Chapter – I

Introduction

Sherwood Anderson, the first American novelist of consequence to break firmly away from the tradition of gentility that had dominated the writing of fiction in the United States, possesses a distinctive place in the realm of American literature. He was a leader in the movement to revitalise the stream of literary naturalism by displaying a concern with inward psychological reality instead of the journalistic documentative outpouring of outward experience. He ranked among the first American writers to become aware of the implications in the works of Sigmund Freud, D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and Gertrude Stein. He influenced the development of the American short story more profoundly than any one else except Edgar Allan Poe. "The contemporary short story became an important form of literature through Anderson’s achievements" (White, 3). His dramatic repudiation of the business ethic in order to pursue literary endeavor has become a part of the folklore of American literature. His writings greatly influenced the minds of such diverse authors as Hart Crane, William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, Katherine Anne Porter,
Ernest Hemingway, Henry Miller, James T. Farrell and Nathaniel West. Anderson was instrumental in helping Faulkner and Hemingway to get their first book published. Moreover no other writer has so deeply understood and so well delineated the peculiar status of the serious writing in the United States.

Sherwood Anderson acquired plenty of fame for his large volume of works. He saw his name become a common knowledge across the United States and Europe. Younger writers paid tribute to his example and inspiration. His *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) was firmly established as an American classic. Among the critics and authors who praised Anderson’s writings include Henry Seidel Canby, Waldo Frank, Malcolm Cowley, Hart Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Clifton Fadiman, William Faulkner, Howard Mumford Jones, Sinclair Lewis, Ludwig Lewisohn, Henry Miller, Gertrude Stein, Mark Van Doren, Edmund Wilson and Thomas Wolfe.

But in spite of this outstanding recognition, Anderson’s fame kept on changing its position. At the time of his death in 1941 and with the publication of the unfinished *Memoirs* in 1942, writers and critics his career in order to measure his achievements examined his
life and career and presented several opinions regarding the nature, merits, shortcomings, and impact of his works. His novels and essays were called "A study in non-discipline" (Margaret, 574) and it came to notice that his works lacked "The mark of high distinction that is needed to set off his undoubted originality" (Paulding, 20). Lionel Trilling spoke for those younger critics who were of the opinion that Anderson's later works "can attempt to catch up with the world, but the world had moved too fast" (Sherwood, Kenyon 293). Maxwell Geismar issued the famous statement "Sherwood Anderson had the ill luck, as was T.S. Eliot's to become an ancestor before he became mature" (White, 4), and Max Gissen proclaimed that "by 1926, he had his full say; from then on, there was no development, only a sensuous, nostalgic surrender to inner..." (Back 548).

Harry Hartwick called him "Dreiser with the backbone removed. With his advent naturalism changed from muscles to nerves..." (112). Anderson struggled hard to overcome the limitations of minor artists. Expressing sympathy for his heroic struggle Alfred Kazin maintains: "If he had not sought so much, he could not have
been humiliated so deeply. It was always the measure of his reach that gave others the measure of his failure”. (Kazin, 217).

But these critical comments cannot be considered the whole truth about his fame and reputation because if these and other literary obituaries had been accurate estimations of his achievements, Anderson’s name would soon have been forgotten by all except specialists in American literature. However, a revival of interest in his life and works was noticed in the decade after his death. In 1947, Eleanor Copenhaver Anderson presented her husband’s papers to the Newberry library in Chicago. The opening of this collection to scholars resulted in a number of excellent publications.

William Faulkner felt that the publication of his Soldier’s Pay in 1926 was possible only due to Anderson’s influence with the publisher Horace Liveright. And James T. Farrell wrote of the “singular humaneness of his character” and acknowledged that it was Sherwood Anderson who influenced him more than any other writer. Apart from these, there appeared studies that attempted to relate Anderson to the literary movements of his era. Charles C. Walcutt discussed Anderson’s particular adaptations of the traditions of
naturalism and Frederick J. Hoffman republished his earlier discussion of the role of Freudian theory in Anderson’s fiction. An invaluable bibliography, while not nearly exhaustive and complete only through 1959, was compiled by Eugene P. Sheehy and Kenneth A. Lohf. More importantly *Winesburg, Ohio* was reissued in a scholarly – sound edition by Malcolm Cowley. Motivated by the success of this reprint Maxwell Geismar collected the finest of Anderson’s short fiction and published them as *Sherwood Anderson: Short Stories*.

The popular and scholarly interest in Sherwood Anderson at the present time is demonstrated by three recent publications. The literary magazines of Washington and Lee University, Shenandoah devoted its spring, 1942, issue to Sherwood Anderson. Among the valuable articles included are discussions of Anderson’s achievement by Frederick J. Hoffman, Walter B. Rideout, James K. Feibleman and others. In 1964, Rex Burbank published his *Sherwood Anderson* in Twayne Publishers’ United Stated Authors Series. This study contributed little of value to the complicated questions of Anderson’s place in the tradition of American literature, but Burbank occasionally
showed an illuminating understanding of the novels and stories. In 1964, Brom Weber presented Sherwood Anderson a helpful but rather shallow survey of Anderson’s career in his written for the University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers.

