

March 29, 1937

My dear Mr. Kohler:

Thank you for sending me your fine review of my book. I am glad to have it and might not have seen it otherwise.

I am particularly pleased by what you say about evoking the past. I often find myself thinking of my books as mosaic and truly feel that as you say there is little in my background-- or any other Southerner's background -- to invent but much to record. There is indeed still much to record and the Southern writer today is in a very fortunate situation: he has something to write about.

I think you are right in saying that many reviewers misunderstood my book. I never intended to write a plain narrative. I was concerned with the fate of the Confederacy as a whole. The book originally had a symbolic title, THE CUP OF FURY, which might perhaps have made this plainer. I think, however, that a serious Civil war novel, a book, moreover, that attempts to evoke the reader's own sense of the past, demands much more than the usual amount of collaboration from the reader. I have been a little saddened by the fact that most of the enthusiastic reviews of my novel come from places like Cleveland, Ohio and Camden, New Jersey and yesterday perhaps the most enthusiastic of all from the one time arch enemy, Boston! Perhaps that only goes to show that Boston's own sense of the past is dead. At any rate I am happy to find in a Virginian the sympathetic collaborator that every author would like to have,

Faithfully yours,

Clarksville, Tennessee

Caroline Gordon

I think you are mistaken when you refer to me as the finest imaginative talent among the Agrarians. I don't know that I could claim to be a member of the group, except by marriage as neither they nor I believe much in women "speaking up in meeting." Have you ever read John Crowe Ransom's poem "The Antique Harvesters?" It is a difficult poem, that is, it does not yield to a hurried reading but I think it is one of the finest things ever written about the south. A novel like mine is in a way a distillation of what can be contained in one line of such a poem.

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