The Southern Agrarians: a case study in intellectualized collection development

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Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to present a case study about how academic librarians can contribute to the interdisciplinary research endeavors of professors and students, especially doctoral candidates, through an intellectualized approach to collection development.
Design/methodology/approach – In the wake of protest movements such as the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street, colleges and universities have begun to develop courses about these events, and it is anticipated that there will be much research conducted about their respective histories. Academic librarians can participate in those research efforts by developing interdisciplinary collections about protest movements and by referring researchers to those collections.
Findings – Through a case-study approach, this paper provides a narrative bibliography about Southern Agrarianism that can help professors and students interested in the Tea Party or Occupy Wall Street movements to see their research endeavors from a new interdisciplinary perspective.
Originality/value – The value of this paper lies in presenting a concrete example of the way in which academic librarians can become active research partners through the work of building collections and recommending sources in areas that professors and students may not have previously considered.

Keywords Academic libraries, Collections management, Collection development, Interdisciplinarity, Collaboration

Paper type Case study

Introduction

In the period 2009-2012, two protest movements, which were typically understood as the products of the radical right and the radical left, not only galvanized numerous Americans, but also attracted much criticism. Supported by members of the so-called right, the Tea Party movement was denounced by those of the so-called left; supported by members of the so-called left, the Occupy Wall Street movement (or, simply, Occupy) was denounced by those on the so-called right. On the one hand, the Tea Party movement brought together those individuals concerned about what they perceived to be the unbridled growth of government institutions and programs and about the myriad ways that such unchecked governmental expansion interfered with and limited their rights as citizens. On the other hand, Occupy criticized the stark economic inequalities that existed between the privileged 1 percent of the population and the remaining 99 percent who were struggling, in various ways, to make ends meet as a result of the multi-dimensional fallout occasioned by the near-total collapse of the banking and financial-investment sectors in late 2008.

As these protest movements swelled, numerous university and college courses were quickly created to explore the issues catalyzing their separate evolutions, especially that of Occupy (Gates, 2012; Schuessler, 2012). It stands to reason that the number of these academic courses will only grow, as will the interest of established scholars and graduate students in writing about them from a broad array of perspectives in theses, dissertations, articles, and monographs. One can imagine these movements being dealt with in cross-listed and interdisciplinary courses taught, for example, in departments of sociology and political science; one can anticipate scholars working in, say, the area of cultural studies to conduct research about their historical antecedents.

Intellectualized collection development

As a result, libraries and librarians will be called upon to collect resources that support teaching and research in the field of early twenty-first-century protest movements. To be sure, collection-development specialists can rely on vendor-based approval plans and patron-driven acquisition strategies to ensure basic coverage of these topics, and they can easily direct professors and students to archival material such as Facebook posts, tweets, blogs, and other electronic media about Occupy and the Tea Party. But, as Lynn Westbrook (2003, p. 203) observes, more and more faculty members want librarians not just simply to direct them to well-known resources, but to help them "conceptualize my problem" and "to ask questions to get me to see my research focus in a different light". In other words, they want librarians to make them aware of resources that they themselves may not have considered (e.g. Dilevko and Gottlieb, 2004, pp. 173-207).

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Moreover, Colleen Harris (2011) explains that a central reason for high attrition rates among doctoral students is their frustration, at the dissertation-formulation stage of their program, with developing an original research project. Among her recommendations to help doctoral candidates in their efforts is the intervention of librarians who would, to paraphrase Westbrook's findings, help doctoral-level students to conceptualize their problem and ask questions to get them to see their research focus in a different light.

All this implies that the process of collection development should have an intellectual component, that collection-development specialists should be on the lookout for materials that will allow faculty members and doctoral students at their institutions to offer original and intriguing analyses of important questions in their areas of academic specialization. It also implies that librarians tasked with collection-development responsibilities should read widely in order to be able to identify such intriguing materials.

With regard to the issue of early twenty-first-century protest movements, it is clear that the Tea Party and Occupy are usually treated as unconnected phenomena that draw on distinct socio-political heritages. But could this view be challenged or, at the very least, made more nuanced? For all the differences in the targets of the respective anger of these two movements – government policymakers and bureaucrats as representatives of an overly centralized government apparatus, or millionaire bankers and CEOs as representatives of an increasingly Darwinian capitalism – there was in both a fundamental discontent with impersonal and distant forces that wielded undue power over the lives of average individuals. Just as Occupy was a revolt against the unfeeling consequences of an implacable industrial capitalism, so the Tea Party was a rebellion against the no-less unfeeling nature of industrialized government.

