

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

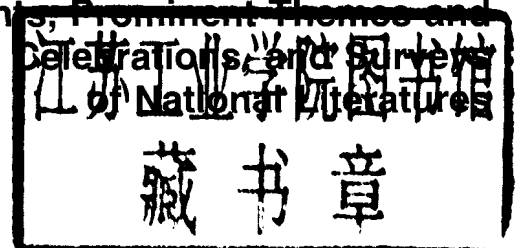
TCLC 102

TOPICS VOLUME

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



Linda Pavlovski
Editor



Detroit
New York
San Francisco
London
Boston
Woodbridge, CT

STAFF

Lynn M. Spampinato, Janet Witalec, *Managing Editors, Literature Product*
Kathy D. Darrow, *Product Liaison*
Linda Pavlovski, *Editor*
Mark W. Scott, *Publisher, Literature Product*

Jennifer Baise, Jenny Cromie, Ellen McGeagh, *Editors*
Thomas Ligotti, *Associate Editor*
Mary Ruby, Patti A. Tippet, *Technical Training Specialists*
Deborah J. Morad, Kathleen Lopez Nolan, *Managing Editors*
Susan M. Trosky, *Director, Literature Content*

Maria L. Franklin, *Permissions Manager*
Sarah Tomasek, *Permissions Associate*

Victoria B. Cariappa, *Research Manager*
Tracie A. Richardson, *Project Coordinator*
Tamara C. Nott, *Research Associate*
Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Timothy Lehnerer, Ron Morelli, *Research Assistants*

Dorothy Maki, *Manufacturing Manager*
Stacy L. Melson, *Buyer*

Mary Beth Trimper, *Manager, Composition and Electronic Prepress*
Carolyn Roney, *Composition Specialist*

Michael Logusz, *Graphic Artist*
Randy Bassett, *Imaging Supervisor*
Robert Duncan, Dan Newell, *Imaging Specialists*
Pamela A. Reed, *Imaging Coordinator*
Kelly A. Quin, *Editor, Image and Multimedia Content*

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, the Gale Group neither guarantees the accuracy of the data contained herein nor assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions or discrepancies. Gale accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

This publication is a creative work fully protected by all applicable copyright laws, as well as by misappropriation, trade secret, unfair competition, and other applicable laws. The authors and editors of this work have added value to the underlying factual material herein through one or more of the following: unique and original selection, coordination, expression, arrangement, and classification of the information.

All rights to this publication will be vigorously defended.

Copyright © 2001 Gale Group, Inc.
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

Gale Group and Design is a trademark used herein under license.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 76-46132
ISBN 0-7876-4562-1
ISSN 0276-8178
Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Topics Volume

Guide to Gale Literary Criticism Series

For criticism on	Consult these Gale series
Authors now living or who died after December 31, 1999	<i>CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CRITICISM (CLC)</i>
Authors who died between 1900 and 1999	<i>TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM (TCLC)</i>
Authors who died between 1800 and 1899	<i>NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE CRITICISM (NCLC)</i>
Authors who died between 1400 and 1799	<i>LITERATURE CRITICISM FROM 1400 TO 1800 (LC)</i> <i>SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM (SC)</i>
Authors who died before 1400	<i>CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL LITERATURE CRITICISM (CMLC)</i>
Authors of books for children and young adults	<i>CHILDREN'S LITERATURE REVIEW (CLR)</i>
Dramatists	<i>DRAMA CRITICISM (DC)</i>
Poets	<i>POETRY CRITICISM (PC)</i>
Short story writers	<i>SHORT STORY CRITICISM (SSC)</i>
Black writers of the past two hundred years	<i>BLACK LITERATURE CRITICISM (BLC)</i> <i>BLACK LITERATURE CRITICISM SUPPLEMENT (BLCS)</i>
Hispanic writers of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries	<i>HISPANIC LITERATURE CRITICISM (HLC)</i> <i>HISPANIC LITERATURE CRITICISM SUPPLEMENT (HLCS)</i>
Native North American writers and orators of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries	<i>NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE (NNAL)</i>
Major authors from the Renaissance to the present	<i>WORLD LITERATURE CRITICISM, 1500 TO THE PRESENT (WLC)</i> <i>WORLD LITERATURE CRITICISM SUPPLEMENT (WLCS)</i>

Preface

Since its inception more than fifteen years ago, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)* 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 librarians 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 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author’s works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting 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 on 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 topics widen the focus of the series from the 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, (CLC)* which reprints commentary on authors who died after 1999. Because of the different time periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between *CLC* and *TCLC*.

Organization of the Book

A *TCLC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author’s actual name given in parenthesis on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the original date of composition.
- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.

- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism.
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

Indexes

A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by the Gale Group, including *TCLC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

A **Cumulative Nationality Index** lists all authors featured in *TCLC* by nationality, followed by the number of the *TCLC* volume in which their entry appears.

A **Cumulative Topic Index** lists the literary themes and topics treated in the series as well as in *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism*, *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, and the *Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook*, which was discontinued in 1998.