Windy McPherson’s Son (1916) was called by H.W. Boynton “perhaps the most remarkable book of the year 1916” (Outstanding 508), “an extraordinary book”...of a constructive realism, in contrast with the destructive naturalism of a Dostoevsky or a Dreiser” (Month 393). Francis Hackett forecasted, “Mr. Sherwood Anderson’s name is likely to become familiar to American fiction. Out of the slag-heap as the romancers see it, he has extracted a veracious novel” (New 336).

About Marching Men (1917) H.W. Boynton said, “Its prophet is a prophet of the masses, of mankind, the toiler finding his place in the sun” (Stroll 338).

Anderson’s next book, Mid – American Chants (1918), was a collection of free verse poems related to mid – America. It seems that he derived style and content from Walt Whitman and Carl Sandburg. H.W. Boynton, praised Anderson for avoiding the spiritual grossness of the Russian naturalists and their imitators, while he expressed his
concern for the obvious psychoanalytical doctrine that with Anderson "sex is well-nigh the mainspring of human action" (Lot 729-30).

Unlike the trend of time he strongly felt to express himself frankly and honestly about controversial subjects such as sex and the frustration and depression that seethed below the surface of American life. When *Winesburg Ohio* appeared in 1919, this frankness brought forth charges that he was shocking and immoral and even caused his work to be prohibited from a number of libraries. But to the American intelligentsia he was a trailblazer who dared to say what others had feared to say in an honest and straightforward manner.

Boynton came closer to later assessment of Anderson's purpose when he wrote: "... always he seems to be after the true morality that governs men and women when they are at odds with, or merely conforming to conventional morality. (Lot 73)

His *Winesburg, Ohio*, is an impeccable microcosm of modern America and of the western world, in general. In it, he simply implied that people could enjoy happiness and completeness when they were allowed the freedom to accomplish their dreams and goals, and that
they should be inspired, rather than thwarted, in that pursuit. It contains more unhappy and unattractive grotesques and victims than optimistic dreamers and formed the story of repression, strangeness and almost universal insanity of society.

In a concise summary of his own career, Anderson wrote:

If *Winesburg, Ohio* tried to tell the story of the defeated figures of American individualistic small town life, then my later book have been but an attempt to carry these same people forward into the new American life, into the whirl and roar of modern machines (Rosenfeld, 290)

And his *Poor White* can really be seen as a companion volume to Winesburg as it deals with the transition in the mid west from agriculture and handcrafts to mechanisation. In it he tried to use the protagonist as a representative of the inventor who corrupts an older society in the name of progress.

Again in the final section of the *Memoirs*, "The Fortunate One" he predicts, future generation will look upon as "another dark age". He
believes that people are absorbed in economics, in war, in the economic interpretation of history, etc. Through these kinds of activities they can create but a savage and brutal civilization.

Anderson’s next two books were collection of short stories — *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921) and *Horses and Men* (1923). *The Triumph of the Egg* won the first ‘Dial’ award. Lawrence Gilman tried to evaluate the appeal of these tales by Anderson:

He is a naturalist doubled by a mystic: he is both seer and poet; and oft of the drab, pitiful, terrible subject matter of his tales — tales of trivial, gross, stunted, frustrated, joyless, ugly and twisted human lives — he is able to disclose... the infinite pitifulness of these souls who are ourselves (*Month 414*).

*The Triumph of the Egg* along with *The New Englander* implies that the lives of average men and women frustration seems inevitable. They feel frustrated both in attempting to understand and control nature and in the achievement of emotional fulfillment. In these stories Anderson is suggesting that happiness lies in exploring nature
to the fullest; in avoiding repression, if possible; and in allowing one's emotions to express themselves.

Beginning his creative life nearly at the age of forty, he felt ready to analyse his own life and achievements. *A Story Teller's Story* (1924) and *Tar* (1926) contain a highly subjective note but they present a historically inaccurate version of his youth in Ohio. Critics found this self-assessment quite praiseworthy but little of it was maintained in the later works.

Reviewing *Tar*, Clifton Fadiman wrote:

... it is always a little embarrassing to read a new novel by Sherwood Anderson. It is like being present at a birth.... In novel after novel, Mr. Anderson continues to render, with a disturbing effectiveness, his mental and emotional birth pangs, but some how we never see the baby (121).
Joseph Collins criticized Anderson for his vision of life that was, "fragmentary, incomplete, unbalanced and obsessed with ugliness, gloom and sensuality." (47). *Sherwood Anderson’s Notebook* (1926) and *A New Testament* (1927) were collections of essays and thoughts, which probably should not have issued as books. Of them the former was the first of seven collections of nonfiction in which he focuses upon several contemporary Americans. *Hello Towns!* (1929) was a collection of articles from Anderson’s two country newspapers. *Beyond Desire* (1932), like most of our Marxist fiction, neglects method for message.

