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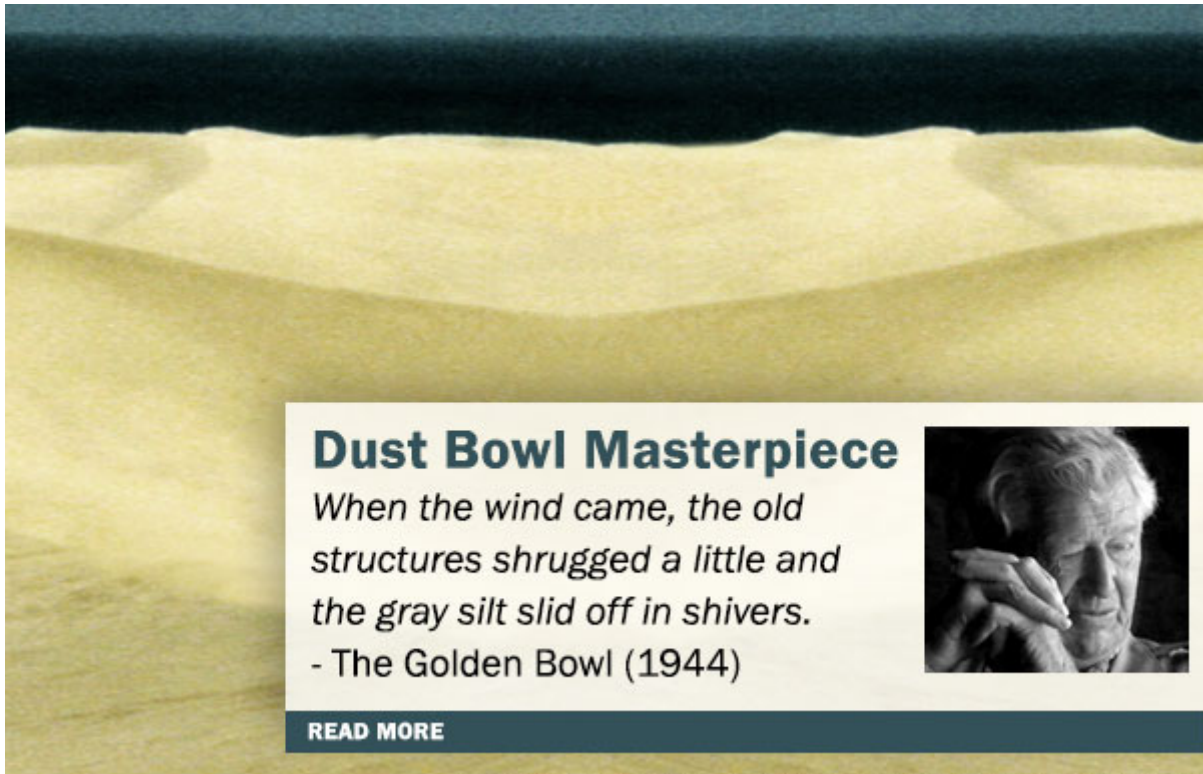
# From the Dust Bowl to Frederick Manfred's *The Golden Bowl*—A Journeyman's Masterpiece

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FREDERICK MANFRED PHOTO COURTESY OF GREGORY WINTER/BLUE 60 PICTURES

## From the Dust Bowl to Frederick Manfred's *The Golden Bowl*—A Journeyman's Masterpiece

By Randi Eldevik, Oklahoma State University

**T**he time and place of Frederick Manfred's birth - 1912, on a farm in a corner of northwestern Iowa close to the South Dakota and Minnesota borders - gave him several perspectives on American life, resulting in the creation of several kinds of fiction. Manfred's most celebrated novels, the five Buckskin Man tales, take place in the nineteenth century and have a wild west (mostly South Dakota) setting: they arose out of Manfred's awareness of the dramatic and tumultuous events that had occurred near his home during the hundred years before his birth. But Manfred's own childhood and youth in a settled agricultural community enabled him to depict, with a more somber palette, the subdued joys and struggles of twentieth-century midwestern farm life which he himself had directly experienced.

