

*Mysterious Girls
in Fantastic
American
Short Fiction*

*Erskine Caldwell · Truman Capote
Sherwood Anderson · Ambrose Bierce*

*Annotations by
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SANSHUSHA

は し が き

謎の少女、風変わりな娘が、主人公あるいは重要な役割を演じる5編のアメリカ短編小説を選んで、この教科書を編纂しました。すべて神秘と幻想に満ち、孤独の影におおわれた魅力ある作品です。以下、ここに取り上げた4人の作家とその作品について、簡単に解説を加えます。

南部 Georgia 州生まれの **Erskine Caldwell** (1903-1987)は、アメリカの一般大衆に最も愛された作家の1人で、1932年、南部の貧乏白人一家の悲劇的な生活を独特なユーモアを交えて描いた長編小説 *Tobacco Road* を発表して、一躍名声を獲得しました。*God's Little Acre* (1933), *Journeyman* (1935), *Trouble in July* (1940) などの長編, *American Earth* (1931), *We Are the Living* (1933), *Kneel to the Rising Sun* (1935), *Georgia Boy* (1943) などの短編集, *Call It Experience* (1951), *In Search of Bisco* (1965) などのノンフィクションを数多く発表して、一般読者に親しまれています。

“The Dream”は、最初の短編集 *American Earth* に収録された1編で、Harry という青年が夢の中で毎月決まって同じ少女に遭遇するという、幻想的な作品。第2の短編集 *We Are the Living* の1編“Rachel”は、Frank という少年が謎の少女 Rachel と恋仲になり、ひそかに逢瀬を楽しんでいるが、少年が母親の言いつけで塵の上に殺鼠(きそ)剤を撒いた夜、少女の身に奇怪な破局が訪れるという話です。この作家は、storyteller としてとりわけ短編小説に抜群の腕を示し、「アメリカのモーパッサン」などと呼ばれたりしています。

24歳のとき、感受性の強い1人の少年を主人公とした長編小説 *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1948) を発表して文壇の寵児となった **Truman Capote** (1924-1984) も、同じ南部の New Orleans 生まれの作家。巧みな技法と華やかな文体を駆使して、この作家がフィクションの中に構築する幻想の世界は、実にユニークで比類を見ません。ほかの作品に長編 *The Grass Harp* (1951), 中編 *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958) ——これは映画化されて、とても有名になりました

た——、短編集 *A Tree of Night and Other Stories* (1949)、それにノンフィクション *Muses Are Heard* (1965)、*In Cold Blood* (1966) などがあります。

Capote の作品は、明るく楽天的な系譜のものと、グロテスクな、悪夢の世界を描いた系譜のものに大別できますが、*A Tree of Night* の 1 編 “Miriam” は、*Other Voices, Other Rooms* と同様、後者に属します。これは、New York のアパートに独り住みする初老の未亡人の孤独を、未亡人と同じ名を持つ不気味な謎の少女を登場させることによって見事に描き上げた、劇的緊張に溢れる傑作です。ちなみに “Miriam” は、この作家が 19 歳のとき雑誌 *Made-moiselle* に掲載され、O. Henry Memorial Award (1943) を与えられた作品です。

Ohio 州生まれの **Sherwood Anderson** (1876-1941) は、20 世紀アメリカ文学の先駆的作家。Ohio の架空の町 Winesburg を舞台に、孤独な人間のグロテスクな姿を描き上げた *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) を発表して、文名を確立しました。ほかに長編 *Poor White* (1920)、*Beyond Desire* (1932)、*Dark Laughter* (1925)、短編集 *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921)、*Death in the Woods* (1933) などを発表しています。

“Nice Girl” は、この作家が 1936 年 7 月 25 日号の *The New Yorker* 誌上に発表した佳作で、ここには孤独とフラストレーションのために性悪となった小悪魔的な女性が登場します。

Ambrose Bierce (1842-?1914) も同じ Ohio の生まれ。Bierce と言えば、まず誰もが思い浮かべるのが、機知と風刺に溢れたあの *The Devil's Dictionary* (1906 ; *The Cynic's Word Book* を改題) ですが、この作家はほかに、死のテーマに貫かれた短編集 *In the Midst of Life* (1891 ; *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* を改題)、超自然現象を扱った短編集 *Can Such Things Be?* (1893)、文明批評 *The Shadow on the Dial* (1909) などを書いています。

