CHAPTER - III
Other Stories of Anderson
OTHER STORIES OF ANDERSON

Winesburg, Ohio brought fame and recognition to Anderson as a master craftsman. The stories published in The Triumph of the Egg, Horses and Men and Death in the Woods and Other Stories made his position all the more firm. Although the stories in these collections are uneven in quality, the best of them represent the pinnacle of Anderson's career as a story-teller. In these stories also, Anderson deals with the characteristic themes and techniques so central to Winesburg, Ohio. As in Winesburg, they generally have lonely, grotesque, sensitive characters who yearn to break out from the isolation of their inner lives. However, these stories are more literal and more sophisticated than those in Winesburg, Ohio, thus losing some of the haunting and mystical qualities of Winesburg. It seemed as if he was trying to reach a larger audience and satisfy his critics by writing his stories more directly. As Thomas A. Cullason has rightly pointed out, 'his (Anderson's) short stories became more artful, less artless'.

Among these stories, "I want to Know Why", "The Egg", "Death in the Woods", "I'm a Fool", "The Man Who Became a Woman" and to a certain extent, "The Corn Planted", "A Meeting South" and "Brother Death" are similar, so far as their structural base rests on an oral narration. According to Irving Howe, the tone of these stories acquires a slightly bewildered tenderness, and all of them deal with the elemental crises in the lives of simple townspeople. The narrator of these stories is often an "I". There are moments when he looks back to his boyhood and remembers an incident in the past. It is always a moment that has helped him in the process of growth. Thus most of these stories also have 'initiation' as a theme. The theme of initiation becomes relevant and important in the context of the tensions and contradictions inherent in the American character and sensibility. The term "initiation" has been defined by various critics in various ways. For example, Adrian H. Jaffe and Virgil Scott explain 'initiation' as something which occurs when

a character, in the course of the story, learns something that he did not know before and — what he learns is already known to, and shared by the larger group of the world.2

Several critics define initiation as a discovery of evil. Brooks and Warren state that 'the protagonist seeks to come to terms with his discovery' and some others suggest that in learning to live with his knowledge the protagonist begins to achieve self-understanding.

Anderson feels that ordinary and usual things can best be seen through the intense light cast by the strange and the unusual. Hence, in his stories dealing with 'initiation' the narrator highlights the strange and unique quality of his remembered experience. At the same time, he is aware that life is full of frustration and loneliness and only in rare moments does one find its 'epiphany', the true moment.

It can be said that almost all the best stories of Anderson have been based on oral narration. In other words, these stories can be read not only as imaginative versions of the human experience, but also as renderings of a pervasive pattern of story-telling. Anderson's narrator not only creates interest and suspense, but also produces in his listeners a vicarious responsibility for the successful completion of the story. The reader can understand this relationship between him and the narrator. Often, the narrator becomes emotionally involved while
narrating his story. In a way, the narrator's reminiscences are his burden. He seeks to disburden himself of the chaos of the past.

Again, the reminiscences of the narrator provide the reader with an occasion for a symbolic cleansing and relief. Moreover, Anderson often resorts to a bold sort of 'artlessness' in the stories that follow the oral narrative pattern. For instance, the narrator of "The Egg" sometimes confesses his bewilderment before the events he narrates. Some critics consider this intrusion of comment by the narrator a fallacy, as they believe it diverts the story from its central subject matter with the result that the shred of verisimilitude is destroyed. But as Irving Howe has rightly pointed out:

--- in those of Anderson's stories that live, artlessness is usually a veil of conscious craft, and the narrator's intrusion, precisely because it is the narrator's and not Anderson's becomes an integral part of the story.3

In fact, eventually the narrator brings his obvious diversions towards a climax. This is the strategy Anderson employs in his stories which have an oral

3. Irving Howe, Sherwood Anderson, P. 150.
narrative form. This again shows Anderson’s belief in the ‘elasticity’ or ‘looseness’ of the Short Story form.

However, one can notice that while the story’s meaning is puzzling, the reader is totally involved in the story. This is indeed the mark of a good story teller. Sometimes, as in "The Egg", both Anderson and his narrator appear to be puzzled by the complex events of the story. In the final analysis, however, the story acquires compactness and becomes absorbing. There are moments as in "Death in the Woods" when the narrator confesses that "the notes had to be picked up slowly one at a time." But the fact is that Anderson himself has already picked up those notes firmly in the story.

Some critics comment that Anderson’s stories are 'moving' but 'formless'. In fact, those who make such remarks take the word 'form' to signify merely the technical devices that go into the making of a Short Story. However, form can be properly understood only by relating techniques and strategies to their organic context of feelings, emotions and themes. It is difficult to imagine that the stories of Anderson lack form. The fact is Anderson’s stories have a form of a different kind.

Irving Howe, in his book *Sherwood Anderson*, examines the form used by Anderson in his best stories. Howe suggests that Anderson has evolved form through two essential means: tone and perspective. Tone is the essence of a work of art like a Short Story. It is the outward sign of the emotion which resides in a Short Story. It also unites the central theme and characterization. For example, it is the tone of love that pervades Anderson's best stories and those in *Winesburg, Ohio*. But as stated in the previous chapter, the importance of love in these stories is emphasized indirectly.

Perspective is the point of view in judging the events narrated. One can mark different points of view in these stories. They are: the events of the story, the feelings of the boy involved in them, the reminiscences of the adult who considers his involvement in the light of his experience, and the ultimate meaning residing in the story which is even beyond the conscious recognition of the story's narrator. It can be noted that the true action of these stories is not the events narrated, but the reaction of the narrator to the events. That is why Anderson's stories are not very dramatic in the ordinary sense of the term. Their purpose is not to establish a resolution of conflict but 'to reflect an enlargement of consciousness'. A study of Anderson's
most famous stories becomes necessary to show what his main pre-occupations were and the devices and techniques he has used in order to render his meanings. The stories may be divided into two classes, those having to do with adolescents, and those having to do with adults. The stories dealing with adolescents have generally 'initiation' as an important theme. The stories that deal with adults have in common loneliness, sensitive souls who want desperately to break out of the isolation of their inner lives. However, loneliness and isolation are the central themes that unify all the stories of Anderson.

Anderson's stories "I'm a Fool" and "I want to Know Why" can be taken as companion stories. Both the stories deal with problems of adolescence and both are dramatic monologues of race-track swipes. Both focus on the world of horses to understand the world of man. Nevertheless, there is a marked difference between the two stories.

In "I'm a Fool", the monologue of the boy is internally coherent. But this coherence is not related to the boy himself. It is hard to believe that the
monologue comes from a boy of nineteen who has learned to drink and "swear from fellows who know how."

One Saturday, the day of a racing meet in Sandusky, Ohio, the boy puts on his best clothes and enters a bar. He sees "a fellow with a cane and a Windsor tie on, that it made me sick to look at him." The boy observes: 'I like a man to be a man and dress up, but not to go put on that kind of airs.' The boy orders a drink. Then just to show the fellow something, he has another. He thinks that sitting in a box seat is 'putting on too many years.' Therefore, he buys the best seat in the grandstand. Soon a well dressed young man brings his sweet heart and his sister to a seat in front of him. During the race, the boy gets acquainted with them. The boy realizes that the sister is sincere and he likes her. Nevertheless, he tells a pack of lies in order to impress her. He tells her about his father being wealthy and owning a string of race-horses. At the railway station, when they leave, she promises to write to him at the false address he has given her. When the train leaves he 'busted out

6. Ibid., P. 7.
7. Ibid., P. 7.
8. Ibid., P. 8.
and cried like a kid. All he can think of is the dandy
with the Windsor tie at the bar. It was mainly because
of him that the boy drank whisky and told the elaborate
lie. In the end the boy is bewildered, hurt, angered
and isolated by a dilemma of his own making. In extreme
disgust he calls himself a fool.