Manfred's agrarian novels, dubbed the Siouxland Saga after the place-name he coined for his own Iowan/Minnesotan/Dakotan/Nebraskan stretch of the Great Plains, have attracted less attention than his five wild west novels. In an overview of the Buckskin Man tales, critic Madison Jones proclaims three of them as Manfred's finest achievements; because of the heights of heroic adventure they reach, Jones draws a parallel between the Buckskin Man tales and Homer's epics.<sup>1</sup> But another parallel serves better to acknowledge the full range of what Manfred achieved: the parallel that can be drawn between his writing career and that of the ancient Roman author Virgil, whose most famous achievement occurred in the epic genre (*The Aeneid*) but who also, less famously, wrote agrarian poems (*The Georgics*). The

fierce nineteenth-century rivalries involving Native American warriors and white newcomers to the west form the subject-matter of America's epic,<sup>2</sup> and as such they captivate the imagination; yet, just as Virgil's *Georgics* turned aside from epic subject-matter to address another aspect of human experience - the tilling of the soil - so too do the volumes of the Siouxland Saga.

Akin to yet distinct from the Siouxland Saga is Manfred's first novel, *The Golden Bowl* (1944), set on a farm in South Dakota but peopled by characters who do not belong to the intertwined Engleking and Alfredson families with which the Siouxland Saga is concerned. Displaying both epic and georgic features, and manifesting a kinship to other literary milestones — chiefly Shakespeare's poetry and the Bible - in addition to Virgil's works, Manfred's journeyman novel stands out as a precocious masterpiece, the premier American novel of rural life during the Dust Bowl.

One of the features that make this novel so rewarding is the richness of intertextuality in it. Juxtaposition of the following quotations will reveal some of *The Golden Bowl's* most significant alignments with classic works of the past:

Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney sweepers, come to dust.

—*Cymbeline* IV.ii

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

—Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

Pa Thor shook his head, still pointing. "Son, when I look out a that winder there, I kin still see this land as it's been. They say it's a dust bowl now, an' maybe it is. But I can close my eyes and see the golden bowl it's been. There's been gold corn an' wheat an' hay an' buffalo grass in the fall, an' gold pheasants an' cows an' women, all gold. It's been full a gold. I can see all that. This land ain't empty fer me. It's the only land I know. It's been full a gold before an' it'll be full a gold again. I know."

--Frederick Manfred, *The Golden Bowl*<sup>3</sup>

If not for his publisher's objections, the title of Frederick Manfred's first novel would have been *The Golden Bowl Be Broken*. Were that the case, puzzled readers would not have been left wondering why it appears that the rugged plainsman Manfred, as antipathetic to Henry James as any American novelist could ever be, was alluding to James's well-known novel of upper-class adultery in *fin-de-siècle* London.<sup>4</sup> The longer title that Manfred preferred shows the allusion is not to James but to the Bible. The allusion speaks to the novel's central theme: the struggle for survival by midwestern farmers during the Dust Bowl era. Even with the shorter title, ambiguity vanishes when the farm owner, Pa Thor, uses the phrase "golden bowl" together with the phrase "dust bowl." In interviews, however, Manfred always specified Shakespeare and the Bible as literary influences of equal importance for him.<sup>5</sup> The meaningfulness of the imagery involving *gold* together with *dust* in both the title and the body of this novel is enriched by a consideration of how Shakespeare's words in *Cymbeline* reflect upon Manfred's endeavors.

Shakespeare's famous "Fear no more the heat o' th' sun" is a meditation on death, a funeral song that in part takes its inspiration from the words "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust" found in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Of course these words themselves derive from the Bible. The idea that the human body was formed from earth or dust, and therefore must return to dust when death occurs, is a biblical commonplace found in Ecclesiastes and in other books of the Old Testament; but in America in the 1930s, the environmental crisis known as the Dust Bowl reified what had previously been just a literary topos. The transformation of fertile soil to sterile dust was directly responsible for many deaths, both of people and of animals. In Ecclesiastes's imagery involving both *dust* and *gold*, just as in that of *Cymbeline*, and of Manfred's novel, one finds a contrast between the ugliness, evanescence, and worthlessness of dust on the one hand, and on the other hand the beauty, durability, and opulence of gold. This contrast poignantly addresses a concern that all three of these writers share — their melancholy sense of how fleeting and precarious human prosperity is.

