

Thornton Wilder's Play "Our Town"

Submitted by

liza hussain dwaini

college of medicine :al-nahrain university

Life of Thornton Wilder

Thornton Niven Wilder was born on April 17, 1897, in Madison, Wisconsin. His father, Amos Wilder, was a strict Calvinist; and his mother, Isabella Niven Wilder, was a very religious lady. The family moved to China in 1906 when his father became the United States Consul-General in Hong Kong. Wilder returned with his mother to California in 1912 because of the unstable political conditions in China at that time. Enrolled in Berkeley High School, he became interested in theater and began regularly attending plays. He also began to demonstrate his unique talents for writing. Graduating from high school in 1915, Wilder attended Oberlin College before transferring to Yale University in 1917. During World War I, he served in Rhode Island in 1918. When war was over, he returned to his studies at Yale. In 1920, he received his bachelor's degree, and saw the first publication of his play *The Trumpet Shall Sound*. He received his master's degree at Princeton University in 1926, the publication year of his novel *The Cabala*. His novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927) proved immensely popular, and led to the Pulitzer Prize in 1928¹.

Wilder later taught at the University of Chicago, in Illinois, (1930–1936), and the University of Hawaii (1935). He received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1938 for *Our Town* to become the only American writer to win both the Novel and Drama categories of that prize². He volunteered in World War II (1939–45), serving in Africa, Italy, and the United States. A lecturer at Harvard in the early 1950s, he received the Gold Medal for Fiction from the Academy of Arts and Letters in 1952. Wilder was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963, and the National Book Committee's National Medal for Literature in 1965. He died of a heart attack December 7, 1975, in Hamden, Connecticut, where he had lived off

and on for many years with his sister, secretary, business manager, and literary adviser, Isabel Wilder³.

Influences on his Writings

Thornton Wilder had a difficult childhood. As a result of separation from his family during most of his childhood years, he became very independent and sensitive, and the lack of love he received had a strong influence in his writing. He acquired strong religious beliefs from his mother, but his father expected him to be athletic, with the power of concentration, and the ability to do uncongenial things⁴. Those demands affected Wilder⁵. He was always aware of his father's disappointed judgment of his character and capacities. However, he could not help curb his desires of music, art, drama, and literature⁶. As a result, Wilder grew very sensitive, and lived most of his high school years unhappily in a boarding-house. The absence of fatherly love and care influenced his writings. In *Our Town*, Wilder tried to show the importance of love when he used the character *Emily* who died and came back as a spirit. She tried to look back at her life, but all she saw was a life of ignorance and blindness⁷.

Another important influence in Wilder's writing came from his teacher: Professor Charles Wager at Oberlin College. Wilder, who was grown up religious, became extremely interested in Professor Wager's lessons on the spiritual world⁸. That subject had a considerable influence on his works where he used the spiritual world to try and enforce his themes. In the play, *Our Town*, when dead people look back at their lives as spirits, they realize the mistakes they have made in their life, such as moving about in a cloud of ignorance and not spending time wisely with their loved ones⁹. The use of spirits added strength to Wilder's theme because it helped the addressees realize that it would be too late to fix things after death¹⁰.

In addition to the Bible, Wilder was also influenced by his study of Greek drama and Philosophy. In fact, *Our Town* can be seen as an allegory that conforms with the Platonic teaching of great Ideas which are timeless, above the history of actual individuals who are illustrated as only shadows on the cave wall. Another source of influence is Dante. Commenting on *Our Town*, Wilder said that the source of his graveyard scene in the play was Dante's *Purgatory*¹¹.

Yet another influence was Brecht's "epic theatre," which aimed at preventing the audience from what is called the "willing suspension of disbelief". This is an act of temporarily accepting what is onstage as "real" for the duration of the performance in order to fully relate to the characters and plot¹². If audiences willingly suspend their disbelief, they can lose themselves in the world of a play and accept it, temporarily, as "real." Epic theatre was designed to distance the audience from the characters and stage so they could focus on both the action onstage and off. *Our Town* was written and produced in that spirit. Some of the aspects of the play that make it similar to "epic theater" are: a bare stage, characters talking directly to the audience, the way the acts are given titles; and lectures given by the *Stage Manager* and other characters¹³.