In *Kit Brandon* (1936), Anderson attempted to recapture his early fame, but this “Reminiscence” rumrunners in the Appalachians hardly marked an impressive presence among public. *Death in the Woods* (1933), Anderson’s last collection of short stories, contains works that are among our finest short fiction—“Brother Death”, “Like a Queue”, and “Death in the woods”.

His *Puzzled America* (1935) is a collection of essays restoring his hope for unity through true democracy. As usual, his chief interest
on the expedition was the human story, an attempt to determine how
the great depression was affecting the lives of individual Americans.
His travels took him to the shacks of miners who were unable to buy
even food by the meager wages, they got after their hard work. He
talked to unemployed tradesman who had become beggars in order to
survive; to workers striking for decent wages; to labourers depended
on government relief programs.

*Puzzled America* contains Anderson’s optimistic belief that the
problems of survival and unemployment would be solved. This belief
was based upon several bases. First of all Anderson relied on the
Roosevelt’s administration. Secondly among Americans he sensed a
propensity for supporting the plans that would relieve the various
forms of suffering. And third was in the reserve of strength shown by
the suffering American workingmen.

His *No swank* is a series of character sketches of a number of
his friend who embody no “swank” or sense of self-importance, but
who instead believe in working together within a democratic context.
The writers Theodore Dreiser, Ring Lardner, and Gertrude Stein are
included, as are the actor Jasper Deeter and the woodcut artist J.J Lankes, but the focal personality of the collection, treated in the sketch ‘no swank’ is Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture in the Roosevelt administration and a personal friend of Anderson.

His “I’m a Fool” reflects the conflict between natural instinct and affectation. This is a subject ideally suited for the ambiance of natural horses and pretentious men.

His *Dark Laughter* like *Many Marriages*, deals more with disillusionment over the bankruptcy of modern marriage, and American social institutions in general, The dark laughter of the title is the natural, primitive mirth of the blacks that echoes throughout the book. It indicates an intuitive appreciation for human impulses with which the middle-class white American had lost touch.

His *Many Marriages* frankly discusses the emptiness that lies at the core of marriage in the modern world and reflects his own uncertainties as to what constitutes the ideal marriage.
His *Home Town* discusses the civic club, the church, the newspaper office, the court–house and the changing seasons and their effect upon town life. Perhaps the most imaginative section of the essay is chapter 8, which describes numerous prototypes among the small, town citizenry. The village industrialist, the female hypochondriac, the town bully, the woman of mystery, again evidence Anderson's great talent at creating a vivid general picture by means of a few revealing details.

His *Perhaps Women* is a series of vivid impression of modern working girls, expressed in prose essays. It would seem that Anderson's association in the Chicago Renaissance led to his best work—*Winesburg, Ohio* and the early short stories. But his natural genius, inclination and impulses were impoverished by the "intellectuals", who taught him about Freud, Lawrence and Marx. As a result, he, who had been heralded as untutored spokesman for small-town America, in order to gratify his learned friends, started writing as they advised but not so well as they expected, causing them to
ignore him for the more appealing figures of Hemingway, Faulkner and Wolfe.

There is some basis for this view of Anderson’s career. Feeling uneducated and slightly pitied by those intellectuals who liked his works and who offered their approbation and advice, Anderson extended the circle of his role—playing, a permanent factor in his personality, to include the role of prophetic Midwestern bard, Freudian and Lawrencian philosopher and socialist tractarian.

The discussion of *Winesburg, Ohio* include William L. Phillips’ masterful investigation of the book’s composition, Edwin Fussell’s examination of Anderson’s theme of isolation, Irving Howe’s treatment of Anderson’s idea of the “Grotesque”, Waldo Frank’s assessment of Anderson’s masterpiece twenty years after its publication. Two discussions of Anderson’s political inclination, “The Populist Temper” by Rex Burbank and “The Glitter of Communism” by James Schevill, reveal the writers concern with social issues, while Walter B. Rideout provides the only close study published on Anderson’s unique career as a country newspaper editor.
To place Sherwood Anderson in the various literary movements that engaged him, Barnard Duffey discusses Anderson and the Chicago Renaissance; Charles Child Walcutt treats Anderson in the tradition of naturalism and Fredrick J. Hoffman analyses the influence of Freud on Anderson’s work. After William Faulkner’s appreciation of Anderson, the fascinating but obscure relationship of Anderson with William Faulkner and Ernest Hemmingway is dealt with by William L. Phillips. Then four eminent scholars, after long study of Anderson and his place in American literature provide their final assessment of the writer’s accomplishment: Lionel Trilling finds Anderson almost irrelevant now; Malcolm Cowley and Frederick Hoffman find a small but important niche for Anderson’s work in American literature; and finally David D. Anderson closes the present discussion with his appraisal of Sherwood Anderson two decades after the writer’s death.

