

Alice – the worst grotesques in sherwood anderson's winesburg, ohio

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* is a book that creates a community through the portrayal of many individual characters that reside in the town of Winesburg; the citizens of the community are connected through a commonality in the environment. The citizens chronicled in Winesburg, Ohio happen to all be what Anderson labels as grotesques. Anderson describes how one becomes a grotesque by stating it is, "...the moment one of the people took one of the truths to himself, call it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood" ("Book of the Grotesque" 3). By comparative means, some of the characters in the book seem to be better off than others; Alice Hindman, however, seems to be at a better place than any other grotesque that is presented in the novel. For this reason, Alice Hindman of "Adventure" is the worst grotesque in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Alice Hindman is presented to the reader in "Adventure" and her story is one of deep longing and commitment to a past lover. Alice falls for a smooth-talking man named Ned Currie; they copulate for some time, then Ned leaves to find a better job in a Midwest city. He promises to return for Alice after he has a stable occupation, and as Anderson puts, "...nothing could have induced [Alice]... to believe that Ned Currie would not in the end return to her" ("Adventure" 63). Alice vows to wait for Ned Currie to return because "...their brief sexual intimacy is so sacred to Alice that she feels bound to Ned in a spiritual marriage..." (Rigsbee 235). Ned Currie, however, forgets of Alice as the years pass. It is through this predicament that the reader is able to view Alice as a grotesque; she becomes obsessed with the homecoming of Ned Currie and this alters her way of living completely. She

reserves herself solely for Ned and refrains from making any contact with other men.

Alice Hindman realizes that her obsessive truth became a falsehood by the end of "Adventure" and this new awareness gives her a chance to break from the constant despair that the grotesques of Winesburg face due to their obsessions. On page 67 it states, "...[Alice] began...to face bravely the fact that many people must live and die alone..." (Anderson, "Adventure"). She understands her situation, and the reader sees her break-free from her fixation on Ned Currie through these closing words on page 67; this is precisely why Alice is the worst grotesque of Winesburg, Ohio. The fact that she comprehends her current state puts her in a position that no other resident of Winesburg reaches; through her realization, Alice is allowed a potentially positive prospect. She, as the definition of worst by The Oxford English Dictionary dictates, "...[has] fallen to the lowest [or least] degree of... misfortune." This, by literal definition, makes Alice Hindman the worst of the grotesques in Winesburg, Ohio.