Our Town: Introduction

Wilder wrote *Our Town* while he was in his thirties. In June 1937, he lived in the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, one of the many locations where he worked on the play. During a visit to Zürich in September 1937, he drafted the entire third act in one day after a long evening walk in the rain with a friend, author Samuel Morris Steward¹⁴.

The three-act play was first performed at McCarter Theater in Princeton, New Jersey, on 22 January 1938, produced and directed by Jed Harris. Wilder received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1938 for that work. *Our Town* may be the most popular American play ever written. It explores traditional American values of religion, community, family, and the simple pleasures of life, while employing innovative elements such as minimalist stage sets, a Stage Manager who narrates and controls the action, and a character who speaks from the grave. Although the setting, characters, and events are commonplace, *Our Town* addresses such universal themes as mortality, the human condition, and the value of everyday life. In his preface to *Three Plays*, Wilder wrote, "*Our Town* is not offered as a picture of life in a New Hampshire village; or as a speculation about the conditions of life after death. ... It is an attempt to find a value above all price for the smallest events in our daily life"¹⁵.

The play is set in the fictional community of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, modeled upon several towns in the Mount Monadnock region.

At the beginning of the play, the narrator gives the coordinates of Grover's Corners as 42°40' north latitude and 70°37' west longitude, which is in the Atlantic Ocean, not Massachusetts. This implies that the play's location could be anywhere in the West¹⁶.

Our Town's narrator, the Stage Manager, is completely aware of his relationship with the audience, leaving him free to break the fourth wall and address them directly. According to the script, the play is to be performed with little scenery, no set and minimal props. Wilder was dissatisfied with the theatre of his time: "I felt that something had gone wrong....I began to feel that the theatre was not only inadequate, it was evasive"¹⁷. The characters' surroundings are created only with chairs, tables, and ladders. For example, the scene in which Emily helps George with his evening homework, conversing through upstairs windows, is performed with the two actors standing atop separate ladders to represent their neighboring houses. Wilder says, "Our claim, our hope, our despair are in the mind – not in things, not in 'scenery' "¹⁸.

The central role belongs to the omniscient Stage Manager, who narrates the action, jokes with the audience, and explicitly connects the people of the small New Hampshire town of Grover's Corners with the universe as a whole. The characters function as symbols rather than fully developed individuals. In the first two acts, entitled "Daily Life" and "Love and Marriage," the Stage Manager traces the existence of the Webbs and the Gibbses who are united by the marriage of their children, George and Emily. "Daily Life" follows the families from morning to evening on an ordinary day in May 1901. The mothers cook breakfast and supper; the fathers go to work and come home; the children go to school and return. Family members interact; the milk and newspaper are delivered; the weather is discussed; the town drunkard is pitied. "Love and Marriage" takes place on George and Emily's wedding day three years later, with a flashback to their encounter at the drugstore soda fountain when they first acknowledged their feelings for each other. The third act, "Death," takes place nine years later. Emily Webb, who has died on giving birth, arrives at the town cemetery, where the other deceased members the community sit quietly in chairs. Unlike the others, who have grown detached from earthly concerns, Emily longs to return to Grover's Corners, and so obtains the permission of the Stage Manager to relive her twelfth birthday. However,

the experience becomes too painful when, knowing the future, she attempts to savor each trivial moment with her family, but cannot because “it goes so fast. We barely have time to look at one another.” Returning to the dead, Emily bids farewell to “new-ironed dresses and hot baths” before expressing the central morale of the play that human beings must “realize life while they live it”¹⁹.

Critical Reception

Initially, *Our Town* was not well received. Wilder then altered the staging of the play to minimal set and props in order to emphasize the allegorical nature of the play, and it soon gained favorable reviews and audience popularity. It ultimately ran for 336 performances in its debut production. Wilder was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for drama for *Our Town*, thus earning him recognition as a major American playwright. The characters celebrate the play's focus on universal themes through allegorical theatrical techniques depicting archetypal characters and events. The play is criticized for its sentimentality, underdeveloped characters, and failure to challenge the audience's received values. These two different perspectives on *Our Town* are partly a function of the degree to which a particular production or critic emphasizes its darker concerns with mortality and the fleeting nature of life, or its lighter, life-affirming elements. Recent critics have discussed the question of whether or not *Our Town* addresses themes still relevant to modern life²⁰.

