

much earlier. Janney's impressively researched and comprehensive book, spanning more than seven decades, indicates that Civil War memory will continue to be a rich and contested field of study for many years to come.

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### *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities: A Geography of Gilded Age American Literature*

By Mark Storey

(New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. viii, 200. Notes, works cited, index. \$75.00.)

When Caroline Meeber steps onto the train station platform in Chicago at the beginning of Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, readers are clearly meant to understand that she is taking a step forward—in space, but also in time. True, Dreiser's novel then goes on to equivocate for more than five hundred pages over the question of whether moving forward necessarily constitutes a move for the better. But there is never really any doubt about what Carrie's initial journey from small-town Wisconsin to the heart of the Windy City is intended to represent. Put simply, Carrie's arrival in Chicago symbolizes her arrival at the doorstep of American modernity.

Such grand metaphorical gestures served Dreiser and a number of his contemporaries extraordinarily well. Not only do we continue to read their books today, we cite them as exemplars of literary “realism” precisely because we see in “urban” novels like *Sister*

*Carrie* the kind of dark and disenchanting world that Weberian theorists of modernity promised we would. But as Mark Storey rightly notes in *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities*, modernity touched virtually everything about American life during the Gilded Age—including the pages of “rural fiction,” a rich and yet largely unappreciated genre of writing that Storey persuasively argues was anything but provincial in its character or concerns.

On the contrary, Storey finds in the pages of American late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural fiction many of the same thematic preoccupations typically associated with the most avowedly metropolitan of Gilded Age novels. He simply finds them off the beaten path: on the train as it speeds across the rolling countryside; at the circus; on the road with a country doctor; amidst the lynch mob; even in the middle of nowhere, if you take Storey's thoughtful recon-

sideration of American utopianism at its enigmatic word.

On some level, the persuasiveness of Storey's argument depends on his scrupulously close reading: his eye catches everything, down to the mechanical gait of a plow horse laboring under the combined metaphorical weight of both garden-variety pastoralism and incipient industrial capitalism. But the book also functions as well as it does because of Storey's innovative and unexpected take on the subject of American modernity, an approach that simultaneously challenges and corroborates much of what we already claim to know. On one hand, it is hardly obvious that novels about late nineteenth-century rural and small-town life would prove to be "a vital entry point to the themes, concerns, currents, and transformations of urban modernity," as Storey persuasively demonstrates (p. 170). But then again, how could any artifact from the Gilded Age have remained innocent of modernity? The answer is that none did, and *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities* demonstrates this beautifully.

Readers with a particular interest in Indiana history will appreciate Storey's thoughtful engagement with a number of Hoosier authors, including Edward Eggleston, Booth Tarkington, and Maurice Thompson, all of whom receive far less attention from serious critics than they deserve. But even readers who come to his book with a specific agenda will admire the sheer number of American authors Storey is able to draw together by way of his adroit analysis. In sum, *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities* is a smart book, and one that is argued with an uncommon degree of care and sensitivity—a decidedly modern reconsideration of a misunderstood body of literature that has remained at the periphery of debates about American modernity.

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### *Ida McKinley: The Turn-of-the-Century First Lady through War, Assassination, and Secret Disability*

By Carl Sferrazza Anthony

(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2013. Pp. 358. Notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00.)

Comparative analyses of First Ladies routinely dismiss the influence of Ida Saxton McKinley (1847-1907), portraying her as inconsequential during

her husband William McKinley's tenure as president from 1897 until his assassination in 1901. While mystery shrouded her medical condition, the