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14 Fiction: 1900 to the 1930s

Jeanne Campbell Reesman

This year appears to be the remaking of that most cosmopolitan of Americans, Gertrude Stein—certainly for critics who have turned their attention to Stein’s prose. (Her poetry is treated in chapter 17, “Poetry: 1900 to the 1940s.”) Work on Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, and the Harlem Renaissance is plentiful, and women regionalists continue to generate new studies.

i Gertrude Stein

In “The Sense of Gertrude Stein” (*NewC* 16, ix: 11–16) Donald Lyons furnishes an overview of Stein’s career by focusing on her *Q.E.D. Things As They Are*, a story of a lesbian love triangle written in 1903 but published in 1950, four years after her death. For its “verbal surfing above the depths” and “extremist pulls of emotion,” Lyons compares Stein’s work to Henry James’s *The Wings of the Dove* (1902). He concludes that Stein is a minor writer when paired against a major, but he gives insightful views into the place of “modernism,” especially in the “Melanchtha” section of *Three Lives* (1909) and in *The Making of Americans* (1925). Steven Meyer (“‘The Physiognomy of the Thing’: Sentences and Paragraphs in Stein and Wittgenstein,” *Modernism/Modernity* 5, i: 99–116) offers linguistic analysis of Stein’s typical prose sentences, citing Wittgenstein and William James as fellow practitioners of the “heterogenous dialectic” of “emotional paragraphs made up of unemotional sentences,” including James’s emphasis on the process of knowing as the “physiological process of attending.” In yet another comparison, Corinne E. Blackmer writes in “Lesbian Modernism in the Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein,” pp. 78–94 in *Virginia Woolf*, that Woolf and Stein share their “obscure” and “marginal” status but their

short stories should be recognized as “elaborate . . . significations around the homosexual closet.” Claiming Stein for feminism against modernism has been a busy topic. In “Formalism and the Return to the Body: Stein’s and Fornes’s Aesthetic of Significant Form” (*NLH* 28 [1997]: 791–809) Randi Koppen compares Stein’s dramatic works and those of Maria Irene Fornes (author of *Abingdon Square*, 1989) for their formalism, aestheticism, politics, and psychology. Koppen rejects modernist and postmodernist approaches in favor of feminist ones.

But Stein and modernism are unlikely to be separated any time soon. M. Lynn Weiss makes a strong case for Stein and Richard Wright as exemplary modernists in *Gertrude Stein and Richard Wright: The Poetics and Politics of Modernism* (Oxford). Issues of expatriation, of violating boundaries, and of marginality occupied both writers. Weiss discusses Stein’s interest in Wright in terms of American racism of the period; Stein recognized in Wright the difference between “Yesterday and Today, the difference between living in a feudal society and a modern one.” In “Thinking Race in the *Avant Guerre*: Typological Negotiations in Ford and Stein” (*YJC* 10 [1997]: 371–95) Paul Peppis seeks to recapture “modernist responses to early twentieth-century race science” in order to show that the writers of the time “neither understood nor deployed race in a straightforwardly racist fashion.” They did “defend period doctrines of imperialism and racialism,” but their “‘revolutionary’ faith in individual and political institutions complicated those defenses, leading the ‘new’ women and men to question as often as they affirmed period notions of biological and cultural determinism.” Peppis turns to Ford’s *The Spirit of the People* (1907) and Stein’s “Melanctha.” Stein’s relation to the most famous of modernists, James Joyce, receives attention in Craig Monk’s “Sound Over Sight: James Joyce and Gertrude Stein in *transition*” (*Re:Joyce: Text, Culture, Politics*, ed. John Brannigan and Geoff Ward [St. Martin’s], pp. 17–32), especially their shared relationships to *transition*, the American expatriate magazine launched in 1927. Joyce and Stein were in need of championing at that point, and both writers “helped inspire through their professional courage the genesis of the programme of revolutionary letters that would come to define *transition*.”

