THAT BODY of writing referred to as "Norwegian-American fiction" might properly be termed "American literature in Norwegian." It belongs fully to the American environment; without the "American experience" of the Norwegian ethnic group, there would have been no such literature. Furthermore, this category of fiction is rather sizable. If one includes only American literature in Norwegian before 1930 and within the Norwegian community, the list would include at least seventy-three authors and one hundred seventy-six works.

A majority of these writings are novels and they vary greatly in literary quality. Except for a few works by Rølvaag and Waldemar Ager, most have not been translated into English, but there is much of artistic value in them. As Lincoln Colcord points out in his introduction to the English translation of Rølvaag's Giants in the Earth, the books of artists like North Dakota's Jon Norstog (Exodus I, II, and III, Moses, and Josef), Julius Baumann, and O. A. Buslett merit the attention of those who would study American literature. Still they remain
untranslated and hence unavailable to all but a few readers.

In many of the works that I have studied, reference is made to the Norwegian Lutheran clergy in the Upper Midwest. On occasion, pastors are major characters, as in Waldemar Ager's *Kristus for Pilatus* (*Christ before Pilate*) and M. F. Gjertsen's *Harald Hegg*. Without attempting to suggest a direct relationship between the fictional world of the artist's creation and the so-called "real" world, I have attempted a study of the minister's role and background as presented in a selection of twelve Norwegian-American novels. The criteria for the selection of these particular works involves consideration for the regional focus of my inquiry and a desire to determine the social-cultural role of Norwegian-American clergy in the immigrant community.

Though there is danger in claiming a direct connection between historical reality and the world of the novel, yet there is a relationship that ought not to be overlooked by the historian. Herman Melville calls attention to this point of meeting between the world of fiction and the "real" world:

"And as, in real life, the properties will now allow people to act out themselves with that unreserve permitted to the stage; so, in books of fiction, they look not only for more entertainment, but at bottom, even for more reality, than real life can show. Thus, though they want novelty, they want nature, too; but nature unfettered, exhilarated, in effect transformed. In this way of thinking, the people in a fiction, like the people in a play, must dress as nobody exactly dresses, talk as nobody talks, act as nobody exactly acts. It is with fiction as with religion: It should present another world, and yet one to which we feel the tie." Melville is suggesting that fiction may present the real world stripped of its facade and fetters in such a way that the reader is both entertained.
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and enlightened regarding the deeper reality of the ordinarily observable world in which he lives. This notion of the “tie” between the daily world of the immigrant and the fictional world portrayed in the immigrant novel is a premise upon which I have developed the methodology of this paper.

Each of the twelve novels that I selected for this study gives some indication of the role and background of Lutheran pastors who served Norwegian-American communities in the Upper Midwest during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The picture that emerges is by no means clear, but it includes some bits and pieces of interest and value.

One fact about Norwegian Lutheran pastors is that they belonged to different social classes. These differences were also associated with variations in such matters as theological emphasis, style of religious life, synodical affiliation, and response to the American environment. The class distinction among Norwegian Lutheran pastors is clearly expressed by Waldemar Ager in his novel Christ before Pilate. His major characters are two ministers serving congregations in the same town. One is Pastor Conrad Walther Welde, who is descended from Norway’s official class with university and seminary training. He is a member of the Norwegian Synod. The other pastor is simply named “Mosevig.” In contrast to Welde’s upper-class origins, he is humbly proud of his upbringing among Norway’s fisherfolk. Mosevig is a member of one of the other Lutheran synods, but its name is not given. He is proud that he had worked as a sailor, fisherman, and carpenter and had had only two years of schooling. Ager expresses Mosevig’s perception of the class difference: “His thoughts dwelt with humility upon his lowly parentage and the fisherman’s hut which had been his home in Norway. . . . The Welde family belonged to the old aristocracy of Norway. The
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father and grandfather were both ministers, the one more austere and unbending than the other.”

