

Pete Segall. *The Voice of Chicago in the 20th Century: A Selective Bibliographic Essay*. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. December, 2006. 66 pages. Advisor: Dr. David Carr

Examining the literature of Chicago in the 20th Century both historically and critically, this bibliography attempts to find commonalities of *voice* in a list of selected works. The paper first looks at Chicago in a broader context, focusing particularly on perceptions of the city: both Chicago's image of itself and the world's of it. A series of criteria for inclusion in the bibliography are laid out, and with that a mention of several of the works that were considered but ultimately disqualified or excluded. Before looking into the Voice of the city, Chicago's history is succinctly summarized in a bibliography of general histories as well as of seminal and crucial events. The bibliography searching for Chicago's voice presents ten books chronologically, from 1894 to 2002, a close examination of those works does reveal themes and ideas integral to Chicago's identity.

Headings:

Chicago (Ill.) – Bibliography

Chicago (Ill.) – Bibliography – Critical

Chicago (Ill.) – History

Chicago (Ill.) – Fiction

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO IN THE 20TH CENTURY: A SELECTIVE
BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

by
Pete Segall

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

December 2006

Approved by

Dr. David Carr

INTRODUCTION

As of this moment, a comprehensive bibliography on the City of Chicago does not exist. Nor will one, at least not in the guise of this project. It is certainly possible that an intrepid soul will one day begin compiling as exhaustive a list of titles pertaining to the city as possible. Perhaps such an undertaking is already in the works – perhaps holed up in a carrel in the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago, or in the Library of Congress, or in the deep recesses of the Richard J. Daley Center on Randolph and Washington in The Loop, behind Pablo Picasso’s hulking steel ambigumorphic sculpture¹, a lonely scholar is busy with laptop and references, typing up a checklist that will do its best to cover the city. When he emerges, years and years from now, he will no doubt have produced an indispensable work for scholars and enthusiasts. This bibliography will be as laudable as it will be massive. I see several volumes. I hear loud plaudits. It isn’t me they’re cheering for.

The aim of this particular bibliography is to pinpoint and illustrate the Voice of the Chicago in the 20th Century. A reasonable goal, it would seem, but one fraught with enough practical burrs and notional snags that I will be coming back to it rather often for purposes of clarification. For the moment let it suffice to say that I have intended to identify the titles where the voice of the city, the essence and essential

timbre that emanated out of Chicago from 1900 to 1999 (give or take a few years in either direction).

So then: what is the Voice of Chicago? I'm not going to vouchsafe any guesses, not yet anyhow. It is my hope that from the titles I have selected the voice will emerge, with hair and teeth. It is a robust group I have put together. Or I'd like to think of it that way. There are limitations to be dealt with, as well as certain arbitrary decisions that will or will not endear this work to certain readers. Nevertheless I believe something unified and meaningful is borne out of the investigation. There is a sound to Chicago. Variegations abound. It is a city of tremendous depth: cultural, historical, political... ad astra. It is a city of immense divisions – some figurative, some more bluntly spelled out. An ad hominem hosanna to the city's vastness could go on for days. In time the definition I have settled into will be made clear, and many more allusive, discursive paragraphs will come.

For now I'll borrow from a Brit and something of a Chicagophile. In a 1994 article for *The Atlantic*, Martin Amis called Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* – a work, incidentally, this list could not exist without – “a Chicago of a novel” (Amis 114).² A perfect phrase for a perfect book. Fear not: a few moments will be spent unraveling the phrase and the concept, but, introductorily, let the concept – as well as the book itself – stand as a vade mecum as the bibliography unfolds. A Chicago of a novel. This, for better or for worse, is not a Chicago of a bibliography. It is a bibliography of Chicago.

THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Chicago, the seat of Cook County in Illinois, stretches for roughly twenty five miles north- and southward along the southwestern shores of Lake Michigan. A recent estimate by the Census Bureau places its population at slightly less 2.9 million souls.³ On March 4, 2007, the city will turn 170.

The image conjured up by *Chicago* remains vitally Midwestern. It is a place of thorough modernity; it is home to Boeing, to the oldest and largest futures market on Earth, to arguably⁴ the planet's largest building.⁵ But its accomplishments all seem to have come on the back of somber agrarian can-doism. The city butts up against (and continuously expands into) the prairie it emerged from; visitors are regularly astonished by the flatness of the place: and indeed, approaching O'Hare International, especially from the west, one is struck at the unstintingly precise and unflinching grid the city its platted on. It is a brilliantly bland arrangement, perfectly suited for the city's geographical and physical situation, a literal checkerboard of streets with the occasional diagonal avenue mirroring the twin slants of the Chicago River's North and South branches, all emerging from and heading out of the rising skyline at the city's eastern edge along Lake Michigan.

Chicago has never quite shaken Carl Sandburg's mildly deleterious sobriquet of "hog butcher for the world" (1). The title was not unearned. As noted in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, Chicago was "the acknowledged headquarters of the [meatpacking] industry... In 1900 Chicago packinghouses employed 25,000 of the country's 68,000 packinghouse employees."⁶ This legacy has had a lasting impact, a

trickle-down effect on the city's perception in general. One might argue that the industrial has tinged the city since it entered the cultural scene – take, for example, Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), one of the city's first great impressions on the literary world. Just several pages into the book, into Carrie Meeber's voyage to Chicago and beyond, we're treated to the following: "Trains flashed by them. Across wide stretches of flat, open prairie they could see lines of telegraph poles stalking across the fields toward the great city" (10). Less than 75 years old and the city was already a hardened working man, a signpost on the industrial prairie. It's hard to shake off a label like that, particularly when it happens to be true.

For all its contributions to the world's cultural and societal betterment, for everything put forth by Saul Bellow and Milton Friedman and Sir Georg Solti, you can't get past the nasal, rock-voweled Blues Brothers of Dan Ackroyd and John Belushi when it comes to public perception. A certain breed of visitor may come to Chicago for the buildings of Mies van der Rohe or Hopper's *Nighthawks* or Wood's *American Gothic* or Seurat's *Samedi sûr L'Île de la Grande Jatte* or Caillebotte's *Paris Street, Rainy Day*, postcard images all, but a taxi driver in Prague, another world class city, recently gave a visitor a free-associative assessment of the city: "Al Capone! Michael Jordan!"⁷ Looking south from Randolph Street, Lake Shore Drive, the highway that snakes along the lake from the top of the city through its heart, looks like a broad and elegant European avenue, something in Madrid or Vienna, something akin to "the Paris of the Prairie" that Daniel Burnham envisioned, and the view terminates with the neoclassical stone columns of the Field Museum – a place named for a man who made his money... as a seller of dry-goods.

The notion of Chicago that endures is undeniably working class, semi-populist, to borrow another expression from Sandburg, broad-shouldered. This was a frontier city when it was born after all. As much as one might like to stand and say, “This is a city of the world and deserving of the praises and admiration with which one greets Tokyo and Buenos Aires and Berlin,” things get in the way. The history and legacy, as Chicago has crafted for itself, smack of can-doism. It is called “The Windy City” because of bluster, boosterism.⁸ To that end, this sampling:

- The city’s official motto (one of them anyway) is *I will*.
- Big Bill Thompson, twice mayor of Chicago (1915-23; 1927-31): “Boost, don’t knock. Lay down your hammer. Get a horn.”
- Following the Great Fire of 1871 in which a third of the city’s buildings burned – over 18,000 buildings in all – the *Chicago Tribune* put out a special edition that proclaimed on the front page: “Cheer up: Chicago will rise again!”⁹
- In 1900 the Sanitary Commission of Chicago reversed the flow of the Chicago River, running it out of (rather than into) Lake Michigan.¹⁰
- Mr. Bellow, *Augie March*, page one, paragraph one, word one: “I am an American, Chicago-born—Chicago, that somber city—and go at things as I have taught myself, free-style, and will make the record in my own way...”

Can-doism.

Around now the first signs of a Voice of Chicago are appearing, embryonic still, far from defined, but nonetheless coming into vision. The Voice is *sui generis*. The Voice demands ambition.¹¹ There is ever the hint of populism about it, in spite of the erudition in the atmosphere. This hardly stands as a proper elucidation of my aims with this project, but it ought to stand as a modest introduction to the city itself.

TO THE READER, CONCERNING THE BIBLIOGRAPHER

You may have noticed that excepting a few statistics, quotations and digressions the last section was largely without citations. This was meant to illustrate a pair of dilemmas facing the bibliographer in a case such as this.

If one were to formally summarize a city as vast and variegated as Chicago in a space as brief as above, the resulting paragraphs would be so woefully inadequate and derivative as to hardly merit reading. But the second dilemma is the proverbial rub.

The second dilemma is that in dealing with a selective bibliography like this one, one is dealing with an all-too-human narrator. I do not claim intellectual, scholarly, or aesthetic indifference or neutrality. I have my preferences and they *will* be visible here. Why am I revealing this? So as to explain in part why, for instance, Milton Friedman is not counted. Or why Scott Turow is not on the table. The Chicago School of Economics and fictional crimes exist on utterly different planes but each could have a reasonable claim on a piece of Chicago's Voice. But this author cannot

do justice to the quantity theory of money or a female detective. They rest outside of my scope. Thus *A Monetary History of the United States* and *Presumed Innocent*, valid as they may be, will not be spoken for.

As will become overly apparent, the bibliographer is most at ease in fields of literary fiction and historical/personal nonfiction. *The Voice of Chicago* loses a few points of inflection through exclusion, but still comes across as clear.¹²

A particularly meaningful defense comes courtesy of Carlo Rotella, in an authored entry in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*: “Any survey of literary images of Chicago must select and compose, choosing a few exemplary scenes and failing to mention a thousand equally deserving ones.”¹³ Amen.

This is, in the final analysis, a personal not scientific creation. There is little by way of previous research to guide and amend. I am aware of the drawbacks yet stake my claim nonetheless. Proceed with that knowledge in hand.

REASONINGS

A question the reader may want to ask the bibliographer: Why are you doing this? And the bibliographer responds in earnest: There is a Library of Congress subject heading particularly germane to this project: Chicago (Ill.) – Bibliography. In the catalog of the University of North Carolina libraries, there are five (5) titles with this classification.¹⁴ The most recent is from 1950.

I-Share is a consortial catalog of 65 libraries in Chicago and Illinois, including those of the Newberry Library in Chicago and the University of Illinois-Chicago – generally speaking these are both indispensable collections in terms of Chicagoana. I-

Share has 18 titles under the Chicago (Ill.) – Bibliography heading, its most recent being *Geographical Excursions in the Chicago Region*, from 1995.¹⁵ There are bibliographies of theses written in Chicago, of Chicago ministries and federal documents, but nothing concerning creative works.

WorldCat, the ur-catalog hosted by the OCLC, is a little more generous. It lists 196 titles under the subject heading.¹⁶ There are several bibliographies on the 1893-4 Columbian Exposition, on Polish groups and Harold Washington (the city's first black mayor), Chicago's maritime history and Chicago's architecture.

Nowhere is a bibliography of the nature of this current undertaking evident. This is not to say that I have stumbled onto a bibliographic El Dorado, heretofore unknown by scholars and students alike.¹⁷ Rather I'd think it a mare tenebraeum – Here there be tigers.¹⁸ The 1893 World's Fair, for example, the Columbian Exposition, presents a much more reasonable target. It was the birthplace of cream of wheat and the Ferris Wheel (not to mention Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, as well as the breeding ground for Dr. H. H. Holmes, the serial killer of young women and children, depicted to best-selling effect in Erik Larson's *The Devil in the White City*, a considered but ultimately excluded candidate for this bibliography). The Exposition was Chicago's debut on the world stage, an opportunity "to shake the widespread sentiment that Chicago was a secondary city that preferred butchered pigs to Beethoven," a chance to "out-Eiffel," a reference to one of the contemporary World's Fair triumphs of the time (Larson 15-16).

To respond, this bibliography contends with Bellow's "Zetland: By a Character Witness," set partially on the same grounds as the Columbian Exposition

some 50 years on, or on the life and efforts of Richard J. Daley, sovereign of the city created in part by the World's Fair.