The boy's disgust with himself is natural. He has
not been used to drinking, to talking to people of the
opposite sex, and to telling pretentious lies. Now, he
has been initiated into the ways of pretense and affect-
ation. In the story, the protagonist professes one set
of values and practices another, and is foolish enough
to be unaware of this inconsistency. Like the heroes in
the other stories, he is a swipe and is deeply involved
with horses and horse-racing. However, his lower middle
class family very strongly disapproves of his involve-
ment in this sport. This fact is responsible for his put-
ting on an act in the grand stand at Sandusky when he
meets Lucy Wassen, her brother and his girl friend, and
for pretending to be the son of a rich owner of horses.
Of course, his family's attitude towards his job as
swipe has partly conditioned his responses.

The story "I Want to Know Why" is yet another
example that shows Anderson’s method of story-telling and his skill in handling a theme common to many American writers viz. the initiation of a boy. The very title indicates the great adolescent question — ‘I want to Know Why’, an adolescent’s inquisitiveness that leads to his initiation.

In this story also an adolescent narrator describes a terrible experience at a race track. He is ‘just crazy’ about horses and he feels a strong sense of companionship with the Negro swipes. He finds horses very beautiful:

There isn’t anything so lovely and clean and full of spunk and honest and everything as some race-horses . . . . It brings a lump into my throat when a horse runs. I don’t mean all horses, but some."

Herman Dudley of Anderson’s “The Man Who became a Woman” feels the same about horses. It is necessary to understand the involvement of these young boys with horses to get an idea of what they expect from horses and men, particularly the norms of behaviour they have in mind for men. They judge human beings by their understanding of the standards of the thoroughbreds.

Early in the story the hero is puzzled by a few things he observes about society. Negroes, as far as he is concerned, are 'sweeter with kids' than most whites. Yet they get 'the messy end of the dung fork' from society.

The hero is bothered about society's attitude towards his friend Henry Riesbeck's father, a professional gambler. The hero considers him as a 'nice' and 'generous' man 'a good and considerate father' to his son. But others consider him bad and undesirable. No wonder the hero finds horses superior to most men. The horses are clean, honest and brave, whereas most men are dirty or at any rate go to dirty places. They are shifty and dishonest and don't have the courage of their convictions.

Jerry Tillford becomes the narrator's idol only because he loves and appreciates thoroughbreds. Being a trainer he has 'been watching and working with Sunbeak since the 'horse was a baby colt', and 'had taught him to run and be patient and when to let himself out and not to quit, never'. In one of those rare 'moments' of rapport, the hero realizes that he loves Jerry Tillford more than he ever loved his own father. He had seen the
'shine' of pride and joy that Tillfort had in his eyes when he was watching Sunstreak in the paddocks. Later he says:

I guess I loved the man as much as I did the horse because he knew what I knew. Seemed to me there wasn't anything in the world but that man and the horse and me.10

But that same night the boy sees the trainer enter a brothel. He watches him gazing at a prostitute through a window. And now for the boy "things are different —".11

There are two moments of intense perception in the story, one resulting in joy and the other in pain. The first moment is the boy's sudden realization that he shares his love for horses with the trainer and the second one, his shock at discovering the trainer's lust for the prostitute. What is even more frightening to him is his realization that good and evil can reside together in the same place, in the same man. That the man can love both the pure horse and the contaminated woman, that he can love both in the same way, is the

10. Ibid., P. 43.
11. Ibid., P. 46.
source of the boy's sorrow. He is confused about the values of life. To quote Welford Dunaway Taylor:

Man's basic confusion of values is — his inability to distinguish between appearance and reality and the boy like Anderson, is unable to explain it.12

The incident proves to be too much for the boy:

I began to hate that man. I wanted to scream and rush in the room and kill him — what did he do it for? I want to know why.13

The whole series of incidents in the story, beginning with the dual racial standards, leaves him bewildered. Since the boy does not make a clean break with his past, his initiation, is of course an incomplete one. However, the knowledge itself is an important part of his initiation.

There is no doubt that Jerry has failed him. But the boy seems to be no longer really concerned with Jerry as a man. He is most concerned with the 'why' of Jerry's actions. As Donald A. Ringe says,

On the surface, the boy insists that he wants to know why. He is already perhaps daily aware of the reason and his persistent questioning is but a symptom of his inability to admit the truth.

Surely the boy is undergoing an 'initiation'. However, at the same time he also remembers his idealized feeling for horses and fiercely rejects the degraded love between humans that he has just seen. By the end of the story, the boy is overwhelmed by confusion, pain, and anger. He is unable to understand the adult world and the way it is attracted to beauty and to ugliness, as if they were one and the same thing.

Anderson effectively captures the mixed feelings and inner turmoil of his adolescent hero. The degradation of the brothel is not the only cause of the boy's revulsion. He looks with suspicion at the prospect of all adult sexuality, which he thinks can never be as 'pure' as his feeling for horses. This realization alone pushes him into the adult world. Besides, he also develops resistance to it. He has entered into a world of knowledge and judgment. He must now face experience.

in terms of ambiguity and distinctions. He must choose rather than absorb. According to Howe, Anderson's theme in the story is:

the niceties of a boy's discriminations and the brutal need to apply them to what he will soon learn to call the real world.15

Anderson has used symbols and images to depict his theme. The stallion stands for the boy, an agent of strength. He compares the prostitute to a gelding. However, this meaning is enriched by a recurrent image of cleanliness the boy had found in his feeling for horses.

In the story, Anderson identifies himself entirely with the adolescent feeling. In other words, he achieves a 'triumph of tone'. The story maintains the tone and perspective suitable for its adolescent narrator.

The central idea of "I Want to Know Why" gets numerous subtle and complex variations in the best of Anderson's stories. In "The Corn Planting", "Brother Death" and "A Meeting South", the possibility of a complete understanding between people or between man

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15. Irving Howe, Sherwood Anderson, P. 156.
and nature is the important theme. "The Corn Planting" is subdued and bare. One evening the old Hutchenson couple learn about the death of their son, Will Hutchenson, in the war. He was born to them in their old age. A friend of the dead son Hal and the quiet self-effacing narrator have walked out from town to tell the parents of their loss. The father receives the news in silence, closing the door at their faces. Presently they see the old couple walking mutely through their fields in the dead of night, the old man with a hand corn planter and the old woman with a bag of seed corn. Then they begin to sow the corn. At the end of each row they kneel and pray. The narrator comments:

It was the first time in my life I ever understood something about the connection between certain people and the earth—a kind of silent cry, down into the earth, of these two old people, putting corn down into the earth. It was as though they were putting death down into the ground that life might grow again—something like that.¹⁶

In fact, the story is a variation on the theme of Anderson's famous story "Death in the Woods". In "Death in the Woods", the peasant woman who nourished life, both animal and human, all her days, continued to serve it after her death. In "Corn Planting" the old farming

couple's answer to the senseless death of their son is to plant the fields again. The story is marked by poetic evocation and lyrical beauty.

Brian Way points out that the pattern of the story closely resembles that of some of Whitman's poems dealing with death: section six of "Song of Myself", "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd". According to him,

Anderson's story and Whitman's poems begin with an affirmation of the beauty of nature. Then there is a recoil into despondency as the thought of death presses on the consciousness; and finally a movement of recovery—a new vision of life, as a never-ending cycle which includes death and rebirth—brings the work to a close.17

"Brother Death" is another story that centres upon the idea of death. Here, Anderson uses death as a means of examining the quality of life as it is lived by John Creys, a farming family in South Western Virginia. In the story, one of the children in the family poses a question: 'Life What is it worth? Is death the most terrible thing?'18 The story answers this question...

successful.

