two-volume work gives every evidence of being, like Wayne F. Cooper’s *Claude McKay*, a definitive study of its subject. Together, the two biographies represent a major new stage in the evolution of Black American literary scholarship.

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Several years before her death in 1985, Sherwood Anderson’s widow Eleanor gave Hilbert Campbell permission to edit the diaries that Anderson kept from 1 January 1936 until 28 February 1941, just five days before his death. During these years Anderson made his home in Marion, Virginia, but he spent the summers on his nearby farm Ripshin and the winters either in New York City or vacationing in the South. Whether at home or traveling, he was able to carry with him his small desk diaries, now part of the Sherwood Anderson papers housed at the Newberry Library in Chicago. In 1978 Campbell began the laborious work of editing these diaries, inaccessible hitherto not only because of Anderson’s well-nigh indecipherable handwriting but also because of the monumental editorial task of annotating Anderson’s references to persons, literary works, places, and events.

In preparation for writing this review, I visited the Newberry Library and was able to study the six imitation-leather desk diaries which Campbell accurately describes in his preface. For over five years and on all but three days, Anderson filled the page set aside for that day with his large scrawl, except when he was ill and scribbled that fact in a few words. He always wrote with a fountain pen in blue ink.

With the publication of these diaries Campbell provides an almost daily account of Anderson’s activities, his family and friends, his working habits, his accomplishments and frustrations, during the last five years of his life. For example, commenting on both family and friends, Anderson writes from New York on 8 December 1938: “With E and Mary [Emmett] to Stieglitz and O’Keeffe to dine. Stieglitz irritable—Georgia charming” (209). We also see him follow with great interest both the rising career of Joe Louis and, avid New Deal Democrat that he was, the presidential campaigns of 1936 and 1940. We hear him comment with dismay on the outbreak of World War II in Europe and its repercussions in the United States. From Marion he writes on 16 October 1940: “Cold grey fall day and the street full of young men registering for the draft. It was like a return to World War days. They try to make a joke of it but do not succeed very well. Some 1300 registering from this town” (324).

We read of his depressions and frustrations with his own writing. The autumn of 1938 seems to have been an especially bad time. He writes from Ripshin on 19 September: “At home, at work... It has turned cold, with a high cold wind. I have been depressed and unhappy about work.” Then on 22 September he adds:
“Sunk deeply into the blues—the black dog constantly on my back, hating the summer’s end, feeling my own inefficiency. It seems to me that I have done nothing” (197). But on 29 October, writing from New York, he can say: “I have begun to come out of my bad time, one of the worst I was ever in” (202).

Even though the best of Anderson’s creative work was not done during these years, scattered throughout the diaries are glimpses of his expressive prose. His entry for 23 November 1936 is reminiscent of “The Book of the Grotesque” in Winesburg: “Had again night of faces. In semi-conscious state they kept coming—all women, all sad, all hurt. The faces, one after another, seemed to draw very slowly nearer and nearer” (65). Writing from Marion on Christmas Day in the same year, he describes an afternoon walk: “Afterwards to the top of Walker Mountain—. . . . The view strange and misty—the world of hills like a woman’s skirt, thrown on the floor” (72). In the passages describing the death and funeral of his mother-in-law Laura Lu Copenhaver, Anderson betrays both his deep feelings and his vivid imagination. On 19 December 1940, the day after she died, he comments: “The house at Marion stunned, the center of all life here gone,” and then on 22 December he explains how he copes with the sorrow of the funeral itself: “During the whole performance I played an imagined game of croquet with Mother” (336).

In transcribing the text of the diaries, Campbell makes several editorial decisions, all explained in his preface. For example, he decides to sacrifice bibliographical “purity” for “readability.” He silently corrects Anderson’s misspellings, and he modifies Anderson’s idiosyncratic punctuation when, in his opinion, “clarity and coherence” warranted these changes. In the few places where even Campbell is baffled by Anderson’s difficult handwriting, he either suggests a possible reading, enclosing the word in brackets followed by a question mark, or, for a word or name he cannot decipher at all, he simply uses a bracketed question mark. When Anderson omits a first or last name, if Campbell thinks that the full name will enhance understanding, he includes it in brackets. Also for clarity, he sometimes spells out, without comment, the names of persons whom Anderson only indicated by initials. By following these editorial policies, Campbell has provided us with a highly readable and, at the same time, scholarly edition of the diaries.

Campbell also explains in the preface that he has omitted “a very small amount of material . . . slight omissions (a total of 146 words altogether).” Campbell is very careful, however, to annotate each omission. In every case, I think that Campbell made the correct decision. The omitted passages are all short, only a matter of a few words each time, and usually concern members of Anderson’s family or very close friends. Campbell omits the passages because, as he explains, they “might prove painful or embarrassing to living persons” and also because these omissions “in no way inhibit the continuity or usefulness of the diary” (x).

In addition to preparing a readable text for publication, Campbell also meticulously accomplishes the task of researching, verifying, and annotating all of Anderson’s references. I found Campbell’s notes (349–86) to be invaluable, adding to both the usefulness and interest of the book. I feel that he achieves the
right balance; he neither tells us things that we already know nor leaves us without the precise information that we need or desire.