So there is what would be called in the parlance of the field an information need. An information gap. In May of 2003 *Booklist* published a brief bibliography of mystery titles set in Chicago but this was not a particularly selective effort.¹⁹ It is, however, indicative of the generalist, genre-specific bibliographies that do exist up to this point.

For a moment, allow me to step back from the focus of Chicago and say a few words about canons and their usefulness, particularly in libraries. To begin with, this list is *not* at all canonical. It strives for none of the expansiveness or loft necessary in creating a canon. But that does not mean that the project eschews canon-like properties and that canons are a bunky enterprise. There is plenty of room for argument about specific canons – inclusions, exclusions, why this and not that; they practically beg for pointed discussion.²⁰ In most cases, though, the merit lies not with the individual works but with the body. Writing about the 50 volume Harvard Classics series, the 1910 literature canon commissioned by then-Harvard president Charles Eliot, William T. Going declares, “The volumes are a testament to an enlightened, moral [T]wentieth [C]entury,” and it is in this vein, not of specific works but of bodies, that this list is perhaps best considered (218). A degree of trust is required by the reader of any canon – trust not in the canon itself but in the canon's creator. If that trust is earned then the canon becomes not only a list but an instruction, a lesson. Eliot, after all, wanted his Harvard Classics to be “a good

substitute for a liberal education” (qtd in Going 212). Canons, for all of their philosophical and intellectual dubiety, still have something to instruct about the nature of works of art.

Moving on, then, there are two subsequent questions that cannot be overlooked. Why hasn't there been a project like mine heretofore and why should there be?

The first is somewhat easier to tackle. The sheer expanse of the subject resists clipped classifications and selective lists. For the not-quite-200 titles WorldCat offered of Chicago bibliographies, it offers close to 35,000 on with simply *Chicago (Ill.)* as a Library of Congress subject. To try to pull roughly a dozen or so from this list seems like a fool's errand at best, but given the semi-specialized tonal parameters I've set, the reader who is still on this plane is running no risk of a pilot who doesn't know how to fly the ship.

The answer to the second question in some ways informs the response (if not the answer) to the first. Why Chicago? Why its Voice?

Again, allow me to summon Chicago's Virgil, Saul Bellow, from a 1983 essay, originally published in *Life* and reprinted in *It All Adds Up*:

Chicago builds itself up, knocks itself down again, scrapes away the rubble, and starts over. European cities destroyed in war were painstakingly restored. Chicago does not restore; it makes something wildly different. To count on stability here is madness... [A] Chicagoan as he wanders around the streets feels like a man who has lost many teeth... Chicago... hasn't been here long enough to attract archaeologists, as Rome and Jerusalem do. Still, longtime residents may feel that they have their own monuments and ruins... Chicagoans [have been put] through a crash program in aging (240-2).

The city is an expression of self-invention, of expected rebirth and normal upheaval. Chicago is a product of a churning nation – an outpost of the Frontier, a hub of industrial reformation, burned out and built again, a locus of urban transformation, a locus of urban tension and decay, a thriving Rust Belt city in a land of the rising Sun Belt.

A recent survey of the city by *The Economist* began by saying “this is a city buzzing with life, humming with prosperity... Chicago is undoubtedly back.”²¹ The issue of where the city might have gone is one to be dealt with eventually. For now let’s simply assume Chicago is and was a vital place, a city essential to the American experience on the strength of its willingness (need?) to be observed (Rudyard Kipling in 1899: “I have struck a city—a real city—and they call it Chicago. The other places do not count”²²). The Voice that will be drawn out of here is not so much a reflection of this attitude but a dynamic aspect of it, the horn that Big Bill Thompson counseled his constituency to pick up.

Places need troubadours, laureates. They operate in odd guises²³ and rarely work solo. Some places demand them. The Chicago historian Perry Duis has noted that by the early 20th Century, “among [writers] who did comment on Chicago, there was an increasing tendency to focus on the city’s personality... instead of its physical characteristics” (Pierce, xix).

The Voice of Chicago has been integral to its image in the world for better than a century. Its personality, its “soul,” to use Duis’s words, are as essential to understanding it as its history – and perhaps do more to explain how and why the city has been formed as it has than historical analysis.

ON READERS

The bibliographer's muse and nemesis, beloved and feared, is his reader. Readers must be catered to without being coddled; they must be considered at the fore (these things aren't written for their authors, are they?) but how do you know whom to consider?

The terrain mapped here will be nothing particularly new to either historians of Chicago or American literature. I do not believe I've discovered anything obscured or forgotten. The titles I'm working with are all fairly familiar – those I use the term not to disparage my selections but to buttress their status as reliable and known. Therefore this project will be of the most utility to those who are unacquainted with the city: younger scholars, scholars of a different province looking for an introduction to the city.

The more experienced researcher may find some use in a centralization of titles and themes: a one-stop shop for Chicagoana. Otherwise they may simply enjoy this on nostalgic or referential terms, in the same way that reading a travel guide to your hometown is always amusing. There may be gaps in the picture and the view may be broad but it can be rather fun to look at home from a distance. It's certainly my hope that this will be seen in that light.

IN WHICH A FEW CRITERIA ARE PRESENTED

It should go without saying that a project like this needs its rules of engagement, its Marquis of Queensbury guidelines. Without them this could devolve quickly into an infinite laundry list. Bear in mind that there is no formal method shaping these criteria, other than a desire to find that Voice of Chicago as best as can be done.

First, this will only be a list of books. Movies, plays, television shows, sound recordings are all very meritorious, each deserving of its own compilation. I will leave that to other hands.

The books need to have been written in the 20th Century. While this rule will be flaunted twice, it won't be by much; and it's this rule that provides the list some much-needed strict structuring. A thematic bibliography can be twisted in all sorts of ways; a chronological one is what it is and not a lot can be done to that.

The books need to be set exclusively or primarily in Chicago or its immediate environs. A few hundred pages of *The Adventures of Augie March* are set in Mexico and on the sea, and a large chunk of *Sister Carrie* takes place in New York, but for the most part those are the only major exceptions.

The books need to be from Chicago. To me it seems that there is an enormous functional difference between books that are *from* a subject and books that are *of* a subject. The simplest illustration I can think of is that *The End of the Affair* is a book from Graham Greene while Norman Sherry's three-part biography is a book of Graham Greene. An easy enough concept to grasp in those terms but harder to pin down when the subject is a place. Books from Chicago emanate from within it; there is something essential to their tone and content that is representative of the city: its

populace, its geography, its history, its place in the world. What separates those from books of the city is that there is no sense of remove, of distance. I have chosen not to limit the list to books by residents of the city (though most, at first glance, are).

William T. Stead's *If Christ Came to Chicago* is by an Englishman who never lived in the city and is included here. Joseph Schwieterman and Dana Caspall's *The Politics of Place: A History of Zoning in Chicago* is by people who at least live in the city, but is not included. The distinction should become clearer in the bibliography itself.

UPSHOTS AND EXCLUSIONS

This project is not exhaustive. Up to now, however, this has been pointed out as a matter of framing and scope. Here it must also be noted that this shortcoming also serves as an admission of guilt: what of everything must be omitted because of my criteria?

From the first it seems apt to lament the constrictions of the word *bibliography*. I have chosen not to include films, television shows, and sound recordings, but also plays and works of visual art. Take the visual arts – a ponderously expansive term. Couldn't it be claimed, rather easily at that, that the Sears Tower and John Hancock Building or Mies van der Rohe's sumptuous constructions or Hopper's *Nighthawks* or Grant Wood's *American Gothic* in the Art Institute or even Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* sculpture in Millennium Park – known

affectionately as The Bean – are a part of Chicago’s Voice?²⁴ Certainly to the modern visitor each one of these things is in some way integrally Chicago.

Perhaps a slightly less abstract contender but far more voluminous is film. The Internet Movie Database lists 2397 films keyworded under “chicago-illinois.”²⁵ The organized crime exploits of Howard Hawks’ *Scarface* (1932), Billy Wilder’s *Some Like it Hot* (1959), and Brian DePalma’s *The Untouchables* (1987) have left an indelible mark; young people of a certain age probably can’t look at some Chicago landmarks without thinking of the shenanigans played out in the films of John Hughes (*The Breakfast Club*, 1985; *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*, 1986). *Medium Cool* (Haskell Wexler, 1969) one of the essential documents of the chaos that overwhelmed the city during the 1968 Democratic National Convention and *The Sting* (George Roy Hill, 1973) lovingly evokes the city’s spirit for grafting at the beginning of the century.

The film that is the most painful to exclude, though, is *Hoop Dreams* (Steve James, Peter Gilbert, Frederick Marx, 1994). *Hoop Dreams* cannot be viewed through any lens that doesn’t consider the enormous shadow cast over the city in the late 20th Century by Michael Jordan. A 1999 article in the *Christian Science Monitor* noted somewhat glibly: “Indeed, because of Jordan, children all over the world know this city as the home of the best basketball team on earth. Letters arrive from far-off places addressed simply, “Michael Jordan, Chicago.” With Jordan’s help, Chicago has become nearly as much of a dreamed-about, mythical place as Santa’s North Pole.”²⁶ Within the city he represented something even greater, a transcendent talent who showed the possible to be quite doable. And so for the two would be basketball

prodigies from Chicago's harder neighborhoods – Arthur Agee and William Gates – the opportunities provided by basketball, by Michael's game, are not just dreams but a reality simply waiting to happen. It is the imposition of the an actual, non-Jordaned reality into these two lives, in ways sadly peculiar to Chicago's flintier ghettos, that gives the film its daunting moral heft. It is certainly overreaching to say that dreams of athletic glory began in Chicago, but this particular strain of dream – “*Be like Mike*” as the Gatorade jingle went – has its very firm roots on the playgrounds of Garfield Park and Cabrini-Green.

What about music? Chicago's contributions to jazz and the blues remain ongoing and there would be no shortage of material to compile in an audiography of the city. I would like to point out one particular record whose inclusion would have been welcome: *Illinoise* (2005) by singer and songwriter Sufjan Stevens. Composed as the second in a series of records about each of the fifty states, Stevens's Chicago and Illinois are places of wonder and sadness; it is, as *The New York Times* called it “psychohistory via Americana in songs that metamorphose from wistful to grand, from historical character study to private reminiscence...Even the most elaborate constructions come across as homemade, touched with an optimism that is by no means naïve” (Pareles). In other words, a Chicago of a record. There are songs about the 1893 World's Fair and the Illinois and Michigan Canal, about the serial killer John Wayne Gacy, Casimir Pulaski Day, and Chief Blackhawk, who once presided over the land that became Chicago. A record of additional material was released in 2006 and included songs about Saul Bellow, Adlai Stevenson, and Jane Byrne, the city's first female mayor.

The long-running television show *E.R.* will be absent, as will Bozo the Clown; the iconic baseball announcer Harry Carry is nowhere to be seen; the film critics Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert and their opposable thumbs are left off.

David Mamet's plays (*Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*) have been passed over, as has the astounding, breathtaking photography of the Dan Ryan Expressway by Jay Wolke, collected in the book *Along the Divide*. When it was completed in 1962 the Ryan (as it's known to Chicagoans) was the widest expressway on earth and its placement had been deliberately moved by Mayor Richard J. Daley in order to provide a literal gulf between the Irish-Catholic neighborhoods that lay to the west (including his own home of Bridgeport) and the dense concentrations of public housing that lay to the east, in what was known as the State Street Corridor.²⁷ It's a sadder chapter in the city's history and Wolke's images are a suitably melancholy record of its legacy.