Ted and Mary are the youngest of the three Grey children. As the story opens, they are examining two huge stumps, left from chopping down a pair of giant oaks. The children, who have witnessed the cutting of the trees, innocently feel the stumps. Ted asks whether the trees had felt pain from the saw and whether the stumps had bled - as a man would bleed when one of his limbs was amputated.

The children's conversation points to the major action of the story. It deals with a tense drama within the family. The mother does not want to see the tree removed. It was her aristocratic Grandfather Aspinwah who had planted the trees many decades ago. To her, those trees symbolize the past grandeur of her family. The family had lost most of its wealth and lands. Her husband John Grey had decided to cut down the trees because the shade they cast is an obstruction to the lawn he is cultivating.

Ted has a serious heart condition that can cause death at any time. His parents and older brother prevent him from playing. When he is stopped from playing,
he becomes tense and turns pale. One day, as he and Mary splash about in puddles during the rain, the mother scolds them. Ted runs to the barn to escape his mother. But Mary stands still and says to her mother, 'You should have more sense, Mother. — You mustn't do it any more. Don't you ever do it again'?

The mother turns and silently walks into the house. After this incident Mary and Ted are given full freedom. They enjoy doing things that are even harmful to Ted. Ted dies after a couple of years. But he dies peacefully, in his sleep.

The brother Don is the oldest of the Gray children. He bears a physical resemblance to Mr. Gray. At sixty, John Gray looks forward to the day when Don will take over the large farm. But when Mr. Gray suddenly decides to chop down the trees, Don sides with his mother. The argument between the father and son continues and finally Don threatens to leave home. The father simply says: "All right, go then." Thus, the trees are cut down and then Don leaves. The family lives in silent tension for several days. Then Don returns. Mr. Gray's only

19. Ibid., P. 209.
comment is, "It (the farm) will be yours soon — now. You can be boss then". Anderson interprets the words to mean that one must assert authority in order to retain authority. But that 'something in you must die before you can possess and command'.

The price Don has to pay in order to be an effective boss is indeed too high. In fact, Anderson sees him as one who has undergone a living death. He who dies in his sleep and does not live to assume authority over others, is far better off than his elder brother, for he never had to make the surrender his brother had made. Anderson wants to suggest that life is worthwhile only when one is allowed to be free from restrictions imposed by anyone else — whether individuals or society. That is why Ted's death is in a sense beautiful, suggesting peace and happiness.

Here again, Anderson uses his favourite metaphor viz. the well, to describe Mr. Gray's decision to cut down the trees. His actions create a well of enmity with Mary and Ted on one side and the rest of the family on the other. Throughout her life, Mary realizes

20. Ibid., p. 221.
its existence. In fact, Don is trapped behind the wall because he possesses the same drives of ambition and greed as his father.

"Brother Death" is one of Anderson's most powerful indictment on contemporary America. The story depicts the meaninglessness of materialism not because material objects are intrinsically destructive or harmful, but because in the pursuit of these things man turns away from human values such as understanding and concern for his fellowmen. Anderson wants to suggest that America must learn to respect human values if its material achievements are ever to be anything other than empty symbols of selfishness and hypocrisy.

The figures of Ted and Mary are drawn with loving tenderness specially in the opening pages of the story when the boy resists in silence all attempts to tame him and the girl offers him whatever happiness and consolation she can. Though there are unnecessary details in the last paragraph, one can easily mark the tone of gray somberness Anderson evokes successfully.

But while he lived, there was always--- a curious sense of freedom, something that belonged to him that made it good, a great happiness to be with him.
It was, she finally thought, because having to die his kind of death, he never had to make the surrender his brother had made — to be sure of possessions, success, his time to command — would never have to face the more subtle and terrible death that had come to his older brother.21

"A Meeting South" is again a warm, rich story of an idyllic evening in New Orleans. It relates the meeting between a young Southerner who is in constant pain from a war wound and must drink to get relief, and a sixty-five year old Mid-western woman named Sally, who had run a brothel in her youth, but now stays at home chatting with young people.

The theme of mutual understanding has been given another variation in the story. Here, the first person narrator is Anderson himself. He introduces David, a young Southern writer, said to be modeled after William Faulkner, to Sally. The narrator feels happy as he has brought the sensitive young man to a mother-like woman. David feels secure in the unmentioned affection of the old woman. David tells of his efforts to sleep by drinking whisky to the rhythm of the Negroes who work in the fields by moonlight. Eventually, he manages to sleep on Aunt Sally's Porch.

21. Ibid., p. 222.
David’s agonized suffering and aunt Sally’s conventionally shady past signify depth and breadth of experience rather than the privation of the typical Anderson grotesques. Yet, like the stories of the grotesques, "A Meeting South" synthesizes the feelings of the narrator and Anderson transforms a simple incident into an intricate texture of complex emotions. The chief difference between this story and the stories of the grotesques is that here the narrator experiences a glowing sense of emotional, imaginative and sensuous fulfilment. The story is also a fine example of Anderson’s gift for lyrical expression.

It is with the publication of "The Man Who Became a Woman", "The Egg" and "Death in the Woods" that Anderson has reached the peak of his career as a Short Story writer. All these stories are also first person narratives and each narrator looks back to an experience in adolescence.

The theme of "The Man Who Became a Woman" is more or less similar to that of "I Want to Know Why". But the former is richer in atmospheric texture than the latter. In the present story one can mark a consistency in point of view which "I Want to Know Why" lacks. The story benefits greatly from its narrator’s distance. This is also
probably one of the very few stories of Anderson which
deals with a very dramatic incident.

The protagonist Herman Dudley explains his experi-
ence as an adolescent. At nineteen, Herman has 'never
been to a woman'. But he has fantasies about them. He
imagines how his ideal girl should look and 'at night
dreaming about --- seeing women's bodies and women's
lips and things ---.'\(^\text{22}\) He is too shy to talk to women.
He finds the company of horses more congenial than that
of men. The one person he shares a close rapport with
is Tom Means, an educated swine who wants to write stor-
ies about horses. He says that each understands the other
in some way he cannot explain:

To tell the truth I suppose I got to love Tom ---
although I wouldn't have dared say so, then.\(^\text{23}\)

The sentence explains the adolescent of the past and
the adult of the present both of whom are not completely
separated. The adolescent's love for horses is evident
in the adult's remark about Tom Means' effort to 'write
the way a well-bred horse runs.'\(^\text{24}\) At several points the
narrator pauses to assure himself and the reader that

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23. Ibid., p. 150.
24. Ibid., p. 151.
his reminiscences were really unusual.

It is a fact that he loves Tom Means. He is, however, afraid to talk of his love for Tom because

Americans are shy and timid about saying things like that and a man here, don't dare own up he loves another man, I've found out, and they are afraid to admit such feelings to themselves.25

Many critics have pointed out that the boy has latent homosexual tendencies without being aware of them, and certainly without knowing how to cope with them. There are indications in the story to show Herman's ambivalent sexuality, if not quite homosexuality. For he is unable to ask the girls who come around to the stables for a date, and though he dreams of women all the time, he is strangely silent when it comes to talking to the girls at all. The horse has always been a cherished object of Herman's adolescent love. Many times, he wished he were a girl and his favourite horse a man whom he could caress.

