

Chapter 1 : Latter-day Saint Filmmakers and Actors - Selected Bibliography

*Vardis Fisher: the novelist as poet, [Dorys Crow Grover] on racedaydvl.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

The novel won the Harper Prize. In , Fisher moved to Hagerman, Idaho, and spent the next twenty years writing the volume Testament of Man " series of novels, depicting the history of humans from cavemen to civilization. Fisher is often grouped with disaffected Mormon writers in Mormon fiction. His family moved to an isolated home in He read many books in the Rigby library. Vardis and Vivian, at ages thirteen and ten, transferred to a school in Poplar, Idaho the next year, where they lived on their own for half of the school year. They lived off of fish and other wildlife. He lost motivation when he found out that he might become a non-commissioned officer, and resigned in early summer, returning to Idaho Falls. Vardis Fisher worked with his father and uncle in their automotive shop, and stayed there while Leona went to live with her parents in Antelope while their baby was born. In his last year at the U of U, in ,[1] he wrote several plays. Vardis spent the summer studying at the University of Chicago in order to qualify for teaching at the U of U that fall. He inspired a few students, including Wallace Stegner , who wrote that Fisher "put a can opener on my head and opened up my brains. Leona read to him until his eyes recovered and he could afford new eyeglasses. He did not have friends among the other faculty members, and even made enemies with a few of them by bluntly criticizing them. Since he tended to stare at others, he sometimes wore dark glasses to hide the direction of his gaze. Trusler started teaching at the University of Utah in The next two books, published in and , were divisive, with critics receiving them as "sternly beautiful" or "erotic tripe. Fisher received help from high school students, who provided obscure information about remote locations. A Fable of Love. The book was his most popular, outselling all his previous books combined, and was still in print in Carl Van Doren , one of the Harper prize judges, said that the book was neither anti-Mormon invective nor pro-Mormon hagiography. Givens sees Fisher as presenting Joseph Smith as a simple but likeable man, and Brigham Young as "pragmatic and decisive;"[34] a successful portrayal of the way adversity solidified bonds between early Saints. The book ends after the practice of polygamy is officially ended, with members who want to still practice polygamy moving to Canada or Mexico. There he started his Testament of Man series, an epic series spanning twelve volumes and tracing the development of the human race from prehistoric times,[36] culminating in another autobiographical work, Orphans of Gethsemane. A Parable, the eighth novel of the twelve-volume epic. Fisher has been described as a "cranky Idaho Old Rightist. Tale of Valor is a novel recounting the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The "lost generation" was a group of writers with Mormon backgrounds who used Mormon characters or themes in their work. Their work was sympathetic to Mormons, portraying them sensitively, though Mormons themselves often saw their work as disloyal. These characters have creative impulses that clash with religious fundamentalists. The characters of the Vardis Fisher "type" often seek to understand religion as a reaction to people close to them, much in the same way Fisher was close to his mother and first wife, both devout Mormons. Austin concludes that the characters, and by extension Vardis Fisher, are definitely influenced by the culture of the religion they reject. Their son Wayne was born in She gave birth to Thornton Fisher in February She was frequently apart from Vardis, and while Vardis disliked religion, Margaret was a Christian. They were mutually attracted to one another. Vardis divorced from Margaret in An American Saga of Courage Pemmican:

Chapter 2 : Project MUSE - Vardis Fisher: March 31, 1864–July 9,

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

Grover received an appointment as professor of English at East Texas State University, where she taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in American literature for more than twenty years. Throughout her career she maintained her interest in Vardis Fisher, writing articles and delivering papers about him at professional conferences. She is the author of two books about Fisher, *A Solitary Voice: The Novelist as Poet*, a study based upon her Ph.D. Her article, "Vardis Fisher: Before entering graduate school she was editor of her hometown newspaper, *The Pendleton Record*. She divides her time between Texas and her ranch near Pendleton. Content Description Return to Top The Doris Crow Grover collection consists of approximately one cubic foot of papers dating mainly from 1864 to 1930. The Correspondence includes 23 postcards and letters from Fisher to Grover, discussing his poetry and the influences on his work. Professor Grover submitted drafts of her dissertation for Fisher to read; his comments and corrections are among the letters. Professor Grover also corresponded with other Fisher scholars and with literary journals and publishers. The Writings of Doris Crow Grover include variant drafts of several of her articles, some of which were republished in *A Solitary Voice*. Some of those are unpublished papers delivered by Fisher scholars at professional conferences. They, along with published articles and reviews by others, are found in the series *Criticism and Reviews of Fisher and His Works*. Copyright to these writings remain with their authors. The collection also contains Conference material organizational papers, programs, and the like, Notes and Clippings collected by Grover, and slides and photos. Forms part of the Idaho Writers Archive. Use of the Collection Return to Top Restrictions on Use Copyright to the articles, reviews, and papers in Series 6 - Criticism and reviews of Fisher and works - remain with their authors. Biographical material about Doris Crow Grover; 2. Correspondence of Doris Crow Grover; 3. Writings by Doris Crow Grover; 4. Notes and clippings; 6. Criticism and reviews of Fisher and his works by others; and 7. Acquisition Information Gift of Dr. Grover, and after.

