

☐ Contemporary
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CLC

59

YEARBOOK 1989

Volume 59

Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook 1989

The Year in Fiction, Poetry, Drama,
and World Literature and the Year's
New Authors, Prizewinners, Obituaries,
and Outstanding Literary Events



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Preface

Scope

Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook is part of the ongoing *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)* series. *CLC* provides a comprehensive survey of modern literature by presenting excerpted criticism on the works of novelists, poets, playwrights, short story writers, scriptwriters, and other creative writers now living or who died after December 31, 1959. A strong emphasis is placed on including criticism of works by established authors who frequently appear on syllabuses of high school and college literature courses.

To complement this broad coverage, the *Yearbook* focuses more specifically on a given year's literary activities and highlights a larger number of currently noteworthy authors than is possible in standard *CLC* volumes. *CLC Yearbook* provides students, teachers, librarians, researchers, and general readers with information and commentary on the outstanding literary works and events of a given year.

Highlights of *CLC*, Volume 59: *Yearbook 1989* include:

- ☞ Extensive coverage of the unprecedented international controversy surrounding Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, with viewpoints representing diverse factions in this intense debate.
- ☞ Reprinted criticism spanning the entire career of 1989 Nobel laureate Camilo José Cela.
- ☞ Critical commentary, from the earliest reviews to recent essays, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*.
- ☞ Numerous reviews of such popular and critically acclaimed works as Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, Anne Tyler's *Breathing Lessons*, and Wendy Wasserstein's *The Heidi Chronicles*.

Format

CLC, Volume 59, *Yearbook 1989*, which includes excerpted criticism on more than forty authors and comprehensive coverage of four of the year's significant literary events, is divided into five sections—"The Year in Review," "New Authors," "Prizewinners," "In Memoriam," and "Topics in Literature: 1989."

- **The Year in Review**—This section consists of specially commissioned essays by prominent writers who survey the year's works in their respective fields. Wendy Lesser discusses "The Year in Fiction," Sidney Burris "The Year in Poetry," Robert Cohen "The Year in Drama," and William Riggan "The Year in World Literature." For introductions to the essayists, please see Notes on Contributors, page 30.
- **New Authors**—*CLC Yearbook 1989* introduces fourteen writers who published their first book during 1989. Authors were selected for inclusion if their work was reviewed in several prominent literary periodicals.
- **Prizewinners**—This section commences with a list of literary prizes and honors announced in 1989, citing the award, award criteria, the recipient, and title of the prizewinning work. Following the listing of prizewinners is a presentation of thirteen entries on individual award winners, representing a mixture of genres and nationalities as well as established prizes and those more recently introduced.
- **In Memoriam**—This section consists of reminiscences, tributes, retrospective articles, and obituary notices on eight authors who died in 1989. In addition, a five-page Obituary section provides information on sixteen other recently deceased literary figures.
- **Topics in Literature**—This section focuses on literary issues and events of wide public interest, as evidenced in extensive multimedia coverage. The entry on the *Satanic Verses* controversy broadens coverage of this topic provided in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Volume 55, *Yearbook 1988*; combined, the two entries offer over 90,000 words and comments by over two hundred political

leaders, authors, and religious figures. In “*Glasnost* and Soviet Literature,” commentators explore how writers have influenced and have been affected by the massive cultural, political, and social changes occurring in the Soviet Union. Also featured in this section are four teenaged playwrights whose works were performed as part of the Young Playwrights Festival, an annual event open to American youths.

Features

With the exception of the four essays in “The Year in Review” section, which are written specifically for this publication, the *Yearbook* consists of excerpted criticism. There are approximately four hundred individual excerpts in *CLC Yearbook 1989*, drawn from literary reviews, general magazines, newspapers, books, and scholarly journals. *Yearbook* entries variously contain the following items:

- An **author heading** in the “New Authors” and “Prizewinners” sections cites the name under which an author publishes and the title of the work covered in the entry; the “In Memoriam” section includes the author’s name and birth and death dates. The author’s full name, pseudonyms (if any) under which the author has published, nationality, and principal genres in which the author writes are listed on the first line of the author entry.
- The **subject heading** defines the theme of each entry in “The Year in Review” and “Topics in Literature” sections.
- A brief biographical and critical introduction to the author and his or her work precedes excerpted criticism in the “New Authors” and “Prizewinners” sections; the subjects, authors, and works in the “Topics in Literature” section are introduced in a similar manner.
- A listing of **principal works** is included for all entries in the “Prizewinners” section.
- **Cross-references** have been included in all sections, except “The Year in Review,” to direct readers to other useful sources published by Gale Research: *Short Story Criticism* and *Children’s Literature Review*, which provide excerpts of criticism on the works of short story writers and authors of children’s books, respectively; *Contemporary Authors*, which includes detailed biographical and bibliographical sketches on more than 95,000 authors; *Something about the Author*, which contains heavily illustrated biographical sketches of writers and illustrators who create books for children and young adults; *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, which provides original evaluations and detailed biographies of authors important to literary history; and *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series* and *Something about the Author Autobiography Series*, which present autobiographical essays by prominent writers of adult literature and those of interest to young readers, respectively. Previous volumes of *CLC* in which the author has been featured are also listed.
- A **portrait** of the author is included in the “New Authors,” “Prizewinners,” “In Memoriam,” and “Topics in Literature” sections, and an **excerpt from the author’s work**, if available, provides readers with a sampling of the writer’s style and thematic approach in the “New Authors,” “Prizewinners,” and “Topics in Literature” sections.
- The **excerpted criticism**, included in all entries except those in the “Year in Review” section, represents essays selected by editors to reflect the spectrum of opinion about a specific work or about the author’s writing in general. The excerpts are arranged chronologically, adding a useful perspective to the entry. All titles by the author are printed in boldface type, enabling the reader to easily identify the work being discussed.
- A complete **bibliographical citation**, designed to help the user find the original essay or book, follows each excerpt.

Additional Features

- A list of **Authors Forthcoming in CLC** previews the authors to be researched for future volumes.
- An **Acknowledgments** section lists the copyright holders who have granted permission to reprint material in this volume of *CLC*. It does not, however, list every book or periodical reprinted or consulted during the preparation of the volume.

- A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all the authors who have appeared in *CLC*, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800*, *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism*, and *Short Story Criticism*, with cross-references to these Gale series: *Children's Literature Review*, *Contemporary Authors*, *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series*, *Contemporary Authors Bibliographical Series*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *Something about the Author*, *Something about the Author Autobiography Series*, *Yesterday's Authors of Books for Children*, and *Authors & Artists for Young Adults*. Readers will welcome this cumulated author index as a useful tool for locating an author within the various series. The index, which lists birth and death dates when available, will be particularly valuable for those authors who are identified with a certain period but whose death date causes them to be placed in another, or for those authors whose careers span two periods. For example, Ernest Hemingway is found in *CLC*, yet a writer often associated with him, F. Scott Fitzgerald, is found in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*.
- A **Cumulative Nationality Index** alphabetically lists all authors featured in *CLC* by nationality, followed by numbers corresponding to the volumes in which the writers appear.
- A **Title Index** alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the current volume of *CLC*. Listings 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, novellas, dramas, films, record albums, and poetry, short story, and essay collections are printed in italics, while all individual poems, short stories, essays, and songs are printed in roman type within quotation marks; when published separately (e.g., T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*), the title will also be printed in italics.
- In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale has also produced a **special paperbound edition** of the *CLC* title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers and will be published with the first volume of *CLC* issued in each calendar year. Additional copies of the index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index: it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is disposable upon receipt of the following year's cumulation.

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¹Anne Tyler, "Manic Monologue," *The New Republic* 200 (April 17, 1989), 44-6; excerpted and reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 58, ed. Roger Matuz (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), p. 325.

²Patrick Reilly, *The Literature of Guilt: From 'Gulliver' to Golding* (University of Iowa Press, 1988); excerpted and reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 58, ed. Roger Matuz (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), pp. 206-12.

Suggestions Are Welcome

The editors welcome the comments and suggestions of readers to expand the coverage and enhance the usefulness of the series. Please feel free to contact us by letter or by calling our toll-free number: 1-800-347-GALE.

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Authors Forthcoming in *CLC*

To Be Included in Volume 60

Douglas Adams (English novelist)—In his popular series of satirical novels beginning with *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Adams uses the devices of science fiction to lampoon modern culture. Adams blends slapstick and fantasy in his recent novels, *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* and *The Long Dark Tea Time of the Soul*, to portray the unusual adventures of a private investigator.

Ersine Caldwell (American novelist and short story writer)—The author of such controversial Depression-era novels as *Tobacco Road* and *God's Little Acre*, Caldwell blended realism and comic pathos in his work to portray the desperate existence of poor Southerners.

Annie Dillard (American essayist and poet)—Dillard is best known for *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, her Pulitzer Prize-winning meditation on nature that critics have compared to Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. She has also earned praise for her works of literary criticism, poetry, and autobiography.

