

Miscellaneous, Unrelated Notes on AW, Summer 2004

8/8/04

1. I completed scanning in all of the pre-electronic chapters (1-53) so I now have the entire first half of the novel (chapters 1-165) in electronic form.
2. Since completing that task, I have been editing the file summaries (using the Summary tab within the file Properties). My object in this is to make all the summaries current and consistent with one another in terms of how the summary items are presented. Included in these items are chapter number, series numbers, story date, number of pages, story place, and a description of the action in each chapter. Using View Details, I can view an overview of these items in tabular form.
3. Using this view, I have been evaluating the events in the first half chapters and adding some events that I have decided need to be there in terms of the entire story. For example, I decided that I need to bring in the character Art Steward sooner in the story since he has become more important in the plot than I foresaw when I wrote the original chapters. To do this, I will revise chapters 49 and 50 to move them from the Brandt subplot to the Steward subplot, and will use the new chapter 50 to introduce Art Steward and the protective big brother role he plays with Tom Steward.
4. As another part of my evaluation of the first half, I've been trying to balance the as yet unwritten second half so as to balance the timeframes, thematic motifs, arrangement of subplot series, and distribution of events having to do with secondary and tertiary characters. In general, all of these elements are balanced within the timeframe in such a way that they occupy as much of the second half of the story as they do of the first half, and in such a way that their distribution and emphasis within the total line of the story form a kind of Bell curve. I have done many diagrams of this configuration.
5. The primary characters (Steward, Brandt, Morris, and O'Rourke, in order of importance) will each have as many series in the second half of the novel as they do in the first half. I have not come up with the exact numbers yet because I am still counting the series in the first half of the novel. Projecting from chapters 1-100, the distribution will be, approximately, 48 series per half of the novel, arranged into 15, 15, 12, and 8 series, respectively, for Steward, Brandt, Morris, and O'Rourke. (Note, 8/18/2005: The actual distribution of series for the first half of the novel is Steward 18, Brandt 15, Morris 10, and O'Rourke 9.)
6. The most important secondary character, Mary Kass Brandt, is the only secondary character with chapters written from her point of view. As I plan these chapters now, there will be eight of them, sequenced in the second half as in the first half, as follows:

**30    52    92    134    <<    197    239    279    301**

My concept for these chapters is that they should compose a history of Mary's emotional, intellectual, and philosophical development with respect to politics, marriage, and motherhood. (Note, 8/18/2005: The distribution of Mary chapters has changed considerably from what is described here. In general, per the present plan, [at chapter 173,] Mary steadily gains in importance throughout the novel and gets more attention with the Cuba trips requiring series devoted to Mary alone.)

