

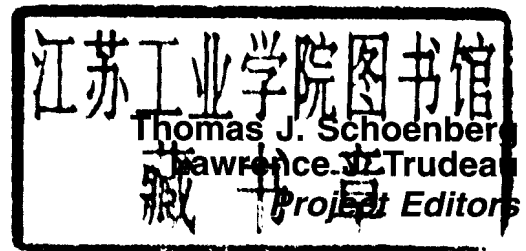
Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 209

Volume 209

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers
Who Lived between 1900 and 1999,
from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations**



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Preface

Since its inception *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)* has been purchased and used by some 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. *TCLC* has covered more than 1000 authors, representing over 60 nationalities and nearly 50,000 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*.

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A *TCLC* entry consists of the following elements:

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- 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

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- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- 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 Gale, 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.

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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.

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Paul Bowles

1910-1999

American short story writer, novelist, essayist, poet, translator, autobiographer, and diarist.

The following entry provides an overview of Bowles's life and works. For additional information on his career, see *CLC*, Volumes 1, 2, 19, and 53.

INTRODUCTION

An American expatriate who lived for many years in Tangier, Morocco, Bowles set many of his writings in the exotic locales of northern Africa. His protagonists are typically disaffected Americans or Europeans who travel to exotic lands where they are confronted with powerful foreign cultures. Written in a spare, detached style, Bowles's fiction usually relates narratives of misunderstanding and hostility, often accompanied by violence, psychological collapse, and death.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Bowles was born in Jamaica, New York, on December 30, 1910, the only child of Claude Bowles, a dentist, and his wife, Rena, a former schoolteacher. Bowles began to write stories by age four. His mother had begun reading to him when he was two years old, initially traditional childhood stories and then, around age seven, works by Edgar Allan Poe, which Bowles later cited as an influence on his imagination. As a child Bowles began studying piano and experimenting with composing music. While attending Jamaica High School he edited and contributed poetry and fiction to the *Oracle*, the school's literary magazine, and regularly attended concerts at Carnegie Hall on Saturday mornings. In March 1928, two months after he graduated from high school, his poem "Spire Song" was published in *transition*, a French avant-garde journal.

Bowles attended the University of Virginia for a short time before leaving for Paris in March 1929, where he briefly held a job as a switchboard operator for the *International Herald Tribune*. After returning to New York in July he began working at a bookstore in Greenwich Village and attempted to write a novel. He planned to call the novel *Without Stopping*, which later became the title of his 1972 autobiography. In 1930 Bowles began receiving music instruction from composer Aaron Copland. The following year he returned to Europe and met Gertrude Stein, who introduced him to her literary

circle and critiqued his poetry. After Stein suggested that Morocco's warm climate might bring out the best in Bowles, he traveled to Tangier.

Bowles spent much of the 1930s and 1940s traveling between the United States, Europe, and Morocco, and was primarily known as a composer. He wrote numerous scores for the theater, made recordings of North African music, and, from November 1942 to December 1946, was employed as music critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*. Bowles's interest in fiction writing was renewed when his wife Jane, whom he married in 1938, was writing her 1943 novel *Two Serious Ladies*. This inspired *No Exit*, his translation of Jean-Paul Sartre's 1944 play *Huis Clos*, which premiered on November 26, 1946, and won a Drama Critics' Award later that year. In 1947 he stopped composing music to concentrate on literature, and settled in Tangier, though for the rest of his life he would continue to travel extensively.

Over the years numerous well-known writers visited the family in Tangier, including Gore Vidal, Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and Gregory Corso. Bowles's first novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, published in 1949, quickly became a bestseller. *The Delicate Prey*, his first volume of short stories, appeared in 1950. Supported by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, Bowles set out on four trips to remote areas of Morocco in 1959 to record Moroccan traditional music. During the 1960s and 1970s he recorded and then translated a large amount of Moroccan oral literature. Bowles's wife died in 1973 after suffering several debilitating strokes, the first of which had occurred in 1957. In 1981 Bowles was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He made a cameo appearance in a film version of *The Sheltering Sky*, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, in 1990. In 1991 Bowles received the Rea Award for the Short Story. After a prolonged illness he died of heart failure on November 18, 1999.

MAJOR WORKS

The bulk of Bowles's best-known works are set in his adopted homeland, North Africa. Other works take place in Latin America or Asia, locales he visited while traveling. A few of his short stories and poems are set in the United States. Much of his work is concerned with the fragility of human relationships and civilization, man's struggle against nature, and discord between so-called civilized and primitive cultures.