As established scholars and doctoral students look more closely at the Tea Party and Occupy, will they be able to draw on interdisciplinary resources in the collections of their libraries that offer new ways of conceptualizing their research? Historical materials covering American protest movements will therefore be paramount, but philosophical manifestos will also be of vital importance.

Background to the case study

One such crucial manifesto is the *I'll Take My Stand* collection of essays produced in 1930 by a group of 12 American southerners who are referred to as the Southern Agrarians (or Nashville or Vanderbilt Agrarians). But the Southern Agrarians are much more than the part-philosophical and part-polemical writings contained in *I'll Take My Stand*, since that fundamental text gave rise to a rich socio-cultural legacy that has been quietly invoked and debated for the past 80 years. Eleven of the 12 original contributors to *I'll Take My Stand* not only left an impressive body of work in their own right, but through their reputation and teaching at various universities attracted followers as diverse as Cleanth Brooks, Richard Weaver, and Wendell Berry. As an example of the little-known though widespread influence of the Southern Agrarians, Marshall McLuhan, the noted Canadian communications and media scholar, contributed an essay entitled "The Southern quality" to a volume edited by one of the leading Southern Agrarians, Allen Tate, in 1947 (Murphy, 2001, pp. 148-149).

Now largely forgotten, the Southern Agrarians, individually and collectively, have much to contribute to a multi-faceted understanding of early twenty-first-century protest movements such as the Tea Party and Occupy. Being cognizant of and thus collecting literature related to Southern Agrarianism is the kind of value-added collection-development activity that can make librarians respected research partners. These are librarians who see that their jobs no longer entail merely keeping up with current world events by collecting and providing access to resources about those events, but who understand that their collection-development tasks must also be informed by the ability to make interdisciplinary connections allowing scholars and students to position their research "in a different light" (Westbrook, 2003). The remainder of this article provides a brief overview of the Southern Agrarians and an extensive bibliography to aid librarians to collect in this comparatively neglected area – an area that has a multitude of interdisciplinary connections to early twenty-first-century protest movements that are sure to be the focus of much scholarly and pedagogical work in the decades to come.

The Agrarians

Who were the original Southern Agrarians? The simple answer is, in alphabetical order: Donald Davidson; John Gould Fletcher; Henry Blue Kline; Lyle H. Lanier; Andrew Nelson Lytle; Herman Clarence Nixon; Frank Lawrence Owsley; John Crowe Ransom; Allen Tate; John Donald Wade; Robert Penn Warren; and Stark Young. These 12 individuals penned essays that appeared in the 1930 manifesto entitled *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*. The complex answer is, well, complex, since *I'll Take My Stand* gave birth to a follow-up treatise in 1936 entitled *Who Owns America? A New Declaration of Independence*, edited by Herbert Agar and Allen Tate, which contained essays by some of the original Agrarians, but also included many new contributors, including Hillaire Belloc, a leading light, along with G. K. Chesterton, of the English Distributist movement, and Cleanth Brooks, a founder of the New Criticism approach to literary analysis and someone who had studied under Ransom and been exposed to Davidson's essays at Vanderbilt University when those two men had been at the center of a group of poets referred to as the Fugitives.

What did the Southern Agrarians believe? To answer this question, it is not without significance that *I'll Take My Stand* appeared shortly after the market crash of 1929 that inaugurated the Great Depression and that *Who Owns America?* was published in the darkest period of that economic collapse, when various solutions to the ongoing national malaise were being implemented. Much like in the aftermath of the 2008 financial meltdown, the very premises of modern capitalism were being interrogated in the 1930s. Against a background of deepening economic inequalities, the Southern Agrarians offered a harsh indictment of the exploitative and degrading forces of industrialization, materialism, and commercialization, proposing a return to a way of life rooted in the precepts of agrarian simplicity that Henry David Thoreau might have found congenial. As Stark Young (1930/2006, p. 335) remarked in the final essay of *I'll Take My Stand*, it was incumbent to respond to the Babbitt-like complacency that was contained in the boast "In our

town we've got twenty thousand miles of concrete walks" by asking "And where do they lead?"