One cold rainy night, he feels quite lonely and he goes to a nearby mining town. In a saloon he sees his

25. Ibid., PP. 150 - 151.
face in a mirror: 'It was a girl's face — a lonely
and scared girl too.' He is scared that perhaps if
the men in the saloon see his 'girl's face', he will be
in trouble. However, he returns from the bar to the
"pick-it-boy's" stall in a heavy rain, half-frightened,
and half-rejected. He is back at the stables and tries
to sleep happily in his stall, and as he says,

running my hands all over his (pick-it-boy) body,
just because I loved the feel of him and as some-
times, to tell the plain truth, I've felt about
touching with my hands the body of a woman I've
seen and who I thought was lovely too. 27

Obviously the boy is soothed by his closeness with
the horse. Soon after, he falls asleep and suddenly the
stall is invaded by two drunken Negro, swampers who mistake
him for a girl. The boy is too frightened to speak.
Their mistaking him for a girl reinforces his earlier
fantasy of seeing himself reflected as a female. He runs
wildly into the nearby woods. He feels that 'every tree
I came close to looked like a man standing there, ready
to grab me.' 28 The story reaches its grotesque climax
when the boy falls squarely into the skeleton of a horse.

26. Ibid., P. 168.
27. Ibid., P. 176.
28. Ibid., P. 181.
lying near a slaughter house located not far from the race track.

And my hands — had got hold of the cheeks of that dead horse and the bones of his cheeks were cold as ice with the rain washing over them. White bones wrapped around me and white bones in my hand.29

Herman Dudley's fall is in fact a kind of bizarre initiation ritual. This proves to be the 'moment' of release for Herman — release from the adolescent love of horses, from his love of Tom Keeps and the other swipes including the two Negroes who were after him. Welford D. Taylor is of the opinion that,

The white bones of the skeleton are stark symbols of death — a death of Herman's innocent fantasies of women and a death of his notions that the world of the race track is superior to the world outside.30

The steadily mounting terror of the evening reaches its peak. As he struggles to extricate himself from the skeleton he screams. The scream releases him, calms him and finally rid him of 'that silly nonsense

29. Ibid., P. 163.
about being a girl. Just then he finds a haystack into which he crawls and which he shares with a flock of sheep. In the morning, he returns naked to the stables and is greeted by the laughter of the other grooms, except for his friend Burt. Finding some clothes, the boy leaves racing and the tracks for good. Thus, he leaves behind him once and for all, his adolescence and is born anew to a kind of 'innocence manhood', innocence being suggested by the presence of sheep and the lambs.

Herman undergoes a great ordeal as an adolescent and comes out of it a man. During the ordeal he learns a great deal about himself and about his ambivalent sexuality. He also comes into contact with evil and violence. At the stables he comes to know about the double standard of behaviour of the Whites towards the Negroes. All these make Herman 'so sick at the thought of human beings — that I could have vomited to think of them at all'.

Anderson suggests that man is doomed to frustration, because he permits and even encourages the brutal

side of his nature to override all claims of understanding, compassion and intuition. Anderson seems to be pointing out that appearances do not indicate the nature of the underlying reality. '----- a man here don't dare own up he loves another man ----- they are afraid to admit such feelings to themselves even'.

Like "I Want to Know Why" this story is also based on a contrast between horses and men. But here the action is less dependent on a naive moral polarity of animal goodness and human depravity. Unlike the earlier story, here the horses and men are not independent agents whose moral qualities are measured by an adolescent observer. They are rather mental referents of the moment in adolescence when psychological needs and moral standards are in conflict. That moment is presented with great skill. Anderson has also used sexual images like horses, faces, dreams etc. to emphasize his theme. They are unconsciously employed by the boy. But the story's greatest moment is projected through the boy's fall over the horse's skeleton. The gothic symbolism of this incident is something that heightens the effectiveness of the short story.

32. Ibid., P. 157.
The story gains greatly from having an adult narrator who is deeply involved in his own story. In spite of his insistence that he is now completely rid of 'all that silly nonsense about being a girl', he exhibits how persistently, and poignantly, the adult mind struggles to control the memories of adolescence. The specific achievement of Anderson is that he has delineated a complex state of adult emotion.

Anderson points out that man experiences frustration, because he permits and even encourages the brutal side of his nature to get the better of the compassionate side. In the story, the narrator seems to have realized the distinction between appearance and reality mainly because he has intuitively recognized beauty. According to David D. Anderson:

The fact that he (Herman Dudley) is compelled to tell the story in adulthood indicates that he knows that somewhere in the incident he can re-discover truth. 33

However, the narrator seems to be confused about the ultimate meaning and as a result remains a grotesque.

Anderson's stories based on adolescent protagonists are indeed great. Though the reputation of these first-rate stories are assured, critics often argue that they are of limited significance as they are restricted to the subject matter of adolescence. On the contrary, in his best stories, adolescence becomes a commanding vantage point for imaginative statements about all human life. However, one thing is sure that only the genuinely mature artist can portray immature life.

Among Anderson's stories, "Death in the Woods" is considered to be his masterpiece. It is a story which may be compared, as it has been, to some of the best in Russian fiction, like Turgenev and Chekhov, Anderson uses the "pathetic fallacy" which is not at all a fallacy. It is introduced to build up the atmosphere of death. Here, Anderson depends on effects of mood and devices of pacing rather than conflict between characters, to take his story into a climax. In many of their stories Turgenev and Chekhov convey a sense of the ultimate unity of nature in death. In order to convey this idea, Anderson uses an elemental experience. Though Anderson is still obsessed with the frustration and the pain of growing up, the story projects a profound respect for nature.
The narrator of the story tells about a farm woman named Grimes, who although still forty looks very old. Both her husband and her son treat her as a servant. Both men see her merely as someone whose duty is to feed the mangy dogs they insist upon keeping. Her role in life has been confined to feeding the men in the family and then the dogs.

One showy afternoon, she walks to a nearby town, where she trades her eggs for meat and sugar. Four farm dogs, 'tall gaunt fellows' come with her. They are joined by three other dogs. She cuts through the woods to reach home before her drunken husband will return from a horse-trading journey. She stops to rest at the foot of a tree, falls asleep, and freezes to death. The dogs run around her, without touching her body, but in tearing the food off her back rip her dress. A day or two later the body is found and the boy who is later to remember the incident notices that,

'She did not look old, lying there in that light, frozen and still — my body trembled with some strange mystical feeling and so did my brothers.'

Her flesh had become smooth and white from exposure to the pure cold. Yet she looked beautiful in death. As the narrator observes: 'A thing so complete has its own beauty', when she lives, there is nothing beautiful or redeeming about her. She is merely a symbol of victimization, for even the dogs that attend her death are males. But in death she becomes young and radiant.

Welford Dunaway Taylor's words come to mind in this connection. He feels that the rhetorical dance of the dogs around the woman's body shows the justice of nature's processes. Death is a relief from the pain and agony, cruelty and madness of life. Death thus becomes a triumph of nature's scheme over the miserable failure that man has made of life. The story shows Andersen's deep respect for some of nature's workings. In claiming the life of the old woman, nature has asserted a wisdom and a process that demands man's respect.

Unlike Andersen's other stories, here, the narrator is not involved in the action of the story. He is merely a bystander who observes the events. According to

Jon S. Larry, the distance between the narrator and his subject; however, serves to enhance their sympathetic contact. He further states that:

--- they have only disinterested humanity in common. Even their shared experiences, being so different in cause, are unrelated save in that most general, yet finally most immediate of relationships. Such distance permits this narrator --- to achieve a similarly paradoxical contact --- through distance with his audience.36

Although the external form of the story is plainly that of a story, its internal structure is that of poetry. It has the power of saying more than simple prose. The narrator himself talks about the musical effect of the story: 'the whole thing, the story of the old woman’s death was to me as I grew older like music heard from far off.'37 No wonder Anderson wrote to the editors of The Oxford Anthology of American Literature:

It seems to me that the theme of the story is the persistent animal hunger of men. There are those women who spend their whole lives, rather dubiously, feeding this hunger --- As for technique, it was quite definitely thought out. Over a period of several years I made several attempts that had

to be thrown aside — what is wanted is something beyond the horizon, to retain the sense of mystery in life while showing at the same time, at what cost our ordinary animal hungers are sometimes fed. 38

At first, the old woman seems an image of the overwhelmed feminine victim, for even the dogs that attend her death are males. But, gradually that image is enlarged to include all human creatures. Her story becomes the story of all unnoticed and uninteresting deaths that litter man’s life. That is one of the reasons why the story transcends the regional to embrace the universal. The reader is made conscious of the fact that an awareness of death is a condition for an intense immersion in life.