His depiction of the spirit of childhood resembles to that of Freud. But he delineates more of Emersonian and even more of Whitmanian traits. Like them he perceived obvious details with deeper insight than most of his contemporaries.
During 1920 to 1925 Anderson’s attitude was deeply influenced by Adams, rather than D.H. Lawrence. Despite Irving Howe’s very persuasive argument that Anderson moved into “the Lawrencian orbit”, Lawrence was for Anderson no more than a greatly admired fellow novelist who shared his general opinions on the significance of sex. Anderson found a kinship with Lawrence in his shared repulsion for bloodless spirituality and intellectualism; but Anderson, like Adams, was fighting primarily against the repressiveness of American Puritanism and machine worship.

Like Lawrence, Anderson also believes that sex is at once the apogee of physical and spiritual love and the source of human self-fulfillment. The Joycean impact is apparent in the awkward stream-of-consciousness style carrying the incoherent thoughts of Dudley who, somewhat like Bloom and Dedalus in Ulysses, is looking for the fountainhead of his being. But Dark Laughter can hardly be compared qualitatively with either Lady Chatterley’s Lover or with Ulysses, for like Many Marriages, it contains largely the reflection of the principal characters Bruce Dudley and Aline Grey, about the complexities of
life and the mess people make of it. Moreover, their wondering recollections and self – analyses impede rather than advance or generate action.

Anderson’s cultural and psychological primitivism was based upon an even less critical anti-intellectualism and irrationalism than was Lawrence’s. If Lawrence’s rejection of reason as a guide to human conduct left him little to go by except the instincts – which he sanctified (“my religion is the blood”) – he nevertheless had considerable first hand acquaintance with ideas which enabled him to make distinctions necessary to a fairly tenable primitive position.

Between the appearance of *Winesburg* in 1919 and Anderson’s death in 1941, American literature became increasingly frank in both language and subject matter. The innovations in the short story, introduced by Anderson were carried on by many young writers including Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner.

Anderson was of the opinion that the old values of life have been destroyed by the industrial dispensation. The people have been cut off from each other and even from themselves. In the foreword to
his volume of short poems, *Mid-American Chants*, Anderson meditates on this threat. In Middle America men are awakening. Like awkward and untrained boys they begin to turn toward maturity and with their awakening they hunger for sun. The whole phenomenon is changing rapidly. Now they stand in roaring city streets, on steaming coal heaps, in the shadow of factories from which came only the grinding roar of machines. They do not sing but mutter in the darkness. Their lips were cracked with dust and with the heat of furnaces.

The entire volume of poems underscores the effect of urbanisation and industrialisation on the people of America. “Manhattan” is a “new place” one goes to “form the place of cornfields”, only to return to the cornfields to laugh and sing. In “Mid-American Prayer” there is singing and dreaming and suckling “face downwards in the black earth of [the] western corn land”, a “Hosanna” may be delivered because “The cornfields shall be the mothers of men”, not the cold streets of Chicago.
In Chicago Anderson wandered through the streets with awe. The tall, dirty buildings overwhelmed him. Here was his first sight of a great industrial city. The passage of McKinley Tariff Act in 1980, “protective in every paragraph and American in every line and word”, had conclusively ushered in the age of big business. Final proof of the material supremacy of the midwestern city had been revealed in the Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1983. The world had been shown that the United States intended to be the leader in the invention of production of machines. No longer was America to imitate European ideas and ways of living.

In “Godliness” Anderson describes the encroachment of industrialisation:

It will perhaps be somewhat difficult for the men and women of a later day to understand Jesse Bentley. In the last 50 years a vast change has taken place in the lives of the people. A revolution has in fact taken place. The coming of industrialism, attended by all the roar and rattle of affairs, the shrill cries of millions of new voices that
have come among us from overseas, the going and coming of trains, the growth of cities, the building of the inter urban car lines that weave in and out of towns and past farmhouses, and now in these later days the coming of the auto mobiles has worked a tremendous change in the lives, habits and thoughts of the people of Mid-America (Sherwood, Winesburg 59)

Personalities as well as towns were inevitably touched by the new industrialism. Jesse Bentley had grown into maturity to America in the year after the Civil War and he, like all men of his time, had been touched by the deeps influences that were at work in the country during these years when modern industrialism was being born. He began to buy machines that would permit him to do the work of the forms while employing fewer men and he sometimes thought that if he were a younger man he would give up farming altogether and that start a factory in Winesburg for the making of machinery. Just as Jesse Bentley represents “all the men of his time”, Louise Bentley is one of the race of over-sensitive women that in later days
industrialism was to bring in such a great numbers into the world. With the influx of machines, there was also a widespread dissemination of words.

