of the people's portrait will continue to develop. To do justice to the handling of the vastness and the diversity of the subject, he could find no more satisfying technique on which to rely. Occasionally, he will use his own style of narrative to tie up the loose ends of the people's story. This he does, for example, in the introductory lines of section thirty-two:

What the people learn out of lifting and hauling
and waiting and losing and laughing
Goes into a scroll, an almanac, a record folding
and unfolding, and the music goes down
and round . . .

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Sometimes he will interrupt the flow of folk humor, anecdotes, and what-have-you, by inserting his observation on the people who are able to produce such comments. He uses this technique in the last half of section thirteen, when he speaks of human foibles:

People lie because they don't remember clear
 what they saw.
 People lie because they can't help making a story
 better than it was the way it happened.
 People tell "white lies" so as to be decent to others.
 People lie in a pinch, hating to do it, but lying
 on because it might be worse
 And people lie just to be liars for a crooked
 personal gain.
 What sort of a liar are you?

There are two things Sandburg accomplishes by these lines. First, he emphasizes his understanding of the people; and second, he paves his way into section thirty-four, which closes this division, and whose thought is complementary to the lines just cited. In the closing section, he subjects the reader to a kind of examination of his own understanding of human nature in general. After exposing him to a series of "if you can do this, that and another thing in your attitude toward others," Sandburg offers him the compliment of the line, ". . . then you can shake hands with yourself," implying that there are not many who really understand the people. This accomplished, he is ready to move into the phase of his earliest interest: social and economic discrimination, which theme he develops in the following twelve sections.

Frame Four.--The Socio-Economic Pattern.

In the thematic breakdown appearing on the opening pages of this chapter, it has been indicated that this particular section is devoted to the consideration of the problems of economic and social inequality. That it is a problem as old as the human race itself needs no argumentation. Sandburg points to its antiquity already during the time of Job. He succeeds in achieving this sense of agelessness through the images he selects in the first stanza of this division. By means of the symbols of the sea and the wind, the perpetual renewal of the stream of humanity and the insatiability of their wants is vividly suggested:

The sea moves always, the wind moves always.
 They want and want and there is no end to
 their wanting.
 What they sing is the song of the people.
 Man will never arrive, man will always be
 on the way.
 It is written he shall rest but never for long.

Of itself, this unending circle of disproportion between man's wants and the degree of economic supply can lead to psychological states of depression. This state of unhealthy concentration on the void of want is hinted at in the opening metaphor of section thirty-six. The arithmetical symbol for nothing, speaks of the hopelessness to which economic want can reduce the needy. Speaking for the people, it says:

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Those doomed to nothing for today
and the same thing for tomorrow

• • •
I am their sign and epitaph . . .

Then in the anecdotes of the people comes forth
their patient waiting for a turning of the wheel. In the
meantime, there are those who stir up the scorpion of hate
among the classes, adding fuel to the fires of discontent.
To this reality Sandburg says in the words of Lincoln,

We are a house divided against itself. We are
millions of hands raised against each other.

And again comes a fearless looking reality square in the
eye, when Sandburg charges his fellow Americans with crass
materialism, short of the principles of social justice:

We are united in but one aim--getting the
dollar. And when we get the dollar we employ
it to get more dollars.

His love for his country suffers no setback, however, by
this admission of reality and the suggestion of his firm
disapproval of this condition. In the progression of folk
reaction to the bitterness and discontent that result from
the clash of the Have's with the Have Nots, come the poet's
words, epitomizing the feelings of the people:

In the night and the mist these voices:
What is mine is mine and I am going to keep it.
What is yours is yours and you are welcome to keep it.
You will have to fight me to take from what is mine.
• • •
What is yours is mine and I am going to take it from
you.

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In the night and the mist
 the voices meet
 as the clash of steel on steel
 Over the rights of possession and control and the
 points:
 What is mine? what is yours?
 and who says so?

Between sections thirty-six and thirty-seven grows a varied array of the people's tolerance of a seemingly incurable condition. They fortify their morale by the sound of their laughter at their own humor, their wit, their anecdotes, and the tall tales they invent and whose make-believe is the Midas touch to their spirits. The growth of folk-lore within these twelve sections, from one-line jests to one-paragraph anecdotes, and finally--in section forty-seven--to a full poem on a single subject, is accompanied by a commensurate acceleration of intensity. The rhapsodic introductory paragraph to the story of "Who Made Paul Bunyan?" as well as the story itself, form the climax of Frame Four.

What though Paul Bunyan stories are no longer told among the lumberjacks. Sandburg's Paul Bunyan is more than a logger's hero. The concepts of national character, which folklore such as this preserves from America's past, are the laws of individualism which the pioneers needed to survive. Unlike river-boating, which died out years ago, logging as a way of life continued well into the twentieth century and preserved the pioneer struggles against the hostile wilderness. Despite changing times, folk heroes like Paul Bunyan

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have a strong hold on the popular imagination because modern man still admires the pioneer's energy, his skill, and his persistence in conquering a resisting earth. It is of these pioneers and of such as they that Sandburg writes:

The people will live on.
They will be tricked and sold and again sold
And go back to the nourishing earth for footholds,
The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,
You can't laugh off their capacity to take it.

The tragedy of their situation is stripped of this folk camouflage, however, when Sandburg, in section thirty-eight, breaks through the voice of the people, to remind the reader that the laughter of the people is impregnated with the hysteria of hopelessness. "Have you seen men handed refusals," he asks the reader,

till they begin to laugh
at the notion of ever landing a job again--
Muttering with the laugh,
"It's driving me nuts and the family, too . . ."

And he continues painting the depressing picture of women driven to sell themselves for easy money; of children grown delinquent for lack of family solidarity; of families pawning their furniture to prolong the certainty of the next meal; of families unable to raise themselves by the bootstraps from the slums to which they are doomed. Once again Sandburg returns to his technique of contrasting opposites on the economic scale. In this saga of the employables, what are the breaks they get, asks Sandburg. And he answers

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his own question by two thoughts in juxtaposition. First, he says ironically that stocks, bonds, machines, land, and buildings are property. Yes. But a job? Using the vernacular for greater effect, he says, "no, nix, nah, nah."

Then again he poses another angle of the wrongs handed the bottom people:

The rights of property are guarded
by ten thousand laws and fortresses.
The right of man to live by his work--
what is this right?

The echo of this question is fraught with the clamor of the disgruntled masses,

and who can hush it
so it will stay hushed?
and why does it speak
and though put down speak again
with strengths out of the earth?

This theme will again appear as the saga will further unfold. Its imagery will change, but its tone will be recognizably the same.

Frame Five.--The Growth of Modern Industry.

In this division are included eleven sections, all of which circle about the fundamental sameness of people the world over, as is demonstrated by the common pattern traceable in the people's sayings, their adages, superstitions, wit and humor. What purpose does this idea have in the overall pattern of the poem? It will be remembered that in Frame Two, Sandburg asserted the family concept of the peoples of

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the world, calling them "one people" or "the family of man." But that notion still remained in the abstract world of idea. In the present Frame, he would re-assert that notion for the purpose of emphasizing its greater connotation by translating it into flesh-and-blood concreteness. If people differ in the accidentals of their national origins, they are comfortably met in the "Howdeehow powpow" of the great family gathering. And so their folk wisdom grows--so much alike, that there is no telling where the most of it had its beginning.

Between sections forty-eight and fifty-nine this folk wisdom appears intermittently, its flow being stopped now by one thing, now by another. Sandburg makes use of his habit of interrupting the flow of the main idea in section fifty. There are two annoyances he registers here. The first is with public figures who boast of their successes as personal triumphs, forgetting the positive function of the role of the people in the lives of these public successes. The poet says of these apostles of the I and the Me:

from what graveyards have they strolled
and do they realize their sepulchral manners
and what are the farther backgrounds, . . .

One must notice here Sandburg's return to his frequently repeated image of the people being the soil from which springs history and history-makers. His second annoyance is directed against the excessive commercialism and high-pressure

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advertising that is a natural outgrowth in a highly industrialized civilization. Irony is nothing new to Sandburg at this point of his literary career. He had used it many times before with varying degrees of success. But it would seem that if one were to search through Sandburg's poetry for examples of irony done with artistry and grace, he would have to consider well before denying the master-touch in the following lines:

The machine yes the machine
 never wastes anybody's time
 never watches the foreman
 never talks what is right or wrong
 . . .
 a man is a man and what can you do with him?
 but a machine now you take a machine . . .

What he does not say about the problem is the thing that gets the underscoring. Here is Sandburg's answer on how he feels about the triumph of machine over man. In "Smoke and Steel" he made his first public acceptance of the machine. But the acceptance is of the same sort as that which the people have taken toward their lot. It is a passive acceptance, not an approval. Then the poet shows the helplessness of the masses caught in the teeth of the moving machine:

We raise more corn
 to feed more hogs
 to buy more land
 to raise more corn
 to feed more hogs
 to . . .

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Here he pauses to inscribe a sobering Mane, Tekel, Phares,
for those who, though they are in the capacity to improve the
social status of the people, fail to do anything about it:

What happened in that buried city they
found in Africa?

. . .
Filled up and smoothed over by long processions
of snails,
Legions of plodding thoughtless misbegotten
snails.

In section fifty-one he repeats this thought:

The longest day must have its end,
Man's life? A candle in the wind, hoar-frost
on stone.

. . .
As wave follows wave, so new men take old
men's places.

Here, too, he inserts his thoughts on the unreasonableness
of prejudice. Building the concepts of the mutual give-and-
take among world civilizations, he offers two ways of re-
action:

Now we may thank these people
or reserve our thanks
and speak of them as outsiders . . .

and a little further in the stanza:

. . . we may say this trash is beneath our notice
or we may hold them in respect and affection . . .

Paying the reader the compliment of choosing the reasonable
answer, he says of those who persist in their unreasonable-
ness:

They say and they say and the juice of prejudice
drips from it.

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They say and they say and in the strut of fool pride
 spit in the wind.
 And the first of the seven rotting sins is this
 one: pride.

In these lines he is beginning to wear his annoyance on his sleeve, even though there is a sensing of effort at its control. To appreciate this emotional growth, one needs to recall Sandburg of Chicago Poems writing "To A Contemporary Bunkshooter."

Returning to the theme of the people as such, Sandburg presents a flow of their lore, and then calls those "sayings and unsayings" and their endless "putting up and tearing down and putting together again,"--a shrouding of obedience to immediate necessity. This is not a new message from the poet, but it has not been so openly put until now. How thoroughly he had succeeded in analyzing the psychology of the people can be read from the following lines:

The mask of "What do I care?" to cover "What
 else can I do?"
 One half-real face to put on to hide a more
 real face under,
 The waiting of the hope of the inner face
 while the outer face
 Says yes to whatever is for the immediate moment--
 This is the poker face of the populace never read
 until long afterward.

Within this context is found Sandburg's answer to the question he posed at the end of section twenty-one, where he asked, "who knows the people?" This is his claim to qualification as spokesman for the masses.

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Because Sandburg had chosen so often to speak of big sweeps of time and events, of restlessly moving masses of people, he had developed a characteristic way of handling the concept of historical progression. He does it by selecting a word, a phrase, an idea, a metaphor, impregnated with those connotations which serve as a tapline to give body to the original concept. The entire section fifty-six can serve as a demonstration of this type of handling of changing of facts. It is here, too, that the poet prepares a runway for himself by means of which to plunge into the consideration of Lincoln in the subsequent section. By way of take-off, he presents in the vernacular of the people, their petty frictions, symbolic of their disconcerted energies needing unification, but lacking it for want of leadership. How ancient has been the recognition of this problem is implied here:

Those without a leader perish,
 says the Sanskrit,
 those without a youthful leader perish,
 those without a female leader perish,
 those without many leaders perish.

More often than not, the people grope through the trial and error method in their search for a leader, vesting now one, and now another with leadership, only to see his inefficiency. But the people are a "trunk of patience, a monolith," and their hopes are desperately strong:

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Yet the strong man, the priceless one who wants
nothing for himself has his roots among his
people,
Comes often enough for the people to know him and
to win through into gains beyond later losing
Comes often enough so the people can look back
and say, "We have come far and we will go far-
ther yet."

Against this formula for leadership Lincoln stands up for a
measuring. And Lincoln looms in the lines as a poet, a
knower of men, a historian, and an organizer; but above all,
he stands tall as one who, in his person, gathered the feel
of the American dream and saw it kindred over the earth.

When Sandburg published his long biography of Lin-
coln, a frequently repeated remark made by Sandburg's crit-
ics was that, writing prose, he produced so much poetry;
whereas in his poetry he is so often prosaic. Is the answer
to this riddle perhaps not in the person of Lincoln himself?
With his feet firmly planted in the soil of the people, he
stood so far above them that there grew about him the aura
of heroism. And Sandburg, capturing this spirit of hero-
worship in the folk, was able to translate it into lines
charged with the music of a lyrical portrait. There are
lyric overtones present in this section of the work being
considered, that can stand along side the best of his poet-
ry, and outdo in their solemnity much verbal music he had
produced in his many lyrics. Perhaps, too, another thought
may be subjected to consideration: that because much of

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Sandburg's treatment of the Lincoln material is done in the direct words of Lincoln, the seed of poetry was present in the people's hero, too. From the union of the two artists, then, springs a new kind of poetry that sings its emotion in both prose and poetry.

But Lincoln's leadership was circumscribed by years, and these having gone by, the drama of the people once more is renewed. This renewal of struggle, whose ramifications will constitute the next Frame of the work under consideration, is heralded by the four lines of the closing section studied here:

The people, yes,
Out of what is their change
from chaos to order
and chaos again?

With the chapter of their history of Lincoln's day closed, the poet is ready to take up their struggle as it appeared in his own day.

Frame Six.--The Complexity of Modern Life.

Face to face with the complexity of modern civilization, with its headstrong rush forward, its apparent aimlessness and senselessness in the outpouring of energy to make a better world--face to face with this uncurbed vitality, Sandburg admits the lusiveness and the uncohesiveness of the subject he set out to concretize:

The books of man have begun only a short
stammering memorandum of the toil,
resources and stamina of man,

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Of the acquired errands, the dramatic impulses,
the irresistible songs of this given moment,
this eyeblink now.

• • •
The how and why of the people so doing
is the saga not yet written.

That the poet is not discouraged either by the scope of the theme or by his own limitations is implied in his retelling of an ancient tale. A dreamy, young man sets out to write for posterity the record of his people--a tale of their good and evil doings. "I will be the word of the people!" he vowed, "Mine is the bleeding mouth from which the gag is snatched!" The story has it that the people killed this visionary and self-appointed spokesman, saying of him:

. . . Who had asked him to be the word of the
people?
When they wanted a history written they would elect
someone to write it as they would have it written.

From these lines emanates another theme, which is developed toward the end of this division, namely section seventy-one. He addresses himself there to the self-appointed leaders of the people, leaders whose service for the people is primarily a service to themselves. To the dictators of the nations he says,

There will be a payday and little bells lost in
the clang and boom of big bells.

But to return to the image contained in the earlier quotation, the cue to the wealth of folk sayings included within this Frame is to be found in the last line. Since there is

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a way the people would have their history written, Sandburg allows them to do just that. In the informality of their vernacular the people's portrait grows

In the casual drift of routine
in the day by day run of mine
in the play of careless circumstance

and the picture emerges

alive with people in words, errands
motives and silhouettes
taller than the immediate moment . . .

As their story takes on momentum, the laughter of the masses comes forward. It is a varied laughter; sometimes it is but an easy hum, sometimes a raucous guffaw, and sometimes a brutal jeer. Retaining the role of psychologist, Sandburg proceeds to analyze the why of their laughter:

They have to in order to live and survive under
lying politicians, lying racketeers of business,
lying news-papers, lying ads.
The people laugh even at lies that cost them toil
and bloody exactions.

(Just how close home that last statement rings for the poet, will be realized when one reads of the tragedy that beset the Sandburg household by the discovery of an unknown mortgage which cost the poet's father a "new" house and years of continued poverty.) The therapeutic value of laughter had been noted by the poet ever since he first began to speak for the people. But each time he speaks of it, he inevitably injects the reminder of its temporary nature. When he attributes to it the curative function, "Daily is death and

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despair stood off by those who in hard trials know how and when to laugh," he is quick to note its impermanency, as for example in section sixty-two: "For a long time the people may laugh, until a day when the laughter changes the key and tone and has something it didn't have."

Amid the complexity of life in the present age, the concepts of which move with the rapidity of a film fallen off its sprockets on a movie projector in motion, the spirit of the people and their stamina to "take it" is reflected in the flow of their anecdotes. If one were to trace the sections given over to the people's talk, for a central subject, one would find that most of them are too loosely put together for any classification. Exceptions constitute sections sixty-five, eight, and nine, in which the people's talk is pigeon-holed into three categories: their attitudes on money, the newspaper, and on the legal professions, respectively. As the spokesman for and the analyst of the people, Sandburg reads the under current of the placid surface:

The human race in misery snarls.
 The writing becomes a mob.
 The mob is the beginning of something
 : : :
 : : : man lacking concert.

Utilizing to the full his role of spokesman for the masses, he debunks the would-be greats of the world. One of his favorite objects of attack--one traceable to the very

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beginning of his poetic career--is the legal profession. Here he peels off their prestige, layer by layer, and lays bare their dishonesty toward their fellow-men. To all of the abusers of the people, Sandburg gives one message, and he repeats it tirelessly: there is a fundamental equality among all men.

Frame Seven.--Democracy: Hope of the Masses.

Though the first seven sections of this division are allied in their sociological theme to sections thirty-five through forty-six of Frame Four, it has been considered more feasible to treat them in relation to the sixteen sections immediately following them. Their combination forms a mathematical relationship of problem, solution, and answer. The problems of the people are found in sections seventy-four to eighty; their attempts at solving them, in sections eighty-one to eighty-nine; and the answers--though still not satisfying--appear in sections ninety through ninety-eight. When Sandburg took up the sociological theme, he ordinarily treated the unbalanced economic scale and its effect on the people, point blank. But here, for the first time, he handles the problems of the masses from the angle of the finer things in life. He says in part:

You can never make moon poems
for people who never see the moon.

• • •
Can you make a sun poem
For those having soot on the window-sill?

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The people's patient waiting for a better future also assumes this association with self-improvement, by means of the geranium symbol:

The geraniums have a low weeping song,
 "Not yet have we known the sun,
 not yet have known the sun,"
 Modulated with a hoping song,
 "Some day we shall meet the sun
 "And gather the pieces of the sun into ourselves
 "and be no longer stunted,
 no longer runts of the slums."

That this waiting and hoping is undying in men's hearts is substantiated by the images of newly-born Indian babies having the mystery-man of the tribe speak over them the prayers of fresh dreams.

As the poet of industrial America, Sandburg never gives the impression that he subscribes to the subordinating role man is reduced to by the power of the machine. Beyond the cataloguing of its variety and its functional contribution toward modern civilization, Sandburg never implies that he places in them his hopes for a better world. But when he speaks of science and of the men dedicated to the probing of its mysteries for their potentialities in bettering man's life on earth, he openly acknowledges his faith in them. The "breed of fire-bringers," as he calls them, or again,

The dreaming scholars who quested the useless,
 who wanted to know merely for the sake of knowing,

these are the research men whom the poet sees as the saviors of society. The lines,

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With what will the test tubes be shaken tomorrow?
 What will the international partnerships of the
 world laboratories track down next . . .
 Whose guess is better than anybody else's . . .

palpitate with faith and hope in their scientific searchings. The problems of the people, he implies, are more than only economic ones. The improvement of health through the conquering of diseases, the expansion of man's knowledge of medicine, of his knowledge of nutritional values, these are among the issues on which he banks his hopes:

Across the bitter years and the howling writers
 the deathless dream will be the stronger
 the dream of equity will win.

It is not the Marxian philosophy of economic equality of which the poet speaks. Rather, it is the equity of like opportunities for all men to profit by the fruits of human intelligence in subduing the forces of nature for the benefit of man. It is the equity of indiscrimination in the application of the knowledge of the few for the good of the many.

Sections seventy-six through seventy-eight return from the contemplation of tomorrow's dreams to today's reality. The people, awaiting the materialization of their hopes, are likened to a stream whose flowing clears it of pollution; then to the fathomless depths of the sea, carrying the "lost and unreclaimed baggage" of discontent, secretly and openly rumbling in its depths. Just as apt

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in its connotations as the preceding symbol, is the concept the poet utilizes from the world of social insects. The closing lines of the image carry the undercurrent of the original thought:

--they carry lessons and warnings
 they do what they must
 they are beyond argument.

The completion and amplification of this metaphor is found in the three following sections, where the modern world is seen in all of its technical and industrial complexity, and man is at its vortex, struggling against its churning powers which aim to destroy his individuality. The people's doing what they must is modified by temporality because people are beyond predictability, not beyond argument.

Variously, Sandburg has been trying to impress the reader with the nature of the teeming masses of people with whom he is coping throughout this long poem. At this point, he admits their incomprehensibility. From the impersonal crowds milling at the crossways of Chicago, he selects "a humpty-dumpty runt of a man," through whom he tries again to arrive at a definition of humanity. Whether the humpty-dumpty man is but a fictitious "no one," through whom the poet speaks; or whether he means himself to be the "runt of a man dived at high noon into a forest of rubber necks," is open to speculation. But there is no like questioning of his admission regarding the people. Of them he says:

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. . . If the big arch of the sky were paper
and the violet depths of the sea were ink, I could
never live long enough to write the dreams of man
and the dynamic drive of those dreams.

This open confession of inadequacy on the part of the poet, is an apology, as it were, to the reader for the poet's extenuation in this portrait, in search of a concrete grasp of the big theme. In view of his continuing the theme for the duration of twenty-six more sections, one might be charged with absurdity for even suggesting such a motive to him. Yet, in relation to the spirit of the poet, as it has been unfurling during the years of his poetic development, it is not at all unreasonable to read into this persistency at continuing to write, his refusal to accept defeat. It is the same spirit which characterized the early pioneers in America's westward expansion. It is the spirit which marked the thousands who defied defeat in countries the world over and who had the daring to try yet another way of life in America, where--they thought--their dreams might be realized. But democracy in the ideal has not yet been achieved.

When Sandburg spoke, a few sections earlier, of his hopes in the potentialities for good coming from scientific research, he did not expunge the existence of economic inequality. It was there by implication. But now, in section eighty-three, he returns to it with the directness of his early sociological pieces.

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how can a poem deal with production cost
and leave out definite misery paying
a permanent price in shattered health and early
old age?

This is the same message whose undertone was present in
"Smoke and Steel" and in "Prayers of Steel." A few lines
earlier, he sounds a note of hopelessness in the economic
dilemma and in his own inadequacy to write of it:

Who can make a poem of the depths of weariness
bringing meaning to those never in the depths?
can they understand the many down under
who come home to their wives and children at night
and night after night as yet too brave and unbroken
to say, "I ache all over"?

When will the efficiency engineers and the poets
get together on a program?

Were it not for a definite mellowing evident in these lines,
one were inclined to pull them out by the roots from their
immediate context and transfer them to Chicago Poems, as
being their natural milieu. Yet, even the mere notion of
so doing suggests a snag that would set a note of disharmony
into the earlier poems. At this point, it will be recalled
that the people's attitude toward their own lot was present-
ed with a certain passivity in accepting the inevitable.
In fact, they accepted their lot with a simple kind of gra-
ciousness and a patient resignation. But though one is
aware of the people's courage, this courage is devoid of
that resignation to carry on so indefinitely. They are,
for the present "yet too brave and unbroken to say, 'I ache

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all over.'" This tone of hopefulness that things might yet work out distinguish the sociological outlook in The People, Yes from that which appeared in the poet's early sociological verses.

In rapid progression, pictures of the people as the target of the multiple attacks of a highly commercialized society living in high gear, flash before the eye in sections eighty-four and five. This vortex of activity is underscored by two questions: where to? and what next? The turn which history will take is hinged on these concepts of the people's unpredictability.

The last ten sections of this Frame open with miniature portraits of the kind of men that go into the making of the people. For every example of smug selfishness among the wealthy there are scores of selfless men who are the real benefactors of humanity. Surrounding the picture of the people busy at their daily occupations, are their words of wisdom, their myths, their hopes, their sayings on inequality and hunger--sayings grown in the "mulch of human culture." The people's instinctiveness for poetry speaks for itself in section ninety-three, where their imagination is given full play in the naming of the flowers.

Within this Frame is sung the "hallelujah chorus" in honor of the people, in two different arrangements. In

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section ninety-one the poet himself extols the ingenuity, inventiveness, and daring of man. In section ninety-eight, he asks that the skylines of American cities take up the theme of the people:

Tell it to us, skyscrapers . . .
Tall oblongs in orchestral confusion.
. . . what are we saying in the skyline?

Then, as the poet, looking into the future, asks, "What shall a thousand years tell a young tumultuous people?" he anticipates the answers posterity will read from its inheritance of the past.

Frame Eight.--Eventual Assertion of People's Rights

Whether the history of the people is traced far into antiquity, or whether its course is followed through modern times, its pattern is a repetition of the conflict "between rulers and the ruled-over." In section one-hundred, the poet epitomizes their history, so lengthily dwelt upon throughout the poem. Into the face of the rulers, Sandburg throws three questions:

When have the overlords and their paid liars
and strumpets
Held as a first question, "What do the people
want besides what we tell them they ought
for their own good to want?"
And second, "How much of living fact is under
those cries and revolts, these claims that
exploiters ride the people?"
And third, "What do they do to themselves who
sell out the People?"

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On the answers of these three questions, developed at length, Sandburg builds the body of this last Frame. The answers are not new; they have been handled and rehandled throughout the poem, except that here they appear in a greater concentration and as a result their impact is so much stronger. They come in the language of both, the poet and the people --big and small--interwoven in the duplication of actuality. Sections ninety-nine through one-hundred-and two carry the answers to the first questions; the second and the third are answered in the following three sections. And the poem is brought to a close on the concept of the people's perpetuity of renewal both in body and in spirit:

The learning and blundering people will live on.

. . .

The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,
You can't laugh off their capacity to take it,
The mammoth rests between his cyclonic drama.

This perpetuity is done in solemn tones, the very echo of which is symbolic of their continuance. The closing of the circle of the story of humanity is achieved when the final words, "Where to? what next?" meet with these very words Sandburg had placed into the mouths of the infants of antiquity, also babbling, "Where to now? what next?" in the very first gathering of people at the building of Babel's tower. The nature of these questions implies a story without end so long as people will continue their march into time.

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The portrait of the people being as vast and as diversified as it is must almost of necessity contain within itself at least some revelation of their character. But just as character in the individual reveals itself in the person's attitude toward life in general, toward God and man, just as it reveals itself in a person's actions, his words, and his thoughts, so too the people's character has to be looked for as it unfolds itself in the pages of the poem. The tracing of the character traits of the American people will constitute the body of the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

TRAITS OF NATIONAL CHARACTER UNFOLDED IN THE PEOPLE, YES

When Sandburg wrote his tribute to American democracy, he made use of the whole cloth of human nature which has always warmed the common American. The poet's conception of the American man--a generic melange of all kinds of people doing all kinds of things in the culture of the new civilization shaped by the freedoms long promised by philosopher-statesmen--does not differ much from the poet's conception of man anywhere. At his best, he is honest, quick to detect affectation or fraud, ready to worship whatever is brave and sensible.

The "people image" in Sandburg's book-long tribute to his fellow citizens grows out of homely words and out of spread-eagle words which the average American speaks at moments when he is most himself. He is a man who loves his sons and the soil and has the toughness needed to endure hardships:

The people know what the land knows
the numbers odd and even of the land
the slow hot wind of summer and its withering
or again the crimp of the driving white blizzard.

Yet this tough core, which has grown a multi-layered thickness over him through the years of buffeting with hardships, hides a kindly and human tenderness. "For myself I don't

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care whether it rains," says a grizzled old-timer of the desert,

But I'd like to have it rain
pretty soon some time.
Then my son could see it.
He's never seen it rain.

With tight-lipped endurance the woman of the desert-west says unaffectedly:

the first year you don't believe
what others tell you
and the second year you don't
believe what you tell yourself.

There is more than surface non-challance in the answer to,
"How are crops this year?"

Not so good for a good year
but not so bad for a bad year.

The endurance of the "status quo" is rooted in their deep-rooted patience that awaits a better tomorrow wherever the tomorrow may lead them:

The people pause for breath, for wounds and bruises
to heal,
For food again after famine, for regaining stamina,
For preparation and migration to greener pastures . . .
. . .
They guess and toil and rest and try to make out
and get along
And some would rather not talk about what they had
to go through
In the first years of finding out what the soil
might do for them,
In the first winter of snow too deep for travel, or
The first summer when the few clouds showing
went away without rain, or
The day the grasshoppers came and tore a black path
where the crops had stood.

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The spirit and the courage of this "wandering gypsy" and "pioneer homeseeker" is duplicated by his city brother, who is wrestling against odds in a mechanized economy:

Everyday the people of the city haul it away,
take it apart and put it together again.

These daily chores of the people are accepted "with heavy toil here, light laughter there" and are done with the same pioneer spirit of toughness and endurance:

I didn't have anything
when I landed here
and I ain't got nothing now
but I got some hope left.

From the epic saga of their multitudinous and multifarious struggles of daily living, the people emerge "a trunk of patience":

The people is a monolith,
a mover, a dirt farmer,
a desperate hoper.

The spirit of these people is permeated with the joy of living and gratitude for what they have. It shows through any number of ways. The railroad engineer whose will specified that his body be cremated and the ashes strewn from his pet locomotive

where the open prairie view was special
and his eyes had so often
met a changing sky of red and gold

was thankful to have been alive:

Always when he had rounded that curve
his run was over and he could go home--
What did he have?

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Not much by material standards, but he knew how to appreciate the little.

God might have made a more beautiful region than
Chester County
--but He never did

rings with the poetry of a grateful heart for the beauty of God's world as much as the following story rings with the realism of accepting facts for what they are:

"That old barn on your place, Charlie,
was nearly falling the last time I saw it,
How is it now?"
"I got some poles to hold it on the east side
and the wind holds it up on the west."