Chapter 3 : Vardis Fisher Fisher, Vardis (Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism) - Essay - racedaydvl.com

Vardis Fisher: The Novelist as Poet by Grover, Doris Crow. New York, NY: Revisionist Press. Good with no dust jacket. First Edition. Hardcover.

His family moved to an isolated home in He read many books in the Rigby library. Vardis and Vivian, at ages thirteen and ten, transferred to a school in Poplar, Idaho the next year, where they lived on their own for half of the school year. They lived off of fish and other wildlife. He lost motivation when he found out that he might become a non-commissioned officer, and resigned in early summer, returning to Idaho Falls. Vardis Fisher worked with his father and uncle in their automotive shop, and stayed there while Leona went to live with her parents in Antelope while their baby was born. In his last year at the U of U, in , [1] he wrote several plays. Vardis spent the summer studying at the University of Chicago in order to qualify for teaching at the U of U that fall. He inspired a few students, including Wallace Stegner , who wrote that Fisher "put a can opener on my head and opened up my brains. Leona read to him until his eyes recovered and he could afford new eyeglasses. He did not have friends among the other faculty members, and even made enemies with a few of them by bluntly criticizing them. Since he tended to stare at others, he sometimes wore dark glasses to hide the direction of his gaze. Trusler started teaching at the University of Utah in The next two books, published in and , were divisive, with critics receiving them as "sternly beautiful" or "erotic tripe. Fisher received help from high school students, who provided obscure information about remote locations. A Fable of Love. The book was his most popular, outselling all his previous books combined, and was still in print in Carl Van Doren , one of the Harper prize judges, said that the book was neither anti-Mormon invective nor pro-Mormon hagiography. Givens sees Fisher as presenting Joseph Smith as a simple but likeable man, and Brigham Young as "pragmatic and decisive;" [34] a successful portrayal of the way adversity solidified bonds between early Saints. The book ends after the practice of polygamy is officially ended, with members who want to still practice polygamy moving to Canada or Mexico. There he started his Testament of Man series, an epic series spanning twelve volumes and tracing the development of the human race from prehistoric times, [36] culminating in another autobiographical work, Orphans of Gethsemane. A Parable, the eighth novel of the twelve-volume epic. Tale of Valor is a novel recounting the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The "lost generation" was a group of writers with Mormon backgrounds who used Mormon characters or themes in their work. Their work was sympathetic to Mormons, portraying them sensitively, though Mormons themselves often saw their work as disloyal. These characters have creative impulses that clash with religious fundamentalists. The characters of the Vardis Fisher "type" often seek to understand religion as a reaction to people close to them, much in the same way Fisher was close to his mother and first wife, both devout Mormons. Austin concludes that the characters, and by extension Vardis Fisher, are definitely influenced by the culture of the religion they reject. Their son Wayne was born in She gave birth to Thornton Fisher in February She was frequently apart from Vardis, and while Vardis disliked religion, Margaret was a Christian. They were mutually attracted to one another. Vardis divorced from Margaret in An American Saga of Courage Pemmican:

Chapter 4 : Vardis Fisher Critical Essays - racedaydvl.com

Vardis Alvero Fisher (March 31, - July 9,) was an American writer from Idaho best known for his popular historical novels of the Old West. After studying at the University of Utah and the University of Chicago, Fisher taught English at the University of Utah and then at the Washington Square College of New York University until