The universal experience portrayed on stage draws the audience in as few realistic dramas have been able to do. The play presents the events of everyday life in a way that underscores their value and their importance²¹.

The play raises questions as well: "What was Wilder's view of the ultimate place of man in the universe?" He seemed to believe that the dead were waiting for something, but had no real knowledge of what it was. The major incidents that mean so much in the long run mean little or nothing, while the daily routines that are often ignored have more meaning than we imagine. So was Wilder an optimist or a pessimist, a believer or a skeptic? *Our Town* raises these questions but never really answers them²².

Even in its own day, Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* was criticized for the uniformity of the citizens presented in the story: racially,

religiously, and politically. The lack of conflicts in these areas seems to be unrealistic, and too good to be true. However, the uniform perspective of the characters does not weaken the power of the drama, but suggests that the things that divide us are far less important than the things that unite us²³.

Summary of Action

Act I - Daily Life

The play begins with the Stage Manager describing the town. With an empty stage, he introduces the play, naming the director, producer, some of the leading actors, and then describing Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, the site of the play, in 1901. Then, he introduces the two central families, Dr. Gibbs, the town doctor, and Mr. Webb, the newspaper editor, and their wives and children. He tells us that Act I pictures one day in the life of Grover's Corners. Gibbs has just returned from delivering a set of twins in the middle of the night. Eleven-year-old Joe Crowell is delivering papers, and the Stage Manager tells us in an aside that this bright young boy graduates first in his class, both from high school and from college, then is killed in World War I. Then Howie Newsome, the milkman, comes through on his daily rounds. He appears and reappears during every morning scene—once each in Acts I, II, and III—highlighting the continuity of life in Grover's Corners and in the general human experience. The Gibbs and Webb children come downstairs for breakfast before they go to school, with the usual good-natured complaining and bickering. After the children go to school, the mothers chat and help one another with chores.

The Stage Manager then introduces Willard, a professor at the State University, who gives some background information on Grover's Corners. He then brings in Charles Webb, the editor and publisher of the Grover's Corners Sentinel, who shares some information about political and social conditions in the town with the audience, then opens the floor for questions, asked by cast members planted in the auditorium.

When the children return from school, George Gibbs and Emily Webb talk shyly, but the scene makes it clear that they really like one another. He goes off to baseball practice and she helps her mother with dinner, meanwhile plying her with questions about whether or not she is

pretty. After they leave, the Stage Manager talks about what is really important - that everyday life has more value than the major events historians remember and archaeologists dig up.

That evening, the choir at the Congregational Church is practicing and George and Emily are doing their homework. Their houses are close enough that they can talk to one another from their bedroom windows, and George asks Emily to give him a hint about a math problem. Dr. Gibbs then calls George downstairs and tells him that he ought to be chopping firewood for his mother rather than making her do it herself; he then raises George's allowance. As the women come home from choir practice, they gossip about the drinking problem of Simon Stimson, the organist. Julia Gibbs tells Frank that she wants him to take a real vacation if she can get her "legacy" (she intends to sell an old piece of furniture to a dealer for \$350; they never make the trip, and the money is left to George and Emily after Julia dies). As the scene ends, Emily and George (and George's sister Rebecca) are sitting by their windows enjoying the moonlight. This scene shows how all people are connected through humanity. The subject of "daily life" addressed throughout this act stereotypes the average "American family."