The entire portrait of the people is shot through with their belief in life as a permanent attraction. Sandburg's belief in man is based on the conviction that the majority of men and women are warm and good and that some of the best of them are those having the hardest time to get along. Just as Sandburg himself is an incurable believer in life, so his people believe in common sense and laughter and love:

The ingenuity of the human mind and what passes the time of day for the millions who keep their serenity amid the relentless process of wresting their provender from the clutch of tongs organized against them--this is always interesting and marvelous.
Daily is death and despair stood off by those who in hard trials know how and when to laugh.

It is not always the "light and humming" laughter that keeps their heads above the water. Sometimes it is "the raucous

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guffaw and the brutal jeer" that rends the air:

The people laugh, yes, the people laugh
 They have to in order to live and survive under lying
 politicians, lying labor skates, lying racketeers
 of business, lying newspapers, lying ads.
 The people laugh even at lies that cost them toil
 and bloody exaction.

Unschoolled psychologists that they are, they realize that
 they "must laugh or go down." In the juxtaposition of oppo-
 sites that converge upon a common starting point, there is
 the fact of the people's laughter in the face of insurmount-
 able obstacles:

Have you seen men handed refusals
 till they began to laugh
 at the notion of ever landing a job again--

This ability to laugh is strongly buttressed by their
 faith and trust in a loving Providence that will see them
 through somehow. "Help us to know" and "let us know when we
 trust in Thee--" they cry to God, Whom they call

. . . a crutch to the lame,
 a mother to the motherless,
 a father to the fatherless,
 a strong arm to the widow,
 a shade from the heat,
 a bridge over deep water.

And they are a grateful people for "their belongings"--the
 early morning in the fields, the chores of feeding and watch-
 ing, seedtime and harvest, the gamble on what they will get
 tomorrow for what they have put in today. For

the monotonous daily motions . . .
 taking their morsels of bread and love

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their hearts can still go out in thanks:

When we rise in the morning
to see the sun plowing his furrow across the elements,
we are thankful.
For the rising of the east moon we have seen tonight
and for the setting of the west moon we shall see,
we are thankful.

The people for whom Sandburg raises his voice are in no way an idealization of what he might have hoped them to be. They are no worse than the lowest, no better than the best; they are men and women with faults and failures; many of them are down-and-outers. But the poet is pan-American in his love for them. There is no apology in his tone when he says,

Of course some folks wont work--
they are sick or wornout or lazy
or misled with the big idea
the idle poor should imitate the idle rich.

In his great knowledge of the little people, Sandburg knows wheat from chaff; nothing human is wholly alien to him. He is aware that the masses are made up of a multitude of individuals with human shortcomings. There is evidence of his deep understanding of their foibles when he says:

People lie because they don't remember what they saw.
People lie because they can't help making a story
better than it was the way it happened.
People tell "white lies" so as to be decent to others.
People lie in a pinch, hating to do it, but lying on
because it might be worse.
And people lie just to be liars for crooked personal
gains.

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From the rank and file he lists the laborers of the field and of the factory, the white-collar workers and the professionals, from every category of employment they are chosen, and of them the poet says:

These are the people with flaws and failings, with
patience and sacrifice, devotion . . .

The sameness of people the world over is attested to by the fact of their belonging to the great family of man:

The people is Everyman, everybody.
Everybody is you and me and all others.

The blood of all men is red, says the poet, and their basic thoughts are the same in all tongues and regions:

The people is a long shadow
trembling around the earth
stepping out of fog gray into smoke red
and back from smoke red into fog gray
and lost on parallels and meridians
learning by shock and wrangling
by heartbreak so often and loneliness. . .

This same notion is posited with greater precision by an early Kansas pioneer whose answers to the query, "What kind of folks live around here?" are pivoted on the opinion of the questioner himself. To both, the Kansan gives a question in return: "Well, stranger, what kind of folks was there in the country you come from?" When one tells him they were "mostly a low-down, lying, thieving, gossiping, backbiting lot of people"; and the other gives a reverse of the picture, "they was mostly a decent, hardworking, lawabiding, friendly lot of people," both men get an identical answer:

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"Well, I guess, stranger, that's about the kind of folks you'll find around here." This unaffected, homespun philosophy bespeaks the realism of the poet himself when he evaluates people. In this area there is no idealizing or romanticizing of the subject, such for example, as is present in his outlook on the physical world which characterizes his earlier poetry volumes. His people are real and down-to-earth, who out of the casual drift of routine, out of the play of careless circumstance, out of their "lifting and hauling and waiting and losing and laughing" produce an endless flow of sayings that reveal their mind and their heart.

The material which the poet re-creates in popular language is various and fascinating. There are shrewd and elusive proverbs, unresolved paradoxes, the have-you-heard yarns, the listen-to-this anecdotes, the howlers produced by answers half right and half wrong, by fantasies heard at filling stations, by riddles and conundrums:

On the babbling tongues of the people have these
been kept.

In the basic mulch of human culture are these grown.

Out of old tales that are mechanized, out of yarns brought up to date with jokes on high-pressure salesmen, out of this miscellanea precipitate views and ideas that are common to all Americans. Under the guise of laughter and homey wisdom

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there emerge their dreams of one day scooping into the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, of realizing their hopes of a "promised land" in America, and of having their prayers heard in attaining of their dream of equality among all men. Sandburg believes in the average American man, the man of tart and tough native wit, the man with a love of soil and sons and strength, the man who believes in hogs and wheat and apples and manhood.

From the kaleidoscopic crossing and recrossing of verbal snatches revealing the types that constitute the fibre of the nation there emerge men and women with a wholesome sense of values. In the poet's words, two hungers move across their faces:

One: when do we eat?
 The other: What is worth looking at?
 what is worth listening to?
 .
 .
 .
 and what is worth dying for?

His feeling for the masses is tempered by ironic pathos for the millionaire suicide of Rochester, New York, and that of Marshall Field of Chicago. For the second time in Sandburg's writing there is a utilizing of Field's stipulation that the income of a \$25,000 fund be used for the upkeep of his tomb. The placement of this incident at the head of a series of divergently opposed views which follow does not, however, repeat the emotional intensity of the earlier socio-economic

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verse. And for obvious reasons. Sandburg's purpose here is to let each man's sense of values pass for what it is objectively. This incident demonstrates only one way in which certain people value the things of this world. In the same tone of objective recounting, there follow flash revelations of the inner depths of man. Sans sentiment, the poet tells of the last wish of a newspaper editor of a small midwest town:

He left orders to the typesetters and they obeyed
him.
His obituary read: "Charlie Cross is dead."
And that was all.

Another newspaperman, John Eastman, on the top rung of the administrative ladder,

died leaving the Chicago Journal to four men,
And to make sure the obsequies would be correct
and decent he instructed in his last will
and testament: "Let no words be spoken at
my funeral."

Jack Binns, radio operator of the stormlashed sinking vessel, "Republic," tapping out the laughing code before going down to a sea-tomb: "God pity the poor sailors on a night like this"; Dr. S. M. Babcock, the agricultural chemist who invented butter-fat milk tester "good for a million dollars if he wanted a patent with sales and royalties," saying:

What in God's name do I want with a
million dollars?
Whistling as though instead of owning the million
it would own him;

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the plant pathologist, Mark A. Carleton, who

. . . could have had a million dollars and
took instead a million thanks

for his contribution in helping improve the quality and quantity of wheat crops in the South Dakota region--these were Americans whom the pursuit of the dollar did not warp spiritually. In the people's quest for truth--the quest of Johnny Appleseed, Lincoln, Van Gogh, the Wright brothers, William D. Coolidge, Thomas A. Edison, Andrew Carnegie, and Julius Rosenwald--cannot be stopped.

Sandburg realizes that in America the lines between the classes cannot be drawn any more sharply than the lines between the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. Speaking through the many voices he had chosen to speak for him, he is moved to anger by the disavowal of human dignity and the crushing of men and Man by the economic machine:

What is the saga of the employables?
what are the breaks they get?
What are the dramas of personal fate
spilled over from industrial transitions?
what punishments handed bottom people
who have wronged no man's house
or thing or person?

From the poet's faith in the people unfolds his attitude toward those whom money has blinded and made vicious in their exploitation and disdain of the people. With the status that comes with money, there is proportionate growth in pride and selfishness, and man is seen growing inhuman

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in a capitalistic economy. From the midst of the wrangling over what is mine and what is yours, from the "clash of steel on steel over the right of possession and control" grows the choking weed of snobbery and pride which holds men

--aloof in pride of distinction

. . .
as though hate has no cost
as though hate ever grew anything worth growing.

In a tone of disdain, the poet speaks of the scorpion of hate:

The poor hate the rich. The rich hate the poor.
The south hates the north. The west hates the east. The workers hate their bosses. The country hates the towns. The towns hate the country. We are a house divided against itself. We are millions of hands raised against each other. We are united in but one aim--getting the dollar. And when we get the dollar we employ it to get more dollars.

This dragging out into the sunlight of irrational prejudice and fool pride is laid on the scale of reasonableness:

Yes we may say this trash is beneath our notice
or we may hold them in respect and affection

. . .
saying, "Yes, you too you too are people."

Sandburg holds no quarrel with the wealthy because of their affluence, but because of their snobbery of "the great unwashed," of the "hoi polloi," who are indicated with mere gestures.

Said a lady wearing orchids

. . .
"Some things go unspoken in our circle:
no one has the bad grace to bring them up:
they exist and they don't:
when you belong you don't mention them"

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is a concept that is the essence of "exclusiveness," and has the distinction (?) of being the most detestable word in the English language. The poet's objectivity on the subject of the wealthy is succinctly put into four lines:

What is a Big Name unless the people love it
 or hate it
 For what it did to them or for them while it
 was in the going?
 And this Big Name means pretense and plunder,
 ashes and dung,
 While another is armfuls of roses, enshrined
 beyond speech.

A reiteration of the poet's earlier sociological message that had aroused the furor of his readers is here tempered with a Lincolnesque restraint:

There is the House of Have and the House of Have-Not.
 God named the Haves as caretakers of the Have-Nots.
 This shepherding is a divine decree laid on the
 betters.

Then, as if unable to continue this restraint, the poet injects a one-line satirical punch, "And surely you know when you are among your betters?" That there be no danger of having his attitude toward the "Haves" distorted, Sandburg includes a non-partisan incident that clears the focus for the reader and lets him see the poet's effort at being objective in his evaluation of the wealthy. Though camouflaged under a pseudonymous guise, the story of Joseph Medill Patterson's wealth is offered to the reader directly from Patterson's own work--a pamphlet entitled, "Confessions of a Drone." In it, the young heir to a million dollars

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questions the destiny which has placed him in the ranks of the affluent:

Why was this money wished on me merely because
I was born where I couldn't help being born
so that I don't have to work while a lot of
people work for me . . .

According to the poet, wealth itself is not the corrupting agent of individuals; corruption is a process that comes from within the person himself. It is only when this moral disintegration affects society, and particularly those in the lower echelons, that the poet speaks against certain groups of people. Those who have violated and smutted "the endless yearnings of man for the beyond," and who play with and trade upon the credulity of the masses, Sandburg calls by the contemptuous name of panderers and cheats. He does not hesitate to put the blame for social unrest and turmoil directly upon their shoulders:

Can you bewilder men by the millions
with transfusions of your own passions,
mixed with lies and half-lies,
texts torn from contexts,
and then look for peace, quiet, and good will
between nation and nation, race and race
between class and class?

In contradistinction to those "who have pretended to be angels while using the fangs of wolves," the poet posits the contributions of dedicated men: musicians, artists, sculptors, writers--of these "moon shooters," as he calls them, he has this to say:

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who but they have held to a hope
 poverty and the poor shall go
 and the struggle of man for possessions
 of music and craft and personal worth
 lifted above the hog-trough level
 above the animal dictate:
 "Do this or go hungry"?

Over and above the unscrupulous usurpers of human dignity who play upon men's hopes and dreams, who trick and sell the masses for selfish ends, Sandburg is specific in his enumeration of those very people whose profession is to guard social justice; namely, judges, public officials, and wealthy industrialists. The whole of section seventy-two is a series of definitions of a judge, with interruptions of the poet's reflections on how the theoretical concepts of what a judge ought to be, differ from what reality has shown him to be. Against this concept of the perfect judge who is "austere, impersonal, impartial, marking the line of right or wrong by a hairsbreadth," one who is "sworn before God never to sell justice nor play favorites," Sandburg juxtaposes the judge who is a mere puppet in the hands of those who own him, the judge who is vacillating, or the one picked for the job by politicians, a judge

. . . with an eye sometimes on justice for the public, equal rights to all persons entering--
 or again with an eye on lucrative favors and special accommodations.

For all the judge's medieval-robed dignity that vests him with the right of holding the scales of justice in his

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hands, Sandburg would remind him that

a judge is nothing more or less than a man--
Therefore should any judge open his mouth
and speak as though his words have an
added light and weight beyond the speech
of one man?

Re-creating a complete court-scene: a jury, a couple of lawyers, a judge, witness, and evidence, the poet somberly reminds them of their undivestible human finiteness in their judgments. The formal swearing-in of a witness regarding the telling of the whole truth is balanced by a solemn testimony of negation:

. . . the more I study about it
the more sure I am that nobody but the
everliving God knows the whole truth and
if you summoned Christ as a witness in
this case what He would tell you would
burn your insides with the pity and the
mystery of it.

In his role as advocate of the masses, Sandburg lines up the usurpers of social justice and points his accusing fingers directly at dishonest public officials:

When aldermen and legislative members say,
"We can put this through for you but it will
take a little grease,"
What is this grease they mean and from whom
comes this grease?

And he plunges into the smokescreen that protects the privileged ones, and indicts them bluntly,

The trail leads straight to those in the possession
of grease, the big shots of bespoken and anointed
interests.

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Substantiating this charge with fact, Sandburg cites an avowal of this made in the press, and coming from a Wall St. operator: "You haven't climbed very high unless you own a judge or two."

To understand this indictment it must needs be seen in the setting of its historical backdrop. In the span between the Spanish-American War and World War I there were certain movements that had an impact on the whole socio-economy of the country. First, there was a tendency on the part of big business to form larger and larger combines, to extend its control in various directions, and to maintain its favored economic position by a more or less corrupt control of political power. Sandburg reflects this condition in the following lines:

amid these props
of time and circumstance
a big shot executive sits
with an eye on the board of directors first of all,
next on the stockholders owning control,
next on the vast egghead investing public,
and after these the men who run the works
. . .
and finally the buyers, the consumers, the customers.

Second, an opposing tendency attempted to control and regulate the mercantile and political activities of big business. They vigorously attacked the system of laissez faire, which made possible the amassing of tremendous fortunes, the control of politics by big business, and the formation of

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large numbers of great trusts. Sandburg's hostility to the entire system of laissez faire rings thus:

What was good for our fathers is good enough
for us--let us hold to the past and keep it
all and change it as little as we have to.
Since when has this been a counsel of light
of pioneers? of discoverers? of inventors?
of builders? of makers?

The third movement of this period was the process of restoring to the common man a measure of the control over the political machinery of democracy denied him by the alliance of big business and politics. Unlike the muckrakers of that day, who exposed corruption in the fortresses of ill-gotten power, Sandburg offers the antidote of the principles of just economics:

After allowing for items to protect future operation
every cut in production cost should be shared with
the consumers in lower prices
with the workers in higher wages
thus stabilizing buying power
and guarding against recurrent collapses.

Fully realizing that such principles would be rejected by the industrial moguls, the poet wrests the answer from their mouths in an impersonal rhetorical parry:

What is this? Is it economics, poetry or what?
Do you think you can run my business?

That the flood of this corruption should have overflowed into the temples of justice and contaminated those appointed to watch over it, was deplorable for the hypocrisy it engendered:

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. . . why should the owners of the judges speak of respect for the law and the sanctity of the Constitution when they know so well how justice has been taken for a ride and thrown gagged and beaten into a ditch . . .

as well as for the consequences that victimized the little man:

Why is the bribe-taker convicted so often and the bribe-giver so seldom?
 Why does a hoary proverb live on its allegation that the nets of the law gather the petty thieves and let the big ones get away? what does it mean in the homes of the poor? how does it connect with crime and the poor?

Against the Goliath of amalgamated power, the 20th century David was destined to sling stones persistently and vigorously before he would succeed in downing his unequal opponent.
 In the meantime,

. . . every day the police seize and the courts order to jail
 this skulker who stole a bottle of milk,
 this shadow who ran off with a loaf of bread,
 this wanderer who purloined a baby sweater in a basement salesroom--
 Thieves? Yes. Little thieves? Yes. And they get it where the chicken gets the ax? Yes. And the big shots are something else? Yes. And you can't convict a million dollars? Not unless Tuesday is Saturday, neighbor.

In the relentless tragi-comedy in which the price of a meal-ticket is the powerful force

. . . holding men and women in toil and danger and sometimes shame, beyond the dreams of their blossom days, the days before they set out on their own,

they patiently eke out their living as best as they are able.

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Yet, they are resigned to be sold and tricked and resold because they know how far to subject themselves

. . . to discipline
and obedience for the sake of an ordered society
free from tyrants, exploiters and legalized frauds.

Wherein lies the source of the people's patience whereby they are ready to be the target of the big guns of a highly industrialized economy? How does one account for the people's spirit that enables them to laugh at and poke jibes at puppet judges, sometimes ignorant and unqualified, featured in the anecdotes of the people? In the portrait Sandburg has painted of them, they are a people who "can live on hard corn and like it." Fundamentally, they are idealists. In the language of the poet,

Man is born with rainbows in his heart and you'll
never read him unless you consider rainbows . . .
He is a phantasmagoria of crimson dawns and
what it takes to build his dreams.

"Give them a cause," says Sandburg,

. . . and they are a living dynamite
They are the game fighters who will die fighting.

When the pieces of the people's portrait are at last put together, what is the image that stands before the mind's eye? The finished canvas looms as a complement to all of Sandburg's poetry, repeating their themes but dulling their emphasis. The people's foremost quality here is their ability to "take it." This toughness derives from their dogged patience at being outwitted by the keener brains of their

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exploiters, and from the pathetic endurance of the underdog who waits grimly for the reprisals of time. Even though the meanness and cruelty that raises its head among them is ultimately traced to the people, from whom the panderers and exploiters rise, Sandburg believes that the qualities of justice and goodness are basic in man, and it is of them that he shouts louder than of their distortions. That is why the rumble of arguing and hating is out-shouted by joking and laughter.

The poet's confidence that the people's ultimate attainment of their rights as individuals lies in the will of the people themselves, is attested to by the fact that throughout the length of the poem it is they who speak. The story unfolds with the laconic ease of talk on the streets and farms, from Union Square soap-boxes and grocery store rag-chewing. Always it is the people who tell the story because it is they, in the final analysis, who will have to solve their dilemma. To this end Sandburg sacrificed to his own single-voiced personality whatever variety or progress might have made him a more forceful writer.

With all of his poetry volumes analyzed for themes and attitudes, it were well at this point in the study to pause in order to examine the technical aspects of his style for its characteristic traits. Since he chose to be

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the mouthpiece of the people, then the verbal medium which employs should be characteristic of them. . Speaking of them and for them, could he have employed another style and yet not be out of character? His style being what it is, it will be subjected to an analysis from the standpoint of color, imagery, language, line and stanza patterns. This material will constitute the burden of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

TECHNICAL DEVICES IN SANDBURG'S POETRY

An analysis of his lyrical poetry yields certain patterns that may be considered representative of Sandburg's art as a poet. The burden of this chapter will be the tracing of the common threads that run through his lyrics from the first volume of his poetry through the last. The common elements can be distinguished in six separate categories of his poetic technique. They are as follows: the element of color; the repeated use of certain concrete or abstract objects, which shall be referred to in this study as "symbols"; the element of figurative language; the imagery of sound; line and stanza patterns; and finally, the element of language.

To one who would read thoughtfully through a number of Sandburg's lyrics, the first note to assert itself is the fact that Sandburg is a poet of visual appeal. With this quality of an artist of the brush and canvas, his volumes present a panorama of color. His use of it, direct and unpretentious, is illustrated in the little lyric, "Tawny":

These are the tawny days: . . .
 The grapes take on purple: the sunsets
 redden early on the trellis.
 The bashful mornings hurl gray mist
 on the stripes of sunrise.
 Creep, silver on the field, the frost is
 welcome . . .

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This same pallet technique can be seen in the poem, "Sumach and Birds":

If you never came with a pigeon rainbow purple
 Shining in the six o'clock September dusk:
 If the red sumach on the autumn roads
 Never danced on the flame of your eyelashes:
 If the red-haws never burst in a million
 Crimson fingertwists of your crying . . .

Chicago Poems is a verbal canvas of city life, done in vast splotches of reds, yellows, and grays. It is a color-spattering relieved and softened by patches of blues and whites. Dabs of brown and purple, green and black add the finer lines and help delineate the panorama. That his use of reds predominates by far in his employ of the color scheme is understandable when it is realized that to him red symbolized the force of life, love, and passion. And Chicago Poems abounds in the vitality of a fast-moving city. Sometimes he uses the vital image of blood directly; at other times, he employs the image of the rose, red almost without exception. By way of illustration of how effectively he uses this red rose image, one need but turn to the second section of "Poems Done on a Late Night Car." Pondering on the regrets and the remorse of women who have soiled their bodies and their peace of mind, he writes:

Roses,
 Red roses,
 Crushed
 In the rain and wind
 Like mouths of women

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Beaten by the fists of
 Men using them.
 O little roses
 And broken leaves
 And petal wisps:
 You that so flung your crimson
 To the sun
 Only yesterday.

When he turns from his preoccupation with urban interests to the vast sweeps of western farmlands, he dips his brush more generously into the colors of the artist's palette. Cornhuskers is more than twice as generous in the use of color as was its predecessor. But here, too, he retains his preference for red. The prairie yields a rainbow floral scene. The red sumach, the rambler roses, the poppies and tulips and clover are set off by white blossoms, yellow cornflower, brown-eyed Susans; by purple peonies, Canada thistle and the violet. Colorful, too, is the harvest yield of the prairie. Radishes are crimson purple. There are red tomatoes, red-haws, apples, and peppers. Golden yellow is provided by fields of corn.

The over-all color tone of this canvas is contrasting placement of the warm reds, orange, and yellows against the neutral grays and whites. Against this background, his modulated use of blues and browns, purple and green, and an occasional dab of black paint the great acres of open land that lay in the wide, sweeping panorama of the midwest prairies. This multi-colored portrait of the

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land evoked for him memories of the country where he was born; of the women, children--and even the horses--with whom he became acquainted while he was earning his living at his odd jobs; of the railroads he rode on; of the laborers and hoboes he met in his tramps through the middle west. Some of the poems radiate with the warmth of his home fireside.

Cornhuskers, being so close to the good earth, would seem to demand to be done more generously in green. But here, as in all of his poetry, his sparse use of green is noticeable. The prairie's yield of green comes in the woods, vines, cud, the tulip stem, peppers, lettuce, and cabbage. Nature provides it in the undersea, the ocean waters, the hanging gardens of Nineveh, and in the coloring of the parrot and the wild duck.

In relation to all the volumes of poetry, Smoke and Steel stands second on the color chart, the first being occupied by Good Morning, America. For the third time he gives preference to the red color in his use of the color spectrum. But Smoke and Steel shows a more effective balancing of colors than do its two predecessors. Utilizing the symbols of haze, mists, fog, and the like, the whites and grays employed here give a buoyance to a picture that would sag in its heavy leaning upon the warm colors of red and yellow.

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Pursuing this color analysis in his other volumes of poetry, it will be noted that Chicago Poems and Slabs of Sunburnt West occupy the last two places on the color chart. Sandburg's heavy leaning on red shifts in Slabs of Sunburnt West to a preference for yellows and grays; red is relegated to the fourth place. In this volume and in The People, Yes there is a marked diminution of reliance on red, and no utilization of the orange color. This last aspect is noted also in Good Morning, America. Of all his poetry volumes, the last mentioned is the richest in its color appeal. It is three times as rich as Chicago Poems; one-third richer than Cornhuskers; two-and-a-half times as colorful as Slabs of Sunburnt West; and two and two-thirds times as rich as The People, Yes. Lining up his poetry volumes in the order of descendancy in the use of colors, the order appears as follows: Good Morning, America; Smoke and Steel; Cornhuskers; The People, Yes; Slabs of Sunburnt West; Chicago Poems.

Because of his generous use of color pervading all of his poetry volumes, it was possible to create a series of tables which analyze the frequency of his use of certain colors. Each volume was measured against the same nine colors, the frequency tallied and determined in terms of per cent on the poet's reliance upon each respective color.

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The color pattern employed in each book appears in a separate table; a special table for the picture of colors used throughout all of his poetry has also been arranged. The formula for finding the percentage of color was to total the number of times each of the colors appears in the book under consideration. With a separate total for each color used, the total of these was divided into each sub-total. For example, Chicago Poems total color-count is 159. The "red" count yields 44. Then 44 was divided by 159. The 27.6 quotient represents the percentage of that color used within the volume.

A table for each of the six volumes, as well as a separate table for all the volumes, appears in Appendix A of this study.

What interpretation can be read into the pattern of colors which has been here traced? That there is a psychological impact that colors have upon a human being will hardly be questioned. By the same token, a man's choice of colors bespeaks, consciously or unconsciously, his outlook on life. In portraying his lyrical canvas of the people engaged in their life-long pursuit of self-fulfillment, Sandburg's primary reliance upon the vital red and yellow are an eloquent assertion of the people's courage in their persistent renewal of and betterment in life. Their struggle

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is often against an impersonal environment; hence, the white and the gray are never far removed from the colors of life. To have stopped there, however, would have resulted in a picture of inevitable futility, a fact to which the poet could never have subscribed. In the world of the little people there is always enough hope (blue, green, purple), to relieve the onerous burden they must carry through life (black, purple, brown), yet not succumb under its weight.

Symbols. The symbols through which Sandburg projects colors may be reduced to eight recurring images, traceable in all of the poetry volumes. The most frequently recurring symbol traceable throughout his poetry is that of moisture. In one of his early poems, "Clark St. Bridge," he looks upon the city of Chicago at night as once Wordsworth looked upon the great heart of the city of London beating in silence during the early hours of dawn. Sandburg says of Chicago:

Now . . .
 . . . Only stars and mist
 A lonely policeman
 Two cabaret dancers
 . . .
 Voices of dollars
 And drops of blood
 . . .
 Voices of broken hearts . . .
 . . . Voices singing, singing
 Silver voices, singing
 Softer than the stars,
 Softer than the mist.

Mist as a symbol of the final unattainability of the longings of humanity appears in the lyric, "The Mist":

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I am the mist, the impalpable mist,
Back of the thing you seek.

. . .
I was at the first of things
I will be at the last
 I am the primal mist
 And no man passes me;
 . . .

In its companion piece, "Lost Answers," Sandburg gives his own meaning of it, a meaning that goes deeper than the mere

. . . beauty of the mist, how pearl and
 gray of it mix and reel
And change the drab shanties with lighted lamps
 at evening into points of mystery quivering
 with color.

There is an atmosphere of mystery in the connotations of mist as the poet sees it and he does not hesitate to claim so on the grounds of his personal conviction:

The whole world was mist once long ago and some day
 it will all go back to mist,
 . . .
And all poets love dust and mist because the lost
 answers
Go running back to dust and mist.

The priority of frequency which Sandburg gives to the symbol of mist will be better understood when one realizes that the poet's favorite portion of the twenty-four-hour cycle is the night. That the mystery of its transforming powers should have appealed to his poet-soul is not unusual; but perhaps it will not be unreasonable to assume that his predilection for the night was at least intensified--if not first awakened--during the owl-shifts when he was busy earning his

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living as a newspaper reporter. "What have I saved out of a morning?" he asks in "Moon Riders." Morning's

. . . moon mist
and the travel of a moon spilt purple
is too soon shattered by the cold fact that morning "is time for work." But when the "night lets the dark yarn unravel," it transforms the often drab pictures of the day with the magic of its touch. Unabashedly the poet asserts that

the night is a lover of mine . . .
I know the night is . . . everything
I know the night is . . . all the world.
"Night's Nothings Again"

The poem closes on the same idea, as though to assure himself that the reader must keep this fact in mind if he is to understand why Sandburg so frequently dipped into the images of night:

It was the night in my blood:
open dreaming night,
night of tireless sheet-steel blue:
The hands of God washing something,
feet of God walking somewhere.

From the regenerative forces of the night come the achievements of mankind's search into the mystery man calls life. These accomplishments Sandburg refers to as "The Great Proud Wagon Wheels." It is not mere sentiment which makes the poet say:

Who has loved the night more than I have?
Who has loved the fog moon night last night
more than I have?
"Far Rockaway Night Till Morning"

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or again, "I know the moon and the lake have twisted the roots under my heart." ("Night Stuff") A search for the reason behind all this preoccupation with and preferences for the night discovers the answers:

Night has many witnesses
to supply evidence, to report honestly
the meaning of dying, loving, being born.

Most of the symbols that appear and reappear throughout his poetry with a frequency that beat their presence on the mind of a perceiving reader grow out of this night love: mist, haze, dew, rain, foam, stars, moon, shadows. A search for symbols outstanding for their repeated use has been traced to eight predominant threads in his poetry pattern: moisture, star, shadows, ashes, and dust, silence, laughter, smoke and haze, and softness. Like the color pattern previously traced, these symbols have been subjected to numerical count in each of the six volumes of poetry. In translating the results to percentages for table organization for each separate book, the following formula was used. The total frequency of each symbol was divided into the general total of repetitive symbols for the book under consideration. For example: the total number of repetitive symbols in Cornhuskers is 207; the star symbol occurs 41 times. 207 divided into 41 equals .20 or 20%, which represents the percentage frequency of the star symbol in this volume.