Frequently in Shakespeare's poetry - especially in his sonnets - consolation for the inescapable fact of human mortality comes from the thought that an author's literary achievements may outlast him and thus, in a sense, immortalize him. Journalists may not expect their work to be remembered long, and Manfred started out as a journalist; but when he began publishing novels, like any other novelist of ambition he began writing for posterity. By choosing to keep in print three of Manfred's Buckskin Man novels - the same three that Madison Jones, with good reason, singled out for praise - the University of Nebraska Press has helped to immortalize Manfred as a novelist with a reputation for achievements in the wild west genre. Certainly Manfred was proud of those three (*Conquering Horse* [1959], *Lord Grizzly* [1952], *Scarlet Plume* [1964]) and of the other two Buckskin Man novels; *Lord Grizzly* in particular has garnered praise from critics, and dollars from the reading public, to a greater extent than anything else Manfred ever wrote. Decisions made not only by publishing companies but also by scholars, who tend to write articles analyzing the Buckskin Man tales in preference to Manfred's other novels, have resulted in a tenuous hold on life for the Siouxland Saga and for *The Golden Bowl*.

When assessing his own achievements, Manfred chose not to emphasize *The Golden Bowl*; instead, he gave pride of place to other novels he had written. Not long before his death, the octogenarian Manfred responded to an interviewer's question by naming two of his novels as his own favorites.<sup>6</sup> Confirming the truism that no author is the best judge of his own works, Manfred's choices were rather eccentric. One of them was *King of Spades* (1966), a Buckskin Man novel not among those currently kept in print by the University of Nebraska Press; neither critics nor readers ever warmed to it and, in a judgment with which most readers would concur, Madison Jones's overview of the Buckskin Man tales singles out *King of Spades* as a disappointment. Along with *King of Spades* Manfred mentioned the Siouxland Saga novel *Of Lizards and Angels* (1992), which to eyes other than Manfred's appears as the weakest volume in that series: a diffuse and rambling narrative, it displays little of the vivid authenticity that abounds in his other novels of midwestern farm life.

Manfred's most eminent admirer, Wallace Stegner, argues that all of Manfred's finest achievements occurred in the Buckskin Man novels, which Stegner treasures because they feature "authentic heroes," such as the nineteenth-century mountain man Hugh Glass, protagonist of *Lord Grizzly*, rather than mere "farm boys" in the midwest.<sup>7</sup> Without denigrating the Buckskin Man tales, and without disputing Stegner's assertion that authenticity and the depiction of heroism are qualities to be cherished in a novel, the present study contends that heroism can be found among twentieth-century midwestern farmers every bit as much as it can be found among nineteenth-century mountain men in the wild west; moreover, authenticity can most readily be achieved in novels that draw from an author's own life experiences. To attain insight into the historical ordeal of the wounded Hugh Glass, Manfred had to set