Far from being a panacea, the industrial ethos as structured by monopoly capitalism and supported by "the barbarism of science and technology controlled and directed by the modern power state" was destroying humankind's relationship with larger spiritual, cultural, and environmental truths (Davidson, 1958, pp. 60-61; see also Newby, 1963). While monopoly capitalism was deemed to be "evil and self-destructive," it was nevertheless possible, within the parameters of a private-ownership society organized along the line of independent agricultural holdings, "to build a true democracy in which men would be better off both morally and physically, more likely to attain that inner peace which is the mark of a good life" (Agar, 1936a/1999). As Andrew Lytle (1936/1999) summarized in the title of his essay for *Who Owns America?*, "the small farm secures the state," offering individuals real opportunity for independence, equality, and economic security.

Of course, not everyone should be expected to become a farmer, as Agar was quick to point out; rather, the distributist tendencies inherent in small-scale agricultural property ownership could be applied to other spheres of American life so as to bring about a decentralized society that recognizes that "one of the most discredited lies in history is the statement that to protect the prosperity of the grain-betters is to promote the well-being of the plain man" (Agar, 1936b/1999, p. 129; Shapiro, 1972). As a result, Southern Agrarianism was, in time, conceptualized more as a metaphor and "an intellectual and spiritual affirmation" rather than as "a practical reform proposal" or as an exaltation of southern ways of life (Murphy, 2001, p. 118).

With few exceptions, neither *I'll Take My Stand* nor *Who Owns America?* was well-received upon initial publication (Newby, 1963; Shapiro, 1999), and both continue to elicit a large amount of negative comment, much of it having to do with fraught issues such as southern regionalism and race relations (Donaldson, 2006). Yet there is also a grudging respect for the acuity of some aspects of the Southern Agrarians' economic and cultural analyses – analyses that have unexpected resonance for the study of early twenty-first-century protest movements. For example, many Occupy protesters would no doubt approve of Agar's point about "grain-betters," forebears of the financial speculators whom they consider to be responsible for the 2008 economic catastrophe. In many ways, the Southern Agrarians were "eerily prescient," despite their shortcomings (Donaldson, 2006, p. ix).

The following narrative bibliography attempts to capture important facets of the Southern Agrarian enterprise so that librarians may begin – or supplement – their collections in this overlooked area with a view toward positioning Southern Agrarianism as an integral part of the study of early twenty-first-century protest movements such as Occupy and the Tea Party. The narrative bibliography is divided into 15 sections, covering the relationship between Fugitives and the Agrarians; eleven of the original 12 Southern Agrarians, with the exception of Henry Blue Kline, whose post-1930 work at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Atomic Energy Commission, and the *St Louis Post Dispatch* left few traces; Caroline Gordon, the wife of Allen Tate, who became a firm advocate of Southern Agrarian principles herself; cultural histories of Southern Agrarianism; and the influence of Southern Agrarians in succeeding generations.

The pre-Agrarian fugitives

It is generally accepted that there were 16 Fugitive poets, who first came together in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1915 and began publishing their work in the *Fugitive* magazine in 1922. Four books provide thorough coverage of this precursor to Southern Agrarianism. First, the anthology *The Fugitive Poets: Modern Southern Poetry in Perspective*, edited by William Pratt (J.S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1991), contains approximately 70 poems from writers who would later be associated with Southern Agrarianism, such as Ransom and Tate, and those who would not, such as Laura Riding, Merrill Moore, and Stanley Johnson. The volume also contains a succinct essay by Pratt about the history of the Fugitives. Ideally, Pratt's anthology should be read in conjunction with Donald Davidson's *Southern Writers in the Modern World* (University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1958), a forthright recollection of the origins of the Fugitive movement and its relationship to Southern Agrarianism by someone who was a focal point of both groups. Finally, two scholarly treatments of this topic stand out: *The Fugitive Group: A Literary History* by Louise Cowan (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1959) and *The Wary Fugitives: Four Poets and the South* by Louis D. Rubin Jr. (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1978). While Cowan's work is a detailed examination of the Nashville- and Vanderbilt-centric cultural milieu that nurtured the Fugitives; the literary debates that roiled the group; and the turn toward literary criticism that marked its end, Rubin's account emphasizes the relationship between the poems, novels, and literary criticism of Davidson, Ransom, Tate, and Warren and their later Agrarian principles.

