Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 82

TOPICS VOLUME

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Volume 82

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Topics Volume

Excerpts from Criticism of Various Topics in Twentieth-Century Literature, including Literary and Critical Movements, Prominent Themes and Genres, Anniversary Celebrations, and Surveys of National Literatures

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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Topics Volume

Guide to Gale Literary Criticism Series

For criticism on	Consult these Gale series
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Authors who died between 1900 and 1959	*TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM* (*TCLC*)
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Authors who died between 1400 and 1799	*LITERATURE CRITICISM FROM 1400 TO 1800* (*LC*) *SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM* (*SC*)
Authors who died before 1400	*CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL LITERATURE CRITICISM* (*CMLC*)
Authors of books for children and young adults	*CHILDREN'S LITERATURE REVIEW* (*CLR*)
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Short story writers	*SHORT STORY CRITICISM* (*SSC*)
Black writers of the past two hundred years	*BLACK LITERATURE CRITICISM* (*BLC*)
Hispanic writers of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries	*HISPANIC LITERATURE CRITICISM* (*HLC*)
Native North American writers and orators of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries	*NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE* (*NNAL*)
Major authors from the Renaissance to the present	*WORLD LITERATURE CRITICISM, 1500 TO THE PRESENT* (*WLC*)

Preface

Since its inception more than fifteen years ago, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* has been purchased and used by nearly 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. *TCLC* has covered more than 500 authors, representing 58 nationalities, and over 25,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as *TCLC*. In the words of one reviewer, "there is nothing comparable available." *TCLC* "is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many libraries would have difficulty assembling on their own."

Scope of the Series

TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1960 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of this period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and excerpting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, *TCLC* helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in *TCLC* presents a comprehensive survey of an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of *TCLC* is devoted to literary topics. These topic entries widen the focus of the series from individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism,* which reprints commentary on authors now living or who have died since 1960. Because of the different periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between *CLC* and *TCLC*. For additional information about *CLC* and Gale's other criticism titles, users should consult the Guide to Gale Literary Criticism Series preceding the title page in this volume.

Coverage

Each volume of *TCLC* is carefully compiled to present:

- criticism of authors, or literary topics, representing a variety of genres and nationalities
- both major and lesser-known writers and literary works of the period
- 6-12 authors or 3-6 topics per volume
- individual entries that survey critical response to each author's work or each topic in literary history, including early criticism to reflect initial reactions; later criticism to represent any rise or decline in reputation; and current retrospective analyses.

Organization of This Book

An author entry consists of the following elements: author heading, biographical and critical introduction, list of principal works, excerpts of criticism (each preceded by an annotation and a bibliographic citation), and a bibliography of further reading.

- The **Author Heading** consists of the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. If an author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the real name given in parentheses on the first line of the biographical and critical introduction. Also located at

the beginning of the introduction to the author entry are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose languages use nonroman alphabets.

- The **Biographical and Critical Introduction** outlines the author's life and career, as well as the critical issues surrounding his or her work. References to past volumes of *TCLC* are provided at the beginning of the introduction. Additional sources of information in other biographical and critical reference series published by Gale, including *Short Story Criticism, Children's Literature Review, Contemporary Authors, Dictionary of Literary Biography,* and *Something about the Author,* are listed in a box at the end of the entry.

- Some *TCLC* entries include **Portraits** of the author. Entries also may contain reproductions of materials pertinent to an author's career, including manuscript pages, title pages, dust jackets, letters, and drawings, as well as photographs of important people, places, and events in an author's life.

- The **List of Principal Works** is chronological by date of first book publication and identifies the genre of each work. In the case of foreign authors with both foreign-language publications and English translations, the title and date of the first English-language edition are given in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.

- Critical excerpts are prefaced by **Annotations** providing the reader with information about both the critic and the criticism that follows. Included are the critic's reputation, individual approach to literary criticism, and particular expertise in an author's works. Also noted are the relative importance of a work of criticism, the scope of the excerpt, and the growth of critical controversy or changes in critical trends regarding an author. In some cases, these annotations cross-reference excerpts by critics who discuss each other's commentary.

- A complete **Bibliographic Citation** designed to facilitate location of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism.

