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**What America Reads: Myth Making in Popular Fiction**

Reading and discussion series for Fall 2021

The mass appeal of the fiction best-sellers listed below seems to come from the combination of mythic characters and realistic, historically identifiable settings. These five novels, published between 1852 and 1971, are united not only by their reliance on a sense of place, but also by the similarity of their myth making. They all reflect, in different ways, a basic split in the American psyche between seeing domestic life – the idea of Home – as embodying humanity’s greatest virtues, or, on the other hand, as representing an impediment to individual freedom.

Books are available now and may be picked up in advance at the Miami Public Library circulation desk. Sessions will take place at the library in the upstairs meeting room.\* All sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. Attendees are asked to fill out a survey at the end of each session. The program is open and free to the public. Call 918-541-2292 for more information.

\*Arrangements will be made for Zoom attendees on request. Email [mjohnson@miamiokla.net](mailto:mjohnson@miamiokla.net) to set up.

Thursday, August 19

**Uncle Tom’s Cabin**

**by Harriet Beecher Stowe**

Stowe’s novel sold more copies than any other work of American fiction prior to *Gone With the Wind.* The topicality of the slavery issue had much to do with the book’s success and it is credited with helping fuel the abolitionist cause in the 1850s.

Dr. Bryan Cowlishaw, Northeastern State University

Thursday, September 16

**Gone with the Wind**

**by Margaret Mitchell**

The antebellum South, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the role of women in southern society—the treatment of these and many other themes in this enduring best-seller has left an indelible imprint on the popular imagination.

Dr. Andrew Vassar, Northeastern State University

Thursday, October 21

**Shane**

**by Jack Schaefer**

Shane, is a mysterious stranger who rides into and then out of the lives of the Starrett family after helping them to save their farm from Luke Fletcher, a cattle driver who is set on purchasing or stealing all the land rights from the homesteaders and farmers in the area.

Dr. Kurt Lively, Tulsa Community College

Thursday, November 18

**From Here to Eternity**

**by James Jones**

A novel loosely based on Jones' experiences in the pre-World War II Hawaiian Division's 27th Infantry and the unit in which he served, Company E.

Dr. Andrew Vassar, Northeastern State University

Thursday, December 16

**A Tan and Sandy Silence**

**by John D. MacDonald**

Harry Broll, husband of McGee's longtime friend Mary, shows up at his houseboat The Busted Flush with a gun, threatening McGee and accusing him of hiding Mary aboard. The rest of the novel, the thirteenth in the Travis McGee series, involves McGee's search for Mary.

Dr. Bill Corbett, retired from Northeastern State University

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