up an artificial experiment in which he crawled through brushy ground in the Minneapolis suburbs, dragging a travois. To attain insight into the life-and-death struggles of farmers in the Dust Bowl, Manfred simply had to journey throughout the midwest following his college graduation in the early 1930s. Jobless and almost penniless, Manfred actually had experiences similar to those of young Maury, the protagonist of *The Golden Bowl*.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1958 interview “West of the Mississippi,” Manfred distinguished between “short grass” literature and “tall grass” literature, adapting an idea from Walter Prescott Webb’s 1931 study *The Great Plains*.<sup>9</sup> Webb subdivides his section on literature into “Literature of the Frontier and the Cattle Kingdom” and “Literature of the Farm”; this distinction corresponds to the Greco-Roman distinction between epic and georgic. Webb asserts that “[t]here could be found in literature no greater contrast than that between the agricultural literature of the Prairie Plains and the nomadic literature of the Wild West. Here is a literature of *people*, of poverty, of unremitting toil, small reward, and ceaseless effort, the basis of stark realism” (470, original italics). Webb’s wild west frontier is a more exciting region, “a land where unusual things happen” (482). Manfred accepted Webb’s two categories of Great Plains literature but described them with more understanding of the farmer. As Manfred put it in his 1958 interview, “The ‘short grass’ man is the sodder, the sod-buster, the one that built the farm. He likes to go out in the field and stick his hand in the soil and lift it up and love it and smell it and to him that’s everything. The high plains guy sits on a horse and rides over it, doesn’t want to touch it at all.” Some critics, including Webb writing thirteen years before the publication of Manfred’s first novel and Stegner writing after it, have expressed partiality for the literature of the long grass. Those who read Manfred without a bias for the epic wild west have been most successful describing the accomplishment of *The Golden Bowl*.

In the “Midwest” section of *A Literary History of the American West*, Robert C. Wright describes *The Golden Bowl* as “a compact gem of a novel.”<sup>10</sup> Compact it certainly is, amounting to only 226 pages in the 1944 Grosset & Dunlap edition. This may be a virtue; though some of Manfred’s longer novels affirm his ability to extend a narrative successfully over hundreds of pages and many years of a protagonist’s life, other long novels by Manfred begin with a burst of energy that quickly fades, leaving the reader becalmed till the final page. *The Green Earth* (1977), a massive entry in the Siouland Saga, is well sustained from the first page to the last and deserves to be ranked among Manfred’s finest novels, but *Of Lizards and Angels*, in which some of the same Engleking and Alfredson characters appear, exemplifies the pitfalls of excessive length. In popular parlance “epic” is sometimes used as a synonym for “sprawling,” but it should not be. Notwithstanding the brevity of *The Golden Bowl*, this novel possesses epic qualities; in the most recent critical reassessment to date, Diane Dufva Quantic rightly calls *The Golden Bowl* “Manfred’s epic novel” and “by far the best portrait of the Great Plains Dust Bowl.”<sup>11</sup>

For many readers, the work of literature that first comes to mind in connection with the Great Plains Dust Bowl is Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*. But Quantic, by far the most discerning critic among those who have written about *The Golden Bowl*, makes it clear that she is not disregarding Steinbeck’s achievement; rather, she argues, *The Golden Bowl* and *The Grapes of Wrath* belong in different categories:

Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* is often cited as the classic Dust Bowl novel, but while the Joads’ problems originate with the failure of the land, Steinbeck’s theme is the displacement of the Depression, not the struggle to preserve life on the dry land itself. Only a few Great Plains novels

focus on the effects of the Dust Bowl. Of these, Frederick Manfred's *The Golden Bowl* is by far the best.<sup>12</sup>

Granted that the "struggle to preserve life" through agricultural toil involves, by its very nature, subject matter more bleak and dreary than the sensationalistic perils found in wild west fiction - desperadoes, wild animals, altercations between Indian warriors and the U.S. Cavalry - still, there is an inherent fascination in Manfred's vivid presentation of the tenacity, stamina, and cunning that are required of Maury and the Thor family. Drought and soil erosion could bring about their deaths just as certainly as, though less flamboyantly than, the perils characteristic of the western genre could.

Contemplating the contrast between tall grass and short grass literature in conjunction with *The Golden Bowl*, even readers with a proclivity for epic grandeur may find themselves sympathizing with the American horticulturalist Liberty Hyde Bailey, who answered the question "Can agriculture function in literature?" by stating, "The action in rural life may not be swift and emotion may be suppressed; but some day we shall tire of violence in literature."<sup>13</sup> Concomitantly, Webb's excitement about the wild west may appear rather childish, as is the flippancy of Webb's contemporary Weare Holbrook, an Iowa native transplanted to New York, who had a modest career writing for magazines: "The chief characteristic of the mass of fiction emanating from the central States is its solid sincerity. It is honest, it is earnest, - and it is rather tiresome. The reader feels impelled to cry, 'How true!' and again, 'How dull!'"<sup>14</sup> Even in 1924 when this accusation of dullness was made, its validity was doubtful; twenty years later, such an accusation would most certainly be unjustified. By then the Dust Bowl had occurred, maximizing the urgency of midwestern farmers' struggles, and with the 1944 publication of *The Golden Bowl* there came a portrayal of those struggles constituting a narrative as poignant and gripping as any ever written. A closer look at some passages from this novel will demonstrate its powerful impact.