Anderson’s descriptive power resembles a poet’s.

Horace Gregory compares the story with that of a poem by Wordsworth:

The story contains the kind of poetry that we associate with Wordsworth — the recollection of youthful experience, the figures of common speech, the instinctive dignity

and life of the poor, the moonlit rural scene — done with simplicity that Wordsworth sought and attained.39

"The Egg" is one of the most complex and ironic stories of Anderson. The story deserves to be placed among the great stories of the world. Here again Anderson delves beneath the surface of lives.

The narrator begins by recalling his parents. His father has been a contended farm hand until at the age of thirty five, he marries a school teacher. Then 'they become ambitious. The American passion for climbing up in the world took possession of them'.40 The means he chose for achieving success was chicken farming. It is here that the image of the egg, which is to dominate the story, first appears. The narrator is reminded of the difficulty of raising egg-laying chickens. 'It is all so unbelievably complex — One hopes for so much from a chicken and is so dreadfully disillusioned.' 41

39. Ibid., pp. 24 - 25.
41. Ibid., pp. 135 - 136.
After ten years of unsuccessful chicken farming, the family moves away to a nearby town, to open a restaurant near a rail road junction. But the father takes with him a box full of glass bottles in which malformed baby chicks are kept in alcohol. The father thinks that these grotesques are valuable, for according to him, 'People liked to look at strange and wonderful things'. Then the father places these grotesques on a shelf in his restaurant, a bizarre element is introduced in the narrative. They symbolize the cruel workings of nature and foreshadow the futile attempt of a farmer to come up in the world by means of a restaurant business. In fact, the eggs become a curse for the family.

Obsessed with the idea of success, the father even plans to make the restaurant a social centre for the neighbouring young people. But one night his dream is shattered. He comes upstairs from the store with 'a half-insane light in his eyes'. He has an egg in his hand. He falls on his knees and

42. Ibid., PP. 135 – 136.
begins to weep. Carried away by his grief, the narrator also cries with him. The scene suggests the awkward and intense nature of their relationship. At this juncture, the narrator quietly tells what happens.

A young man, Joe Kane, comes to wait for a train. The father begins his conversation, insisting that Christopher Columbus was a cheat for falsely claiming to be able to make an egg stand on its head. He claims that he can do it. Meanwhile, the youth thinks him to be a little insane and fails to notice the trick. The father tries to suppress his anger and tries another trick. He heats an egg in vinegar and begins to squeeze it through the neck of a bottle saying that when

the egg is inside the bottle it will resume its normal shape — People will want to know how you got the egg in the bottle. Don't tell them. Keep them guessing.43

The father hears the approaching train and begins to hurry. In his confusion, he breaks the egg. The contents spurt over his clothes. Joe Kane turns and laughs. Then,

43, Ibid., p. 145.
a roar of anger rose from my father's throat. He danced and shouted a string of inarticulate words. Grabbing another egg --- he threw it just missing the head of the young man.

This is again a classic American Story. Ambition puts a man into a situation he cannot control and thereby brings about his spiritual destruction.

Traditionally, the egg arouses the most intimate associations with the process of life. But here, as Irving Howe says,

--- it is to be seen less as a symbol of creativity and renewal than as a token of all the energy in the universe - arbitrary, unmotivated, ridiculous and malevolent --- against which man must pit himself.

In fact, the image of man suggested by "The Egg" is a deeply pessimistic one. He is not only defeated but is also tricked into defeat. His very ambition

44. Ibid., P. 146.
to come up in life is the source of his humiliation. The egg contains the secret of life. But, the secret is hidden by a strong but fragile shell. Similarly, the secret of man's grotesqueness and tragedy is hidden under a deceptive appearance. Sometimes man attempts to penetrate the shell. Then it explodes. Man continues his effort to probe into the secret of life. But, every time he is defeated and he makes a fool of himself. As Anderson remarks in his story "Seeds", man is not permitted to 'venture far along the road of human lives'. After seeing the father crying pathetically beside his wife, the narrator concedes 'the complete and final triumph of the egg'. over the family's strivings. In the final analysis, the energy of the egg destroys man.

The egg splatters over the father as the stranger he had sought to please laughs at him. But the boy's mother later runs her hand consolingly over the 'bald path'. These are two important

images in this story, neither of which is valid without the other. The two images together make for the most mature vision of human life. Anderson ever had. It is the peculiarity of "The Egg" that while each paragraph seems comic, its total effect is one of great pathos. The prophetic line -

'Grotesques are born out of eggs as out of people'- echoes throughout the story. It endows the father's vision (as well as the son's) 'with sterility and inevitable doom', as he is conquered by the egg.

In his essay 'Coming Full Circle', Sherwood Anderson's "The Egg", Mark Savin\(^\text{47}\) says that the narrative structure of the story is itself egg-like. Within the shell of history lies a second and more vulnerable sphere, the fiction one creates about oneself and one's genesis. The power of the story lies not in the impersonal memory, nor in that outer shell. Rather, it resides in the revelation of the softer worlds of imagination. Anderson knows that the narrator's story is in some ways inexpressible.

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One agrees with Mark Savin when he says that,

"The story works by lodging the significant and implicit, so neatly within the trivial and explicit that each accommodates and protects the other, a fertile centre contained within a protective shell." 46.

The father in the story is as pitiable as the chickens. Both struggle to survive in a world filled with obstacles. For the first time Anderson shows that because the father is a grotesque, he deserves compassion and understanding. Sam McPherson in Windy McPherson's Son had rejected his father. George Willard also followed Sam's pattern of behaviour in Winesburg, Ohio. In such case, Anderson's portrayal of the father was unsympathetic. But in "The Egg", Anderson looks at the father sympathetically. Perhaps, as Anderson's biographers have noted, the shadow of his own father Irwin Anderson was coming into a clearer, more sympathetic focus.

None of the three main characters - the boy and his parents - is ever named. By making them anonymous, Anderson suggests the universality of their plight. Loneliness is a universal condition and this fact is projected in all his stories. "The Egg" is a grim story where once again Anderson reveals the perplexing and painful riddle of life itself.

The rest of the stories of Anderson are by and large, not as successful as those based on the oral narrative pattern. It seems that when his stories do not depend on a central narrator for their movement and meaning, they lack the tonal unity and structural neatness of the stories based on the oral narrative form.

In the second group of stories, Anderson usually deals with the frustrations of unfulfilled lives which as stated earlier is yet another form of loneliness. Stories, like "Unlighted Lamps" and "The Door of the Trap" are examples where the characters are unable to communicate their inner feelings, though they yearn to do so. There is one common character
in both the stories - Mary Cochran. The theme of 
unfulfilled life is given two important variations 
here. In "Unlighted Lamps", Doctor Cochran and 
his eighteen year old daughter Mary cannot express 
their feelings for each other or for anyone else. 
In "The Door of the Trap", there is a hesitation 
to accept sex from which love might follow. Anders-
son does not reveal where the source of this iso-
lolation lies. Sometimes he hints that it is a herit-
age of Puritanism or of Midwestern town harshness. 
Though he leaves it to the imagination of the read-
ers, it is obvious that Anderson regards isolation 
as an unavoidable human condition.