Books badly imagined and written though they may be in the hurry of times, were in every household; magazines circulated by the millions of copies, newspapers were everywhere. Even a farmer standing by the stove in the store in his village had his mind filled to overflowing with the words of other men. The newspapers and the magazines had pumped him full. Much of the old brutal ignorance that had in it also a kind of beautiful childlike innocence is gone forever. The farmer standing by the stove was brother to the men of the cities, and if one listens one would find him talking as glibly and as senselessly as the best city man.

The point is made well and ironically at a time when the printed word was proliferating, people had no words to express their ideas and feelings to each other. They became the “mere peddlers of words” that Winesburg’s Helen White cautions George Willard not to
become. He must instead learn "what people are talking about, not what they say."

The myth of the search, based on the recognition of the passage of a time and place, the corruption of its people, and the search for a new reality rooted in the values of the past, is the substance of the works of Midwest’s most perceptive interpreters and ablest writer: Sherwood Anderson. He came out of small town Ohio to write a substantial body of work rooted in his Ohio experience and went on to a significant measure of success, convinced that the past of which he wrote and the myth to which he had given his allegiance in his youth had been lost in the refuse heap of an industrial civilisation. Finally, only after much introspection and examination, did he complete the myth as he, in rural Virginia, sought and became convinced he had found the recreation in fact of what he had so long described in fiction. For him it was rediscovery of reality, with all its imperfections, rather than a pastoral perfection and idealisation. He was a witness even, perhaps, unwilling or unthinking participant in the corruption of his state, his region, and his people and he
attempted, in his early fiction, to define what had happened and to try to understand it. Significantly, he was convinced that he had escaped personal contamination or more accurately, having been corrupted, by business, he had undergone an almost ritualistic purification.

Anderson discovered the hill country of western Virginia, a section of the country not yet contaminated by industrialism or by the values of a materialistic society. For Anderson an era was at an end, innocence lost, and the alter ego thrust through circumstance into world beyond, that of commerce, of conflict, of acquisition, of competition and destruction. In neither case does the protagonist "escape" as those who see a revolt form village would have it: there is no suggestion of a "metaphor of abuse" nor of spiritual poverty, but more properly a metaphor of fulfillment snatched away, of innocence corrupted, of life to be filled with competition, with combat, with an inevitable dehumanisation.

Anderson seems to believe, "Modern men and women who live in industrial cities are like the mice that have come out of the fields to live in houses that do not belong to them" (Gregory, 125).
Above lines from *Poor White* prove that the novel is powerful indictment of industrial society. It is an influential expression of human being’s loneliness in an industrial society. The main cause of this alienation was the aggressive greed and selfishness among people who wanted to grab the opportunity of quick wealth and positions of power offered by machines which were able to produce material success at a faster rate than ever before.

The transition from agriculture and handicrafts to mechanisation finds expression in *Poor White*. Anderson in his letter to Van Wyck Brooks mentioned:

> We are no longer the old America. Those are tales of farming people. We’ve got a new people now. We are growing, shifting, changing thing. Our life in our factory towns intensifies. It becomes at the same time more ugly and more intense. (Edmund, 1258-1254)

Scientific and technological progress boosted industrialisation remarkably. This was the main reason why history aided by these advancements moved with such an electrifying speed that it became a
challenge for man to keep pace with it. Men and Women in their new urban setting became no more than mere commodities engaged in the production and consumption. The year 1886 seems to have been a high point in Clyde's business life. Many factories were flourishing. Anderson has recalled the atmosphere of his boyhood years in his *Memoirs*, written at the end of his life:

There was something strange happening to our town that must have been happening at about the same time to thousands of American towns: a sudden and almost universal turning of men from the old handicrafts toward our modern life of the machines.... It meant the end of the old craftsmen of the towns, the shoemakers, the harness, wagon buggy, furniture and clothing makers. All the little shop scattered through the towns, shops in which men fashioned things with their hands directly out of the raw materials furnished by nature, were to disappear with amazing rapidity.... It was a kind of fever, an excitement in the veins of people. (Irving, 170)
The early story of Hugh McVey (*Poor White*) constitute a beautifully proportioned portrait of the transition from the craftsman’s town to the factory town in late 19th century America. The dissolution of small town life, transformation of America from an agrarian country to a big commercial centre, the cravings of young people captured by a mad fad for progress, their struggle and anxiety to adapt themselves to cope with the speedy industrial life influenced America’s mind and art. The transmuted American milieu marked an absence of direct relationship among individuals. They strived to be a part of a whole. Notwithstanding, they craved to be recognised as an individual and not as a cipher.

