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This thesis is the outcome of my casual reading of Maxwell Anderson's *Lost in the Stars*. The interest and curiosity it aroused prompted me to read his other plays and consider him a possible subject for research. The dramatist had something significant to convey in all his plays, and I realized his message underscores perhaps what Mathew Arnold said 'what we are and what we ought to be'. Though Anderson dominated the American stage for more than three decades and left a rich artistic legacy, he has failed to set in motion the same kind of popularity, scholarly pursuit and discussion as one might expect from a great literary figure.

It is easy to describe a person great, but quite a different thing to demonstrate his greatness. The enthusiasm and the interest I had for the dramatist soon suffered an erosion as the paucity of creative and scholarly works available for library and classroom use posed a crucial barrier to the comprehensive study of Anderson. The inadequacy and non-availability of materials left me in a quandary many a time. Yet the very paucity of critical materials convinced me that Anderson would be a fruitful subject for investigation. His wide variety of lofty themes and output intimidated me initially, but thanks to Joyce Huggett whose spiritual write-up on conflict sensitized me to the subject and gave me the tool to sculpt a form out of the disparate work of this multi-talented playwright.
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I strongly feel that Maxwell Anderson deserves more attention than what has been accorded to him. I would consider my labour fruitful, if this work wins more readers and scholars for Anderson.