This is not to question that the novels are carefully researched, but to assert that Fisher never grasped the dynamism of Christianity, which is also a part of history. Fisher has never seen that, though Christianity has been a religion of the desert, it has also been a religion of the valley of vision. Nowhere does he give a convincing portrait of a George Herbert, who lived in the beauty of holiness, nor a Jonathan Edward in all of his complexity and stature. These people are beyond Fisher - who might have recalled Cabell and the dynamic illusion. There is a poetic mysticism and beauty Fisher failed to see. It is no small tribute to Fisher that the most elemental characters come to life. Tim Woodward in his biography of Fisher states: Never failed to say he was an atheist and was proud of his atheism. He did this in one of the most conservative states of the Union between and when he died. That type of courage is heroic and much needed in our country today. After his death, the Mormon historians Davis Bitton and Leonard Arrington tried to claim Vardis as one of their own because of his stature. Opal Fisher was a member of American Atheists and a regular contributor to the Utah Chapter until her death in . The sources he drew upon for these novels soon would take him down two divergent paths. One led to the frontier Americana for which Fisher is now remembered: These novels, with their naturalistic insistence on the sordid details and commonplace violence of frontier life, set a standard for verisimilitude now commonplace among historians and novelists of the West. In , unsatisfied by the tetralogy, Fisher determined to find the human character in the history of the species and began a series of novels that would culminate in a revision of the tetralogy. Others, such as three on the evolution of Judaism, are less successful. He had found a kindred spirit in J. Eight years later, a few days before his death, he told a Salt Lake City reporter that he had begun his autobiography. His historical fiction is notable for its foundation in meticulous research and its rigorous objectivity. Despite his vehement and unwavering dislike for Mormonism, his novel on the beginnings of the church is admired by believer and non-believer alike. Accordingly when Vardis was six years old, his father loaded the family onto a dead axle wagon and headed up the South Forks of the Snake River thirty-six miles. By the time Vardis was thirteen and his brother Vivian was ten, the family had decided the boys could manage on their own and found a vacant house near Annis for them. The parents stocked the house with fruits, dried meat, bread and goose grease butter, blankets and clothing. For half a year the boys were alone in a land where it could be dangerous to take out the garbage. It was in Annis that Fisher met his childhood sweetheart, Leona McMurtrey, a woman he married in Idaho had only one college, in Moscow, and that was further away than Salt Lake. After Fisher received his BA, a professor he liked encouraged him to go to graduate school at the University of Chicago. In Chicago Fisher first experienced how the non-Mormon world lived. After receiving his MA he went back to the University of Utah to teach, but did not feel academically secure in this position, and returned to the University of Chicago for his Ph. Fisher again returned to Utah to teach, but this time he began to have trouble with the Mormon Church and knew after three years that he could not reach tenure before the Church hierarchy would have him fired or force him to resign. He returned to Idaho in to write novels, and was hired by the Work Progress Administration WPA federal writers project as the state director in . In he married Margaret Trusler and had one child with her. Vardis Fisher had risen from a life of poverty, ignorance, and superstition to one of some affluence, a Ph. Though his attempt to do this was not a complete success, his books are still with us and could still be used as a tool for the advancement of atheist philosophy. The impact of fiction can be great.

Chapter 5 : ~@Com~|~Atheism: Vardis Fisher ~~~ Mountian Man

Auto Suggestions are available once you type at least 3 letters. Use up arrow (for mozilla firefox browser alt+up arrow) and down arrow (for mozilla firefox browser alt+down arrow) to review and enter to select.