Of the works of fiction that did not make the final cut there are too many to bother with much singling out. There are a few nonetheless whose absence will be conspicuous and need at least brief mention (if not justification). Perhaps the most prominent omission is Richard Wright's *Native Son*.²⁸ Of a more recent vintage, Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* and Stuart Dybek's *The Coast of Chicago* merited strong consideration; the prohibition on books not set primarily in the city disqualified Frederick Exley's stunning and uproarious and ultimately overlong novel of alcoholism and disappointment, *A Fan's Notes*, which includes a dizzying forty page *opera buffa* of drink and fractured love and misplaced grandeur set in Chicago—"the city that gave everything and asked nothing" (137).²⁹ A very

late cut was *The Man With the Golden Arm* by Nelson Algren (who does make the final list in another form). With a main character whose nom de guerre – Frankie Machine – conjures images of Chicago in multiple senses; its hyper-naturalistic depiction of Division Street lowlifes certainly makes a strong case for inclusion but in the end I felt that there were several works that were included and when placed side-by-side, made Algren’s novel somewhat redundant.

One of the trickier decisions involved Studs Terkel’s *Division Street: America*. While the Division Street of the title is a metaphoric avenue and not the street of the same name that runs east-west through the Near North Side of Chicago, its interviews with people from the proverbial varied walks of life (social activist, hot dog vendor, housewife) were conducted for Terkel’s radio program on Chicago’s WFMT. The book is, quite literally *voices* of Chicago, but perhaps too much so. The Voice of Chicago, as defined here, is a construction, an aggregation, not an extant thing. What the Voice *is* is collective declaration – “*Here we are;*” a series of aesthetic and intellectual leitmotifs that are generated because of their placement within the city. Terkel’s subjects speak from the city, not for it, not of it, and therein lies the difference, and the reason *Division Street: America* is not on the final list.

Eight Men Out, Eliot Asinof’s heartbreaking and gripping narrative of the 1919 World Series, thrown by the White Sox at the behest of crime boss Arnold Rothstein, is off the list.³⁰ (An event that gave rise to the brutal but recently-obviated line that the White Sox had thrown a World Series more recently than they’d won one.)

The very last book cut from the bibliography was what's known semi-formally as the *Plan of Chicago*. The *Plan* was created by Daniel Burnham, the patron saint of Chicago planning, along with the Paris-trained Edward Bennett. The 1909 report was a massive document, designed to bring Chicago up to contemporary standards and prepare it for a future as a world-class city (a process doubtless begun by 1893 Columbian Exposition, a project largely spearheaded by Burnham). "No other document in modern times has had as much influence on the growth of Chicago, or indeed, on city planning throughout the United States and the world" (Mayer and Wade, 276). The Plan included details for everything from the construction of museums and railway stations to the building of a semi-connected island in a shallow part of Lake Michigan. The plan also took Chicago's place "as a center of industry and traffic" under consideration, calling for the widening of boulevards to alleviate traffic congestion, as well as a series of axis roads running into and out of the Loop. Burnham's Plan was a tremendous effort aimed at societal betterment through city planning, a triumph of greenspaces and public recreation, a work that "creates pictures of a City Beautiful, calls upon civic character to realize the goal, and characterizes Chicagoans as a people who can and will act in the best public interest to realize the vision" (*The Encyclopedia of Chicago*).

So why is it consigned to the exception pile? It is certainly exemplary of the can-doism that's been mentioned before; certainly made more of a physical impression upon the actual city than many of the books that were included. I can only say that Burnham's work, in an ineluctable but definite way, strikes me as not *from* Chicago. This is the *Plan of Chicago*, after all. The genius of the work emanates from

the city but at a distance, from a point of remove – a removal necessary, probably, to properly view the city planned.

A SHORT AND NECESSARY HISTORICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE CITY³¹

In order to fully situate and comprehend the Voice one needs some introduction to the speaker. The following short historical bibliography is intended to give a broad but useful picture of the city's history from the 1600s to nearly the present.³² I have tried here to compile a list of general histories (with a few exceptions) roughly modeled on the flag of the City of Chicago.³³ Much of the material presented here precedes the scope of the "official" bibliography, and is offered in chronological order according to the historical period addressed.

Pierce, Bessie Louise (ed). *As Others See Chicago: Impressions of Visitors, 1673-1933*. University of Chicago Press: 2004.

Compiled to coincide with the 1933 Century of Progress World's Fair, this collection of travelers accounts charts the city's rise from a trading outpost to an international hub of culture and commerce. It contains descriptions of the city by French traders, outpost politicians, Eastern speculators, but most amusingly, European intellectuals, like Rudyard Kipling's famous "real city" essay and a short piece by G.K. Chesterton about the city's criminal culture where he notes that the city "has the good taste to

assassinate nobody except assassins.” Pierce is perhaps best remembered for her three volume *History of Chicago* (1937, 1940, 1957), but this work represents the most thorough aggregation of those rare and invaluable city insights: those of outsiders.

Miller, Donald L. *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*. Simon & Schuster: 1997.

Culminating with the 1893 World’s Fair, Miller’s history likewise begins with Chicago as a cold and muddy hinterland but in his exhaustive rendition, Miller manages to peg the ascent of the city to that of the nation – finding in Chicago the wonderful metaphor that by the end of the 19th Century one could have moved from the country to the city “without ever leaving Chicago.” A city that “throbbed the true life” (as Miller has Frank Norris putting it) can pack a lot into 200 years; Miller’s narrative sweeps across the early expeditions, and then the city’s beginnings: its explosive industrial growth and the stunning campaign of city planning that followed. The “epic” of Chicago is presented as a struggle – and ultimately triumph – of wills against an unlikely and uncooperative setting.

Cronon, William. *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. Norton: 1992.

Though Cronon’s history, like *City of the Century*, concludes with the Columbian Exposition, its approach is something altogether different. Cronon’s interest is in Chicago’s natural history, its ecological character as a factor in the city’s

development. By this logic Chicago was well-situated to become the crucial American midpoint that it did – a proverbial perfect storm of geography, geology, culture, and nature allowed Chicago to become the East’s gateway West, and, just as importantly, the induction point from West to the East (think grain, lumber, livestock, and so forth). Chicago was, essentially, America’s first regional metropolis, a point Cronon finds to have great significance.

Miller, Ross. *The Great Chicago Fire*. The University of Illinois Press: 2000.

Not so much a historical account as a social, cultural, and psycho-history of the defining event of Chicago’s past.³⁴ A third of Chicago’s buildings were destroyed in the 1871 conflagration (the effects of the resulting housing shortage could be felt well into the mid-20th Century) while the psychic trauma of the blaze impressed itself as a particularly American brand of apocalypse. But the subsequent reconstruction gave rise to both a new sort of city (the “odd sense of euphoria” that Miller describes is best witnessed in the strangely chipper “Cheer up” headline in the *Tribune* the following day) and an urban mythology that only cemented Chicago’s status as a marvel of ingenuity. “Here lies the key to the Chicago condition:” Miller writes, “in the same instant the fire created a possibility for radical freedom it also produced enormous anxieties in the face of such release.”

Green, James. *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America*. Pantheon: 2006.

Given that industry was so central to Chicago's rise it should not be surprising that Chicago was central to the rise of the American labor movement – an influx of American labor and liberal European thought cultivated some of the more radical flanks of the early American workers' rights campaign. While it is not remembered very widely today, the bomb thrown at an 1886 workers' rally that killed seven Chicago policemen and led to the execution of four union organizers caused a national furor and a frenzied response.³⁵ The identity of the bomb thrower remains unknown and the event forever changed the course of American labor relations, “usher[ing] in fifty years of recurrent industrial violence.”

Drake, St. Clair and Crayton, Horace. *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. The University of Chicago Press: 1993.

In the 20th Century, spurred on by the industrial opportunities of two world wars as well as the lingering specter of institutionalized racism in the South, Chicago attracted thousands upon thousands of new black residents. Drake and Crayton's monumental study of this emergent community – and its subcity within Chicago – was a product of two seminal institutions: the Works' Progress Administration, which gave economic support, and the Chicago School of Sociology, the urban ethnographic specialization that originated at the University of Chicago. Not a history but an

exhaustive, almost anthropological study of how blacks lived in Chicago, Drake and Crayton's work is perhaps the most extensive examination of any single part of Chicago's population.

Mayer, Harold M. and Wade, Richard C. *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*. The University of Chicago Press: 1969.

While the transformation of Chicago from settlement to city to burned city to World's Fair was as dramatic as it was expeditious, the changes undergone in the city during the 20th Century were in some ways just as remarkable. Mayer and Wade begin in 1830, much later than Cronon and Donald Miller, but they run all the way to 1969. Their approach is mostly documentary, extensively illustrated with photographs and other contemporary materials. By letting the city tell its own story the rise from "Prairie Seaport" to the birthplace of the skyscraper, the blues and the atomic bomb seems nearly inevitable, as the place is practically overrun with planners and dreamers.

Bogira, Steve. *Courtroom 302: A Year Behind the Scenes in an American Courthouse*. Knopf: 2005.

Closer in spirit to *Black Metropolis* than any of the histories listed here, Bogira spent a year in close contact with the attorneys, participants, and staff in Judge James Locallo's courtroom at the Cook County Criminal Courthouse at 26th and California

on Chicago's Southwest Side. The result is a somewhat grim illustration – and while the subtitle may imply a more national theme will emerge the story is still inherently Chicagoan: the results of the first Mayor Daley's segregationist policies and a history of judicial malfeasance are all part and parcel of the city's present day landscape.

“Blacks in Chicago might pray for justice, but they wouldn't bet on it,” Bogira writes.

The Voice of Chicago: A Bibliography

Entries are chronological based on original publication date. An asterisk (*) indicates that a particular title in hand is a reissue and the parenthetical year is the original date of publication.

Stead William T. *If Christ Came to Chicago!: A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer*. Chicago Historical Bookworks: 1990.* (1894)

William T. Stead was not a Chicagoan, not an American. He was a British journalist – one of the best known of his time, editor of the *Review of Reviews* in London – who spent four months in Chicago on the heels of the Columbian Exposition. He was a reformer with a decidedly Christian bent, an admirer of early American populism and skeptical of America's habit of creating tycoons. “When Stead reached Chicago on October 31 [1894], the closing day of the exposition, the city [was] hit hard by the economic depression which had gripped the nation... He found a corrupt municipal government and ineffective welfare agencies either unable to cope with or indifferent

to the plight of the unfortunate” (Baylen, 422). He spent his time in the city giving lectures and closely investigating the vice district known as The Levee (today just south of The Loop).³⁶ He toured The Levee’s police stations and whorehouses, saloons and street corners. The result of his time in The Levee was a book he hoped would inspire not condemnation of the city’s overlooked and undesirables – what he termed the “miscellaneous tide of human life run[ning] fast” – but a sense of Christian compassion for those whose lives had been blackened by “the predatory rich.” His depictions of the falling-down drunks at the Harrison Street police station, the beaten whores and their pimps, were not meant to titillate (though they did; the book sold 70,000 copies its first day in print) but as a call to arms. Stead’s *Christ in Chicago* was interested in the actions of the financier Charles Yerkes, the “trinity” of Marshall Field, Phillip Armour, and George Pullman, and the “snap vote” of the city’s aldermen.³⁷

A self-styled crusader, Stead found a worthy cause in *The Levee*. “I can only say that for my own part I marvel with exceeding great wonderment that a system so rotten and so unjust could be allowed to continue...” Stead devotes little time to the individuals of *The Levee*, the particular battered souls whose betterment he so desperately seeks. What emerges here is Chicago the polar, a place of extremes. One hundred thirteen years after the publication of Stead’s book there is something particularly familiar about seeing a sentence with “wonderment” followed shortly by “rotten.” There is George Pullman’s model city south of Chicago and a haven for literal vermin at the Harrison Street police station. There is Maggie, the whore looking for a Christian home, and “the Hannibal, the Tamberlane” of dry goods,

Marshall Field. Other cities may have presented extremes of wealth and poverty but in Chicago things seemed dire and institutional enough to conjure “the thought of Him... and applying that ideal to the actual circumstances of civic life in Chicago.” Stead punctuated the book with a hand drawn map of The Levee, indicating which plots were brothels, which pawn brokers, and which saloons. It’s a colorful map.³⁸

Stead returned to the city thirteen years later. “It looks like the same old Chicago,” he said.³⁹ Five years later he died aboard the *Titanic*, where he was noted for his heroism, his “superhuman composure.”