Some, but not all, of *The Golden Bowl's* episodes involve scenes of violent crisis that anticipate those of the Buckskin Man tales and exemplify the overlap that can sometimes occur between the subject matter of short grass literature and tall grass literature - an overlap not of violent confrontations between human enemies but, rather, of confrontations between a human protagonist and menacing forces of nature. A close encounter with a rattlesnake occurs at one point in *The Golden Bowl*, and at another point Manfred depicts, with excruciating suspense, a destructive tornado approaching the Thor farm instead of the gentle rain for which the family has been longing. In scenes such as these, physical sensations are intensely realized. In a comment based on the Buckskin Man tales but equally applicable to *The Golden Bowl*, Madison Jones singles out as Manfred's greatest strengths "the acuteness of his eye for detail and his gift for portraying the eloquence of purely sensuous experience." Another critic, James D. Bratt, surveys Manfred's fiction more broadly and comes to a similar conclusion, singling out for praise Manfred's vivid descriptions of natural phenomena: "The glory of Manfred's naturalism lies not in its concepts but in its total aesthetic realization. Through a thousand details - rock formations, pebbles in a stream, acres of wildflowers under the noon sun, signs of cloud, bird, wind and frost - his novels attain an aura of utter physicality."<sup>15</sup> To balance out his emphasis on Manfred's descriptions of non-human nature, Bratt rightly adds, "His unexcelled descriptive powers render moments and milieus unforgettable: a lowering bank of clouds, an enveloping snowstorm, a 1930s industrial slum, the vagabond's endless highway" (171). In fact humanity is always involved, for the gaze that beholds earth and sky in Manfred's novels is always a human gaze.

The impact of nature on humankind, the impact of human artifice on the natural environment, and human beings' impact upon one another - all these are of equal concern to Manfred. The Dust Bowl, of course, involved all three at once, for it arose from natural phenomena and additionally from the effect

of human settlers' unwise practices when tilling the Great Plains. A short passage from the final chapter of *The Golden Bowl*, in which Maury must struggle through a dust storm to get from the Thors' house to their barn, illustrates Manfred's descriptive talent at its most powerful - and its most meaningful, for this passage strikes at the heart of Manfred's concerns with the interaction of humans and their environment:

Two wires led from the side of the house to the barn, and he went in search of them. He found the wires. He followed them, bucking ahead, closing his eyes to mere slits, peering down at the earth. He could not face the wind directly. He had the feeling that he was walking along the floor of an ocean full of black ink. The wild prairie was an inky ocean roiled by a tempest. . . . Long black veils coiled and slithered above him. (214)

Is Manfred equally adept at handling the interactions of human characters with one another, though? His emphasis on the erotic aspects of human relationships has caused discomfort to some critics, Bratt among them. At times Manfred seems to promulgate a view of male/female couplings that is antiquated in its brutality and coarseness; his little-known 1956 novel *Morning Red* (part of the Siouland Saga, though it deals with Sioulanders transplanted to an urban area) may be the worst offender in this regard. But it can be argued that the objectionable aspects of *Morning Red* are offset by Manfred's deft and insightful portrayal of female protagonists in novels such as *Scarlet Plume* and *The Green Earth*. As for *The Golden Bowl*, its male protagonist, Maury, certainly wrongs Kirsten Thor when he seduces her and then temporarily leaves her. But he attempts to make amends when he returns to the Thor farm and finds Kirsten pregnant. Maury is not an idealized protagonist, but rather a flawed protagonist. As Manfred himself acknowledges in interviews (and in the preface to *The Green Earth*, where he addresses readers' responses to *The Golden Bowl*), he is not holding up Maury as a role model in the seduction scene or in the parts of the novel concerned with Maury's attempts to evade his responsibilities. In response to an interviewer's question about similarities and differences between Manfred himself and the fictional character Maury, the novelist stated, "I wouldn't have left Kirsten there by the crick. And I would have felt guilty about what Maury did with her by the crick. Except that later on maybe where I come in again is when he felt bad about it, so he went back to her."<sup>16</sup> Though Manfred's handling of male/female relationships is problematic in some of his novels, the magnitude of the problem has been overstated.