The first of his four novels, *The Sheltering Sky*, centers on Port and Kit Moresby, a married couple from New York who travel in North Africa accompanied by their friend, Tunner. Wandering across the Sahara Desert, Port contracts typhoid fever and dies. Kit becomes the concubine of a young Arab, Belqassim. She escapes from his household and is transported by authorities to the city of Oran, her mental state in decline. There, she disappears into a crowded marketplace. In *Let It Come Down* (1952), Nelson Dyar, a bank clerk from New York, takes a job as a travel agent in Tangier. He is blamed for criminal activity at his workplace, has an affair with a prostitute, and experiments with drugs. While in a drug-induced state of confusion he kills a sleeping Arab acquaintance by hammering a nail into his head, which he mistakenly thinks is a door. Many critics consider *The Spider's House* (1955) Bowles's most conventional novel in content and in style. It examines the effects of national revolution on a boy, Amar, a descendant of Muslim prophets, who crosses paths with a cynical American expatriate, John Stenham. In *Up above the World* (1966), Taylor and Day Slade, an American married couple vacationing in Latin America, become victims of a madman, Vero Soto, who thinks they may have witnessed him murdering his mother.

Bowles's first short story collection, *The Delicate Prey*, contains two of his best-known stories, both of which contain graphic violence. In the title story, Driss, a boy from a nomadic tribe, the Reguibat, is castrated, raped, and murdered by a rival tribe. In "A Distant Episode," an American linguistics professor has his tongue severed by Reguibat tribesmen. *A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* (1962) consists of four stories, known as the "Kif Quartet," centering on Moroccan hashish. In the title story of *The Time of Friendship* (1967), a Swiss schoolteacher referred to as Fräulein Windling vacations in North Africa and becomes fascinated by a Muslim boy. *Things Gone and Things Still Here* (1977) largely reflects Bowles's interest in the oral storytelling tradition of Morocco. Many of the stories in *Midnight Mass* (1981) return to the theme of expatriates in Morocco and their interactions with locals. One story, "Here to Learn," reverses the roles: Malika, a young woman from a Moroccan village, travels to Europe and then the United States, escorted by a string of men, settling into Western life. When she returns home for a visit, she finds that her mother has died and her house has been demolished. The stories in the collection *Unwelcome Words* (1988) primarily focus on madness and death. Three of the stories—"Massachusetts 1932," "New York 1965," and "Tangier 1975"—are written in dramatic monologue form, a stylistic departure for Bowles.

Bowles's works in other genres includes *Next to Nothing* (1981), which collects the poems that Bowles considered his best. Employing surrealistic imagery and musical language, his poetry concerns man's struggle against the power of nature. While his poems are pessi-

mistic as a whole, those written in the 1970s are particularly nihilistic. *Two Years beside the Strait* (1990), published in the United States as *Days* in 1991, is a nonfiction work recording Bowles's observations on life in Morocco from 1987 to 1989. *Without Stopping*, Bowles's autobiography, has been described by critics as candid—particularly concerning Bowles's childhood—but related with the same detached style as his fiction.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Bowles is regarded as a significant author of existential novels and short fiction, as well as a notable poet, translator, essayist, and composer of music. His prose has been praised as precise, elegant, and finely crafted. Critics have noted the thematic consistency of his works, and while some have viewed this positively, as evidence of a unified artistic vision, others have lamented that Bowles did not explore a wider array of themes and ideas. Scholars have often compared Bowles's work to that of Edgar Allan Poe for its depictions of macabre violence and conflict between civilization and primitive forces; its preoccupation with psychological processes, self-destructiveness, and madness; and its detached narrative style. They have also emphasized the influence of Bowles's difficult relationship with his father on the bleak, psychologically harrowing nature of his fiction. Some critics have asserted that Bowles ranks with the greatest American authors of the twentieth century; yet, they note, he is not correspondingly well-known. Gore Vidal, for instance, in his introduction to Bowles's *Collected Stories* (1979), maintained that Bowles, while admired, is not fully appreciated due to "crude America First-ism": he chose not to live in or write much about the United States. In recent years Bowles's writings have received increased attention and are often considered topical and relevant for their depictions of culture clashes.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- Two Poems* (poetry) 1933
- No Exit* [translator; from Jean-Paul Sartre's play *Huis Clos*] (play) 1946
- The Sheltering Sky* (novel) 1949
- The Delicate Prey, and Other Stories* (short stories) 1950
- Let It Come Down* (novel) 1952
- The Spider's House* (novel) 1955
- Yallah* (essays) 1956
- The Hours after Noon* (short stories) 1959
- A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* (short stories) 1962
- Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* (essays) 1963