- Criticism is arranged chronologically in each author entry to provide a perspective on changes in critical evaluation over the years. All titles of works by the author featured in the entry are printed in boldface type to enable the user to easily locate discussion of particular works. Also for purposes of easier identification, the critic's name and the publication date of the essay are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the journal in which it appeared. Some of the excerpts in *TCLC* also contain translated material. Unless otherwise noted, translations in brackets are by the editors; translations in parentheses or continuous with the text are by the critic. Publication information (such as footnotes or page and line references to specific editions of works) have been deleted at the editor's discretion to provide smoother reading of the text.

- An annotated list of **Further Reading** appearing at the end of each author entry suggests secondary sources on the author. In some cases it includes essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights.

Cumulative Indexes

- Each volume of *TCLC* contains a cumulative **Author Index** listing all authors who have appeared in Gale's Literary Criticism Series, along with cross references to such biographical series as *Contemporary Authors* and *Dictionary of Literary Biography.* For readers' convenience, a complete list of Gale titles included appears on the first page of the author index. Useful for locating authors within the various series, this index is particularly valuable for those authors who are identified by a certain period but who, because of their death dates, are placed in another, or for those authors whose careers span two periods. For example, F. Scott Fitzgerald is found in *TCLC,* yet a writer often associated with him, Ernest Hemingway, is found in *CLC.*

- Each *TCLC* volume includes a cumulative **Nationality Index** which lists all authors who have appeared in *TCLC* volumes, arranged alphabetically under their respective nationalities, as well as Topics volume entries devoted to particular national literatures.

- Each new volume in Gale's Literary Criticism Series includes a cumulative **Topic Index,** which lists all literary topics treated in *NCLC, TCLC, LC 1400-1800,* and the *CLC* yearbook.

- Each new volume of *TCLC,* with the exception of the Topics volumes, includes a **Title Index** listing the titles of all literary works discussed in the volume. In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale has also produced a **Special Paperbound Edition** of the *TCLC* title index. This annual cumulation lists all titles discussed in the series since its inception and is issued with the first volume of *TCLC* published each year. Additional copies of the index are available on request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the following year's cumulation. Titles discussed in the Topics volume entries are not included *TCLC* cumulative index.

Citing Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume in Gale's literary Criticism Series may use the following general forms to footnote reprinted criticism. The first example pertains to materials drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books.

[1]William H. Slavick, "Going to School to DuBose Heyward," *The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined,* (AMS Press, 1987); excerpted and reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism,* Vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Gariepy (Detroit: Gale Research, 1995), pp. 94-105.

[2]George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi," *Partisan Review,* 6 (Winter 1949), pp. 85-92; excerpted and reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism,* Vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Gariepy (Detroit: Gale Research, 1995), pp. 40-3.

Suggestions Are Welcome

In response to suggestions, several features have been added to *TCLC* since the series began, including annotations to excerpted criticism, a cumulative index to authors in all Gale literary criticism series, entries devoted to criticism on a single work by a major author, more extensive illustrations, and a title index listing all literary works discussed in the series since its inception.

Readers who wish to suggest authors or topics to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to write the editors.

Acknowledgments

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The Blues in Literature

INTRODUCTION

Blues music is generally regarded as having derived from African music and African-American "field hollers," improvised songs that were used by slaves to communicate their whereabouts to overseers, to set the pace for manual labor, and to communicate in code with other slaves. Field hollers developed into work songs and spirituals that were sung by black farmers and laborers in the rural South, particularly in the Mississippi Delta region. Early blues musicians carried the form throughout the South; during the Industrial Revolution, African-Americans moved north to cities to seek jobs, bringing blues music with them. Cornet player W. C. Handy is often credited as the first person to expose the blues to audiences outside the Deep South. According to Handy, he heard street musicians in the South playing a song entitled "East St. Louis Blues" as early as 1892. His own adoption of blues techniques came after he heard a musician in Tutweiler, Mississippi, playing a six-string guitar and maneuvering a knife across the strings to create a slide-guitar effect. As a result of its spread, the blues developed many stylistic variations. Linking these different styles were lyrics that emphasized the hardships of everyday life, as well as musical and lyrical improvisation within a firmly established set of conventions. Collections of lyrics made by such white scholars as Charles Peabody provide much of the early written commentary on blues music. Peabody and others such as Howard W. Odum regarded the blues as primitive and coarse form of artistic expression, and their scholarship reflects the prevalent racist views of their era. Commentators writing in the later twentieth century approach the blues as a form of lyric poetry or folk song that has had a profound influence on music and literature in the United States and elsewhere.

REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Louis Armstrong
Louis Armstrong Plays the Blues (songs) 1953
Edward Albee
The Death of Bessie Smith (drama) 1961
Big Bill Broonzy
Good Time Tonight (songs) 1940
Sterling A. Brown
Southern Road (poetry) 1932
Blind John Davis
1938 (songs) 1938
Champion Jack Dupree
The Blues of Champion Jack Dupree (songs) 1994
Ralph Ellison
Invisible Man (novel) 1952
Shadow and Act (essays) 1964
T. S. Eliot
The Waste Land (poetry) 1922
William Faulkner
Sartoris (novel) 1929
The Sound and the Fury (novel) 1929
F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Great Gatsby (novel) 1925
Peter Guralnick
Night-Hawk Blues (novel) 1980
W. C. Handy
"The Memphis Blues" (song) 1909
W. C. Handy's Memphis Blues Band (songs) 1923
Howlin' Wolf
Howlin' Wolf Sings the Blues (songs) 1962
Langston Hughes
Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz (poetry) 1961
Zora Neale Hurston
Their Eyes Were Watching God (novel) 1937
Blind Lemon Jefferson
The Classic Folk Blues of Blind Lemon Jefferson (songs) 1957
Robert Johnson
The Complete Recordings (songs) 1990
B. B. King
The Definitive B. B. King Collection (songs) 1992
Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter
Convict Blues (songs) 1935
Leadbelly: Huddie Ledbetter's Best (songs) 1962
Memphis Minnie
Hoodoo Lady (songs) 1937
Muddy Waters
At Newport (songs) 1960
Howard Odum
Rainbow round My Shoulder: The Blue Trail of Black Ulysses (novel) 1928
Oliver Pitcher
Dust of Silence (poetry) 1958
Gertrude "Ma" Rainey
Ma Rainey, 2 vols. (songs) 1953
Bessie Smith
Collection (songs) 1933
Mamie Smith
Complete Recorded Works, 1920-1922, 4 vols. (songs) 1995
Sonny Terry
Folkways Years, 1944-1963 (songs) 1963
Nathanael West
The Day of the Locust (novel) 1939
Bukka White
The Complete Sessions, 1930-1940 (songs) 1976

Richard Wright
Native Son (novel) 1940
Black Boy (novel) 1945
The Long Dream (novel) 1959
Lawd Today (novel) 1963

CRITICISM

Charles Peabody

SOURCE: "Notes on Negro Music," in *The Journal of American Folk-Lore,* Vol. XVI, No. LXII, 1903, pp. 255-94.

[*In the following excerpt, the author analyzes the music sung by the African-American men hired to help at an archeological excavation in Mississippi.*]

During May and June of 1901 and 1902 I was engaged in excavating for the Peabody Museum of Harvard University a mound in Coahoma County, northern Mississippi. At these times we had some opportunity of observing the Negroes and their ways at close range, as we lived in tent or cabin very much as do the rest of the small farmers and laborers, white and black, of the district. Busy archaeologically, we had not very much time left for folk-lore, in itself of not easy excavation, but willy-nilly our ears were beset with an abundance of ethnological material in song,—words and music. In spite of faulty memory and musical incompetency, what follows, collected by Mr. Farabee and myself, may perhaps be accepted as notes, suggestions for future study in classification, and incidents of interest in the recollecting, possibly in the telling.

The music of the Negroes which we listened to may be put under three heads: the songs sung by our men when at work digging or wheeling on the mound, unaccompanied; the songs of the same men at quarters or on the march, with guitar accompaniment; and the songs, unaccompanied, of the indigenous Negroes,—indigenous opposed to our men imported from Clarksdale, fifteen miles distant.