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. Doubleday: 1997.* (1900)

By the 1930s H.L. Mencken was calling Chicago “the Literary Capital of the United States.” What happened? Not *Sister Carrie*, not at first blush, at least. Like his doomed Hurstwood, who is mocked by the bright lights of New York before extinguishing himself, Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* was a failure.⁴⁰ Today the book’s reputation is in little doubt. Carrie Meeber and her 1889 voyage into Chicago – the burgeoning West Side is described as “a gigantic sketch of its own future” – are roundly considered exemplars of not just Chicago fiction but American fiction. Let’s pay close attention to Alfred Kazin’s remark quoted in the book’s introduction: “Dreiser was accepted as a whole new class, a tendency, a disturbing movement in American life, an eruption from below” (xxi). Carrie, drawn from the midwestern provinces to the infant metropolis, eventually winds up with a view from the top but not before skimming the bottom, running though a very similar geographical and

moral route to the one Stead ran some years earlier. But throughout she remains attuned to the tone and hum of the rising city. Chicago “was connected with something of which she knew nothing, and was doing things which she could not understand. It was so with the vast railroad yards, with the crowded array of vessels she saw at the river, and the huge factories which were over the way lining the water’s edge... The great streets were wall-lined mysteries to her. The vast offices, strange mazes which concerned far-off individuals of importance.”

Dreiser’s was the first of two now-considered major works of the decade. The other, of course, was Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906). And even though Sinclair’s depiction of the life and work in Chicago’s stockyards is generally unsurpassed, and brought into existence a federal agency (the Food and Drug Administration) but *Sister Carrie* seems to be a more indelibly Chicago book.⁴¹ The rows of streets and stores, “the stretching city,” is still a frontier, still a world of new discovery, but one that can be traversed by an altogether new vehicle: money.

The Jungle may have misery but *Sister Carrie* has ingenuity, capitalism. Once introduced to Chicago something hedonistic and predatory emerges from Carrie’s character; inured, armored, no longer a vulnerable new arrival, she *needs* to thrive. As the critic Walter Benn Michaels notes, “Desire... is most powerful when it outstrips its object” (383). While Carrie may not stoop to the level of venality Stead crusaded in aid of she comes close. The city’s lot is improving – the top can be clawed to through an office by one so inclined. But the lot must improve itself. There are no helping hands, no charity. “There is nothing so inspiring in life as the sight of a

legitimate ambition, no matter how incipient... Carrie was now lightened by a touch of this divine afflatus.”

Farrell, James T. *Studs Lonigan*. Library of America: 2004.* (1935)

“Let ‘em do their damndest; Studs Lonigan would tell the world that he was growing up.

“He goofed around for a while in the vacant lot just off the corner of Fifty-eighth and Indiana. He batted stones. He walked around kicking a tin can, imagining it was something very important...”

Chicago’s Irish South Side would produce a handful of the city’s mayors in the 20th Century, to say nothing to a dominant attendant political bloc. Insular, provincial, reactionary, and, for lack of a better term, racist, the neighborhoods of Back of the Yards and Bridgeport would not provide so much the setting for the growth of James T. Farrell’s Studs Lonigan but the impetus, the engine – or the root of the inertia. Farrell gave birth to Studs in three separate novels: *Young Lonigan*, *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan*, and *Judgment Day*; in no other case does the city speak as clearly *through* a character as it does with Studs. Whether he fights or dotes on his surroundings, Studs is purely of a piece with his environment. After a sexual encounter in Washington Park Studs peers up past the foliage and into the South Side night seeing “so many stars like jewels.” Studs is neither denied the city nor offered it. Like Chicago’s other heroes what happens to Studs is up to Studs, and as someone

who will “stare sleepily at the June morning that crashed through his bedroom window,” a characterological torpor will define him.

Studs is a meaningful counter to Carrie Meeber.⁴² If the city’s rise to 1900 is concurrent with hers, then the city’s malaise – its hangover – is all Studs. As Ann Douglas writes in her introduction, “Red Kelly, one of Studs’s pals who gets a city job as an alderman in the late 1920s, finds his paycheck stopped in 1931; the city of Chicago, near bankruptcy, did, indeed, stop paying its teachers and some of its municipal officials in the early 1930s” (xiv). The extensive growth and civic euphoria with which the 19th Century ended did not carry over into the next century – not for all, at least. Studs, like Carrie, probably would have drifted through Stead’s orbit had the timing been right. By the mid-1910s, with the machine politics of Big Bill Thompson firmly entrenched, the city’s fortunes turned. Nineteen nineteen remains a particularly dark year for the city: the White Sox threw the World Series, and in July a race riot that began at a beach on 29th Street would last for several days and kill dozens.⁴³ Studs himself takes part in the riots, “searching for niggers,” finding a ten year old boy who Studs and his friends beat and humiliate brutally.⁴⁴ It is a rare moment of energy for Studs. He is mostly a spectator, angered by the game he watches but cannot/will not participate in. If the city is a chance for self-creation, then the opposite must be true as well: it is a miserable place to stand on the corner of Indiana and Fifty-eighth and watch the world go by.

Algren, Nelson. *Chicago: City on the Make*. University of Chicago Press: 2001.*
(1951)

The key consideration for selecting books for this list was that they be *from* Chicago rather than *of* Chicago. So Nelson Algren's prose poem *Chicago: City on the Make* represents a curious exception. Neither from nor of: it *is* Chicago.

The nuts and bolts of it are this: seven free-form sections roughly comprising something of a history, something of a Baedeker (the parts slightly and not so much), something of a map of the city's emotional layout. The references to Chicago lore and arcana come hard and fast – the 1919 White Sox, Samuel Insull, Robert Hutchins, Hinky Dink Kenna. In many ways the book resembles a reference guide from within, Chicago's inner Britannica. Written in a literary-slang pidgin (“‘The slums take their revenge,’ the white-haired poet warned us thirty-two American League seasons and Lord-Knows-How-Many-Swindles-Ago”) the book is nothing if not (double metaphor coming up here) *divided*. Studs Terkel, in his introduction to the 2001 edition, calls it “a haunted, split-hearted ballad.” Algren himself calls Chicago “a Jekyll-and-Hyde sort of burg,” and this is the undeniable crux, not just of *City on the Make* but of Chicago's Voice as well. The city is gulfs and schisms. There is no way around this. The geographical and physical metaphors can be constructed for days but in the end it comes down to – and always has – divisions:

“And since it's a ninth-inning town, the ball game never being over till the last man is out, it remains Jane Addams' town as well as Big Bill's. The ball game isn't over. But it's a rigged ball game.”⁴⁵

Or: “One face for the Go-Getters and one for the Go-Get-It-Yerselfers. One for the poets and one for the promoters. One for the good boy and one for the bad...One for the White Sox and none for the Cubs.”⁴⁶

The figure looming over Algren’s shoulder is of course Carl Sandburg, whose 1916 *Chicago Poems* stands as one of the century’s finest examples of sloganeering.⁴⁷ Sandburg addressed the city and all its attendant figures: “a Jew fish crier down on Maxwell Street,” “Mrs. Gabrielle Giovannitti com[ing] down Peoria Street every morning,” “Runners on the prairie.” And even though Sandburg suggests the melancholy tone that will fill Algren’s work thirty-five years on, it still stands at something of a remove from the city; Sandburg’s eye was not one for passion, while you can practically hear Algren shaking his head somberly when he writes in the afterword to the 1961 edition of *City on the Make*, “There are a number of answers to the old query about why writers so often take a one-way flight from Midway or O’Hare and never come back here.”

Ultimately *City on the Make* is a lament for a vanished city – Algren loves the low, will not brook the high – but is still the city’s book. It is the most closely dependent of all the books on this list, the one most related to what came before it (and to an extent, what followed). It may not have a Carrie Meeber or a Moses Herzog or a Jozef Pronek but has, simply, from beneath the El tracks, its Voice:

“‘City of big shoulders’ was how the white-haired poet put it. Maybe meaning that the shoulders had to get that wide because they had so many bone-deep grudges to settle.”⁴⁸

Bellow, Saul. *The Adventures of Augie March*. Penguin: 1999.* (1953.)

“I am an American, Chicago-born—Chicago, that somber city—and go about things as I have taught myself, free-style, and will make the record in my own way: first to knock, first to be admitted; sometimes an innocent knock, sometimes a not so innocent. But a man’s character is his fate, says Heraclitus, and in the end there isn’t any way to disguise the nature of the knocks by acoustical work on the door or gloving the knuckles.”^{49 50}

It seems a bit difficult to begin any discussion of *The Adventures of Augie March* any place but the beginning itself. The first six words themselves, the most dynamic assertion of an individual since “Call me Ishmael” could spark any number of contemplative responses. But now it’s the place as much as the man: *I am an American, Chicago-born*. The children of Jewish immigrants, refugees and better-life seekers, pogrom’d and unwanted, now relocated to places like the West Side of Chicago, Humboldt Park, to be exact, where Augie lives with his brothers and mother, as well as Grandma Lausch, not a relation but a aging and would-be majestic Ukrainian force in the home.

What are Augie’s adventures? Since the answers will be the same, we might as well revisit Martin Amis’s quotation while we’re at it: What is “a Chicago of a novel”?

In the same piece Amis later says: “Augie is on a journey but he isn’t going anywhere. If he has a destination it is simply a stop called Full Consciousness. In a sense Augie is heading to the point where he will become the author of his own story” (Amis, 117). The points along the way include working as a gofer for Einhorn, a crippled real estate magnate (“the first superior man I ever knew”), stealing medical books, and, after some time, as a trainer of an eagle named Caligula in Mexico (where he will meet one Leon Trotsky) and as a seaman on a doomed ship.

Augie is without bearings. All he desires is the unquantifiable value of experience. Studs Lonigan was helpless at the sight of the passing world; Augie longs to hurl himself into it headfirst.⁵¹ For the purposes of what? Of self-creation. To delineate himself. Sprung forth from the house with his brothers Simon and Georgie into a world of “big personalities, destiny molders, and heavy-water brains; Machiavellis and wizard evildoers, big wheels and imposers-upon, absolutists.” Philip Roth found the key words of *Augie March* to be “democratic and cosmopolitan” – a marriage of high and low, the popular, the street-corner, the everyman brought into line with the urbane, the shining, “big personalities.” It is as inherently Chicago as the night-school educated, malaprop-spouting populist Richard J. Daley soliciting a sculpture from Pablo Picasso with a check and a baseball jacket. In all of Augie’s wanderings the common thread is a desire to understand and *be seen*, laments all too familiar for the capital of flyover country.

If history teaches one lesson about Chicago it’s that the city would have been nothing had not the desire to *become something* inspired a number of hearty and sagacious men to take steps to make something of this prairie murkland. This, more than that of Carrie Meeber, more than that of Studs Lonigan, is the course Augie follows.⁵² Chicago’s history may rival the enterprise of Carrie Meeber but its character, its integument belongs to Augie March, a self-dubbed “Columbus of the near-at-hand.”⁵³

Bellow, Saul. *Herzog*. Penguin: 1964.

Up to this point there has been relatively scarce mention of one of the locuses of Chicago's intellectual production in the 20th Century – if not *the* locus – the University of Chicago. Rockefeller's neogothic neo-Oxford in Hyde Park certainly did its part. It gave birth to two Chicago Schools – economics and sociology, plus the Committee on Social Thought, the atom bomb, the first Heisman Trophy winner, and, to boot, neoconservatism. Philip Roth took his masters there; TS Eliot, Philip Glass, Barack Obama, and so on.⁵⁴ Saul Bellow began his education there, but actually graduated from Northwestern. Still, the milieu never left him. He would teach there later in life but the place retains a youthful, exploratory tinge in Bellow's work, and nowhere is that more apparent than in *Herzog*. This is certainly not the high to the high-low dichotomy in treatments of Chicago – Moses Herzog, intellectual, harebrain, flighty, is not above handling guns, is prone to accidents. He is a product of his environment: "He notified himself that he was passing out, and he fainted away. They spread him out on the grass. He heard a locomotive—the Illinois Central." Herzog writes letters (to kin, to friends, to the famous, the dead⁵⁵) and tries to reassemble his life from a crushed marriage, particularly his relationship with his young daughter. But mostly, like his Bellow predecessor, he tries to find his bearings in the Chicago galaxy.