- A Life Full of Holes* [translator; from Driss ben Hamed Charhadi's oral tale] (novel) 1964
Up above the World (novel) 1966
Love with a Few Hairs [translator; from Mohammed Mrabet's oral tale] (novel) 1967
The Time of Friendship (short stories) 1967
Pages from Cold Point and Other Stories (short stories) 1968
Scenes (poetry) 1968
The Lemon [translator; from Mohammed Mrabet's oral tale] (novel) 1969
M'Hashish [translator; from Mohammed Mrabet's oral tales] (short stories) 1969
The Thicket of Spring: Poems, 1926-1969 (poetry) 1972
Without Stopping (autobiography) 1972; revised edition, 1991
For Bread Alone [translator; from Mohamed Choukri's autobiography *Al-khoubz Al-Hafi*] (autobiography) 1973
The Boy Who Set the Fire and Other Stories [translator; from Mohammed Mrabet's oral tales] (short stories) 1974
Harmless Poisons, Blameless Sins [translator; from Mohammed Mrabet's oral tales] (short stories) 1976
Look and Move On [translator; from Mohammed Mrabet's oral tale] (autobiography) 1976
Things Gone and Things Still Here (short stories) 1977
Collected Stories, 1939-1976 (short stories) 1979
Midnight Mass (short stories) 1981
Next to Nothing: Collected Poems, 1926-1977 (poetry) 1981
Points in Time (short stories and essays) 1982
Call at Corazón and Other Stories (short stories) 1988
A Distant Episode (short stories) 1988
Unwelcome Words (short stories) 1988
A Thousand Days for Mokhtar, and Other Stories (short stories) 1989
Two Years beside the Strait: Tangier Journal 1987-1989 (journal) 1990; also published as *Days: Tangier Journal 1987-1989*, 1991
Too Far from Home: Selected Writings of Paul Bowles (short stories, essays, poems, and letters) 1993
In Touch: The Letters of Paul Bowles (letters) 1994
The Stories of Paul Bowles (short stories) 2001

CRITICISM

John W. Aldridge (essay date 1951)

SOURCE: Aldridge, John W. "Paul Bowles: The Canceled Sky." In *After the Lost Generation: A Critical Study of the Writers of Two Wars*, pp. 184-93. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1951.

[In the following essay, Aldridge suggests that *The Sheltering Sky* reflects the apathy, malaise, and emptiness of the post-war era.]

If the struggle of the new writers to make a dramatic affirmation of value could be plotted on a graph, the result would be a parabolic curve extending from the absolute zero of Vance Bourjaily to the absolute zero of Paul Bowles. In first position, at the point where the curve begins its ascent, would come Norman Mailer. Because the lives of the men he chose to portray in *The Naked and the Dead* did not contain positive values, Mailer was deprived of the means to make his protest against war dramatically convincing. He was obliged, therefore, to depend for his dramatic effect on the straight reporting of war violence. In violence he found a way to shock the reader into an acceptance of at least part of his total indignation. John Horne Burns, in the next higher position on the curve, set out to affirm the values of human dignity and love in a milieu of war. But like Mailer, he could not find those values in that milieu and was forced to get them into his book by describing them in the "Promenades." The "Portraits," meanwhile, flatly contradicted his point by demonstrating that the real values of his material were emptiness and futility. Irwin Shaw and Merle Miller would come at the top of the curve because they made the most overtly deliberate effort to affirm, Shaw by warping his material to fit his polemical purpose and Miller, at least in *That Winter*, by simply disregarding the logic of his material and imposing the affirmative destinies of his characters upon it. Vidal, coming at the declining end of the curve, disintegrated artistically because of his failure to find a value for his characters that would make them dramatically meaningful.

To the extent that all these writers have avoided considerations of value and fallen back on a direct rendering of the more violent and sensational forms of experience, their work has achieved a measure of success. To the extent that they have tried to deal dramatically with those considerations, their work has been confused and imperfect. Violence and sensation carry with them their own dramatic value; they are both manifested in concrete action; and they do not depend for their significance upon a hierarchy of moral judgment or belief. An affirmation of value, to be dramatically significant, does, however, depend on such a hierarchy as well as on a kind of experience in which values have concrete reference; and neither of these exists today.

There is, however, another side to this proposition. If the work of these writers shows clearly that a successful dramatic affirmation is impossible today, the work of Paul Bowles shows just as clearly that a successful dramatic negation is equally impossible. To be dramatically successful, negation must have behind it a strong compelling force; it must be angry and rebellious and dogmatic; and in the end, it must be as firmly positive an attitude as the thing against which it is a reaction. This is to say that negation itself must become a value.