Act II - Love and Marriage

The Stage Manager informs the audience that three years have now passed - more than a thousand days - and tells them that the theme of Act II is "Love and Marriage." It's July 7, 1904, and the day starts with the women making breakfast and the paperboy and milkman making their deliveries. They discuss the sad truth that George Gibbs is giving up baseball to get married to Emily Webb; in fact, this is their wedding day. Frank and Julia Gibbs reminisce about their wedding day and how nervous they were. The day is filled with stress, topped off by George's visit to the Webb family home. There, he meets Mr. Webb, who tells George of his own father's advice to him: to treat his wife like property and never to respect her needs. Mr. Webb then says that he did the exact opposite of his father's advice and has been happy since. Mr. Webb concludes by telling George not to take advice from anyone on matters of that nature. After having breakfast with Mr. Webb, George comes bounding downstairs and goes over to see Emily, but Mrs. Webb won't let him see her before the wedding ceremony.

The Stage Manager then introduces a flashback. The scene moves to a year earlier, near the end of George and Emily's junior year. He has been elected Class President, and she is Secretary/Treasurer. The two meet in Mr. Morgan's drugstore, where he buys her an ice cream soda. Emily tells George that she is worried about him because he is getting so conceited about his success on the baseball diamond. He promises to change, and asks if she will write to him when he goes off to college. He then tells her he might not even go to college, but start working on his uncle's farm right away (his Uncle Luke promised that he could take over the farm when he died). They confess that they've been paying special attention to one another, and George awkwardly asks Emily to be his girl. The wedding scene follows, and, after brief wedding-day jitters, the two are united as man and wife. George proceeds down the aisle to be wed by the preacher (played by the Stage Manager). Mrs. Soames is very pleased with the wedding, as she says: "Isn't this the loveliest wedding..." The text is interrupted by the individual thoughts, a modern twist to Shakespeare's soliloquy.

Act III - Death and Eternity

The setting for Act III is a cemetery near Grover's Corners. The Stage Manager tells the audience that nine years have passed - it's now 1913. Part of the stage is now taken up with the graveyard on the hill over the town. Occupying the chairs representing the graveyard are Mrs. Gibbs, Mr. Stimson, Mrs. Soames, and Wally Webb, whose appendix burst while on a Boy Scout trip. Joe Stoddard, the undertaker, is preparing a new grave for someone who has just died. The newly-dead woman is Emily Gibbs, who died giving birth to her second child. Much of the scene is taken up with conversations among the dead. They are gradually losing their memories of life on earth, and pity those who are still alive because of their constant troubles. Emily asks if she can go back among the living again, and the others tell her she can, but advise against it. She decides to choose a happy day – the day she and George first knew they loved one another. The others warn her to choose an unimportant day instead, because the reliving will be too painful, knowing how everything turned out. She chooses her twelfth birthday, February 11, 1899. It turns out to be unbearably painful – seeing her parents when they were younger, seeing again those who have

died, including her brother Wally. She realizes just how much life should be valued, "every, every minute." Poignantly, she asks the Stage Manager whether anyone realizes life while they live it, and is told, "No. The saints and poets, maybe--they do some." Seeing how little people actually notice one another and enjoy the happiness that they sadly take for granted. In agony, she asks to return to the graveyard. Meanwhile, in Grover's Corners, life goes on as usual. The Stage Manager concludes the play with a monologue and wishes the audience a good night²⁴.

Symbolism

Characters of *Our Town* focus on universal themes through allegorical theatrical techniques depicting archetypical characters and events. Commenting on *Our Town* Wilder, said that the play was not intended to be a speculation about conditions of life after death. Instead, he said that the point of the scene is "to find a value above all price for the smallest events of our daily life"²⁵.

The division of the play's narrative action into three acts reflects Wilder's division of human life into three parts: birth, love and marriage, and death. While *Our Town* spans the course of fourteen years it distills its events into the span of one day: opening with a morning scene and ending with a nighttime scene: The span of a life parallels the span of the day: birth is related to dawn, and death is related to night. Wilder's attention to natural cycles highlights his themes of the transience of life and the power of time²⁶.

When in Act I, the citizens of Grover's Corners wish to include the works of Shakespeare, the Constitution, and the Bible; the Stage Manager says he would like to throw a copy of *Our Town* into the time capsule as well. The time capsule embodies the human desire to keep a record of the past. Accordingly, it also symbolizes the idea that certain parts of the past deserve to be remembered over and above others. The self-referential notion of placing the play into the time capsule also carries symbolic weight. The fact that *Our Town* is actually mentioned within *Our Town* clearly shows Wilder's intent to break down the wall that divides the world of the play from the world of the audience²⁷.