Stein’s influence on Hemingway and the characteristic strategies by which Hemingway dealt with her legacy receive attention by Kirk Arnutt in “‘In the Temp de Gertrude’: Hemingway, Stein, and the Scene of Instruction at 27, Rue de Fleures” (*French Connections*, pp. 121–39). Arnutt reevaluates Hemingway’s claims about Stein and about his rela-

tion to her home as well. Stein's identity vis-à-vis the United States is taken up by Hugh English in "'By Being Outside of America': Gertrude Stein's Geographical History of Gender, Self, and Writing" (*Women, America, and Movement*, pp. 258–80); her "spatial and temporal experience of writing" is defined within the terms of a mind and body geographic that locates subjectivity within a "multiple seeing subject."

What do Stein's support for Vichy leaders and her dual identity as Jew and lesbian mean in assessing her political dimensions? How does such an assessment relate to the relative "public" and "private" identities of her works? Phoebe Stein Davis takes up these issues in "'Even cake gets to have another meaning': History, Narrative, and 'Daily Living' in Gertrude Stein's World War II Writings" (*MFS* 44: 568–607). Stein's sense of competing "histories" in *Mrs. Reynolds* (1941–42) and *Wars I Have Seen* (1945) is examined.

Stein's philosophical ideas are explored by Herwig Friedl and Charles Altieri. Friedl ("Art and Culture as Emerging Events: Gertrude Stein, Pragmatism, and Process Philosophy," *Emerging Structures in Interdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Rudi Keller and Karl Menges [Francke, 1997], pp. 43–64) draws connections between Stein's "foundational intuition" and John Dewey's concept of "emergent growths." Tracing the issue from Emerson, he argues that Stein's writings on art and culture reflect American pragmatism and process philosophy; for Stein art is "a moment of wonder" and "a process of constant becoming," not a mimesis. Altieri's response to papers given by Steven Meyer and Jacques Lezia at a 1996 MLA panel appears as "Stein and Wittgenstein: A Panel" (*Modernism/Modernity* 5, 1: 1997, 141–48). Altieri challenges the parallel with Wittgenstein but points to a shared "experimental spirit."

Close analysis of Stein's unique style appears in three essays. In "How to Read *How to Write*" (*Modernism/Modernity* 5, 1: 117–29) Jacques Lezra addresses the relationship of her sentences and paragraphs, where she determines how we are to read her "knot of fantasy." In *How to Write* (1931) Stein teaches us how to cut the knot. Lezra compares her with Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein, who taught their readers how to think through problems of naming—even so, Lezra argues, the "real" Stein remains inaccessible within her own particular "structural reserve." In "Gertrude Stein and Disjunctive (Re)reading" (*Second Thoughts*, pp. 266–93) Juliana Spahr examines the specifics of Stein's "libidinal play" in her poetry and prose. Stein presents "diversionary ways of reading," such as "metawareness." Her characteristic "extreme exposure

of the reading act combined with the insistence that readers do the difficult work of (re)reading adds a resolute questioning of authorial authority to the discussion of resistance.” Style in *Three Lives* occupies Daylanne English in “Gertrude Stein and the Politics of Literary-Medical Experimentation” (*LE&M* 16 [1997]: 188–209). Stein’s experimental “laboratory of words” indicates an “ambivalence regarding the poor, largely African American and immigrant population for whom she provided care during her tenure as a medical student” and on whom she based *Three Lives*. Though it displays conflicts between racist/eugenicist and feminist points of view, the novel’s treatment of the lives, illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths of the protagonists creates a paradoxical politics in Stein’s “literary/medical experimentation,” with unsettling racial and cultural stereotypes.