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In the table showing these symbols in all six volumes together, the formula used was as follows. After obtaining the total of each respective symbol as it appears in all of the books, these were summed up for a grand total. Then this grand total was divided into each of the sub-totals, for percentage equivalent. For example: the image of laughter throughout the poetry volumes was traced to 176 instances, and the total number of repeated symbols to 1473. Then 176 was divided by 1473, which yields a quotient of .119 or 11.9%. This represents the percentage of the symbol of laughter in relation to the other repetitive symbols upon which Sandburg relied. The tables on symbol frequency are to be found in Appendix B of this study.

From his use of night images, and particularly that of the star, there is but one step to the flower symbol that is scattered throughout his poetry volumes, for, as the poet says, "flowers can be cousins of the stars" ("There Are Different Gardens"). Of the floral symbols he employs, the predominant one is the rose. His obvious preference is for the red rose, which in his lyrics is always the symbol of love. Unlike his handling of other flowers, the rose is usually wrapped in a delicate metaphor. Speaking of a rambler rose, he calls it variously, "crimson Rambler," "red curve," "loop of blood." Wedded to the symbol of love, it appears thus:

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Now that a loop of blood
 is written on our roof
 and reaching around a chimney--
 How are the two lives of this house
 to keep strong hands and strong hearts?
 "Crimson Rambler"

In another lyric

The roses slanted crimson sobs
 On the night-sky hair of the women
 And the long light-fingered men
 Spoke to the dark-haired women,
 "Nothing lovelier, nothing lovelier."
 "Testimony Regarding A Ghost"

Occasionally he treats it as he does the other floral symbols, by merely naming it, and then the effect of this image is noticeably lessened. This may be observed, for example, in "Broadway":

Hearts that know you hate you
 And lips that have given you laughter
 Have gone to their ashes of life and its roses
 Cursing the dreams that were lost
 In the dust of your harsh and trampled stones.

Only one instance has been traced where Sandburg metaphorizes the tulip, when he calls it a "bomb of red caresses" ("Garden Wireless"). Otherwise, his flowers are merely mentioned by name: purple lilacs, poppies, peonies, pansies, marigolds, brown-eyed susans, buttercups, golden-rods, wild azaleas, Johnny-jump-ups, peach-tree blossoms, oleander blossoms, toadflax, thistlebloom, blue broom, and windflowers.

In this tracing for a symbol pattern, one comes upon a poem which telescopes Sandburg's paint-brush technique and

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his already mentioned symbols. "Understanding in Blue" presents this in the two triplets:

The bird sat on a red handle
counting five star flowers
five clover leafs.

The bird was a pigeon
Wearing a quiet understanding
Of how to wear blue.

The bird symbol occurs time and again throughout his lyrics. Like its floral companion, this one, too, gives a cross-section of the variety of birds the poet has seen in his travels across the country. Though the poet does not use this symbol as frequently as he does the preceding one, he does, nevertheless, underscore his preference for the pigeon and its companion, the sea-gull. Obviously, the two are symbols of the two places he loved so well: the city and the sea.

In folk superstition the belief that the pigeon is a harbinger of death is not characteristic of any one people; it raises its head anywhere and everywhere among the uneducated. Sandburg utilizes this folk belief when he writes:

It is so long ago I heard the summer song of the
pigeon who told me why night comes, why death
and stars come, and why the whippoorwill re-
members three notes only and always.

"Timber Wings"

This same notion is reiterated in "Sandhill People," a triptych which offers the white gull, the sandpiper, and three spotted waterbirds. The associations are then drawn:

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One was a thing my people call "love" . . .
 One was a thing my people call "silence" . . .
 One was a thing my people call "death," neither
 a whistle in the little sandhills, nor a bird
 Sanscrit of wing points, yet a coat all the
 stars and seas have worn . . .

Occasionally, Sandburg will present the bird in a colorful metaphor, as he does in "Purple Martins," where they are "purple tumblers in sheaths of satin blue." The ten white pigeons in "Three Spring Notations on Bipeds" together form "a feather of foam bubble, a chrysanthemum whirl speaking to silver and azure." For the most part, however, the birds appear by a simple reference by name. There are the flame flamingo, the spotted hawk, the oriole, the bluejay, the redwing, the blackbird, the mockingbird. To none of these is there any symbolism attached.

The symbol of laughter, which has been noted earlier in the discussion of his sociological verses, reappears in all of his subsequent volumes. But only in The People, Yes does it predominate over all the other repetitive symbols throughout Sandburg's poetry. It is strangely interesting to observe that this symbol is relegated to the background when the poet deals with the people close to the good earth in Cornhuskers. For all the riotous splurge of color which pervades this book, a search for the image of joy and laughter brings but meagre results. The most musical tones come from the "Laughing Corn," which has "come on with a high and

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conquering laughter" in the late summer. The harmony of the "tall hollyhocks laughing glad to children in peaceful villages ("Four Brothers") and the "low laughter of the red moon" ("Prairie Waters by Night") is shot through with the discordant notes of "a God with a cackling laughter" ("Four Brothers") and a "laugh . . . full of rattling nails" ("Gargoyle"). The two pieces which are pervaded with the spirit of joy and laughter are "Potato Blossom Songs and Jigs" and "Band Concert." The "Prairie" carries it only in one instance: "I will keep the laughing men who ride iron." In his preoccupation with the grim realities of industry, Sandburg gives only a passing nod to the image of laughter. But lest he create a false notion that his "Steves with dinner buckets and cinder sleeves" or the "miners' wives with white cauliflower faces" are depressed in their struggle to live," the poet injects the saving note of laughter because "the hands of the work gangs smell of hope":

People singing; people with song mouths connect-
 ing with song hearts; people who must sing or
 die; people whose song hearts break if there
 is no song mouth; these are my people.
"Work Gangs"

It is a calm hope of a better future that buoys them onward:

If the oriole calls like last year
 . . .
 If the leaves climb and climb on a bean pole
 . . .
 If the crickets send up the same old lessons
 . . .

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we will get by, we will keep on coming,
 we will get by, we will come along,
 we will fix our hearts over,
 the south wind says so.

"The South Wind Says So"

The laugh of Cornhuskers is the same as that of the sociological verses of Chicago Poems. This laugh and this hope are picked up again in Slabs of the Sunburnt West:

The hands of the men took hold and tugged
 And the breaths of men went into the junk
 And the junk stood up into skyscrapers and asked:
 Who am I? Am I a City? And if I am what is my name?
 And once while the time whistles blew and blew again
 The men answered: Long ago we gave you a name,
 Long ago we laughed and said: You? Your name is
 Chicago.

"Windy City"

If there were "high majestic foolings" in "Laughing Corn," its companion piece in Good Morning, America, "Corn Prattlings," is even more musical and the spirit more care-free. This poem is one of the relatively rare lyrics that succeeds in developing the central thought without an abrupt injection of an unrelated idea to the original image. Here is concentration on two allied symbols: the corn and the wind. This limiting of details produces a unity that is uncommon in Sandburg's poetic style. With the initial concept of the wind in the tasseled corn, the poem progresses smoothly to the last stanza, which reads in part:

The ears laugh in the husks now.
 The big job of the year is done.

. . .
 The yellow and gold kernels laugh.
 The big job is over and the laugh of the yellow ears
 And the laugh of the running wind go together.

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The men who people the pages of Good Morning, America are those who lived in the pre-Depression years, men who heard the rumblings of economic collapse but were unable to recognize its ominous reality so soon to leave its blight on a land that has never felt the pinch of economic want as painfully and as generally as it did in the third decade of the century. This atmosphere was not one to engender the spirit of laughter that was flourishing when the times were hard but the promise was good. With the lights of promise blacking out, it was a matter of laughing only to keep from crying. This type of laughter is heard in "Destroyers" where

. . . the two grand old gray-whiskered monochromic men, one a sea dog, the other a land-lubber, laughed, laughed, laughed in each other's sea-green, land-gray eyes.

Not until he wrote The People, Yes did Sandburg fully utilize the image of laughter as a prism through which to portray the vast cyclorama of the divergent cultures of the people who went into the making of the American nation. This aspect has been indicated in the chapter on The People, Yes, and developed still further in the subsequent one, which traces the traits of national character as it unfolds in that book.

Figures of Speech.--Sandburg's poetic art--whether in his sociological verses or in his lyric poems--bears one stamp: it is in no way conventional. In his search for a

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proper modern colloquial idiom through which to make himself heard, he sacrificed all conventional concepts of meter, verse form, regular rhythms, and subtle imagery. The pre-occupation in his poetry is not concentration upon idea, but upon the total impression which a given poem was to create. To this end his technique of amassing direct details relied heavily upon color and symbols, a technique that is shared by any prose naturalist. Though not devoid of figurative language, his lyrics are primarily verbal descriptions of visual images capable of activating the imagination. In this respect his kinship with the Imagists is not difficult to detect. But this immediate response to color and form crowds out any metaphysical ambiguity in his figurative language.

His metaphors--the term is here used in the broad sense--create pictures in the mind's eye of what the words stand for. They are reminiscent fragments of sensory experience fitted together in a verbal montage. In the restricted sense of the term, his metaphors rarely stimulate any deeper parallelism of two streams of thought. An instance of this infrequent handling of the metaphor occurs in the lyric, "Thin Strips":

In a jeweler's shop I saw a man beating
out thin sheets of gold. I heard a woman
laugh many years ago.

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Under a peach tree I saw petals scattered
 . . . torn strips of a bride's dress. I
 heard a woman laugh many years ago.

But it is the single visual free imagery that characterizes his metaphors. The following may be considered representative of this category:

The moon is a lovely woman . . . lost in a
 silver dress
 . . . the lake by night is a lovely woman . . .
 circled with birches and pines.
 "Night Stuff"

The five o'clock prairie sunset is a strong man
 going to sleep after a long day in the cornfield.
 "Rusty Crimson"

Some metaphors are cameos carved with the master-touch of a word artist:

At half past three in the morning
 . . . there were deer feet and horns of stars
 in the sky.
 "Early Evening"

Or again:

When the moon was a hammock of gold,
 And the gold of the moon hammock was changing
 Till there was a blood hammock of a moon
 . . .
 Till the idle easy slipping down of it
 Left a bridge of stars
 and marchers among the stars--
 "Moon Hammock"

At times these techniques are employed in combination, as may be seen in "We Have Gone Through Great Rooms Together":

And when on the dark steel came the roads
 Of a milky mist, and a spray of stars,
 Bunches and squares and spatter of stars,
 . . .

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. . . we remembered those stars as fishermen
remember fish
As bees remembered blossoms, as crops remember rains.

Some of the metaphors are enhanced and enforced by the kinesthetic power of the words he selects, as may be seen here:

The stone goes straight.
A lean swimmer dives into night sky,
Into half-moon mist. . .
"Washington Monument"

This kinesthetic power is employed with varying degrees of emotional tension. The iron-tautness of the image in the following lines:

The horizon ahead is a thousand fang flashes,
it is a row of teeth that bite on the flanks
of night . . .
"Remembered Women"

assumes two types of flexibility in:

Good-by is a loose word, a yellow ribbon
fluttering in the wind.
Good-by is a stiff word, a steel slide-rule
a fixed automatic phone number.
"Different Kinds of Good-By"

In both of the passages cited the central meaning has tones and undertones of other senses in context, but such use of the amazing capacity of words is not characteristic of Sandburg's language art. Ordinarily, his metaphors are presented simply as implied comparisons; they are presented in a phrase or a sentence at most. It is rare for him to develop a full, rounded metaphor as it is found in the long lyric, "Slabs of the Sunburnt West":

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Eighteen old giants throw a red gold shadow ball;
 they pass it along; hands go up and stop it; they
 bat up flies and practice; they begin the game,
 they knock it for home runs and two-baggers; the
 pitcher put it across in and out--and in--shoot
 drop; the Devil is the Umpire; God is the Umpire;
 the game is called on account of darkness.

In the lyric, "This for the Moon, Yes?" this same metaphor
 is handled with less completeness, but its kinesthetic effect
 compensates for the trimmed metaphor:

This is a good book? Yes?
 Throw it at the moon.
 Stand on the ball of your right foot
 And come to the lunge of a center fielder
 Straddling in a throw for the home plate,
 Let her go--spang--this book for the moon--yes?
 And then--other books, good books, even the best
 books--shoot 'em with a long twist at the
 moon--yes?

Like the bulk of his metaphors, Sandburg's similes are used
 in their simplest formula, that of comparing two unrelated
 ideas or objects. In none of his similes does the question
 arise: "Is it one thing or another that he means?" When
 Robert Burns writes,

O, my love is like a red, red rose,
 That's newly sprung in June.
 O, my love is like the melodie
 That's sweetly played in tune,

he poses a choice of meaning to the word "love." Whether
 it is his sweetheart or his emotion can be deduced by a
 close observance of the equation implied in the two similes.
 Such is never Sandburg's manner of handling this figure of
 speech; a thing is like another in the aspect which the poet

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indicates and that is all. An example of the manner in which he handles the simile can be obtained from the lyric, "Even Numbers":

A house like a man all lean and coughing,
a man with his two hands in the air at a cry,
"Hands up."
A house like a woman shrunken and stoop-shouldered,
shrunken and done with dishes and dances.

These two houses I saw going uphill in Cincinatti.

Two houses leaning against each other like drunken
brothers at a funeral,
Two houses facing each other like two blind wrestlers
hunting a hold on each other,

These four scrawny houses I saw on a dead level
cinder patch in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

When he uses personification, Sandburg is able to enrich it with an implied metaphorical context which not only enhances the artistry of the figure, but is able to stimulate another stream of thought. He says in "Two Nocturnes" that "The sea speaks a language polite people never repeat." The sea's all-destructive, non-discriminating, unharnessed power is referred to as "a colossal scavenger slang." In another instance of personification, the poet juxtaposes two contradictory ideas with almost a paradoxical effect:

And it was the leaves with a strong soft wind
over them that talked most of all and said
more than any others though speaking the
fewest words.

"Bird Talk"

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Sometimes there is a merging of personification, metaphor, and rhetorical question, as is demonstrated by the following stanzas:

Does the night forget
as a woman forgets?
and remember
as a woman remembers?

Who gave the night
this head of gypsy hair,
this gypsy head
calling: Come-on?

From his pattern of figurative language Sandburg does not exclude the apostrophe, the almost inseparable companion of personification. But because the use of it offers no marked artistic variability, it is considered unnecessary to see it in its ordinary functions of direct address. A persistent search of Sandburg's poetry for evidences of ambiguous enrichment produces two more functional figures, namely, synecdoche and allusion. Of the seven traced instances of the synecdoche, two lyrics employ it for the totality of the image of man. In "Sky Pieces" and in "Hats," it is this head covering that stands for the whole man. In the latter poem, Sandburg is standing "on the rim of a sky-scraper's forehead," and as he looks down he sees

. . . fifty thousand hats:
Swarming with a noise of bees and sheep, cattle
and waterfalls
Stopping with a silence of sea grass, a silence
of primal corn.
Hats: tell me your high hopes.

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If he were in Milton's place, he "would marry a third pair of eyes to serve my blind eyes" ("To the Ghost of John Milton"). In "This Street Never Sleeps," the wheels and feet pose the question: "What has Tomorrow done for us?" More strongly colloquial than these, the synecdoche in "Caboose Thoughts" says: "Last summer we took the cushions going west." When the poet stands among the crowds lining the streets of the nation's Capital to witness the solemn entombment of the unknown soldier, he sees the crowds as "faces at street crossings" shining

. . . with a silence
 of eggs laid in a row on a pantry shelf--
 . . .
 faces come to a standstill . . .
 in the name of the Boy, in the name of the Republic.
 "And So Today"

Only one figure of speech was traced which lies on the boundary between synecdoche and metonymy. The lyric, "Mémorial," speaks of the French General Joffre as

. . . the man on whose yes and no has hung the
 death of battalions and brigades.

This search for connotative fullness in Sandburg's poetry leads to the last figure of speech traceable in his works. Numerically, the allusions scattered throughout the poems present an imposing array of subject classifications. They can be divided into fourteen categories: antiquity, ancient history, Greek mythology, the Bible, world history, English history, European history, American history, Mexican

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history, European writers, Church history, American writers, musicians, composers, as well as art, painting, and sculpture. Antiquity includes references to: Babylon, Babel, Garden of Eden, Hanging Gardens of Nineveh, Karnak, sphinxes, walls of Jericho. Ancient history: Nebuchadnezzar, Ashu-matsirpal II, Nero, Xerxes, Meltiades, Hasdrubal, Epictetus, Spartacus, Chaldeans, Lief Ericsson, Hannibal, Alexander the Great, Diogenes, Attila, Genghis Khan, the mysterious hand writing on the wall, and Omar Khayam. Bible: Fall of Adam and Eve, Egyptian Plagues, Methuselah, Elijah, Johan, Lot's wife, Daniel, Joshua, Judas Iscariot, Mary Magdelene, Lazarus, Pilate, casting out the devils into a herd of hogs. World history: the Dark Ages, Renaissance, and Christopher Columbus. Church history: St. Francis of Assissi. European history: Carl XII of Sweden, Peter the Great of Russia, Napoleon, Frederick the Great, the Romanoffs, the Hohenzollerns, Franz Joseph, Kornilov, Clemenceau, Rabelais, and Belleau Woods. English history: Kitchener of Khartoun and John Cade. American history: early French missionaries, Valley Forge, George Washington, John Adams, Andrew Jackson, Thomas Jefferson, Lincoln, Shenandoah, Nancy Hanks, John Brown, Jesse James, Buffalo Bill, Brigham Young, John Ericsson, David Griffith, and James Hill. Mexican history: Juarez. Greek mythology: Momus, cyclops. European writers:

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Francois Villon, Dante, Rabelais, Victor Hugo, Milton, Hans Christian Anderson, William Morris, St. Exupery, Ibsen, and Bjornson. American Writers: Poe, Longfellow, Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Stephen Crane, James Whitcomb Riley, Jack London, O. Henry, Robert Frost, Adelaide Crapsey, Sherwood Anderson, and Archibald MacLeish. Musicians and Composers: Bach, Grieg, William Henderson, Victor Hubert, MacDowell, and Fritz Kreisler. Art, Painting, and Sculpture: Mona Lisa, Gainsborough, Rodin, Hokusai, Hiroshige, and Brancusi. Literature: Sinbad, Piers Plowman, Hamlet and Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, Browning's "Childe Roland," the Holy Grail, Launcelot, Roland, Alice and the Cheshire cat.

Most of the allusions are handled matter-of-factly, with no effort at achieving any subtleness of poetic ambiguity:

Who saw the night
fold its Mona Lisa hands
and sit half-smiling, half-sad
"Night's Nothings Again"

The wind bit hard at Valley Forge one Christmas.
Soldiers tied rags on their feet .
Red footprints wrote on the snow . . .
"Washington Monument by Night"

In the lyric "Again" the allusions are merely itemized. In several instances he uses the technique of non-direct reference. A lyric warning about the power of words, reads in part:

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Before the word comes off the end of the tongue,

. . .
In the moment of doom when the word forms
It is born alive, registering an imprint--

. . .
The warning holds yet: speak now or forever hold
your peace.

Ecce homo had meanings: Behold the Man! Look at
him! Dying he lives and speaks!

"Precious Moments"

In one of his reportorial pieces, written from the who-what-where-when-why angle, the allusion to the sleep-walking scene of Lady Macbeth is handled with unquestionable directness:

Yesterday she washed her hands forty-seven times
during her waking hours and in her sleep moaned
restlessly attempting to clean imaginary soiled
spots off her hands.

Now the head physician touches his chin with a
crooked finger.

"White Hands"

A far more subtle handling of this figure can be traced to the poem, "Four Brothers." The implied reference to the Biblical counterpart of the angel of death passing over the blood-marked door-posts of the ancient Israelites, both reinforces the impact of the image and produces an effective poetic image:

The crimson thumb-print of this anathema is
on the door panels of a hundred million
homes.

From this study of Sandburg's poetry for figurative language it was noted that he drew most frequently upon the metaphor, the simile, and personification. But with his preoccupation with form and color, which aspect was treated

somewhat earlier in this study, Sandburg was almost constrained to rely on imagery that is built upon analogy. For a poet of the people, however, intellectual subtleties and vague mythical allusions would have been out of character. And Sandburg was neither capable of nor desirous of confounding his readers with poetic obscurities. It may be argued that some of his allusions deal with people or events that the common man may not be familiar with. The number of poems that utilize allusions is less than fifty, and those which contain less-known people or events do not obstruct the flow of the poet's message.

Imagery of Sound. From the tracing of Sandburg's literary work thus far, it is evident that he has all the marks of a romantic. Everything about him is viewed to be larger and more wonderful than actuality. This verbal portrayal of his vision of life about him draws much of its power from his diction, his poetic method and the fresh naivete with which he sees life. In describing his visions of power he uses short, blunt words and does not hesitate to use the diction of the streets and the smoking rooms. In his short descriptive lyrics he is able to use language as gentle as the summer breeze and as gossamer as an early morning mist. In the next few pages there will be an effort made to discover the technical means by which he succeeded to create the tonal element with which his poetry is charged.

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By a selection of tonally rich words Sandburg was able to achieve such polar extremes of effect as are produced in the two excerpts which follow:

Once when I saw the curves of fire . . .
 Dancing out of the flues and smokestacks . . .
 Buckets and baskets of fire exploding and chortling,
 fire running wild out of the steady and fastened
 ovens;

Sparks cracking a harr-harr-huff from a solar plexus
 of rock ribs of the earth taking a laugh for
 themselves;

I saw then the fires flash one by one . . .
 "Smoke and Steel"

And the hoofs of the skeleton horses
 all drum soft on the asphalt footing
 so soft is the drumming, so soft the roll call
 of the grinning sergeants calling the roll call--
 so soft is it all--

"And So Today"

The rhythms here are those of free verse. The phrasal sense-pattern is fortified by a sound pattern rich in tone color, alliteration, assonance, and phrasal repetition. Not only does the sound pattern provide a richness of oral texture, but there is an obvious relationship between sound and sense. "Buckets and baskets of fire exploding and chortling" and "Sparks cracking a harr-harr-huff from a solar plexus of rock ribs of the earth"--these not only suggest an aspect of sense, but they stir the imagination to a concrete visualization of the industrial images in action. In like manner, the euphonious combinations of low back vowels, creating a dark tone color, and the sibilant s, the lingering

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liquid l, the murmuring m, and the guttural g create a harmonious sound of muffled softness. All this provides a tonal color to the solemn and subdued atmosphere required on the occasion of the formal entombment of the unknown soldier.

The source of tone in Sandburg's poetry is to be looked for also in the personality of the poet himself. The romantic element in his mental outlook is not of the extreme type. Never devoid of a down-to-earth realism, there is always room for and an acceptance of the tragedy and the comedy present in modern experience. Even irony and despair are blended with a spirit of joyous vitality. This duality of outlook is reflected in the varied poems he has produced. Except for the brief lyrics which record his emotional reactions to nature surrounding him, his poems are more frequently a harmonizing of more than one tone. More obviously perhaps than other of his lyrics, his sociological poetry bears the stamp of multiple tonality.

The dissonance and cacophony of his vituperation against Billy Sunday's using Christ's teaching as a hypodermic shot in the arm of the masses to numb them against the social and economic abuses of the country's industrial moguls, draws its power from two sources: the principle of contrast and the deliberate word technique which selects them for their ability to create disgust. The contrast is maintained

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throughout the entire poem: Christ versus Billy Sunday. The word technique draws heavily on the colloquial, on images deliberately deprived of any refinement,

You come along squirting words at us, shaking
your fist and calling us all damn fools so
fierce the froth slobbers over all your lips . . .

He draws freely on the element of revolt:

You slimy bunkshooter, you put a smut on every
human blossom in reach of your rotten breath
belching about hell-fire and hiccuping about
this Man who lived a clean life in Galilee.
"To A Contemporary Bunkshooter"

There is no semblance of melody in any portion of the poem because it was not meant to be melodious. Vituperation was never meant to be sung but to be pounded out in strong words and crude images. On the element of melody in poetry, T. S. Eliot writes in his essay, "Music of Poetry":

It would be a mistake to assume that all poetry ought to be melodious . . . most poetry, in modern times, is meant to be spoken--and there are many other things to be spoken of besides the murmur of innumerable bees or the moan of doves in immemorial elms. Dissonance, even cacophony, has its place.²⁰

And further he says:

. . . if the whole poem need not be wholly melodious, it follows that a poem is not made only out of beautiful words. The ugly words are those not fitted for the company in which they find themselves.²¹

²⁰ Eliot, T. S., "The Music of Poetry," On Poetry and Poets, New York, Farrar, Straus, 1957, p. 24.

²¹ Ibid., p. 25.

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By a deliberate combination of jaw-breaking sounds, evoked images, and an unpleasant accumulation of sybillants and explosives, Sandburg is able to heighten the disagreeableness of what he is saying of the war and of those who sat in on formulating the terms of peace:

And now
 Out of the butcher's job
 And the boneyard junk the maggots have cleaned,
 Where the jaws of skulls tell the jokes of
 war ghosts,
 Out of this they are calling now: Let's go back
 where we were.
 Let us run the world again, us, us.
 Where the doors are locked the liars say: Wait
 and we'll cash in again.

"The Liars"

In the examples cited thus far the effect produced by the lines was blended with the meaning of the thought. But there are lines of sound pattern which have no message, except perhaps the creation of an atmosphere which the whole poem sets out to create. This is demonstrated by the second half of the poem, "Eleventh Avenue Racket":

Whoop-de-doodle-de-doo.
 Hoodle-de-harr-de-hum.
 Nobody home? Everybody home.
 Whoop-de-doodle-de-doo.
 Mamie Riley married Jimmy Higgins last night. Eddie
 Jones died of whooping cough . . .
 Whoop-de-doodle-de-doo

Except for the creation of the racket of a busy street, the sound effects are entirely devoid of association with the narration of the rest of the poem.

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In other instances the poet successfully weaves a unity of effect and mood:

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos,
sob on the long cool winding saxophones.

• • •
Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy
tin pans, let your trombones ooze, and go husha-
husha-hush with the slippery sand paper.
"Jazz Fantasia)

Onomatopoeia in its most elementary form, namely, repetition is also utilized by the poet:

So near you are summer stars
So near, strumming, strumming,
So lazy and hum-strumming.
"Summer Stars"

The most notable technique of the element of rhyme is obviously ruled out of the free-verse medium through which all of Sandburg's poetry is written. This auditory element is entirely omitted both in its conventional form of rhyme as well as in its variant, consonance. The closest approach to the regular beat of a sound pattern is achieved by alliteration and assonance. The tone of hushed softness cited earlier from the poem, "And So Today," is achieved in almost the same fashion in "Drumnotes":

Days of the dead men, Danny.
Drum for the dead, drum on your
remembering heart.

• • •
Days of the dead, Danny.
Drum on your remembering heart . . .

The rhythm is almost tangible because of the close frequency of alliterative, monosyllabic words. Wherever Sandburg can

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make any claim on rhythm, it is invariably obtained from this type of syllable control. When he writes in "Smoke Blue":

The boomers boomed the boosters,
The boosters boosted the boomers.
And the mountains stood on their bottom ends,
The mountains stood in a smoke and a blue,
. . . .

he achieves rhythm by a multiple-technique. Here is the merging of pure onomatopoeia, alliteration, and a controlled accent pattern of strong stresses. Such and similar rhythmic control is not typical of Sandburg's style in general, but is found in varying degrees of strength in isolated lyrics. None of them, however, stand up to a regularly recurring rhythmic pattern that make up the conventional metrical foot.

Line and Stanza Patterns.--The fluidity of the internal structure of his poetic style overflows into the external pattern, both of line and of stanza. The line lengths of his poetry defy classification. Each is a law unto itself, so it would seem. Yet there is present a phrasal control which governs the length or brevity of each line--a trait which is characteristic of prose rhythms. At times the lines elude even this type of labeling. The apparently regular line length in the following excerpt breaks the phrasal sense-pattern between lines two and three:

The young child, Christ, is straight and wise
And asks questions of the old men, questions
Found under running water for all children . . .
"Child"

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The last stanza of another lyric again shows how perfectly the breakdown of lines into phrasal sense-patterns can come from the poet's pen:

Let only the young come,
 Says the sea.
 Let them kiss my face
 And hear me.
 I am the last word
 And I tell
 Where storms and stars come from.
 "Young Sea"

That he understood the people for whom he chose to speak will hardly be questioned. But it is evident he has not always spoken well. Certainly not as well as he did in the panoramic imagery of the poem, "The Masses," or in its less poetic companion piece, "I Am the People, the Mob." Rich in eye-appeal, the long lines of "The Masses" create the illusion of vast sweeps of sky and stars and of the endless procession of humanity. Lapsing into prose-rhythms and Whitmanesque cataloguing of phrases, "I Am the People, the Mob" continues the panoramic imagery of the shorter poem, though with a marked diminution of lyric quality. But even there Sandburg does not allow the lines to run away on him. His control over them is seen in his use of anaphoric lines in perpendicular alliteration, in his use of the horizontal reiteration and in other technical literary devices. Not many phrases will evince the same rhythmic control as, for example, the line:

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When I, the People, learn to remember, when I, the
People use the lessons of yesterday . . .

It is in the poem's loosely handled phraseology, however, that the reader senses immediately the weakening of the poem's lyric value.

In "Chicago" Sandburg apostrophizes his city in loose, prose rhythms arranged in a series of nervous and jagged lines, demonstrative of the irregular but perpetual motion in big-city life. Sharing the lot of his other sociological poems, "Chicago" is a mixture of the poetic and the non-poetic. Lines of loose, prose-like writing, as:

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer:
Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill
and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is:
On the faces of women and children I have seen
the marks of wanton hunger . . .

are in contradistinction to the dynamism of:

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling
job on job . . .

. . .
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action,
cursing as a savage pitted against the
wilderness . . .