An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale also produces an annual paperbound edition of the *TCLC* cumulative title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

Citing *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*

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

George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi," *Partisan Review* 6 (Winter 1949): 85-92; reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Garipey (Detroit: The Gale Group, 1995), 40-3.

William H. Slavick, "Going to School to DuBose Heyward," *The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined*, ed. Victor A. Kramer (AMS, 1987), 65- 91; reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Garipey (Detroit: The Gale Group, 1995), 94-105.

Suggestions are Welcome

Readers who wish to suggest new features, topics, or authors to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions or comments are cordially invited to call, write, or fax the Managing Editor:

Managing Editor, Literary Criticism Series
The Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535
1-800-347-4253 (GALE)
Fax: 248-699-8054

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank the copyright holders of the excerpted criticism included in this volume and the permissions managers of many book and magazine publishing companies for assisting us in securing reproduction rights. We are also grateful to the staffs of the Detroit Public Library, the Library of Congress, the University of Detroit Mercy Library, Wayne State University Purdy/Kresge Library Complex, and the University of Michigan Libraries for making their resources available to us. Following is a list of the copyright holders who have granted us permission to reproduce material in this volume of *TCLC*. Every effort has been made to trace copyright, but if omissions have been made, please let us know.

COPYRIGHTED EXCERPTS IN *TCLC*, VOLUME 102, WERE REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING PERIODICALS:

African American Review, v. 26, Summer, 1992 for "'Communicating by Horns': Jazz and Redemption in the Poetry of the Beats and the Black Arts Movement" by Lorenzo Thomas./v. 32, Winter, 1998 for "Sonny's Bebop: Baldwin's 'Blues Text' as Intracultural Critique" by Tracey Sherard. Both reproduced by permission of the authors.—*Canadian Literature*, v. 44, 1970 for "Swinging the Maelstrom: Malcolm Lowry and Jazz" by Perle Epstein. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Canadian Womens Studies/Les Cahiers de la femme*, v.17, Summer/Fall, 1997 for "Dodging Around the Grand Piano: Sex, Politics, Contemporary Irish Women's Poetry" by Ailbhe Smyth. Reproduced by permission of the publisher and the author.—*Chicago Review*, v. 17, 1964. Copyright © 1964 by Chicago Review. Reproduced by permission.—*Chinese Literature*, 1965. Reproduced by permission.—*Concerning Poetry*, v. 14, 1981. Copyright © 1981, Western Washington University. Reproduced by permission.—*Contemporary Literature*, v. 40, Spring, 1999. Copyright © 1999 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—*Cultural Critique*, v. 31, Fall, 1995. Reproduced by permission.—*The Dublin Magazine*, v. 6, Spring, 1967 for "Recent Irish Fiction" by Maurice Harmon. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Éire-Ireland*, v. XVIII, 1983; v. XX, 1985; v. XXVI, 1991. Copyright © 1983, 1985, 1991 by the Irish American Cultural Institute. All reproduced by permission of the publisher.—*Encounter*, v. XLI, December, 1973 for "The Speckled Hill, the Plover's Shore" by Douglas Dunn. © 1973 by Douglas Dunn. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Essays in Criticism*, v. XLVIII, April, 1998 for "Earth Writing: Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson," by John Kerrigan. Copyright © 1998 Oxford University Press. Reproduced by permission of the publisher and the author.—*Evergreen Review*, v. 4, January-February, 1960. Reproduced by permission.—*France-Aise/Asia*, v. XXII, 2nd Quarter, 1968 for "Some Background notes on Nhat Linh" by Stephen O'Harrow. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*The Georgia Review*, v. XLVI, No. 4, Winter, 1992 for "Jazz and Poetry: A Conversation" by Yusef Komunyakaa and William Matthews. Copyright, 1992, by the University of Georgia. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Irish University Review*, v. 22, Spring/Summer, 1992. Reproduced by permission.—*Journal of American Culture*, v. 14, Winter, 1991. Reproduced by permission.—*The Literary Review*, v. XXII, Winter, 1979 for "Irish Poetry After Yeats" by Adrian Frazier./v. 40, Summer, 1997 for "Small Gifts of Knowing" by Thomas E. Kennedy. Copyright © 1997 by Fairleigh Dickinson University. Both reproduced by permission of the authors.—*Modern Drama*, v. XLI, Spring, 1998. Copyright © 1998 University of Toronto, Graduate Centre for Study of Drama. Reproduced by permission.—*Modern Fiction Studies*, v. 28, Spring, 1982. Copyright © 1982 by Purdue Research Foundation, West Lafayette, IN 47907. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of The Johns Hopkins University.—*Mosaic*, v. 31, December, 1998; v. 32, September, 1999. © Mosaic 1998, 1999. Acknowledgment of previous publication is herewith made. Both reproduced by permission.—*New England Review and Bread Loaf Quarterly*, v. XII, Winter, 1989 for "Threaders of Double-Stranded Words: News from the North Ireland," by John Drexel. Copyright © 1989 Middlebury College Publication. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*New Theatre Quarterly*, v. XIII, November, 1997 for "The Pandora's Box of 'Doi Moi': the Open-Door Policy and Contemporary Theatre in Vietnam" by Catherine Diamond. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Play & Culture*, v. 3, August, 1990. Reproduced by permission.—*The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, v. 17, Spring, 1997. Copyright © 1997 by Illinois State University. Reproduced by permission.—*The Sewanee Review*, v. LXXXIV, Winter, 1976. Copyright © 1976 by The University of the South. Reproduced with permission of the editor.—*Shenandoah*, v. XXV, Summer, 1974 for "'The Enabling Ritual': Irish Poetry in the 'Seventies'" by Dillon Johnston. Reprinted from *Shenandoah: The Washington and Lee University Review*, with the permission of the Editor and the author.—*Studies in Short Fiction*, v. 19, Fall, 1982; v. 27, Spring, 1990. Copyright 1982, 1990 by Newberry College. Both reproduced by permission.—*Twentieth Century Literature*, v. 42, Summer, 1996. Copyright © 1996 Hofstra University. Reproduced by permission.—*Under the Sign of Pisces*, v. 11, Winter, 1980. Reproduced by permission.—*Wascana Review*, v. 2, 1967. Reproduced by permission.—*World Literature Today*, v. 54, Autumn, 1980; v. 68, Autumn, 1994. Copyright © 1980, 1994 by the University of Oklahoma Press. Both reproduced by permission.—*Yale French Studies*, v. 1, 1993 for "Literary No-