Though Welde belonged to the hereditary clergy of Norway, who enjoyed many advantages of education and travel, Mosevig muses over his own spiritual superiority: “Descending from such a family one could enjoy all the advantages of travel and study, could learn all the languages of the world, and there would be no difficulty in securing the pastorate of a wealthy church. But as to the spiritual, that was a different matter. He could expound all the difficult theological periodicals, but in order to deliver a sermon he would first have to write it all down on paper, take it to the pulpit and read it.” Here, then, the issue of social class differentiation is linked with role expectations concerning education, theological erudition, homiletical practice and style of religious life.

The class distinction among the Norwegian Lutheran clergy is also clear in the novel Harald Hegg. Pastor Holm and his wife are portrayed as belonging to the upper class of Norwegian society. He is a member of a Norwegian merchant family and in America is a minister of the Norwegian Synod. The author explains that there were two forms of address used for the pastor’s wife: one if she was of the same social group as the members of the congregation, another if she was from a higher class. In the former case, the word was prestekonen and in the latter it was prestefrue. In the words of the author, “Pastor Holm’s bride was ‘prestefrue’ from the first moment.”

Class distinctions within Norwegian Lutheranism are also evident when Dorthe Anderson, who favored the ‘Haugeans,” went to “war” against Pastor Holm and his family. She had been a servant girl in Norway and considered all of the “culture” of the parsonage a sign that they had sold out to worldliness and were not truly “Christian.”
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This portrayal of social separation within the clergy and among congregations is evident in James A. Peterson’s Solstad: The Old and the New and in Per Strømme’s Hvorledes Halvor blev prest. In the latter novel, it is Anne who tries to dissuade Halvor from going to Luther College, the school of the Norwegian Synod. She says, “[It] would be safer to keep to [our] own station in life.” Thus, she is implying that Halvor, son of a farmer, is not of equal status with the Synod pastors and their sons who attended Luther College.

The role characteristics of Norwegian-American pastors in relation to society also emerge from this fictional material. The pastor is portrayed as prominent in the community and especially as a leader of the ethnic group. This condition had also existed in Norway, where the pastor was an official of the state who carried on the functions of county clerk, agricultural adviser, supervisor of the school and the poor, while he also carried out his strictly religious duties. James Peterson portrays this role as reflected in the features of the local pastor: “His face indicated that he was conscious of his position, not only in the church, but also in the community where he lived.”

As Strømme explains in Halvor, the pastor’s library was the source of reading material on a wide variety of subjects for the inquiring young minds of the parish. In H. A. Foss’s Tobias both the anti-abstinence and abstinence forces are led by Lutheran clergymen. It is the pastor, in his first visit to Per Hansa’s outpost on the Dakota prairies, who gives substance and direction to the immigrants’ vague dreams. He reminds them that the “New Kingdom” which they are about to build will be constructed on the foundations of history — on the “truths” implanted in them as children by their fathers. So, too, in Simon Johnson’s From Fjord to Prairie, the leadership role of the pastor is recognized and positively accepted by the people.
In *Jonasville*, it is again the minister who has a leadership role in community matters, especially as the guardian of the interests of the Norwegian community. From the perspective of fiction, there is little doubt as to the part that the Norwegian Lutheran clergy played in the ethnic group’s secular and religious life. However, the patterns of leadership which the clergy developed revealed deep cleavages among the several synods. The interesting revelation from fictional materials is that there are correlations between class, theological outlook, and social role of the clergy and the synod.

My study of the literature of the period from 1870 to 1930 reveals two issues that are dealt with in different ways by opposing groups of clergy and laity. One is the “American school” issue and the other is the “American saloon” threat. Each pattern of response depends upon pastoral leadership. How do the writers of fiction perceive the ministerial role in each situation?

First, the “American school” issue. The champions of Norwegian tradition and culture saw the common school as a threat to their “American dream.” Rølvaag portrays this attitude in his book *Peder Victorious*, from which the following excerpt is taken:

“Directly in front of him hung the blackboard; at the top of it was written in a beautiful hand, ‘This is an AMERICAN SCHOOL in work and play alike, we speak English only!’ . . . He read the commandment twice; a feeling of shame came over him and he slunk even lower in his seat. — On his desk lay a few books. Mechanically, he picked up the top one and began turning the pages. After a while he came upon a picture which he had to look at more closely. . . . The title of the paragraph accompanying the picture was a single word: Norway. Under the picture someone had written in pencil: ‘A Norskie.’ Slowly and deliberately Peder read the short paragraph about the land of his ancestors. Throughout the whole process of his education in the public school
this was the only information he ever got about the land from which his people had come. . . . His feeling of being ill increased. He closed the book and put it back. An idea, which he found comfort in, took possession of him: When I am grown up I am going to go so far away that I'll never hear the word NORWEGIAN again.”

