

the persistence of the progressive mind: the case of bernard devoto

alfred haworth jones

It is generally conceded that the major thrust of progressivism as an intellectual—not to mention political—movement was dissipated by American involvement in the First World War. That popular assumption provides the basis for the common stereotype of the intellectuals' odyssey during the decades following the armistice. As generally drawn, this version sees the intellectual moving from alienation and expatriation during the twenties to radicalism and commitment during the thirties; then to despair and self-castigation during the forties and finally to reconciliation and affirmation during the fifties.¹

Accordingly, when three writers issued harsh wartime indictments of the American literature of the interwar years, it only seemed that a generation of intellectuals was chastizing itself. The first of the outbursts, *The Irresponsibles* (1940), bore the name of the poet Archibald MacLeish who had himself taken refuge from America in Paris during the twenties. The critic Van Wyck Brooks, author of the second, *The Opinions of Oliver Allston* (1941), had in many ways provided the rationale if not the impetus for such expatriation with his earlier critiques of American culture. But Bernard DeVoto's 1944 polemic, *The Literary Fallacy*—like the mind and stance of the man—represented something altogether different from the preceding works, as the author himself insisted.

Indeed, MacLeish with his call for moral involvement, and Brooks with his plea for affirmation, whatever the dimensions of their own recantations, retained more in common with the objects of their attack than with DeVoto. His assault differed from the others in three fundamental respects. While the works of MacLeish and Brooks represented in effect confessions of error, *The Literary Fallacy* radiated the opposing spirit of self-righteous certitude. DeVoto had maintained faith with America during the period when other writers voiced and often acted

upon their disenchantment. Now he meant to insure that the dissenters received their just desserts, which partly explains the tone of moral outrage that colored his work.

Second, it had not required the fury of fascist aggression abroad to galvanize DeVoto into action. The author of *The Literary Fallacy* had harbored—and also expressed—profound reservations about the mind of his “literary generation” for years before the Second World War broke out.²

Finally, in rebuking the alienated writers of the inter-war years, DeVoto was not, like MacLeish and Brooks, calling for a literature of blind affirmation toward either the national past or present. Indeed, he came down hardest on such writers’ very ignorance—they knew not whereof they wrote. “[W]hat truly was bankrupt was not American civilization,” he declared, “but the literary way of thinking about it.”³

If the force of DeVoto’s argument in 1944 drove in the opposite direction from that of Brooks, MacLeish and their colleagues, then perhaps he differed from them in other significant respects. Furthermore, the possibility that several writers shared his views suggests that the common conception of American intellectual history during the interwar years will not hold. Finally, a closer look at DeVoto’s career and indictment reveals that simplistic notions about the demise of the progressive mentality must be revised. In order to understand DeVoto and his times, as well as to measure the persistence of progressivism in this instance at least, it is necessary to consider his case in some detail.

DeVoto’s opposing view rested upon a body of assumptions that can only be called “progressive.”⁴ The terms of the American political debate had been set in the reform period of the first years of the twentieth century when the progressives came forth with their doctrines of freedom and purposeful change that contrasted with the mechanistic determinism of both conservatives and radicals. Although both the right and left might modify their views with the passage of time, the middle ground would remain distinctly progressive and fundamentally the same.

By the time DeVoto came to maturity, however, progressivism had drifted from the mainstream to the periphery and its exponents had retreated from programmatic reform to piecemeal criticism. Furthermore, the progressive ranks, undeniably thinned, had lost their appearance of cohesiveness. Like the older progressive generation, DeVoto found himself something of an outsider during the interwar years and an embattled one at that. But as with many others he maintained his equilibrium, perhaps out of some vague sense that his time would come. The Depression launched a new reform era, but like most of the older progressives, DeVoto was never fully reconciled to the New Deal.⁵ It is ironic, finally, that the Second World War in part fulfilled for him the hopes that the First had shattered for others. The wartime experience

provided the justification for his progressive faith in democracy and the excuse for his indignant outburst in *The Literary Fallacy*.