7. The first half of the novel, as it exists now, does not have a Mary-specific chapter 52, as indicated above. I will need to revise the current chapter 52 to provide that. I need to do this because I need four Mary-specific chapters in the second half of the novel and, in order to balance the chapters, need four in the first half.
8. The reason I need four Mary-specific chapters in the second half of the novel is because I need two chapters for Mary's trips to Cuba (chapters 238 and 300) and one chapter for her final meeting with Hattie Beecher (chapter 288) when Hattie travels with the coop to Washington D.C.
9. Chapter 196 is present in the second half to balance chapter 134 in the first half. Chapter 196, as I foresee it, will be a summary of Mary's reflections after Woodstock.
10. Note where the Cuba chapters fall with respect to the April-to-July Venceremos trip timeframe. April chapters, in successive years, fall as follows: 1967 (1); 1968 (73); 1969 (148); 1970 (223); 1971 (295). The assigned Mary-specific chapters (238 and 300) occur on the June-July side of that trip time period in 1970 and 1971. So, the trips must be summarized when Mary is about to come home. To accomplish this, chapters 238 and 300 will need to be narrative, each chapter covering about a month of time.
11. At some point, Mary should reclaim her name and call herself Mary Kass Brandt, then near the end, just Mary Kass.
12. Morris, on his return to Scotts Bluff, understands the whole idea of the Oregon Trail as a kind of collective propaganda. The story he heard as a boy is not accurate, he realizes; it has been exaggerated to serve a cultural purpose as an icon of pioneer sacrifice. In the same way, the war needed to be promoted with propaganda, exaggerated and simplified, Morris realizes, to convince people to give up their lives for it; the war was a lie.
13. This chapter (306) ties in thematically with the next (307), in which Morris thinks of himself as having been "chipped away" with nothing left to live for. In losing the idealistic meaning of the Oregon Trail, Morris loses a big part of what gave him intention as a boy. This plus losing his belief in the war and his ability to be intimate with Ellen (both emotionally and sexually) reduces him to his final state of despondency.
14. All secondary and tertiary characters in this novel should be completed thematically and dramatically. In order for this to be done, they must appear into the second half approximately to the extent that they appear into the first half, with their presence in the second half timeframe-balanced against their presence in the first half.
15. The secondary characters, in order of importance, are Mary Kass Brandt (already mentioned), Ellen Kass Morris, Christine DeSolt, and Barbara Carpenter. These characters must all be strong characters, admirable for different reasons.
16. Christine DeSolt cannot exactly be timeframe-balanced because she comes into the novel in chapter 125 and will not exit completely until the end of the novel. After her entry into the story, she is often in Steward's mind and is a predominant reason for many of his actions even after he and she split as a couple.
17. The tertiary characters in order of importance are Dennis Kelly, Fletcher Bourne, Darren Houghton, Douglas Thomasek, Birl Poling, Hattie Beecher, Bruce Harris, Fr. Dan Riley, Rev. Mark Chambers, Jose Terda, Bumper Bourne, Gail Martin, Jane LaRue, Harold

Lagerquist, Sammy Lane, Mark Chambers, Don Andrews, and Sam Copening.

18. All of these characters should also be completed dramatically, to the extent possible. They should not just appear in the story and then drop off. They should reappear at some point (not necessarily timeframe-balanced) to fulfill their dramatic roles.
19. Sammy Lane comes back into the action in the second half of the novel converted to use of violence to obtain black objectives.
20. Harold Lagerquist, who was dropped from the current chapter 10, and who does not exist anywhere in the current chapters, should be brought back into the first half of the novel as an officer of the draft board. In chapter 10, he will explain to Steward why people are being drafted, then he will be part of the interview team when Steward explains his CO in chapter 105. Later he will come back into the story in passing when Steward reads that Lagerquist's son has died in Vietnam.
21. The reprisal of thematic motifs such as the moon, the river, and the boatclub, must be timeframe-balanced also, as noted in previous notes on thematic balance.
22. Before doing any more writing of second half chapters, I need to list and briefly describe all of the the series in the second half, assigning them to Steward, Brandt, Morris, and O'Rourke in the 15-15-12-8 proportion configuration mentioned above. Note that some series are ALL series involving all the primary characters and that some series are combined series counting separately as a series for two characters. For example, the Steward-O'Rourke hitching chapters count as one series for Steward and one series for O'Rourke, while incrementing the total number of series by only one.
23. I need to arrange the second half chapters along the second half timeframe approximately in balance with how the first half chapters are arranged along the first half timeframe. In the first half of the novel, there are approximately six to seven chapters per month of story time (more specifically, there are 72 chapters per year for the first and last years of the novel, and 75 chapters per year for the middle 2-1/2 years). The reason for this difference is because the Morris and O'Rourke subplots start later and end earlier than the Steward and Brandt subplots (thus there are fewer subplots in play in the first and last years of the novel).
24. Exact dates, since used in the first half chapters approximately of 65 to 165, must be used in the second half chapters in about the same salting pattern throughout. Likewise, the date salting must be added to chapters 1 to 65 to bring the use of specific dates overall into a consistent pattern.
25. Chapters have tended to get longer, I noticed, creeping up from six or seven pages per chapter at the start to nine or ten pages, often, in the middle chapters. Therefore, to restore the balance, the middle of the book chapters in the second half of the novel should be about the same longer length with the chapters getting shorter toward the end of the novel.
26. To establish this balance at start and end of novel, chapter 330 (the already completed last chapter of the novel) must be shortened to nine pages. Chapter 1 must be lengthened to nine pages.
27. Lengths of some of other chapters will need to be adjusted, also. All the very short chapters (six or less pages) must be lengthened to at least seven pages.