“The Eyes of the Panther” は、*In the Midst of Life* の中の 1 編。パンサーの目を持つ謎の娘が、いいはずけと結ばれぬままショック

ングな結末を迎えるという話で、息もつかずに読み進んで行きたくなる作品です。

学生諸君が、手持ちの辞書だけで十分に読みこなせるように、注は多めに付けました。特に明記しませんが、注を付けるにあたって *Kenkyusha's English-Japanese Dictionary*, *Shogakukan Random House English-Japanese Dictionary*, *The New Crown Dictionary of English Idiomatic Phrases*, 『コンサイス地名辞典』(外国編)なども参照し、これらからいくつか説明や例文を引かせてもらいました。不確かな点に関して、東北大学教養部の Todd Holden 氏にいくつか問いただしたところがありました。記して感謝の意を表します。注の不備な点に関して、大方のご叱正をいただければ幸いです。

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編注者

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The Dream

by Erskine Caldwell

FOR six or seven years Harry had been telling me about a dream. I thought nothing of it, because nearly everyone has dreams; some of them are pleasant, others very disagreeable, but, otherwise, I could never see anything in a dream
5 to become upset about. Each time I dreamed I remembered what happened in the dream for a day or two, and afterwards never thought of it again. But Harry had been having the same dream regularly each month all that time. Exactly the same thing happened on each occasion, the time
10 and place were invariably the same; and the two people had not changed in dress or appearance since the beginning. Harry was one of them; the other was a young girl.

Harry, while he was at home the winter before, had consulted a psychiatrist. The man had a reputation for correct-
15 ing and curing practically every case of minor mental disorder he had undertaken, and Harry felt certain that if there was anything wrong with him the psychiatrist could help him. He went, however, to see him only once. Harry explained that the dream was recurrent each month, but the
20 psychiatrist said there wasn't anything to it. He said it was all utterly silly. He told Harry to forget it.

Probably that was his method of curing Harry. But, any-

way, Harry said he lost all confidence in him after that, and he never went back again. His reason for doubting the ability of the psychiatrist to help him was that the man had said something about the impossibility of a dream's occurring more than once. But Harry's dream was recurrent. It came back again the following month, the next, and the next. 5

It was late June when I saw Harry the first time that summer, and he had just had his monthly dream. He told me all about it again. It was precisely the same thing he had told me the year before. 10

We were at the boathouse and Harry was putting a new coat of green paint on his canoe. While he was retelling the dream I was sitting against a tree. As he neared the close of the dream his paintbrush moved faster and faster, and when he reached the end the brush was moving so swiftly he could not keep enough paint in the bristles to coat the canvas. 15

"You finish it for me," he said, his eyes ablaze and his hands jerking nervously. "There isn't much more to paint, anyway?" 20

I took the brush from him, and before I could reach for the paint-bucket he had disappeared in the woods behind the boathouse. I did not see him again that day.

Harry's condition worried me more than it had since he first began dreaming. It seemed to me that there must be something that could be done to help him, and perhaps cure him completely. I did not believe for a moment, however, that he would become insane. Neither did Harry. He had always been normal, and as far as I could see he 25

was still normal. We both looked upon the dream as something temporary that would pass away at any moment.

We had known each other for ten years. Each summer we came up to Maine with our families and stayed through the season. Our camps were on the same lake, and we saw each other almost every day. We went on fishing trips together, and we went swimming two or three times a day. Once a week we went somewhere to a dance, and more frequently, over to the village to the movies. Whenever we talked about the dream Harry always said it was as bad as ever. He said the fact that he continued having the recurrent dream was what was bad; the dream itself, however, was very pleasant.

The intensity of the dream was as memorable as the events of it. Nothing really happened, he said; it was the feeling and lifelike reality that caused him so much worry. He had told me about it so many times I believed I knew how he felt. Each time, he was walking along a lonely road through a forest in northeastern Maine. The moon was out, but a thin veil of grayish clouds darkened everything and left the road and forest in a dull glow like the soft light of a shaded lamp. After he had walked a mile and a half along the road he came to a bridge over a stream. It was a timber bridge, about four and a half feet wide. He had not heard a sound or seen a single living thing until he reached the bridge. But the moment he put his foot on the bridge he heard someone call his name very softly. He looked up, and in front of him, in the center of the gravel road, was a young girl. She was about eighteen. She stood in the road ahead of