Bernard DeVoto's progressivism included an especially strong draught of nationalism in the older, more generous sense of the term. Among other factors, his family background doubtless contributed to the making of a self-conscious American. Born of a Roman Catholic father and a Mormon mother, he grew up a renegade from both traditions.⁶ Instead, DeVoto embraced a secular religion—a passionate commitment to his native land. Sometimes this attitude manifested itself in a belligerent insularity. But often the new faith was expressed in an identification with the traditional American democratic tenets. Above all, it was devoid of dogma: DeVoto possessed a grave distrust of utopian finalities and gospel panaceas. He called himself “a pluralist, a relativist, an empiricist.”⁷ Experience and common sense were his guides; he readily embraced the concrete inquiries of historians and scientists, and consciously shunned the abstractions of metaphysicians and aesthetes. This very tendency made him an ardent champion of an America which could not be encompassed in formula or defined by absolutes. “Many men are confident that they can sum up a nation and a people in one manuscript page,” he wrote, “but I must refuse to try.”⁸

Bernard DeVoto grew up in the Great Salt Lake basin during the heady days of western progressivism. Like many another ambitious young man from the Rocky Mountain region, he went East to college. During his junior year at Harvard, on the very day the United States entered the First World War, DeVoto withdrew from college and lied about his age in order to enlist for military service. His reaction to the experience hardly compared with that of the “lost generation.” The only disappointments came when he was not shipped overseas and, perhaps, when he returned to Harvard “both too old and too broke to go to medical school” as he had planned.⁹ Graduated in 1920 when some young Americans were turning their backs on their native land, he set out in the opposite direction. “Heading West Again” he entitled an unpublished poem. Two years later, he quit an Idaho ranch to accept an English instructorship at Northwestern University. DeVoto was moving—in the classic pattern of American writers—from West to East.

The following years, although typical enough for a young writer living in the twenties, had an impact far different from the popular stereotype. College teaching represented for DeVoto little more than a means of economic support. What mattered was his writing—fiction and essays alike. In 1927, after he had discovered that a handful of slick “pot boilers” a year—romances tailored for *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Redbook*—could provide a comparable livelihood, DeVoto resigned from Northwestern and moved farther east to Cambridge. The very month he returned, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts executed Sacco and Vanzetti. Although convinced of their innocence, DeVoto would not

allow the tragedy of the two Italian immigrants to destroy his equilibrium. "I was unable to feel surprise at the miscarriage of justice—unable to recall any system of society that had prevented it or to imagine any that would prevent it."¹⁰

An on-going consciousness of the events of his time, as well as a determination to keep them in balanced perspective, often through the use of historical analogy, provided the continuity for what were years of financial struggle for DeVoto. As the Depression closed in he responded, typically, with a level head. "Panic possessed America, but New England wasn't quite so scared," he reported, purposely invoking the region as a metaphor for himself. Through the eventful and unnerving years of the locust, DeVoto worked steadily and productively, never succumbing to the manifold anxieties that accompanied the major contemporary political and economic changes. Through periodic essays, first in *The Saturday Review of Literature* and then, after 1935, from "The Easy Chair" of *Harper's Magazine*, he called continually for sanity and constancy in those years of chaos and flux. While other writers repudiated American principles and institutions, he reiterated his commitment to the native traditions. "Position Maintained" DeVoto characteristically entitled one of his *Harper's* essays. Above all, he remained confident that the people would eventually overcome the domestic disaster—but only if their leaders kept faith with them and their institutions. He gave Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal his qualified support as long as it remained pragmatic, but announced his "desertion" in the wake of the Supreme Court reform controversy. The New Deal had "sold out to the millennial vision," he declared; President Roosevelt had abandoned restoration for the transformation of government and society.¹¹

Whatever his misgivings regarding the course of domestic developments, DeVoto showed even more concern about the implications of events abroad. "At this moment," he announced when news of the British mobilization came in 1939, "we are in the war to stay." Almost fatalistically, he acknowledged that the conflict spreading throughout Europe would eventually engulf the United States, and resolutely set out to prepare the American people for battle. As complex forces drew the country closer to intervention, DeVoto wrote increasingly on the subject.¹² Americans, he repeated, "must fight and win this war." Their leaders must tell them that "America will be burned up" unless they "come awake and do something." And finally, some must be sent out to die, he confessed in "What to Tell the Young." Not even an unprecedented volume of mail from outraged readers could daunt DeVoto now. In calling upon his fellow citizens to accept the responsibility for waging the war, he both registered his confidence in America and undertook to insure the nation's survival. When, in the closing days of 1941, the Congress finally declared war on the Axis nations and prepared for the

coming ordeal, DeVoto looked on with hope and faith as the Americans girded themselves for the greatest challenge of their history.