Vardis Fisher American novelist, poet, historian, essayist, short story writer, and nonfiction writer. For further information on his life and works, see CLC Volume 7. Fisher is best known as a historical novelist of the Western frontier. Fisher achieved the height of his popularity during the s and has since fallen into relative obscurity, although he continued to write and publish prolifically until his death in His novel Mountain Man was adapted to the screen in the popular film Jeremiah Johnson starring Robert Redford. When Fisher was six the family moved to an isolated homestead in the foothills of the Big Hole Mountains, near the Snake River. When he was twelve years old, Fisher and his sister moved out of the family home in order to live in the nearest town where they could attend high school. In he married Leona McMurtrey, with whom he had two children. After graduating from college Fisher moved to Chicago to pursue his graduate education, leaving his wife behind in Idaho. In he completed a M. Fisher then moved his family to Chicago where he continued his graduate education, receiving a Ph. In , his wife Leona committed suicide. Filled with guilt, Fisher wrote the poems of Sonnets to an Imaginary Madonna as an expression of these feelings. His first novel, Toilers of the Hills was published the following year. In Fisher married Margaret Trusler, with whom he had one child before they divorced. Under these auspices, Fisher edited and co-wrote the volumes Idaho: In Fisher married Opal Laurel Holmes, with whom he remained until his death. From to he worked as a newspaper columnist. Fisher died in at the age of seventy-three, under conditions some believed to be a suicide. Dark Bridwell , his second novel, also concerns a pioneer couple in Idaho. A Fable of Love focuses on a homely girl living on the Western frontier who eventually finds love. The name of the protagonist of the tetralogy, Vridar Hunter, resembles that of the author in that Vridar and Vardis share all but one of the same letters and Hunter is an obvious substitute for Fisher. The rest of the novel concerns the development of primitive man from its earliest beginnings. At this point, humans develop a matriarchal society based on the association of women with reproduction. In Adam and the Serpent , the fourth novel, a struggle for male dominance begins to emerge as the concept of a male sun-god takes precedence over the female moon-goddess. By the fifth novel, The Divine Passion , human society has developed greater degrees of complexity with power-struggles emerging between religious factions as well as between men and women. The seventh novel, Island of the Innocent , is set in the second or third century b. A Goat for Azazel , the eighth novel, continues to trace the development of Christianity. The tenth novel, Peace Like a River ; reprinted as The Passion Within in , concerns the development of the Christian concept of original sin. My Holy Satan , the eleventh novel of the series, is set in thirteenth-century medieval times and focuses on the increasing political power wielded by the Christian church in Europe. In addition to these two major multi-volume series, Fisher is known for his historical novels of the American West. Children of God traces the history of the Mormon religion as it took root in the West. An American Saga of Courage is based on the famous incident of the Donner party, a group of would-be pioneers who resorted to cannibalism when they were trapped by snow in the high Sierras en route to California. Tale of Valor is based on the factual events of the Lewis and Clark expedition to explore the American West, and Mountain Man is based on a legendary figure of the Western frontier. Critical Reception Fisher reached the height of his popularity and critical acclaim during the s. The crest of his reputation was capped by the award of the Harper Prize for fiction for Children of God. By the mids he had fallen into relative obscurity, although he continued to write and publish prolifically. The popular film adaptation of Mountain Man in the early s brought him renewed critical attention but only briefly. He was praised for his stark realism in depicting life on the frontier in such works as Toilers in the Hills and Dark Bridwell. Critics lauded Fisher for his historical accuracy and meticulous research in the historical novels, Children of God, The Mothers: Critics who did make note of the series found the novels to be over-written and over-burdened by didacticism. The series was then picked up by another publisher who regarded the project with enthusiasm. Though he has fallen into obscurity since the s, Fisher remains an important regional writer of the American

West. Taber has argued that Fisher is also an important influence on the development of historical fiction. Taber asserted that Fisher was highly influential for bringing the element of well-researched historical accuracy to the genre of historical fiction previously associated with Romanticism.

Chapter 6 : Vardis Fisher ~ The Real Idaho Writer, Mountain Man

Vardis Fisher has 35 books on Goodreads with ratings. Vardis Fisher's most popular book is Mountain Man.

Additional Information In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Other such evidence, however, is forthcomingâ€”and this in addition to the one fifth more numerous citations to be found in this edition of the bibliography. For one thing, Mr. Fisher was honored in September, , when the editors of the American Book Collector published a special Vardis Fisher issue containing a number of valuable articles on the author by scholars and friends. Again, in the following year, critical attention focused on Mr. Fisher when he was invited to participate in a Symposium on the Western Novel conducted by the South Dakota Review, in which he sat in such assured literary company as that of Frank Waters, Frederick Manfred, Walter Van Tilberg Clark, Michael Straight, and Paul Horgan, most of whom singled out at least one Fisher title for special honors among Western novels. Nor did the author himself fail in this same autumnal period to support his reputation with significant publications. Thomas Wolfe as I knew Him, and Other Essays provided an indispensable collection of his essays. Mountain Man was, with a few notable exceptions, reviewed with as high praise as any comparable piece of Western Americana. He was awarded for it the Western Heritage Award for the outstanding Western novel of the year. After his sudden death in July, , memorial articles by John Hutchens, John Milton, and Ronald Tabor appeared in general and academic periodicals. The compiler would like to point out that in revising the bibliography, he has worked retroactively to garner older, overlooked citations, as well as those published from to Indeed, at this writing a new Ph. Grover has been approved by her thesis committee at Washington State University. Other recent dissertations on Fisher listed in the Winter, , issue of Western American Literature are the following: University of Colorado, Pennsylvania State University, In fact, it might be said that Mr. Fisher has had three such reputationsâ€”as a writer of regional and naturalistic novels in the late twenties and early thirties e. Dark Bridwell and the Vridar Hunter tetralogy ; later You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