In many Manfred novels — certainly in *The Golden Bowl* — episodes of human interaction are among the most compelling and memorable of all. The scene in which Maury outlines his plan to save the farm, and thereby save the Thors' lives, stands out unforgettably:

"...Actually, I don't have much hope fer rain. So, the corn an' the hay an' the grain is doomed. But you got some pigs there, seven real little jiggers, an' it's them I'm thinkin' of. If you kin keep them alive, there's hope. Now, how much grain you got?"

"Well, not enough fer all the animals."

"I thought so. Well, you could sell the sow fer grain." He paused. "But, what I'm really gettin' at is the greens."

"Greens?"

“Yeh. Animals, and humans too, need greens. An’ I thought that if you was to plant a patch a greens, some radishes, an’ lettuce, or some such, an’ you’d water it, an’ keep it goin’, why, you could keep the pigs healthy. An’, a course, yourselves too.” (116-117)

This conversation, occurring halfway through the novel, offers a new glimmer of hope to the despairing Thor family. The hundred-plus pages of characterization and plot development that Manfred has lavished upon Maury and the Thors up to this point in the novel have a cumulative effect that no summary can adequately convey; suffice it to say that by the novel’s halfway point, any reader’s human sympathies for the foundering Thors will have become engaged as passionately as those of Virgil’s readers for the beleaguered Trojans at that moment in *The Aeneid* (Book 2) when their struggle to survive against the attacking Achaians has reached its ultimate crisis. In this connection it is worth remembering that the ancient Romans, who regarded Mars as their patron deity, revered him as lord of agriculture in addition to war.<sup>17</sup> In both his epic and his georgic poetry, Virgil functioned as the spokesman for a people who acknowledged that the warrior and the farmer were complementary — both equally essential to Rome’s survival. The two domains of Mars, dealt with separately in various works by Manfred, converge in *The Golden Bowl* as they do in few other novels.

Among American critics concerned with trans-Mississippi literature, a long-standing preference for wild west subject-matter — exemplified by Webb and Stegner, and persisting in subsequent generations as well — may account for neglect of Manfred’s *The Golden Bowl*. Few are the critics who have actually taken as their central concern what Roy W. Meyer calls “The Middle Western Farm Novel in the Twentieth Century.” His book of that title, though almost fifty years old, is to date the most thorough treatment of this topic; unfortunately Meyer gives short shrift to *The Golden Bowl*. John T. Flanagan’s article “The Middle Western Farm Novel” was published two years before *The Golden Bowl*, but nonetheless points to the place that *The Golden Bowl* rightfully ought to occupy in American literature: “Eventually a great farm novel is bound to appear . . . For man, despite refinements, and adjustments, remains a creature of earth, and no human being is closer to the elements, to nature, than the farmer. And when that book appears it will be the natural and logical culmination of a long series of rural fictions.”<sup>18</sup> That book — Manfred’s *The Golden Bowl* — appeared in 1944. It has never been surpassed; it should not be forgotten.