By the spring of 1943, when he was scheduled to deliver a series of five lectures at Indiana University, Bernard DeVoto felt his faith in the American people had been vindicated. The time had come, then, to speak out for them and their culture against their domestic detractors—to say “at full length” what he had argued before only in short essays.¹³ Furthermore, DeVoto wished at last to “polish off” the literary generation of the interwar years.

The nucleus of his lectures had already emerged in a letter written at the time of MacLeish’s indictment. To DeVoto, the “irresponsibility” of the intellectuals had been “their all but unanimous repudiation of American ways of living—in . . . complete disagreement with the people actually existing in those ways of living. On the whole, and even during the worst of the Thirties, the Americans still believed in their culture and institutions and even their future. . . .”¹⁴ But it had taken the war to bear the people out and to provide the ultimate justification for DeVoto’s assault.

By 1943, of course, Van Wyck Brooks was also accusing prewar writers of withdrawing from the American people, as DeVoto noted. He found this development particularly arresting because, in his view, Brooks had been the source of many of the literary attitudes of that generation. Altogether, according to DeVoto, Brooks had done more than anyone else to sow the seeds of discord which germinated so conspicuously into the literary repudiation.¹⁵

In 1915, Brooks had prepared the ground with his study of *America’s Coming of Age*. In it he seized upon the Freudian concept of *bourgeois* “repression” and used it to prove that American society had blocked individual artistic fulfillment and smothered emotional life. Preoccupied with the problem of the impact of native environment upon the writer, Brooks had turned to American literary history in search of evidence for his concept of “repression.” He soon isolated what he took to be three different ways an artist might react to an oppressive society. He proposed, therefore, to study in turn each of three gifted American writers whose careers illustrated his points. One, Mark Twain, had remained at home and yielded to the environment; another, Henry James, had escaped it by exiling himself abroad; and a third, Emerson, had mastered the environment.¹⁶ Turning to the native failure first, Brooks had written *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*. In it he claimed that a mediocre American society had blocked and repressed Twain’s artistic fulfillment, arrested his personality and turned him into a pessimistic determinist.

Some ten years later, Bernard DeVoto had challenged those assertions in a spirited defense. *Mark Twain’s America* (1932) was forthrightly termed “an essay in the correction of ideas.” Characteristically, DeVoto chose to vindicate the American society which Brooks had attacked rather

than to focus upon the equally problematical question of Mark Twain's "ordeal." His reply, then, was a conscious attempt to discover and define a usable American past. In the work, he gave considerable attention to correcting misconceptions of the life and culture of the American frontier which he sensed underlay Brooks's misunderstanding of Mark Twain and his writings. Implied in that approach was DeVoto's sustained belief that the West somehow represented the key to an understanding of America. Those who remain ignorant of the frontier, he seemed to be asserting, do not really know or understand their native land. In those broader terms, DeVoto's one-sided literary feud with Brooks raged during the ensuing years. Again, in 1944, DeVoto repeated his charge: all the early books of Van Wyck Brooks had been based upon patently mistaken notions about American life, past and present.¹⁷

By 1936, however, Brooks had changed his judgment of American culture, as the lecturer conceded. Brooks no longer bemoaned in critical works the frustration of American writers. Instead, he was now undertaking to celebrate their achievement in a projected five-volume "History of the Writer in America" christened the Makers and Finders series. Already he had published one volume, *The Flowering of New England, 1815-1865* (1936).¹⁸ Unlike Brooks's earlier studies, according to DeVoto, the new series had been preceded by a thorough study of the literature and writers dealt with. In addition, Brooks had now embraced a much broader conception of culture and literature. The combination of greater intensity and wider extension provided a new conclusion: the American cultural tradition was eminent and impressive. In spite of the reversal, however, DeVoto perceived a continuity throughout Brooks's works. All were characterized by "historical ignorance." In DeVoto's view, Brooks remained indifferent to the life from which works of literature sprang and concentrated only upon the books in isolation. Though the omission was less blatant now, he nevertheless continued to ignore the "common experience of mankind."¹⁹ Ignorance was the lesser error; it could be corrected through study. The "hopeless error" was the method of approach Brooks had introduced and which he continued to pursue. This error, which DeVoto labelled "the literary fallacy," assumed that

a culture may be understood and judged solely by means of its literature, that literature embodies truly and completely both the values and the content of a culture, that literature is the highest expression of a culture, that literature is the measure of life, and finally that life is subordinate to literature.²⁰

Isolating the literary fallacy in the works of Van Wyck Brooks enabled DeVoto to systematize and sharpen his attack. Now he could clearly demonstrate that, however much Brooks had changed his judgment of the American cultural tradition, his method remained as falla-

scious as ever. Even more important, the leading writers of the interwar years had adopted that method, as well as Brooks's earlier findings, and incorporated them into their fiction and criticism. During that period, as DeVoto saw it, four significant and distinct literary groups had produced works which embodied the literary fallacy. As a consequence, they had repudiated American civilization and lost DeVoto's respect.