Most of the human noise of the township was caused by our men, nine to fifteen in number, at their work. On their beginning a trench at the surface the woods for a day would echo their yelling with faithfulness. The next day or two these artists being, like the Bayreuth orchestra, sunk out of sight, there would arise from behind the dump heap a not unwholesome μυγμός as of the quiescent Furies. Of course this singing assisted the physical labor in the same way as that of sailors tugging ropes or of soldiers invited to march by drum and band. They tell, in fact, of a famous singer besought by his coworkers not to sing a particular song, for it made them work too hard, and a singer of good voice and endurance is sometimes hired for the very purpose of arousing and keeping up the energy of labor.

This singing in the trenches may be subdivided into melodic and rhythmic; the melodic into sacred and profane, the rhythmic into general and apposite.

Our men had equal penchants for hymns and "ragtime." The Methodist hymns sung on Sundays were repeated in unhappy strains, often lead by one as choragus, with a refrain in "tutti," hymns of the most doleful import. Rapid changes were made from these to "ragtime" melodies of which "Molly Brown" and "Googoo Eyes" were great favorites. Undoubtedly picked up from passing theatrical troupes, the "ragtime" sung for us quite inverted the supposed theory of its origin. These syncopated melodies, sung or whistled, generally in strict tempo, kept up hour after hour a not ineffective rhythm, which we decidedly should have missed had it been absent.

More interesting humanly were the distichs and improvisations in rhythm more or less phrased sung to an intoning more or less approaching melody. These ditties and distichs were either of a general application referring to manners, customs, and events of Negro life or of special appositeness improvised on the spur of the moment on a topic then interesting. Improvising sometimes occurred in the general class, but it was more likely to be merely a variation of some one sentiment.

The burden of the songs of the former class were "hard luck" tales (very often), love themes, suggestions anticipative and reminiscent of favorite occupations and amusements. Some examples of the words and some of the music are:—

> They had me arrested for murder
> And I never harmed a man.

(A Negro and the law courts are not for long parted.) Other songs had a refrain of "going down the river" (possibly a suggestion of the old slave market at New Orleans), or a continuous wail on "The time ain't long," or hopes for "next pay-day."

Referring to occupations or amusements:—

> Some folks say preachers won't steal;
> But I found two in my cornfield.
> One with a shovel and t'other with a hoe,
> A-diggin' up my taters row by row.
>
> Old Brudder Jones setten on de log,
> His hand on de trigger and his eyes on de hog.
>
> Old Dan Tucker he got drunk,
> Fell in de fire and kicked up a chunk.
>
> I don't gamble but I don't see
> How my money gets away from me.
>
> When I look up over my head

Makes me think of my corn and bread.
(Possibly meteorological.)

If one would complain of the heat, another would sing out:—

Don't bother me.
The hotter the sun shines the better I feel.

Love ditties:—

The reason I loves my baby so,
'Case when she gets five dollars she give me fo'.

Say, Sal, don't you powder so
We'll be too late for de party, oh.

Oh we'll live on pork and kisses
If you'll only be my missus. . . .

Some pronunciations were noted. Murder came out plainly as "muddo" and baby as "bébé;" the latter may be from Creole influence, but I am at a loss to explain the former. No preference otherwise for "o" sounds was evinced.

Coming to more apposite ditties, the cover of this quasi-music was used to convey hints to us up above. One Saturday, a half-holiday, a sing-song came out of the trench,

Mighty long half day, Capta-i-n,

and one evening when my companion and I were playing a game of mumble-the-peg, our final occupation before closing work, our choragus shouted for us to hear.

I'm so tired I'm most dead,
Sittin' up there playing mumblely-peg.

These are only a few. It is impossible to remember and it was impossible to put down all. The men were not good on parade. Asked to sing for my wife while she was with us on a visit, they suddenly found it too hot, and as a whole a request performance got no further than very poor "ragtime," "Goo-goo Eyes" with any number of encores, and "Nigger Bully" and others quite as original probably with Miss May Irwin as with them. Their rhymes were not necessarily more than assonance. Consonants, as seen above, were of little importance.