Formless as the poem may appear to the eye, the poet's line control is here, none the less. Reminiscent in its format of some of the techniques employed by Whitman in The Leaves of Grass, are Sandburg's use of the alliterative chain of present participles:

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Shoveling,
 Wrecking,
 Planning
 Building, breaking, rebuilding, . . .

his use of the anaphora and of perpendicular alliteration:

They tell me you are wicked . . .
 And they tell me you are crooked . . .
 And they tell me you are brutal . . .

Lines like:

. . . laughing with white teeth,
 Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing
 as a young man laughs,
 Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs
 who has never lost a battle . . .

demonstrate the variety Sandburg can employ in the handling of parallel phrasing, and in his manipulation of the alliterative device. In this case, his use of the liquid sound is an effective medium over which the lusty laugh of the worker is transmitted.

There are lines which do not fit into a phrasal breakdown at all, but are so intimately a part of the stanza sense that they cannot be divorced from it. An example of this is found here:

If the wind has a song, it
 is moaning; Good Lawd, I
 done done what you told me
 to do.

"Many Hats"

Like his indefinable line pattern, the stanzas only rarely assume a regularity that would make them approach the conventional stanza forms. To an eye accustomed to

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Sandburg's irregular stanza patterns, the series of four couplets that make up the lyric, "Winter Gold"; the six regular triplets of "How Yesterday Looked"; and the four quatrains of "Baby Song of Four Winds" seem to appear almost out of character. Sometimes the poet's line and stanza irregularity assumes a perfect harmony with the subject-matter of the poem. This type of merging is present in "Nocturne in a Deserted Brickyard," where the transforming magic of light and color is aided by the gradual lengthening of the lines to create the irregularly circular outline of the pool. To claim, however, that this was deliberately created by the poet is to assume an unsubstantiated fact. But this embellishment of the visual pattern can be noticed in other poems, too. In "The Answers" the visual pattern of line structure creates the flower, the leaves, the stem, the soil from which the pansy is growing, and finally the roots under the soil. This is achieved through apparently deliberate phrasal control. Still another lyric, "Aztec," demonstrates this functional use of the line. Core thought of the poem is the parting of two Indian lovers. Sections which carry the burden of narration follow a regular four-line pattern. But with the theme of the parting itself, the lines take on an effect of movement away from each other, a coming together, and again a separation into opposite directions.

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"Sheep," a seemingly prosaic lyric, merits consideration from the standpoint of functional line usage. A casual meeting with the poem and a hurried reading through what the eye sees as two solid paragraphs of type tempts the reader to dismiss it as mere prose writing. Yet, a thoughtful reading of the lines reveals the unity of thought and pattern. What appears to be a prose pattern of the lines becomes an externalizing of the mental image of thousands of sheep gathered in two large herds.

There is no implication intended here that this type of line function is always present in Sandburg's poetry. It may be that even these few examples cited resulted quite by accident on the poet's part. But if even one imagination can educe from them the connotations suggested above, the plausibility of such functional line control cannot be ignored.

Language.--In the analysis of verbal techniques used in Sandburg's free-verse style as a medium through which his verses are written necessitates consideration of the language levels and rhetorical devices which he utilized. The second longest poem in Smoke and Steel, entitled "The Sins of Kalamazoo" is an especially good example of effective handling of colloquial idioms.

Portraying Kalamazoo as typical of all American cities in its ordinariness, a city least likely to inspire

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poetry, Sandburg speaks thus through the mouth of the loafer:

Kalamazoo, you ain't in a class by yourself;
 I seen you before in a lot of places.
 If you are nuts America is nuts.
 And lagging along he said bitterly:
 Before I came to Kalamazoo I was silent.
 Now I am gabby, God help me, I am gabby.

Certainly the propriety of conventional language would be out of place in the mouth of the speaker, and the general effect of the main theme--the city's ordinariness--would not be carried as well. The lines of the entire poem ring with a criticism of America. Through the loafer's words the poet expresses his dissatisfaction with America's emphasis on the material progress purchased at the price of cultural, intellectual and spiritual values. Its ring carries the same tone that Matthew Arnold implied in criticism of England, when he wrote, "By the Ilissus there was no Wragg,"²² an implication that all was not right with England in spite of all the eulogies that were being sung in her praise.

A similar type of handling the colloquial idiom is seen functioning in the lyric, "Threes." When the American leatherneck voices the three needs he considers most essential in life, saying:

. . . Tell me how to say three things I
 always get by--gimme a plate of ham and eggs--
 how much?--and--do you love me, kid?

²² Arnold, Matthew, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," Essays in Criticism, London, Macmillan, 1895, p. 24.

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he speaks the language of the masses, literate, yet little educated, those for whom these basic needs are the most important in life. In a similar vein he employs colloquialism well in "The Liars," a poem in which the passes do the talking. In their characteristic colloquialisms he writes of the war:

Across their tables they fixed it up.
 Behind their doors away from the mob.
 And guns did a job that nicked off millions.
 And guns blew seven million off the map,
 And guns sent seven million west.
 Seven million shoving up the daisies.

Neither does the poet shy away from employing ungrammatical language when it but intensifies the colloquial character of the idea:

. . . in the night when the hammers and shovels
 sleep in corners,
 the night watchmen stuff their pipes with dreams--
 and sometimes they doze and don't care for nothin'
 "Work Gangs"

Again this is employed in "Jazz Fantasia," where he addresses the jazzband:

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome
 treetops,
 moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible . . .

In the untrammelled freedom of colloquial language, no aspect of the speech of the people was ignored as unsuitable. Since his was to be a portraiture of the people, it would have to be done in their idiom--provincialisms, slang, vulgarisms, and coined words not excluded. Thus, when he

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writes of the transformation of the immediate surroundings of the fire-belching open blast furnaces, he does not hesitate to resort to the use of name-calling but without any implication of prejudice or contempt:

In the rolling mills and sheet mills,
 In the harr and boom of the blast fires,
 The smoke changes its shadow
 And men change their shadow;
 A nigger, a wop, a bohunk changes.
"Smoke and Steel"

In images deliberately chosen for their repulsiveness, Sandburg utilizes even the vulgarisms of common speech to show his utter contempt for and disgust with the mask of hypocrisy that is frequently worn in the name of good breeding and social propriety. In "Testimony Regarding A Ghost," Sandburg sees into the other "self" of "the long light-fingered men," who whisper softly into the ears of love-hungry women:

How could he sit there among us all
 Guzzling blood into his guts,
 Goblets, mugs, buckets--
 Heaving, toppling, laughing
 With a slobber on his mouth . . .

Out of the "metaphors of the street" the poet writes in journalese fashion a piece in a language that has sprung up "among the interstices of the curb":

. . . these boys--among the police they were known
 As the Dirty Dozen and their names took the front
 pages of newspapers
 And two of them croaked on the same day at a "necktie
 party" . . . if we employ the metaphors of
 their lips.

"Alley Rats"

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From vulgarisms to slang is only a step, and that step the poet does not hesitate to take. In the verse just cited he writes of and defines the slang of the day, not generally used, but limited to the lowest strata of society:

They were calling certain styles of whiskers by
the name of "lilacs."
And another manner of beard assumed in their
chatter a verbal guise
Of "mutton chops," "galways," "feather dusters."

These slangy terms would have no meaning today were it not for Sandburg's explanation of them. His use of slang is by no means limited to the verses that rely entirely on the prose reportorial style of presentation. The poetic Swedish metaphor, "aprons of silence," which he originally heard from his mother, Sandburg utilized in a lyric of that title. As if not to divorce this metaphor from the folk milieu whence it originated, the poet wrapped it in a folksy colloquialism generously seasoned with slang:

Many things I might have said today.
And I kept my mouth shut.
. . .
The aprons of silence covered me.
A wire and hatch held my tongue.
I spit nails into an abyss and listened.
. . .
I fixed up a padded cell and lugged it around.
I locked myself in and nobody knew it.
Only the keeper and kept in the hoosegow
Knew it--
Here I . . .
. . . did business with my own thoughts.
Do you see? It must be the aprons of silence.
"Aprons of Silence"

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Whatever belongs to the people is a legitimate vehicle for his thoughts. It was not accidental anachronism when he reached back to the language of Middle English to describe the harshness of a winter night: "Harsk, harsk, the wind blows tonight" ("Harsk, Harsk"). Archaisms like, "I go where you wist not of" ("The Red Son"); British provincialisms like, "Let her go--spang--this book for the moon" ("This--for the Moon, Yes?"); British dialect in "a loud-mouth liblab"--all these are legitimate folk media for the poet. If the folk have not the word with a proper nuance, he matter-of-factly creates one. In the night hours, "The owl car blutters along in a sleepy-walk," across the "Blue Island Intersection." The bubble in "Two Humpties," "busted, went flooey, on a thumb touch." To the poet of the vernacular, language was something pliable, something "slimpsy and loose," but from which he was able to mold the shape and form he needed for his diverse purposes. He calls language:

. . . a mountain effluvia
 moving to valleys
 And from nation to nation
 Crossing borders and mixing.
"Languages"

Is it conscious prophecy that he utters about his own poetry since it draws so heavily on the vernacular? In the last cited lyric he says:

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Languages die like rivers.
 Words wrapped round your tongue today
 . . .
 Shall be faded hieroglyphics
 Ten thousand years from now.

The poet does not deny the coarseness that frequently makes its way into colloquial idioms. This image of the language being a sea appears in another lyric, "Two Nocturnes," where Sandburg says, "The sea speaks a language polite people never repeat." But he was fearless in employing the various media of language available in informal usage:

So many times I was asked
 To come and say the same things
 Everybody was saying, no end
 To the yes-yes, yes-yes,
 me too, me too.

"Aprons of Silence"

When he writes of the "crimson flash" time and again as the symbol of his poetic soul, he says of it:

There is one crimson pinch of ashes left after all;
 and none of the shifting winds that whip the
 grass and none of the pounding rains that beat
 the dust, know how to touch or find the flash
 of this crimson.

"Flash Crimson"

Yet, with true Sandburgian "crimson flash" he was able to utilize freely even the technical aspects of modern industry and still achieve the transforming magic which is characteristic of him:

In the subway plugs and drums,
 In the slow hydraulic drills, in gumbo or gravel,
 Under dynamo shafts in the webs of armature spiders
 They shadow-dance and laugh at the cost.

"Smoke and Steel"

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With the multiplicity of language factors discussed on the preceding pages, it may be said with a certain degree of conclusiveness that: in spite of the degree of variability that is characteristic of colloquial language; in spite of the flair for ephemeral coinages that characterize American speech; in spite of the geographical and temporal limitations of slang, Sandburg succeeded in mirroring the personality of the people who speak this language. The following chapter will endeavor to trace those factors that were instrumental in helping create the style that is characteristically Sandburgian.

CHAPTER VII

SANDBURG'S STYLE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In the synthesis of the techniques of Sandburg's manner of expression, which devices have been analyzed in the preceding chapter, lies the key to his personal poetic style. But style does not emerge in a vacuum. It must be measured against the background of the age in which it has grown, and re-evaluated with the writer's individuality as a person. Against the backdrop of history the degree of intelligibility is perceptibly heightened.

The age of experimentation in poetry in America coincided with the beginning of Sandburg's literary career. The spirit of revolt against an entrenched romanticism which had grown decadent in its three-hundred-year-old grasp on the literature of England, and consequently of America, was sparked into being by a young Cambridge philosopher, T. E. Hulme. His advocacy of unrestrained experimentation freed poetry from its conventional molds. In the flare of popularity and enthusiasm for this "new poetry" that had sprung up in America after 1912, Sandburg's penchant for the uninhibited individuality of style, that has since been referred to as "Sandburgese," found a providential milieu. His rejection of all conventional poetic techniques, his adaptation of certain internal ones that did not run counter to his

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individual style, his unrestrained freedom of subject matter gave him an unquestionable place in that niche of history of American letters that has retained its experimental label of "new poetry."

Through the instrumentality of Harriet, who championed and guided the founding of an official organ for the poetic experimentors of the day, Sandburg was given his first public hearing. "New poetry" found also an indefatigable enthusiast in the person of Amy Lowell, of Boston. Equipped with money, intellectual and social prestige (she was a cousin to James Russell Lowell and a sister to the then-president of Harvard University), she exerted a tremendous influence on the movement. In her hands the literary experiment was molded according to her desires, and she eventually established herself as the spokesman for the movement in America. Little wonder that she greeted Sandburg's first volume of published verse as "one of the most original books that the age has produced."²³ She wrote Sandburg, saying:

I am perfectly delighted with your book! I do not know when I have read anything that gives me so much pleasure. Your 'Omaha' is a wonderful poem, and I feel about Billy Sunday as I did the first time I read it. I think it is one of the things which ought to have been said

²³ Lewis, Lloyd, in Preface to Poems of Midwest, Sandburg, Carl, Cleveland, World Publishing Co., 1946, p. 17

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and which I think you said in exactly the right way. Certain it is that no book that I have read for a long time has given me anything like the thrill and delight of this one.²⁴

An off-shoot of the "new poetry" movement, known as Imagism, came to America from England through Miss Lowell. Her conversion to "new poetry" was achieved through Ezra Pound, an American expatriate, intellectual, and poet. He spearheaded the formulation of a new theory of poetry, which called for terse, strong, vibrant poetry, purged of all extraneous emotions and didactic comment on cosmic issues. This revolutionary movement made its first appearance on the pages of Miss Monroe's literary magazine, Poetry. It was there that Miss Lowell first met it. In a few brief meetings with Ezra Pound, she became a convert to Imagism, which she embraced in theory and practice. In her hands, Imagism took on an American character. It was she who formulated the credo of American Imagists and gave it its national character in the form of six explicit dicta:

The Imagist must use exact words, and employ the language of common speech.

The particulars must be precise. The Imagist must never express himself in vague generalities.

The Imagist must create new rhythms. Free verse may be used, though it is not the only poetic form that may be employed.

²⁴ Damon, S. Foster, Amy Lowell: A Chronicle, New York, Houghton, Mifflin, 1935, p. 355-6.

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Imagists have absolute freedom in the choice of subject-matter.

Imagism seeks hard, concrete analogy to immediate experience.

The Imagist is not discursive. He must seek a dramatic condensed metaphor as an "objective correlative" of an emotional experience.

Sandburg's formal admission into the experimental movement of "new poetry" did not, however, find him go all the way to the point of embracing the Imagist movement. True, his first volume contains a modest sheaf of lyrics that show his kinship with Amy Lowell and the Imagists. And it was between the covers of Chicago Poems that the frequently anthologized "Fog" made its first appearance. In a nine-line lyric entitled, "Lost," Sandburg describes a lonely boat whistling its way through a dense lake-fog

Like some lost child
In tears and trouble
Hunting the harbor's breast
And the harbor's eyes.

The hard, precise chiseling demanded by the Imagists is present in the metaphor, "Flux":

Sand of the sea runs red
Where the sunset reaches and quivers.
Sand of the sea runs yellow
Where the moon slants and wavers.

And again in "White Shoulders":

Your white shoulders
I remember
And your shrug of laughter.

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Low laughter
Shaken slow
From your white shoulders.

Other lyrics in this volume that carry the stamp of Imagism are, "Pool," "Two," and "June." Others carry some of the demands of Imagist writing but fail in the requirement of compression in total effect. This is demonstrated by two lyrics, "Sketch" and "Follies." The Imagist trend was not to recur in any appreciable degree in Sandburg until he wrote Good Morning, America. By that time Sandburg had several years of experimentation with "new poetry" and with Imagism. He was then able to chisle such compressed metaphors as this:

Cabbages catch at the moon
It is late summer, no rain, the pack of the soil
cracks open, it is a hard summer.

In the night the cabbages catch at the moon, the
leaves drip silver, the rows of cabbage are
series of little silver waterfalls in the moon.
"Nocturn Cabbage"

With the same precision he writes the quatrain:

The sky is eaten in six places
Rag holes stand out.
It is an army blanket, and the sleeper
slept too near the fire.
"Broken Sky"

The Imagists' demand for concreteness offered no difficulty to the poet since he was fundamentally the poet of the visual. It was the lack of condensation and the tendency to inject the extraneous element of his own reaction to the objective image that changed the ultimate result of

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the poem. But to have expected Sandburg to comply with the decrees set down by the formulators of American Imagism would be tantamount to a distortion of his personality both as an individual and as a poet. Sandburg could represent himself only, not a set of preformulated laws in his writing. The tender-rough attitude of his writing was the only way he was able to articulate. And he admits it in a lyric on Milton, where Sandburg recounts the biographical facts of the great Puritan poet and then places himself in Milton's circumstances. He says, "I would write wild, foggy, smoky, wordy books" ("To the Ghost of John Milton"). To have forced his material into formal molds or to have restrained his individuality by clamping him down with even the "free" requirements of the Imagist creed would have produced someone else's style, not Sandburg's.

As his writing experience was progressing, Sandburg was becoming more and more aware of his individual style, and occasionally he would make attempts at defining it. One of the earliest lyrics that may be considered as his initial endeavor at formulating what makes him himself can be obtained from a short piece appearing in Cornhuskers:

Ah, this looking-glass man!
Liar, fool, dreamer, play-actor,
Soldier, dusty drinker of dust--
Ah! he will go with me
Down the dark stairway
When nobody is looking,
When everybody else is gone.

"Chicago Poet"

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The formlessness and fluidity of his style has its first prophecy uttered by this "dusty drinker of dust," who states that he has not yet arrived at the medium through which he would utter his poetry. It is the "dark stairway" he must go alone. He would grope longer in the darkness with the hope that something more definable would loom out of the shadows. With the experience of another volume to his credit, however, the closest he could arrive in grasping the character of his style appears in this metaphor:

There is one crimson pinch of ashes left after
all; and none of the shifting winds that
whip the grass and none of the pounding
rains that beat the dust, know how to touch
or find the flash of this crimson.
"Flash Crimson"

The poet's search for this flash of crimson, this talent buried in his soul which moaned for birthing, cried out:

All I can give you is broken-face gargoyles.
It is too early to sing and dance at funerals,
Though I can whisper to you . . .

. . . I cannot bring you now.
It is too early and I am not footloose yet.

I shall come in the night when I come with
a hammer and saw.
I shall come near your window, where you look
out when your eyes open in the morning,
And there I shall slam together bird-houses
and bird-baths for wing-loose wrens and
hummers to live in, birds with yellow wing
tips to blur and buzz soft all summer,
So I shall make little fool homes with doors,
always open doors for all and each to run
away when they want to.

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I shall come just like that even though now
it is early and I am not yet footloose.

All I can give you now is broken-face gargoyles.
"Broken-Face Gargoyles"

These lines are heavily impregnated with the hope that one day he will find the flute on which to play the songs of his poet-soul. But he was realist enough to face the fact that his melodies were to be played through the hollow reed of his native talent, which can produce only one kind of music. With the same undaunted spirit that characterizes the patient persistence of the masses who can laugh while they carry their burden, Sandburg accepts the fact of his artistic limitations. Like a circus clown, under whose heavy mask of paint hides the twitch of sorrow, Sandburg makes the admission:

As many poems as I have written to the moon
and the streaming of the moon spinners of light,
so many of the summer moon and the winter moon
I would like to shoot along to your ears for
nothing, for a laugh, a song,
for nothing at all
for one look from you,
for your face turned away
and your voice in one clutch
half-way between a tree-wind moan
and a night bird sob.

Believe nothing of it all, pay me nothing, open
your window for the other singers and keep it
shut for me.

The road I am on is a long road and I can go
hungry again like I have gone hungry before.
What else have I done nearly all my life than
go hungry and go on singing?

"Horse Fiddle"

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At the time he wrote these lines he little realized that the road he was traversing was not only long but one that had no outlet. He was destined never to reach maturity of poetic style. To employ the images he used, his art was to remain an unopened bud, a fruit that never ripened, a fog that never lifted. But once he comprehended this fact, he accepted it for what it was. With his native tool he would carve not Imagist portraits, but Sandburgian ones. To his critics' wranglings over his style Sandburg wrote a direct answer after thirty some years of experimentation. This answer reads in part:

All adverse critics of any work not yet tested by time come near falling headfirst into the category of the man who enjoys his personal habit of exclaiming to any and all who vocalize, "Would you just as soon sing as make that noise?" . . . The more original a piece of writing is, the less likely an adviser or critic is to find what is original. Some of the greatest poetry had to go through many tests of time before it came to be accepted.²⁵

For anyone who had the courage to produce his best with even the least gift, Sandburg had great admiration. It is this attitude that explains his admiration for two of Japan's minor painters of the nineteenth century, Hokusai and Hiroshige. In their own unpretentious way they were an

²⁵ Sandburg, Carl, "Those Who Make Poems," Atlantic, March, 1942, p. 345.

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inspiration and an influence on fellow artists outside Japan. It is still this attitude that accounts for his resentment of letting any extraneous force impinge upon one's freedom of individuality of style. In a poem called "Many Handles," he asks: "Would you accept a thesis in governance of the writing of poems?"

For poets who strive for pretentiousness of style, for all poetic experimentors who concede to the artificial restraints imposed by intellectual snobs, for those who write for a closed circle of the elite, Sandburg has nothing but disgust:

Light rose-candles and contemplate yourselves,
gentlemen all--speak lofty praise of each
other--form cliques or claques and wear man-
darin queues taking your cues from each other
--it has been done.

Let the cubes go by themselves in declarations
they have the answers while likewise the
globes foregather and rate the globes as
having the finalities of the exquisite far-
flung verities.

Have we not heard conversations between cube
and globe and neither of them enjoying
the shape of the other?

"Many Handles"

It is their refusal to be their natural self that is so
annoying to Sandburg:

Many the handles whereby to take hold,
many the dishes to choose and eat therefrom,
many the faces never chosen
yet worn by many as though chosen
as though saying, "This one on me my choice was."

"Many Handles"

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He was particularly annoyed with the vacillations of MacLeish, who unsaid his original poetic manifesto, that "a poem should not mean but be," ("Ars Poetica") in a curious cycle of instructions in verse. From "Ars Poetica" and "Invocation to Social Muse" to "America Was Promises," MacLeish turned from literary politics to political politics. Sandburg not only satirized this fluctuation in the lines:

Beware writing of freedom: the idea is political.
 Beware too writing of discipline: there too is
 politics.
 Be careful of abstractions: they become bright
 moths.
 When images come test them by trial and error:
 let them vanish should they choose exist.
 "Many Handles"

but he also wrote a jabberwocky parody of MacLeish's verse instructions in the following stanzas:

Nobody noogers the shaff of a sloo.
 Nobody slimbers a wench with a winch
 Nor higgles armed each with a niggles
 and each the flimdrat of a smee,
 each the inbidy hum of a smoo.

Then slong me dorst with the flagdarsh
 Then creep me deep with the crawbright.
 Let idle winds ploodaddle the dorshes.
 And you in the gold of the gloaming
 You shall be sloam with the hoolriffs.

On a flimmering floom you shall ride.
 They shall tell you bedish and desist
 On a flimmering floom you shall ride.
 "On A Flimmering Floom You Shall Ride"

If traces of Imagism are present in Sandburg, they are filtered through his personality and take on an individuality undeniably his own. In his hands Imagism is made

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more human. The objectivity demanded by the Imagists could never satisfy Sandburg simply because intellectual experiences do not satisfy him. All that he touches he vests with an emotional nuance, but always he is in complete command of his feelings.

Influences of other writers.--By and large, a reading through the multiplicity of critical reviews of Sandburg's poetry converges on the claim that Whitman's influence on Sandburg's style is the most pronounced. Undeniably, Sandburg's externals of free-verse technique are in many respects a duplication of those of the senior poet; but even these are transformed and expanded into a style of his own. To be sure, there are the long sentences, the lists, the repetitions, the parallel alliterations, etc. But whereas Whitman's lines are characterized by the tidal rhythms of oratory, Sandburg's have the unpretentious movement of daily speech. It were folly to attribute verbal genius to Sandburg, whose language is the monosyllables of truck-drivers and stevedores.

I rise out of my depths with my language
 You rise out of your depths with your language
 "Jabbers"

aptly clinches the argument of those who would carry the similarities between the poets too far. In both there is the same fidelity to the here and the now and a love of

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freedom, ruggedness, and vigor. But Sandburg's Americanism and love of humanity is not the blustering type which shouts them blatantly over and over again. Even his realism is tempered with a Scandinavian mysticism, which makes Sandburg's outlook on life different from that of Whitman. Because of this mystic content in Sandburg's poetry, it is left to the reader to interpret what the poet sees and tells. Whatever the speculation on influences may be, Sandburg does not deny it but simply asserts that the

chief influence on my poetry was Abraham Lincoln.
I have him soaked in my blood and brain and bone.
After that are the proverbs of all nations and
the music of the Negro.²⁶

Whatever outside forces there were which played their subtle part in formulating Sandburg's style, they have gone through a process of osmosis which created an individual style and which Sandburg would guard as part of himself:

Style--go ahead talking about style.
You can tell where a man gets his style just
as you can tell where Pavlova got her legs
or Ty Cobb his batting eye.

Go on talking.

Only don't take my style away.
It's my face.
Maybe no good
but anyway, my face.
I talk with it, I sing with it, I see, taste and
feel with it, I know why I want to keep it.

²⁶ Morgan, Thomas B., "A Visit with Carl Sandburg,"
Look, July 10, 1956, pp. 95-100.

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Kill my style
and you break Pavlowa's legs,
and you blind Ty Cobb's batting eye.
"Style"

By implication, then, style is the man--the sum total of his heredity, his personality, his immediate environment, his social background, his education, his life experiences. It is undeniably true that style does not develop in a vacuum. Man is influenced unawares by every contact he has with the printed or spoken word. But unless there is admiration of the person writing or speaking, there will be no conscious effort at emulation. That is why the poet could make the claim that his chief influence was Lincoln. To Sandburg he symbolized the ideal, the epitome of all those qualities which the poet underscored as desirable in the masses, for whom he had chosen to act as spokesman. If there is any place where the validity of this claim on Lincoln's influence on him should be evident, it is in the Lincoln biography itself. Though the tracing of stylistic influences is not one of the purposes of that section in this dissertation, this influence is bound to assert itself as the biography is subjected to a multi-factoral analysis in the chapter which follows immediately.

PART III

SANDBURG AND LINCOLN

In the preceding chapters, which endeavored to examine Sandburg's poetic traits, methods, and style in general, one of the deductions reached is that Sandburg is, for the most part, a poet of the visual. Whatever speculation on the metaphysical is present in his poetry, more often than not, lacks depth and adequacy of development. A third aspect is its profuseness in subject-matter, its verse pattern, and its quantity. Is Sandburg, the poet, duplicated in Sandburg, the biographer? If there are any duplications of any of the earlier traits, to what extent are they employed? To pursue further the analytical method begun with the poetry, the following chapter will be devoted to an analysis of his Lincoln biography, The Prairie Years and The War Years.

The pattern of analysis here will be, first, to examine the degree of psychological compatibility between biographer and his subject. To do what he set out to do, namely, to paint a verbal portrait of Lincoln against the backdrop of history which was being then made, Sandburg had to maneuver a multiplicity of detail toward one focal point: the person of Lincoln. The second aspect of this study will be the examination of the socio-historic aspects that went into the moulding of Lincoln, the threads of which

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run through all the volumes of the biography. The third phase in this analysis will be devoted to the study of the person of Lincoln from those incidents which Sandburg had chosen to include in his work. Thus, there will be an effort to trace Lincoln's character, his temperament and moods, his laughter, and his human weaknesses. In addition, this analysis will endeavor to trace the social phase of Lincoln's personality; namely, his attitude toward the people and their attitude toward him, as well as his social relationship with women. Because Sandburg's portrait of Lincoln is so vast, it offers adequate material to trace Lincoln's religion and faith in God. Each of these aspects will be traced in turn. From this multiple-focus analysis, there will be an effort to synthesize and evaluate the total effect of the work from the angle of the biographer's initial purpose.

CHAPTER VIII

SANDBURG, THE BIOGRAPHER

Sandburg testifies in the introduction to The War Years that he had consulted eighty percent of the Lincoln documents and other pertinent sources on the Civil War era scattered throughout the country. A twelve-year gleaning of facts on so prominent a historical figure was bound to yield prolific results, and Sandburg was faced with the difficult problem of selection and organization. The resultant profusion of detail in the biography bears a resemblance to the extravagance present in his poetry. By Sandburg's own count, the original four volumes of The War Years embody over a million words. Yet such a comparison is in itself superficial and meaningless. What is important is to learn what type of Lincoln portrait emerges from the plethora of historical data that goes into the making of this biography. Whether the mass of known facts--trivial and portentuous--on the Civil War President and his age, freight the work. Whether the figure of Lincoln succeeds to rise out of what appears to be a superfluity of detail on him and on his age.

This problem will have to be evaluated from a particular focus. The reading public for whom Sandburg writes is one whose thinking is under the impact of psychology. Men are interested in knowing the factors that went into

the determining character traits of the subject and what were the motivations of his actions. In short, the emphasis is on interpretation. Modern readers are wont to look for answers to these and other ancillary questions that help to complete the picture of the one written about. With this psychological bend of mind before him, Sandburg set out to portray Lincoln as a product of the meeting of two forces: hereditary and environmental. He sought to depict the nature and personality of Lincoln as an individual man, how he met the successive crises of life that went into the making of his individuality, and what was the nature of these crises. It was up to Sandburg to select the fertile facts that would engender Lincoln's character and personality. To do this, it was necessary for him to rely considerably on his own intuitions, to imagine thoughts and emotions and pour them out convincingly on his pages. Such handling of material called for a work that was simultaneously analytic and historic. To achieve this goal, Sandburg would have to do as impressionists do in oils. His emphasis would have to be not on richness of detail or finesse of technique, but on dramatic moments of spiritual or mental struggle or apprehension. These would have to be subjectively conveyed. Such mental focusing on the subject would give the work a dual character; first, as a work of

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art; and second, as a biography. It is as a work of art that Sandburg's creation is here subjected to a critical analysis.

Biographer and Subject.--Starting point for this analysis will be a consideration of the author's suitability to interpret the imposing and popularly revered national figure that was Abraham Lincoln. A study of Sandburg's life and his work indicate his being favored on four scores to attempt the biography, destined to show him at his best.