Anderson’s works encircled the unavoidable modern theme i.e. the destruction of the craftsmanship by mechanisation, unsatisfied individuals, their alienation and loneliness. These themes, exist in embryonic form in *Windy McPherson’s Son*, interwoven into wanderings of its hero “in search for truth” become more engrossing in *Marching Men* and *Poor White*. 
Both the works deal with the themes which have occupied the skill of numerous best young men in 1930's and the line of decline is direct. Even before war Sherwood Anderson had witnessed ample industrial life to know its inevitable and sorry limitations which Americans faced rather reluctantly. He had seen the glorious independence and pride of craftsmanship destroyed within few years by mechanisation. He had seen the vicinity of Clyde, Ohio, grow dark with mushrooming factories, and the farmer turned into factory slaves without any suspicion or provident thought. He resented the outrageous and perilous thing the country was growing into, somewhat emotionally and blindly.

He found himself perplexed, miserable, twisted, frustrated and completely surrounded by the pressure of soulless machine civilisation. His hatred for the machine as the symbol of standardised living, of a corrupting material prosperity of the suppression of pure instincts in man's nature, found expression in his words. He couldn't find any beauty in an American factory town. To him living in industrial cities, leading industrial life, the whole things were as ugly
as a modern war. His worship of the egg, the life – force, and his antipathy to the machine can be traced in all his works.

He was quite surprised as how could Americans brought up in a fresh and cleans land, develop in themselves so many impure and base qualities. He asks in Windy McPherson’s Son. If mankind would ever shrive itself and understand itself, and turn fiercely and energetically toward the building of bigger and cleaner race of men?

Money seemed the obvious measure of happiness in the new mechanical society. The frustrated and discontented moods of people were challenged by the rising national sentiment against the Spanish government in Cuba. Corrupt and inefficient, the Spaniards has ravaged the island and suppressed the freedoms of speech, press, and trial in the courts. In 1895 the Cuban patriot, Jose Marti, had ignited the material of revolution. Under the Cleveland and the early days of the McKinley administrations, the United States had resolved to remain neutral. But it soon became clear that America would intervene. About 50 million dollars of American capital was invested
in Cuba, to say nothing of a trade that had reached $100,000,000 a year.

A number of trader type millionaire emerged as the product of America because she offered no better outlet for the energies of active, assiduous and daring men. Through her success publicity she molded their emptiness into the supermen of business and made their antithesis develop in the mass of enslaved workers who have never learned to co-operate, who have no vision of independent men in attractive liberated cities and who do not encourage any reform because they possessed minds too inert to be deeply moved by a dream. And thus emerged two groups vice-versa to each other. The few with the will and the power to hurt and to underpay, the many whom they control, moved farther into hostility.

The cry “get on in the World” rang all over America. Money question was on the top. In one of his articles contributed to Agricultural Advertising Anderson expatiated on the kind of success Americans were running for:
Now in the advertising business, when we speak of success, the word can mean but one thing. There is only one kind of business success and that is, the kind of success that makes money (Irving, 170).

Industrialisation creates social classes; uproots men from the soil and nature; alienates the worker from the pleasure and product of his work; destroys beauty and creativity of craftsmanship; frustrates human begins leading them to loneliness. In Winesburg, Ohio Anderson draws out the corrupting,. In Winesburg, Ohio Anderson draws out the corrupting, perverting and frustrating influence of the city life. This aspect is extensively explored in his later writings. In Winesburg, Ohio Ned Currie who goes to the city forgets to redeem his promise of love to Louise. City life never gives a sense of belonging to them who come from an agrarian past.

Anderson was bent upon to trace the confusion and vulgarity of his age to the displacement of the agrarian base of American society. He recollects in Windy McPherson’s Son this older America as a kind of pastoral paradise, a land where both men and women led a life full
of hope, courage and with a pride in craftsmanship and independence. The snake that had crept into this agrarian Eden and its village culture, was in Anderson’s opinion, a new dependence on the external advantages supposedly bestowed by technological advancement rather than on the internal resources conferred by Nature and the soul. This theme of human self versus nonhuman machine is beautifully dealt with in Anderson’s major works – especially in *Windy McPherson’s Son, Winesburg, Ohio, Poor White, Dark Laughter and Beyond Desire*.

In *Windy McPherson’s Son*, Sam McPherson seems to be Anderson’s mouthpiece when he finds that American men and women have not learned to be simple clean, noble and natural, as are their natural surroundings.

He did find that the old values were not the product of a time or a place but of an attitude, a way of life, a determination to transcend the immediate, the world of conflict, competition, and accumulation, and to seek in meaningful work, and new but timeless closeness to nature and to men whatever it is that give meaning and depth and
purpose to human life. This for Anderson was both metaphor and reality, a metaphor of meaning, a way of life and ultimately a recognition that time and values were, are, and will be a continuum, if one can love to live in accordance to values that exist, some where and somehow, in every age.

The values of the past, distorted and disguised, remain; we are their creatures; and the search beyond materialism is a search for life, for meaning, for a living fulfillment if we are capable of knowing and accepting it.