Both the variations of the theme of an unful-
filled life can be seen in "Out of Nowhere Into 
Nothing". It is a long story that is perhaps one 
of Anderson's most characteristic expression. The 
story develops around the inability of Rosalind 
Westcott, a twenty-seven year old lady. She has 
returned from Chicago to her home in Willow Springs, 
Iowa, to decide whether she should agree to become 
the mistress of Walter Sayer, her Chicago employer,
who is a married man. She wants to think over Sayar's proposal as a way to finding 'meaning' in life and to discuss it with her mother. But as she watches the indifference and laziness of her parents and hears again those terrible 'night noises' she had hated as a girl, she realizes that her parents cannot help her. She becomes lonely.

Like many of Anderson's women, Rosalind Westcott is a strong character. She is full of desire for an experience that can occupy her emotional capacities. While walking along a railroad track in the corn fields, she meets her neighbour Melville Stoner, who assumes the role of a reflective observer. He is resigned to the futility of seeking a permanent contact with others. He is as Paul Rosenfeld observes, 'tired to the marrow with the loneliness of existence'. Rosalind is drawn to Melville Stoner, to his queerness, and to his

desire for companionship. But he cannot reciprocate as he cannot leave his passive role and hence he withdraws.

The story's greatest strength lies in the portrayal of male inadequacy, of a good man's refusal to enter a relationship of love and sex. 'Did loneliness drive him to the door of insanity, and did he also run through the night seeking some lost, some hidden and half-forgotten loveliness?' asks Anderson. As Irving Howe has rightly pointed out,

A woman's desire and a man's loneliness meet, there is a brief parable of intense feeling and then parting - each unable to satisfy the other.51

The words 'door', 'run', 'hidden', 'half-forgotten', 'loveliness' suggest what kind of world Anderson is portraying.

51. Irving Howe, Sherwood Anderson, P. 175.
In a structure built upon contrasts between death and life, night and day, shadow and light, dead trees and vibrant plant and insect life, Anderson depicts Melville Stoner as resembling alternately a vulture and a seagull. Stoner appears to Rosalind as death but actually holds out to her the promise of life. He cannot give himself to her as he is fixed in a state of permanent estrangement. The idea that Stoner is a saged spirit is suggested by the image of a sea-gull stranded inland. For a moment Rosalind thinks that sexual gratification is one way of overcoming loneliness, but then she reflects: 'I'm lonely now. It is evident after that had happened. I would still be lonely'. In her mind, the idea of sex is interwoven with strange fears. Foremost among these is the fear planted by her mother who always tried to dissuade Rosalind from marrying anyone: 'God, Rosalind, don't do it, don't do it. She muttered over and over again'. Rosalind and Melville Stoner are doomed to loneliness as 'they could not

52. Irving Howe, Sherwood Anderson, P. 205.
53. Ibid., P. 211.
break through the walls themselves, to the white wonder of life’. 

“Seeds” is yet another story which once again depicts loneliness, frustration and a sense of waste. A crippled woman from Iowa makes grotesque efforts to entice the man of her Chicago rooming house into her rooms, going so far at one point as to stand naked before her hall door. Yet, she is frigid and deathly afraid of men, and shrinks from them when they come near. In discussing her actions, the narrator and his psychologist friend take opposite views, of the extent to which one may probe clinically into the secret recess of the inner life for the purpose of “curing” a psychic illness. The narrator, speaking for Anderson, maintains that the professionally induced love the psychologist practices upon his patients violates love by rationalizing it. “The thing you want to do cannot be done”, he tells the psycho-analyst. “Feel – do you expect love to be understood?” However, the narrator gives


another 'cure' to the woman; sex. And, when he tells his friend Le Ray, who had been the woman's neighbour that he could have helped her by becoming her lover, Le Ray replies:

It is n't so simple. By being sure of yourself, you are in danger of losing all of the romance in life. You miss the point. Nothing in life can be settled so definitely.26

The story points out that one's inner life is a myriad of often conflicting impulses — of love and hate, revulsion and attraction, beauty and ugliness. And that life has been choked by 'old thoughts and beliefs — seeds planted by dead men', by efforts to control it, or understand it. That the woman needed was

to be loved, to be long and quietly and patiently loved — the disease she has is — universal. We all want to be loved and the world has no plan for creating lovers.57


57. Ibid., P. 29.
Like the psychoanalyst, La Roy wants 'more than anything else in the world to be clean', to be free of the doctrines and formulas that have destroyed the spontaneity and the force of love and that have made men and women grotesque and emotionally crippled.

In "A Chicago Hamlet", the narrator relates the stories of a melancholy young advertising writer who tells of his youth on a dreary Ohio farm and of his eventual flight to Chicago where he finds the same wretchedness, the same meaningless activity and tired quarrelsome people. The narrator has pieced together a series of conversation in a Chicago bar. Here, Anderson has used the technique of juxtaposing contrasting images which blend into a single impression in the reader's mind.

The most arresting incident in the story is one in which Tom creeps up behind his father one night with the intention of killing him, as the old man kneels in prayer. Tom is sickened by the
dirty, disordered life on the farm. David Anderson points out that in this scene, Tom's sensitivity and "rather nice sense of life" reveal themselves through his compulsive and unconscious reactions against ugliness. Later, Tom sees the black and yellow soles of his father's feet and returns silently to his own room,

where — Christ like — he washes his own feet and puts on a clean night gown. Out of the strange juxtaposition of ugliness and beauty comes a symbolic act of grotesque innocence.

Tom's struggle for purity and innocence that runs up his life is symbolized in this remarkable incident.

"Milk Bottles" which has the same narrator as "A Chicago Hamlet", is of interest chiefly as a contrast to that tale. In fact, its symbolism

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58. David D. Anderson, Sherwood Anderson i an Introduction and Interpretation, P. 93.
59. Ibid.
overpowers the flimsy, factual structure of the story. The repeated symbol of sour milk in the story signifies life gone sour. A young man writes advertisements for a condensed milk company. Once he writes an angry but honest story about it. Soon after he denies the truth of his tale and returns to his spurious "masterpiece", which is, like his advertisements, a popular fabrication about happy people living contented lives.

"The New Englander" is yet another story which implies that the lives of average men and women are doomed to frustration, both in attempting to understand and control nature and in the achievement of emotional fulfilment. Elsie Leander is an unmarried woman in her mid-thirties who has grown up on the family farm in Vermont. She moves with her mother and father to Iowa. She has lived a shattered existence with her parents. One day, she watches her niece and a farm hand embrace in a cornfield during a storm and suddenly realizes that her protected life has actually been one long episode of suppression that has thwarted her feminine impulses,
The attention of the narrator is focused primarily upon Elsie's mind and emotions and they form a moving narrative. Elsie's New England is depicted with more detail than is normally used in an American Story. Here it is done to correlate character with setting. The narrator speaks of the New England landscape as containing 'mangled hillsides(s)' and 'gnarled orchard(s)' surrounded by half-ruined stone-fence'.

Though the subject of sex is never mentioned in the story, the story has many sexual images. The warm, fertile earth that Elsie likes to touch is clearly a womb symbol. This is borne out by her seeing it in terms of a sea, which is identified by some psychologists as a maternal symbol. The tall stalks of corn that spring from the warm, black earth are obvious phallic symbols. When Elsie becomes frightened by touching them, she is in reality showing fear and uncertainty concerning the opposite sex. In all these stories,

Anderson seems to imply that happiness lies in exploring nature to the fullest; in avoiding suppression, if possible; and in allowing one's emotions to express themselves.

The rest of the stories of Anderson, especially those belonging to the last group are not very successful ones. They are mostly vague in terms of background, place and objects. To quote Irving Howe:

Though Anderson's intention is a call to experience, these (last) stories are often evasions of the writer's obligation to focus on particular segments of experience; they create an unprovisioned and unlimned world, a neither-nor area suspended between reality and symbol. He could neither build realistic structures nor find an adequate means of transcending the need for them.