There was some jealousy among them as to leadership. A handsome fellow named Ike Antoine had been undisputed leader for three months and enjoyed besides a county-wide reputation as a dancer; we imported a burley jail-bird for the last few weeks; he was a capital worker with a voice comparable to the Bashan Bull and Tamagno. He out-bawled Antoine, not altogether to the improvement of the music.

As regards execution, the men's voices, with the exception of Antoine's, were mediocre; but their tempo was singularly accurate. In their refrains ending on the tonic, they sometimes sang the last note somewhat sharp. So frequent was this that it seemed intentional or unavoidable, not merely a mistake in pitch. Otherwise their pitch was fairly true.

Their singing at quarters and on the march with the guitar accompaniment was naturally mostly "ragtime" with the instrument seldom venturing beyond the inversions of the three chords of a few major and minor keys. At their cabin the vocal exercise was of a Polyphemic nature, causing congratulations at its distance. Occasionally we would get them to sing to us with the guitar, but the spontaneity was lacking and the repertoire was limited. They have, however, the primitive characteristic of patience under repetition, and both in the trench and out of it kept up hours-long ululation of little variety.

As to the third division, the autochthonous music, unaccompanied, it is hard to give an exact account. Our best model for the study of this was a diligent Negro living near called by our men "Five Dollars" (suggestive of craps), and by us "Haman's Man," from his persistent following from sunrise to sunset of the mule of that name. These fifteen hours he filled with words and music. Hymns alternated with quite fearful oaths addressed to Haman. Other directions intoned to him melted into strains of apparently genuine African music, sometimes with words, sometimes without. Long phrases there were without apparent measured rhythm, singularly hard to copy in notes. When such sung by him and by others could be reduced to form, a few motives were made to appear, and these copied out were usually quite simple, based for the most part on the major or minor triad. . . .

The long, lonely sing-song of the fields was quite distinct from anything else, though the singer was skilful in gliding from hymn-motives to those of the native chant. The best single recollection I have of this music is one evening when a negress was singing her baby to sleep in her cabin just above our tents. She was of quite a notable Negro family and had a good voice. Her song was to me quite impossible to copy, weird in interval and strange in rhythm; peculiarly beautiful. It bore some likeness to the modern Greek native singing but was better done. I only heard her once in a lullaby, but she used sometimes to walk the fields at evening singing fortissimo, awakening the echoes with song extremely effective. I should not omit mention of a very old negro employed on the plantation of Mr. John Stovall of Stovall, Mississippi. He was asked to sing to us one very dark night as we sat on the gallery. His voice as he sang had a timbre resembling a bagpipe played pianissimo or a Jew's-harp played legato, and to some indistinguishable words he hummed a rhythm of no regularity and notes apparently not more than three or more in number at intervals within a semi-tone. The effect again was monotonous but weird, not far from Japanese. I have not heard that kind again nor of it.

The volume of song is seen to be large and its variety not spare; they are in sharp contrast to the lack of music

among the white dwellers of the district; their life is as hard as the Negroes', with some added responsibility; they take it infinitely harder and for one thing seem not to be able to throw off their sorrows in song as are the true sons of the torrid zone, the Negroes.

Howard W. Odum

SOURCE: "Folk-Song and Folk-Poetry as Found in The Secular Songs of the Southern Negroes," in *The Journal of American Folk-Lore,* Vol. XXIV, No. XCIII, July-September, 1911, pp. 255-94, 351-92.

[*In the following excerpt, Odum identifies and categorizes the various types of African-American music, dividing the between the spiritual and secular, the latter of which displayed the style and subject matter for early blues songs.*]

An examination of the first twenty volumes of the *Journal of American Folk-Lore,* and a study of the published folk-songs of the Southern negroes, reveal a large amount of valuable material for the student of folk-songs and ballads. Investigation of the field indicates a still larger supply of songs as yet not collected or published. Unfortunately the collection of these songs has been permitted to lapse within recent years, although there is no indication that even a majority have been collected. In fact, the supply seems almost inexhaustible, and the present-day negro folk-songs appear to be no less distinctive than formerly. It is hoped that special efforts will be made by as many persons as possible to contribute to the negro department of American folk-lore as many of the songs of the Southern negroes as can be obtained. That they are most valuable to the student of sociology and anthropology, as well as to the student of literature and the ballad, will scarcely be doubted.