Chapter 7 : Vardis Fisher Biography - Facts, Childhood, Wiki, Family Life & Achievements

Vardis Fisher /by Joseph M. Flora. *A solitary voice: Vardis Fisher ;a collection of essays* /by Dorys C. *Vardis Fisher: the novelist as poet* /by Dorys C. Grover.

See also Contemporary Authors, Vols. Fisher has the energies and the admirably steady work habits of a nineteenth-century man of letters, and his output shows the sort of unevenness that commonly accompanies incessant production. One would hate to be set the task of reading every word he has published, but would hate even worse to be without the half-dozen books that show him at his best. His talent and his subjects are sometimes not congruent. In an essay written in Fisher remarks that the Testament of Man series was probably too much for him, the difficulty being that he started on the series so late in life that he simply could not read enough or learn enough. It is unlikely, however, that the Testament would have been much improved if Fisher had started on it the day he was weaned; if the series fails it is not through lack of knowledge or historical insight, not because of any inability to understand history, but because Mr. Fisher could not animate that many periods in fiction. In a few of the Testament novels, particularly in *My Holy Satan*, he has managed to do so, but in most of the others the ideas are made quite clear while the characters remain vague. The pre-Christian era pricks the scholar in Fisher; the early West pricks the novelist. Fisher had made a rather propitious beginning as a novelist. His first two novels, though not best sellers, were highly praised; and critics expected a rich new regionalist contribution to American literature. When Fisher started his autobiographical tetralogy, he still seemed in the regionalist tradition, but it was soon evident that the modern Rousseau had other things in mind. When *Children of God* won the Harper prize in , Fisher was, from all indications, in the forefront of American letters. While reviewers and the public were praising the Mormon saga, Fisher was trying to talk up his scheme with publishers, with very little success. When the first few books of the new series appeared, a few critics noticed them with interest. However, they received nothing like the attention Fisher got in the depression decade. Even his first two novels received more notice. But midway through the series, Fisher was receiving almost no attention. Indeed, it seemed for a time that *The Testament of Man* would not even be published. The four books follow the pattern of the conventional symphony. The narrative technique of the tetralogy is more elaborate than the criticism which first labeled Fisher a Naturalist would indicate. But by writing a Bildungsroman in which the reader was not invited to identify with the hero, Fisher assumed great risks, and many critics turned from him in anger as the tetralogy concluded. The books were certainly not a staple of Naturalistic fiction. The project is, of course, frighteningly ambitious. He realized the immensity of the project, but he thought of his novels as pioneering in a fruitful direction. Fisher has frequently been called a propagandist, and the Testament, to be frank, is didactic. Fisher has a message, and he does not wish anyone to misunderstand him. He regrets the modern prejudice against authorial intrusions, which he considers to be the cream of many of the great Victorian novels. Some readers will be greatly annoyed at the didactic in Fisher. Anyone reading the Testament straight through may be irritated by repetitions; though some are unnecessary within a work, Fisher rightly repeats the central themes of a previous novel. On the story level, Apollo is [here] as overwhelmingly a villain as Fisher has ever shown; but, rather than serving primarily as a melodramatic device, Apollo symbolizes the neurotic male ego which corrupts womankind. In his *Americana*, Fisher explored the possibilities for a new kind of historical novel, a method which enabled him to escape the peculiar distortion that increasingly comes into play in the Testament, where he also tried to present the past as it was but in part succumbed to the dangers of the didactic approach. They have felt that he has focused on the unpleasant side of life—and in a sense he has because he felt we do not understand this part of ourselves. We need to remember, also, that Fisher was from the frontier West where human behavior was frequently savage, and where passions of hate and greed were more dominant than we like to think. Fisher has exposed the baseness of human nature; but that quality is not his emphasis. Though the toll on Fisher has sometimes been heavy, American literature has had something of decided value added to it. Of special significance for Americans, he has brought to the novel an authentic pioneer view and vigor. He is not only man on the frontier; he is the civilized writer schooled in great literature. His novels and stories of the Antelope country of