Anderson indulges in his early works, in a headlong assault on industrialism as the source of the frustration, bewilderment and dehumanisation that had corrupted a Midwest with the potential for social perfection. His *Windy McPherson’s Son* makes clear the cost of success in human values as Sam finds himself cut off from meaningful relationships with other. He realises that material values are meaningless, and he begins a search that is only vaguely successful for a meaningful way of life to replace materialism. In his second novel, *Marching Men* (1917), Anderson launched another
assault on the system, saying that man can revolt against the 
materialism of industrialism, but after the act of rebellion there is 
nothing else. He cannot make peace with the system, destroy it, or 
find peace outside of it. At this point, Anderson found little hope for 
individual or for his fulfillment in a dehumanised system. He learned 
that rebellion was not fulfillment, that the end had been lost in the 
means and he changed direction drastically.

Having experienced the ultimate frustration in his inability to 
resolve the predicament of the individual in a mass industrial society 
through rejection and rebellion, Anderson sought new direction and 
new dimensions in his work. He moved in a direction that had 
decidedly mixed results but was ultimately rewarding. Significantly 
he turned away from the present, from industrialism and its 
concomitant effects, and into the half-remembered, half imagined past 
out of which he had come. His introspection resulted in a new style 
and a new search for insight, not in terms of social movements but in 
the sometimes fulfilling but often inhibiting or destroying relations 
among people.
Anderson always evoked in his books the world of old handicrafts artisans, the harness makers and Civil War veterans like his father, the small town tailors and shoemakers, the buggy and wagon craftsmen of the old school. It was almost a forgotten America which was brought back out of the simple force of memory – the America of the old slumbering village towns, of the old religious stirrings of the old village workmen and saloonkeepers and stablemen. But machines came to the town and destroyed whatever peace and beauty it once possessed. A blind faith in machines caused the disintegration of the agrarian community which resulted in frustration and mal adjustments of its habitant.

_Poor White_ is Anderson’s another novel rooted in an ugly industrial town. What awaits the small town dreamer in the city is the subject of _Poor White_. Hugh McVey, the protagonist of the novel is "completely happy" in communion with nature, Sarah Shepard, Hugh’s self appointed guardian represents the Puritan or New England ethic enjoining man to a life of work and success. She considers Hugh’s lethargy and moodiness a sin. She firmly believes
that if Hugh follows the New England virtues of hard works and thrift he will become a successful man. Midwest was observing a transformation and her plans for him go parallel to this pattern, Eastern Manufacturing interests, resolved primarily upon economic extension, were heading towards the slothful, sprawling Midwestern United States. New types of material success through the efficient operations of mechanised factories could not be achieved.

Under her influence Huge starts working hard. After Shepards’ departure and his father’s death he leaves Mudcat Landing and settles in Bidwell taking up the job of a telegrapher at the Bidwell railway station but his main desire is to “penetrate the wall that shuts him off from humanity”. To stave off his loneliness he enrolls in a correspondence course in mechanics. Once he gets the idea that by inventing a plant setting machine he can lessen the drudgery connected with setting plants by hand.

But all his hope to improve the quality of the farmer’s life and to enter into some sort of relationship with the Bidwell community end in smoke as his role of an inventor of machines alienates him
instead of uniting him with the people. He becomes the target of their hostility. His machines transform the life of Bidwell. All the vices of industrialisation tip - toe in the life of Bidwell. Hugh finds no peace and togetherness in all the wealth, power and fame that he acquires.

Anderson evokes, in his portrayal of Bidwell, the loneliness and emptiness of man in an industrial society. What happens when man observes an artificial life loaded with mechanization, keeping natural life furnished beautifully by craftsmanship at a bay, is artistically portrayed by Anderson. The hunger for money becomes a tool to alienate man from man. When Tom Butterworth finds his daughter Clara who longs to communicate with others, as an impediment in his money making as she requires time which can be utilised to quench the thirst of money, he sends her to the state university with the hope that she would relieve him from her burden by getting herself married. Earlier for farmers and tradesmen residing on a relaxed land, time means little but for the habitants of a booming industrial region it becomes one of the means of mass production and making money.
But at the end of the novel Huge realises that people are more important than machines and that by concentrating his attention upon them, instead of on creations of metal and wood, he can tear down the wall that causes alienation. Hugh says his farewell to machines, symbolically, to the industrial civilisation and becomes a human being among human beings. Huge and Clara set themselves free from the confinements of the new industrial society.

*Poor White* belongs among the few books that have restored with memorable vitality the life of an era, its hopes and desires, its conflicts between material prosperity and ethics, and its disillusionments, in a manner that stimulates the historical imagination. Today one reads *Poor White* almost as though it were a particular kind of historical novel: time has refreshed it and thrown into perspective the ideas, the events, the atmosphere of a late nineteenth-century American small towns that had thrust forward the fortunes of Hugh McVey. He gives the scene of his novel an historical perspective, by establishing their contemporaneous disillusionments. His position is obviously neither that held by the theorist, the reformer,
the economist nor the politician, but rather the one held by the novelist, the American, non-Maxian historian, the individual who shared the hopes of those who had preached the religion of humanity.