Two distinct classes of folk-songs have been, and are, current among the Southern negroes,—the religious songs, or "spirituals;" and the social or secular songs. An examination of the principal collections of negro songs, a list of which is appended at the end of this paper, shows that emphasis has been placed heretofore upon the religious songs, although the secular songs appear to be equally as interesting and valuable. My study of negro folk-songs included originally the religious and secular songs of the Southern negroes; analysis of their content; a discussion of the mental imagery, style and habit, reflected in them; and the word-vocabulary of the collection of songs. The religious songs have already been published in the *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* (vol. iii, pp. 265-365). In order to bring this paper within the scope and limits of the *Journal of American Folk-Lore,* it has been necessary to omit the introductory discussion of the songs, for the most part, and to omit entirely the vocabulary and discussion of the mental imagery, style and habits, of the negro singers. In this paper, therefore, only the secular songs are given, which in turn are divided into two classes,—the general social songs, and work songs and phrases.

To understand to the best advantage the songs which follow, it is necessary to define the usage of the word "folk-song" as applied in this paper, to show how current negro songs arise and become common property, to note their variations, and to observe some of the occasions upon which they are sung. Each of these aspects of the Southern negro's songs is interdependent upon the others; the meaning of the folk-songs is emphasized by the explanations of their origin and variations; the singing of the songs by many individuals on many occasions emphasizes the difficulty of confining any song to a given locality or to a single form; and the value of the song is increased as it passes through the several stages.

The songs in this collection are "negro folk-songs," in that they have had their origin and growth among the negroes, or have been adapted so completely that they have become the common songs of the negroes. They are "folk-poetry which, from whatever source and for whatever reason, has passed into the possession of the folk, the common people, so completely that each singer or reciter feels the piece to be his own."[1] Each singer alters or sings the song according to his own thoughts and feelings. How exactly this applies to the negro songs may be seen from the explanations which follow, and from the study and comparison of the different songs. It is not necessary, therefore, in order to classify the songs as negro songs, to attempt to trace each song to its origin or to attempt to determine how much is original and how much borrowed. Clearly many of the songs are adapted forms of well-known songs or ballads; others, which in all probability had their origin among the negroes, resemble very strongly the songs of other people; while still others combine in a striking way original features with the borrowed. In any case, the song, when it has become the common distinctive property of the negroes, must be classed with negro folk-songs. Variations of negro folk-songs among themselves may be cited as an illustration of this fact. Likewise there is abundant material for comparing with well-known folk-songs or ballads of other origins. One may note, for instance, the striking similarity between the mountain-song—

> "She broke the heart of many poor fellows,
> But she won't break this of mine"—

and the negro song "Kelly's Love," the chorus of which is,

> "You broke de heart o' many a girl,
> But you never will break dis heart o' mine."

Or, again, compare the version of the Western ballad, "Casey Jones,"—which begins,

> "Come, all you rounders, for I want you to hear
> The story told of an engineer.
> Casey Jones was the rounder's name,

A heavy right-wheeler of mighty fame,"—

with the negro song, "Casey Jones," which begins,

"Casey Jones was an engineer,
Told his fireman not to fear,
All he wanted was boiler hot,
Run into Canton 'bout four 'clock,"

and, having recited in a single stanza the story of his death, passes on to love affairs, and ends,

"Wimmins in Kansas all dressed in red,
Got de news dat Casey was dead;
De wimmins in Jackson all dressed in black,
Said, in fact, he was a cracker-jack."

Thus Canton and Jackson, Mississippi, are localized; in "Joseph Mica" similar versions are found, and localized in Atlanta and other cities,—

"All he want is water 'n coal,
Poke his head out, see drivers roll;"

and the entire story of the engineer's death is told in the verse,

"Good ole engineer, but daid an' gone."