The first group, according to DeVoto, consisted of Brooks's immediate followers—writers who had adapted his judgments and techniques to their own work and come up with cruel caricatures of American life. Waldo Frank, for instance, “learned or was confirmed in his belief that Americans were a people dominated by fear, without capacity for joy, and . . . hostile to beauty. . . .” Lewis Mumford, too, used deductive methods to draw conclusions which misinterpreted the American past, as did Ludwig Lewisohn, who “was sanctioned to seek the entire explanation for a society which he found altogether loathsome in the Puritan's fear and hatred of sex.”²¹

The second group comprised many of the literary artists of the twenties. In DeVoto's words, they had taken “instruction from the critical system embodying the literary fallacy” and incorporated it in their work. Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos and Thomas Wolfe, therefore, arrived at the same conclusions as the critics: American life was mediocre and subject to contempt. This artistic repudiation achieved its final expression in T. S. Eliot's pessimistic poem, “The Waste Land.”²²

During the 1920's, some members of both groups chose to combine their intellectual rejection of America with a physical withdrawal. Following Harold Stearns's manifesto, this “Lost Generation” of expatriate writers sought sanctuary on the Continent and elsewhere. In DeVoto's view, their flight from America was a flight from reality. They were repudiating a society they misunderstood because of the literary fallacy. Their ignorance of America, then, vitiated the importance and authority of their removal.²³

The Depression had produced the two remaining groups. Their reactions to the Great Crash represented for DeVoto the final frustrations of the literary approach to America. One group, shocked out of its “purely literary preoccupations,” asserted the necessity of a literature dealing directly with society. But their habit of thinking in abstractions merely drew them on to new hypotheses: Marxian axioms replaced the old aesthetic tenets. As DeVoto saw it, the new hypotheses proved an equally effective basis for the repudiation of society, while at the same time obscuring any real understanding of America. “Literary Marxists” such as Joseph Freeman and Granville Hicks had been subject to DeVoto's attack during the 1930's. He not only quarreled with their description of America, but also ridiculed their prescriptions for a proletarian revolution which, to him, represented less of a danger than a nuisance.²⁴

The other group of the thirties had reacted in the opposite fashion: it carried the dichotomy of life and literature to its logical conclusion. In this "second frustration" of literature, as DeVoto referred to it, these new critics concentrated upon words as words and worked toward a semantic approach to literature. In fact, rather than taking their material from fiction—which, at least, was an attempt to deal directly with life—they concentrated upon one another's work. Literary criticism, which began by "abstaining from life," came finally to "abstain even from literature."²⁵

In DeVoto's view, the literary misunderstanding, attack, alienation, withdrawal and finally abstention were all products of a dissociation from society begotten by the literary fallacy. From it had followed patently false judgments of the American people. It was clear to DeVoto that the American people were not contemptible, their society decadent nor their history a farce. They were proving that in the war. Their vigor, courage and especially their faith demonstrated that the traditional promise of American democracy still retained its meaning.²⁶ Instead, the writers of the interwar period were altogether wrong in their description of America. And by 1944, DeVoto acknowledged, even they were "confessing their errors." But no mere admission of guilt could reinstate these apostate Americans. That it took a world war to reveal their error only emphasized their complete separation from the common national experience—the heritage without which American literature was false, and therefore trivial. Only through a communion with American life, DeVoto maintained, could American literature fulfill its promise of greatness. With that final brief assertion, the lecturer concluded in *The Literary Fallacy*, his extended attack upon the literature of repudiation.²⁷