## Notes

1. Madison Jones, “Frederick Manfred — Parallels with Homer,” *New York Times Review of Books* 16 February 1975, n.p. In this connection it ought to be noted that Anthony Arthur’s article “Manfred, Neihardt and Hugh Glass: Variations on an American Epic,” in *Where the West Begins: Essays on Middle Border and Siouland Writing*, ed. Arthur Huseboe (Sioux Falls: Center for Western Studies, 1978), 99-109, compares the protagonist of *Lord Grizzly* to Odysseus.
2. Richard Waswo’s study *The Founding Legend of Western Civilization: From Virgil to Vietnam* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1997) shows how Virgil’s vision of westward expansion in *The Aeneid* has provided a model for numerous imperial and colonial enterprises, including America’s, over the last two millennia.
3. Feike Feikema, *The Golden Bowl* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1944), 131-32. The first edition has long been out of print, and the twenty-fifth anniversary edition published by the University of Dakota Press in 1969 is also out of print, as is the novel’s most recent reprinting in 1992 by South Dakota Humanities. Feike Feikema, the name given at birth to this novelist by his Frisian immigrant parents, was



the name he used for his novels up till age 40. With *Lord Grizzly* in 1952, he began using the pen name "Frederick Manfred," the name by which he is customarily known; the 1992 reprint of *The Golden Bowl* displays the name "Frederick Manfred" on the cover. This article will refer to the novelist as "Manfred" throughout.

4. Henry James's *The Golden Bowl* was published in 1904.

5. Frederick Manfred, "West of the Mississippi: An Interview with Frederick Manfred," *Duke's Mixture*, by Frederick Manfred (Sioux Falls, SD: Center for Western Studies, 1994), 45-67. Under "Acknowledgements" on page 269 of *Duke's Mixture* occurs a statement that the interview originally appeared in the periodical *Critique* in 1958; however, a more accurate citation would have been *Critique* 2 (1959): 35-56. At one point in the interview, Manfred mentions Shakespeare along with the Bible and Chaucer as influences; at another point he lists his four greatest influences as the Bible, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Walt Whitman. Manfred stated that the copy of the complete works of Shakespeare he was given as a teenager accompanied him throughout all his travels during the Depression.

6. "A Conversation with Frederick Manfred," *Duke's Mixture*, 228-51.

7. Wallace Stegner, "Introduction," *Conversations with Frederick Manfred*, moderated by John R. Milton (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1974), cxii. John R. Milton, in *The Novel of the American West* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1980), 188, concurs with Stegner: "*Lord Grizzly* fulfills its promise, but I am not sure that the others [Manfred's other novels] do."

8. For the ways in which Manfred's own experiences in the 1930s informed *The Golden Bowl*, see *The Selected Letters of Frederick Manfred: 1932-1954* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1988), and Nancy Owen Nelson, "'Sweet Dakota Land': The Manfred Letters and the Inception of *The Golden Bowl*," *South Dakota Review* 30 (Spring 1992): 61-70.

9. (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1931), 453-84. The statement in which Manfred elaborates on Webb's ideas occurs in *Duke's Mixture*, 53.

10. Ed. J. Golden Taylor (Fort Worth: Texas Christian Univ. Press, 1987), 797.

11. Quantic, "The Midwest and the Great Plains," *Updating the Literary West*, ed. Thomas J. Lyon and Max Westbrook (Fort Worth: Texas Christian Univ. Press, 1997), 643.

12. Quantic, "Frederick Manfred's *The Golden Bowl*: Myth and Reality in the Dust Bowl," *Western American Literature* 25 (Winter 1991): 298-309. A doctoral dissertation offering a comparative study of these two novels, "John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Frederick Manfred's *The Golden Bowl*" by George Henry Spies (Ball State Univ., 1973), is facile; it fails to draw the useful distinctions that Quantic contributes.

13. L.H. Bailey, "Can Agriculture Function in Literature?" *The Midland* 4 (May-June 1918), 105.

14. Holbrook, "The Corn Belt Renaissance," *Forum* 72 (July 1924): 118.

15. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America: A History of a Conservative Subculture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 174. Though Bratt's field is religious studies, his literary criticism is quite perceptive.

16. "A Conversation with Frederick Manfred," *Duke's Mixture*, 235.

17. See Mary Beard, *Religions of Rome*, Vol. I (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 15-16.

18. Flanagan, "The Middle Western Farm Novel," *Minnesota History* 23 (June 1942): 125.

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