In the same way comparisons may be made with "Jesse James," "Eddy Jones," "Joe Turner," "Brady," "Stagolee," of the hero-songs; "Won't you marry me?" "Miss Lizzie, won't you marry me?" "The Angel Band," and others similar to some of the short Scottish ballads and song-games of American children; and "I got mine," "When she roll dem Two White Eyes," "Ain't goin' be no Rine," and many others adapted from the popular "coon-songs;" together with scores of rhymes, riddles, and conundrums. In any case, the songs with the accompanying music have become the property of the negroes, in their present rendition, regardless of their sources or usage elsewhere.

In the same way that it is not possible to learn the exact origin of the folk-songs, or to determine how much is original and how much traditional, it is not possible to classify negro songs according to the exact locality or localities from which they come. The extent to which they become common property, and the scope of their circulation, will be explained in subsequent discussions of the songs. The best that can be done, therefore, is to classify the songs according to the locality *from which they were collected,* . . . and to give the different versions of the same song as they are found in different localities. The majority of the songs collected from Lafayette County, Mississippi, were also heard in Newton County, Georgia; and a large number of the songs heard in Mississippi and Georgia were also heard in Tennessee (Sumner County). From many inquiries the conclusion seems warranted that the majority of the one hundred and ten songs or fragments here reported are current in southern Georgia, southern Mississippi, parts of Tennessee, and the Carolinas and Virginia. It may well be hoped that other collections of negro songs will be made, and that similarities and differences in these songs may be pointed out in other localities, as well as new songs collected. The large number of "one-verse songs" and "heave-a-hora's" were collected with the other songs, and are representative of the negro song in the making.

In studying the negro's songs, three important aids to their interpretation should be kept in mind,—first, facts relating to the manner of singing, and the occasions upon which they are sung; second, the general classes of negro songs, and the kinds of songs within each class; and, third, the subject-matter, methods of composition, and the processes through which the songs commonly pass in their growth and development. The majority of songs current among the negroes are often sung without the accompaniment of an instrument. The usual songs of the day, songs of laborers, of children, and many general care-free songs, together with some of the songs of the evening, are not accompanied. In general, the majority of the songs of the evening are accompanied by the "box" or fiddle when large or small groups are gathered together for gayety; when a lonely negro sits on his doorstep or by the fireside, playing and singing; when couples stay late at night with their love-songs and jollity; when groups gather after church to sing the lighter melodies; when the "musicianers," "music physicianers," and "songsters" gather to render music for special occasions, such as church and private "socials," dances, and other forms of social gatherings. Special instances in which a few negroes play and sing for the whites serve to bring out the combined features of restrained song and the music of the instrument. The old-time negro with his "box" (a fiddle or guitar), ever ready to entertain the "white folks" and thus be entertained himself, is less often observed than formerly. The majority of younger negroes must be well paid for their music. In the smaller towns, such negroes not infrequently organize a small "ochestra," and learn to play and sing the new songs. They often render acceptable music, and are engaged by the whites for serenades or for occasions of minor importance. They do not, however, sing the negro folk-songs.

Of special importance as makers and mediums for negro folk-songs are the "music physicianers," "musicianers," and "songsters." These terms may be synonymous, or they may denote persons of different habits. In general, "songster" is used to denote any negro who regularly sings or makes songs; "musicianer" applies often to the individual who claims to be expert with the banjo or fiddle; while "music physicianer" is used to denote more nearly a person who is accustomed to travel from place to place, and who possesses a combination of these qualities; or each or all of the terms may be applied loosely to any person who sings or plays an instrument. A group of small boys or young men, when gathered together and wrought up to a high degree of abandon, appear to be able to sing an unlimited number of common songs. Perhaps the "music physicianer" knows the

"moest songs." With a prized "box," perhaps his only property, such a negro may wander from town to town, from section to section, loafing in general, and working only when compelled to do so, gathering new songs and singing the old ones. Negroes of this type may be called professionals, since their life of wandering is facilitated by the practice of singing. Through their influence, songs are easily carried from place to place. There are other "music physicianers" whose fields of activity are only local. In almost every community such individuals may be found, and from them many songs can be obtained. From them and from promiscuous individuals, a "musicianer" may be influenced to obtain songs new to himself, which he, in turn, will render to the collector. Finally, a group of young negroes, treated to a "bait" of watermelons or to a hearty meal, make excellent "songsters" in the rendering of the folk-songs. In addition to these special cases, it is a constant source of surprise to the observer to learn how many songs the average negro knows; and they may be heard during work hours, or, in some cases, by request.