With the publication of *Peder Victorious*, Ole E. Rølvaag believed he had put his finger on the “tragedy of emigration” more adequately than in any of his previous books. Thus, it was the American public school, presided over by the priestess of “Americanization,” the Yankee schoolma'am, which symbolized for Rølvaag that alien force which threatened to destroy the American dream of the immigrants.

The fear and distaste which the author felt for the common school is clearly evidenced in his unsympathetic portrayal of Miss Mahon, Peder's first teacher. She was a superpatriot who pursued with missionary zeal the task of rooting out every hint of Norwegianness in Peder. With religious fervor, she led her “congregation” in its daily cultic observances. Her confession of faith was the Declaration of Independence; her hymns, the national songs; her revealed scriptures, the Gettysburg Address; and her canonized saints, Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln.

The role of education in the common school was to eradicate any remnant of un-American, that is, un-Yankee customs. Miss Mahon chides Peder about his accent and urges him to speak nothing but English at home. For Miss Mahon, “Education is our only weapon against ignorance and against the inherited customs we have brought with us from the old country.” It is Rølvaag's belief that American common-school education is the great destroyer of the immigrant culture and thus the chief threat to the ethnic group's continued existence; it is also the cause of the great gulf between the first and second generations. It is the common school that sym-
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bolizes those forces which disrupt families and communities and destroy the possibility of building and maintaining vital Norwegian-American culture, the “new kingdom” in the Upper Midwest.

The dream of building in America a nation of nations where each ethnic group could retain the most cherished aspects of its own culture, at the same time living in a spirit of mutual respect and democratic co-operation, was an important part of the American dream for Rølvaag and for a significant group of Norwegian Americans. The force that destroyed the hope of perpetuating a healthy regard for Norwegian culture became for Rølvaag and many other artists the symbol of their failure and their tragedy in America.

The artist portrayed the common school as the institution that tore Peder from his mother’s world. She was locked out of his world; by the tactic of prejudice and calculated silence regarding the land of Norway and its culture, the common school succeeded in cutting the son’s roots and casting him adrift. Peder was transformed into Whitman’s “Western Youth” who was sickened by the anachronism of his Norwegian past. By comparison with the glorious portrayal of American civilization, thought Peder, Norwegian culture must be nothing, for it was never mentioned in the “books.” The American school is credited with a major role in causing the unhappiness of the immigrant experience. That “tragedy” is rooted in the rejection of the past. Peder’s denial of his roots is completed symbolically when he rides enthusiastically home from school singing Whitman’s lines:

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O pioneers!13
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In his concern to preserve the American dream of a vital Norwegian-American culture in the Upper Midwest area, Rølvaag was not alone. Nor was he alone in his opposition to the American school as the real threat to this dream. As a member of the faculty of St. Olaf College, the United Norwegian Lutheran Church's institution at Northfield, Minnesota, he was the articulate voice for many ardent parochial-school supporters in his synod and in the Norwegian Synod.

In Norwegian-American fiction, the character who stands out as the major upholder of Norwegian culture and leading opponent of the common school is the Norwegian pastor. Usually, however, his opposition is portrayed in its positive aspect as the promoter of parochial education. Rølvaag's fictional pastors are representative of the attitudes of many laymen like himself who were committed to the importance of perpetuating traditional values through the vehicle of the parochial school. Still, it was the pastors of the Norwegian Synod and United Church who were used in fiction as symbols of this attitude.

Thus, in Per Strømme's Halvor, it is Pastor Preus who gives Halvor the Norwegian ABC Book, Norse Catechism, and Bible History and who encourages Halvor's father to send him to the parochial school at Decorah. It was Pastor Evenson who taught Halvor Norwegian and instructed him in the history of ancient Norway. It was the Norwegian Synod's school, Luther College, which Halvor attended, then the center of Norwegian cultural and spiritual life in America.