Chicago and Bellow operated on familiar terms. A catalogue of Bellocia – *The Dean's December*, *Humboldt's Gift*, *Ravelstein*, *More Die of Heartbreak* – has as its center Chicago, and indeed, it can be easily argued that any one of those titles could take the place of *Herzog* or any other title here. *Ravelstein*, in particular, is a worthy contender, the novelized story of Bellow's friendship with the AIDS-afflicted

sudden celebrity Allan Bloom, whose *The Closing of the American Mind* was a shock bestseller and a piece indicative of the political mood at the University of Chicago in the late 1980s. *The Dean's December* (despite a large section in Romania) has its Hyde Park inter-office academic politics and racially-charged murder trial while *Humboldt's Gift* and *More Die of Heartbreak* have their varying degrees of Chicago-brand political and extra-legal shenanigans.⁵⁶ But perhaps the most personally-colored of his Chicago titles is his *Collected Stories*, the last of his books to be published in his lifetime; “A Silver Dish,” “Zetland: By a Character Witness,” and “Looking for Mr. Green” all embody the same high-low affection for the city and its supernumeraries.

The cuckold Moses Herzog exists to be in his place; he and Chicago breathe the same air: “He gunned his motor at the stoplight, trying to decide which was the faster route to Harper Avenue. The new Ryan Expressway was very quick but it would land him in the thick of the Negro traffic on West 51st Street, where people promenaded, or cruised in their cars.” He is neither hero nor villain, does not directly correspond to Algren’s Jane Addams or Big Bill Thompson; but rather to the quieter, less evoked presence of Drake and Crayton, or, better yet, to the unknown, unseen scribblers toiling away on Harper Avenue. For an institution that boasts Nobel Prize-winners the way most boast first round draft picks, the University of Chicago was often a silent partner in the city, an unheard factor in Hyde Park. It was, naturally, a hotbed of racial antagonism – a place of white privilege amidst the long arm of the ghetto, but that was fully keeping within Bellow’s province. You couldn’t have the city without its rust, without its gnarled edges. There was no Gold Coast without a

Black Belt. The gleaming skyline had its high-rise housing project alter ego. It wasn't a case of high-and-low, it was always *no-high-without-low*.

Howland, Bette. *Blue in Chicago*. Harper & Row: 1978.

As of this writing – Autumn, 2006 – every book on this list (including the historical bibliography) remains in print save for one. Given that several of these books could qualify under the commercially damning heading of “local history,” this seems to be a bit of a feat.⁵⁷ And there is a fairly sensible argument that holds that if a book is not in print, there is a *reason* for that – often not one that would lend itself to publicizing the book's merits, let alone its inclusion in a bibliography suggesting anything essential about a particular matter.

So that leaves us with two questions: Why is Bette Howland's *Blue in Chicago* out of print and why is it on this list?

The first question is open for debate. The fact that Howland has not published a book in 23 years probably isn't helping her cause, though that can't be the only factor. Without diving into a debate about the tendencies of the publishing industry, the only possibility that will be put forth here is that the genre of memoir generally has a limited shelf-life, and most people have short memories.⁵⁸

Howland's memoir is divided into six sections (mistakenly described as “stories” in Gale's *Contemporary Authors*) about her life in Chicago: as a divorced mother of two boys, as niece to a Jewish cop married to a Southern woman (“I tolt her beige blond and she dit it silver blond instet”), about the death of her grandmother –

about a general condition of being “blue.” Her awareness of the city is keen, mostly blue-collar, closely attuned to her gently distanced but melancholy mood:

The elevated went up in 1893 to trundle ladies in bustles and whalebone to the world’s fair. Now it comes pitching round the bend, shooting out sparks, eyeball to eyeball with smashed glass, bombed-out craters, curtains fluttering like torn stockings. At Stony Island, the terminus, it sits and shutters for a while. Nothing around but the prairie.⁵⁹

So what is *Blue in Chicago* doing on this list? This steely memoir from beyond the backlist? For one, it is a memoir. Chicago is not a city without memory, or that exists solely in history and imagination. Howland comes in part and parcel with the city where she was reared. When she works briefly at a public library in Uptown she says the neighborhood “lies a few miles north of the Loop along the lakefront, so it is bounded by high rises, motel architecture, breakwaters, the twinge of lights on the Outer Drive. Lake Michigan spreads its deep blue rumor. Walls of glass greet the rising sun.” She evokes names and places that are, in a sense, exclusive, known best to a certain breed of Chicagoan: the last night at the Clark movie theater, a grindhouse in the Loop that used to have a separate ladies’ section; the resorts of southeastern Lake Michigan in Indiana and Michigan, “Hspuda’s, Redmiak’s, Sixta’s,” inevitably Chicago characters: “the Clark Street panhandler.”

And therein lies Howland’s gift, her inimitable contribution to the literature of Chicago. No other writer on this list seems to have been hewn from the same motherland-cloth, is as shimmeringly evocative of a place, what John McPhee called (albeit under grossly different circumstances) “a sense of where you are.” There is no doubt where Howland is. No question at all.

Klinenberg, Eric. *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. The University of Chicago Press: 2002.

On August 25, 1995, the *Chicago Sun-Times* ran article on page 14 under the heading “List of Those Who Died Alone.” The piece consisted of forty-plus names, their ages, their addresses. They were anywhere from 40 to 90 years old; they lived on the far South Side, in Uptown and Edgewater, West of the Loop and in Bridgeport. There was a Vargas and a Stojkovic, a Laszhiazza, a Ozienkiewicz, a McCann. In essence, a rather succinct cross-sample of the lives that make up Chicago’s periphery. The oddly Victorian headline gives way to this somber, equally Victorian-sounding news:

“These are the mid-July heat wave victims whose bodies have not been claimed. Forty-two of them will be buried this morning by the Cook County medical examiner’s office in a paupers’ service at a south suburban cemetery...”⁶⁰

The second half of the 20th Century was not terrifically kind to Chicago. When the 1933 World’s Fair celebrated A Century of Progress the name was apt. In a hundred years Chicago had gone from rough settlement to city of the world. But in the years that followed the Second World War, Chicago, like most major Rust Belt cities, found itself in several states of decline. It did experience some renewal, some cause for celebration in this period under the reign of Richard J. Daley, but not nearly enough to staunch the civic hemorrhaging. *The Economist*, recounting its 1980 survey of Chicago,

found a city whose “façade of downtown prosperity” masked a creaking political machine, the erosion of its economic base and some of the most serious racial problems in America. There followed an intensely painful

decade of industrial decline and political instability during which jobs, people and companies all left Chicago while politicians bickered and racial antagonisms flared or festered (18 March, 2006).

And while the city today, for the most part, sits at a level of surprising and impressive prosperity, the state of the city at the end of the century is best captured by Eric Klinenberg's *Heat Wave*. Klinenberg presents a city on the verge of restoration, churning downtown and in the affluent neighborhoods but stagnant beneath a century's worth of negligence in the poorer districts. This divided city was pitifully helpless when a meteorological disaster struck.

The Chicago heat wave of 1995 lasted for five days, from July 12 to July 16, 1995. On July 13 the city recorded its highest official temperature ever of 106 degrees at Midway Airport; heat indices were some twenty degrees higher. 525 people died in that period but the Cook County Coroner later adjusted the total to 739 – more than twice the total of the Great Fire of 1871. It was one of the deadliest weather events in the country prior to Hurricane Katrina. Like Katrina, a major event had taken place, but like Katrina as well, the staggering inability of officials to respond and help beggared the question *how could this happen here?* City Health Commissioner Daniel Alvarez said, “We’re talking about people who die because they neglect themselves.”

So how did it happen? Meteorologically the city became what is known as an “Urban heat island,” where the city’s density, combined with the heat and cloud cover in the evenings, did not allow for any cooling at night. But beyond that, the city was simply unprepared. Klinenberg notes that a composite victim would have been an elderly man living alone with few, if any, outside contacts; without social support – let alone the material means to best the heat – many victims simply expired without

anyone ever noticing. Generally frightened – the *Tribune* ran a headline on July 13 of “City Murders on Rise with the Thermometer” – and mistrustful of the city’s social services, there was no safety net, no eye kept on this vulnerable population segment.⁶¹

It may seem a reach to include *Heat Wave* as part of the Voice of the city, and in an aesthetic or stylistic sense, it certainly is the odd man out of the bunch. Still, it represents a crucial moment for the city, a point in time not just on the brink of a century but of a transformation. Within a few years of this Chicago would be leaving behind the violent, fractious image that marked its end of the 1900s⁶² – and *Heat Wave* stands as a memento mori, a snapshot of how the 20th Century closed on Chicago, and how many strides the city has already taken since then.

Cohen, Adam and Taylor, Elizabeth. *American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Daley, His Battle for Chicago and the Nation*. Little, Brown: 2000.

In the introductory matter to this bibliography it was stated that the most iconic Chicago figures of the 20th Century were Al Capone and Michael Jordan. True as that may be, it stops short of a full civic definition. The course of events in Chicago – and by extension in varying degrees, the United States and the world at large – were the sole province of Richard J. Daley. In his 21 years as mayor (1955-1976; he died, semi-literally, in office) Daley irrevocably shaped the city’s character. He presided over a political machine that resembled the despised eastern bloc more than Washington.⁶³ His power was absolute; as both mayor and head of the Cook County Democratic apparatus he created a city government almost devoid of opposition.⁶⁴

His word was law. His word was also *big*. He gave Chicago the world's busiest airport, the tallest skyscraper, the widest expressway. But in a saddeningly perfect illustration of Daley's perverse and single-minded vision of power, he finagled the placement that expressway, the Dan Ryan, to create a buffer between his own Irish neighborhood and a collection of massive public housing projects less than a mile to the east. He obliterated an entire neighborhood, an established Italian enclave, to bring Chicago a viable branch of the University of Illinois. He did his best to blunt and retard the progress of the Civil Rights Movement while working hard to keep Chicago's blacks a subservient cog in his machine. He famously orchestrated the "police riots" of the 1968 Democratic National Convention; he was a party kingmaker at the national level, and, as the legend goes, probably *did* manipulate voting totals in Chicago wards to ensure the 1960 presidential victory of John F. Kennedy. He was a burly, unattractive, ineloquent man from Bridgeport, and it was his autarchic, his rotten strong-arming of everyone in sight that kept Chicago from reaching the depths of decline that afflicted Cleveland or St. Louis or Detroit; the momentum the city knows today was set in motion by the graceless hands of Richard J. Daley.

Suffice it to say that a figure this monumental has inspired a great deal of literature. Among the more interesting are two by Milton Rakove, a sociologist who studied under Leo Strauss at the University of Chicago. Turning an ethnographic eye to the Democratic machine he wrote a pair of fascinating studies, *Don't Make No Waves*, *Don't Back No Losers* and *We Don't Want Nobody Sent* that capture the Daley apparatus from the ground level up. Len O' Connor's *Clout* depicts a Daley

more adept at scheming than politics. Alderman Leon Depres, who served the area around Hyde Park and the University of Chicago for several decades (always as an independent, thereby often putting him in the same room as Chicago's few and reactionary Republicans, though Depres's politics were and are liberal and progressive) recounts life as the opposition in *Challenging the Daley Machine*.