Each of the three morning scenes in *Our Town* features the milkman, Howie Newsome, and a paperboy Crowell who symbolize the constancy of small town life. Because Grover's Corners is Wilder's microcosm of human life in general, Howie and the Crowells represent not only the stability of life in Grover's Corners, but the stability of human life in general. They embody the persistence of human life and the continuity of the human experience from generation to generation²⁸.

As the lights fade out on the stage for the final time, we are left with Emily's final words, "They don't understand." The suggestion is that we cannot truly understand the beauty and transience of our world until it has gone.

Hymns are incorporated into the script of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. They help the playwright communicate the themes he wishes to emphasize²⁹. A choir sings the hymn text written by John Fawcett *Blessed Be the Tie That Binds* at the background in three different times throughout the play. In part, the repetition of the song emphasizes Wilder's general notion of stability and tradition. However, the Christian hymn primarily embodies Wilder's belief that the love between human beings is divine in nature. The "tie" in the song's lyrics refers to both the tie between humans and God and the ties among humans themselves. He concentrates on the hymn not because of its allusion to the fellowship between Christians in particular, but rather because of what it says about human beings in general²⁹.

Conclusion

Our Town is a beautifully written play, with a simple message offered in all the complexity of our modern-day world. There are four major themes in the play: taking life for granted by assuming that there will always be another day, routine, freedom to dream, and the wasted youth of the young who do not appreciate the significance of their life in time³⁰.

Its central message is the power and simplicity of ordinary life, and the way that we can take our lives for granted whilst we are living them. It suggests a model picture of America as warm, innocent, religious, and simply nice by depicting Grover's Corners as a living fragment of the universe. Set in the vanguard of modernism, the themes are not modernist. There is no stress, despair, or urge for social activism, but a spirit of humanity in a positive and affectionate light³¹. (Shiach, 2000: 102). The play implies a higher order, a world beyond this world, a "something" which seems to be "pushing and contriving " human events so that mankind might reach a higher plane of existence³².

The greatest appeal of The play is its universality since it concentrates on the routines of everyday life, love, marriage, and death, striking a chord with everyone in the audience. Yet, the family values presented in it makes it a little shorter than an ideological piece of propaganda³³.

Notes

- (1) Harold Bloom (ed.) Thornton Wilder . Philadelphia : Chelsea House, 2002. P.2
- (2) The Pulitzer Board , " *Pultzer Prize Winners 1938* " The pulitzer prizes, Retrieved, 2008. P. 10.
- (3) M. Blank (ed.) *Critical Essays on Thornton Wilder*. New Essays, Thornton Wilder, 1999. P.
- (4) M. Goldstein (ed.) *The Art of Thornton Wilder* , 1965. P.
- (5) Ibid , p. 10
- (6) Ibid , p. 13
- (7) A. N. Wilder (ed.) *Thornton Wilder and His public* , 1980 p. 109
- (8) Ibid , p 108
- (9) M . Goldstein , P. 21
- (10) Ibid , p. 23
- (11) Wilder , p . 109
- (12) M anis Shelly (ed.) *A study Guide for Teachers and students*. Texas University of Texas.
- (13) Theatre Teks : 117 . p .34.
- (14) Ibid , p. 66
- (15) Thornton Wilder (ed.) *Thornton Wilder, The Bridge of san luis Rey and other Novels 1926-1948. Library of America*. New York library of America, 2009 p. 108.
- (16) Plimton (ed.) playwrights at work , 2000 p .111
- (17) Ibid , p.
- (18) Samual Steward, Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Tokals, (ed.) *Dear Sammy : letters from Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklasa* Houghton Mifflin . 1977. P. 32.
- (19) www. 2011 e notes . com, Inc
- (20) Samul Steward, Gretrude Stein. P. 32
- (21) Ibide, p. 43