Umberto Eco (Italian novelist and semiotician)—Acclaimed for his international best-seller *The Name of the Rose*, Eco has generated widespread interest with his recent mystery novel, *Foucault's Pendulum*. Spanning several centuries and exploring the nature of language and words, this work combines intrigue, autobiography, political commentary, and esoteric motifs.

Carlos Fuentes (Mexican novelist and essayist)—In his internationally acclaimed works, Fuentes often employs myth, legend, and history to examine Mexico's past and contemporary social and cultural issues. This entry will focus on his

recent novel, *Christopher Unborn*, and *Myself with Others: Selected Essays*.

Shirley Jackson (American novelist and short story writer)—A prolific author, Jackson is generally known for such Gothic horror tales as "The Lottery" and *The Haunting of Hill House*. In lucid prose juxtaposing humor with intense psychological states and an atmosphere of foreboding, Jackson explores the dark side of human nature.

Harper Lee (American novelist)—Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which examines racial attitudes in the Deep South through the experiences of a young girl in a small Alabama town, will be the focus of this entry.

Anaïs Nin (French-born American diarist, novelist, and short story writer)—Nin is best known for the erotic pieces she wrote during the 1930s and 1940s and for her numerous books containing excerpts from her diaries. This entry will emphasize recent analyses of her work.

Molly Peacock (American poet)—In such collections as *Raw Heaven* and *Take Heart*, Peacock uses humor, unusual rhyme schemes, and contemplative tones to examine family bonds, love, and sexuality.

Kurt Vonnegut (American novelist and short story writer)—Widely regarded as a masterful contemporary writer, Vonnegut uses satire, irony, and iconoclastic humor to explore social values and the meaning of life. This entry will focus on *Slaughterhouse-Five; or, The Children's Crusade*, Vonnegut's absurdist novel about his experiences as a prisoner of war during the firebombing of Dresden, Germany, in World War II.

To Be Included in Volume 61

Nicholson Baker (American novelist)—Baker has received critical praise for his debut novel, *The Mezzanine*, a contemplative, detail-oriented work in which an escalator ride inspires revelations on the unexamined, seemingly trivial aspects of daily life.

Malcolm Bradbury (English novelist and critic)—A prolific author, Bradbury writes satirical novels about British and American university life in which he examines themes of social dislocation and liberalism.

Gillian Clarke (Welsh poet)—Considered an important new voice in contemporary Welsh poetry, Clarke utilizes traditional Celtic metrics that resonate throughout her primarily meditative verse. Clarke often employs these subtle sound and rhythmic patterns to explore the nature of female experience.

Maria Irene Fornés (Cuban-born American dramatist)—Winner of six Obie awards, Fornés is a leading off-Broadway dramatist. Although unconventional, her humorous, intelligent plays reflect such traditional concerns as human relationships and social and political corruption.

Larry Gelbart (American scriptwriter and dramatist)—Chief writer for the first five years of the television series "M*A*S*H," Gelbart has recently garnered praise for his comic plays *Mastergate*, a satire on the Iran-Contra scandal, and *City of Angels*, a parody of 1940s detective films.

Ernest Hemingway (American novelist and short story writer)—Recognized as one of the preeminent American authors of the twentieth century, Hemingway wrote powerful, terse narratives of disillusionment, personal loss, and stoic resolve in

the face of an apparently meaningless world. Critical commentary in Hemingway's entry will focus upon his acclaimed novel, *The Sun Also Rises*.

Zora Neale Hurston (American novelist and short story writer)—Regarded as an important writer of the Harlem Renaissance, Hurston is respected for works that provide insights into black culture and the human condition. Hurston's entry will focus on her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, which is enjoying renewed popularity through Women's Studies courses.

Jack Kerouac (American novelist)—Kerouac was a key figure in the artistic and cultural phenomenon known as the Beat Movement. This entry will focus on his novel *On the Road*, considered a quintessential work of Beat literature for its experimental form and its portrayal of a rebellious, hedonistic lifestyle.

Stephen King (American novelist and short story writer)—King is a prolific and popular author of horror fiction. Non-supernatural in emphasis, King's recent novels include *Misery*, in which a best-selling writer is held captive by a psychotic nurse, and *The Dark Half*, about a pseudonymous author attempting to shed his persona who finds that his submerged alter-ego seeks revenge.

George F. Walker (Canadian dramatist)—Closely associated with the Factory Theater, a group that promotes alternative drama in Toronto, Walker writes social satires in which he employs black humor and a variety of unconventional theatrical devices. His recent play, *Nothing Sacred*, for which Walker received his second Governor General's Award, was popular in regional theaters in the United States and Canada.

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