Donald Davidson

In many respects Davidson is the most controversial of the Southern Agrarians, partly due to his uncompromising stances as an advocate of traditionalism and southern regionalism. Gradually isolated from most of the other members of the group, he was revered both for his analytic abilities and bluntness of opinion by numerous students who took his literature courses at Vanderbilt, including the novelist Elizabeth Spencer, who drew an indelible portrait of him in her memoir *Landscapes of the Heart*. For a balanced account of Davidson's life and political thought, Mark Royden Winchell's biography *Where No Flag Flies: Donald Davidson and the Southern Resistance* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO, 2000) is indispensable. Davidson's unrelenting adherence to Southern Agrarian values can be glimpsed in *Still Rebels, Still Yankees, and Other Essays* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1957), but the most vivid incarnation of his Southern Agrarianism is *Regionalism and Nationalism in the United States: The Attack on Leviathan* (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, 1938/1991), a series of linked essays denouncing what he felt to be the twin forces of government centralization and rapid industrialization, not to mention their detrimental effects on education, literature, and the arts in general. These views also find expression in his two-part account of the history of the Tennessee River, the second volume of which Winchell describes as "a fitting benediction for the Agrarian

movement" (p. 249). Taken together, *The Old River: Frontier to Secession* and *The New River: Civil War to TVA* (both reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1991-1992) tell a story about a vibrant regional culture transformed by a homogenizing modernism whose main concern is consolidation of power.

John Gould Fletcher

Less well known than other Southern Agrarians, Fletcher nevertheless achieved recognition for his *Selected Poems*, a book which won the 1938 Pulitzer Prize. A native of Arkansas, he lived in England for most of the period 1908-1933 except for visits back to the USA. In Europe he was associated with the Imagist poetry movement, but on his return to Arkansas he became interested in state history and southern traditions. A tragic figure beset with mental-health issues, Fletcher committed suicide in 1950. His contributions to Southern Agrarianism can be accessed in *The Autobiography of John Gould Fletcher* (University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, AR, 1989) and *Selected Essays of John Gould Fletcher*, edited by Lucas Carpenter (University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, AR, 1989). Also worthwhile is Fletcher's history of Arkansas, simply entitled *Arkansas* (University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, AR, 1995). A comprehensive biography of Fletcher is *Fierce Solitude: A Life of John Gould Fletcher* by Ben F. Johnson III (University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, AR, 1994). Edmund S. de Chasca's *John Gould Fletcher and Imagism* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO, 1978) focuses on various facets of his poetry, while Lucas Carpenter's *John Gould Fletcher and Southern Modernism* (University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, AR, 1990) discusses the relationship between Fletcher's Agrarian beliefs and his poetry.

Caroline Gordon

Of course Gordon deserves to be considered in her own right, but she was also the wife of Allen Tate, one of the founders of Southern Agrarianism. Two biographies reveal the complexities of her relationships to both Tate and Southern Agrarianism, as well as her life before her first marriage to him and after their second divorce: Ann Waldron's *Close Connections: Caroline Gordon and the Southern Renaissance* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, NY, 1987) and Nancylee Novell Jonza's *The Underground Stream: The Life and Art of Caroline Gordon* (University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1995). Her novels, which are often interpreted as embodying Southern Agrarian themes, are given close readings by Rose Ann C. Fraistat in *Caroline Gordon as Novelist and Woman of Letters* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1984). Three of these novels are especially noteworthy: *Penhally*; *None Shall Look Back*; and *Women on the Porch* (all reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1991-1993). *Penhally* considers the spiritual and philosophical roots of the destruction of a southern family, pointing to a clash of values between a place-based traditional society and individual greed as the primary cause. *None Shall Look Back* portrays a staunch commitment to traditional principles against the background of the Civil War, and *The Women on the Porch* depicts a woman's temporary flight to a rural community as a meaningful alternative to city life with a philandering husband.

Lyle H. Lanier

A psychology professor and administrator at the University of Illinois for a large part of his career, Lanier made three important contributions to Southern Agrarianism. In his essay for *I'll Take My Stand*, entitled "A critique of the philosophy of progress," he urges the renunciation of "the capitalistic industrial program" that can provide "no humanized living" to workers caught in its "predatory and decadent" cyclical convulsions. In "Big business in the property state," contained in *Who Owns America?*, he indicts the "two hundred corporations [that] control more than 50 percent of the nation's industrial assets," calling them "the instruments of an economic fascism which threatens the essential democratic institutions of America." Because these corporations currently do not operate with regard "for the public welfare" and are controlled by small groups "holding a negligible amount of voting stock" who accrue profits for their own benefit, "[t]he taxing power of Congress must be used constructively to encourage a greater distribution of the fruits of corporate enterprise." Finally, in the volume *A Band of Prophets: The Vanderbilt Agrarians after Fifty Years* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1982), he participated, along with Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, and Andrew Lytle, in a roundtable discussion whose edited transcript appears as "The Agrarian-Industrial Metaphor: Culture, Economics, and Society in a Technological Age." Here the speakers draw connections between 1930s Southern Agrarianism and what they perceive as contemporary manifestations of the same philosophical ethos, analyzing works such as Robert Heilbroner's *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*; Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism*; and the writings of Barry Commoner.