The runner-up for the Daley spot on this list was Mike Royko's *Boss*, a brutal and caustic condemnation of a thundering bully, beginning with its legendary day-in-the-life-of-the-mayor ("He spots Al, calls out his name, and gives him a two-handed handshake, the maximum in City Hall affection"). Royko himself was a man of some stature in Chicago, a columnist at all three of its papers (including the late *Daily News*) and an unabashed enemy of Daley. *Boss* is swift and clipped, somewhat like Daley himself, a terse rendering of a man ruling by the backside of his hand. Cohen and Taylor's *American Pharaoh* is a plain-spoken history, but in its exhaustion of the facts and scope of its narrative gives range to the Voice. Daley's youth in Bridgeport, his inauguration into Irish cronyism and city politics, his rather improbable but wholly self-designed rise through Chicago's Democratic machine, and ultimately his vast rule are treated patiently and precisely. It is a fittingly bulky book for its subject.

Daley the Elder will remain a figure of debate among Chicagoans for generations because his impact on Chicago has no foreseeable half-life.⁶⁵ More than any other civic politician this country has seen, perhaps, Daley's impression on his city is impossible to miss. The beautiful and the ugly, the skyscraping and the choked-off. He had a hand in all of it. It would be very easy to dismiss Daley as a racist and a low-grade dictator – both charges he was guilty of – but anyone walking

the emptied, dull expanses just blocks from downtown St. Louis, or looking at parts of Detroit so neglected and desolate that they've actually turned *pastoral* (there are wild turkey on the streets of outer Detroit) may have to appreciate, if only grudgingly, the world of difference that Daley made.

Hemon, Aleksandar. *Nowhere Man*. Vintage: 2002.

The question now that stands is where are we? Or, better tailored to this undertaking, what does it sound like? The answer seems to be – *Just the same as it did before*:

Across Broadway, they were tearing down a Shoney's: what used to be its parking lot was just a mud field now. The building was windowless; floors ripped out, cables hanging from the ceiling like nerves. Just in front of Pronek, a throbbing car stopped at a street light, inhabited by a teenager who had a shield of gold chains on his chest. He was drumming on the wheel with his index fingers, then looked up, pointed one of his fingers at Pronek, and pretended to shoot him. (Hemon, 145)

Aleksandar Hemon's *Nowhere Man* is not as classically a Chicago novel as *Studs Lonigan* or *Augie March*. Stretches of it are set in Sarajevo and Kiev; the heart of its titular man, Jozef Pronek, belongs more to his native Bosnia than to the Chicago he finds himself in during the brutal Balkan wars of the 1990s. Still, the setting is hardly incidental or accidental – it is a city of snow and Jordan's Bulls, thick midwestern accents, young people in cheap apartments, victims of the world's collective upheavals. The echoes of Studs Lonigan's wanderings are unmistakable; Pronek's haunts of Rogers Park and Uptown are the same as Bette Howland's. He takes ESL classes and works as a canvasser for Greenpeace; he even enacts the pyrotechnic absurdity of his homeland's destruction in Lincoln Square, serving a summons to a

heavily-armed Serb. This scene is a meeting of “ruined men,” in the words of Gary Shteyngart, “in an alien and unfamiliar America.”⁶⁶ But the strange place always does the same thing. In a dizzying paragraph at the end of his Greenpeace days, Pronek the canvasser reinvents himself at each door he comes to.

To a young couple in Evanston who sat on their sofa holding hands, he introduced himself as Mirza from Bosnia. To a college girl in La Grange with DE PAW stretching across her bosom, he introduced himself as Sergi Katastrofenko from Ukraine. To a man in Oak Park... he introduced himself as Jukka Smrdiprdiuskas from Estonia. To an old couple from Romania in Homewood who could speak no English... he was John from Liverpool. (179-180)

The city that created itself bestows that gift on everyone in it, it would seem. Like Carrie Meeber there is *something* Pronek wants, although what that is far more vague. Still, in Chicago’s immense precincts Pronek is able to construct and reconstruct himself to fit his needs, his moods, the time of day... This “ruined man” may not have anywhere to go, but where he’s wound up is a place that looks at such characters with a forgiving eye.

The Voice of Chicago: A Note of Conclusion

At the risk of sounding reductive I’d like to offer up the theory that unlike many places, Chicago does *not* resist definition; and while there are always exceptions, always lines running perpendicular rather than parallel, or worse, tangential, or worse than that, simply on a different axis, in this case I’d like to think that most things are moving in the same direction.

There are a pair of thematic elements that seem endemic to Chicago's Voice in the 20th Century. One is division and the other is self-creation. Both are rooted in history; both have their origins in a primordial place in the city's past. Chicago splits high and low, black and white, comfortable and hardscrabble, those who won from those who lost from those who never tried. But all of these binary factions need each other; the relationship is symbiotic. Chicago is not Chicago without both sides of the equation.

And given that the place built itself up out of nothing, the intersection of an insignificant river and a formidable lake amidst a sea of prairie grass into a teeming town, then built again following a cataclysm into a world-class city, and then continued to build to stave off looming urban entropy, there always seems to be room, cause, permission to define and redefine oneself. Creation is at the place's heart; the belief in what can be done – "*I will.*"

At the outset of this project the question *Why create this list?* was asked, and the answer provided was both practical (that nothing similar exists) and abstract (that a completed list may well prove beneficial in a better understanding of Chicago). But there was another question which now seems to want reconsideration. Early in the introduction, the first page of it in fact, there is this: "So then: What is the Voice of Chicago?" The selected books have answered for themselves in convincing and meaningful fashion, I think. But now that they have I can't get around this amendment, this new iteration of the question: Why answer the question "What is the Voice of Chicago?" To put it another way, quite a bit of time was spent justifying the

question, now there needs to be some justification of the response. Wouldn't the question be better left as rhetorical or even unasked? Our understanding of Chicago may be better off now – what good is that?

Quite a bit. If the definition of canons given in the introduction as instructive aggregates holds any water then even a micro-sub-canon like this one has something to teach. The value – intellectual, philosophical, aesthetic – of Chicago's literature is beyond impeachable, and anything that might serve as an introduction, an entrée into a vast and frankly daunting body of work has at least some merit. By answering that question I have tried to present the city in all its protean, uncertain parts, and the whole those parts have created is unified to a satisfactory point. The fact that the city impresses itself so consistently on such wildly varying pieces of literature speaks to the fact that Chicago is a force, a generative machine. The Voice that I've tried to find does not seem to be created by the works I've chosen but rather an integrated element of them – and in that an understanding of Chicago as a place, geographical, physical, creative, political, ought to come into view.

After all, under regular circumstances, a book about the civic mistreatment of a heat wave and a Saul Bellow novel about a young man's search for self shouldn't have anything to do with one another. But in this case, they do. A force this unifying is practically gravitational, and it would be my hope that readers of this may come to a greater appreciation for a city that can pull so powerfully toward its center.

Speaking of Mr. Bellow, since I've already spent so much time on his shoulders, it doesn't seem inapt to finish back in that same place. "Give Chicago half

a chance,” he said, concluding an essay of his own, 23 years ago, “and it will turn you into a philosopher.”

Notes

¹ Chicago lore – a handful of PhD dissertations by itself, I’d reckon – states that Chicago architect William Hartmann was dispatched to Spain with \$100,000 and a Chicago White Sox jacket to lobby Picasso to create a work to embellish the city’s new civic center. Picasso agreed, but refused the money. He took the jacket. Chicago doesn’t exist without its teams and without its rivalries, bile and all. This author stands proudly beneath the flag of the White Sox. Exceptions will not be made.

² A touch ironic that *Chicago Manual of Style* formatting is not accepted for these papers, no? They take Turabian, but it’s not quite the same.

³ Annual Estimates of the Population for Incorporated Places Over 100,000, Ranked by July 1, 2005. June 2006. United States Census Bureau. September 16, 2006. <http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/tables/SUB-EST2005-01.csv>.

⁴ And a Chicagoan *will* argue this point to no end. Tread here at your own risk.

⁵ In the odd calculus of these things, both the Taipei 101 towers in Taipei and Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, can claim to be bigger than the Sears Tower but Chicago smells an architectural rat and will not concede the title. We know shenanigans when we see them. See World’s Tallest Skyscrapers. September 2006. Emporis. September 16, 2006. <http://www.emporis.com/en/bu/sk/st/tp/wo/>.

⁶ “Meatpacking.” Louise Carroll Wade. 2004. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. September 4, 2006. <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/804.html>

⁷ But why take my word for it? From the *Chicago Tribune*, September 28, 2006, in an article about Chicago’s chances to host the Summer Olympics, 2016: “I travel the world a lot ... and it astounds me how many people still view Chicago as Al Capone city, and Michael Jordan,” said Marc Ganis, an expert in sports facility development. Bergin, Kathy. “Chicago Faces an Uphill Climb for Olympics.” *Chicago Tribune*. (28 Sep. 2006).

⁸ For a concise delineation of the nickname, see “Windy City.” Jonathan Boyd. 2004. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. September 16, 2006.

<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/6.html>

⁹ Ever the enterprising institution, the City Council of Chicago passed a resolution absolving the historically maligned Mrs. O’Leary and her equally infamous cow of any responsibility for the fire. Absent from the Council’s activities was a resolution condemning the early builders who erected much of a city from little more than dry wood.

¹⁰ The River was the city’s de facto sewage canal at the time; the Lake was and still is the source of its drinking water. The change of flow remains a commendable one today.

¹¹ Daniel Burnham’s oft-quoted maxim to “Make no small plans” seems apt here. Growing up fifty yards from a street called Burnham Place sensitizes one to such things.

¹² Timing's a funny force, not to be ignored. Listmaking may seem to be a perpetual habit (of which bibliographies are a definite and perhaps highfalutin form) but when things coincide so cozily as they did in this case you have to wonder if maybe the forces (Forces?) guiding listmakers aren't consolidated and regular. Midway through the writing of this section the new issue of *Film Comment* landed in my mailbox. In it was an article by Paul Schrader, screenwriter of *Taxi Driver* and director of *Blue Collar* and *Hardcore*, someone you could classify as a *filmmaker*; a solid, intelligent craftsman of quality cinema. Also something of a scholar and film historian, as witnessed by this article. Entitled "Canon Fodder," it's a lengthy (the editor's note at the front of the book identifies it as the longest piece *Film Comment* has ever run) discourse, lurching toward a canonical list of films. The effort begins with a book offer, then slowly zooms out until Schrader is not simply recounting the history of movies, but of canons themselves. "I began by looking at the hand of the sleeping man in Charles Eames's *Powers of Ten* and ended up in theoretical outer space," he writes. It's quite a contortion act he gets himself into – twisted deeply enough that he cancelled his book contract and returned the publisher's money – but at root were some very similar questions: "why was I selecting these films? What were my criteria?" Later, looking at another critic's attempt at a cinematic canon, he remarks, "It's much easier make lists than to explain why." The piece is written under the shadow of Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon*, and while Schrader's aims are far loftier than mine, I can't help but feel the slightest bit of sympathy for his position. It is not a canon I seek to create; on the listmaking totem pole I am much closer to the earth. The question of criteria affirms this – as will be seen mine are largely technical, while Schrader can use such big guns as *Beauty*, *Tradition*, and, wonderfully, *Strangeness* to pick off the unworthies. But the struggle is not so dissimilar. The questions of validity, personal imprimatur (*I am not the one who included one of his own works in his list*), and authority all resound. Ultimately Schrader says the goal of his list is to "counter the proliferation of popularity-driven lists" and I'd like to think that in a small way I'm charting a similar course. This is a shadow I have no qualms about operating beneath, and can't help but appreciate the timing. Schrader, Paul. "Canon Fodder." *Film Comment*. 42.5 (Sep. 2006): 33-50.

¹³ "Literary Images of Chicago." Carlo Rotella. 2004. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. September 6, 2006. <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1390.html>.

¹⁴ University of North Carolina libraries. August 2006. The University of North Carolina. September 17, 2006. www.lib.unc.edu.

¹⁵ I-Share. September 2006. Consortium of Academic & Research Libraries in Illinois. September 17, 2006. i-share.carli.illinois.edu.

¹⁶ WorldCat. September 2006. Online Computer Library Center. September 17, 2006. firstsearch.oclc.org.