Idaho not only make that region come alive, butâ€”more forcefully than our pioneer stories can usually even intimateâ€”portrays pioneer life in many phases, both its tragedy and its comedy, what day-by-day life means for adult and child. His first works, which indicated a genuine talent for characterizations, gave American letters vital characters in an area in which their lack in fiction had been so evidentâ€”convincing pioneers of the West. His work has more complexity than summary treatments of him have usually indicated. If he is a hard-boiled Naturalist, he is also a humanitarianâ€”and though many critics missed itâ€”a humorist. If he sometimes is overly didactic â€” he has [also] written novels in which he has been quite detachedâ€”. He has not only written novels on many subjects, but he has experimented with form; he has unfortunately, however, never developed the technical excellence of most of our major figures. Though he has not always written with grace, he is sometimes a poet and his style is usually clean. He has written a few finely chiseled short storiesâ€”especially those set in Antelope, and if he has not done more with the genre, it is not from lack of ability. As poet, essayist, and novelist, Fisher is a writer of range, imagination, and mindâ€”. And of course, Fisher is a masculine writer, one for the tough-minded. His works are not for the squeamish, nor on the other hand would some do at all for readers with no interest in more intellectual matters. Fisher has never tried to titillate the glands, but he does suggest that in all of life the mind could be better used. With the subjects and themes of advanced society at least in the last two or even three volumes of the Vridar Hunter tetralogy , Vardis Fisher is not at home. He is more vivid and more significant and more understanding when he deals with the primitive world, the "animal" worldâ€”. Fisher finds barbarisms in modern society, as any perceptive sociologist or anthropologist can. From the autobiographical materials in the Idaho novels it is evident that the young Vardis Fisher was shocked and disturbed by the cruelties of men as well as by the harshness and indifference in the natural world. His later research for the twelve-volume Testament was undertaken in order to explain those cruelties and to provide some kind of answer to the questions raised in the Vridar Hunter tetralogy. Fisher also used the method of relating in vivid detail the barbaric nature of man, presumably to shock the reader into an awareness of the problem. His extensive use of animalism in the Testament series is designed to show that man has not been able to free himself entirely of his primitive origins, that even in the twentieth century he is socially and morally crude. The intention is to teach, to show that man need not be captive to his origins, that he has the ability and the power and often the will to be something higher and better than mere creature. It is obvious that certain parts of the history of the American West lend themselves easily to this particular theme. What goes wrong â€” is the tone; Fisher goes beyond a literal description of the animalism and adds either irony or humor. Perhaps Fisher exaggerates to the point of humor because this is the only way in which he can endure the barbarisms of which he writes; or perhaps he gives in to the impulse to shock his readers, partly for his own enjoyment. Sometimes it is hard to tell. We know that, as a person, he was sensitive enough although he wore a cynical surface to be terrified, even while fascinated, by the cruelties which man commits upon his fellow men. Fisher believes that man has the intelligence to overcome his animalism and emotionalism, and his superstitions, but that he has refused to take this step forward; therefore, Fisher is often bitter and antagonistic against the human race, adopting the role of the village atheist in order to prod, to criticize, and to condemn. He attacks stupidity and callousness, and he revels in the gore of barbarism, all the while trying to protect and nourish his own sensitive soul. One sympathizes with the man and cries out for all men after reading his Idaho novels, especially the Vridar Hunter story. Gradually, through the next three volumes, fiction gives way to a kind of loosely-dramatized exposition. In the last volume [No Villain Need Be] there is almost no action. Through endless conversations, Fisher presents all of his ideas in encyclopedic fashion, thinking them through as he goes along. The novel is tedious, and it resolves nothingâ€”. Fisher was not a politician; he might have liked to be a psychologist; he probably was more than anything else a moralist. It is a true tragedy of the end of the American frontier; it achieves the status of myth, although firmly anchored in the Idaho soil; and Charley Bridwell, through his peculiar strengths and weaknesses, becomes an American Lear. Some of his later work is heavy with exposition and autobiography, presumably the result of his increasing impatience with superstition, ignorance, and fear, all of which he tried valiantly to overcome. While his life work rarely swerved from its predetermined course, established by his youthful reaction to the Idaho wilderness, the early and archetypical Dark Bridwell remains his most artistic blending of

the literally real and the mythical.