Andrew Nelson Lytle

Lytle's connection with and impact on Southern Agrarianism is concisely articulated in Mark Lucas's *The Southern Vision of Andrew Lytle* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1986), and the full spectrum of his philosophical vision is accessible in *From Eden to Babylon: The Social and Political Essays of Andrew Lytle* (Regnery Gateway, Lanham, MD, 1990). It is a vision that is also exemplified in his 1931 biographical narrative *Bedford Forrest and His Critter Company* (reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1992) and his 1975 *A Wake for the Living: A Family Chronicle* (reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1992). Forrest is best known as a Confederate General in the Civil War, but for Lytle, the only one of the Southern Agrarians who tried to combine his writing career with an agrarian lifestyle, Forest also represented the ideal of the small independent landowner whose virtues he had praised so highly in the essay "The hind tit" for *I'll Take My Stand*. In *A Wake for the Living*, a book referred to as an "Agrarian coda" by Lucas, Lytle traces the history of his deeply rooted southern family, emphasizing the importance of attachment to and respect for the land, as well as the spiritual and emotional alienation that results from the loss of that attachment and respect. Novels such as *The Long Night*, originally published in 1936 (reprinted by University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL, 1988); *At the Moon's Inn*, originally published in 1941 (reprinted by University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL, 2009); *A Name for Evil* (Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, IN, 1947); and *The Velvet Horn*

(McDowell, Obolensky, New York, NY, 1957) have woven within them key strands of Southern Agrarian philosophy such as traditionalism, the necessity for a religion-based humanism, and abiding reverence for nature. Through his teaching at the University of Florida, Lytle inspired writers such as Harry Crews, perhaps best known for *Childhood: The Biography of a Place* (reprinted by University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1995), and Madison Jones, author of *The Innocent* (reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1993) and *The Buried Land* (Viking, New York, NY, 1963), among others.

Herman Clarence Nixon

A historian and political scientist, Nixon was a strong regionalist opposed to the rampant industrialization that he felt was undermining the South's autonomy in moral, social, and economic terms. Even more forgotten than other Southern Agrarians, Nixon was well regarded for three books: *Forty Acres and Steel Mules* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1938); *Possum Trot: Rural Community, South* (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 1941); and *Lower Piedmont Country* (Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, New York, NY, 1946). *Forty Acres* surveys the abysmal conditions associated with cotton cultivation and makes recommendations for the amelioration of widespread southern poverty through the development of alternate types of farming that might better allow for economic independence. *Possum Trot* is an affectionate portrait and astute social analysis of his northern Alabama hometown, as well as of the changes that it will have to confront in the future. Overturning the myth of a monolithic South steeped in conservatism, *Lower Piedmont* is a rich description of the multi-faceted history, traditions, economics, and diverse personalities of that nebulous area sometimes referred to as the "Northern South" or "Southern North." A fruitful overview of Nixon's life, writings, and political thought is contained in *Hillbilly Realist: Herman Clarence Nixon of Possum Trot* by Sarah Newman Shouse (University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL, 1986).

Frank Lawrence Owsley

Like Nixon, Owsley was a historian. His writings include *States Rights in the Confederacy* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1925; reprinted by Gale, 2010) and *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1931), but Owsley is best remembered for *Plain Folk of the Old South* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1949/2008). By consensus view *Plain Folk* is regarded as one of the most influential books in the world of southern social history, a massively documented work that overturned the myth that the category of middle-class "yeomen farmer" or small landowner did not exist to any great extent in an ante-bellum South thought to consist mainly of slaveholders, slaves, and poverty-stricken whites. Also valuable is a collection of essays entitled *The South: Old and New Frontiers* (University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1969), which provides an overview of the evolution of Owsley's political thought. A balanced assessment of the entire range of his scholarly endeavors, his association with Southern Agrarianism, and his views about his native region is contained in *Frank Lawrence Owsley: Historian of the Old South* (Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville, TN, 1990), a biography by Harriet Chappell Owsley, his wife.