madics in Francophone Allegories of Postcolonialism: Pham Van Ky and Tahar Ben Jelloun” by Lisa Lowe. Copyright © 1993 by Yale University. Reproduced by permission of the publisher and the author.

COPYRIGHTED EXCERPTS IN *TCLC*, VOLUME 102, WERE REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:

Cahalan, James M. From *The Irish Novel: A Critical History*. Twayne Publishers, 1988. Copyright 1988 by G.K. Hall & Co. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of The Gale Group.—Chau, Phan Boi. From “Reflections From Captivity” in *Reflections From Captivity*. Translated by Christopher Jenkins, Tran Khanh Tuyet and Huynh Sanh Thong. Edited by David G. Marr. Ohio University Press, 1978. Copyright © 1978 by Ohio University Press. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of the editor.—Chung, Nguyen Ba. From “The Field of Vision in Vietnamese Poetry” in *Mountain River*. Kevin Bowen, Nguyen Ba Chung, Bruce Weigl, eds. University of Massachusetts Press, 1998. © 1998 by the William Joiner Foundation. All Rights Reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Deane, Seamus. From *A Short History of Irish Literature*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1986. Copyright © 1986 by Seamus Deane. Reproduced by permission.—Durand, Maurice M. and Nguyen Tran Huan. From an introduction to *Vietnamese Literature*. Columbia University Press, 1985. Translated from the French by D. M. Hawke. © G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose et UNESCO 1969. English-Language translation copyright © 1985 Columbia University Press, New York. All rights reserved. Republished with permission of the Columbia University Press, 562 W. 113th St., New York, NY 10025.—Garratt, Robert F. From *Modern Irish Poetry: Tradition and Continuity from Yeats to Heaney*. University of California Press, 1986. Copyright © 1986 by The Regents of the University of California. Reproduced by permission.—Huan, Nguyen Tran. From “The Literature of Vietnam, 1954-1973” in *Literature & Society in Southeast Asia*. Edited by Tham Seong Chee. Singapore University Press, 1981. Copyright © 1981 Singapore University Press. Reproduced by permission.—Kearney, Richard. From *Transitions: Narratives in Modern Irish Culture*. Manchester University Press, 1988. © 1988 Richard Kearney. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Kreilkamp, Vera. From *The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House*. Syracuse University Press, 1998. Copyright © 1998 by Syracuse University Press. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Maxwell, D. E. S. From *A critical history of modern Irish drama 1891-1980*. Cambridge University Press, 1984. © Cambridge University Press 1984. Reproduced with the permission of Cambridge University Press.—Murray, Christopher. From “Friel and After: Trends in Theater and Drama” in *New Irish Writing: Essays in Memory of Raymond J. Porter*. Edited by James D. Brophy and Eamon Grennan. Twayne Publishers, 1989. Copyright 1989 by G.K. Hall & Co. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of The Gale Group.—Werner, Craig Hansen. From *Playing The Changes*. University of Illinois Press, 1994. © 1994 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Reproduced by permission.

Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments xi

Jazz and Literature

Introduction	1
Representative Works	1
Criticism	3
Further Reading	123

Modern Irish Literature

Introduction	125
Representative Works	125
Overviews and General Studies	129
Drama	144
Fiction	170
Poetry	247
Further Reading	320

Vietnamese Literature

Introduction	322
Representative Works	322
Criticism	324
Further Reading	386

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Author Index 389

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Topic Index 465

TCLC Cumulative Nationality Index 473

Jazz and Literature

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in the early twentieth century, jazz music has exercised an influence on American literature's subject matter and style. Beginning in the 1920s—an era labeled “The Jazz Age” by novelist and short story writer F. Scott Fitzgerald—the syncopated rhythms of jazz music became associated with the relaxation of social mores, including the consumption of illegal alcohol during Prohibition, sexual promiscuity, and drug use. The music—as well as the mostly African-American musicians who created and played it—was described by its detractors as primal, obscene, and overtly sexual. Many writers—including Fitzgerald, Carl Van Vechten, and John Dos Passos, as well as such writers of the Harlem Renaissance as Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and Jean Toomer—perceived the music as a liberating force against the racial, social, and sexual repression of America society. These writers embraced the freedoms that they believed the music represented, and their poetry and prose also borrowed the swinging rhythms of the era's Ragtime and Dixieland jazz styles. In addition, jazz musicians populated novels and short stories as examples of existential heroes, exhibiting freedom in their lifestyles and within the music they performed. These characters, like their real-life inspirations, often suffered from alcohol and drug abuse and engaged freely in sexual activity. In other works, like Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (1947), existential characters succumbed to their vices in emulation of their musical heroes, which they considered to be the unavoidable destiny of their lives led as if they were jazz compositions. Jazz continued to evolve throughout the first half of the century, moving from swing music to the even more freely played bebop, with its emphasis on spontaneity and improvisation. The latter jazz form received its most famous literary validation in the works of American novelist Jack Kerouac, who initiated the Beat movement with his novel *On the Road* (1957). Like his greatest literary influence, Thomas Wolfe, whose *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929) and the unfinished *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940) both display the author's stylistic affinity with jazz, Kerouac's *On the Road* (and his many other prose and verse works display his efforts to describe and mimic the rhythmical extrapolations of such bebop musicians as saxophonist Charlie “Bird” Parker. Another beat poet, Allen Ginsberg, also imitated bebop rhythms in his poem “Howl” (1956). Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) contains many passages describing the impact of jazz music on the novel's protagonist. Other writers such as Nelson Algren, Clellon Holmes, Garson Kanin, and John O'Hara used jazz as backdrops for their novels chronicling promiscuity and drug abuse in

post-World War II America. The influence of jazz continued into the 1960s in works as diverse as the formal poetic pieces of Philip Larkin and the social satire of Terry Southern. Authors in the 1980s and 1990s who displayed a reverence for jazz music include Josef Skvorecky and Michael Ondaatje.

REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Nelson Algren

The Man with the Golden Arm (novel) 1949

Michael Arlen

The Green Hat (novel) 1924

Dorothy Baker

Young Man with a Horn (novel) 1938

James Baldwin

“Sonny's Blues” (short story) 1957

Imamu Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones)

“The Screamers” (short story) 1967

Ernest Borneman

Tremelo (novel) 1948

Edward Kamau Brathwaite

The Arrivants (poetry) 1973

Mother Poem (poetry) 1977

Sun Poem (poetry) 1982

Middle Passages (poetry) 1993

Chandler Brossard

Who Walk in Darkness (novel) 1952

W. Clapham

Come Blow Your Horn (novel) 1958

Dale Curran

Dupree Blues (novel) 1948

John Daniel

Melancholy Baby (novel) 1986

Ralph Ellison

Invisible Man (novel) 1952

- Rudolph Fisher
"Common Meter" 1930 (short story)
- Harold Flenders
Paris Blues (novel) 1957
- Leon Forrest
There Is a Tree More Ancient than Eden (novel) 1973
The Bloodworth Orphans (novel) 1977
Two Wings to Veil My Face (novel) 1983
- Allen Ginsberg
Howl and Other Poems (poetry) 1956
- E. S. Goldman
Big Chocolate Cookies (novel) 1988
- Benny Green
Blame It on My Youth (novel) 1967
- DuBose Heyward
Mamba's Daughters (novel) 1929
- Clellon Holmes
Go! (novel) 1952
The Horn (novel) 1958
- John Houston
Gig (novel) 1969
- Langston Hughes
Not without Laughter (novel) 1930
Selected Poems (poetry) 1974
- Zora Neale Hurston
Mules and Men (short stories) 1935
Their Eyes Were Watching God (novel) 1937
Moses, Man of the Mountain (novel) 1939
- James Jones
From Here to Eternity (novel) 1951
- Garson Kanin
Blow Up a Storm (novel) 1959
- Bob Kaufman
The Ancient Rain: Poems, 1956-1978 (poetry) 1981
- William Melvin Kelley
A Drop of Patience (novel) 1965
- Jack Kerouac
The Town and the City (novel) 1951
On the Road (novel) 1957
The Dharma Bums (novel) 1958
Mexico City Blues (poetry) 1959
Doctor Sax (novel) 1961
- Desolation Angels* (novel) 1965
Visions of Cody (novel) 1972
- William Kotzwinkle
The Jazz Trio (short stories) 1938
- Philip Larkin
All What Jazz (reviews) 1970
Collected Poems (poetry) 1988
- Gene Lees
And Sleep until Noon (novel) 1966
- Malcolm Lowry
Ultramarine (novel) 1933
Under the Volcano (novel) 1947
Lunar Caustic (novella) 1958
Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place (short stories) 1961
Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid (short stories) 1968
- Claude McKay
Home to Harlem (novel) 1928
Banjo (novel) 1929
- Henry Miller
The Colossus of Maroussi (travel) 1941
- A. Mitchell
If You See Me Comin' (novel) 1962
- Toni Morrison
Jazz (novel) 1993
- Anaïs Nin
The Diary of Anaïs Nin (autobiography) 1966-80
- John O'Hara
Butterfield 8 (novel) 1943
Pal Joey (novel) 1946
Hope of Heaven (novel) 1950
Appointment in Samarra (novel) 1953
- Michael Ondaatje
Coming Through Slaughter (novel) 1976
Secular Love (novel) 1984
In the Skin of a Lion (novel) 1987
The English Patient (novel) 1992
- Paul Pine
The Tin Angel (novel) 1983
- Ishmael Reed
Mumbo Jumbo (novel) 1972
- J. D. Salinger
"Blue Melody" (short story) 1948