Two essays treat authorial point of view in *The Making of Americans*. Barrett Watten offers close reading of key passages “to show how a notion of social subjectivity is articulated in its unfolding horizons of narration and self-consciousness.” He finds that this masterpiece of the “processes of identification and loss” moves to distribute the father mentioned in the opening to form the basis for a social typology as well as family history (“An Epic of Subjectivation: *The Making of Americans*,” *Modernism/Modernity* 5, ii: 95–121). And George B. Moore’s *Gertrude Stein’s The Making of Americans: Repetition and the Emergence of Modernism* (Peter Lang) provides a fully developed study of Stein’s first effort “to discover the meaning of human differences.” This early work, with its “protean element,” deconstructs its own methods by questioning how to write about history and psychology. Moore identifies several “formative moments” that occur in this work, such as the development of Stein’s repetition, and points to the influence of psychologist Otto Weininger and his “experiential” and “representational” typology.

George Monteiro traces the origin and uses to which Stein’s most famous phrase has been put (“‘Rose is a Rose is a Rose is a Rose’ as Poem: Stein, Hemingway, and Augusto de Campos,” *Brasil* 18 [1997]: 9–17). He includes Hemingway’s “A bitch is a bitch is a bitch” but uncovers a lesser-known version by Augusto de Campos in a concrete poem, “A rosa dente,” a Portuguese translation of Blake’s “The Sick Rose.” He also reviews the uses that Stein and Alice B. Toklas found for her epigram, including its appearance as an emblem on Stein’s stationery and the cover of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933). And Jan Susina provides a very interesting connection—unexpected but instantly recognizable to

generations of parents and children—the influence of Stein on Margaret Wise Brown’s beloved bedtime story *Goodnight Moon* (“Children’s Reading, Repetition, and Rereading: Gertrude Stein, Margaret Wise Brown, and *Goodnight Moon*,” *Second Thoughts*, pp. 115–25). Brown developed her ideas on children’s education under the mentorship of Lucy Mitchell Sprague, founder of Bank Street College of Education; Sprague believed that children want to understand the here and now, empirically, and do not want to be taught only fairy tales. Brown’s literary mentor was Stein, and she went to Columbia University in 1932 specifically to study experimental writing, but later dropped out to become an editor with the publishing firm of William R. Scott. She helped publish Stein’s children’s book *The World is Round* (1939) and developed her own rhythmic, musical language patterns in her children’s books by responding to Stein’s stream-of-consciousness style. Susina offers comparison of the two writers and claims that Clement Hurd’s illustration of the “quiet old lady whispering ‘hush’” is homage to Gertrude Stein, her “childlike literalness,” circling patterns, and repetition. A quiet farewell to Stein, then—think of her next time you read your bedtime stories.

ii Jack London

Work on London included two important biographical additions. Volume 4 (1997) of the *Jack London Journal*, released this year, was devoted almost entirely to the first publication of “Jack London in Boyhood Adventures” by Frank Atherton, his boyhood chum. Introduced and edited by James Williams and Mark Zamen, the 170-page reminiscence contains many gems. The journal also includes a bibliography of London studies for 1995 by Hensley C. Woodbridge. Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin masterfully elucidates the complicated relationship between London and his friend, lover, and collaborator, Anna Strunsky Walling (“To Love or Not to Love? Jack London and Anna Strunsky’s *The Kempton-Wace Letters*,” *Symbiosis* 1 [1997]: 255–74). Tavernier-Courbin points to the “fallacious parallel” between London’s losing the argument in *The Kempton-Wace Letters* (1903), which he coauthored with Strunsky (London’s character Herbert Wace unsuccessfully argues against romantic love and for a scientifically based notion of the reproductive process) and his failed first marriage to Bess Maddern. “A born romantic,” London would probably have written Strunsky’s side more convincingly even than she; the irony lies in his being in love with her while intellec-

tually denouncing love. Tavernier-Courbin presents evidence that London's sudden marriage to Maddern was a direct result of his having been refused by Strunsky, who later entered into a troubled marriage to the prominent socialist reformer William English Walling.