First, by environment. The paths of their early years run parallel. Only thirteen years after Lincoln had made his last return to Springfield, Sandburg was born in Galesburg, Knox County, not quite a hundred miles to the northwest of Lincoln's Sangamon region. Though the passage of time somewhat tempered and changed existing conditions, the prairie touch in northwest Illinois was still pronounced. Like Lincoln, Sandburg too was forced to develop some of the crude self-reliance of a prairie boy making his way in stubborn surroundings. In circumstances differing in detail from those of Lincoln's day, he experienced, nevertheless, hard poverty, hard labor, hard winters, and soft springs. To write of young Lincoln that

He lived with trees, with the hush wet with
shining raindrops, with the burning burst of
autumn, with the lone wild duck riding a north
wind and crying down on a line north and south,
the faces of open sky and weather . . . these
he had for companions

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Sandburg needed only to recall the scenes of his own boyhood, a source more reliable than any document could be. Lincoln in the cornfields; taking part in small-town pranks; building the family log-cabin--scenes like these needed but Sandburg's own recollections to be convincingly re-created on the pages of the books. The stories of Lincoln he heard among the townsfolk were those of a plain country lawyer. To them, Lincoln was a neighbor who, though he made a national reputation for himself, was always just "one of the plain folks."

Second, by experience. Just as his prairie boyhood days served as documentation for Lincoln's youth, so Sandburg's political experiences, both in Milwaukee and in Chicago, stood him in good stead in filling in the chapters on Lincoln's political experiences. A great American democrat himself, Sandburg could look at the world, feel toward the poor and oppressed, and say things the way Lincoln would have looked at, felt toward, and said of the great masses of American folk. Had not Sandburg sung of them in all of his poetry?

Third, by temperament. Even beyond the sociological poems of his first volume, Sandburg has been always a poet of protest. His argument with wealth and culture pivoted on his inability to see in them much that is kindly and worthy of admiration. He peopled his poems with the lowly who were become sodden, unresisting, and often brutal as a

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result of the benumbing sociological conditions in which they were living. From this abuse came Sandburg's protests and accusations, which flowed unremittingly from his pen. He sorrowed for these people much as Lincoln sorrowed for all mankind oppressed by injustice, prejudice, and poverty. But whereas Sandburg's heart went out to those who needed it most, Lincoln's was all-embracing. The words of Thomas B. Aldrich in "Monody on the Death of Wendell Phillips," can well apply to Lincoln:

The hurts
Of all men beat in his breast.

Sandburg, then, could look at Lincoln through the windows of his own soul and see the man as he was because Sandburg is kin and race of Lincoln's soul.

Fourthly, by his profession as poet. Poets have always understood Lincoln. One needs only turn to the poetry of Emerson, Whitman, Lindsay, or Benet, to verify this claim. It takes an awareness of tone and subtle emphasis and a poetic sensing that a great story is best told simply, plainly, and with restraint. Through the unadorned, colloquial style of Sandburg's biography of Lincoln there breaks through, the sturdy, loving heart of the man "who never willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom."

On choosing Lincoln, Sandburg decided upon a subject which was most natural to him. In him he found not only a

personification of the American people, but a folk-hero about whom the veil of myth was already beginning to fall. And he set out to take Lincoln out of the region of myth and present him to the people in clear daylight, at the same time adding to the mystery of his complex personality. In Sandburg's words, the goal he set for himself reads thus: "I wanted to take Lincoln away from the religious bigots and the professional politicians, and restore him to the common people to whom he belongs."²⁷ By the consensus of critical opinion on Sandburg, he has achieved this purpose.

America in Lincoln's Day.--From the very outset of the gigantic portrait, Sandburg labored under the conviction that Lincoln was intelligibly and inevitably produced by his own times, circumstances, and people. For one to try to separate one from the other were to endeavor to separate light from the sun. It was an inescapable necessity to recreate the sociological culture of the day if there was to arise an intelligible portrait of Lincoln. To this end, the crude society of the prairie frontier is pictured with luminous realism. The throb of immigration, the hordes of people moving westward, the movements of the pioneers who

²⁷ Lunderbergh, Holger, "Carl Sandburg," American Scandinavian Review, September, 1938, p. 49-51.

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were struggling to adjust themselves to a new country--these things are told in a homely vernacular, a speech far different from the polished rhetoric of the conventional biographer.

Nothing earthy or commonplace is held in disdain because to Sandburg nothing human is unclean. Particularly in the first volume of Prairie Years does one sense what has been noted when Sandburg's poetry was being discussed. He has a feeling for the soil, and there is something mystical to him in this closeness to the fact of the earth. Just as he does in his poetry, so too in the biography he paints in colors and lines of stark realism. Only occasionally is there a deviation from this when he murmurs a haunting phrase of inward belief or preoccupation. How ably he has succeeded in the art of realistic touches can be glimpsed from the following picture:

Rains came, loosening the top soil of the land where it was not held by grass roots; it was a yellow clay that softened to slush; in this yellow slush many a time Abe Lincoln walked ankle deep . . . In the timbers with his ax, on the way to chop, his toes, heels, soles, the balls of his feet, climbed and slid in banks and sluices of clay. In the corn-fields, hoeing, cutting, and shucking, again his bare feet spoke with the clay of the earth.

Sandburg's frequent and rapid change from writing the racy natural speech of the pioneers to the magical language of poetry is characteristic of Prairie Years. Speaking of Nancy Hanks, for example, he writes:

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She was sad with sorrows like dark stars in blue mist. The hope was burned deep in her that beyond the harsh clay paths, the everyday scrubbing, washing, patching, fixing, the babble and gabble of today, there are pastures and purple valley of song.

To Sandburg the ability to give poetic interpretation to ordinary things of life was nothing new. He has been doing that consistently in his poetry. Now, he employs this method with the substance that went into the making of the Lincoln portrait. The Biblical starkness of the old pioneers, the wild flowers in the springtime, the songs and the wonder of the wilderness, the log cabins, the Indians, the quiltings, the shucking-bees, all these and more are subjected to the transforming touch of his poetic interpretation. Among others, one reads:

One morning in April, when the redbud was speaking its first pink whispers, and the dandelions scattered butter colors in long handfuls over the upland bull-grass, a rider on a muddy, sweating horse stopped in New Salem and gave out handbills signed by the governor of the state calling for volunteer soldiers to fight Indians.

The community in which young Lincoln lived was fired and stimulated by the migratory and nomadic life of its people. And a curious mind like Lincoln's would hardly be deprived from such conditions. The school where he was to develop his intellectual capacities was the talk and the arguments of the rough and untutored people that made up his environment. It was here that he sharpened his talents

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as a describer, an arguer, and a story-teller. Eventually, this was not enough for the knowledge-hungry boy. In Sandburg's language:

He wanted to learn, to know, to live, to reach out; he wanted to satisfy hūngers and thirsts he couldn't tell about, this big boy of the backwoods. And some of what he wanted so much, so deep down, seemed to be in the books. Maybe in the books he would find the answers to dark questions pushing around in the pools of his thoughts and the drifts of his mind.

Without detracting from the biographical intent, Sandburg portrays the economic history of the period, a situation that had its influence on the making of Lincoln. The author notes that when Lincoln was seven years old, his family moved from Kentucky to Indiana because

Poor white men were having a harder time to get along . . . It seemed that as more slave black men were brought in, the poor white man didn't count for so much.

The low ebb of national economy is brought out by flesh-and-blood statistics. Debtor prisons were teeming with inmates. Observations like the following, that in one city the total debt of forty prisoners was \$23.40 are more than a cold, impersonal fact of America's economic history. They are a demonstration of Sandburg's repeated protest against the unjust oppression of the poor, irrespective of time. This is but an extenuation of the role he faithfully maintained throughout his poetry.

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Time and again he recrosses the elements of biography with those of the then-current history. When he describes Lincoln's return to Springfield after his Congressional term expired, the element of welding the biographical with the historical is reinforcing to both:

He saw cow pastures his feet had worn paths on,
filled with lumber from cottages; fences hedged
the old paths. He saw city lots where a log cabin
had stood and the dishes inside were pewter; in
their stead had come a brick house with a pantry
and little fan-shaped ice-cream dishes tinted
with gold and blue violets . . .

Sandburg notes that even after Lincoln was earning the highest fees paid in the region for legal services, he had to do his own shoveling of snow, cut his own firewood, axle-grease his buggy wheels, and curry-comb his horse. Two years before his presidential election, the streets of New York were resounding with the steps of 40,000 unemployed men marching in a mass demonstration, their banner proclaiming, "Hunger is a sharp thorn." To allow such historical facts to lie fallow in the dust of time would be too unlike Sandburg. His character as poet-sociologist is consistently the same.

Over and above these happenings, Sandburg records that the growing menace of slavery beat with an ominous throb as cotton grew to unprecedented importance. In proportion to the people's obsession with fears for the Union, grew their decline in the sense of human principles that gave the Union its meaning. Some spokesmen for the Union

were offering a plan urging a national extension of the principle of slavery without race distinction. The paupers, the unemployed and the non-land owners were to be attached to the soil for life.

Meanwhile, as the biography records it, the West had problems of its own:

The railroad and traffic problem of the country, the land question and free homestead development were woven in and tied through with the more open issue of slavery. The economic results of the North were beginning to tower overwhelmingly over the South. It was happening again and again that an economic issue based on natural, healthy growth of the country was buried and covered over by the raging passions and prejudices of the supreme political, social and economic issue of slavery.

Throughout the lengthy work Sandburg was forced to devise a literary vehicle which would enable him to control the handling of the multitude of events that went into the making of a growing nation. The cyclorama of history, against which the Lincoln portrait was being developed, was too varied and too detailed for full treatment. Yet, to ignore the presence of these issues was tantamount to creating a false picture of still-life. The first time he resorts to a literary vehicle of some sort is when he portrays the boy Lincoln wondering about the world beyond his little sphere, and then Sandburg utilizes the moon through to comment on the progress of the country: "He might have asked the moon, 'What do you see?' And the moon might have told him many

things." Then there follows a dreamy fantasy of fast-moving pictures of the increase of population through European emigration, the Louisiana purchase, the Lewis and Clark expedition, the westward migrations, etc.

Sandburg utilizes every opportunity to make the reader aware of the progress civilization was making in America. Thus, when Lincoln arrives for the first time in Chicago for a political convention, in broad outlines Sandburg traces the picture of this city as Lincoln's eyes have seen it. Similarly, the reader is given a graphic portrait of the city of Washington when Lincoln first looked at it as he arrived there in the capacity of senator from Illinois. At another time Sandburg utilizes the medium of newspaper advertising to show the changing picture of life from crude pioneer surroundings to the more genteel one of nineteenth-century elegance. At another time the reader sees the changing society reflected in the person of Lincoln himself:

His feet had worn deerskin moccasins as a boy; they were put into rawhide boots when he was full-grown; now he had them in dressed calf leather. His head-cover was a coonskin cap when he was a boy, and all men and boys wore racoon tail as a high headpiece; floating down the Mississippi to New Orleans he wore a black felt hat from an eastern factory . . . ; now he was a prominent politician and lawyer wearing a tall, stiff, silk hat known as a "stove-pipe," also called a "plug hat."

When Sandburg was faced with the fourth year of Lincoln's presidential term, he felt the need of giving a sweeping

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picture of the highlights of the administration. The opening came when he wrote the sentence: "New Years Eve came, the fourth for Lincoln in the White House. In the first . . ." Thus could Sandburg include the major issues of Lincoln's first three years.

From the mass of material out of which the biography arises, Sandburg creates in the reader a sense of what it was like to be alive in that day.

Lincoln and the People.--Circumstances cannot be isolated from the people that take part in them. And in the life of Lincoln there are people who have helped mold him and who help explain him--in so far as Lincoln was explainable. From the pages of Sandburg's work there looms the society of Lincoln's earlier years. In true democratic fashion, the illiterate and literate meet on even terms. The illiterate element, steeped in ignorance and superstition, was nevertheless actively interested in politics. But politics to them was a mere scheming for place and pelf. Belligerent by nature, they would often solve their personal difficulties--and sometimes political ones--by hammering, clawing, gauging, and biting one another. To them, leisure was synonymous with drinking and telling racy stories.

Within this milieu the tough, rawboned boy with amazing physical powers, is shown growing from boyhood to manhood. It was already then that he had given evidence of

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the two traits that have woven about him a certain web of mystery: loneliness and silence. Of these aspects Sandburg writes:

Days came often when he was by himself all the time except at breakfast and supper hours in the cabin home. In some years more of his time was spent in loneliness than in the company of other people . . .

And again:

He found his life thrown in ways where there was a certain chance for a certain growth. And so he grew. Silence found him; he met silence. In the making of him as he was, the element of silence was immense.

Thus the qualities that were to leave an indelible impress upon his personality throughout his life were burgeoning in him in the tender years of boyhood, when he was being shaped by the crude aspects of pioneer society. Sandburg's portrait shows him far more a listener than a talker. Questions of life and destiny moved him near to prayers and tears, "the depths of them were too profound for man to try to tell what he knew. So he took recourse to silence." His loneliness was to experience its greatest paradox during his presidential years. In the biography one sees him waylaid and wedged in by endless numbers of office seekers, who serve only to sharpen his loneliness more keenly.

But there was still another side to Lincoln's early society. This group was interested in culture and refinement, studied books and met periodically for what was called

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"mutual improvement." With one group as well as with the other, he was thoroughly at home. Sandburg writes intimately of this heterogeneous society, re-creating the talk of the men and women who had eaten with Lincoln, given him bed overnight, listened to his jokes and understood his silences. Within this environment Lincoln is shown growing in wisdom and understanding. Lincoln was made of the same kindly stuff as they, and yet so very different from other men--inexplicably different and strange. Out of the crude, rough, and untutored people, Lincoln lifted himself from the ranks of the ordinary. From an awkward, unschooled boy, he developed himself through a maze of vicissitudes to the statesman chosen to guide his country in its most perilous years.

Sandburg would have his readers recognize that of all the people that had an influence upon Lincoln's early formation, that of his mother, Nancy Hanks, comes first. From her Lincoln learned those basic virtues that make for solid Christian living in the small circle of the family. When her death left a void in the life of the Lincoln home, Tom Lincoln sought to have this emptiness filled by someone who would give his children the love and understanding of a natural mother. Sally Bush agreed to give them all that and more when she agreed to become the wife of Tom Lincoln. Of her, as of Nancy Hanks, Sandburg writes tenderly that in the formative years of her eldest stepson she was the influence

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that guided the development of his character and personality with an understanding beyond her own realization. Her simple but strong faith in God's goodness and love toward the human family was one of the rich forces that went into the making of Lincoln's character. Hard as her life was, she was thankful to be alive. It is the same gratitude Sandburg underscores in the character of the people of The People, Yes. In her unschooled way she radiated this understanding and goodness of God, toward her stepson:

Sally Bush . . . was all of a good mother to Abe. If he broke out laughing when others saw nothing to laugh at, she let it pass as a sign of his thoughts working their own way. So far as she was concerned he had a right to do unaccountable things; since he never lied to her, why not? So she justified him.

She was able to say of him after he had already grown to manhood and set out to follow his own path in life: "Abe never spoke a cross word to me in his life since we lived together." Years later, Lincoln would pay her a tribute that reveals how highly he prized her. Sandburg writes that to Mrs. Rebecca Pomeroy, special nurse to the two Lincoln boys, the President spoke words of thanks for her expressions of sympathy on the day of Willie's burial, and then added a tender memory of his mother: "I had a good Christian mother, and her prayers have followed me thus far through life."

Perhaps one of the tenderest scenes that Sandburg paints between mother and son is the one where Lincoln is

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is shown bidding his mother a final farewell before his departure for Washington, where he was to assume office of the President of the United States:

Sally Bush and he put their arms around each other and listened to each other's heartbeats. They held hands and talked, they talked without holding hands. Each looked into the eyes thrust back in deep sockets. She was all of a mother to him.

He was her boy more than any born to her. He gave her a photograph of her boy, a hungry picture of him standing and wanting, wanting. He stroked her face a last time, kissed good-by, and went away.

There were many men and far fewer women who have come into Lincoln's life. Some left an impress on the making of him; others, like lighted candles were blown out by a gust of wind. It was primarily in silence, however, and apart from the eyes of others--says Sandburg--that Lincoln grew, learned, shaped his personality and purpose and held firmly to his resolution that his life should curve "quietly, as the orbit of the earth."

Lincoln's Character.--After more than two years as President of the United States, during which time an immense audience of his fellow-countrymen sat in judgment of him, there were many appraisals of him, many estimates, absolute pronouncements, frank and apologetic surmises that he was this, that, or the other. From the documentary evidence utilized in the biography, the trait least assailable was that of his personal integrity. This trait, which in the

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course of time has crystallized itself in the epithet 'Honest Abe' can be traced even to his young years. There is an early account of it in The Prairie Years, when Lincoln worked as a sales clerk in the village store. One evening, when he was counting the money a woman paid him for dry goods, he found she had over-paid her bill by six-and-a-quarter cents. Sandburg records the fact that Lincoln walked six miles to pay it back. His honesty is attested to also in the second volume of The Prairie Years, when Lincoln was already practicing law. One of his friends, Henry C. Whitney, is cited as saying that when the case was one of clear dishonesty, Lincoln would hedge in some way so as not to partake of the dishonesty himself. In a case of doubtful dishonesty he would give his client the benefit of the doubt. It was Lincoln's frugal and careful ways in handling property cases, his scruples and fears about the slightest sort of cheating, and his code of justice that won him the support of fellow lawyers and judges. Sandburg quotes Senator Lyman Trumbull saying of Lincoln: "He never misled me by word or deed." It is because of this honesty that he was big enough to stand before the public, when he was answering Senator Douglas' speech, and say of himself:

I do not claim, gentlemen, to be unselfish; I do not pretend that I would not like to go to the United States Senate; I make no such hypocritical pretense, but I do say to you that in this mighty issue, it

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is nothing to you--nothing to the mass of the people of the nation--whether or not Judge Douglas or myself shall ever be heard of after this night.

The philosophy which guided Lincoln throughout his life, appears in the biography in the direct words of Lincoln:

Quarrel not at all. No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare time for personal contention. Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiating of his temper and the loss of self-control. Yield larger things to which you own no more than equal right; and yield lesser ones, though clearly your own.

This disciplining of the tongue to make it an instrument of common understanding was aptly worded by him in still different words: "Shades of opinion may be sincerely entertained by honest and truthful men." Sandburg records the incident when Robert Lincoln lost his father's gripsack containing the inaugural address, and Lincoln spoke witheringly to him. Some time later speaking confidentially of this incident to Lamon, Lincoln said: "I guess I have lost my certificate of moral character written by myself." Senator Wade of Ohio was able to rely confidently upon Lincoln's character when the latter was charged by his enemies of readiness to violate the Constitution whenever, without laying himself open, he could damage the slavery institution. Sandburg gives Wade's reply as follows:

I will only say that from Mr. Lincoln's character and conduct from his youth up, you have no right to draw any inference that he will trespass upon the rights of any man.

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As the biography progresses, Lincoln's philosophy of conduct in politics is shown to have been no different from that which guided his personal life. It led him to the formulation of the theory that "Some things legally right are morally wrong." At an all night session held by the members of the State Legislature favoring Springfield for the State Capital, Lincoln was told of a block of votes he could have if he would give his votes for a certain measure that he considered against his principles. Lincoln's reply was:

You may burn my body to ashes, and scatter them to the winds of Heaven; you may drag my soul down to the regions of darkness and despair to be tormented forever; but you will never get me to support a measure which I believe to be wrong, although by doing so I may accomplish that which I believe to be right.

The scrupulous caution in his dealing with others, and which Lincoln considered wisdom, gave rise to the whisper of his being "cunning as a fox." Basically, it was translatable to this: give no offense to others and deal justly with all.

Sandburg records that Lincoln, speaking to his close friend, Joshua Speed, once said:

As a nation we began by declaring 'All men are created equal.' We now practically read it, 'All men are created equal, except negroes!' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read, 'All men are created equal except negroes, foreigners, and Catholics!' When it comes to this I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of living liberty--to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without alloy of hypocrisy.

Lincoln's concept of democracy is shown bearing out this idea even more directly, when Sandburg quotes him as saying: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master . . . whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

After his nomination to the presidency in 1860, Lincoln was watching the young but powerful political party of Republicans shaping his personal figure into heroic stature, coloring his personality into something more than it actually was, picturing him as an embodiment of excellence and of genius, one in whom there were qualities that he had never tested, never put under the fire of experience. If he was to prove to be the man they said he was, states the biographer, it could be only by "prayers, tears, sardonic laughter, through a wild dance of death out of which he, perhaps, could not come alive." Sandburg took upon himself, however, the task of tearing off the veil descending upon Lincoln and of showing him to the people the man that he was. To achieve this, he portrays Lincoln in his strong moments and weak; he writes of Lincoln's virtues and faults, of his foibles and weaknesses--of all things which spell out the man of flesh and blood.

His Temperament and Moods.--Lincoln's personality, intricate and mysterious even to himself, looms large on the pages of the biography. In moods he is shown to have

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been a drifter, letting the wind and weather of history have their way with him, taking no credit to himself for the inevitable. The biography records Isaac N. Arnold, a close friend of Lincoln's, making this estimate of him: "Mirthfulness and melancholy, hilarity and sadness, were strangely combined in him." His law partner, William H. Herndon, who had the opportunity to observe Lincoln at close range for a long period of time, was unable to make out his "woe-struck face." It was a face made desolate with melancholy, observes Sandburg, and the barriers of its mystery rarely let down. Herndon tried to figure out whether it was heredity, environment, glands, slow blood circulation, constipation, or love. The biographer quotes Robert L. Wilson, a colleague of Lincoln, writing in this regard:

Lincoln told me that although he appeared to enjoy life rapturously, still he was the victim of terrible melancholy. He sought company and indulged in fun and hilarity without restraint or stint as to time; but, when by himself, he told me that he was so overcome by mental depression that he never dared carry a knife in his pocket . . .

True to his original claim, Sandburg shows here how Lincoln's heredity and environment made him an easy prey to superstitions. Not only as a boy is he portrayed searching his dreams for meanings; but even as a sternly practical and strictly logical man that he develops into, the rigorous realist that he could be in given events, he is shown to have unchangeably believed in dreams as having validity for

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himself and for others. Of certain coincidences he would feel that what had happened before under certain combinations of events would probably happen again. Both he and his wife were believers in dreams. He tried to read them for their connections with his future; she saw them as signs and portents. Sandburg selects the well-known dream incident, or illusion, which haunted the president for a long time. On the eve of his presidential election he had thrown himself on a sofa. After some time, when he looked into a mirror directly across the room, he saw himself full length but with two faces, one paler than the other. He rose from the sofa to test the real or illusory character of this occurrence. Once again he reclined on the sofa and the experience was repeated. A few days later the experience reoccurred. His wife read the meaning into it that her husband would be elected to serve another term, but that the pallor on one face meant he would not live through his second term. Lincoln tried the experiment in the White House, but the effect was not duplicated. Some time later, he was inclined to believe it was a natural phenomenon of refraction and optics that could be accounted for on scientific principles.

It was Lincoln's belief, says Sandburg, that the best interpreters of dreams were the common people. He held that some basis of truth could be found for whatever obtained general belief among these "children of Nature." Such was

Lincoln's outlook not only on dreams, but on the superstitions of the people as well. Of the latter he claimed that they had roots of reality in natural occurrences.

His Laughter.--The best warfare with his melancholy was to find people and trade with them his yarns and drolleries. This aspect is brought out early in The Prairie Years. Lincoln was not yet grown-up when he realized that his heart would be hurting if he did not learn to laugh at himself with a horse laugh. Years later he would say of himself: "I laugh because if I didn't I would weep." This is the same reason Sandburg attributed to the laughter of the people when he wrote of them in his poetry. Lincoln's gift of laughter, his flair for the funny and the comic, his scrambling of nonsense with serious sense, have become intimately associated with Lincoln's name and personality, and throughout the biography the echoes of his laughter are to be heard. Even in state papers he injected exaggerations, thinly shaded jests, and outright jokes. In the portrayal of his personality one cannot fail to notice the blending current of the comic and mystic elements. But this joking habit of the President was regarded as a vulnerable point by his political opposition. An Illinois cavalry colonel, John F. Farnsworth, is recorded in the biography as quoting Lincoln on his story-telling:

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a funny story if it has the element of genuine wit, has the same effect on me that I suppose a good square drink of whiskey has on an old toper; it puts new life into me . . . I have always believed that a good laugh was good for both the mental and the physical digestion.

On another occasion, Congressman James Ashley of Ohio went very early one morning to see the President about General McClellan. Almost instinctively Lincoln began with his well-known phrase, "Well, . . . that reminds me of a story." When Ashley began protesting, Lincoln looked at him sadly, saying:

Ashley, I have great confidence in you, and great respect for you, and I know how sincere you are. But if I couldn't tell these stories, I would die. Now, you sit down!

Hugh McCulloch, officer of the Treasury Department, is quoted as testifying to this same effect, saying: "story telling was to Mr. Lincoln a safety valve . . . relief from oppressing cares."

First and foremost, then, Lincoln took recourse to laughter for therapeutic reasons, not only for himself but for those of his listeners as well. And his story-telling ran back to a talent which was part of his temperament and to an instinct for democracy, an instinct which drove him to snatch at false dignity resting only on externals. As for his stories, Sandburg notes that Lincoln chose them for their wit and not for their vulgarity. Horace White of the

Chicago Tribune, who saw Lincoln through the debates with Douglas and on through the years in the White House, wrote of Lincoln's humor being intermeshed with his everyday behavior and democratic habits. With his propensity to melancholy, the pendulum of his temperament swung faithfully to the side of humor to bring about a wholesome sense of mental balance for him. His sense of the comic and occasional role of the comedian, which stayed with him during his term of office, was the subject of criticism both by the press and by those who helped him carry the burden of office. Sandburg records an observation to this effect, made by Charles A. Dana, assistant secretary of war, whom Lincoln invited on Election Day of November, 1864, to listen to some writings of the American humorist, Petroleum V. Nasby. Between interruptions by telegrams and by political business of the moment, Lincoln continued reading Nasby. During one of these interruptions, the secretary of war, Edwin M. Stanton called Mr. Dana out and voiced his impatience with what seemed to him mere nonsense on the part of the President:

He could not understand apparently that it was by the relief which those jests afforded to the strain of mind under which Lincoln had so long been living, and to the natural gloom of a melancholy and desponding temperament--this was Mr. Lincoln's prevailing characteristic--that the safety and sanity of his intelligence were maintained and preserved.

Thus, the comic element in Lincoln is shown in the biography as drawing to him those who truly valued laughter,

and annoying those who preferred less of such humor in their President. Many were those who discounted or forgot it in the flow of Lincoln's solemn messages voicing grief, hope, and assurance. Yet, for a large mass of people his humor was the channel through which they formed their impressions of him as a plain, neighborly, a somewhat droll man, at home to common folks and even to simpletons and charlatans who might step into the White House for a look at this man of kaleidoscopic humor. Sandburg emphasizes the fact that the range of the serious and the comic in Lincoln ran far and wide.

His Human Foibles.--It has not been Sandburg's interest to select or delete the material at his disposal in such a way as to produce Lincoln in an aura of false idealization or unreal perfection. If the person of Lincoln stood tall in his qualities of mind and soul over the masses, he had, nevertheless, his feet planted in the muck and grime of frail human nature. That he was heir to the same shortcomings they were, detracts nothing from the greatness that kept his head above the level of mediocrity.

When he assumed to carry the burden of the highest office in the land, he tacitly agreed to have his countrymen sit in judgment of him in his private and political life. And the downpour of criticism and accusations did not fail to come. Evils of gossip, greed, jealousy, and personal

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ambition in the fury of the rushing events of the war years, created various unfavorable impressions of the President. Sandburg shies from none of these in the biography. And of the many eulogies spoken at Lincoln's death, Sandburg selected the documents objectively. He draws upon every source that can provide the seed for the unfolding of the person of Lincoln.

The men who had the opportunity of living at a closer range to Lincoln witnessed instances when he lowered the barriers of self-control to give vent to his roused emotions. Congressman J. B. Alley had often seen Lincoln provoked and tried, but only once did he see Lincoln in a burst of temper. The biography shows him waylaid by two importunate office-seekers one day, men who persisted in needling him for an office he could not give. Then the President,

evidently worn out by care, turned upon them, and such an angry terrific tirade against those two incorrigible bore, I never before heard from the lips of mortal man.

Thus spoke Congressman Alley. To speak of Lincoln's shortcomings in the legal capacity, Sandburg turns to Lincoln's law partner, William H. Herndon:

Lincoln's fault, if any, was that he saw things less than they really were; less beautiful and more frigid. He crushed the unreal, the inexact, the hollow, the sham. He saw what no man could dispute, but failed to see what might have been seen.

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Still from Herndon's pen comes this statement, intended to portray Lincoln's shortcomings:

he is terribly, vexatiously skeptical. He can scarcely understand anything, unless he has the time and place fixed in his mind.

Herndon was yet to learn that in personal decisions Lincoln was as independent and free-going as he was in shaping his own formulas of politics and law. One of Lincoln's friends is quoted as saying in this respect: "He respectfully listened to all advice, and rarely if ever, followed it."

A petty human weakness is attested to by Lincoln himself when Sandburg quotes directly from him. Lincoln says in all candor about his loss in the senatorial election:

I regret my defeat moderately but I am not nervous about it. I could have headed off every combination had it not been for (Governor) Matteson's double game--and his defeat gives me more pleasure than my own gives me pain.

Neither was Lincoln always humble. He could be cutting and scornful. On July 27, 1848, he delivered a speech in Congress, in which speech he sketched a cartoon of another politician. Yet in this very caricature of another man there was a quiet report of himself--Sandburg notes by way of comment--a revelation of why he would rather quit politics than be told what to do. He knew he was slipping in popularity because of his refusal to be obedient to public opinion on the Mexican War. A newspaper comment on the style of the speech described it as "scathing and withering."