However, Maxwell Geisser has a word of appreciation about Anderson's last stories:

What Anderson did to perfection in these last tales was a marvellous quick alternation of mood so that you are always caught half-way, as it were, between laughter and tears at this spectacle of human destiny in which all of us ultimately can be classified as failures, outcasts, victims, dupes of life and yet some do triumph.\(^{62}\)

Will Appleton in "The Sad Horn Blowers", like George Willard in *Winesburg, Ohio* realizes that growing up is a movement towards loneliness. His mother's death and his elder sister's impending marriage, force him to a state of isolation. He is compelled to leave the Ohio small town to work in a factory at Erie, Pennsylvania. This movement from a rural life to an industrial one is one thread in the pattern. Yet another thread lies in the extra-ordinary sympathy with which Anderson conveys Will's ambivalent feelings towards his father. Will is troubled by a keen sense of his father's lack of dignity - his tendency to clown and to act 'like a kid'. The foolish prank which

leads to his father's accident, when he stumbles and spills two great pots of scalding coffee over himself, is one such incident. Even when he is writhing and screaming on the ground, his neighbours imagine at first that he is playing some practical joke. His cornet playing is the leading motif in the story, and gives it the title. He makes Will feel embarrassed and humiliated by parading foolishly down Main Street with the town band, and by playing badly - especially in the cornet solo passages.

The little old man who becomes Will's friend in Brie is another sad horn-blower. He has tried to leave his wife and become a professional cornet player. But he is not competent enough. At first, he amuses Will, just as his father does. But, in the course of time, through his own loneliness and unhappiness, Will's attitude begins to change. He considers his own need of warmth, security and reassurance a kind of 'childishness'. In the final analysis, he learns to accept the little old man and by implication his own father with new sympathy.
and understanding. In the last scene, in Will’s bed room at the boarding house, the old man urges him to blow a loud, defiant blast on the cornet, but Will produces only a few soft notes. He, also, is to be a sad horn-blower.

David D. Anderson feels that the story shows the change in Anderson’s approach to the father-son-relationship; from the son’s complete misunderstanding of his father in *Windy McPherson’s Son*, to the son’s understanding of the father as a grotesque deserving sympathy in “The Egg”. In this story, Anderson shows how the son learns to understand his father through intuition and finally comes to identify his life with his father’s. David D. Anderson makes a pertinent remark in this connection:

This is only possible after the son has experienced the same sort of frustration as the father. This new point of view suggests that Anderson realized — that he, like his father, can find no satisfaction except in his stories.64

64. "..."
In "The Man's Story" a married man called Edgar Wilson runs off with another woman. They take shelter in the anonymity of a large city. She is murdered and he is arrested. Later on he is acquitted through another's confession. Nevertheless, he might better have been hanged:

The man had come up out of the sea of doubt, had grasped for a time the hand of the woman, and with her hand in his had floated for a time upon the surface of life - but now he felt himself again sinking down into the sea.65

The narrator has been trying to drag Wilson 'out of the sea of doubt and dumberness into which we feel him sinking deeper and deeper ' ---,66 But it is of no use. The narrator ends the story with a note of hope that by writing of him, he may be able to understand himself -- and at the same time it is possible that 'with understanding would come also the strength to thrust an arm down into the sea and drag the man Wilson back.

66. Ibid., P. 312.
to the surface again'. 67 This is Anderson’s hope also.

In "An Ohio Pagan", Anderson once again returns to the rural scene, with a description ending on a note of optimism. The story centers round Tom, a young boy who has lost his father and mother at an early age. A farmer named Harry Whitehead takes the boy into his own house to live and makes him the caretaker of Bucephalus, the horse. The boy and the horse win races. When he is compelled to go to school, he decides to leave the place: ‘I’ll get out of here. Before they get me into that school, I’ll skip out of town’, 68 and ‘no one there ever sees him again’. He comes to the city of Cleveland. To him the city life was in a way fetid and foul.’ 69 It is when he joins John Bottaford who owns a threshing outfit at Erie Country, Ohio that for the first time he begins to think about life and its meaning. New impulses come to him. Sometimes as he comes from the fields to a farmer’s barn, the

69. " * * " , P. 323.
daughter of the farmer steps out of the farm house and stands looking at him. Eventually, the young man decides that he can find fulfilment through love and understanding. But he also realizes that first of all he must learn to identify them:

I am obsessed with this idea of having a woman. I'd better go to the city and go to school and see if I can make myself fit to have a woman of my own.  

Anderson seems to imply that man may find satisfaction in the search even though it never ends. Perhaps, the purpose of man's life lies not in the attainment of any ultimate victory, but in the spirit with which he struggles. Almost all his characters are in search of something that gives them peace and happiness in life. They do not want to suppress their true feelings and emotions, but circumstances force them to do so and they become grotesques. The struggle varies from person to person. Some like George Willard go out of the place in search of fulfilment. But whether they

succeed or not is a matter of conjecture. However, the search continues.

In some of these stories, there is an attempt to examine the relationship between man and his environment. Anderson also examines the influence Society exerts on the people he has known. One feels that Anderson regained his faith that it is possible for man to understand himself and his fellow-beings, that such an understanding would help man to live a satisfying life.

"There She Is - She Is Taking Her Bath", "Another Wife", "Daughters", "The Other Woman", "Like a Queen", "Nobody Laughed", "A Walk in the Moonlight", "The Yellow Gown", "Morning Roll Call", "His Chest of Drawers", "Not Sixteen", "In A Strange Town" are the other minor stories of Anderson.

"There She Is - She Is Taking Her Bath" is both ludicrous and pathetic. It is the story of a frustrated husband who has hired a detective to
collect evidence of his wife's infidelity. Then, afraid of being forced to act when the proof will be delivered, he returns to the agency pretending to be his wife's lover and bribes the detective's partner to falsify the report. The story is, in fact, not about Mrs Smith's infidelity, but about her husband's insistence that life should conform to codes of behaviour. Smith admires 'men who like myself — keep the world going'. Rules are very important to Smith. In fact, it is not jealousy that troubles him but the thought that his wife believes she can betray him with impunity by flirting with a "young squirt" who slights the work ethic, and thus makes fools of those who shoulder their responsibilities. That she is usually taking a bath (instead of troubling with a guilty conscience) when he is about to confront her with his justified suspicions, weakens his faith in the morals and principles of life.

The doctor in "Another Wife" contemplates re-marriage. But he vacillates between fear and desire.

The woman is ten years his junior. However, he imagines that she is far more experienced sexually. At the same time, she considers him as at once an unattractive old man and a fumbling boy. He clings to the memory of his undemanding first wife. However, he also recalls that she had never excited him. In order to win the new woman's respect, he feels he must rekindle his ambition and strive for professional success. He wants to kiss her. But he is also afraid that she wants to be kissed in order to trap him. On returning to his cabin presumably after proposing to her, he says, 'Oh, Lord - I've got me a wife, another wife, a new one.' However, this statement does not resolve the confusion within the doctor's mind which is the story's true subject. The last two sentences - one an exclamation and another a question - project the mixed emotions in the doctor's mind: 'How glad and foolish and frightened he still felt! Would he get over it after a time?'

72. Ibid., "Another Wife", P. 74.
73. " " P. 74.
The above sentence could serve as the conclusion to "The Other Woman" also. This story focuses on the mind of a narrator who is torn between his attraction to a lower class woman with whom he feels sexually free and his love for his bride, a "respectable woman" who asks him to delay fulfillment of their marriage until she has overcome her inhibitions. Obviously, the narrator's unsorted feelings towards these two women are similar to the doctor's embarrassment in "Another Wife", particularly regarding his two wives. Moreover, the story's final image is similar to that of "Thore She Is - She Is Taking Her Bath". Though in this story it is an open door that separates the narrator from his wife, the effect is almost the same.