Chapter 8 : Vardis Fisher : the frontier and regional works - ECU Libraries Catalog

The Real Idaho Writer, Mountain Man. Idaho writer Vardis Fisher is remembered, if at all, for his novel Mountain Man, which was the inspiration for the superb Sydney Pollack film Jeremiah Johnson, starring Robert Redford.

Farrell, and Thomas Wolfe. The remaining thirty years of his career were devoted to Western Americana and to an ambitious project called *The Testament of Man*, a series of twelve historical novels set in periods from the Pleistocene to the modern era and tracing the "psychohistory" of Western mankind. I encountered his work in high school, at a time when I needed an intellectual mentor, and his fierce, scathing honesty about his own character, his relentless pursuit of historical truth, his strangely bipolar voice alternately that of a preaching mystic and sneering sceptic, and his lyrical naturalism were precisely what I needed. And when, as a precocious teenager, I wrote a fan letter, shyly asking if we could correspond, his response "Stop looking for fathers. My affection for his work is that of a child for his admirable parent. I love him in spite of his flaws; I respect the strength and integrity of his mind; and I make no more apologies. Unfortunately, very little is in print regarding Fisher, either of his own books or books about him. The list below is selective and subjective rather than complete. Many of his best books were printed in multiple paperback editions, and they often turn up in used bookstores. If you are looking for a particular title and cannot find it locally, I recommend Powells Bookstore in Portland. They almost always have a few Fisher titles on hand, from old trade paperbacks of *Mountain Man* to the occasional gem like a *Dark Bridwell* first edition. The "open book" icon [] is a link to a review of the neighboring title. Mormon historian Leonard Arrington praises the book highly, but it has generally been criticized by Mormons for being irreverent and by non-Mormons for being too sympathetic. There is no more painless way to gain a thorough understanding of the meaning of the Mormon experience. Here is a link to my own essay on *Children of God: Fisher finds the perfect mix of heroism and horror in his telling of this nightmarish incident of the Oregon Trail era.* Bernard de Voto included the Donners in his *The Year of Decision*, an extremely readable history of the American West focused on the five years immediately after the Mexican War, and California novelist George R. Stewart wrote a historical account of the Donner Party, *Ordeal by Hunger*. Of all the Donner literature, Fisher is the place to begin. My essay about *The Mothers, "Survival of the Blood,"* is posted. While its authenticity is unquestionable, the racist attitudes toward the Indians will be offensive to many readers. *Centennial Essays*, edited by Joseph M. It is essentially a good yarn rather than an powerful novel. Not a typical Fisher book, and far less engaging than a half dozen others, but it mysteriously gets reprinted in paperback fairly regularly. Similarly, his huge book on the mining industry, *Gold Rushes and Mining Camps of the Early American West*, comes in and out of print regularly. This is certainly his best-known, if not his best novel. I find it readable, but not the best introduction to the topic and very oddly Romantic for a writer who seemed to specialize in reducing the Romantic notion to its sweat-soaked reality. For example, Fisher backs away from the alleged cannibalism in the historical record. Nor does he, as Johnston claimed to have done, cut off the leg of a Blackfeet captor for food on a cross-Wyoming trek. For a rationalist, Fisher had enormous empathy with the mystic mind. His pictures of Kate communing with her dead children are so of the most touching moments in all his fiction. Edward Anhalt revised the script extensively, and he says that one thing he took out was the cannibalism. Personal Fiction Fisher spent his childhood on a homestead in Swan Valley, now on the inaccessible northern edge of Palisades Reservoir. He went to school in Rigby, Annis, and Driggs, and left the region to attend school at the University of Utah and then the University of Chicago. He married his childhood sweetheart, Leona McMurtrey, and after a few tempestuous years she committed suicide. He subsequently married twice more, and he began his writing career after her death, a personal tragedy that may well have been the single most powerful influence on his work. Of the printings, revisions, and reprintings of the narrative, the one volume worth reading is *In Tragic Life*, which depicts childhood in the American wilderness as something rather different from *A Little House on the Prairie*. *Dark Bridwell* In addition to these books, he published two notable novels set during his lifetime in the Idaho wilderness. You can often find used copies of a mass market paperback with the title *The Wild Ones*. This is *Dark Bridwell*; there is only one, fairly trivial difference from