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Sandburg's portrayal of Lincoln in his presidential moves in no way underplays the fact that Lincoln was often caustically criticized because of his Secretary of State. Seward was charged with many objectionable things, especially with too great ascendancy and control of the mind of the President and measures of the administration. Of the "backstairs" influence paralyzing the President's best intentions, Joseph Medill of the Chicago Tribune wrote to Schuyler Colfax:

Seward . . . is Lincoln's evil genius. He has been President de facto, and has kept a sponge saturated with chloroform to Uncle Abe's nose all the while, except one or two brief spells, during which rational intervals Lincoln removed Buell, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and discharged McClellan. There must be reorganization of the Cabinet.

From the abundant eulogies cited in the biography, the one by Rev. John E. Todd, has this to say about Lincoln's "grave faults":

over-lenieny and generosity, deliberation and patience--faults which would have been excellences in less desperate times, and which even in these times have probably been our salvation.

Lincoln had been charged with seeking to purchase peace by concessions and ignoring platforms; with having no Cabinet in the true sense of the word; with not consulting his Cabinet councilors as a body, upon important matters; with being too easy, too bland, too easy-going as he parcelled out

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post-offices and consulates. Sandburg considered none of these accusations as possible detriments which might take away from the greatness of the personality of Lincoln, and fearlessly included them in the biography.

Lincoln's Ability to 'Take It'.--In view of such attacks as have been heaped on Lincoln, it seems logical to examine, in the light shed by the biography, his moral stamina to withstand the psychological drag into paralyzing discouragement. Though the onus of attacks came to him in his presidential capacity, he has been showed readied for them already in his legal and his earlier political experiences. Disappointments and criticisms are experiences one does not merely get used to; they are the chisel and the mallet that can bring out the best in man or completely crush him. Lincoln would have them do the former. To illustrate Lincoln's stamina Sandburg records a pertinent incident. One day, General Robert Patterson, who was blamed more than others for the Northern defeat at Bull Run, came to the White House to have his good name restored:

The President replied that he would cheerfully accede to any practicable measure to do me justice, but that I need not expect to escape abuse as long as I was of any importance or value to the community, adding that he received infinitely more abuse than I did, but he ceased to regard it, and I must learn to do the same.

At another time, when suspicion and criticism of him was rampant, Lincoln wrote calmly to a man in New Orleans:

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"I shall do nothing with malice. What I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing."

With patience and understanding, Sandburg shows by the selection of historical data how time had been required to grow Lincoln. His build-up and development were slow, but he grew up "tough, solid, knotty, gnarled, standing out with power against the storm." Horace White, of the Chicago Tribune, shows the stolid granite-like figure of Lincoln, in whom exterior and interior storms have succeeded in releasing the kindly soul that was his. Sandburg gives the following observations of White, who wrote of Lincoln during the worst years of the war:

Mr. Lincoln's nature was one of almost child-like sweetness. He did not 'put you at your ease' when you came into his presence. You felt at your ease without being put there. He never assumed superiority over anybody in the ordinary intercourse of life . . . His democracy was of the unconscious kind--he did not know anything different from it. Coupled with this was a habit of unselfishness and kindly temper most engaging to all who knew him. At the same time he knew when he was imposed upon, and it was unsafe for anybody to presume upon his good nature to take him for a flat.

Another quotation in the same vein is the one of Carl Schurz, who wrote on October 12, 1864, to Theodor Petrasch, a newly arrived immigrant:

. . . he is a man of profound feeling, correct and firm principles and incorruptible honesty. His motives are unquestionable, and he possesses to a remarkable degree the characteristic, God-given trait of this people, sound common sense. Should

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you read his official documents and his political letters, you would find this verified to a surprising extent . . . He personifies the people and that is the secret of his popularity.

Another documentary quotation Sandburg has chosen to fill in the Lincoln portrait is that of Lincoln's secretary of war, Charles A. Dana, who had more than average opportunities to observe the President in the trying war years. He gives a keen analysis of Lincoln as man and as politician:

Lincoln was a supreme politician. He understood politics because he understood human nature. . . . He was all solid, hard, keen intelligence combined with goodness. The expression of his face and of his goodness which impressed one most, after his benevolence and benignity, was his intelligent understanding. You felt that here was a man who saw through things, who understood, and you respected him accordingly.

Such is the person who rises out of Sandburg's portrait: a man surrounded by gallant generals and rash ones; by snarling office-seekers, wealthy war-profiteers, scalawags and scoundrels and contrabands; by dignified statesmen and authors; by professional humorists; by soldiers and their wives; and finally by representatives of the people and by the people themselves. Within this framework Lincoln's character and his personality go through a simultaneous unfolding, displaying those facets which went into the making of his individual fibre. In the midst of a turbulent sea of humanity he stands--not as a mighty hero, a demi-god with unerring foresight and wisdom--but as a mortal, molded of

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the same clay as the masses. Like they, he had his tempers and distempers, trying his way out now one way, now another. There is a sense of his belonging to the crowd of men and women playing and loving, quarreling and making-up, all without much rhyme or reason. Lincoln, too, shifts from one mood to another: now joking and laughing, now being bewildered and disappointed, now woeful and weeping. In one thing, however, he was steadfast: in his purpose of saving the Union by removing the blight of slavery from it, because a house divided cannot stand. Here, as in his youth, Lincoln is portrayed eminently as a man of the atmosphere which surrounded him.

Lincoln and the Masses.--The presence of the masses is felt particularly in the four volumes which treat of the war years. It seems logical at this point to pause long enough to determine how the masses were disposed toward the man whom their votes have placed in the White House? How did he appear to them? Sandburg utilizes a revealing document to this effect when he quotes from the letter of Joseph Twitchell, regimental chaplain in McClellan's camp on the Virginia peninsula. Writing to his father, July 9, 1862, Twitchell says:

They (the Negroes) hardly account him a real man, but rather some half-mythical, far-off omen of good, which would one day break the clouds above them. Simple minds apprehend persons rather than principles.

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Already in his early political career the people were responding to him. Among the thousands of plain folk was an instinctive response that his voice was their voice; that his tongue was their tongue. Lincoln's fellow lawyers in Illinois knew that hidden in the caverns of his heart and soul, "Lincoln had queer soft spots and his feelings ran out into understanding of blunderers and stumblers; he spoke their language and their stories." Throughout the four volumes of War Years the reader is consciously or unconsciously aware that it was Lincoln's gift of empathy that sounded out the people's sorrows so that he could weep at their hardships and feel the pull of the load that was weighing them down.

Lincoln always regarded himself as part of the people and prided himself of this fact. Repeatedly he referred to himself as "the representative, for the time being, of the majesty of the people of the United States." This was not merely an empty phrase; his respect for them was honest. Walt Whitman wrote to his mother that when Lincoln was reviewing the Ninth Corps parade up Pennsylvania Avenue,

It looked funny to see the President standing with his hat off to them just the same as the rest as passed by.

To show how well the people responded to Lincoln's attitude toward them, Sandburg cites the statement made by Gilbert Finch, a conductor on the Alton Railroad:

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Lincoln never frightened anybody. No one was afraid of him. But something about him made plain folks feel toward him a good deal as a child feels toward his father.

And Lincoln reciprocated with corresponding feelings. Sandburg records Lincoln as saying one day to his friend, Joshua Speed:

Speed, die when I may, I want it said of me by those who know me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower when I thought a flower would grow.

With the sympathy and love of a father, Lincoln would receive the humble poor seeking his help in their distress. In his many acts of kindness toward those whose burdens he could alleviate, Lincoln found pleasure and a reward in feeling that he has done good to others.

The biography quotes another Alton man who wrote of Lincoln that in all his actions and habits he resembled the people:

gentle as he was strong, fearless as he was honest, who towered above them in that psychic radiance that penetrates in some mysterious way every fibre of the hearer's conscience.

His feel for the people is evidenced even in his published speeches, which are generously used throughout the biography. Sandburg writes that sprinkled all through them are

stubby, homely words that reached out and made plain, quiet people feel that perhaps behind them was a heart that could understand them--the People --the listeners.

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One of his private secretaries, Nicolay, speaking of Lincoln's habit of clipping out bits of verse from newspapers and carrying these bits with him until he was quite familiar with them, is recorded as saying of this practice of the President:

it was noticeable that they (the clippings) were almost always referable to his tender sympathy for humanity, its hopes and its sorrows.

His words won for him hearts in unknown corners of far-off places, even beyond the boundaries of the United States, says Sandburg. The New York Herald's practice at that time was to hire writers with gifts of satire and persiflage. Bennett is recorded as being one of such writers for the Herald, and he was permeated with Lincoln's manner of speech and his vocabulary. That he counted on his readers being similarly permeated in the latter part of 1863 is evidence of the extent to which Lincoln's personality had reached out across the country and made an impression living and breathing.

Lincoln and Women.--Another aspect of Lincoln which commands attention as the biography develops is his attitude toward women. His attitude toward his step-mother has been already indicated in the section which treats of influences upon his character. The tying in of his name with that of Ann Rutledge is a generally known love-tragedy, poignant and tender. To Lincoln she was so much the ideal of womanhood that the beauty of her soul shining through her eyes

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made it hard for him to believe that a person such as she had been raised out of the dust of the earth. In his short courtship of her, he always underscored his unworthiness of her, not knowing then that Divine Providence had never destined her for his attainment. When 22-year old Ann Rutledge was laid in her grave, it would seem that to the end of his life he felt that part of his soul had been laid alongside of her.

Eventually other women came into his life. But within him there were factors operating which served as obstacles in his getting a woman who could fit into the void left by Ann Rutledge. Sandburg notes that Lincoln was backward--or was it bashful?--about telling any one woman how he felt about women in general,

that they had a harder path in life than men, that he felt sacred and mysterious urges living in the bodies of women . . . that there were soft mystic confusions about the behavior of women that upset him . . .

In the matter of compliments he felt very awkward and self-conscious with women. To back up the statement that Lincoln was unable to make a winning and honest compliment to women, the biographer utilizes the comment Mary Owens makes in this regard. Speaking of Lincoln, she says that "he was deficient in the little links that make for a woman's happiness." He had individual eccentricities and peculiar ways; he was homely, simple, whimsical, ironical. But over and above

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this, Sandburg emphasizes that Lincoln was kindly and understanding. No one, however, could say that "he had a way with women." The awkwardness he felt in his dealing them is reflected in this brief extract from a letter he wrote to Mary Owens:

I want in all cases to do right, and most particularly so in all cases with women. I want at this particular time, more than anything else, to do right with you.

That Mary Owens' estimate of Lincoln is not isolated among the impressions created in the biography is seen in another reference made, but this time, by one of the law-students at the Lincoln-Herndon office. Herndon was most flattering and gentlemanly in manner to the attractive women, writes the legal apprentice. But of Lincoln he writes;

Both the good-lookers and those not so good-looking had his escort from the desk to the door, and no matter what their looks he did not risk a pat on arm or shoulder.

Only to Joshua Speed, a crony of tried and tested friendship, did Lincoln write freely to exchange his secrets about women. Before Speed married, he was undergoing serious mental and spiritual disturbances and he turned to Lincoln for moral and spiritual help. Lincoln wrote him a letter, analyzing him and telling him what was wrong with his physical and mental system. At the same time he revealed his own misery in the unfortunate endings of his love affairs with Ann Rutledge and with Mary Todd--a misery that was deep-

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rooted, tangled, and baffling. When Speed wrote a letter of thanks to Lincoln three months later, thanking him for the role he played in bringing and keeping him and his wife together, Lincoln wrote back:

I am pleased with that acknowledgment. But a thousand times more am I pleased to know that you enjoy a degree of happiness worthy of an acknowledgment . . . I believe God made me one of the instruments of bringing your Fanny and you together, which union I have no doubt he had fore-ordained.

The happiness that Joshua and Fanny Speed found in their wedded life was never meant to be, however, for Lincoln and Mary Todd. If Lincoln was said to have been a mystery and a paradox, the future Mrs. Lincoln was even more so a perplexity and a contradiction. But when Sandburg writes of her, there is as much delicacy in his treatment of her as there is present in Lincoln's attitude toward his wife. She was a woman given to pride and vanity, impulsiveness and temperamental unpredictability. After her excesses of temper had worn her out, she could rise and stand up to do battle again for definitely formed purposes. Once, when she embarrassed her husband before a visitor in the Lincoln home, Lincoln stood in her defense before the shocked guest:

Why, if you knew how much good this little eruption did, what a relief it was to her, how she really enjoyed it, if you knew her as well as I do, you would be glad she had an opportunity to explode, to give vent to her feelings.

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On still another occasion, when Mrs. Lincoln, in a heat of temper, dismissed one of her servants, the uncle of the servant came for an explanation of this unprovoked dismissal. In answer, Mary Lincoln gave him the rough side of her tongue and the man hurried away to file a complaint with Lincoln. The latter's half-jesting comment to this has more than surface connotations:

If I have to stand this everyday for fifteen years, don't you think you can stand it a few minutes one day?

Like Lincoln, Sandburg knows how to pour oil on stormy waters. In a spirit of sympathetic understanding he writes that between flare-ups and clashes, between collisions and regrets, the spirit of accommodation rose and offered a way out for Lincoln. If anywhere Sandburg successfully assumes the role of the psychologist, it is here when he treats of the mutual relationship between Lincoln and his wife. He says of the situation that for Lincoln to have been free with sharing his thoughts with his wife would have led to understanding. But between the two of them the key word had to be accommodation more than love. Lincoln was his wife's senior by ten years, and he had a tireless talent for conciliatory adjustment--a very genius in the decisions of human accommodations. So he steered their wedded life away from the rocks of ruin even though he alone bore the chafing and the sting of the effort.

Throughout the biography Lincoln's relation to women is tender yet profound. In author and his subject, there is a quiet and simple understanding of the character of woman--it is a tenderness with a little smile of gentle superiority.

Lincoln's Religion and Faith in God

One of the chapters in the second volume of War Years is entitled "Lincoln's Laughter--And His Religion." It is an interesting observation that in organizing the chapter, the author combined these two seemingly exclusive subjects. Yet, they are exclusive only paradoxically; for, unless Lincoln were equipped with a profound faith in the Providence of God, he could not have laughed while he carried a burden that seemed apparently too great for any human to bear. Unless he had faith in God, how could he accept the incongruity that he, who was so tenderly sympathetic to everything living, should have the death of thousands of human lives laid against him. How could he have explained to himself that he, who had always seen the perils of controlling men, should now have the destinies of millions placed into his hands. It is, then, as a natural sequel to Lincoln's laughter that Sandburg stops to examine Lincoln's faith and mysticism.

The question of Lincoln's religion was posed early in his professional life. Known as he was for the noble

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qualities of mind and heart, his friends and acquaintances wanted a positive affirmation in one way or another. His law partner advised a person who sought clarification on Lincoln's faith: "You had to guess at the man after years of acquaintance, and you must look long and keenly before you guessed . . ." Lincoln was a praying man, but not in the conventional and demonstrative sense. His piety and spiritual resources were subdued. Sandburg states that Lincoln read the Bible closely, knew it from cover to cover, quoted it in talks to juries, in political campaigns, and in his letters. How well he knew the Bible is illustrated in the following episode:

To a man who came complaining against his superior officer, loose-mouthed, Lincoln merely said: "Go home and read Proverbs XXX, 10." And the man hunted up his Bible and read the verse "Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty."

What the Bible meant to Lincoln was expressed in late summer, 1864. When a committee of colored people from Baltimore presented him with a richly wrought Bible, Lincoln acknowledged the gift, saying:

In regard to this great book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it.

And the biographer quotes Mary Todd Lincoln as saying of her husband:

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He never joined a church, but still he was a religious man . . . It was a kind of poetry in his nature, but he never was a technical Christian.

That Lincoln, without being an affiliated churchman, had, by a natural reverence and without affectation, won his way to many hearts of the clergy is evident from the pulpit tributes paid to him after his death, and upon which addresses Sandburg draws generously.

During one of his visits to the home of his friends, Lincoln, the lawyer, was faced with a direct question from his hosts regarding his religion. The raising of it made him uneasy; then after some fumbling he said slowly that he could not discuss the character and religion of Jesus Christ in stump speeches. Shortly after, for the first time he put into words his personal attitude toward orthodox religion. Because it is a rare example of its kind from Lincoln, it was considered--in spite of its length--to quote it here in its entirety from Sandburg's work:

Probably it is to be my lot to go on in a twilight, feeling and reasoning my way through life, as questioning Thomas did. But in my poor, maimed, withered way, I bear with me as I go on a seeking spirit of desire for a faith that was with him of the olden time, who, in his need, as I in mine, exclaimed, 'Help thou my unbelief.' I doubt the possibility, or propriety, of settling the religion of Jesus Christ in the models of man-made creeds and dogmas.

It was a spirit in the life that He laid stress on and taught, if I read aright. I know I see it to be so with me. The fundamental truths reported in the four gospels, as from the lips of Jesus

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Christ, and that I first heard from the lips of my mother, are settled and fixed moral precepts with me . . . I cannot without mental reservations assent to long and complicated creeds and catechisms.

If the church would ask simply for assent to the Savior's statement of the substance of the law: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,'--that church would I gladly unite with.

It was outside of Springfield that Lincoln was first described as a Christian gentleman. Yet both he and Hershon, notes the biographer, believed in God and constantly mentioned Him. When Lincoln was serving his congressional term in Washington, word came to him that his father was dying. Sandburg cites the following from a letter Lincoln wrote to John D. Johnston, the stepson on the farm:

I sincerely hope father may recover his health, but at all events, tell him to remember to call upon and confide in our great and good merciful Maker, who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads, and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him. Say to him that if we could meet now, it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant, but that if it be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyous meeting with many loved ones gone before, and where the rest of us, through the help of God, hope ere long to join them.

During the presidential campaign Lincoln openly testified to his belief in God:

I know that there is a God, and that he hates injustice and slavery. I see a storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If he has a place and work for me I believe I am ready. I am nothing but truth is everything.

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And he went on in a lengthy meditation on God, slavery, and the teaching of the New Testament.

As President, Lincoln gave his wide-flung public no definite impression that he belonged to any particular church, notes the biographer, or that he endorsed any special faith or doctrine. It was rather by his unmistakable expressions in his speeches, in his proclamations, his recommendations of thanksgiving or of fasting and prayer, in numerous references to God, Providence, the Almighty, the Common Father, that he conveyed the impression of being a man of piety and deep religious belief. Sandburg here records the not generally known fact that Lincoln rented a pew and regularly attended services in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington. Members of that congregation noted that when he attended the weekly prayer meeting, he

usually sat alone in the pastor's room, from which he could hear the service without being seen, thus avoiding the interruptions of the many people who gathered to consult him at its close.

A current of mysticism in Lincoln seemed to run parallel with a strain of rationalism. Beyond the natural and seen was there an operating force of the supernatural and inscrutable? This questioning hovers very closely about his thinking. It is especially evident in the following private Lincoln memorandum, written in late 1862, and which Sandburg includes in his study of the President:

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In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different for our doing it. I have felt His hand upon me in great trials and submitted to His guidance, and I trust that as He shall further open the way I will be ready to walk therein, relying on His help and trusting in His goodness and wisdom.

Such thinking were impossible to be produced spontaneously; it had to be nurtured patiently and persistently in the depth of his soul for a long time.

At this point of the study of Lincoln's religious beliefs, one is led to the question: What was his notion of God? Thanks to the documentary selections of the biographer, the answer can be obtained from the course of conversation Lincoln had with George McCormack. The latter openly asked, "What is your conception of God?" To this Lincoln replied, "The same as my conception of nature." "And what is that?" the questioner pursued. Lincoln replied, "It is impossible for either to be personal." In August, 1864, the President wrote for Mrs. Guerney, his contemplations of God as a Power beyond man, yet intimately associated with the works of man:

In all it has been your purpose to strengthen my reliance on God. I am much indebted to the good Christian people of the country for their constant prayers and consolations. . . . The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge his wisdom, and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best lights he gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great end he ordains. Surely he intends

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some great good to follow this mighty convulsion,
which no mortal could make, and no mortal could stay.

As the biography progresses, a distinct trend toward a deeper religious note in Lincoln is observable--a piety more assured of itself because more definitely derived from the inner growth of Lincoln himself. From year to year, the President fitted himself more deeply and awarely into the mantle of authority of Chief Magistrate. Sandburg writes directly that as the war was progressing, Lincoln was constantly drawn closer to the churches of the land, both in his personal contacts and in a spirit of increased piety. On one occasion he reminded a delegation of Methodist and Baptist ministers that, at the outset of the war, the Government appealed to the prayers of the pious and the good, and placed its whole dependence on the favor of God. Then he uttered words which testify that he had a creed of religious faith:

I now humbly and reverently in your presence, re-iterate the acknowledgment of that dependence, not doubting that, if it shall please the Divine Being who determines the destinies of nations, this shall remain a united people, and that they will, humbly seeing that Divine guidance, make their prolonged national existence a source of new benefits to themselves and their successors, and to all classes and conditions of mankind.

In answer to a kindly letter from Rhode Island Quakers, he wrote, in part:

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No one is more deeply than myself aware that without his favor our highest wisdom is but as foolishness, and that our most strenuous efforts would avail nothing in the shadow of his displeasure.

Again, to the members of the Baltimore Presbyterian Synod, who paid a call on Lincoln in October, 1863, he spoke the following words:

I have often wished that I was a more devout man than I am. Nevertheless, amid the greatest difficulties of my Administration, when I could not see any other resort, I would place my whole reliance in God, knowing that all would go well, and that He would decide for the right.

Lincoln proclaimed May 26, 1864, as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer for the nation, and called for 400,000 men to be conscripted:

In all exigencies it becomes a nation to carefully scrutinize its line of conduct, humbly to approach the Throne of Grace and meekly to implore forgiveness, wisdom and guidance. For reasons known only to Him, it has been decreed that this country should be the scene of unparalleled outrage . . .

The realism that characterized Lincoln's religious belief is especially manifest in his remarks to the repeated delegations that called on him. Sandburg underscores the fact that Lincoln would patiently reiterate his conviction that it would be useless to issue an emancipation proclamation without the military force to back it up. He assured each group that he was trying to find his path through a diversity of beliefs. The biography offers the following documentation to this effect:

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I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and by religious men who are certain they represent the Divine Will . . . I hope it it will not be irreverent in me to say that if it be probable that God would reveal His will to others, on a point so closely connected with my duty, it might be supposed that He would reveal it directly to me . . . And if I can learn what it is, I will do it. These are not, however, the days of miracles, and I suppose I am not to expect a direct revelation. I must study the plain, physical facts of the case . . . and learn what appears to be wise and right . . . Whatever shall appear to be God's will, I will do.

The profundity of his faith in the conviction that the destiny of the world and the events in the lives of men are guided by the supreme intelligence of a Divine Being, never weakened in him, even in the darkest moments of the nation's history and in his personal life. When Thurlow Weed wrote a letter of compliment to Lincoln on his second inaugural address, Lincoln wrote his gratitude for the gesture, but inserted his own estimate of the speech:

I believe it is not immediately popular. Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it, however, in this case, is to deny there is a God governing the world. It is a truth which I thought needed to be told, as whatever of humiliation there is in it falls most directly on myself, I thought others might afford for me to tell it.

In summary, it may be said that, as the biographical portrait unfolds, it is obvious that Lincoln's religion had its source in the Bible, from which he drew all the moral principles that governed his private and public life; that

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he utilized to the full the natural goodness that was his; and that it was this natural virtue that overflowed into the lives of others to spread good in the ever-widening circles of his environment.

Method and Style of the Biography

Sandburg's elaborate study of the environment in which Lincoln grew up and matured, of the natural, social, and political forces that went into the shaping of his character, produce a totality that is more than just a biography. It is simultaneously a comprehensive survey of the development of mid-western America. The enormity of detail demanded a special skill in keeping the mass of documentary information continuously unfolding so that the growing personality of Lincoln is never lost sight of. The method he used was to present a scene--whether it be that of a social order, a political conflict of ideals, or a role of an individual character--through a rapid succession of images and anecdotes. He follows the familiar order of events, but he pauses to enlarge them with incidents, conversations, speeches, anecdotes, reminiscences, editorials, and cartoons. Sandburg uses his material for effects only, not for a sustained and complete record. The battles and campaigns of the Civil War are treated with but scant interest in their tactical and strategic courses. It is with the repercussions

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of these victories and defeats that Sandburg is much more concerned. Always faithful to his role as spokesman for the people, his concern is less with the events than with the men and women who went into the making of these. Tirelessly he tells all that can be told of the generals and the privates who took active part in these events. In his effort to survey and analyze the whirlpool of cultures out of which Lincoln emerged, Sandburg brings to life again the old mid-Western mind by means of the people's songs, their poems, their proverbs, their superstitions. He brings forth such intimately concrete things as the clothes they wore, the food they prepared, the machines they used, the stories they read in their newspapers, the gods they swore by, and the jokes they laughed at.

Like Sandburg's poetry, the biography is done with an eloquent use of contemporary anecdote and language. Each is fitted to the monumental portrait with Sandburg's particular feel for words. Paragraphs of clipped prose and quick characterization crowd the pages with excitement. He treats life frankly and without bitterness because, on the whole, he likes it and believes in it. To him, life with all its ugliness is touched with beauty and filled with solemnity. That is what he found in the life of Abraham Lincoln, and Sandburg is not one to dodge issues.

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The first volume of Prairie Years is richest in Sandburg's peculiar poetry. There is one made to feel and smell the prairie and the land. At the outset of the work, when the author writes that the Lincoln's had a cabin of their own to live in, he adds:

It stood among wild crab-apple trees. And the smell of wild crab-apple blossoms, and the low crying of wild things, came keen that summer to the nostrils of Nancy Hanks.

To portray the passage of time, he resorts to the land again, and with the same mysticism that tinged his treatment of it in his poetry. In the biography it appears thus:

Ten years pass and the roots spread out finding water to carry up to branches and leaves that are in the sun; the trunk thickens, the forked limbs shine wider in the sun, they pray with their leaves in the rain and the whining wind; the tree arrives, the mystery of its coming, spreading, growing, a secret not even known to the tree itself; it stands with its arms stretched to the corners the four winds come from, with its murmured destiny, "We are here, we arrived, our roots are in the earth of these years," and beyond that short declaration, it speaks nothing of the decrees, fates, accidents, destinies, that made it an apparition of its particular moment.

When in his wanderings about the countryside to earn a living, the young Lincoln came by the village of New Salem, which he chose to make his home for the next six years, the smell of the earth plays an active part in creating the atmosphere of the scene:

Early harvest days came; the oat straw ripened to cream and gold; the farmers bundled the grain in the russet fields. From the Salem hilltop, the

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prairie off toward Springfield lifted itself in a lazy half-world of harvest haze; the valley of the Sangamon River loitered off in a long stretch of lazy dreamy haze.

From the second volume of Prairie Years comes this nature poetry so characteristic of Sandburg:

The sunshine of the prairie summer and fall months would come sifting down with healing and strength; between harvest and corn-plowing there would be rains beating and blizzards howling; and there would be the silence after snowstorms with white drifts piled against the fences, barns, and trees.

As if lifted from the pages of his poetry comes this nocturnal scene that ended a Republican mass meeting which was to have been held in the Springfield courthouse, but for which the anticipated crowds had failed to come. Lincoln and his two colleagues who were to preside over the meeting, are here described leaving the empty hall:

They stepped out of the courthouse into a June night of stars, with measured and peaceful constellations arching over the steel blue vault of the sky. The streets leading to the nearby prairies smelled of loam with the push of new grass in it. And from the puddles and ditches along the prairie roads the shrilling of the frogs lifted a song of young summer.

The tiniest of corn leaves were coming up in rows in a field near Eighth and Jackson streets.

Sandburg's response to nature is scattered throughout the two volumes of Prairie Years. The images that fascinate him here, have appeared over and over again in his poetry. Even the language is the same. When moments of dramatic import needed handling, Sandburg relied on nature to help him carry the effect, and it never failed him. From the last volume

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of War Years comes this method of Sandburg's writing that the war has come to an end:

Whatever might be the communications of men at day-break this morning of April 9, the earth spoke of peace. The oaks flung out fresh tassels. Trees leafed out pale green. Peach trees sang with blossoms. New grass and opening buds put the breath of spring on the air. Winter had said good-bye a week or so before when troops had shaken a white frost off their blankets before the morning coffee. Now softer nights had come. Now it was Palm Sunday, April 9, 1865, a date to be encircled in red, white, and blue on calendars.

A little further in this volume, he develops the dramatic moment of the war's end, by merging poetry with rhetoric. This is how the drama of the face-to-face meeting of Grant and Lee reads:

And it became a folk tale and a school-reader story how at the McLean house on the edge of Appomattox village, ninety-five miles west of Richmond, the two great captains of men faced each other in a little room and Lee gave over his army to Grant, and the two men looked so different from each other. Lee tall and erect, Grant short and stoop-shouldered. Lee in a clean and dazzling military outfit, Grant in a rough-worn and dusty blouse telling his high rank only by the three stars on the shoulders, Grant apologizing to Lee that he had come direct from the field and hadn't time to change his uniform. Lee fifty-eight years old with silver hair, near the evening of his life, Grant forty-two with black hair and unspent strength of youth yet in him.

Both saw slavery as a canker and an evil. Neither cared for war as a game for its own sake. Each loved horses, home life, wife and family.

Yes, it was to become a folk tale and a school-reader story, how at Appomattox Grant and Lee signed papers. For a vast living host the word Appomattox had magic and beauty. They sang the syllables "Appo-ma-tox" as a happy little carol of harvest and fields of peace and the sun going down with no shots in the night to follow.

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Chapter 72 of the last volume of War Years is impregnated with the language of poetry. Poetry breathes in its very title: "The Calendar Says Good Friday." It is here that the climax of Lincoln's life is treated with pronounced free-verse techniques. Woven through the images of springtime is a subdued tone in a minor key:

The purple lilacs bloomed April the Fourteenth
of the year Eighteen Sixty Five. And the shining
air held a balance of miracles good and evil

Wrens on the White House lawn chattered a fast
evil gossip soon forgotten.