Missing from Campbell’s notes, however, are references to the traces of Eleanor Anderson’s work in the diaries. For example, pinned with a single straight pin to the page for Monday, 4 May 1936, is a small piece of paper, two by three inches, now turning brown. In Eleanor’s handwriting there is the message: “Look up letter to mother.” We know that Eleanor, in the later years of Sherwood’s life, often made copies and then filed his letters. For example, Sherwood’s entry for 28 December 1936 states: “Eleanor busy with filing letters” (74). A few times, also, Eleanor’s hand writes a word that Anderson has scribbled illegibly or has misspelled. In other words, it is clear that from time to time, either before or after Sherwood’s death, Eleanor attempted to elucidate parts of the diaries.

A notable example of Eleanor’s changing a word written by Sherwood occurs in the entry on the page for 4 February 1937. Sherwood almost always indicates the place where he is at the time of writing, and, in the entry for 4 February, he writes “Marion.” In Eleanor’s hand “Marion” is crossed out and “Corpus” written in, and it is clear from the surrounding entries that from 21 January to 5 March 1937, Sherwood and Eleanor were in Corpus Christi, Texas.

For several reasons the entry that fills the space for 4 February 1937 is very puzzling. Campbell includes this date along with 3 February 1936 and 1 December 1938 as the only three days in more than five years that Sherwood did not write in his diary. Campbell is correct in saying that the pages for 3 February 1936, and 1 December 1938 are blank, but the page for 4 February 1937, is filled. It seems to me, however, that what Anderson wrote on this page does not fit in with his other entries from Corpus Christi in 1937. I surmise, along with Campbell, that Anderson did leave the page blank that day. Later, however, he obviously filled it in.

My reasons for assuming that what is written on the page for 4 February 1937 was not written that day are several. First, the ink used is a lighter shade of blue than the ink on the surrounding pages. Second, the tone of the entry is not in keeping with the tone of the other entries. Sherwood has been complaining about the cold, rainy weather in Corpus Christi and the fact that both he and Eleanor have been ill, but on this page he speaks about “a day of spring showers” and goes on to say that a walk he took with Eleanor and his brother-in-law Randolph Copenhaver “was very lovely, the green coming everywhere.” The last and most convincing argument that the comments are not, in fact, referring to 4 February 1937 is the mention of Randolph Copenhaver. Randolph was not with Eleanor and Sherwood on their trip to the Southwest in the winter of 1937. It seems to me that at some other time, when Randolph was in Marion in the spring, Anderson used this hitherto blank page to record the day. Even though I believe that Campbell is correct in saying that 4 February 1937, along with the other two, were days on which Sherwood did not write in his diary, I would have liked to have heard his explanation of the entry on that page.

I was also slightly disappointed in the index. I would have found it more useful if Campbell had indexed places and titles, as well as persons. The only titles
indexed are of Anderson’s works. Furthermore, when spot checking references, I found the list of persons incomplete. For example, the index does not list Wallis Simpson, even though in his entry for 2 December 1936, Anderson refers to a dream he had of her and King Edward VIII, and in the entry for 10 December comments on Edward’s abdication (67, 69).

I was not disappointed, however, in Campbell’s choice of pictures, all new to me. I found especially appropriate the haunting view of Sherwood walking down the road at Ripshin, which serves as the frontispiece. I was delighted, too, that Campbell included a photostat of a page from the diaries. Reproduced on page 139, the entry for 7 November 1937, speaks about a bad burn suffered by Bill Faulkner—spelled without the “u”—and gives us a good indication of Campbell’s challenges in editing the diaries.

All in all, in his edition of Anderson’s diaries Campbell succeeds commendably in giving us both an accurate and readable text and a thorough commentary on the people and events that filled the last years of Anderson’s life. Not only Anderson aficionados but also all serious students of American literature and certainly all libraries should welcome the publication of this valuable contribution to the literary record left us by Sherwood Anderson.

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With this selection from the correspondence of the man he describes “in the best sense of an old-fashioned word” as the “leading dilettante” of the first part of the twentieth century (vii), Bruce Kellner continues a project in cultural history begun unwittingly in 1951 when his mail order to Banyan Press for a book by Gertrude Stein brought not just his requested volume but also the offer of a friendship by mail, if only the young man would respond to an extraordinarily kind, but nevertheless characteristic, note from the octogenarian who styled himself Stein’s “literary executor” (x). Technically Carl Van Vechten was charged with the responsibility to edit Stein’s unpublished manuscripts rather than with oversight of her literary estate, but if he usurped a title he had justification in the fact that for years he had conducted a devoted exchange with Stein and her companion Alice B. Toklas. There developed an intimacy of letters and personal visits that put him in position to help promote and later to sustain her reputation with all who would attend his remarks, including the young sailor who expressed his curiosity about her writings from Korea on the other side of the world. Evidently that impulse to facilitate a literary connection led Van Vechten to reach out to Kellner and led him, also, to invite the future scholar into a line of acquaintance snaking back to the beginnings of literary modernism.

Kellner has made a good deal of this gift. At least as early as 1961 he went to work, with his friend’s aid and approval, on Carl Van Vechten and the Irreverent