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

ACD	<i>The American College Dictionary</i>
AHD	<i>The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language</i>
DAS	<i>Dictionary of American Slang</i>
LDC	<i>Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English</i>
LDP	<i>Longman Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs</i>
NID	<i>Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language</i>
NWD	<i>Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language</i>
OAD	<i>Oxford American Dictionary</i>
RHD	<i>The Random House Dictionary of the English Language</i>

THE DREAM

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- 6 2 **thought nothing of...** 「...を何とも思わなかった」 'think nothing of' = to treat casually; regard as insignificant. (RHD)
- 4 **otherwise** 「他の点では (in other respects)」
- 10 **invariably** = always.
- 14 **psychiatrist** [sikáiətrist, sai-] 「精神病医, 精神科医」
- 14- **correcting** 'correct' = to remedy.
- 15- **mental disorder** 「精神障害」
- 19 **recurrent** [rikó:rənt, -kúr-] = happening again and again; repeated. (LDC)
- 7 11- **was putting a new coat of green paint** 「新しく緑のペンキを塗っていた」
'coat'=a covering spread over a surface. (LDC)
- 12 **retelling** 'retell' = to tell (a story) again in a new way or different language. (LDC)
- 13 **close** [klouz | kləuz] = [formal] the end, esp. of an activity or of a period of time. (LDC)
- 8 1 **looked upon the dream as...** = regarded the dream as...
- 2 **pass away** = to cease to exist. (LDP)
- 4 **Maine** [mein] 米国北東部大西洋岸の州で, 州都は Augusta.
- 9 3 **What do you want?** 「何の用ですか」
- 17 **recapture** = [literary] to bring back into the mind; cause to be experienced again. (LDC)

- 10 1 **at regular intervals** 「一定の間隔をおいて」
 5- **was almost upon her** 「危うく彼女を轆(ひ)きかけた」
 20- **I've gone beyond that now** 「もうそういう段階は過ぎてしまった」
 21 **I've got to...** = I have to...
 24 **went around with...** 'go around' = to be often in company (often followed by *with*). (RHD) e.g. He *went around with* a bad crowd. (彼は不良たちと付き合った)
 26 **went all to pieces** 「すっかり参ってしまった」 'go (all) to pieces' = [*informal*] to lose the ability to think or act clearly because of fear, sorrow, etc. (LDC)
- 11 7 **Just the same** 「それでも、やはり(yet; still)」
 17 **camp chair** 「キャンプ用いす, 折りたたみ式の軽便いす」
- 12 3 **arrow** 「矢印」
 8 **was undecided** 「決めかねていた」
 12 **Rangeley** [réindʒli] ちなみに, 米国北東部, Maine 州西部に同名の町が存在する。美しいレンジリー湖(the Rangeley Lakes)沿岸に位置し, 木材の集散地として知られる。但し, 実際にレンジリー湖群に Lost Lake という湖があるかどうかは不詳。
- 13 4 **in spite of myself** 「われ知らず, 思わず」
 10 **go along** = to go somewhere together with someone. (LDP)
 15 **Good Lord** 「(驚きなどを表して)おやおや」
 20 **solitaire** [səlɪtɪə] 「(指輪などの)1つはめの宝石(特に, ダイヤモンド)」 [*<F<L sōlītārius SOLITARY*]
- 23 **nerve** = strong will; firm self-control; courage. (AHD)
- 14 4 **why don't you bet me that...** 「...と賭けても[断言しても]いいではないか」
 9 **do that** i.e. bet (that) I won't find her.
 10 **I'd rather not** 「そんな気になれない」

RACHEL

- 15 **Rachel** [réɪtʃəl]
 4 **alley** = a narrow passage or street between or behind houses or other buildings. (OAD)
 7 **hydrant** [háidrənt] 「(普通, 街路上にある柱状の)給水栓(せん), 消火栓」
- 16 8- **impress upon me...of danger** 「何かある種の危険が起こりそうであることを私に痛感させる」
 11- **as...as anyone else** cf. He is *as honest a lad as any*. (彼は誰にも劣らぬ正直な青年である)
 13 **back gate**=a rear gate. 「裏門」
 14 **short cut** 「近道」 普通, shortcut と書く。
 23 **thing**=a garment; piece of clothing. (LDC)