Cardinals streaked in crimson curves and whis-
tled happy landings on tall treetops.

A veery thrush and a brown thrush in a circle
of bushes poured out a living waterfall of cool
song.

Did any clairvoyant foreteller write a fore-
cast that today, this April the Fourteenth, one
man must hear a deep sea bell and a farewell gong
and take a ride skyward swifter than Elijah in
the chariot of fire?

This is not the language of a conventional biographer, but then, Sandburg consistently defied convention, and produced his own characteristic style. He used this poetic style also when he was describing the hanging of John Brown:

On the day of his doom the Shenandoah Valley
was swept and garnished by sky and weather; beyond
the 3,000 guardsmen with rifles and bayonets, he
could see the blue haze and a shining sun over the
Blue Ridge Mountains. "This is a beautiful coun-
try; I never had the pleasure of seeing it before."
And he may have thought he had missed many other
Shenandoahs of life, shining valleys that would
have lighted him into pronouncing the word "beau-
tiful" wistfully. Yet he was not a wistful man.
He was a man of doom, believing in his own right
to doom others, and the power of God to doom
wrongdoers everlastingly.

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The plunge of John Brown into the darker valley beyond the Shenandoah kept echoing.

Moments charged with deep emotion and profound feeling inevitably are stamped with poetry. Under whatever conditions his poetry appears, it is recognizable by its recurrence of the images that have been graphed out when Sandburg's poetry was being analyzed. His fondness for the sky and the stars remains unchanged:

On certain March days in Illinois, the sky is a rag-bag of whimsies. It may whisper of spring to come with soft slants of sun, while baby pearl-shell clouds dimple and drift, and then let blusters of wind flow up followed with flurries of snow, a little sleet, and a drizzle of rain, and then sunshine again and baby pearl-shell clouds dimpling and drifting.

From the first volume of Prairie Years comes this merging of earth and sky:

If a blizzard stopped blowing and wind went down, with the white curve of a snow floor over Salem Hill looking up to a far blue scoop of winter stars blinking white and gold, with loneliness whispering to loneliness, a man might look in it and feel organization and testimony in the movement of the immense, relentless hugs and sprockets on the sky.

The images of night and mist, which figure so prominently in his poetry, recur here with the same touch and effect:

A light mist floated in over Washington that night and around the illuminated public buildings hung its moving filament of gauze. From many miles away could be seen the dome of the Capitol.

On the calendars the day of April 11 was marked off. Midnight came. The lighted windows of the White House had darkened. The curves of light shining from the Capitol were gone. The moist air

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stayed on. Washington sleeps in the possession of a mist that crept everywhere, fine-spun, intangible, elusive.

His supreme poetic effectiveness, however, Sandburg reserved for the moment when Lincoln delivered his "Gettysburg Address." If ever Sandburg casts off the mantle of biographer and the toga of the scholar, and assumes the role of inspired poet, it is at the climax of the chapter called, "Lincoln Speaks at Gettysburg." After the crowds have left the dead to silence and to night, Sandburg looks over the darkening hill and in simple unadorned language describes the deserted battlefield under the sky of night. He pauses at a row of graves where an unidentified boy sleeps, and then he turns his eyes to the boy's village. He looks into a quiet farmhouse where the lamps are lit and the people are listening to the ticking of a tall, old clock. Then Sandburg thinks their thoughts when he writes that they were thinking how the boy would never again be coming in from the milking of the cows and asking, "What's the time?"

For Sandburg such poetic writing is a natural bend of mind, and he is most at home with it. But it is this very element that makes it difficult to analyze his prose style. One place in particular stands out for having the poetic element overdone: it is in the final chapter of the fourth volume of War Years. Its closing lines are so fraught with emotion that what faces the reader comes very

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close to being dithyrambic verse. But if one is tempted to hold this against the author, the bulk of the biography is there to bear Sandburg out in good standing.

Stylistically, the political content of the War Years stands diametrically opposed to the two earlier volumes. Its rhetoric is expository because of the abundance of research material that went into its building. In the style of a mason, the author lays document upon document to create a structure of the Civil War years, and then allows the documents to speak for themselves. He merely cements them to make the structure. Yet it is the artistry of placement of these so that the biographer reveals what he wants revealed that constitute so much of the excellency of the Lincoln portrait. The mass of historical data is invariably projected through the people themselves. To Sandburg, history is never impersonal. It is always people. And Lincoln is seen through them because he is of them, though he stands tall above the mass of humanity below.

From the standpoint of progression, the biography follows the chronological development, with only occasional flashbacks. One has been noted in the Gettysburg scene referred to above. Another one is employed when the assassin's infamous deed is spoken of; still another one is introduced when Lincoln is assassinated. This last instance has a triple flashback:

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To a deep river, to a far country, to a by-and-by whence no man returns, had gone the child of Nancy Hanks and Tom Lincoln, the wilderness boy who found far lights and tall rainbows to live by, whose name even before he died had become a legend inwoven with men's struggles for freedom the world over.

Now there was a tincture of deep violet given to the Gettysburg phrases: "We cannot consecrate--we cannot hallow--this ground."

Now there was a snow-white fabric crossed with sunset vermillion around the words written to the Boston widow woman:

"The solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

In the progressive chronology of the documents, arranged to show the development and growth of Lincoln, there is a simultaneous unfolding of the variety of men who surrounded him. But except for a few key figures who remained close to Lincoln for a longer period of time, the bulk of the masses appear in a fast-moving montage surrounding the President and creating for him an environment in which his qualities were made manifest. Even though Mary Lincoln and the Lincoln boys are each given a chapter, Lincoln himself is never far away. The reader never forgets that they are brought to the fore not for themselves, but to show Lincoln in relief. No character in the biography can be said to appear there for himself. That the author was successful in doing this is a major achievement of the biography.

What of the rate of progression that the author employs? One who would approach this six-volume biography with the notion of flipping its pages hurriedly would find

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himself held back by the enormous research that goes into the making of the biography. The documentary evidence present balks at a cursory reading of the work. To expect a biography of this kind to progress at the rate of a conventional one is to expect the impossible. The style of its architecture dictates a slower progress. This is especially true of the War Years, sections of which move at a lumbering pace. Sandburg became so engrossed in the effects of the political upheaval of Lincoln's day that fitting document against document and dovetailing so much fringe material cause the biography merely to inch its way forward in some sections. But since the work is also a commentary on the people of the day, such retarding of movement serves a secondary purpose; namely to show the people in action. Artistically this slow-down is a defect, though not of such proportions that the literary merit of the work should suffer by it.

Lincoln was so large a mirror of mankind that every biographer can find in him that which he and his generation is looking for. Perhaps more than any other Lincoln-biographer, Sandburg had felt the universality of his appeal:

The range of the personality of Abraham Lincoln ran far, identifying itself with the tumults and follies of mankind, keeping touch with multitudes and solitudes. The free-going and friendly companion is there and the man of the cloister, of the lonely corner of thought, prayer and speculation. The man of public affairs before a living audience announcing decisions, is there, and the

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solitary inquirer, weaving his abstractions related to human freedom and responsibility. Perhaps no other American held so definitely in himself both those elements--the genus of the Tragic, the spirit of the Comic.²⁸

Even the criticism which was heaped upon Lincoln--and Sandburg has not spared including it in his work--has detracted nothing from the great figure. It is Sandburg's way of writing down "the record of their (the people's) own stupid inability to appreciate their leader, and contrast their vindictiveness with Lincoln's magnanimity."²⁹ But Sandburg is understanding of the weaknesses of his fellowmen, and his judgments of them are just as kindly here as they are in his poems. For all their faults, people are good in the long run and can be trusted. This was the faith of Lincoln. This was the faith of Sandburg.

That from the biography's tremendous and vivid detail there emerges a firm, enriched, and understanding Lincoln, is in no little way helped by the affinity of biographer to his subject. Not only does Sandburg belong to his region, but he shares his realism, his sense of humor, his sober faith, his patience with life, and his gift of phrase.

²⁸ Sandburg, Carl, "Review of Abraham Lincoln," Atlantic, February, 1947, p. 62.

²⁹ Ramsdell, Charles W., "Carl Sandburg's 'Lincoln,'" Southern Review, Winter, 1941, p. 446.

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Like Lincoln, of whom Sandburg wrote that " . . . his intense experience of the weakness of democracy did not sour him," Sandburg's stern religious upbringing held him singularly free from the less worthy aspects of human life. When Sandburg wrote of Lincoln that no political theory stood out from his words or actions, but that they showed "a most unusual sense of the possible dignity of common men and common things," he was making a statement upon himself as well. It is his close spiritual kinship with Lincoln which makes every utterance of Sandburg on the great emancipator a self-inclusive observation. This fact has been no small contribution to his creating not so much a book, as a man.

Stripped of the myth that shrouded the real man, Lincoln is the more loveable for the humanness and humility that stamped his whole life. It is the little facts that make for his manly stature. Sandburg's minute examination of him leaves Lincoln substantially where the people have fixed him in their affection. From the synthesis of the mass of evidence which goes into the making of this voluminous biography comes Sandburg's voice saying again that the people knew all along. The final portrait that emerges from the myriad psychographs show Lincoln the man that the great masses of American people are unconsciously striving to become. He stands up from the book a true folk hero.

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Primary sources for this study were: Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg; Abraham Lincoln: the Prairie Years, two volumes; and Abraham Lincoln: War Years, four volumes. In the secondary sources the bulk of the reading was found in the area of book reviews. Though all available sources were read for background, only a few of them were used directly since the study was intended to be a personal analysis and evaluation of Sandburg.

The major objective, indicated at the outset, was to reproduce Sandburg, the writer, as he evolves from his literary output and to determine whether he can really be considered the voice of the American people. To achieve this, the study was divided into three parts, each of which contributed by its findings to the major objective.

Part I has shown him to be a poet of two broad areas: sociological and lyric. In the first, he produced not poetry, but sociological pieces characterized by radical populism which, with time, became more tempered. Their frequency, too, tapered off and his concentration shifted to the contemplation of nature and life in general. It was when he entered this area that he first came into the field of poetry.

Examination of his lyric poetry revealed him first and foremost a poet of the visual. Through color and form,

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however, he was frequently led to a meditative mood. In these instances Sandburg reveals his real self to be a realist, a romantic, and a mystic.

Part II carried the study even more deeply when it analyzed him in six of his long lyrics. Through them he is revealed with greater amplitude and intensity, but the Sandburg of Part I is fundamentally the same. If everywhere he is a poet of the people, he is especially so in The People, Yes. Here he speaks through them, for them, and in a language all their own. In his short lyrics, he reveals his attitude toward God, man, nature, and life in general. In this tribute to the people he speaks his attitude toward humanity. Since all is spoken in a manner characteristic of himself, the study examined what went into the making of his particular style. This was followed by a detailed analysis of the technical aspects of it. The findings revealed his almost total dependence upon the informal level of language usage, with frequent recourse to the elements of colloquial speech. It may be safely said that ninety percent of the time he speaks of and for the people in their idiom.

Even his lyric poetry has been charged by critics as frequently slumping into mere prose writing, whereas his biography of Lincoln has often been said to soar with poetry. With this criticism in mind, an attempt was made in Part III

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to analyze the biography for three aspects: first, for his ability to maneuver an unwieldy amount of historical material in the revelation of the personality of Lincoln; second, for the tracing of Lincoln's character; and finally, for the analysis of the method and style of the work. The results revealed Lincoln in all ways a man of the masses, yet an epitome of all that is best in the people. The poetry in the biography stands out as a result of the merging of the lyric elements present in Sandburg's response to nature and to men in general, and of Lincoln's qualities of mind and soul that are evident at every turn of the page.

At the end of this study Sandburg stands reinforced in his role as spokesman for the people by virtue of his profound understanding of them; his broad sympathy for them; his keen insight into their problems; his espousal of their cause spoken the way the man in the street would speak it were he able to articulate his feelings. Sandburg's poetic medium and the character of the masses for whom he speaks are mutually reinforcing. Through this and through his successful portrayal of Lincoln as a folk-hero, Sandburg has intensified his claim of being the voice of the American people.

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The reviewer notes the presence of a faint hero-worship throughout the book, but credits the biographer for his ability to say things about Lincoln with poetic insight and understanding.

Aiken, Conrad, Scepticisms, New York, Knopf & Co., 1919, 305 pp.

In the chapter, "Notes on Contemporary Poetry," the author indicates the dominant characteristics of Frost, Masters, Gibson, Masefield, and Sandburg. These he groups as poets searching for color and pathos in the lives of the commonplace, but notes that Sandburg is less selective than the others.

Angoff, Allan, ed., American Writing Today, New York, New York University Press, 1957, 433 pp.

In the essay, "Carl Sandburg: Smoke and Steel," the author is especially disturbed by the aspect of Sandburg's journalistic style as reflected in his poems. He agrees that Sandburg's poetry has succeeded in doing what it set out to do, but he questions its art.

-----, "The Poet of American Industrialism," Living Age, January 22, 1921, pp. 231-234.

This writer's theory is that realistic poetry must be judged by the life that has produced it. He traces Sandburg's tradition to three sources: Whitman, journalism, and modern free-verse poets. According to him, vitality, novelty, and Americanism constitute the essence of Sandburg's writing.

Bartlett, Alice H., "Voices from the Great Inland States (Sandburg and Lindsay)," Poetry Review, March-April, 1924, pp. 101-110.

The critic holds that the school of vers librists reaches perfection in Carl Sandburg, and considers his portrait of Chicago convincing in its dramatic power.

Beach, J. W., The Outlook for American Prose, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1926, 285 pp.

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Benet, Stephen V. and Rosemary, "Sandburg: Song of the Lincoln Countryside," New York Herald Tribune Books, December 14, 1941, p. 8.

Emphasis in this article is given to Sandburg's prose style. The authors hold that his ability to use words purely American show where the American mind stopped imitating, began to look around on its own, and discovered its own country.

Benjamin, Paul L., "Poet of the Common-place," Survey, October, 1920, pp. 12-13.

The poetry of Sandburg cannot be shredded apart from Sandburg the man, says the author. The article selects his humaneness and simplicity, his use of social material for so many of his themes, his infinite pity, his stripping bare of social injustices and his love of common folk, as the poet's trademarks.

Blair, W., Hornberger, T., Stewart, R., eds., The Literature of the United States, vol. II, Chicago, Scott, Foresman & Co., 1953, 1313 pp.

An anthology and a history of American letters from the Civil War to the present. It gives an interpretation of the positive intellectual and moral forces at work in the literature of the 20's and 30's. Sandburg is given an analysis in the section which discusses the Little Renaissance.

Blankenship, Russell, American Literature as an Expression of the National Mind, New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1931, 731 pp.

The book interprets American literature as an expression of changing and developing thought on social, political and cultural aspects of American life. Nine pages are allotted to the discussion of Sandburg.

Bogan, Louise, Achievement in American Poetry, 1900-1950, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1951, 157 pp.

This is a brief account of American poetry during the first half of the 20th century. Sandburg is discussed in a nine-page analysis.

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Boynton, Percy H., "American Authors of Today," English Journal, December, 1922, pp. 610-620.

The objections raised by conservatives to the brutality of Sandburg's poems are open to challenge here. The author holds that Sandburg sings neither in one key, nor only one tune. He is speaking in character, just as any novelist or dramatist makes his characters do.

-----, Challenge of Modern Criticism, Chicago, Thomas S. Rockwell Co., 1931, 127 pp.

This is a comprehensive background of the American literary scene against which the writers of the day are set in the opening years of the twentieth century.

-----, Literature and American Life for Students of American Literature, Boston, Ginn & Co., 1936, 933 pp.

It is a miscellany of historical fact, biography, bibliography, opinion and incisive criticism. It covers the literature of America from colonial times to the present.

-----, Some Contemporary Americans, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1924, 289 pp.

The book is devoted to the examination of modern literary works. It contains sections on: The Voice of Chicago, The Younger Set, The Puritan Bogey, Puritanism and the Critical Code.

Bradley, William A., "Four American Poets," Dial, December 14, 1916, pp. 528-530.

The author holds that there are two Sandburgs. One is merely a clever reporter, with a bias for social criticism. The second, a true artist--within his limits. His method of concentration, of intense objective realization, ranges him with those who call themselves Imagists.

Braithwaite, William S., "Review of Slabs of Sunburnt West," Boston Transcript, July 29, 1922, p. 4.

The best and worst of Sandburg's character are in this book, contends the reviewer. In his substance Sandburg is always greater than in his expression. When the poet is led astray by his symbols, he is a better poet but he does not consistently inweave himself into his work.

Brenner, Rica, Ten Modern Poets, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1930, 279 pp.

Five American and five English poets are discussed in this book. Critical evaluation of each of the following Americans is given: Frost, Millay, Amy Lowell, Robinson, and Sandburg.

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Brooks, Van Wyck, "Carl Sandburg's Lincoln," Forum, April, 1926, pp. 632-634.

Brooks places Sandburg's prose epic into the same school that produced Lindsay's Johnny Appleseed. For all the fine qualities of writing the reviewer notes, he holds that the greatest achievement is Sandburg's success in bringing Lincoln into clear daylight out of the fog of myth.

-----, The Confident Years, 1865-1915, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1952, 627 pp.

This is the concluding volume of the author's series on the literary history of the United States, entitled Makers and Finders: A History of the Writer in America, 1800-1915. This volume presents a criticism of authors as people in an environment, rather than of the things they wrote.

-----, Writer in America, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1953, 203 pp.

This also belongs to the five-volume history of the Makers and Finders series. The author gives a general attitude toward life and letters.

Calverton, V. F., The Liberation of American Literature, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1932, 500 pp.

American culture is presented from the Marxian point of view. The author holds that all cultural manifestations are the result of economic forces operating through social classes.

Cargill, Oscar, "Carl Sandburg: Crusader and Mystic," English Journal, April, 1950, pp. 177-184.

The article gives a rapid review of the highlights of Sandburg's life and examines hurriedly the poetic output of the man, in the light of his socialistic interests and inclinations. The author then proceeds to develop the thesis that the history of Sandburg as a thinker and his development as an artist do not perfectly coincide.

"Carl Sandburg in England," Living Age, April 3, 1926, pp. 72-73.

In Sandburg's lack of sentimentality, his optimism and his forcefulness, England saw qualities especially suited for expressing America.

Carnevali, Emanuel, "Our Great Carl Sandburg," Poetry, February, 1921, pp. 266-272.

The reviewer claims that--excluding Whitman--Sandburg, in his words and his metaphors, is the wealthiest writer America has ever read; that he is the poet of her good qualities.

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Coffin, R. P., "Poets of the People," Virginia Quarterly Review, January, 1937, pp. 126-131.

If poetry is to assume a public function, it must do so with oratory, claims the author. It is precisely in this that Sandburg and Masters show their strength. A parallel study of the two poets of proletarianism is pursued throughout.

Combs, George H., These Amazing Moderns. St. Louis, Bethany Press, 1933, 270 pp.

In the twenty-one pages allotted to the analysis of Sandburg, the prairie poet is scrutinized in his poems as well as in his monumental biography.

Cook, Howard W., Our Poets of Today, New York, Moffat, Yard & Co., 1918, 218 pp.

Sandburg is one of the sixty-eight American poets who is presented biographically, representatively by quotations, and interpretatively by comments made upon his works by critics.

Cook, Sherwin L., "The Prairie Years of Abraham Lincoln," Boston Transcript, February 6, 1926, p. 2.

The reviewer underscores the fact that Sandburg, from the facts at his disposal, was able to build out of his intuitions a new conception of the first fifty-one years of Lincoln's life.

Cowley, Malcolm, ed., After the Genteel Tradition: Writers Since 1910, New York, Norton & Co., 1937, 270 pp.

This volume is a history and a criticism of American writers of revolt. Among others, Sandburg is given his share of consideration as a writer.

-----, "Two American Poets," Dial, November, 1922, pp. 563-567.

An early reviewer looks on the unfolding of a new poetry, whose aims and methods he calls different and conflicting. His understanding of Sandburg's style is unusual for one so close to the period. He analyzes Sandburg's metre, rhyme, verse, diction; but the section on Sandburg's language is most thorough.

Damon, S. Foster, Amy Lowell: A Chronicle, New York, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1935, 773 pp.

Carl Sandburg's "Three Notations on the Visit of a Massachusetts Woman to the Home of Neighbors in Illinois," enlivens the biography with extracts of correspondence she had with the poet.

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Detzer, Karl, Carl Sandburg, A Study in Personality and Background, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1941, 210 pp.

The author studies the poet's personality and the background which helped mold him into the man he has become. To give validity to the book are Sandburg's direct words obtained from personal interviews with him.

Deutsch, Babette, "Poetry for the People," English Journal, April, 1937, pp. 265-274.

The article is built around the concept of democratization of poetry by twentieth century poets writing in terms of the common man. She points out that the revolutionary attitude emblazoned in the body of Sandburg's work stamps it with the mark that it is of the people. The article traces this element in all of his poetry volumes.

-----, This Modern Poetry, New York, W. W. Norton Co., 1935, 284 pp.

This volume traces the development of the verse of the twenties and the thirties, what forces went into the shaping of it, and suggests ways of understanding it.

Dondore, Dorothy A., The Prairie and the Making of Middle America, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, The Torch Press, 1926, 472 pp.

The volume is a study and estimate of influences of the American frontier, with attention confined to the Mississippi Valley. The survey begins with early 16th century and is extended to include the study of the twentieth century.

Drinkwater, John, "An American Epic," Saturday Review of Literature, March 20, 1926, p. 659.

This is a review of the two-volume biography of Lincoln by Sandburg. The reviewer predicts that in this work the world will find it was given its first great American epic.

Duffey, Bernard T., The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters, Michigan State College Press, 1954, 285 pp.

Both types of writers, the genteel and cultural, and the realistic and rebellious, who have figured in the traditions of the Chicago Renaissance, are dealt with in this work.

Erskine, John, "The New Poetry," Yale Review, January, 1917, pp. 379-395.

This critic has trouble with what he refers to as the "transference of the methods of prose realism to verse." He notes the absence of song quality in poetry which uses subjects similar to those used in the novel.

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Farrar, John, "Review of Prairie Years," Bookman, May, 1926, pp. 86-87.

The reviewer comments especially on the effectiveness of Sandburg's prose style and on the similarity between the biographer and his subject. The article offers no negative criticism.

Foerster, Norman, Toward Standards, New York, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1930, 224 pp.

Essentially, this source confines itself to surveying the development of humanistic principles in criticism in modern literature.

Fletcher, John G., "Some Contemporary American Poets," Chapbook, May, 1920, pp. 11-12.

Like all early reviewers, Fletcher begins by tracing similarities between Sandburg and Whitman. Cornhuskers and Smoke and Steel are the two volumes that are reviewed here.

Gard, Wayne, "Carl Sandburg Interprets Young Lincoln," Literary Digest International Book Review, February, 1926, pp. 189-190.

The reviewer regards the simplicity of style as the most distinguishing aspect of Sandburg's biography of Lincoln. Attention is given to Sandburg's choice of words and to the directness and economy of his narration.

Ghent, W. H., "Carl Sandburg's Lincoln," Outlook, February 24, 1926, pp. 296-298.

This reviewer stresses the style of the biography, the substance of which is marked by poetic interpretation of the Lincoln story. He notes, however, that the narrative is "jazzy" in spots and sometimes lapses into Sandburgese.

Gregory, H., "Review of Good Morning, America," Poetry, January, 1929, pp. 214-218.

In this review Sandburg is considered simply and effectively as America's poet. According to the critic, the poet has succeeded to make articulate the speech of the inarticulate masses.

Gregory, H., and Zaturenska, M., A History of American Poetry, 1900-1940, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946, 524 pp.

This is a historical survey of American poetry of the first forty years of the twentieth century. Each poet is discussed from the standpoint of derivation of his work and of the critical judgment of him by his contemporaries.

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Hansen, Harry, "Carl Sandburg, Poet of the Prairie," Pictorial Review, September, 1926, pp. 21, 114-118.

Of the Lincoln biography, Hansen believes that Sandburg was helped much by his wide experiences, which gave him an understanding of what places and human contacts mean in life; how careers grow partly because of the man, partly because of his surroundings. All this helped make Lincoln real to Sandburg, says the author.

-----, Carl Sandburg, the Man and His Poetry, Girard, Kansas, Haldeman-Julius Co., 1925, 64 pp.

A critical evaluation of Sandburg and his writing. Excellent section is the one where Sandburg's art is contrasted with the literary art of Whitman.

-----, Midwest Portraits, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1923, 357 pp.

American writers of the midwest are featured in this volume. The eighty-four page portrait of Sandburg contains a critique of his poetic art, which was repeated to a great extent in the preceding source. Only his early poetry, up to Slabs of the Sunburnt West are included.

"Harmony Helps Sandburg Say 'Good Morning, America,'" Newsweek, May 5, 1934, p. 38.

The reviewer concentrates on the musical element present in Sandburg's fifth poetry volume. Though in some parts the music is as rough-hewn as the words, it reaches an appealing lyric quality toward the end, notes the reviewer.

Hicks, Granville, The Great Tradition, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1935, 312 pp.

The author follows the slow growth of American literature from its dependence upon the past and on foreign culture, to a broader realism and genuine concern with activities and interests of the masses of the American people.

Hoffman, Dan G., "Sandburg and the People: His Literary Populism Reappraised," Antioch Review, June, 1950, pp. 265-278.

The core of the article may be reduced to the following: because Sandburg's poetry was to represent communal emotion rather than individual emotion, it denied him access to the "dark night of soul" and limited the range of his language and his emotion. Yet these limitations are the source of his strength because they make him a pioneer in ways of feeling and speaking.

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Hoffman, F., Allen, C., and Ulrich, C., The Little Magazine: A History and A Bibliography. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1946, 440 pp.

A voluminous index of magazines and personalities and a check-list of more than 500 little magazines since 1891 is provided by this source. It contains an excellent chapter on the interrelation of little magazines with the development of modern poetry and the resulting effects.

Hoffman, F. J., The Twenties, New York, The Viking Press, 1955, 466 p.

This is an analysis of several writers within the framework of the author's own deductions and conclusions. He offers a valuable guide to the study of them and gives Sandburg due attention. Nearly ten years of research went into this work.

Holcomb, Esther L., "Whitman and Sandburg," English Journal, September, 1928, pp. 549-555.

Key words to the similarity of the two poets, as developed by the author, are: fidelity to the here and now, concrete pictures, realism, Americanism, freedom. Whitman rushes across America; Sandburg pauses to consider individual scenes. She concludes that Sandburg is more skillful in his use of contrast than Whitman, and is never guilty of the elder poet's sentimentality.

Holden, Raymon, "Review of Slabs of Sunburnt West," New Republic, August 30, 1922, p. 26.

Though an early reviewer, Holden attributes qualities to Sandburg which most reviewers and critics held back: music of language. He commends the poet's imaginative use of the vernacular idiom as distinct additions to the literature of the American language.

Horton, R., and Edwards, H., Backgrounds of American Literary Thought, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952, 425 pp.

As the title implies, the work concentrates on the forces that led eventually to the Little Renaissance in American letters. No study is made of the works of individual writers.

Hutchinson, Percy, "Review of Good Morning, America," New York Times, October 21, 1928, p. 2.

It is this reviewer's opinion that this collection shows Sandburg seeking to perpetuate the Whitman trademark. Hutchinson says that Sandburg is a poet in every feeling, yet fearful of English poetic tradition and will not or cannot discipline himself lest he be considered un-American.

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Jenkins, Alan, "Sandburg, Poet Who Keeps On Learning and Growing," Christian Science Monitor, September 2, 1950, p. 18.

The author feels that Sandburg wants to be an American Hokusai, the Japanese artist who portrayed the common people; and that in The People, Yes he has succeeded in transcribing the heart of America.

Jones, Howard M., "Backgrounds of Sorrow," Virginia Quarterly Review, January, 1927, pp. 111-123.

The critic indicates that from Sandburg's earliest work to his latest runs a progress from rebellion through skepticism to resignation. Jones is objective and unprejudiced in his observations on the language of Sandburg.

-----, Ideas in America, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1944, 304 pp.

In relation to this particular research, the most valuable chapter in this book is the one dealing with the nature of American classicism, romanticism, and liberalism.

Jones, Llewellyn, "Carl Sandburg: Formalist," American Review, July, 1924, pp. 356-362.

The thesis of this critic is that Sandburg is a greater formalist than poets using regular verse forms because, rejecting patterns, Sandburg had to watch his form every moment. One of the most important factors in his success from a technical point of view is his use of quantitative rhythm.

Karsner, David, Sixteen Authors to One, New York, Lewis Copeland, 1928, 290 pp.

These are intimate sketches of leading American writers, not their critical appraisal. The author portrays the man in relation to his work, stressing the human note. Sandburg is one of the authors considered here.

Kazin, Alfred, On Native Grounds, New York, Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942, 425 pp.

Prose literature from 1890 to the present are studied in this volume. It traces the growth of American traditions, folklore, and the American past. The spirit of this growth is revealed most vividly in biography, claims the author.

Knight, Grant C., American Literature and Culture, New York, Long and Smith, Inc., 1932, 523 pp.

A historical survey of American literature, attempting to show the relations between literature and history of

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manners and social conditions of the times. The section on literature of realism discusses the years during which Sandburg was doing his writing.

Kreymborg, Alfred, Our Singing Strength, New York, Coward-McCann, Inc., 1929, 643 pp.

Complete outline of American poetry from colonial times to the present. Of special interest are the chapters on the poetic renaissance just prior to the war, and the appraisal of the work of contemporary poets.

-----, "Review of Sandburg's Cornhuskers," Poetry, December, 1918, pp. 155-161.

Though the major portion of the article is the reviewer's estimate of individual poems in the volume considered, he includes a section on the poetic influences evident in the book as a whole. In addition to the influence of Whitman, Kreymborg notes also the influence of O. Henry.