The Wallings are the subject of a new biography, *Revolutionary Lives: Anna Strunsky and William English Walling*, by James Boylan (Mass.), a study of these two "near-greats" that provides ample discussion of the presence of Jack London in Strunsky's life from the time of their love affair through their literary collaboration and then their lifelong friendship. Boylan not only places London in relation to Strunsky but also situates him within the complexities of the socialist milieu of the era. Like Tavernier-Courbin, Boylan quotes from Strunsky's unpublished materials at the Beinecke Library at Yale. One only wishes for a bibliography and for more complete notes on Strunsky's own published writings.

One bibliographical essay appeared: Scott Matthew Korb's "To Understand the 'London Myth': The Life and Writings of Jack London" (*BB* 55: 3-10), which takes the form of an essay followed by a set of 24 annotated entries. Korb addresses the relationship of autobiography to London's work, the facts of his biography, and the disagreements about his critical status and his embrace of socialism. Korb aptly observes that those who are most critical of London's life are often most critical of his work and that his biographies are notable for their inconsistencies. And he makes the intriguing point that London would have benefited artistically from some sort of religious belief, since his naturalism often feels like only "half of the story." But when Korb states that "apart from biographical studies of his fiction no general trend in London scholarship is evident," he seems unaware of several important trends, including study of London's racial attitudes. Inspection of the annotated bibliographical entries reveals why: James Lundquist's *Jack London: Adventures, Ideas, Fiction* (1987) is the most recent.

No new editions this year, but Jon Tuska's *Stories of the Far North* (Nebraska) includes "The League of the Old Men," the narrative of an old Indian man on trial for murdering white settlers told in the old man's voice, a nice departure from the stories nearly always chosen for anthologies. More importantly, Tuska in his introduction offers very helpful insights into London's notion of romance and effectively compares London with other authors represented in the volume, such as Robert Service, Rex Beach, and Max Brand.

My own *Jack London: A Study of the Short Fiction* (Twayne) provides an overview of London's 198 short stories, treating them in the order in which they were composed rather than as they were eventually published in serial or book form, allowing for a better sense of his development as a writer. Many stories receive brief discussion, but the most significant are treated in depth in the volume's four critical chapters: "The Klondike," "Stories of Social Realism," "Fictional Experimentation," and "The Pacific." Works as well-known as "An Odyssey of the North" and as little-known as "The Devils of Fuatino," a racial role-reversal from *A Son of the Sun* (1912), are compared. London's predominant sources and subjects, from the Greek mythological influence on the Klondike stories to the heavy use of the Bible in the South Sea tales, are identified; the key threads of race and gender concerns are traced throughout the stories; and the three major themes of justice, community, and imagination are presented. Parts II and III of the volume contain excerpts of London's own writing about his short fiction, including letters and portions of *Martin Eden* (1909) and *John Barleycorn* (1913), as well as a selection of critical essays by Edgar Lucien Larkin, Carl Sandburg, Earle Labor, King Hendricks, Lawrence I. Berkove, and James Slagel. This is only the second book published on the subject of London's short fiction.

The Sea-Wolf (1904) comes under scrutiny from Lee Clark Mitchell in "'And Rescue Us From Ourselves': Becoming Someone in Jack London's *The Sea-Wolf*" (*AL* 70: 317–36). Mitchell explores what he calls "the problem of the body itself—of what it means to have a body and the relation that emerges between one's body and one's self." Maud Brewster reveals that "the novel's celebration of an integrated, multitiered self" is "not only an impossible achievement but at least achieved when most heartily celebrated." As to Humphrey Van Weyden, the protagonist, Mitchell does not believe that he exhibits any significant change by the end of the book. *Jack London's The Sea-Wolf: A Screenplay*, ed. Rocco Fumento and Tony Williams (So. Ill.), reproduces Robert Rossen's 1941 screenplay for Warner Bros., which became the film starring Edward G. Robinson and directed by Michael Curtiz, the best-known of all films of the novel and "the most imaginatively constructed." At least eight versions of *The Sea-Wolf* were filmed, beginning in 1904.