The literary defense and counter-attack began as soon as the lectures were published. At once, Sinclair Lewis launched an *ad hominem* attack which went far beyond even DeVoto in intemperance and discourtesy. "I denounce Mr. Bernard DeVoto as a fool and a tedious and egotistical fool, as a liar and a pompous and burdensome liar," he bellowed in the pages of *The Saturday Review*. Others, including DeVoto's chief victim, Van Wyck Brooks, added to the heat. "It is simply a masterpiece of demolition," he wrote Lewis, praising the reply.²⁸ All but obscured in the name-calling was Lewis' very sound rejoinder to the "literary fallacy" thesis: "Just as fair—and just as unprovable—an assertion would be that the major writers of the twenties, men who so loved their country that they were willing to report its transient dangers and stupidities, have been as valuable an influence as America has ever known."²⁹ But the Nobel novelist's chief contribution remained the polarization of opinion—or emotions—on the subject, and DeVoto seemed to capture more of the reviews and letters in what the *Saturday Review* editors called "the great feud."

In his lectures, DeVoto had already named a few of the writers—the poets Carl Sandburg, Stephen Vincent Benét and Robert Frost, for instance—who had not adopted the literary fallacy. Now, others who had remained unalienated during the same period came forward in his behalf. The critic Joseph Wood Krutch, for example, could only lament that DeVoto “is so busy explaining how wrong nearly everybody else is that he has little time to explain his own superlative rightness.”³⁰ In published letters, the biographers Dixon Wecter and Catherine Drinker Bowen rushed to DeVoto’s defense, the latter hailing his book as “the most ringing salutation to the American belief that I, for one, have heard or read in many years.”³¹ Two other “progressive” writers, Elmer Davis and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., added enthusiastic private letters.³²

The intensity of the conflict prevented any reviewer, except Henry Seidel Canby, from recognizing the basic incompatibility between DeVoto and the generation of writers he criticized.³³ Doubtless the author’s own categorical condemnation of their works had also helped obscure this fact. Above all, Bernard DeVoto was an historian demanding of writers a faithful representation of their subject matter. From such critics of American culture as Brooks, Mumford and Hicks, he could rightfully require an accurate description of American life. But novelists such as Hemingway and Wolfe had no such obligation; DeVoto’s historical method of criticism was not relevant to their work. He had abandoned literary values in order to criticize writers in terms of extra-literary criteria. Yet, the very men he assailed denied that literature had a prime obligation to the accurate reproduction of the life of its time, or to an understanding of it.

DeVoto’s own fundamental assumptions about the nature and reality of American democracy had dictated his attack as well as the methods he used to wage it. The Indiana lectures represented a natural expression of his progressive belief and temperament. In effect, they brought to a climax his criticism of the literature of a generation.³⁴ As he put it,

My own career in letters has been in absolute opposition to the main literary current of my time. From my second novel on to . . . *The Literary Fallacy*, I have set myself to oppose the ideas, concepts, theories, sentiments, and the superstitions of the official literature of the United States between the two wars. If I have any significance as a writer, it derives entirely from that fact.³⁵

Even more important, in delivering the lectures DeVoto acknowledged that his faith in America had been justified and rewarded by the course of the Second World War.

But the war represented only the most recent instance of the American people providing fruitful justification for this faith. DeVoto had already found abundant nutriment for his conviction of national greatness in the rich soil of American life and history. Indeed, in his Indiana

lectures, DeVoto even took pains to rehabilitate two particularly unsavory epochs by emphasizing, in characteristically progressive terms, the concrete accomplishments that the aesthetes overlooked. The speaker called attention to John Wesley Powell, a pioneer conservationist and progressive prototype in that Gilded Age of gross waste, and to American medical science, making greater progress during the reactionary decade of the 1920's than in any previous hundred years.³⁶ But these represented only two examples of previous American achievement; in all, DeVoto possessed a fund of illustrations. Progress in the exploration, expansion and settlement of the American continent was a frequent subject of his works of history; the civilization of the wilderness was a pageant which never tired him. The theme of progress also informed his works on the Mormons and on Mark Twain, as well as many of his novels and essays.³⁷ Changing with and adapting to transformations in national life while maintaining dignity and strengthening character represented another aspect of that theme.³⁸ Finally, progressive ideals inspired the tireless conservation crusade to which he devoted increasing energy during his last years.³⁹

DeVoto's progressive faith finally came back to the people from whom it had originally sprung. His democratic commitment inevitably led him to grant that the ultimate verdict in national affairs rested with them. Whatever his misgivings about some of the briefs delivered in the court of public opinion during the interwar years, DeVoto had no fundamental doubts about the jury. During the darkening winter of 1940-1941—when he felt the troubled nation needed reassurance—DeVoto had reiterated his faith in the American folk for all time by paying florid tribute to the soundness of their judgment.