- Herbert Simon
Man Walking on Eggshells (novel) 1962
- Josef Skvorecky
The Bass Saxophone (novellas) 1979
- Terry Southern
Red Dirt Marijuana and Other Tastes (short stories) 1967
- Carl Van Vechten
Nigger Heaven (novel) 1926
Echoes (novel) 1985
- John Wain
Strike the Father Dead (novel) 1962
- Stanford Whitmore
Solo (novel) 1956
- John Williams
Night Song (novel) 1962
- Bernard Wolfe
The Late Risers (novel) 1954
The Magic of Their Singing (novel) 1961
- Thomas Wolfe
Look Homeward, Angel (novel) 1929
Of Time and the River (novel) 1935
You Can't Go Home Again (novel) 1940

CRITICISM

Hugh L. Smith, Jr. (essay date 1958)

SOURCE: "Jazz in the American Novel," in *The English Journal*, Vol. XLVII, No. 8, November, 1958, pp. 467-478.

[In the following essay, Smith examines the inclusion of jazz music from F. Scott Fitzgerald to Ralph Ellison, John O'Hara, and Nelson Algren.]

Since the late thirties enough has been written about jazz as an art form to warrant its dignity with those who claim any real breadth of reading. And jazz has become an intellectual fad in the fifties, which is fortunate, for now the burden of disproof rests with the unbelievers: jazz is no longer a talented but naughty waif trying to slide in the temple door behind the tuxedoed respectability of classical music.

Jazz has been denotatively defined as successfully, at least, as poetry ever has. One such definition was arrived at by a roundtable conducted by professor Marshall Stearns of Hunter College and held at Music Inn, Lenox, Massachu-

setts, in 1951: "Jazz is an improvisational American music utilizing European instrumentation and fusing elements of European harmony, Euro-African melody, and African rhythm." An introductory reading list of critical-historical books dealing with jazz as an art—and they were written for the most part by literary men to whom jazz owes a great deal—might contain Frederic Ramsey and Charles E. Smith's *Jazzmen*, Wilder Hobson's *American Jazz Music*, Robert Goffin's *Jazz: From the Congo to the Metropolitan*, Rudi Blesh's *Shining Trumpets*, Barry Ulanov's *A History of Jazz in America*, Marshall Stearns' *The Story of Jazz*, and Andre Hodeir's *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*.

In the treatment of jazz by American novelists, three trends are apparent: a quantitative increase in jazz subject matter, a qualitative advancement in the accuracy of portrayal of the jazz world, and a consistently romantic treatment of jazz subject matter. The third development is a unique survival which defies the present age of conformity—a tiny literary revolution, a possible harbinger of the New Romanticism that may lie somewhere ahead as our inevitable anodyne. This Romanticism is American, a Transcendental brand which concerns celebration of self, expansiveness, high idealism, belief in art, anti-materialism, non-conformity, and—amazingly in our Eliot-Tate-ridden age—fearlessness and an acceptance of both life and death. Its major modification from the Transcendentalism of our great-grandfathers is its amorality.

JAZZ AS ATMOSPHERE

Jazz in the American novel can be broken down into divisions based on the author's apparent purpose in using it: for atmosphere and mood; as a set of romantic symbols to the professional musician; and as a set of romantic symbols to the jazz listener. The use of jazz for mood first appeared in the twenties. Here the distinction between jazz and the treacly dance music of the day must be insisted upon, for the latter, borrowing its novelty from jazz percussive effects, was employed by novelists also. Literary treatment of popular music loses most of its power when the musical style portrayed goes out of vogue; this is not true of jazz, for no jazz style has been lost—each is still being played on records and in public. Young bands like those of Lu Watters in the forties and Bob Hodes in the fifties are representative of many which continue to use the earliest instrumentation, including banjo and tuba, to obtain authentic traditional jazz effects.