28. References to exact historical events using quotes in newspapers and news casts must be maintained in the second half in about the same pattern as they are in first half, also.
29. Key nicknames like "Old Guy" for Morris and "Bomb Dog" for Brandt (the whole "dog cadre" should be retained throughout the novel. These nicknames become transfigured in the course of the story and serve to emphasize changes in the characters. For example, Morris is not really an "old guy" before he goes to Vietnam but, after returning, he is a true "old guy" in appearance and mental state. The "dog cadre" names, once expressing the idealism and pretending of the early days of the Movement persist as a kind of inside joke among the characters. ("Bomb Dog" becomes "B.D." then "Big Dog" on the farm where Gail's son, Matt, becomes "Little Dog").

8/17/04

1. After thinking more about Mary Brandt, I've come to the conclusion that she needs to have more chapters than previously planned for the second half of the novel. Specifically, in place of the individual chapters identified above, Mary will need to have series of two to four chapters per series.
2. This configuration would bring the novel out of the proportion I was planning before, with Mary's secondary subplot getting gradually bigger within the overall plot. All told, there will be four Mary-specific chapters in the first half of the novel and from eight to 12 Mary-specific chapters in the second half of the novel.
3. Tertiary characters likewise should be rounded out in the story, but not necessarily strictly proportional with respect to the timeframes for the two halves of the novel. These characters should remain as proportionally rounded as possible, however.
4. Venceremos Brigade timeframe: Typically, they return from Cuba in the first week of August.

8/19/04

1. As I've continued to think about Mary Brandt and her place in the story, it has become increasingly clear that she must increase in importance throughout the story. She will never become as important in the story as the primary characters, but she will be not far behind them, almost as important as Bill O'Rourke.
2. Most importantly, Mary's intellectual and philosophical development must be presented in detail in light of the the important ideas being considered by feminists in the timeframe of the story.
3. Characters having a major influence on Mary: Matthew (her husband), Ellen Morris (her sister), Hattie Beecher, (director of the Women's Center at Georgetown), Gail Martin (Matthew's eventual mistress).
4. Extremely important to the novel, also, are the other female lead characters, including Ellen Morris, Christine DeSolt, and Barbara Carpenter. The novel must be sympathetic to these characters, portraying them as strong and admirable women with flaws.
5. O'Rourke may need to remain in the story longer than anticipated (therefore, being bigger in the second half of the novel than he is in the first half). The reason this may have to be is because the romantic buildup between O'Rourke and Carpenter may need to be retained longer in order to balance against the dismal developments in the other relationships (Morris and Ellen, Steward and Chris, break up at about the same time, in fall of 1970).
6. More specifically, O'Rourke and Barbie should have a romantic liaison about the same time.