In the story "Daughters", Anderson depicts John Shepard's annoyance with his daughter, Nave. He finds Nave 'wayward, headstrong, inconsiderate and unfeminine', but he loves her 'dutiful, mild, self-sacrificing' sister Kate. 'She's such a good girl --- she works so hard. She does everything.
She never complains. She is just the kind of woman he says he would have chosen for a wife. The comparisons seem to foreshadow a violent outburst, directed at once against Wave and the injustice of life. Such an explosion does occur at the close of the story. One day John Shepard almost chokes Wave to death when he has seen the sharing of physical intimacies between Wave and Ben Hurd, a male boarder the family has taken in. Finally Ben Hurd leaves her and goes away.

Shepard has subconsciously identified himself with Ben Hurd, who he has hoped would marry Kate. Frank Gado rightly points out:

--- beneath the puritanical rage, and beneath the exacting vengeance for what he construes to be a slight suffered by the "good" daughter, lies far more powerful, emotional storm roiled by the lust within him repressed for years.75

74. Ibid., P. 91.
75. Frank Gado (ed.), "Introduction" to The Teller's Tales, P. ii.
In the final scene, while the father tries to fall asleep, he hears both daughters whispering and laughing behind the closed door of their room—perhaps about him. The two daughters' easy friendship suggests that he has misread them. In fact Kate is really no different from Wave.

The sound of the whispering continued. Girls were something you couldn't understand. There was something— it was hidden from you. How strange it was!

"Nobody Laughed" and "His Chest of Drawers" explain how an inferiority complex born of physical defects makes people grotesque. In the former, Pinhead is undersized and possesses a big nose. In the latter, Bill has a very ugly and grotesque appearance. Though both marry, the inferiority complex still persists with the result that they are disillusioned at the end.

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76. Ibid., The Tellers' Tales --- "Daughters", P. 122.
In the story "In a Strange Town", the narrator, a philosophy professor, repeatedly leaves his home to wander in unfamiliar surroundings. According to him, being alone among strangers, gives a sense of wonder. But the reader finds it difficult to accept his assertion as he is reluctant to speak the whole truth. It is difficult to understand what that underlying urgency may be. Finally, however, 'as if to slice through the confusion he has created', the narrator returns to the subject he began at the beginning of the long monologue:

A while ago, I was speaking of a habit I have formed of going suddenly off like this to some strange place. "I have been doing it ever since it happened", I said. I used the expression "it happened". Well what happened? Not so very much.77

"It", he then tells is a car accident that killed a female student who used to visit him in his office. Though he insists that she was nothing special to him, the girl has, no doubt, roused thoughts long

77. Ibid., "In a Strange Town", P. 31.
stilled by his wife and the others who populate his days. However, when he hears the news of the accident, he shows no emotion. His only reaction is to take a train into the countryside.

His wanderings do not express a form of mourning for the girl's death (which he seems "not so very much"). They are not even just the result of a naive wanderlust as he first suggests. Something else is at work here: a need to recreate the stirring of vitality he felt in that brief moment when her life touched his. In this respect, as Frank Gado points out:

--- the narrator's recitation of his curious adventures represents an act of affirmation; beginning with a celebration of life's fullness and concluding with the evocation of a friend's death, it is an elegy in which the usual order is reversed.78

The narrator compares his trips to 'baths' in life. He likes to be alone among strangers. But he

78. Frank Gado, "Introduction", to The Teller's Tales, P. 6.
scarcey immerses himself in their lives. He
preaches against the false faces humankind show
to each other. Paradoxically, he knows 'too much
and not enough' about those he observes. Although,
he seeks communion with them by expanding his
knowledge of their inner experience, he admits that
what he knows blunts his interest in them. The
narrator proclaims his love of life. At the same
time he is pre-occupied with death and he is aware
that he is 'no longer young'. His confused behav-
ior and mind show that he also is one of Anders-
son's grotesques.

In spite of variations, all the other stories
of Anderson also travel through similar orbits and
and arrive at similar destinations. The most stri-
kling element in these stories is again Anderson's
concern with the sexual relationship between men
and women and his use of that relationship as a
mirror which reflects the problematic nature of
the self. However, as Frank Gado points out:
What aggregates them as a constellation,
--- is not subject or theme but a concep-
tion of structure that moves toward
nullification rather than completion.79

Some critics are of the view that the movements
in these stories have a 'symphonic pathétique'
which gives them a touch of unity. Elaborating
the musical pattern of these stories, Lawrence
Gilman says:

Anderson uses words with a strange and
baffling music. He uses them in such a
way that they shed slowly and almost
imperceptibly their familiar associations,
and take on the unspecific, un-
shackled expressive quality of the
tones of blended and complementary
instrumental voices, weaving a musical
pattern vaguely, delicately, but most
potentially evocative.80

Though these stories Anderson has dwelt
upon the theme of sex quite extensively and with
great frankness. It is not that Anderson’s

79. Frank Gado, "Introduction", The Teller’s
Tales, P. 12.
80. Lawrence Gilman, North American Review, 216
(March, 1922), P. 413.
primary interest is in the biology or psychology of sex. To Andersen, sex is the most natural channel of communication between man and woman. It is an antidote to loneliness. It has a therapeutic effect. At the same time, Andersen also believes that if denial of sex is a cause of loneliness, then sex without love is an equally important cause of loneliness. Men and women long for some kind of relationship. Sex is the primary means of establishing such a relationship. In "Minasburg, Ohio", Andersen portrays women like Elizabeth Willard, Louis Bentley who recoil from lust without love. The typical Andersen characters are present in all his stories, all straining, bursting into nothingness, all lost.

As stated earlier, Andersen usually deals with characters who are unable to communicate. While they avoid one another, they need each other. They struggle for recognition. Some of his titles like "Unused", "Unlighted Lamps", "Out of Nowhere Into Nothing" etc. also present a picture of waste, of
human sensitivity never developed. In fact, Anderson's world cannot be separated from the aura of loneliness that enfolds it. As in Winesburg, Ohio, in the other stories also, the characters first appear quite ordinary and simple. But by the time the stories are completed, they have taken a unifying quality of loneliness.

In the portrayal of all these defeated people, Anderson presents a vision of American small town life. Here, one can see a society that has no cultural framework, from which to draw common experiences; no code of manners by which to initiate, guide and sustain a meaningful relationship among individuals. Through a subtle art of evocation and suggestion, Anderson tries to convey the loneliness, the confusion, the anxiety, the sense of liberation and the sense of loss, experienced by the American Provincial.
If one reads Anderson's stories for their moral implication or as a guide to life, one is likely to be disappointed, for in that sense they do not tell us enough. But there is another more fruitful way of reading his stories. They can be read as an expression of a sensitive witness to the national experience. Anderson's stories are the achievement of a story teller who has created a small body of fiction unique in American writing. The stories can also be enjoyed for the lyrical purity of feeling that they convey. 'The muted atmosphere, the sad irony, the pessimistic self-knowledge, the sense of unlimited loneliness'—all these qualities attract contemporary Americans and account for the revival of interest in Anderson today. These are also qualities evident in the contemporary American life. *Winesburg, Ohio* along with the first group of stories, collected in *The Triumph of the Egg*, *Horses and Men*, and *Death in the Woods* are his most valuable contribution to the American Short Story. Though Anderson has written very little of the highest
order, what he has, is enough to give him the
status of a pioneer who has propelled the
American Short Story of the twenties and given
it a new form and flavour.