Another novelist, Waldemar Ager, portrays his leading character in Christ before Pilate as the promoter of Norwegian language and culture through church-sponsored education. Of Pastor Conrad Walther Welde the author says: "He believed that the young people of the congregation ought to learn Norwegian and be
trained in using this language.” Pastor Welde began a night school in which he instructed the native-born boys and girls in Norwegian and the immigrant young people in English.

In the sequel to *Peder Victorious*, entitled *Their Fathers’ God*, it is Pastor Kaldahl who becomes the mouthpiece for Rølvaag’s ideas of cultural conservation. The pastor turns to Peder in the midst of a monologue on Norwegian history, and, in answer to his scoffing, says: “You have been entrusted with a rich inheritance, an inheritance built up through the ages. How much of it, what portion, are you trying to get? Isn’t it your irrevocable duty to see how much of it you can preserve and hand down to those coming after you? A people that has lost its traditions is doomed!”

On the opposite end of the assimilation spectrum is novelist and literary critic H. H. Boyesen. His refusal to write in Norwegian is indicative of his “Americanization” tendencies, or what Milton Gordon terms “Anglo-conformity” ideology. In his novel *Falconberg*, we note that it is the Lutheran clergyman whom he casts as the leader of opposition to “Americanization.” For Boyesen, this made the pastor a villain and the one whom his young hero, Einar, eventually defeated. The fact that this book raised a storm of protest in the Scandinavian West in 1879 suggests that the ideology of Norwegian cultural maintenance under clerical leadership was widely supported.

Johannes B. Wist’s novel *Jonasville*, which is subtitled “A Picture of Culture,” reveals this same deep concern for an “American dream” which is built upon the economic promise of the Upper Midwest and the tested traditions of inherited culture. The fictional town of Jonasville is set in eastern North Dakota and is characterized as a stronghold of the Norwegian Synod. Here, as in most immigrant communities, the congregation estab-
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lished its own school, the "Norwegian school," which ran during the summer. This was a half-way measure because a full year of parochial school was not possible. When the "Norwegian school" is opposed by a fellow countryman, Jonas Olson and the pastor increased its term from one to three months. Also the pastor and leading laymen succeed in inducing the local school board to hire a Norwegian instructor for the town's two-year public high school.

However, the ultimate tragedy — fear for the failure of Norwegian cultural maintenance on the Upper Plains — is symbolized at the end of the novel when Jonas' daughter, Signa Marie, rejects the young pastor, symbol of Norwegian culture, and elopes with Miles Standish, the "Yankee." Ragna Olson's lament over her daughter's choice is prophetic of the failure of the American dream as many Norwegian immigrants cherished it: "I have been afraid that it would end like this." 20

Norwegian-American fiction, however, also suggests that there was another element among the clergy and laity whose different social-cultural background in Norway led them to perceive the "threat" from the American environment in different ways and to react with different solutions. The literature suggests that this group of clergy and laity were not greatly troubled by the American school. They may even have been outright supporters of this institution. They are portrayed, however, as sensing the threat to their cherished Norwegian ideals as coming from what is symbolized by the "American saloon." One fictional character remarks: "The saloon is one of America's most dangerous pitfalls, and I could not wish even my worst enemy to fall into it. The state, permitting its existence, is largely responsible. I for my part make this social fabric of Norway responsible for my first step on the downward grade. There the seed of vice was sown, which the AMERICAN SALOON has nourished until the plant is fully developed." 21
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This declaration by Lorentzen, an educated and artistic immigrant who has been reduced by alcohol to a groveling beggar, is the basic theme of H. A. Foss's novel of social realism, Tobias. The centrality of the "saloon" issue is more evident in the original Norwegian title, Den amerikansk saloonen (The American Saloon). Foss's book, written in 1888, contains most of the elements that occur in Norwegian-American fiction during the period of settlement in the Upper Midwest, 1870-1920.