Though writers of the twenties struggled along with popular music for the most part, even a Michael Arlen might be affected by what seems to be a jazz form. The book is *The Green Hat*, and the setting is Paris, which was visited by several early jazz units:

They call this rhythm the Blues. It reminded you of past and passing things. . . . It reminded you of the scent tangled in the hair of she with whom you had last danced to that rhythm. . . . You mourned the presence of the dead. You mourned the memory of the living. They call this rhythm the Blues. It reminded you of regret.¹

Although Scott Fitzgerald employed popular music in every novel he wrote, he gave us few passages that suggest jazz. One occurs in *The Beautiful and Damned*, when Anthony Patch is serving in a South Carolina army camp (Fitzgerald served in Alabama):

He liked Johnston's Gardens, where they danced, where a tragic negro made yearning, aching music on a saxophone until the garish hall became an enchanted jungle of barbaric rhythms and smoky laughter, where to forget the uneventful passage of time upon Dorothy's soft sighs and tender whisperings was the consummation of all aspiration, of all content.²

Toward the end of what he wrote of *The Last Tycoon*, Fitzgerald shows an acquaintance with the "swing" enthusiasm of the thirties, which America owed to Benny Goodman and the others who popularized Swing—a jazz style featuring a heavy four-four beat, driving ensembles, and improvised solos. Swing reached a public much larger than that of King Oliver and the little-known Negro jazz units of the twenties, handicapped as they were by race and by the social onus of the only places which would hire them. Fitzgerald employs Swing for a simile in the scene in which Monroe Stahr, the producer, uses the British writer Boxley to inspire a played-out group of screen writers working on a picture:

Suddenly they were at work again—taking up this new theme in turn like hepcats in a swing band and going to town with it. They might throw it out again tomorrow, but life had come back again for a moment.³

Fitzgerald, the "chronicler" of what was, paradoxically, a counterfeit Jazz Age, had only these things to say about jazz; yet what he said was approving, was romantic, and contained references to idealism, tragedy, and vitality.

Fitzgerald's "enchanted jungle of barbaric rhythms," in *The Beautiful and Damned*, could bring to a number of minds Carl Van Vechten, that antic and romantic novelist and music critic of the twenties who has been accused by certain jazz critics⁴ of glorifying the Negro and his music for the insincere purpose of encouraging the "jungle" fad of the twenties, thereby offering himself and the sad young people the promise of *id* releases. Edward Lueders' recent book on Van Vechten⁵ leaves us instead with a man whose sincerity and musical taste remain unimpaired by any fads he may have started or become involved in. In the twenties he interested himself in a number of jazz musicians who have since become musical giants. His photographs of Bessie Smith, for example, remain the best we have of this remarkable singer. And Van Vechten's critical judgments on jazz remain closer to the truth of today than any of the surfeit of wild critical writing that concerned itself with "jazz" in the twenties. His 1926 novel *Nigger Heaven* offers an early example of the use of jazz to establish the Harlem atmosphere of its day. The following passages are typical:

Couples were dancing in such close proximity that their bodies melted together as they swayed and rocked to the tormented howling of the brass, and the barbaric beating of the drum.⁶

The drummer in complete abandon tossed his sticks in the air while he shook his head like a wild animal. . . . The band snored and snorted and whistled and laughed like a hyena.⁷

This idea of primitive emotion is carried further in a scene in which Mary analyzes her racial background:

Savages! Savages at heart! And she had lost or forfeited her birthright, this primitive birthright which was so valuable and important as an asset, a birthright that all the civilized races were struggling to get back to—this fact explained the art of a Picasso or Stravinsky. To be sure, she, too, felt this African beat. . . . This love of drums, of exciting rhythms. . . .⁸

The Picasso and Stravinsky references offer a basis of comparison for what Van Vechten feels is the valuable folk-art tradition expressed by jazz. What would appear to be condescension in others does not seem so in Van Vechten, for he approves unreservedly of the Negro's cultural heritage. He seems to have adopted an anthropological position which refuses to label cultures as "inferior," and he felt that post-Victorian America needed some of the values of this heritage. Subsequent developments toward a non-Puritanistic moral code and a more primitivistic and subjective artistic expression would appear to reveal a prophesy in the direction of his thinking.

When Van Vechten's characters are serious or dejected, he often tends to employ a Blues or spiritual singer to help establish the mood. At one point Mary reflects on the faith of the people who wrote and sang the spirituals, and in another instance a powerful emotional effect is provoked in a small-minded audience (the Albrights and Orville Snodes of the Y.M.C.A.) by the unschooled Webb Leverett's singing of "Ezekiel Saw the Wheel."

Du Bose Heyward, the Charleston novelist who collaborated with George Gershwin on *Porgy and Bess*, employed spirituals for atmospheric effect in somewhat the same manner as Van Vechten, but in addition he wrote one passage in *Mamba's Daughters* which offers music that could be identified only as jazz variations on a theme. Heyward ascribes to it a powerful, affirmative effect:

Charlie rejoined the party just as the music flung its unifying rhythm into the discordant babel. . . . There were eight men in the orchestra, and Lissa noted . . . that they were all full-blooded negroes. There were two guitars, two banjos, a fiddle, a cornet, and trombone, and a man with drums and traps. The sound was unlike anything that the girl had ever heard. Strive as she might, she could not recognize the tune. As a matter of fact, it was not an orchestra in a strict interpretation of the term, but merely a collection of eight individuals who had taken some simple melody as a theme and were creating rhythm and harmony around it as they played. Her immediate sensation was one of shock at the crude and almost deafening uproar. Then, as she stood listening, a strange excitement commenced to possess her. Music had never moved her like this before. It had made her cry—and it had shaken her with

delight, but this seemed to be breaking something loose deep within her—something that seethed hot through her veins and set her muscles jumping.⁹

At the end of *Mamba's Daughters*, however, Heyward succumbs to a popular attitude of the twenties: the book's climax suggests the symphonizing of jazz (à la Gershwin?) as a final hope for the Negro's music.

Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel* utilizes vocal jazz briefly to round out the character of Pearl Hines, who sang with Helen Gant at rural moving picture theaters:

Pearl Hines was a heavily built girl with a meaty face and negroid lips. She was jolly and vital. She sang rag-time and nigger songs with a natural passion.¹⁰

Pearl's "happy and vital sensuality" and the gusto with which she sang occasionally led men to make passes at the girls, at which times Pearl was wounded and disappointed. Pearl's attitudes suggest a quality in "nigger music" that can be appreciated without debasing the performer or listener.

In *Of Time and the River* Captain Nicholl and some of his companions form a little band for their own entertainment:

They played nothing but American jazz music or sobbing crooner's rhapsodies or nigger blues. Their performance was astonishing. Although it was contrived solely for their own amusement, they hurled themselves into it with all the industrious earnestness of professional musicians employed by a night club or dance hall to furnish dance music for the patrons.¹¹

Wolfe fills a page with the intensity of their performance. Their Blues are sincere but ineffective, for they do not feel the music (as did Pearl Hines); they are simply trying to escape from an inner emptiness by

. . . mouthing the words of negro blues . . . and with an obvious satisfaction, with an accent which was remarkably good, and yet which had something foreign and inept in it.¹²

Even Wolfe seems puzzled by the extremity of their need for this music, but he records it faithfully in an effective scene.

Since the arrival of the "bop" jazz style (which originated in Harlem in 1941), with its odd intervals, unusual chord extensions, vibrato-less tone, reverse percussion (featuring steady cymbal beat with snare and bass accents), and new demands on technique, jazz has again been revolutionized. By adding "progressive" effects Bop has evolved into a less tense "cool" style. The Greenwich Village novelists of the "beat generation" use "cool" music for mood and background in much the same manner as their predecessors. One passage in Clellon Holmes' *Go* (1952) offers this music as a symbol and a philosophy for young people dislocated by World War II:

In this modern jazz, they heard something rebel and nameless that spoke for them, and their lives knew a gospel for the first time. It was more than a music; it became an attitude toward life. . . .¹³

Chandler Brossard is another who has used up-tempo Bop musical settings to emphasize certain fast-paced and searching qualities in his characters:

I looked away from the Rouault and listened to Danny Blue. He was blowing all by himself now, without the orchestra, blowing on and on and up and up, blowing one variation after another . . . until I thought he was going to come right off the record. A real junkie. He was loaded with heroin on this record. He flipped his wig when it was finished and they took him to a sanitarium.¹⁴

The obvious reference is to Charlie Parker, the great alto saxophonist who suffered a breakdown after a record date for Dial on the West Coast. Against reality, Brossard's intellectual bravado comes off badly, for Parker's record ("Be-Bop")—unlike Danny Blue's—shows that he was in no condition to play at all. A *Harper's* short story, Elliott Grennard's "Sparrow's Last Jump" (May 1947), treats the same incident much more effectively and genuinely as tragedy.

JAZZ AS SYMBOL TO THE MUSICIAN

Dorothy Baker's 1938 Houghton-Mifflin award novel, *Young Man with a Horn*, opened the world of the jazz musician for the novelist. Its romantic theme—the struggle of the jazz musician to produce his art creatively in an alien, commercial world—was to become the norm. Her prologue is a thoroughly romantic statement:

It is the story of . . . the gap between the man's musical ability and his ability to fit it into his own life; of the difference between the demands of expression and the demands of life here below; and finally of the difference between good and bad in a native American art form—jazz music. . . . There is music that is turned out sweet in hotel ballrooms and there is music that comes right out of the genuine urge and doesn't come for money.¹⁵

The novel is overwritten and Byronic in attitude, but it is historically significant. Rick Martin's struggle for musical perfectibility and against the materialism of Phil Morrison's orchestra (and the world it symbolizes) destroys him. His only true friends are Negro musicians. The attempted parallel with Bix Beiderbecke in Paul Whiteman's orchestra is blatant, for the book is one of many oblations to the Beiderbecke myth which is rapidly becoming a part of American folklore.

Piano in the Band, Dale Curran's interesting 1940 novel, followed the general pattern. A bandleader, Jeff Walters, finds his sidemen, led by trumpeter Jay Crabtree, revolting against the band's commercial style. Basically Walters sympathizes with the jazz spirit, but he wants security. At one point Crabtree is compared to Louis Armstrong: "Shut

your eyes and you'd think it was Old Satch himself." "Bix" and "Satchmo," the light and dark brotherhood of jazz myth, set the dizzying romantic standard. They are the Gemini of jazz.