¹⁷ There is a slight exception which I feel obligated to make mention of. The Chicago Public Library has drafted a number of bibliographies that are available online. Its "Chicago" section is devoted primarily to history, and while its "Art and Literature" heading does include one bibliography entitled "Chicago Fiction Writers: A Selected List," it is just that: a long list of authors associated with the city. Many of the bibliographies date from 2000, 2001, and even though the interested reader will find

that there are titles on my list that overlap with the Chicago Public's, I feel that the library's project is more than general enough to leave room for a project as specialized as mine. Please see "Bibliographies, Pathfinders, and Reading Lists." Chicago Public Library Librarians. June 2006. Chicago Public Library. September 17, 2006. http://www.chipublib.org/003cpl/contents_bibs.html

¹⁸ Or Bears. Or Bulls. I will no longer apologize for these asides.

¹⁹ Ott, Bill. "A hard-boiled gazetteer to Chicago." *Booklist*. (1 May 2003).

²⁰ Sparking argument over literature would be by itself a good enough reason for creating one of these lists.

²¹ Grimond, John. "A Success Story." *The Economist*. 378.8469 (18 March, 2006): Special section. 3.

²² Qtd. in Pierce, 250.

²³ For instance, a decent argument could be made that for much of the time period this bibliography covers, New York's capital-V Voice has best been captured by... *The New Yorker*?

²⁴ A question for another day: how important is the role of *image* in *voice*?

²⁵ The Internet Movie Database. 2006. September 10, 2006. imdb.com.

²⁶ McLaughlin, Abraham. "A City Shares Jordan's Legacy of Joy." *Christian Science Monitor*. (14 Jan 1999): 9

²⁷ To embellish for a moment: the even sadder truth of the matter is that the need for an actual barrier between Bridgeport and the State Street Corridor arose when the Mayor himself, in order to keep black voters in close quarters, decided to build the largest housing project in the country, the Robert Taylor Homes (28 buildings, 4400 units), in the already dense Corridor. Bridgeport lay less than a mile due west, and its Irish-Catholic residents feared that the newly-engorged ghetto may expand and swallow their bastion. Hence their relief at fourteen lanes of traffic planted between here and there.

²⁸ If it may be some small consolation, I cannot omit this devastating passage from Wright's memoir *Black Boy*: "My first glimpse of the flat black stretches of Chicago depressed and dismayed me, mocked all of my fantasies. Chicago seemed an unreal city whose mythical houses were built of slabs of black coal wreathed in palls of gray smoke, houses whose foundations were sinking slowly into the dank prairie." Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

²⁹ In a vaguely similar vein Martin Amis's *The Information* spends seven harrowing, Bellow-haunted pages in Chicago ("Chicago was the only city that frightened him").

³⁰ John Sayles' lovely film of the same name is also not included, but it was largely filmed in Indianapolis and on sets.

³¹ A word or three about methodology: Much of the selecting here was done under arbitrary and *sui generis* terms, but some logic was followed. A citation analysis was performed, though not using the typical references, per se; a *Web of Science* would not be (and was not) very useful. When navigating across a single subject one begins to notice patterns of citations, familiar names, stories and quotations reoccurring. Because this bibliography runs until roughly the present I relied most heavily – but not at all exclusively – on the citations in the following recent titles: *American Pharaoh*, *Death in the Haymarket*, *Heat Wave*, *Challenging the Daley Machine*, and

Courtroom 302. But the overall methodological shape my efforts took was a nicely cross-hatched web of linked citations, essentially ranging between many if not all of my selections.

³² In other words, here's a list of books *of* Chicago.

³³ The flag is three white stripes separated by two blue stripes, with four red six-pointed stars in the middle white stripe. The white stripes are the North, South, and West sides of the city, the blue represent Lake Michigan and the Chicago River, while the stars are Fort Dearborn, the Great Fire of 1871, the Columbian Exposition of 1893, and the 1933 Century of Progress fair. For a complete explanation see "The Municipal Flag of Chicago," Chicago Public Library.

<http://www.chipublib.org/004chicago/flagtxt.html>. October 2, 2006.

³⁴ The distinction belongs to the Fire and not the Columbian Expo because the Exposition never would have taken place were it not (partially) intended to commemorate Chicago's rise from the ashes of the Fire. The Exposition was a moment of great civic adornment; the Fire was the engine of a great city.

³⁵ Following the blast one Chicago preacher wrote: "We need a careful definition of what freedom is. If it means the license to proclaim the gospel of disorder, to preach destruction, and scatter the seeds of anarchy... the sooner we exchange the Republic for an iron-handed monarchy the better it will be for us all." Green, 200.

³⁶ "To his Music Hall meetings came an amazing conglomeration of people: preachers, college professors, a variety of other professional people, saloonkeepers, gamblers, prostitutes, members of the WTCU, socialists, and anarchists." See Baylen, 424.

³⁷ Shortly before the book's publication in March of 1894, the *New York Times* reported that Yerkes was in talks with the book's publisher to buy up the entire first edition – it is doubtful he was planning to distribute these copies in Chicago's lending libraries. "Editor Stead's Book on Chicago." *New York Times*. 4 May 1894. p. 9

³⁸ Herbert Asbury would – in slightly more garish and less munificent terms – recover the same territory some fifty years later with *Gem of the Prairie* (retitled in its most current reissue *The Gangs of Chicago* to ride on the tails of the Asbury's recently rediscovered *The Gangs of New York*). Asbury, more a fabulist than a historian, might lead one to believe that setting foot in Chicago was a death-defying act but he can still spin a nifty yarn. In this context he's best thought of as an extra-eager younger brother to Stead or James T. Farrell, always trying to one-up his beloved bigger sibling, never fully respectful of the bounds of reality – for worse or for better.

³⁹ From *The New York Times*, April 28, 1907: "This is a purely superficial observation," said Mr. Stead, smiling, "but what I have seen does not impress me with the fact that Chicago has greatly reformed." "Same Old Chicago." *New York Times*. 28 Apr. 1907. p. 1.

⁴⁰ Dreiser's initial royalty from the book's sales: \$68.40.

⁴¹ The critic Philip Fisher has pegged Carrie's rise to Chicago's: industrious guilelessness mixed with terrible guile. An interesting and supportable theory, doubtless. Fisher, Philip. *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

⁴² “Farrell’s city, like Dresier’s city, finally is two radically opposed worlds, a harshly deterministic environment which destroys people... like Studs and a liberating space which offers new lives to people like Carrie...” (Butler, 283).

⁴³ Carl Sandburg covered the mayhem as a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News* and later published an account in book form – a strangely subdued and distant rendering of a deadly melee. A candidate for this list, it was ultimately passed over because of its oddities in tone. Sandburg, Carl. *The Chicago Race Riots, July 1919*. New York: Harcourt, 1969.

⁴⁴ Like many of the naturalistic Chicago books of the era – especially those of Richard Wright, *Black Boy* and *Native Son* – the problem of race is inescapable *Studs Lonigan*. The impoverished city within a city that Drake and Crayton portrayed just ten years after *Studs Lonigan* was published only continued to grow and butt against its mistrustful, intolerant neighbor. The problem is vexing, very difficult to address (in a non-quantitative form, at least) since it still exists today, glaringly, and shows few signs of abating.

⁴⁵ That would be Big Bill Thompson, two-term machine mayor, no friend of the little.

⁴⁶ Sorry, couldn’t resist.

⁴⁷ The first edition is actually dedicated to him.

⁴⁸ In 2003 a scholar named Jeff McMahon unearthed evidence that a good deal of Algren’s imagery in *City on the Make* was likely ‘borrowed’ from work by a writer named Ben Maddow... who was writing about New York. True as this may be it is not the physical imagery that makes it a Chicago book. Algren’s book is a construction of names and history and feeling; the sight and sound are, frankly, secondary. See McMahon, Jeff. “Nelson Algren’s Secret.” *New City Chicago*. (01 Jan. 2003).

⁴⁹ I realize that a bit of this same text was included earlier in this work; if an indulgence may be excused, it’s sheer joy typing those words. Reading them is almost as much fun.

⁵⁰ In an essay for *The New Yorker* Philip Roth likened that opening paragraph to the music of George Gershwin – I mention that only because I can’t see that paragraph without having the opening bars of “Rhapsody in Blue” flutter into my head. A personal aside, I know, but a valid one too. Roth, Philip. “Re-reading Saul Bellow.” *The New Yorker*. 76.30 (09 Oct. 2000): 82-91.

⁵¹ Farrell was personally responsible for helping secure the Guggenheim grant that allowed Bellow to travel to Paris in the 1940s, where *Augie March* was written. The ghost of Studs knew the deleterious effects of the city’s heavy gravity, perhaps.

⁵² Amis: “If the novels of another great Chicagoan, Theodore Dreiser, sometimes feel like a long succession of job interviews, then *Augie March* often resembles a surrealist catalogue of apprenticeships” (116).

⁵³ Listen to Augie’s description of the city, viewed from a West Side rooftop: “In its repetition it exhausted your imagination of details and units, more units than the cells of the brain and the bricks of Babel... A mysterious tremor, dust, vapor, emanation of stupendous effort traveled with the air, over me on top of the great establishment, so full as it was, and over the clinics, clinks, factories, morgue, flophouses, skid row.”

⁵⁴ To say nothing of Leopold and Loeb, those meanies.

⁵⁵ And here one finds Bellow's second most wonderful line, after *Augie March's* opener. The conclusion to a letter to fellow stumbling Illinoisian Adlai Stevenson: "The general won because he expressed low-grade universal potato love."

⁵⁶ The character of Von Humboldt Fleischer was modeled on Delmore Schwartz, but the name forever evokes the West Side neighborhood of Humboldt Park where Bellow grew up.

⁵⁷ In all fairness, though, Chicago does have a rather generous local history publishing benefactor in the University of Chicago Press, as well as Northwestern University Press. Both of them, but especially the U of C, do commendable work in publishing and worthy reissuing titles of Chicago interest. This list ought to be a decent object lesson to that effect.

⁵⁸ Howland was a Guggenheim fellowship recipient and continues to publish to this day; she was also, probably not incidentally, a lover of Saul Bellow's, and briefly his literary executor. In his biography of Bellow James Atlas (who also oddly misidentifies *Blue in Chicago*, this time as a novel) describes her as "[a] stocky woman with a pockmarked face... her family was from the tough Uptown neighborhood..." (360) Atlas notes that a critic uncharitably called Howland Bellow's "working-class queen." Atlas, James. *Bellow*. New York: Random House, 2000.

⁵⁹ It won't come as a major shock that Howland's previous book, *W-3* was about her attempted suicide.

⁶⁰ "List of Those Who Died Alone." *Chicago Sun-Times* (25 Aug. 1995): 14.

⁶¹ Klinenberg notes the interesting finding that death rates were significantly lower in Latino neighborhoods than in economically comparable black neighborhoods; rather than simply chalking this up to Latinos being predisposed to heat or having stronger family bonds, Klinenberg finds the imbalance symptomatic of the actual condition of the neighborhoods – many black neighborhoods with higher death rates were blighted and desolate, while neighboring Latino areas actually supported a stable, if modest, community economy. See 79-129.

⁶² A longer, hotter heat wave hit the city in July and August of 1999; the death toll was 114.

⁶³ John Lilly noted in *The American Spectator* that being in Chicago when Daley died was like being in Beijing when Chairman Mao died. Lilly, John. "The Chairman With the Bridgeport Sensibility." *The American Spectator*. Sept. 2000. p. 68-69.

⁶⁴ Mike Royko, *Boss*: "Until his death, one alderman could be expected to leap to his feet at every meeting and cry, 'God bless our mayor, the greatest mayor in the world'."

⁶⁵ The pharaonic sobriquet of the title is not at all inappropriate. The current mayor of Chicago? Richard M. Daley, in his 16th year and in all likelihood preparing for another election in 2007 which he would be hard-pressed to lose.

⁶⁶ Shteyngart, Gary. "Pronek is Illuminated." *The New York Times Book Review*. 15 Sept. 2002. 7.

Appendix A

A list of all Chicago-related titles appearing in this text.