The saloon is clearly portrayed as an American institution and as such is a real threat to the Norwegian-American community. This Americanness is emphasized by assigning "Yankee" or "Irish" names to the saloonkeepers, who are also the central villains of the novels. In Tobias, the saloonkeeper, Pat O'Leary, is characterized as a "dog [who] first licks, then bites the victim's hand." The chasm between the American saloon and the best interest of the Norwegian-American community becomes unbridgeable when Pat finally murders the leader of the local Norwegian abstinence society.

The idea that the saloon is an American institution and a threat to the Norwegians' realization of their "dream" is borne out also in Strømme's Halvor. Here the struggle between the good men, Søren and Pastor Evensen, and the unscrupulous saloonkeeper, Myran, is developed in a chapter entitled "The American Saloon." Myran, as the embodiment of the threat to the immigrant's dream, loans money to Ole Findreg in order to get his property. This Myran accomplishes, finally driving Ole to suicide.22

The animosity between Norwegians and Americans is often connected with the saloon and liquor. It is in Pat's saloon that the Yankee doctor, Lewis, hatches his scheme to try some of his patent medicine on Tobias' sick children. His attitude toward Norwegians is clear: "Well, that old ignorant, orthodox Norwegian will
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charge it [the children's death] to fate or the will of God — he will never think of making us responsible for it.” 23

Neither are the Yankees treated in a flattering light in Simon Johnson's novel I et nyt rige (In the New Kingdom). On the one hand, they are characterized as an overly pious, superpatriot type; on the other, they are pictured as indulging in drunken orgies: “The Norwegians became a frequent subject of conversation. Their language, habits and customs were ridiculed.”

This hostility toward those who used and abused the immigrants is also portrayed by H. A. Foss in Tobias. He expresses the deep hurt in the Norwegian-American soul when he describes the dialogue between Pat and Dr. Lewis in the rear of the saloon on the day of the funeral for Tobias' children: “They talked and laughed and swore as usual and maintained that out West it matters little how one makes it; money, alone, classifies the people, and there is no God west of the Mississippi.” 24

Here we sense that the American saloon is more than a single institution. For the artist, it is symbolic of the principles of materialism, godlessness, and injustice.

In reaction to the American saloon and all it symbolized, several immigrant novels urge social-political activism, especially in the form of organizing abstinence societies and other political pressure groups to bring about social justice. This idea is the theme of the Reverend M. F. Gjertsen's novel Harald Hegg, published in 1914. 25 In this book, Hegg, the young crusading lawyer, is the champion of the "people" against the railroads, saloons, liquor interests, and "machine politicians." He is the uncompromising idealist who seeks justice for poor farmers, loggers, and all the downtrodden. Harald is an ardent supporter of the "new ideas" of the "progressive party" which, in the bias of the author, is clearly the party of the future. 26 Even the rich lumber king, Mr. Hadley, can see the handwriting on the wall. He muses:
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“It appears that Mr. Hegg’s prophecy is already beginning to be fulfilled, that the day will come when the sons and daughters of the money barons will come and take the lead in the work for these new ideas.”

In opposition to Harald is his boyhood friend, Karl Holm, son of the aristocratic Pastor Holm of the Synod. Karl also turns to the profession of law and becomes a supporter of big business interests and the Republican party. With this backing, he wins a seat in the state legislature.

Later in the novel, Hegg tries to rally Norwegian Lutheran pastors to the banner of political activism in the cause of progressive ideals. In a speech he says: “And these duties merit help from the best spiritual force among us. Here we need our pastors’ influence. I know that there is a rather strong feeling among our people that the pastor’s Call is altogether too high and holy to mix together with such temporal and worldly things as elections and government. But if it is the pastor’s Call to nourish the flock and tend the lambs, it seems to me that it is in complete agreement with this Call to defend the flock against the wolves, which threaten to destroy and lay desolate the entire people. In the battle of liberation which confronts us, the church people ought to take the lead. The ‘Systems’ fear them and will mobilize everything in order to get the understanding commonly disseminated, that politics is much too worldly and unclean for pastors and serious Christians to get mixed up in.” Harald goes on to call upon the Old Testament prophets and John Knox as guides to the clergy in their political involvement.