Rink Stevens' Negro band stands as the ideal for emulation to the men in Walters' unit. Walters, at the end, laments his lost youth (his strength to break conformity), but hopes his younger bandsmen can "make the world see this thing" some day. The novel received approving reviews from Clifton Fadiman and several others.

Perhaps the most mature novel of the jazz world up to its time was Dale Curran's *Dupree Blues* (1948). Its plot is merely an up-to-date version of the lyrics to an old jazz standby, "Dupree Blues." Dupree steals a diamond ring and kills a man for the woman he loves. The story ends just as the song:

He got into a taxi,
Went to Memphis, Ten-o-see
.....
When he got there
Detectives was waiting for Dupree
Now Dupree's gone so far away,
Never gonna see the light of day.

Dupree becomes a jazz trombonist down on his luck and playing at a small Southern roadhouse. He gains the love of Betty, the band's beautiful and unprincipled vocalist, by the gift of the ring; then in panic he strikes the jeweler hard enough to kill him when repossession of the ring seems imminent. Dupree's one friend, a Negro, helps him to a short-lived escape. Dupree is sympathetically portrayed, and the jazz material artfully handled. Curran's preface makes the novel's purpose clear:

Generals get into the history books, but Mr. Howard and Frankie and Johnny and Barbry Allen and Dupree got into the songs and it is very likely they will outlive Robert E. Lee, who only got in because a steamboat was named for him. These people are real, a reality the big iron-pants statues in the park never have had.

The folk-artistry that created the blues had a sharp perception, finding in the little guy's story the fundamental reality of American life that had to be set down just as it happened. That is the reason for this book, which is only a set of expanded footnotes to a blues theme.¹⁶

The romantic belief in the value of the individual and in the folk-power of jazz emerges as Curran, using the jazz principle, "plays variations" on a stated theme.

Music out of Dixie (1952) by historical novelist Harold Sinclair employs genuine jazz history more effectively than any previous novel. The early pianist Ferdinand (Jelly Roll) Morton becomes one of the book's principal characters, and Sinclair has drawn Morton's opinions, and even dialogue, largely from Alan Lomax's valuable book *Mister Jelly Roll*, and from the records Morton made for the Library of Congress. Dade Holmes, the Negro jazzman who is the book's protagonist, falls victim to white minstrel

show operators who take advantage of his ignorance of legal matters and his general good nature to cheat him out of songs he has written. In one memorable scene Dade roundly defeats a French concert pianist in a piano duel, using Morton's clef-changing "Shreveport Stomp." Sinclair's book demonstrated again the American novelist's increasing awareness of the artistic validity of jazz and his closer scrutiny of its part in American folk history.

The American short story, especially since the late forties, has exhibited the increase in jazz subject matter, accuracy of treatment, and insistence upon the value of jazz found in the novel. Eudora Welty's "Powerhouse" is an excellent story of the tremendous imaginative interplay between the members of a colored jazz unit. Bryant Marvin's "Hath Charms to Soothe" is a romantic idyll published by *Esquire* in 1944. Freeman Phillips' "Little Nooley's Blues" (*American Mercury*, 1951) is about a band whose only effective answer to the death of one of their number is to play the Blues over his grave "until it seemed like even the tombstones would have to get up and stomp around." "Black Water Blues," which won an *Atlantic* college short story contest, offers the same theme of the art of jazz as an ultimate solution to life itself. Clellon Holmes' "The Horn" (*Discovery No. 2*, 1953), perhaps the best jazz short story yet written, is a statement of affirmation. Weldon Blue, a young Negro tenor saxophonist, plays Bop and lives the necessarily dislocated life of the Harlem jazz musician. He has neither material comforts nor any security beyond his belief in his art, yet he "finds" himself one night during a "cutting session" against Edgar Poole (drawn after Lester Young), the disillusioned father of Bop tenor sax style. Through his vigorous, validly emotional music Walden wins, and Edgar, recognizing such belief, grants the victory. Holmes' writing here documents the growth of a literary sensitivity to jazz.

JAZZ AS SYMBOL TO THE LISTENER

John O'Hara was probably the first novelist to portray the jazz sympathizer as non-musician. Jazz to this sympathetic listener has always stood for the artistic ideal in particular and romantic idealism in general. Julian English, of *Appointment in Samarra*, finds semi-commercial jazz—which is the peak of his musical taste—one of the very few meaningful experiences in his crass country-club world. During a dance at the club itself, the band, naturally, fails to match Julian's musical requirements:

The orchestra was not doing so well with the back-time, and that disturbed Julian, whose ear for jazz was superb.¹⁷

Though Julian loves his wife, she cannot save him. Their musical standards vary significantly:

Caroline got up and put Poor Butterfly on the Vic. "That's one of our old records," she said, "but I like it because it's so syncopated." Anything that had the sound of the trapdrummer's wood blocks in it was syncopated.¹⁸