John Crowe Ransom

For all his centrality to the birth and development of Southern Agrarianism, Ransom, the author of the lead essay "Reconstructed but unregenerate" in *I'll Take My Stand*, is an elusive figure, not the least because the majority of his output is poetry and literary criticism. The contours of his social and political thought are presented in Thomas Daniel Young's *Gentleman in a Dustcoat: A Biography of John Crowe Ransom* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1976). At the core of Ransom's Southern Agrarian principles was *God Without Thunder: An Unorthodox Defense of Orthodoxy* (Harcourt, Brace, New York, NY, 1930), which argued that religion, in its Old Testament incarnation, is the primary bulwark against the dehumanizing concept of technological progress as manifested in the worship of science and industrialization. The very inscrutability and mysteriousness of an Old Testament God – worshipped in the beauty and grace of ritual and myth – is necessary to prevent the rise to power of a god of scientific rationality that, in its reliance on the principles of efficiency and selfish desire, destroys nature and degrades human sensibility. Another valuable source for his relationship to Southern Agrarianism is *Selected Essays of John Crowe Ransom*, edited by Thomas Daniel Young and John Hindle (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1984), which contains the 1945 article "Art and the Human Economy," Ransom's elegy for the Agrarian project.

Allen Tate

One of the most prominent of the Southern Agrarians, Tate gradually moved away from involvement with the group after the publication of *Who Owns America?* in 1936 because he was dissatisfied with the decreasing focus on religious values in the Agrarian program. His work with Herbert Agar on *Who Owns America?* solidified his appreciation of the English Distributist movement, which, like Southern Agrarianism, promoted an economic and social system based on small landownership and small businesses, but unlike Southern Agrarianism, drew strength from traditional Roman Catholic teachings. Already in *I'll Take My Stand* his religious orientation was on display in the essay "Remarks on the Southern Religion"; in 1950 he converted to Catholicism, although he had considered doing so since 1929. The evolution of Tate's philosophical and spiritual beliefs is recounted in Thomas A. Underwood's biography *Allen Tate: Orphan of the South* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2000); this evolution can also be experienced firsthand in *Allen Tate: Essays of Four Decades* (ISI Books, Wilmington, DE, 1999). The Catholic undertext of the entire range of Tate's writings is discussed in Robert H. Brinkmeyer Jr.'s *Three Catholic Writers of the Modern South: Allen Tate, Caroline Gordon, and Walker Percy* (University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, MS, 1985). Two important milestones in Tate's journey are *Stonewall Jackson: The Good Soldier* (reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1991), which contrasts the individualism of an industrializing North with the ethos of traditional southern community, and *Jefferson Davis: His Rise and Fall* (reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1998), which sees

the South as the upholder of classical and Christian values as derived from an European heritage – a heritage squandered by an alienated and atomized North. Also central to Tate's views is his only novel *The Fathers*, originally published in 1938 (reprinted by Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1996), which follows the protagonist's search for wholeness in a world caught in a psychologically debilitating struggle between, on the one hand, ritual, tradition, and order, and, on the other, unscrupulous and self-centered modernity – a struggle where each of the competing factions has within it the seeds not only of spiritual destruction, but also of renewal.

John Donald Wade

Chiefly known for his work on the *Dictionary of American Biography* and as the founder of *The Georgia Review* in 1946, Wade made substantial contributions to Southern Agrarianism. His early interest in southern history and culture was manifested in *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet: A Study of the Development of Culture in the South*, which was originally a 1924 doctoral dissertation; it was reissued as a book under the editorship of M. Thomas Inge (University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1969/2010). As some commentators have observed, this work explores themes that would reappear in Wade's subsequent writings, including his biography of the Methodist John Wesley. Also of importance for situating Wade in the context of Southern Agrarianism is *Selected Essays and Other Writings of John Donald Wade* (University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1966, 2010); it was edited and introduced by Donald Davidson, who held Wade in great esteem. Wade's friendship with Davidson is documented in *Agrarian Letters: The Correspondence of John Donald Wade and Donald Davidson, 1930-1939* (Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 2003). Edited by Gerald J. Smith, *Agrarian Letters* collects much valuable information about Wade's opinions in the period immediately after the publication of *I'll Take My Stand*.