Not all writers of Norwegian-American fiction, however, perceived the clergy’s role as did Gjertsen and those who saw the big threat to Norwegian-American goals in the figure of the American saloon or the “System.” Not all Norwegian Lutheran clergy portrayed in
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fiction are supporters of political action even to the extent of organizing abstinence societies. The novels clearly portray a division among pastors on the issue of organized resistance to those forces symbolized by the American saloon. In Ager's *Christ before Pilate* it is clear that the former fictional pastor had warned against the temperance societies. In *Tobias* the church is split on the issue of the abstinence society. Pastor Traglie of the Norwegian Synod speaks against organizing for secular reforms. His position is reflected in the words of the sexton: "It is obvious that as a church and as individual Christians we are not justified in inaugurating a campaign of secular reform." Pastor Traglie expresses his disfavor regarding what he calls politics in the church when he says to Pastor Fuglesang: "I'm sorry to see a brother in the church's work who endorses the use of God's house for political purposes."

But Pastor Fuglesang of the new congregation, synod not given, continues as an active abstinence organizer. He is credited with having "criticized the Norwegian State Church and the clergy as a whole on both sides of the water." For him the way to meet the threat to the Norwegian church, family, and community life is to organize a Norwegian religious institution that could take effective political action to overcome the threat from the American saloon.

We have surveyed a portion of the material written by Norwegian-American authors during or with reference to the period 1870–1930; certain patterns regarding the artists' perception of the clergy and their role in the immigrant community life now begin to emerge.

First, it is apparent that the novels portray social class differences that divided the Norwegian Lutheran clergy. These differences are also associated with cleavages in terms of style of religious life and theological perspective. They all have roots in Norway and seem not to have
been simply the product of the American environment. However, these differences do take on an American form when they are expressed in a plurality of synodical organizations — Norwegian Synod, Hauges Synod, United Church, and Free Church.

The synodical form of church organization was something new for Norwegian Lutherans, but it represented a structural adaptation to relieve the internal tensions of the ethnic group. It seems that all of these tension-producing factors, including class, theology, and style of religious life, had a part in determining which group a given pastor would join. But the important consideration for the Norwegian Americans was that the multiplicity of Lutheran synods helped to relieve some of the intra-group tensions and thus to preserve the group itself — that is, to keep most Norwegian immigrants within the Lutheran fold.

Next, from the novels that I studied, it is apparent that the clergy as well as the laity tended to polarize in their response to threats from the American environment. Because they perceived these threats differently, they carried out their leadership function in different ways. The Norwegian Synod group is portrayed as expecting the clergy to act as the cultural guardians of the ethnic group and so to perpetuate the best of the cultural and religious tradition through a system of parochial schools. Hence, it tended to be suspicious of the American school. The other side of the polarity, consisting primarily of the Haugean and Free Church synods, considered it the ministers’ duty to enter actively into the political and social life of the larger community in order to perpetuate the heritage of freedom, justice, and respect for law and order that this group saw as “the best” of their Norwegian inheritance. To achieve this goal, it was necessary for the clergy to help organize quasi-religious centers, abstinence societies for political power.
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This varying apprehension of the dangers in American society meant that the synods at each pole tended to adapt to the environment in different ways. Hence, the role of the Norwegian-American clergy is portrayed in the novels as involving participation in differing forms of activity. The first group, centered in the Norwegian Synod, tended to hold the line on cultural assimilation. That is, they usually insisted on longer periods of parochial school and more study of Norwegian language, history, and literature, as well as a greater stress on the symbols of orthodox Lutheran theology — Luther’s Small Catechism, Pontoppidan’s Explanation, and other Lutheran confessional writings. This group was relatively muted about political involvement and thus was moderately willing to assimilate into American political structures.

The second group, which focused in the Hauges Synod and the Lutheran Free Church, is portrayed in the novels as more willing than the Norwegian Synod to adapt to the cultural institutions of the American environment. That is, pastors tended to favor a quicker transition to English and supported the American common school. In order to achieve political power, this group saw its role as that of supporting some degree of cultural assimilation. By organizing the Scandinavian temperance societies and Norwegian-speaking congregations, however, its ministers showed themselves very unwilling to promote total cultural assimilation.