7. Developments in Steward's story in the second half of the novel should follow as closely as possible developments in my own life. Don't change the timeframe. This should especially be the case in summer and fall of 1971.
8. Note that, if this timeframe is followed, Steward will travel to San Francisco and Los Angeles in June 1971 (during which trip he will see his brother Art and Chris DeSolt). He will arrive on the farm in New Hampshire after the blowup between the major parties has already occurred. When he arrives on the farm, the only ones left will be Matt and Mary, Gail Martin, and Jane LaRue (plus Gail's son and daughter and Jane's two daughters).
9. Steward remains on the farm for only two months (from early August to early October). The novel ends on October 13, 1971.
10. An encounter between Brandt and Steward sets in motion the events leading to Steward's departure from the farm. In this encounter, by the hay wagon outside, Brandt questions Steward's full membership in the commune (since Steward has put no money into it). That same night, Steward gives in to having sex with Jane LaRue and in the succeeding week he looks for a job (so as to have money to put in the farm), only to discover that the job openings in Concord are rather grim.
11. Jane LaRue is a tertiary character owing to her late entry in the story, but she should also be as strong and sympathetic a character as possible with appealing qualities arising in her cooperativeness and non-dogmatic, inquisitive mind. Her flaw is her lack of self-confidence. She is interested in the occult and in the spiritual dimension of life as not defined in traditional religion. Jane brings in a trait going back to the New England reformists of Colonial times.
12. Related to the above, the farm has to be shown (maybe through dialog at some point) as carrying forth the New England religious tradition of congregationalism (local control).

9/1/2004

Some mini-plots with quaternary characters that have to be explored and completed:

1. Brandt's relationship with his father, Butch, and how this ties into his love of the land and physical work.
2. Steward's relationship with his father, Joseph, and how this acts as an anchor to bring him back home at the end of the story.
3. Brandt's relationship with Fletcher Bourne and how their alienation from one another is resolved. ("Well, I don't like to talk too much about the Good Book," Bourne remarked, "but I do know it says if you have ought against anyone, take care of that before you go on, and I try to do that, in my own way.")
4. Morris's relationship with his mother, her death, and the aftermath. (How is it he returns to take care of the house in August, 1971? She must have died earlier somehow, he attended the funeral but left the house in the hands of someone else to be sold, so he needs to return to take care of the final arrangements.)
5. Morris's relationship with his father (but this is a central element in the Morris subplot).
6. Bumper Bourne's return to participate in the newspaper. This comes into the story through indirect contacts of Barbie Carpenter in a clinic in Vietnam and then Mary through a letter.
7. Other similar developments:

- Doug Thomasek shows up out West in Gallup when Steward is there. He has become a blacksmith. He shoes horses for a living mostly on the Navajo reservation. He has married the woman he met in North Carolina. They live in a trailer out in a isolated area of the mesa but close to town. His wife is pregnant. She wants to have the baby by natural birth. Steward is surprised to see how Thomasek dances with his wife. They take up the whole floor in the small café where they dance to the juke box. Steward is impressed with the freeness of expression. This is part of his self-criticism as he realizes the containment of his formal personality and native intellectualism.
- Samuel Copening shows up in DC. He has evolved along a path from non-violence to armed resistance. Toward the end of the story, he is arrested for participating in a robbery to obtain funds for a black separatist cause. ("Look, what I'm trying to hip you to, Matt, is you can be a 'gentleman,' a man of peace, and still take up arms. Ain't that what some of the big generals was supposed to be like Robert E. Lee? You can take up arms, man, you can take up a piece, because you have to, not wanting to and not getting any particular pleasure out of it, is what I'm trying to tell you, man.")
- Don Andrews loses his job and, without any art or writing sources of income, needs to downscale his life. When Steward visits him and his wife Audrey in August, 1971, the Andrews have moved to a smaller house in North Hollywood.
- Bumper Bourne returns home to Kentucky with one arm crippled to an extent where he can't continue with his previous ambition to be a mechanic. He becomes an ad salesman and then a reporter on his father's newspaper. This is conveyed to Matt and Mary through Mary's exchange of letters with father and son and through Matt and Mary's occasional returns to Kentucky.
- Fletcher Bourne sees Matt standing by on the road as Mary talks to Hattie Beecher. He nods at Matt as he drives by and then comes limping down the road to talk to Matt later. ("I miss those old days, Matt. I thought we had a friendship there. I was sorry to see it go.") In the course of all this (including the above bullet, also), Fletcher reveals the story of Bumper's mother. But note that there must be more suspense regarding who the mother is earlier in the story.
- Dennis Kelly (still in Kensington, Kentucky) continues with his purist enterprise of being a worker organizer at a factory (not taking money from the government). He continues to be involved with the Brandt's through letters and through his participation in the October and November 1969 antiwar events in DC. Kelly becomes associated eventually the "Woodstock family" of the Brandt's, Houghten, Jane Larue, and Gail Martin. Kelly must have some kind of involvement with women, or there must be an explanation of why he avoids women. He is not gay. I will have to figure this out. Maybe he has gotten involved with Lois Roatsch's daughter and it hasn't worked out. Maybe he leaves that behind in joining Cranston Farm and goes back to it at the end of the story (goes back to his life as a just an ordinary factory organizer). I have to be careful here, though, because from summer 1969 to Cranston Farm is more than two years. It's not plausible that his involvement with the girl would build so slowly, or could it? Maybe Mary in summer of 1969 notices how the girl interacts with