They believe that eight score and four years ago our forefathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. They believe not that the nation so delivered was either perfect or complete, but that the conception and the proposition have insured and still insure its ability to renew itself, adjust itself to change, and bring itself nearer its ideal aim. They believe that, on the whole, and in the round, a hundred and sixty-four years have widened the base and vindicated the instruments of its democracy; that sixteen decades of intermittent change have proved its power to control change within the sanction of its ideal. They believe not that it is in all ways completely equitable to all men now, ever has been, or ever will be, but that it has established a wider equity than any other nation in history and possesses and frequently renews the means of enforcing equity. They believe that events have proved the truth of their beliefs.⁴⁰

That DeVoto counted himself one of the people, and ardently subscribed to their profession of faith, there could be no doubt. Further-

more, the author, who entitled his 1940 collection of essays *Minority Report*, hardly stood alone among writers during the interwar years. However personal his mode of expression, the progressive beliefs he articulated were shared by a number of his contemporaries. In *The Literary Fallacy*, DeVoto himself called a partial roll of those who had maintained faith with America between the wars. Certainly the poets Sandburg, Frost and Benét deserved mention among what Elmer Davis pronounced “the saner faction of the war generation”—the ones who had not made a “gainful occupation out of being lost.”⁴¹ But the roster could be readily extended to include the journalists Henry Pringle and William Allen White, the playwright Robert E. Sherwood and the poet Paul Engle. John Dewey, Ralph Barton Perry and Irwin Edman, philosophers, and Carl Becker, Henry Steele Commager and Benjamin P. Thomas, historians, belonged in the same group, as did the biographers Dixon Wecter and Carl Van Doren. In all, they represented a loose but coherent intellectual group united by a common progressive posture.

Bernard DeVoto had already found his faith in America long before a Second World War and its aftermath made patriotism fashionable again. Indeed, like many others, he had never abandoned the progressive beliefs that had nurtured him during his formative years. Though deceptively simple, DeVoto’s affirmation was more than adequate for him as well as a number of his contemporaries. In addition, it marked the essential difference between the progressive mind and that of the alienated literary generation of the time; and unconsciously it revealed a fundamental dichotomy in American intellectual life during the interwar period.

University of Minnesota

footnotes

1. See variations on this theme in the 1952 *Partisan Review* symposium, published separately as *America and the Intellectuals*. Despite their characteristic reliance upon a narrow sample of opinion, the editors could not eliminate all dissent from their assumptions, which follow the above stereotype. Note especially Norman Mailer’s contribution. Even more remarkable is the number of times the name of Bernard DeVoto, who was not invited to participate, appears in the symposium.

2. See, for example, Bernard DeVoto, “A Generation Beside the Limpopo,” *The Saturday Review of Literature*, September 26, 1966, 3-4+.

3. Bernard DeVoto, *The Literary Fallacy* (Boston, 1944), 123.

4. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., calls DeVoto a “populist,” but the rural-agrarian and sectional implications of that term make the label misleading. Catherine Drinker Bowen, *et al.*, *Four Portraits and One Subject: Bernard DeVoto* (Boston, 1963), 41-77.

5. The progressives’ response to the New Deal is discussed in Otis L. Graham, Jr., *An Encore for Reform: The Old Progressives and the New Deal* (New York, 1967).

6. Sources of biographical data are: Bowen, *et al.*, *Four Portraits; Current Biography*, 1943 (New York, 1944), 171-173; Robert S. Forsythe, *Bernard DeVoto: A New Force in American Letters* (New York, 1929); Robert E. Lee, “The Work of Bernard DeVoto: Introduction and Annotated Check List,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1957; Garrett Mattingly, *Bernard DeVoto: A Preliminary Appraisal* (Boston, 1938); Fred B. Millett, *Contemporary American Authors* (New York, 1940), 316-318; and Orlan Sawey, *Bernard DeVoto* (New York, 1969).