As a tentative hypothesis, then, for a thorough historical study of the social-cultural role of Norwegian Lutheran clergy in the Midwest, I have summarized the patterns that have emerged from this perusal of Norwegian-American novels: Groups of Norwegian immigrants and their clergy who settled in the Upper Midwest in 1870-1920 held differing attitudes toward the American school and the American saloon, and chose different ways of dealing with these threats from the
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American environment. The patterns of differing attitudes and roles are associated with the several Norwegian Lutheran synods. Furthermore, they are related to cultural and social class differences among the clergy and laity.

Thus, this study has attempted to point up the important function of immigrant fiction as a source available to the ethnic historian for the formulation of an operating hypothesis. For the genesis of such a hypothesis is more than the result of a rather objective observation of events. In fact, even in the exact sciences, it is no longer presumed that the inductive method is the sole source of one's hypothesis. The generalizations which one arrives at are not to be separated from the cultural and social milieu within which the writer lives.

I have assumed that fiction may reveal certain facts regarding the cultural and social environment of the period under consideration; literature thus may prove of valuable assistance to the historian as he formulates his generalizations. These, in turn, are only tentative; they must be tested by data from historically valid sources.

The value of Norwegian-American fiction insofar as the historian is concerned has been emphasized by Vernon L. Parrington in his introduction to Ole Rølvaag's Giants in the Earth: "It is because Giants in the Earth, for the first time in our fiction, evaluates adequately the settlement in terms of motion, because it penetrates to the secret inner life of men and women who undertook the heavy work of subduing the wilderness, it is — quite apart from all artistic value — a great historical document."

As a resource for the historian of Norwegian-American life, I believe Parrington's statement may be applied to all immigrant fiction. In this literature the historian can find clues regarding the social-cultural milieu of the age that may aid him in his task of interpreting the historical data.
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NOTES

1 Ole E. Rølvaag, Giants in the Earth, xxxiv (New York, 1929).
2 Following is a list by author, title, and date of publication of the twelve primary works to which I make reference in this paper: Waldemar Ager, Kristus for Pilatus (1911); Ager, Paa veien til smeltepotten (1917); Hjalmar H. Boyesen, Falconberg (1879); H. A. Foss, Tobias (1899); Foss, Husmandsgutt en (1885); M. Falk Gjersten, Harald Hegg (1914); Simon Johnson, I et nyt rige (1914); James A. Peterson, Solstad: The Old and the New (1923); Ole E. Rølvaag, Giants in the Earth (1929); Rølvaag, Peder Seier (1928); Per Strømme, Hvorledes Halvor blev prest (1893); and Johannes B. Wist, Jonasville (1922).
4 Waldemar Ager, Christ before Pilate (Kristus for Pilatus) (Minneapolis, 1924).
5 M. Falk Gjertsen, Harald Hegg (Minneapolis, 1914).
6 Per Strømme, Hvorledes Halvor blev prest (Decorah, Iowa, 1893); the English translation is titled Halvor: A Story of Pioneer Youth (Decorah, 1960).
7 James A. Peterson, Solstad: The Old and the New (Minneapolis, 1923).
8 Foss, Tobias (Minneapolis, 1889).
9 Rølvaag, Giants in the Earth.
10 Simon Johnson, I et nyt rige (Minneapolis, 1914); tr. by C. O. Solberg, From Fjord to Prairie (Minneapolis, 1916).
11 Johannes B. Wist, Jonasville: Et kulturbillede (Decorah, 1922).
12 Rølvaag, Peder Victorious (Peder Seier) (New York, 1929).
13 Rølvaag, Peder Victorious.
14 Strømme, Halvor.
15 Ager, Christ before Pilate.
16 Rølvaag, Their Fathers’ God (New York, 1931).
18 Hjalmar H. Boyesen, Falconberg (New York, 1879).
19 Clarence A. Glasrud, Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, 73 (Northfield, 1963).
20 Wist, Jonasville.
21 Foss, Tobias.
22 Strømme, Halvor.
23 Foss, Tobias.
24 Foss, Tobias.
25 Gjertsen was a pastor of the United Church who later joined the Lutheran Free Church.
26 Gjertsen, Harald Hegg.
27 Ager, Christ before Pilate.
28 Foss, Tobias.