Dennis. The girl is only 18, Kelly is 25. "She's like a sister," Kelly says. "I've seen a lot of sisters and brothers," Mary replies, "and I never saw a sister look at a brother like that." This is what gets the whole thing going and it goes along extremely slowly because of Kelly's meticulous, forever-examined idealism which extends to his relationships. At the end, on the farm, Kelly says, "You know, Matt, to tell you the truth, for some reason I got into this thing where I was thinking, you know, that whatever people had done before was wrong, that we were in the vanguard somehow and had to do everything different. And now what I've been seeing is we're not really all that different and maybe the best we're going to come up with is going back to the same old things and bringing a different kind of sensibility to them. I don't know. Maybe not even that. I just know I want to go back to that girl. She's my sweetheart, Matt. What the fuck have I been thinking of, trying to rouse up some kind of revolution or something when everything is right there? I could have a farm myself, she and I could have a farm together, back there in Kentucky." Matt replies, "Yes, you could, Sad Dog, and you better goddam do it." -> "That was the end of the conversation as they both soon afterwards fell asleep. The next day found Kelly packing and there was no need to inquire where Kelly was going." But there is a new gloom in the people left behind since Kelly has represented an idealistic component of the project. With Kelly gone, the physical work becomes more meaningless and grim.

- Eddie Begay should enter the story and exit it pretty much as the model for his character entered and exited the actual events in spring and summer of 1971.
- Likewise with Joan Shannon. And I should be careful what I say abt Joan Shannon's "ass," the extent to which I allow the narrative voice to use that word. The same idea can be conveyed without being so cute about it.
- Bruce Harris shows up in DC at the antiwar march, holding a bullhorn. He serves as an example of a poseur who never put his life on the line in any way for his beliefs.
- Orin Brown shows up in Hue and interacts with Morris a few times when Morris is being prepared for shipping back home. Brown has continued to live his intellectual, history buff life as an intelligence officer, always staying an arm's length from combat.
- Art Steward and his wife Nancy come in and out of the story as Art interacts with his brother (Tom Steward) and also with Bill O'Rourke as the CO of the med company that O'R is assigned to. Later, after O'R is killed, Art visits his brother in Gallup. This is a rather awkward meeting, continuing the strained but affectionate relationship between the two brothers.
- Joe Steward is in the story much as he was in his real life model. Joe Steward must enter the story at a key times showing his struggle with his chronic mood swings. The mood swings are worst when Steward returns home briefly in summer of 1971 before going on to the farm. The recollection of his father is a force in bringing Steward home at the end of the novel.
- Dennis Nyberg must be finished out somehow, also, just by a reference of some kind. Not sure what that should be.



16. Set composition goals. In general, I should try to complete one second half chapter per week. If I did that, I would have the novel completed in three years, before I turn 65.