- (22) J . D. Mc Clatchy (ed.) *Thornton Wilder, Collected Plays & Writing* : on Theatre. Library of American 172, 2007, New York: library of America p. 32.
- (23) Frederick Lumley (ed.) *New Trends in 20th Century Drama: A Survey Since Ibsen & Shaw* . New York: Oxford. University Press. 1967 .p. 333
- (24) Kuner, M.C. Thornton Wilder 1972 , p. 300
- (25) Ibide , p. 44
- (26) Gallap, Donald (ed), *American Characteristics and Other Essays*, New York:1979 Harper and Raw Haven, CT :Ticknor & Fields, 1983. P. 70
- (27) Wilder's Work p. 127
- (28) Manis Shelley (ed.) *A Study Guide for Teachers & Students*: University of Texas Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. P.
- (29) www. Learner libraries program resources
- (30) Don Shiach (ed.) *American Drama*. Combridge University Press. 2000. P. 102
- (31) A. R. Gurney (ed.) *Thornton Wilder . playlets* 1998 .p. 2
- (32) Ibid , p.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blank, M. (1995) (ed.) *Critical Essays on Thornton Wilder*.
- (1999) (ed.) *New Essays, Thornton Wilder*.
- Bloom, Harold, (2002) (ed.) *Thornton Wilder*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House.
- Bryer, Jackson R. *Conversations with Thornton Wilder*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992.
- Burbank, R. (1961) *Thornton Wilder*.
- Castronovo, David. (1986) *Thornton Wilder*. New York: Ungar.
- Gallup, Donald (1979) (ed.) *American Characteristics and Other Essays*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Goldstein, M. (1965) *The Art of Thornton Wilder*.
- Goldstone, R. H. (1975) *Thornton Wilder: An Intimate Portrait*.
- Grebanier, B. (1964) *Thornton Wilder*.
- Gurney, A. R. (1998.) <http://www.thorntonwilder.com/playlets/index.html>
- Harrison, Gilbert A. *The Enthusiast: A Life of Thornton Wilder*. New Haven, CT: Ticknor & Fields, 1983.
- Kuner, M.C. (1972) *Thornton Wilder*.
- Lumley, Frederick, (1967). *New Trends in 20th Century Drama: A Survey since Ibsen and Shaw*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 333.
- Manis, Shelley A *Study Guide for Teachers and Students*. Texas: University of Texas.
- McClatchy, J. D. (2007). ed. *Thornton Wilder, Collected Plays and Writings on Theater*. [Library of America](#). 172. New York: Library of America.
- (2009). ed. *Thornton Wilder, The Bridge of San Luis Rey and Other Novels 1926–1948*. [Library of America](#). 194. New York: Library of America.
- Niven, Penelope (2001) *Exploring Thornton Wilder's Our Town*:

Suggestions for Teachers and Students.

Ousby, Ian. *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Payne, Tom. *The A-Z of Great Writers*. London: Carlton, 1997.

Plimton, G. (2000) (ed.) *Playwrights at Work*.

Rosemary, G. (1994) (ed.) *Larousse Dictionary of Writers*. New York: Larousse.

Shelley Manis, *Thornton Wilder's Our Town: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students*. University of Texas.

Shiach, Don (2000) *American Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simon, L. (1979) *Thornton Wilder* .

Sternlicht, S. (2002) *A Reader's Guide to Modern American Drama*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Steward, Samuel; Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas (1977). *Dear Sammy: Letters from Gertrude Stein & Alice B. Toklas*. Houghton Mifflin. p. 32.

Wilder, A. N. (1980) *Thornton Wilder and His Public*.

Wilder, T. (1938) *Our Town: A Play in Three Acts*. New York: Coward McCann.

Thornton Wilder Biography: *American Playwright and Novelist, Famous for Our Town* | Suite101.com "[Our Town](#)". Database. Retrieved 2008-07-10.

The Pulitzer Board (1938). "[Pulitzer Prize Winners of 1938](#)". The Pulitzer Prizes. Retrieved 2008-07-10.

Wilder, Thornton. [Collected Plays](#). Preface.

[Our Town](#)". *Playbill.com*. Retrieved 2010-12-12.