7. Bernard DeVoto, *Minority Report* (Boston, 1940), 163-189; "Position Maintained," *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1940, 221.
8. DeVoto, *Minority Report*, 168.
9. *Ibid.*, 173.
10. Bernard DeVoto, "New England: There She Stands," *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1932, 405-407.
11. Bernard DeVoto, "Desertion from the New Deal," *Harper's Magazine*, October, 1937, 557-560.
12. Bernard DeVoto, "The Oncoming," *Harper's Magazine*, November, 1939, 669-672; "All Quiet Along the Huron," *Ibid.*, November, 1940, 669-672; "Holidays, 1940," *Ibid.*, February, 1941, 333-336; "What To Tell the Young," *Ibid.*, May, 1941, 669-672; and "Either-Or," *Ibid.*, August, 1941, 333-336.
13. See Bernard DeVoto, "A Sagebrush Bookshelf," *Harper's Magazine*, October, 1937, 488-496; "The Threshold of Fiction," *Ibid.*, January, 1940, 221-224; "To Our New Prophets," *Ibid.*, December, 1940, 109-112; "Under Which King, Bezonian?," *Ibid.*, September, 1941, 445-448; "The Easy Chair," *Ibid.*, September, 1943, 338-341.
14. Bernard DeVoto to Elmer Davis, July 21, 1940, Elmer Davis Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
15. DeVoto, *Literary Fallacy*, 25-28.
16. See *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920); *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* (1925); and *The Life of Emerson* (1932).
17. DeVoto, *Literary Fallacy*, 39-42.
18. Subsequent volumes are: *New England: Indian Summer, 1865-1915* (1940); *The World of Washington Irving* (1944); *The Times of Melville and Whitman* (1947); and *The Confident Years, 1885-1915* (1952). DeVoto had undertaken his trilogy on the Trans-Mississippi West only a few years later. Bernard DeVoto, *The Year of Decision: 1848* (1943); *Across the Wide Missouri* (1947); *The Course of Empire* (1952).
19. DeVoto, *Literary Fallacy*, 81-83.
20. *Ibid.*, 43.
21. *Ibid.*, 43-46; Bernard DeVoto, *Mark Twain's America* (Boston, 1932), 40-42.
22. DeVoto, *Literary Fallacy*, 96-109.
23. *Ibid.*, 103-104, 119-120.
24. *Ibid.*, 84-86.
25. *Ibid.*, 87-88.
26. *Ibid.*, 113-122.
27. *Ibid.*, 166-175.
28. Mark Schorer, *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life* (New York, 1961), 712.
29. Sinclair Lewis, "Fools, Liars, and Mr. DeVoto," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, April 15, 1944, 9-12. For a penetrating critique of *The Literary Fallacy* see Malcolm Cowley, "In Defense of the 1920's," *The New Republic*, April 24, 1944, 564-565.
30. Joseph Wood Krutch, "Debunking Debunkers," *New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review*, April 23, 1944, 4. Another essentially favorable review is Stanley T. Williams, "Counterblast," *The Yale Review* (Summer, 1944), 747-749.
31. Dixon Wecter, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, May 27, 1944, 16; Catherine Drinker Bowen, *Ibid.*, June 3, 1944, 19.
32. Elmer Davis to Bernard DeVoto, November 16, 1944; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. to Bernard DeVoto, April 6, 1944, Bernard DeVoto papers, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
33. Henry Seidel Canby, "Mr. Bernard DeVoto," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, May 6, 1944, 16.
34. DeVoto, *Harper's*, September, 1943, 338-341.
35. Bernard DeVoto, "A Revaluation," *Rocky Mountain Review* (Autumn, 1945), 9.
36. DeVoto, *Literary Fallacy*, 125-148.
37. See especially the novels *The Chariot of Fire* (1926) and *The House of Sun-Goes-Down* (1928).
38. See especially the novel *We Accept with Pleasure* (1934).
39. See especially, "The West Against Itself," *Harper's Magazine*, January, 1947, 1-13; "The Western Land Grab," *Ibid.*, June, 1947, 543-546; "Sacred Cows and Public Lands," *Ibid.*, July, 1948, 44-55; "Shall We Let Them Ruin Our National Parks?," *The Saturday Evening Post*, July 22, 1950, 17-19+; "Billion Dollar Jackpot," *Harper's*, February, 1953, 53-56; "Headlong for the Last Round-up," *Ibid.*, July, 1953, 49-52; "Conservation: Down and on the Way Out," *Ibid.*, August, 1954, 66-74; and "Your National Forests," *Holiday*, August, 1956, 93+.
40. DeVoto, *Harper's*, December, 1940, 112.
41. Elmer Davis to Bernard DeVoto, September 10, 1934, DeVoto Papers.