the original book aside from the title change. The original has a rather lyrical prologue which was left out of the mass market edition. The Testament of Man In the late forties, Fisher began a series of 12 books with which he was able, eventually, to offend everybody. It was an ambitious project flawed by some discredited theories about anthropology. With that agenda, the closer you get to the present, the less there is to write about, hence the jump for CE to the 20th Century. There is a terrible personal truth in the fact that this devotee of "Reason" skipped, in his gigantic exposition of the history of our emotional development as a culture, all of our history from the beginnings of the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution and the closing of the frontier. Looking back on the books, one wishes he had had the foresight to write about the Age of Reason, that period of over-reaching intellectual optimism. The Desert Fathers book variously reprinted as Peace Like a River and The Passion Within has a wiry, ferocious strength about it, and the others will appeal if you are interested in the period they cover. The book has remained in print, suggesting that Fisher is not a dead issue in American letters. Fiction, after all, is "made up," whatever the factual basis, and an author making up a story in which he is the protagonist is hardly an unbiased reporter. Centennial Essays, Joseph Flora, ed. University of Idaho Press The University of Idaho Press flirts now and then with adopting Fisher as one of their own, and this collection of essays on his work is the fruit of an "on" time. Idaho, meanwhile, has gone back to fawning over Papa Ernie, who became an official Idaho writer when he re-decorated his cabin in Sun Valley. Fisher is not a great American author, but when other writers of merely historical interest, such as Thomas Hornsby Ferrill, John Neihardt, and George R. Stewart are accorded reprint, Fisher is unjustly ignored. Many of his novels are deservedly forgotten, but at least two, Dark Bridwell and The Mothers, should be available to readers of regional literature. They vary in value, though not in quality. It is likely to turn up in used book stores in the western states. It is one volume of a great series of six novels, The Buckskin Man Tales, which traces some themes from pre-white days to the end of the frontier. Glass was mauled by a grizzly and left for dead. He came to, splinted his broken leg, and with wounds most of us would have died from he crawled two hundred miles back to the trading post Ashley had launched the expedition from. A few months later, healed and healthy, he set out for the Upper Yellowstone to deal with the men who left him. The truth is spectacular. Manfred turns it into a myth of comradeship and selfishness. The story has been retold a number of times, most recently in the film Man in the Wilderness and the novel and film, The Revenant. Neither tells the story as well, of with such thematic resonance. It was made into a film by Howard Hawks. It is well-written but essentially reportorial. Don Berry, Traskand Moontrap Don Berry is a Portland writer known and respected by people who are knowledgeable about the fur trade. These two novels are highly regarded by historians and literary scholars. Berry also wrote a history of the fur trade called A Majority of Scoundrels. It was made into a Gary Cooper movie longer ago than I can remember. Blevins is also the author of a popular history of the fur trade, Give Your Heart to the Hawks. Bill Hotchkiss, Medicine Calf The best part of a very odd four-volume novel about the life of black mountain man Jim Beckwourth. There were a number of black trappers, some of them, like Beckwourth, unacknowledged children of Southern planters. It turned out, when historians examined the facts, that there was a lot less lying than appeared. Beckwourth lived for a while among the Crow in Wyoming, then he became a storekeeper in Denver. After returning to Denver, he disappeared into Crow country and was never seen again. Hotchkiss drifts off into New Age hoohaw as his tetralogy unfolds. A Majority of Scoundrels As mentioned, Don Berry has written a good popular history of the fur trade, in addition to his excellent Mountain Man novels. De Voto weaves together the Ashley expedition, which established the U. The American Fur Trade of the Far West This two-volume history originally published in the nineteenth century remains a basic book on the topic. The Beaver Men Popular history of the trappers by a Nebraska writer. The University of Nebraska has reprinted a selected single volume edition.

Chapter 9 : The Mothers: A Documentary Novel of the Donner Party by Vardis Fisher

Vardis Fisher American novelist, poet, historian, essayist, short story writer, and nonfiction writer. The following entry provides criticism on Fisher's works through