No novel of the American small town in the Middle West evokes in the minds of its readers so much of the cultural heritage of its milieu as does richness *Poor White*; nor does Anderson in his later novels ever recapture the same of association, the ability to make memorable each scene in the transition from an agrarian way of living to a twentieth-century spectacle of industrial conflict with its outward display of physical comfort and wealth.

In his later novels Anderson has shifted his scene to the South. The process of industrialisation, going on more ruthlessly, fills him with horror. Scenes in the cotton mills recur with a kind of obsession. Rather timidly he puts forward his social remedy in *Perhaps Women*, the result of "a growing conviction that modern man is loosing his ability to retain his manhood, in the face of the modern way of utilizing the machine, and that what hope there is for him lies in women."(David, *Interpretation* 101)
It is significant that Anderson selects a woman to illustrate the mastery of the machine by a human being. In 1931, he had published *Perhaps Women*, a collection of essays and sketches maintaining that American women had not relinquished themselves to the control of the machine as American men had done. He put forth the proposition that the machine has taken from men the creative function they enjoyed as craftsmen, rendered them sexually impotent and spiritually empty life and robbed them of both freedom and dignity. It is scarcely to be wondered at that, believing himself to have been "saved" by a woman, Anderson could with some self-assurance predict to Charles Bockter that they would have to turn to women so, crying save them save them. He seemed to believe that they could not save themselves.

Man has come to rely upon the machine to perform his labour and to create the products he uses. Working and creating are man's chief sources of strength, and by relinquishing them, man has become weak and even impotent. But women according to Anderson are most at home in the machine age. He seems to believe that in a factual age woman always rule. They always hold a superior position to men as
they have something a man cannot have – the machine cannot touch their mystery.

An important motive in *Perhaps Women* is Anderson’s fascination with machines specially the automobile. Seeing nothing inherently wrong with machines he places blame for their dehumanising influences upon what American people have allowed machines to do their lives. Anderson’s sustained cry is for human control over the monsters - the control that men have not exercised.

Several of the sketches deal with Anderson’s tour of a southern factory, where he perceives, somewhat mystically, a bond between the factory girls and the spinners and looms, which they operate with feeling and mastery. His conclusion is that women would control the machines, so that their power to hurt men, by making them impotent, could be checked. In *Kit Brandon*, Anderson is quite specific on the subject of humanistic versus mechanistic concerns. He recognises that the machine is a permanent part of American society. From her work in factories, Kit “had got the feel of machinery down into her veins, into all of her body.” When she becomes a driver of liquor cars she
soon develops "a kind of personal feeling about the machine she drove. It seemed beautifully alive to her." In it he portrayed the strange loss of maleness in modern men and the noble efforts of women – themselves compelled to assume the masculine traits surrendered by men – to combat that effects of the machine.

But behind his hopes that women could salvage humanity in the machine age lay the same primitive agrarian moral assumption he had always held. Kit Brandon never rids herself of the effects of the machine, but she learns that the source of genuine fulfillment lies in the simple agrarian values of the past as she secretly observes a young farmer and his wife enjoying the vigorously sensuous, happy life close to the soil; working together in their common cause on the farm; and fulfilling their lives in each other and in the land.

Anderson reiterated the sense of alienation that has become a theme of much twentieth century American literature. Having grown in a small mid western town in the last quarter of the nineteenth century he had seen quiet villages of farmers and tradesmen disrupted by the advent of factories with machines that could produced more
goods in less time than ever before. He had witnessed an erosion of close human relationship as one man competed with another for financial success and positions of authority.

The changes wrought by industrialism were not the only cause of alienation. As Anderson made wide-ranging travels through the United States, first as a businessman, then as a writer, he came to recognise a pronounced diversity in the beliefs and loyalties of the people. As a kindly out-going man who felt a strong emotional attraction to people and a concern for the well being of his country, Anderson felt as repelled by this sense of separateness as by the growing emphasis upon materialism and the corresponding decline in human values. Most essays and sketches that from the Notebook show Anderson as an artist-critic, commenting upon people and events in contemporary America. He is concerned over the fact that America has rushed blindly ahead on a course of "progress" toward material success that has left a spiritual void. Her towns are ugly; her people have lost a sense of beauty. What she calls literature is not a creation
of beauty, but a glib depiction of surface details of an unattractive civilisation.

The voice of Anderson’s generation was the voice of “progress”; it promised the arrival of a “new day”. To Anderson the delight of invention for its own sake never lost its spell. To invent became part of his pleasure in telling a story, and the very inventions of the machine age, an age whose virtues he came to distrust and to criticise, never lost their fascination.

But at last he feels that the machine is not intrinsically evil. As long as man remains its master, he can use it to achieve meaningful ends. It is only when the machine is given a position of too much importance in human life – when people are made to serve machines, human values are destroyed.