Lader, Lawrence, "Carl Sandburg: An American Legend," Coronet, January, 1949, pp. 66-72.

The article gives an over-all picture of Sandburg, offering nothing by way of critical evaluation. It is directed to the general reading public of a popular magazine.

Lewis, Lloyd, "The Many-Sided Sandburg," Rotarian, May, 1940, pp. 44-46.

The author gives a sweeping review of the literary accomplishments of Sandburg, but offers no critical evaluation of the poet's works. Only general information is presented without much comment.

Lewisohn, Ludwig, Expression in America, New York, Harper Bros., 1932, 624 pp.

The book is not so much a history of American literature as an interpretation of creative thought in America and of the American spirit as expressed in the literature of the different periods.

Loeber, William, "The Literary Tough," Double Dealer, February, 1922, pp. 105-107.

This is a defense of the language Sandburg employs in his writing. This early critic makes the statement that if Sandburg's choice of words shocks the sensitive, it discloses not so much the poet's lack of ability to make poems, but rather a limitation in the ability of the academically sensitive to read them.

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Loggins, Vernon, I Hear America, New York, Thomas Crowell Co., 1937, 378 pp.

Partly biographical, partly critical sketches of American writers, most of whom had done their principle work since 1900.

Lowden, Carl S., "Carl Sandburg Impressively Reviews Lincoln's War Years," Christian Science Monitor, December 23, 1939, p. 10.

It is as a biographer, says the reviewer, that Sandburg reveals mastery of a higher order. The article has only high praise for the biography.

Lowell, Amy, Poetry and Poets, New York, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1930, 232 pp.

This is a series of critical essays on poetry of the elder poets and of contemporaries. Miss Lowell shows a sympathetic understanding of Sandburg manner of writing.

-----, Tendencies in American Poetry, New York, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1928, 349 pp.

The author writes of six fellow poets: Robinson, Frost, Masters, Sandburg, H. H., and Fletcher. She endeavors to show how each of these have adopted the habit of mind which now characterizes them, and how these have taken form in their minds and the way each expresses this form in his work.

Luccock, Halford E., American Mirror, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1940, 300 pp.

A history and criticism of the social, ethical and religious aspects of American literature from 1930-1940. It considers the impact of the decade on American life as it has found expression in the literature of those years.

-----, Contemporary American Literature and Religion, Chicago, Willett, Clark & Co., 1934, 300 p.

Dr. Luccock looks at the creative literature of America since the First World War and its relation to religion and to war. This literature is discussed as an expression of life and moods of the time.

Lunderbergh, Holger, "Carl Sandburg," American Scandinavian Review, September, 1938, pp. 49-51.

Denying the influence of Whitman on Sandburg, the author points to the unmistakable rhythm is Sandburg's jagged sentences. It is an underlying three-time and four-time pattern instinctively used by the poet. Another difference pointed out is Sandburg's sociological outlook, totally absent from Whitman.

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Manly, J. and Rickert, E., Contemporary American Literature, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1940, 716 pp.

Carefully chosen studies and reviews of each author of major importance are here presented. The book gives a classified bibliography of all significant writers of the period.

Matthiesson, F. W., American Renaissance, New York, Oxford University Press, 1941, 678 pp.

In this carefully-reasoned study in interrelations the author traces connections between Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne, between Whitman and the New England group. He is no less successful in his account of the descendants of his five subjects, Sandburg being among them.

McBride, Henry, "The Lincoln of the Plains," Dial, June, 1926, pp. 513-518.

The critic comments on Sandburg's style as being suspiciously like "fine writing," and underscores the biographer's success in creating the atmosphere of Lincoln's day. He sees the influence of Whitman in the long lists Sandburg uses to create the feeling of atmosphere.

McGill, Ralph, "The Most Unforgettable Character I Have Met," Readers Digest, May, 1954, pp. 109-113.

Obviously, the article underscores the human side of the poet. But it gives some of Sandburg's first-hand quotations not found elsewhere.

Miller, James M., An Outline of American Literature, New York, Farrar & Rinehart, 1934, 386 pp.

This source gives the general historical background of the era which produced Sandburg. It underscores the tendency of reform which was carried into the literature of the day and grew so sensational and aggressive that its force drew serious writers into the maelstrom.

Millet, Fred B., Contemporary American Authors, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1940, 716 pp.

The volume is a handbook of American literature since 1900. It is a compilation of an introductory critical survey of the various types of literature, of 219 bibliographies of contemporary American authors, and of select bibliographies.

Monroe, Harriet, Poets and Their Art, New York, Macmillan & Co., 1932, 322 pp.

This is a series of essays on poets who have accomplished their work wholly or chiefly since 1925. It is a revision and an enlargement of the 1926 edition.

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Monroe, Harriet, "Review of Slabs of Sunburnt West," Poetry, September, 1922, pp. 334-338.

Miss Monroe selects "The Windy City" as the most distinguished poem in this volume. The whole review is a positive one and has no argument with Sandburg's style.

Morris, Lloyd R., The Young Idea, New York, Duffield and Co., 1917, 213 pp.

An anthology of early opinions concerning the spirit and aims of contemporary literature. It gives an analysis of new poetry and the function that was awaiting it as more and more poets were to take it up.

Munson, Gorham B., Destinations: A Canvas of American Literature Since 1900, New York, Sears Co., 1928, 218 pp.

Interesting only as a contemporary impression of writers, most of whom were just beginning to publish. Critical analysis of mixed tendencies in contemporary writing.

-----, "The Single Portent of Carl Sandburg," Double Dealer, October, 1924, pp. 17-26.

The article presents critical comments on Sandburg's rhythm, form, and use of social propaganda. It analyzes literary mysticism and fits Sandburg into this sphere. Munson sees a smouldering sentimental mysticism underlying all of Sandburg's work.

Nash, J. V., "Carl Sandburg: An American Homer," Open Court, October, 1930, pp. 633-639.

The critic sees Sandburg as one who has gathered up the inchoate folklore of the toiling classes and gave it form and permanency in American literature. Like Homer, Sandburg speaks a language springing directly from human emotions. Like Lincoln, Sandburg, too, is best explained by the factors of heredity and environment that have made what he is.

Newton, Arvin, "Carl Sandburg," New Republic, September 9, 1936, pp. 119-121.

The thesis of the article is that Sandburg's effort in finding a poetic outlet for the experiences of the people of an industrialized city and of the one-sided experience of mid-western city villagers and farmers, has taken on the dimensions of a literary achievement that no disparagement can minimize. He has made himself a remarkable writer in spite of his unconventionality, contends the author.

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O'Connor, William Van, Sense and Sensibility in Modern Poetry, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948, 279 pp.

The subjects given consideration here include: meter, metaphor, obscurity, the Symbolist school, the Imagist school, the alienation between the artist and society.

"Of Thee, I Sing," Time, December 4, 1950, p. 100.

This is a review of Sandburg's Complete Poems. His poetry, according to the critic, is dredged raw from the look and experience of the people. He calls it a shrewd, tender, slangy, impressionist folk-portrait. The reviewer holds that Sandburg's is a song with good swinging rhythms but the time is hard to remember, and that it is only their mood that remains.

Pattee, Fred L., The New American Literature, 1890-1930, New York, The Century Co., 1932, 507 pp.

The author examines the new movement in the light of Chicago and gives highlights of the larger westward movement in industry and literature. Its concentration is on the poetic output begun in the 20's.

Phelps, William L., The Advance of English Poetry in the 20th Century, New York, Dodd, Mead Co., 1918, 343 pp.

The author of the essays, which comprise the body of the book, holds that every poet should be measured by two standards; one, the literature of the past; the other, the life of today.

Quinn, Arthur H., ed., The Literature of the American People, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952, 1172 pp.

This is a comprehensive history of the literature of the United States. It presents estimates of individual writers, brief but provocative.

Ramsdell, Charles W., "Carl Sandburg's 'Lincoln,'" Southern Review, Winter, 1941, pp. 439-453.

In this evaluation of Sandburg's Abraham Lincoln: The War Years, the critic holds that the biography is written primarily for the large and less scholarly group and is to be read for enjoyment rather than for knowledge.

Roberts, R. Ellis, "Review of Abraham Lincoln," New Statesman, literary supplement, June 5, 1926, pp.iii-iv.

The reviewer evaluates the book as a masterpiece. He underscores the style and the manner as being helpful in revealing the Lincoln that grows out of the pages.

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Rodman, Selden, "Pulse of Common Activity," Saturday Review, November 18, 1950, pp. 14-15.

Rodman considers the enduring values of Sandburg's work. It is his belief that the key to Sandburg's identity is his primitiveness. He applies this key to every volume of Sandburg's poetry.

Roscoe, Burton, Before I Forget, New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1937, 442 pp.

This is a volume of informal essays on the author's experiences with the writers of the Chicago school. He records not only his personal observations on them but comments on their works as well. Five pages are devoted to Sandburg.

-----, "Carl Sandburg," The Literary Review, September 27, 1924, pp. 1-2.

This earlier evaluation of Sandburg records the observation that Sandburg's poetry was becoming more and more fanciful, imagistic, and elegaic. The reviewer makes a comparison of Whitman and Sandburg, and concludes that Sandburg is the voice of the people because he understands and expresses their emotions in their own language.

Rosenfeld, Paul, "Carl Sandburg," Bookman, vol. 53, 1921, pp. 389-396.

Although this is an early evaluation of Sandburg's literary style, it is not one-sided. The chief defect underscored is Sandburg's lack of critical sense.

-----, Port of New York, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1924, 311 p.

Fourteen essays on modern American poets comprise this volume. It is the author's opinion that it is because of Sandburg's following of his mood that he was able to give a voice to the American folk.

Sandburg, Carl, Abraham Lincoln, The Prairie Years, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1926, two volumes, 962 pp.

Much of the biography is concerned with the prairie folk of Lincoln's day and uncovers details about Lincoln, who to Sandburg was a representative of the finest qualities of common Americans. The two volumes cover fifty-one years of his life.

-----, Abraham Lincoln, The War Years, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1939, four volumes, 2,330 pp.

An-exhaustive study of the life of Lincoln from the point where the Prairie Years left off, to his assassination and death. It is also a history of the Civil War years.

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Sandburg, Carl, "Address and Reading," in Proceedings at the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Opening of the Chicago Public Library--1873-1923, Chicago, Board of Directors of Chicago Public Library, 1923, 96 pp.

The address of Sandburg is found on pages 44-47. In it he formulates the theory which guided him in his writings, particularly in the writing of Chicago Poems and Slabs of the Sunburnt West.

-----, Complete Poems, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950, 676 pp.

The volume is a compilation of more than 800 poems written between 1900-1950. The poems reflect that which has transpired during the forty years: First World War, the gay post-war prosperity years, the Great Depression, the Second World War, peace, and the Cold War.

-----, "Introduction to Chicago," Holiday, October, 1951, pp. 32-33.

Sandburg sketches the makings of and the growth of the midwest metropolis. His love for Chicago remains unchanged.

-----, "Review of Abraham Lincoln," Atlantic, February, 1947, pp. 62-65.

Written by Sandburg himself, it is understandable why this article concentrates only on the person of Lincoln. He underscores the range of Lincoln's personality.

-----, "Those Who Make Poems," Atlantic, March, 1942, pp. 344-346.

Sandburg gives his opinions on writers. He looks upon his own writing experiences and faces the charges held against his style.

-----, "Trying to Write," "Trying to Write," Atlantic, September, 1950, pp. 31-38.

In a way, this contains an apologia for his style of writing. Sandburg gives his viewpoints on style in general.

"Sandburg's Lincoln," Newsweek, December 4, 1939, pp. 29-30.

This is a review of The War Years. The reviewer claims this to be the greatest history of Abraham Lincoln if only because it incorporates all others. He underscores the literary values of the biography.

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"Sandburg's Virile Slabs," New York Times, June 4, 1922, p. 11.

The reviewer feels that the poet's emphasis upon virility is too forced and too conscious. According to him, the highest excellence of Slabs of the Sunburnt West comes not from the virile portions, but from the quieter, more restrained moments present in the book.

Schelling, Felix E., Appraisements as to Contemporary Writers, Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Co., 1922, 199 pp.

The volume is a reprinting of a selection of what was considered "better reviewing" of books in the early years of the present century. The reviews first appeared on the pages of the Evening Public Ledger of Philadelphia.

Sherman, Stuart P., Americans, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1922, 336 pp.

Together with all the other writers included in this volume, Sandburg is given a critical evaluation of his work. Typical of the early critiques, it is the negative aspect that is underscored.

-----, "Carl Sandburg's Lincoln," New York Herald Tribune, Book Section, February 7, 1926, pp. 11-12.

The article emphasizes the rationalistic and liberal idea underlying this comprehensive study of Lincoln. It considers the biographer and his subject to be mutually illuminating.

-----, The Main Stream, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922, 336 pp.

The volume is devoted to an analysis of prose writing. Of direct bearing to this research is the nine-page study of Lincoln as he appears in Sandburg's Prairie Years.

Slosson, Preston W., The Great Crusade and After, 1914-1928, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1937, 486 pp.

A study of the social, political and economic aspects of the American scene since 1914, and the infiltration of these facts into modern writing.

Speers, Archer, "Lincoln's Man Sandburg," Newsweek, February 14, 1955, pp. 49-52.

The reviewers spotlight is reversed from subject to biographer. After some forty years of work on Lincoln, Sandburg has become identified with his subject in the public mind. His poetry, folk singing, stories for children, and his great biography and Sandburg's life itself justify his being considered the poet of the people.

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295.

Spiller, Robert E., The Cycle of American Literature, New York, Macmillan Co., 1955, 318 pp.

The theory of the book discloses not only a single organic movement in American letters, but two secondary cycles: the first reached its climax with Melville and Whitman; the second began with the Western frontier of the nineteenth century and ripened in the works of Eliot and Faulkner.

Spiller, R., Thorp, W., et al., Literary History of the United States, New York, Macmillan Co., 1953, 1456 pp.

Every conceivable form that literature can take is here correlated with the cultural and political evolution of the American people.

Strachey, J. St. Loe, "The Making of Lincoln," Spectator, May 29, 1926, pp. 911-912.

The review is geared toward the facts of Lincoln's life in the midwest, as these are brought to life in the Prairie Years.

Taylor, Walter F., The Story of American Letters, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1956, 504 pp.

The story is that of writings, their titles, their content, their forms and techniques, their emotional tones and overtones, their underlying philosophy, their human values. Sandburg himself is given a four-page discussion.

Untermeyer, Louis, ed., American Poetry Since 1900, New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1923, 405 pp.

A critical anthology in which the author traces the part played by Whitman, Hovey, Carman, Markham, Robinson, Frost, and Sandburg, in the democratizing of American poetry.

-----, "Review of Smoke and Steel," New Republic, December 15, 1920, pp. 86-87.

The reviewer sounds boastful when he says that with the publication of Smoke and Steel, America can claim two living major poets: Sandburg and Frost. He attempts to explain the coarseness of Sandburg's language, still so strange to the reading public.

-----, The New Era in American Poetry, New York, Henry Holt & Co., 364 pp., 1919.

An early effort at evaluating the type of writing which was sprouting all about the country. He tries to trace the roots of the new growth and draws bold genealogical lines.

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296.

Van Doren, Carl, "Flame and Slag: Carl Sandburg, Poet with Both Fists," Century, September 1923, pp. 786-792.

Critic Van Doren evaluates Sandburg's early poetry in the light of the first three volumes published. He believes that Sandburg's difficulty with the raw materials and the raw language is attributable to his unwillingness, or incapacity, to accept any help from tried and prosperous themes or words of poetry. As a result, his poetic is the loser.

-----, Many Minds, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1924, 242 pp.

The volume gives a realization of the accumulating wealth of America's poetic writing.

Van Doren, Carl and Mark, American and British Literature Since 1890, New York, The Century Co., 1925, 408 pp.

The book presents an analysis of the modern scene of English and American life and of the writers who arose to be spokesmen for that life. There is a four-page section devoted to Sandburg.

Van Doren, Mark, "Review of Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years," The Nation, February 10, 1926, p. 149.

In his review of the work, Van Doren says that the Lincoln biography will do for the up-coming poets what Standish O'Grady's History of Ireland did for Yeats and Synge. The review is entirely optimistic.

Ward, Alfred C., American Literature, 1880-1930, New York, Dial Press, 1932, 273 pp.

This is a survey of American literature by an English writer. He gives a sympathetic analysis of the American scene and of the efforts of American writers in interpreting this scene.

Warren, Henry, "Sing a Song of Chicago," Bookman, (London), vol. 70, 1926, p. 126.

The reviewer is impressed with the youthful note that pervades all of Sandburg's poetry. Very bluntly he states that Sandburg is so positive a quantity that there can be no half-measures in the way one accepts him.

Weirick, Bruce, From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry, New York, Macmillan Co., 1924, 245 pp.

This critical survey sees Whitman's influence in Sandburg's view of nature, but Sandburg's naturalism is considered as having more tang and bite than that of the elder poet.

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297.

Wells, Henry W., The American Way of Poetry, New York, Columbia University Press, 1947, 246 pp.

This is a series of essays which aim to define whatever is truly indigenous and unique in the American tradition. Each poet is analyzed with care in terms of his underlying point of view, choice of subject matter, and poetic form in which his principal works are cast. Sandburg is discussed in an essay, "New America."

West, Rebecca, "Preface" in Selected Poems of Carl Sandburg, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1926, 287 pp.

Miss West comes to the defense of Sandburg's controversial style. According to her, every age has its own concept of poetry and demands that poets write accordingly.

"When Lincoln Rode the Circuit," New York Times, Book Supplement, February 14, 1926, p. 1.

The qualities of the Lincoln biography that are given the highest rating here are its extraordinary living warmth of Lincoln as he is drawn in the book, and the tenderness of handling the stories of Nancy Hanks and of Ann Rutledge.

Whipple, Thomas K., Spokesmen: Modern Writers and American Life, New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1928, 276 pp.

The spokesmen of American life and letters whose message the author analyzes are those who won national reputation at about the time of World War I. Sandburg is discussed in twenty-one pages.

Wilkinson, Marguerite, ed., New Voices, New York, Macmillan Co., 1928, 547 pp.

Of direct bearing upon this research, the chapter on the poets of the radical movement of the twenties is of importance. Sandburg is measured by the standards developed in the early sections of the book. The point is left open whether or no a man who takes upon himself the mission of radical humanitarianism can produce real poetry.

-----, "Present Day Poets," The World Review, October 25, 1926, pp. 92-93.

The critic believes that with the new literature America has come of age. Correctness in rhetoric is a mark of the tyro, she holds. The fact that the new literature is not imitative scores large in her estimation.

Williams, William C., "Review of Carl Sandburg's Complete Poems," Poetry, September, 1951, pp. 345-351.

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298.

First and foremost, the reviewer attacks the formlessness of Sandburg's literary figures and of the materials with which the poet worked. The whole evaluation is a negative one.

Wood, Clement, "A Homer from Hogwallow," Nation, July 26, 1922, pp. 96-97.

The critic sees kinship between Sandburg and such poets as Elinor Wylie, Robert Frost, and Edwin Robinson, in the area of word selection. He considers Sandburg a word artist, his themes as being well chosen and vital to make the thrill that comes from poetry.

-----, Poets of America, New York, Dutton & Co., 1925, 392 pp.

The book contains a fifteen-page study of Sandburg. Since the volume appeared as early as it did, it does not have the deeper insight into his work that appeared later.

Wyatt, Edith, "Review of Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years," New Republic, March 17, 1926, pp. 116-117.

If the economic history of The Prairie Years is its greatest prose contribution, its power in making Lincoln's thought a part of the world-thought of the future is its most moving poetic value--such is the conclusion this reviewer reaches in her article.

Yust, Walter, "Carl Sandburg, Human Being," Bookman, January, 1921, pp. 285-290.

From the pen of an English critic comes the statement that Europe holds Sandburg to be the most authentic voice, if not the authentic voice of the new world spirit since Whitman.

Zobel, Morton, "The Sandburg Testament," Poetry, October, 1936, pp. 33-46.

This is an evaluation of Sandburg's book-long poem, The People, Yes. The book, according to the critic, has epic potentialities, but these have not been realized. It fails in its major purpose. But of all of Sandburg's poetry volumes, this one is destined to bring him distinction, claims the author.

APPENDIX A

TABLE I.

Distribution of Color
in the six volumes of poetry

Colors	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		1787	
Red	361		20.2
Yellow and Orange	328		18.3
White	263		14.7
Gray	248		13.9
Blue	218		12.2
Black	115		6.4
Green	111		6.2
Purple	89		5.0
Brown	54		3.0

APPENDIX A

300.

TABLE II.
Distribution of Color
in Chicago Poems

Colors	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		159	
Red	44		27.7
Yellow and Orange	25		15.7
Gray	25		15.7
White	19		12.0
Blue	14		8.8
Brown	10		6.3
Purple	8		5.0
Green	8		5.0
Black	6		3.8

APPENDIX A

301.

TABLE III.
Distribution of Color
in Cornhuskers.

Colors	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		342	
Red	92		26.9
Yellow and Orange	69		20.2
Gray	46		13.5
White	44		12.9
Blue	38		11.1
Black	22		6.4
Green	18		5.3
Purple	7		2.0
Brown	6		1.7

APPENDIX A

302.

TABLE IV.

Distribution of Color
in Smoke and Steel

Colors	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		420	
Red	89		21.2
White	75		17.9
Orange and Yellow	68		16.2
Gray	59		14.0
Blue	45		10.7
Black	27		6.4
Purple	25		6.0
Green	16		3.8
Brown	16		3.8

APPENDIX A

303.

TABLE V.
Distribution of Color
in Slabs of Sunburnt West

Colors	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		191	
Orange and Yellow	34		17.8
Gray	34		17.8
White	31		16.2
Red	23		12.0
Blue	22		11.5
Black	20		10.5
Purple	16		8.4
Green	9		4.7
Brown	2		1.1

APPENDIX A

304.

TABLE VI.

Distribution of Color
in Good Morning, America

Colors	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		471	
Orange and Yellow	100		21.2
Red	80		17.0
Blue	73		15.5
White	59		12.5
Gray	57		12.1
Green	44		9.3
Purple	23		5.0
Black	21		4.4
Brown	14		3.0

APPENDIX A

305.

TABLE VII.

Distribution of Color
in The People, Yes

Colors	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		204	
White	35		17.2
Red	33		16.2
Orange and Yellow	32		15.7
Gray	27		13.2
Blue	26		12.7
Black	19		9.3
Green	16		7.8
Purple	10		4.9
Brown	6		3.0

TABLE VIII.

Comparative Color Chart of Sandburg's Poetry
in Descending Order of Frequency.

Chicago Poems	Corn- huskers	Smoke and Steel	Slabs of Sunb. West	Good Morn. America	People, Yes	All volumes
Red	Red	Red	Yel.-Or.	Yel.-Or.	White	Red
Yel.-Or.	Yel.-Or.	White	Gray	Red	Red	Yel.-Or.
Gray	Gray	Yel.-Or.	White	Blue	Yel.-Or.	White
White	White	Gray	Red	White	Gray	Gray
Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Gray	Blue	Blue
Brown	Black	Black	Black	Green	Black	Black
Purple	Green	Purple	Purple	Purple	Green	Green
Green	Purple	Green	Green	Black	Purple	Purple
Black	Brown	Brown	Brown	Brown	Brown	Brown

APPENDIX B

TABLE I.

Distribution of Repetitive Symbols
in the Six Volumes of Poetry.

Elements	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		1473	
Moisture	291		19.8
Stars	231		15.7
Shadows	218		14.7
Ashes and dust	197		13.3
Silence	197		13.3
Laughter	176		12.0
Smoke and haze	119		8.1
Softness	44		3.1

APPENDIX B.

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TABLE II.

Distribution of Repetitive Symbols
in Chicago Poems

Elements	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		201	
Moisture	40		19.9
Silence	38		18.9
Laughter	35		17.5
Shadows	34		16.9
Ashes and dust	24		11.9
Softness	15		7.5
Stars	13		6.5
Smoke and haze	2		.9

APPENDIX B

309.

TABLE III.

Distribution of Repetitive Symbols
in Cornhuskers

Elements	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		207	
Stars	41		19.8
Moisture	39		18.8
Shadows	38		18.4
Ashes and dust	38		18.4
Smoke and haze	16		7.7
Laughter	16		7.7
Silence	13		6.3
Softness	6		2.9

APPENDIX B

310.

TABLE IV.

Distribution of Repetitive Symbols
in Smoke and Steel

Elements	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		351	
Stars	76		21.7
Moisture	67		19.1
Shadows	52		14.8
Ashes and dust	52		14.8
Smoke and haze	39		11.1
Silence	38		10.8
Laughter	27		7.7
Softness	0		.0

APPENDIX B

311.

TABLE V.

Distribution of Repetitive Symbols
in Slabs of Sunburnt West

Elements	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		159	
Shadows	33		20.7
Moisture	32		20.1
Silence	22		13.8
Stars	20		12.6
Laughter	16		10.1
Smoke and haze	15		9.4
Ashes and dust	12		7.6
Softness	9		5.7

APPENDIX B

312.

TABLE VI.

Distribution of Repetitive Symbols
in Good Morning, America

Elements	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		313	
Moisture	65		20.8
Stars	57		18.2
Silence	57		18.2
Shadows	46		14.7
Laughter	33		10.5
Ashes and dust	28		9.0
Smoke and haze	21		6.7
Softness	6		1.9

APPENDIX B

313.

TABLE VII.

Distribution of Repetitive Symbols
in The People, Yes

Elements	Frequency	Total No.	Per cent
		242	
Laughter	49		20.3
Moisture	48		19.8
Ashes and dust	43		17.8
Silence	29		12.0
Smoke and haze	26		10.7
Stars	24		9.9
Shadows	15		6.2
Softness	8		3.3

APPENDIX C

SANDBURG'S VIEWS ON HIS WRITINGS
AS GLEANED FROM HIS SPEECHES AND HIS INTERVIEWS

If I had not written many poems, good, not-so-good, or rather bad, about Chicago, if I had not written about Chicago as a great world city. . . proud and strong for all the ugly and brutal, if I had not loved Chicago as Victor Hugo loved his Paris, as Charles Lamb loved his London, I would not be here tonight. . . (October 31, 1957)

. . .there are many pieces in my books I would write in a different way if I had them before me now as manuscripts for revision and rewriting. . . there are a few pieces I would throw away or lay by as experimental curiosities. . . (1942)

A book is an instrument. . . It tells what its author thinks up to the time of his writing. If he learns better, he may be fairly confident that his readers will have forgotten his old one by the time he knows enough to write a wiser one. (1950)

It could be, in the grace of God, I shall live to be eighty-nine, as did Hokusai, and speaking my farewell to the earthly scenes, I might paraphrase: 'If God had let me live five years longer, I should have been a writer. (1950)

APPENDIX D

ABSTRACT OF

Analytical Study of Carl Sandburg
as Poet and Biographer

The main problem of this study was to determine whether Sandburg can rightfully be claimed to be the spokesman for and the voice of the American people. The answer to this problem was sought in answers obtainable through the analytical approach. Consequently, there was an effort made at an assessment of him through his poetry and his biography of Lincoln.

Primary sources of this study were limited to his Complete Poems, the two volumes of The Prairie Years, and the four volumes of The War Years. Among the secondary sources consulted were the published reviews of his works, the critical articles on him in various periodicals, the evaluations of him in books dealing with the development of American literature, and finally, pamphlets and magazine articles which contain Sandburg's personal comments on his style of writing. But though the reading in the secondary sources was broad, this study employed a relatively small amount of the material directly, since this research intended to be a personal analysis and evaluation of Sandburg.

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The study was divided into three parts. Part I considered his poetry from two major aspects: sociological and lyric. The chapter which studied him in the sociological role traced the themes of his early social reform, the manner of his expression, the subsequent changes evident in his treatment of sociological themes, and the gradual tapering off and disappearance of this type of verse. In the same analytical vein, his lyric poetry was then studied for moods, tones, and themes.

Part II continued this lyric study but concentrated on the longer poems, six of which were selected as representative. This analytical process was extended into the subsequent chapter, where his book-long poem, The People, Yes, was subjected to a similar study. An attempt was then made to trace the traits of the national character of the American people as they are revealed in this poem.

The technical devices which Sandburg has employed in his poetic output were also studied. Among the literary techniques examined are his use of color and repetitive symbols, his use of figures of speech, the imagery of sound, line and stanza patterns, and finally, his language. The results of the findings regarding his use of color and the repetitive symbols employed, were tabulated and arranged in tables for each book of poetry separately and for all six

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books together. These tables constitute the body of Appendices A and B, respectively.

Efforts to trace the influences that have gone into the making of Sandburg's characteristic style followed the analytical phase of this study. He was measured in particular against the literary movement of Imagism, during which time he produced the early volumes of his poetry. Peripheral influences of other writers have been indicated, though these have not been delved into to any appreciable degree. It has been felt that more positive results could be arrived at by dealing with Sandburg's own admissions regarding the formative elements of his style. These have been obtained directly from his poetry and from magazine articles which Sandburg himself had written.

The last part of this study examined Sandburg in his six-volume biography of Lincoln. Both, the biographer and his subject were subjected to an analysis. Sandburg, for the compatibility of his personality and background in attempting to write the biography, and for the method and style he used in re-creating Lincoln's life and times. Lincoln, on the other hand, was examined for the formation and growth of his character and the development of his personality within his immediate surroundings. An endeavor has been made to find an explanation for Sandburg's producing that poetic element that frequently permeates his prose.

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The results of the findings upheld Sandburg's position as spokesman for the people, alike through his poetry as through his portrait of Lincoln as a folk-hero. In both areas Sandburg demonstrated a deep understanding of common men; nurtured a profound sympathy for them; evinced a keen insight into their problems; and in the espousal of their cause, he spoke in the way they would speak had they been able to express their feelings. Whether Sandburg could have spoken in a manner other than the one in which he did, however, had he not chosen to be the voice of the masses, is a matter open to speculation.