The negation which helped to give energy and health to the literature of the Twenties became such a value. But the negation which is merely a form of spiritual noth-

ingness cannot. The nothingness in which all things are unimportant has no value. It is, in fact, a condition in which values have never existed. It is impossible, therefore, for a writer to give it dramatic significance, since to be dramatic a thing must possess a value by which we recognize and accept it as worth while. The best a writer can do if he finds himself dedicated to spiritual nothingness—and he will be if he is at all sensitive to the condition of our time—is to seek in raw violence and direct sensation that drama of shock which will always have a value to all men in all times.

Paul Bowles is acutely sensitive to the condition of our time. His novel *The Sheltering Sky* is a book-length metaphor of the modern world, particularly of the new postwar world in which all morality is relative and life is gray and destined to become grayer as more of the blacks and whites are canceled out. The novel is, in fact, so perfect an image of this world, the quality of the life finds so exact an equivalent in the quality of the art, that all the defects of the life carry over into the art and become defects of the novel.

Kit and Port Moresby, doomed exiles in the contemporary wasteland, move without motive from sensation to sensation through the heat and squalor of Africa. They have no history and no destination. Their names on their passports are their only proof of life, the labels on their luggage their only record of their passage through time. Their sole function in life is, as Hemingway would have put it, *nada*; their sole function in art is to symbolize that condition of spirit in which life, deprived of values, has ceased to exist. They cannot, therefore, by themselves give meaning to the material Bowles has prepared for them. Because they live without values as people, they are without dramatic value as characters.

Fortunately the African setting in which they are placed provides an atmosphere of violence in which their meaning as characters becomes less important than the bizarre actions which they are driven to commit, or which are committed upon them, by their surroundings. The Arab world with its filth, disease, and poverty is an innately destructive world dominated by an ancient spirit of evil. Because of its mixture of races, creeds, and castes, it has no fixed center of moral or religious law. It becomes, therefore, the perfect external equivalent of the spiritual emptiness and moral anarchy of the Moresbys and, through them, of all modern civilization. Like the Pamplona fiesta in *The Sun Also Rises*, it provides the key or parallel in action for the inner breakdown of the characters. But unlike the fiesta and far more importantly, it provides the sole excuse for that breakdown. Because the Moresbys are so completely infused with the complex and richly colored life of Africa, we are led to attribute its complexity and color to them and to find in it a substitute for the motivation we cannot find within their personalities.

The novel consists entirely of a series of violent and sensational actions, of which some are instigated by the Moresbys and others are perpetrated upon them. But in each case it is Africa and not the Moresbys that furnishes the dramatic meaning and impact. Port's experience with the dancing girl Marhnia is the first of these and sets the pattern for the others. As he is guided through the Casbah toward Marhnia's tent, Port is driven by a compulsion which neither he nor we can formulate. He has just come from an odd and inconclusive talk with Kit during which a vague sexual suspicion between them has been hinted at but never made meaningful. He does not particularly want a girl, and we are given no reason for his needing one; yet he allows himself to be led by the Arab Smail to Marhnia. The obscurity of his motives is soon disguised, however, by the intrusion upon him of emotions and fears which are not obscure and which, because they are not, serve to divert our minds from everything about him that is. He begins suddenly to suspect that he is being made the victim of some conspiracy in which Smail, Marhnia, and all the natives of Africa are involved. Smail is evasive about the location of the girl's tent; the streets seem to run endlessly into nowhere; and the section of the city through which they pass seems to conceal a secret horror in its silence. A short time later, as he is making love to Marhnia, this feeling is actualized in concrete violence.

The two arms stole up again, locked themselves about his neck. Firmly he pulled them away, gave them a few playful pats. Only one came up this time; the other slipped inside his jacket and he felt his chest being caressed. Some indefinable false movement there made him reach inside to put his hand on hers. His wallet was already between her fingers. He yanked it away from her and pushed her back on the mattress. "Ah!" she cried, very loud. He rose and stumbled noisily through the welter of objects that lay between him and the exit. This time she screamed briefly. The voices in the other tent became audible. . . .¹

The scene that follows is a nightmare of confusion and terror. Port runs wildly away from the tent, imagining, as he does so, that men are converging upon him from all sides. In the darkness he stumbles, falls, and is hurt. But he manages to drag himself up a long staircase leading out of the Arab valley and, at the top, to dislodge a massive boulder and hurl it down the staircase upon the men who he thinks are close behind him. He blunders up a hill through the tombstones of a Moslem graveyard. Finally, exhausted and delirious with fear, he reaches safety on high ground above the city.