- Algren, Nelson. *Chicago: City on the Make*.
 Algren, Nelson. *The Man With the Golden Arm*.
 Amis, Martin. *The Information*.
 Atlas, James. *Bellow*.
 Asbury, Herbert. *The Gangs of Chicago*.
 Asinof, Eliot. *Eight Men Out*.
 Bellow, Saul. *The Adventures of Augie March*.
 Bellow, Saul. *The Collected Stories of Saul Bellow*.
 Bellow, Saul. *The Dean's December*.
 Bellow, Saul. *Humboldt's Gift*.
 Bellow, Saul. *It All Adds Up*.
 Bellow, Saul. *More Die of Heartbreak*.
 Bellow, Saul. *Ravelstein*.
 Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind*.
 Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon*.
 Bogira, Steve. *Courtroom 302*.
 Burnham, Daniel and Bennett, Edward. *Plan of Chicago*.
 Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*.
 Cohen, Adam and Taylor, Elizabeth. *American Pharaoh*.
 Conzen, Michael P. *Geographical Excursions in the Chicago Region*.
 Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis*.
 De Palma, Brian (dir.). *The Untouchables*.
 Depres, Leon. *Challenging the Daley Machine*.
 Drake, St. Clair and Crayton, Horace. *Black Metropolis*.
 Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*.
 Dybek, Stuart. *The Coast of Chicago*.
E.R. (television program).
 Exley, Frederick. *A Fan's Notes*.
 Farrell, Studs. *Studs Lonigan*.
 Friedman, Milton. *A Monetary History of the United States*.
 Green, James. *Death in the Haymarket*.
 Grossman, James R., Keating, Ann Durkin, and Reiff, Janice L. (eds.). *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*.
 Hawks, Howard (dir.). *Scarface*.
 Hemon, Aleksandar. *Nowhere Man*.
 Hill, George Roy (dir.). *The Sting*.
 Howland, Bette. *Blue in Chicago*.
 Howland, Bette. *W-3*.
 Hughes, John (dir.). *The Breakfast Club*.
 Hughes, John (dir.). *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*.
 James, Steve, Gilbert, Peter, and Marx, Frederick (dirs.). *Hoop Dreams*.

Klinenberg, Eric. *Heat Wave*.
Larson, Erik. *The Devil in the White City*.
Mamet, David. *Glengarry Glen Ross*.
Mamet, David. *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*.
Mayer, Harold M. and Wade, Richard C. *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*.
Miller, Donald L. *City of the Century*.
Miller, Ross. *The Great Chicago Fire*.
O'Connor, Len. *Clout*.
Pierce, Bessie Louise. *As Others See Chicago*.
Pierce, Bessie Louise. *A History of Chicago*.
Ravoche, Milton. *Don't Make No Waves... Don't Back No Losers*.
Ravoche, Milton. *We Don't Want Nobody Sent*.
Royko, Mike. *Boss*.
Sandburg, Carl. *Chicago Poems*.
Sandburg, Carl. *The Chicago Race Riots, July 1919*.
Sayles, John (dir.). *Eight Men Out*.
Schwieterman, Joseph and Caspell, Dana. *The Politics of Place*.
Sinclair, Upton. *The Jungle*.
Stead, William T. *If Christ Came to Chicago!*
Stevens, Sufjan. *Illinoise* (audio recording).
Terkel, Studs. *Division Street: America*.
Turow, Scott. *Presumed Innocent*.
Wexler, Haskell (dir.). *Medium Cool*.
Wilder, Billy (dir.). *Some Like it Hot*.
Wolke, Jay. *Along the Divide*.
Wright, Richard. *Black Boy*.
Wright, Richard. *Native Son*.

Works Cited

- Algren, Nelson. *Chicago: City on the Make*. Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 2001.
- Algren, Nelson. *The Man with the Golden Arm*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999.
- Amis, Martin. "A Chicago of a Novel." *The Atlantic Monthly* 276.4 (Oct. 1995): 114-127.
- Amis, Martin. *The Information*. New York: Vintage, 1996.
- Asbury, Herbert. *The Gangs of Chicago: An Informal History of the Chicago Underworld*. New York: Thunder's Mouth, [2002?].
- Atlas, James. *Bellow*. New York: Random House, 2000.
- Baylen, Joseph O. "A Victorian's 'Crusade' in Chicago, 1893-1894." *The Journal of American History* 51.3 (1964): 418-434. Jstor. 22 Sep. 2006
<<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021->

8723%28196412%2951%3A3%3C418%3AAV%22IC1%3E2.0.CO%3B2-
M>.

Bellow, Saul. *The Adventures of Augie March*. New York: Penguin, 1999.

Bellow, Saul. *The Collected Stories of Saul Bellow*. New York: Viking, 2001.

Bellow, Saul. *The Dean's December*. New York: Penguin, 1998.

Bellow, Saul. *Herzog*. New York: Penguin, 1964.

Bellow, Saul. *Humboldt's Gift*. New York: Penguin, 1996.

Bellow, Saul. *It All Adds Up: From the Dim Past to an Uncertain Future*. New York:
Penguin, 1994.

Bellow, Saul. *More Die of Heartbreak*. New York: Morrow, 1987.

Bellow, Saul. *Ravelstein*. New York: Penguin, 2000.

Bergin, Kathy. "Chicago Faces an Uphill Climb for Olympics." *Chicago Tribune*. (28
Sep. 2006).

Bloom Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987.

Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. New York: Riverhead, 1995.

Bogira, Steve. *Courtroom 302: A Year Behind the Scenes in an American Criminal Courthouse*. New York: Knopf, 2005.

Butler, Robert. "Farrell's Ethnic Neighborhood and Wright's Urban Ghetto: Two Visions of Chicago's South Side." *MELUS* 18.1 (1993): 103-111. Jstor. 2 Sep. 2006 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0163-755X%28199321%2918%3A1%3C103%3AFENAWU%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8>>.

City 2000: Words and Images About the City of Chicago and its People. Chicago: 3 Book Publishing, 2006.

Cohen, Adam, and Elizabeth Taylor. *American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Daley, His Battle for Chicago and the Nation*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2000.

Cowley, Malcolm. "Nelson Algren's Chicago." *The Nation* 232.7 (20 Feb. 1984): 210-213.

Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: Norton, 1992.

Dee, Jonathan. "The 'I' Spy." *Harper's* 306.1832 (Jan. 2003): 77-81.

Depres, Leon M. *Challenging the Daley Machine: A Chicago Alderman's Memoir*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005.

Drake, St. Clair and Crayton, Horace. *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Duis, Perry R. *Challenging Chicago: Coping With Everyday Life, 1837-1920*. Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1998.

"Editor Stead's Book on Chicago; It Is Likely to Create a Sensation in the World's Fair City." *New York Times* 4 Mar. 1894: 9. ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times. University of North Carolina. Retrieval Sep. 2006 <<http://proquest.umi.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/pqdweb?did=106898749&sid=1&Fmt=2&clientId=15094&RQT=309&VName=HNP>>.

Exley, Frederick. *A Fan's Notes*. New York: Vintage, 1988.

Farrell, James T. *Studs Lonigan: A Trilogy*. New York: Library of America, 2004.

Fisher, Philip. *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Flynn, Dennis, Jack Salzman, and James T. Farrell "An Interview with James T. Farrell." *Twentieth Century Literature* 22.1 (1976): 1-10. Jstor. 19 Sep. 2006 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0041-462X%28197602%2922%3A1%3C1%3AAIWJTF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2>>.

Going, William T. "'Dr. Eliot's Five-foot Shelf of Books': Toward a Centennial of the Harvard Classics." *Papers on Language & Literature* 42.2 (2006): 210-219.

Green, James. *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America*. New York: Pantheon, 2006.

Grossman, James R., Keating, Ann Durkin, and Reiff, Janice L., eds. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Grimond, John. "A Success Story." *The Economist*. 378.8469 (18 March, 2006): Special section. 3.

Hakutani, Yoshinobu, ed. *Theodore Dreiser and American Culture: New Readings*.

Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2000.

Hemon, Aleksandar. *Nowhere Man*. New York: Vintage, 2002.

Howland, Bette. *Blue in Chicago*. New York: Harper & Row, 1978.

Klinenberg, Eric. *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Kotlowitz, Alex. *Never a City So Real: A Walk in Chicago*. New York: Crown, 2004.

Larson, Erik. *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America*. New York: Vintage, 2004.

Lawson, Steve. "Blues and the Concrete Truth." *The Nation* 226.10 (18 Mar. 1978): 310-311.

Lemann, Nicholas. "Machine Man." *The New Republic* 223.5 (31 July 2000): 27-32.

Lilly, John. "The Chairman with the Bridgeport Sensibility." *The American Spectator* 33.7 (Sep. 2000): 68-69.

“List of Those Who Died Alone.” *Chicago Sun-Times* (25 Aug. 1995): 14.

Mayer, Harold M. and Wade, Richard C. *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969.

McLaughlin, Abraham. “A City Shares Jordan’s Legacy of Joy.” *Christian Science Monitor*. (14 Jan 1999): 9.

McMahon, Jeff. “Nelson Algren’s Secret.” *New City Chicago*. (01 Jan. 2003).

Michaels, Walter Benn. “Sister Carrie’s Popular Economy.” *Critical Inquiry* 7.2 (1980): 373-390. [Jstor](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0093-1896%28198024%297%3A2%3C373%3A%22CPE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O). 4 Oct. 2006 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0093-1896%28198024%297%3A2%3C373%3A%22CPE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>>.

Miller, Donald L. *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

Miller, Ross. *The Great Chicago Fire*. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2000.

O’Connor, Len. *Clout: Mayor Daley and His City*. New York: Avon, 1976.

Ott, Bill. “A hard-boiled gazetteer to Chicago.” *Booklist*. (1 May 2003).

Pareles, Jon. "Feeling the Illinoise." *New York Times* 10 Jul. 2005: 24.

Pierce, Bessie Louise. *A History of Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Pierce, Bessie Louise. *As Others See Chicago: Impressions of Visitors, 1673-1933*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Rakove, Milton. *Don't Make No Waves... Don't Back No Losers: An Insider's Analysis of the Daley Machine*. Bloomington, IN: The University of Indiana Press, 1975.

Rakove, Milton. *We Don't Want Nobody Sent: An Oral History of the Daley Years*. Bloomington, IN: The University of Indiana Press, 1979.

Royko, Mike. *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*. New York: Plume, 1976.

"Same Old Chicago; Stead Can't See That It Has Improved in Fourteen Years." *New York Times* 28 Apr. 1907: 1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers *The New York Times*. University of North Carolina. Retrieval Sep. 2006
 <<http://proquest.umi.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/pqdweb?did=106750343&sid=3&Fmt=1&clientId=15094&RQT=309&VName=HNP>>.

Sandburg, Carl. *Chicago Poems*. New York: Dover, 1994.

Sandburg, Carl. *The Chicago Race Riots, July 1919*. New York: Harcourt, 1969.

Schwieterman, Joseph and Caspall, Dana. *The Politics of Place: A History of Zoning in Chicago*. Chicago: Lake Claremont Press, 2006.

Shteyngart, Gary. "Pronek Is Illuminated." *New York Times* 15 Sep. 2002: 7.

LexisNexis. University of North Carolina. Retrieval 30 Sep. 2006

<[\[nexis.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/universe/document?_m=135af0a837c71dc58d\]\(http://web.lexis-nexis.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/universe/document?_m=135af0a837c71dc58d\)](http://web.lexis-</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

[7c5de1f5a5e2cb&_docnum=1&wchp=dGLbVzb-](http://web.lexis-nexis.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/universe/document?_m=135af0a837c71dc58d)

[zSkVb&_md5=c9ba37327a59f8124cc297a2c869b467>](http://web.lexis-nexis.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/universe/document?_m=135af0a837c71dc58d).

Stead, William T. *If Christ Came to Chicago! A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer*. Evanston, IL: Chicago Historical Bookworks, 1990.

Terkel, Studs. *Division Street: America*. New York: Avon, 1967.

Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.