Robert Penn Warren

Best known for his Pulitzer-Prize winning novel *All the King's Men* (1946), a searing account of southern political corruption, Warren was also an accomplished poet and a part of the Vanderbilt milieu that gave rise to Southern Agrarianism, with which he had an ambivalent relationship as the years passed. His prominent place in and connection to a wide variety of literary and social currents in the middle decades of the twentieth century is described in Joseph Blotner's *Robert Penn Warren: A Biography* (Random House, New York, NY, 1997). Four of his lesser known novels are important markers of his thinking: *Night Rider*, originally published in 1939 (reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1992); *At Heaven's Gate*, first published in 1943 and dedicated to Frank Lawrence Owsley and Harriet Owsley (reprinted by New Directions, New York, NY, 1985); *World Enough and Time*, first published in 1950 (reprinted by Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1999); and *Flood*, originally published in 1963 (reprinted by Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 2003). *Night Rider* and *Flood* are especially salient: the former depicts the intersection of rural poverty and violence in Kentucky and Tennessee in the early 1900s, while the latter weighs the spiritual losses and gains attendant upon the construction of a giant dam in Tennessee – a symbol of the triumph of technology over agrarian ideals. Warren's grappling with questions of southern identity is also on display in such non-fiction works as *John Brown: The Making of a Martyr* (Payson & Clarke Ltd., New York, NY, 1929); *Segregation: The Inner Conflict of the South* (Random House, New York, NY, 1956); *The Legacy of the Civil War: Meditations on the Centennial* (Random House, New York, NY, 1961); and *Jefferson Davis Gets His Citizenship Back* (University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 1980).

Stark Young

Born in northern Mississippi, Young eventually moved to New York City, became the drama critic of the *New Republic*, and wrote several plays. His connection with Southern Agrarianism is slight, but significant. After his essay "Not in Memoriam, but in Defense" appeared in *I'll Take My Stand*, he published his most successful novel, entitled *So Red the Rose* in 1934 (reprinted by J. S. Sanders and Co., Nashville, TN, 1992). As one critic noted, the essay "might appropriately stand as a preamble" to the novel (Stovall, 1976, p. 97). Based on his own family history, *So Red the Rose*, whose popularity as a Civil War novel was eclipsed by *Gone with the Wind*, is a sensitively wrought consideration of southern traditional values in opposition to northern industrialism. In 1953, Young's novel was reissued with an introduction by Donald Davidson, a circumstance that made the ties between Young's agrarianism in *I'll Take My Stand* and *So Red the Rose* tighter still. Young's early novels *Heaven Trees* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY, 1926) and *River House* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY, 1929) are also important for understanding his Southern Agrarian views, as is his memoir *The Pavilion: Of People and Times Remembered, Of Stories and Places* (Scribner, New York, NY, 1951). Finally, much valuable information about him is contained in *Stark Young: A Life in the Arts: Letters 1900-1962*, a massive two-volume compilation edited by John Pilkington (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1975).

Cultural histories of the Southern Agrarian movement

Seven books are crucial to situating Southern Agrarianism within a larger social and cultural framework. The internal divisions between members of the original 12 Southern Agrarians are analysed in Richard Gray's *Writing the South: Ideas of an American Region* (Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 1986). To better understand the diverse competing currents of thought within southern intellectual circles and the relationship of Southern Agrarianism to them, Donald Joseph Singal's *The War Within: From Victoria to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919-1945* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1982) is vital. Especially useful is his discussion of the sociologist Howard W. Odum and the social-science approach to southern issues. Like Singal's book, Michael O'Brien's *The Idea of the American South, 1920-1941* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1979) is a compelling history of ideas that emphasizes the debates between southern intellectuals over the meaning of progress and tradition; he too devotes much space to Odum, but also includes individual chapters on lesser known

Southern Agrarians such as Frank Owsley and John Donald Wade. Robert H. Brinkmeyer Jr.'s *The Fourth Ghost: White Southern Writers and European Fascism, 1930-1950* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 2009) positions the social vision of Southern Agrarianism against the background of Europe's struggle between totalitarianism and democracy.

While Gray, Singal, O'Brien, and Brinkmeyer Jr. examine the contemporary context of Southern Agrarianism, Mark G. Malvasi's *The Unregenerate South: The Agrarian Thought of John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Donald Davidson* (Louisiana University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1997) not only explores the continuing influence of Southern Agrarianism, as manifested in the work of Richard M. Weaver and M.E. Bradford. Similarly, Paul V. Murphy's *The Rebuke of History: The Southern Agrarians and American Conservative Thought* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 2001) is a wide-ranging discussion of the place of Southern Agrarianism in the history of American intellectual debates and mid-twentieth-century conservatism, with analyses not only of the work of Weaver and Bradford, but also that of Eugene D. Genovese and Wendell Berry. Finally, Allan Carlson's *The New Agrarian Mind: The Movement toward Decentralist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, 2000) discusses numerous offshoots of Southern Agrarianism, which collectively may be identified as "new agrarianism." Like Murphy, Carlson includes Wendell Berry in his overview, but also discusses little-known figures such as Liberty Hyde Bailey; Ralph Borsodi; Louis Bromfield; and Troy Jesse Cauley, who published a practical treatise entitled *Agrarianism: A Program for Farmers* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1935) that garnered much praise from Donald Davidson as a sound economic analysis of the viability of agrarian life.