The episode, coming as it does near the beginning of the novel, should be expected to illuminate the theme and characters and to accelerate the action. Instead, it serves to replace all three. During its progress, the true

action remains suspended, the theme is sacrificed to melodrama, and the character and motives of Port are lost in the raw violence of Africa.

In the episodes that follow, the failure of motivation becomes more obvious as the violence and melodrama become less effective. This is particularly true of those that have to do with the relations of Kit and Tunner. Although Kit is presumably in love with Port at the beginning of the novel and is described as becoming more completely so as the novel progresses, she becomes just as completely involved with Tunner, even though she finds him distasteful as a person and unattractive as a man. The scenes of their love-making, therefore, are totally unjustified thematically and are acceptable at all only because Bowles makes them sensational. The circumstances of Kit's first submission to Tunner on the night of their train trip are illustrative.

There is, first of all, Kit's nervousness which she always has on trains but which is extremely acute on this occasion because Port, in a moment of anger, has put a curse on the trip by saying he hoped there would be an accident. To Kit, a curse of any kind amounts to an open invocation of disaster, so she takes immediate steps to charm herself against it. The champagne Tunner has brought along for quite a different purpose becomes the magic potion which is going to save her, and she drinks a great deal too much of it too quickly. The result is that when she leaves the compartment for the washroom she loses her way and wanders into the fourth-class car which is crowded with Arabs. It is here that the sensational element is introduced; for as she pushes through the crowd of men toward the rear of the car, she is shocked first by the discovery of a yellow louse on the nape of her neck, next by the sight of a man eating quantities of red locusts, and finally by a "wild-faced man holding a severed sheep's head, its eyes like agate marbles staring from their sockets." Then, coming out on the rear platform into a heavy rain, she finds herself "looking directly into the most hideous human face she had ever seen. . . . Where the nose should have been was a dark triangular abyss, and the strange flat lips were white. . . ."

She had the impression of living a dream of terror which refused to come to a finish. She was not conscious of time passing; on the contrary, she felt that it had stopped, that she had become a static thing suspended in a vacuum. Yet underneath was the certainty that at a given moment it would no longer be this way—but she did not want to think of that, for fear that she should become alive once more, that time should begin to move again and that she should be aware of the endless seconds as they passed.

Like Port's premonition of conspiracy during the Mahria episode, this impression of Kit's is unexplainable in terms of her character as it has previously been re-

vealed to us. It is perhaps vaguely associated with her latent atavism and it probably foreshadows her subsequent breakdown after Port's death and her flight into the desert. But in its immediate context it is justified only because it is presented right after the nightmare experience she has just undergone and seems to have been precipitated by it. We are led to assume that her willingness, a few moments later, to let Tunner make love to her is also the result of that experience. The bizarre violence that has gone before has prepared an atmosphere of unreality in which the act in all its pointlessness is safely removed from the logic by which we must judge it as pointless.

As one might suspect, there comes a time in the narrative when motivation breaks down completely and Africa takes over altogether. This begins to occur during the bus trip when Port falls ill, and it is later fully realized in his death and Kit's disappearance. The first symptom is a sudden and unexplained change in Kit's behavior and status as a character. Where previously she had been little more than a shadow in Port's background, she now emerges as the central figure of the novel. As Port loses consciousness and drifts toward death, she comes to life and begins to reveal aspects of herself which we have not been told she possesses. Although she is on the surface a model of solicitude in her concern over Port's suffering, it is evident that there are new impulses awakening within her and that she is finding it increasingly difficult to hold onto her old loyalty to him. It is as if the mysterious evil that is condemning him to die has infected her also and already begun to erase the stamp of his existence from her mind. For as she rides beside him in the bus, she begins to feel, for the first time since she came to Africa, a strong fascination with the wild primitivism of the countryside. The men standing beside the road seem to possess a vital and magnetic attractiveness. She cannot help noticing the admirable figure of a young Arab as he stands erect in his flowing white garment, although "to efface her feeling of guilt at having thought anything at all about him, she felt compelled to bring him to Port's attention." In all her past relations with men, even with Port and Tunner, Kit has been uniformly passionless. But now she is slowly leaving behind all that she was and preparing herself for a destiny of which she has never before been capable.

Unfortunately, in preparing her for this destiny, Bowles not only takes great liberties with Kit's character but inserts a kind of meaning into her relationship with Port that the relationship as it has been portrayed does not justify. Her flight into the desert is ostensibly motivated by three impulses: first, her need to purge herself of the guilt she feels at having deserted Port at the moment of his death; second, her desire to assert life completely and violently now that his death has freed her from the detachment his inertia imposed upon her; and third, her