TEKS: 117.34

Petri Liukkonen (author) & Ari Pesonen. Kuusankosken kaupunginkirjasto 2008 (retrieved 24 May, 2011)

John Gassner, "The Two Worlds of Thornton Wilder" (introduction copyright © 1963 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.; reprinted by permission of the publishers), the introduction to The Long Christmas Dinner, and Other Plays in One Act, by Thornton Wilder (copyright 1931 by Yale University Press and Coward-McCann, Inc.), Harper & Row, 1964, pp. vii-xx.

IBLIOGRAPHY

- Blank, M. (1995) (ed.) *Critical Essays on Thornton Wilder*.
- (1999) (ed.) *New Essays, Thornton Wilder*.
- Bloom, Harold, (2002) (ed.) *Thornton Wilder*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House.
- Bryer, Jackson R. *Conversations with Thornton Wilder*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992.
- Burbank, R. (1961) *Thornton Wilder*.
- Castronovo, David. (1986) *Thornton Wilder*. New York: Ungar.
- Gallup, Donald (1979) (ed.) *American Characteristics and Other Essays*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Goldstein, M. (1965) *The Art of Thornton Wilder*.
- Goldstone, R. H. (1975) *Thornton Wilder: An Intimate Portrait*.
- Grebanier, B. (1964) *Thornton Wilder*.
- Gurney, A. R. (1998.) <http://www.thorntonwilder.com/playlets/index.html>
- Harrison, Gilbert A. *The Enthusiast: A Life of Thornton Wilder*. New Haven, CT: Ticknor & Fields, 1983.
- Kuner, M.C. (1972) *Thornton Wilder*.
- Lumley, Frederick, (1967). *New Trends in 20th Century Drama: A Survey since Ibsen and Shaw*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 333.
- Manis, Shelley A *Study Guide for Teachers and Students*. Texas: University of Texas.

McClatchy, J. D. (2007). ed. *Thornton Wilder, Collected Plays and Writings on Theater*. [Library of America](#). 172. New York: Library of America.

----- (2009). ed. *Thornton Wilder, The Bridge of San Luis Rey and Other Novels 1926–1948*. [Library of America](#). 194. New York: Library of America.

Niven, Penelope (2001) *Exploring Thornton Wilder's Our Town: Suggestions for Teachers and Students*.

Ousby, Ian. *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Payne, Tom. *The A-Z of Great Writers*. London: Carlton, 1997.

Plimton, G. (2000) (ed.) *Playwrights at Work*.

Rosemary, G. (1994) (ed.) *Larousse Dictionary of Writers*. New York: Larousse.

Shelley Manis, *Thornton Wilder's Our Town: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students*. University of Texas.

Shiach, Don (2000) *American Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simon, L. (1979) *Thornton Wilder* .

Sternlicht, S. (2002) *A Reader's Guide to Modern American Drama*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Steward, Samuel; Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas (1977). *Dear Sammy: Letters from Gertrude Stein & Alice B. Toklas*. Houghton Mifflin. p. 32.

Wilder, A. N. (1980) *Thornton Wilder and His Public*.

Wilder, T. (1938) *Our Town: A Play in Three Acts*. New York: Coward McCann.

Thornton Wilder Biography: *American Playwright and Novelist, Famous for Our Town* | Suite101.com "[Our Town](#)". Database. Retrieved 2008-07-10.

The Pulitzer Board (1938). "[Pulitzer Prize Winners of 1938](#)". The Pulitzer Prizes. Retrieved 2008-07-10.

Wilder, Thornton. [Collected Plays](#). Preface.

[Our Town](#)". *Playbill.com*. Retrieved 2010-12-12.

TEKS: 117.34

Petri Liukkonen (author) & Ari Pesonen. Kuusankosken kaupunginkirjasto 2008 (retrieved 24 May, 2011)

John Gassner, "The Two Worlds of Thornton Wilder" (introduction copyright © 1963 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.; reprinted by permission of the publishers), the introduction to The Long Christmas Dinner, and Other Plays in One Act, by Thornton Wilder (copyright 1931 by Yale University Press and Coward-McCann, Inc.), Harper & Row, 1964, pp. vii-xx.