The legacy of the Southern Agrarians

Two collections of essays take stock of the relevancy of the ideas of Southern Agrarianism some 50 years after the publication of *I'll Take My Stand*, its founding document. Edited by William C. Havard and Walter Sullivan, *A Band of Prophets: The Vanderbilt Agrarians after Fifty Years* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA, 1982) offers an overall assessment of the extent to which Southern Agrarianism had been prescient with regard to contemporary social issues, such as the destructive tendencies of technology and cultural narcissism. Edited by Clyde N. Wilson and with an afterword by Andrew Lytle, *Why the South Will Survive: Fifteen Southerners Look at Their Region a Half Century after I'll Take My Stand* (University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1981) attempts to define the quintessential values that differentiate the southern states not so much from their northern neighbors as from the superficiality of popular culture.

The influence of the Southern Agrarians on later thinkers runs deep. Cleanth Brooks, a founder of the New Criticism literary movement, was one of John Crowe Ransom's students and a contributor to *Who Owns America?* For a thorough discussion of the influence of Southern Agrarian principles on his work, Mark Royden Winchell's biography *Cleanth Brooks and the Rise of Modern Criticism* (University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, VA, 1996) is useful. Richard M. Weaver, who taught at the University of Chicago, was also greatly affected by Southern Agrarianism. Among his many literary and philosophical writings, three works have particular relevance to Agrarianism: *The Southern Tradition at Bay: A History of Postbellum Thought* (reprinted by Regnery Gateway, Lanham, MD, 1989), which is dedicated to John Crowe Ransom; *The Southern Essays of Richard Weaver* (Liberty Press, Indianapolis, IN, 1987); and *Ideas Have Consequences* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1948). The evolution of Weaver's social and cultural ideas is described in Fred Douglas Young's biography *Richard M. Weaver, 1910-1963: A Life of the Mind* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO, 1995). M. E. Bradford, a student of Donald Davidson's at Vanderbilt, was also heavily influenced by Southern Agrarianism. Insight into his views can be gained from *Remembering Who We Are: Observations of a Southern Conservative* (University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1985) and *The Reactionary Imperative: Essays Literary and Political* (Sherwood Sugden & Co., Peru, IL, 1990), as well as *A Defender of Southern Conservatism: M.E. Bradford and His Achievements*, a collection of articles edited by Clyde N. Wilson (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO, 1999). The Marxist historian Eugene D. Genovese also deserves mention in surveying the legacy of the Southern Agrarians, particularly for his *The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1994). Finally, the radical ecologist Wendell Berry is a spiritual descendent of the Southern Agrarians who grounds his environmental philosophy in the writings of *I'll Take My Stand*. Especially relevant are *A Continuous Harmony: Essays Cultural and Agricultural* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1972); *The Unsettling of America* (North Point Press, San Francisco, CA, 1977); and *Gift of Good Land* (North Point Press, San Francisco, CA, 1981). A good compendium of Berry's thinking is contained in *The Art of the Commonplace: Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, edited and introduced by Norman Wirzba (Counterpoint, Berkeley, CA, 2002). Valuable critical commentary is available in Fritz Oehlschlaeger's *The Achievement of Wendell Berry: The Hard History of Love* (University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 2011) and Kimberly K. Smith's *Wendell Berry and The Agrarian Tradition: A Common Grace* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 2003).

Conclusion

The sources described in the above narrative bibliography of Southern Agrarianism provide a rich tapestry of material that would be useful for any researcher of early twenty-first-century protest movements who is interested in discovering new and original philosophical and socio-cultural approaches and contexts for the Tea Party and Occupy. By conceptualizing intriguing interdisciplinary approaches to current academic issues and questions – and then acting to develop collections that support those interdisciplinary approaches – academic librarians can become true research partners with doctoral students and established scholars by helping them to see their research topics in a different light and from different perspectives, which is the essence of creating an interdisciplinary mindset.

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