The great mass of negro songs may be divided into three general classes, the last of which constitutes the folk-songs as commonly used,—first, the modern "coon-songs" and the newest popular songs of the day; second, such songs greatly modified and adapted partially by the negroes; and, third, songs originating with the negroes or adapted so completely as to become common folk-songs. The first class of songs is heard more frequently by the whites. All manner of "ragtimes," "coon-songs," and the latest "hits," replace the simpler negro melodies. Young negroes pride themselves on the number of such songs they can sing, at the same time that they resent a request to sing the older melodies. Very small boys and girls sing the difficult airs of the new songs with surprising skill, until one wonders when and how they learned so many words and tunes. The second class of songs easily arises from the singing of popular songs, varied through constant singing or through misunderstanding of the original versions. These songs appear to be typical of the process of song-making, and indicate the facility of the negroes in producing their own songs from material of any sort. The third class of negro songs is made up of the "folk-songs" proper; and while the variations of the songs of the first and second classes would constitute an interesting study, they are in reality not negro songs. Accordingly, only those that have become completely adapted are given in this collection. In all of these the characteristic music and manner prevail, and the principal characteristics may be enumerated simply. The music may be reduced to a few combinations. The harmonies are made up mostly of minor keys, without reference to studied combinations or movement toward related keys. There is much repetition in both words and music. The song and chorus are adapted to an apparent mood or feeling. Verses are sung in the order in which they occur to the singer, or as they please the fancy. The great majority of the songs are made up of repetitions, but they do not tire the singers or the hearers. The negro song often begins with one conception of a theme, and ends with another entirely foreign to the first, after passing through various other themes. This may be explained by the fact that when the negro begins to sing, he loves to continue, and often passes from one song to another without pausing. In time he mingles the two or more songs. Most of the groups and "socials," and especially the dance, require continuous music for a longer period of time than the average song will last. It thus happens that the negro could sing the great majority of his songs to a single tune, if the necessity called for it; although it is likely that the last part of his melody would scarcely be recognizable as that with which he began. In words, as in music, variation seems unlimited. As is pointed out subsequently, and as was true in the case of the religious songs, there is no consistency in the use of dialect. Perhaps there is less consistency in the social songs than elsewhere. It is common for the negro to mingle every kind of song into one, or to transpose the one from its usual place or origin to any other position. Thus "coon-songs," "rag-times," "knife-songs," "devil-songs," "corn-songs," "work-songs,"—all alike may become love-songs or dancing "breakdowns." The original names given to such songs serve to distinguish them in the mind of the negro, rather than to indicate their separateness. However, the distinctions are often made clearly enough for a definition of what the negro means to be made.

The "musicianer" will play many "rag-times," which he carefully names, and calls off with pride. Usually they are not accompanied by words, but are represented on the fiddle or guitar. When he is through with these, he will offer to play and sing "some song." This he does to precisely the same music as the "rag-time." With the words, it is a song; without the words, it is a "rag-time," in which case the negro puts more life into the music. Likewise the "knife-song" is by origin instrumental only, but it is regularly associated with several songs of many verses. Its name is derived from the act of running the back of a knife along the strings of the instrument, thus making it "sing" and "talk" with skill. Instead of the knife, negroes often carry a piece of bone, polished and smooth, which they slip over a finger, and alternate between picking the strings and rubbing them. This gives a combination of fiddle and guitar. The bone may also serve as a good-luck omen. The knife, however, is more commonly used. The "musicianer" places his knife by the side of the instrument while he picks the strings and sings. He can easily take it up and use it at the proper time without interrupting the harmony. In this way the instrument can be made to "sing," "talk," "cuss," and supplement in general the voice and the ringing of the fiddle or the tinkling of the guitar. It is undoubtedly one of the negro's best productions, and defies musical notation to give it full expression.

The "train-song" derives its name from its imitation of the running train. The most popular name for it is "The Fast Train." The negro's fondness for trains and railroad life has been observed. In the railroad-songs that follow, the extent to which the train appeals to the negro