Christophe Den Tandt's *The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism* contains chapters on Dreiser and on London (Illinois). Den Tandt's overall argument concerns realists' and naturalists' ambivalence toward the city, "a necropolis as a site of terror and wonder," a place that

fulfills Edmund Burke's definition of the sublime. Examining literature of the 1890s through World War I, Den Tandt traces naturalist metaphors of the city as romantic sublime that look forward to postmodernism, connecting, for example, the panoramas of Dos Passos to William Gibson's alternate worlds. Chapter 8, "Pastoralism Reconstructed: Jack London's *The Valley of the Moon*," describes the novel's agenda as the search for a compromise between city and country that requires "redefinition of domestic ideology and of work-based models of manhood." Den Tandt notes the centrality of race to the novel and comments on the fragility of Billy Roberts's character compared to that of his wife Saxon and to those of the female farmers whom they encounter on their travels. Billy and Saxon's utopia "looks, from our point of view, like a blueprint for the home-centered lifestyle of suburbia." Though Saxon and Billy forgo their dream of a ranch and settle for a moderate-sized farm, London still provides a romantic ending with Saxon's pregnancy. But Den Tandt does not seem to recognize the irony of that supposedly idyllic moment when Saxon tells him: Billy is busy scrutinizing a mountainside for its lumber and clay pit possibilities. Perhaps the danger is not the suburbs per se, but the capitalist Billy who has transported the evils of the city with him into the Sonoma countryside.

London's autobiographical novel *Martin Eden* (1909) contains evidence of London's careful reading of Joseph Conrad, according to Kevin Hayes in "How Jack London Read Joseph Conrad" (*ALR* 30, ii: 17–27). Hayes provides an overview of Conrad's influence by examining London's annotations in his personal copies of Conrad's works, now housed at the Huntington Library. London read nearly all of Conrad and consistently used ideas and images from Conrad. Of particular note are his annotations in Conrad's *Romance: A Novel* (1903, coauthored with Ford Madox Hueffer), which contains notes from London's fight novel *The Game* (1905); in *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906), a collection of seafaring reminiscences; and in *Victory* (1915). Hayes gives a good sense of the context and suggestiveness of London's annotations and how Conrad spurred his imagination.

Race is an increasingly important focus for critical analyses of London's works. Howard Horwitz takes up the issue in "Primordial Stories: London and the Immateriality of Evolution" (*WHR* 50–51 [1997]: 337–43). Strong individuals of whatever race, Horwitz observes, are more important to London than racial categories: "London's narratives focus on the responses to environment by individual specimens of a group,"

and he looks for the “strong, primordial individual.” Horwitz surmises that London’s notion of evolution meant that “any modifications in behavior, technology, institutions, and habit are accidents of specific environments and therefore not of lasting interest,” and that his views on race are best described as “racialist” rather than “racist.” However, Horwitz does not clearly explain his view of the relation between this idea and the notion that certain traits are inherited by races and individuals. In “Nature Over Nurture: Racialism in the Fiction of Jack London and Edgar Rice Burroughs” (*Burroughs Bulletin* n.s. 35: 21–25) Joseph Sciambra begins his comparison with the authors’ readings of Rudyard Kipling, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Ernst von Haeckel and the nature of their racialism. He compares Frona Welse’s admiration of Anglo-Saxon men in *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902) with Jane’s admiration for Tarzan’s physique, commenting on the issues of natural selection and the “call of kind.” Buck’s inherited abilities to lead in *The Call of the Wild* (1903) compare with Tarzan’s dominance over the Africans, and the bestiality of the natives in London’s *Adventure* (1911) is not unlike that in Burroughs’s, especially in *Tarzan of the Apes* (1914). Burroughs admired London and considered writing a biography of him.

iii Dreiser

The annual “Prospects” essay for 1998 is Paul A. Orlov and Miriam Gogol’s “Prospects for the Study of Theodore Dreiser” (*RALS* 24: 1–21). Orlov and Gogol point to new critical and theoretical approaches that have expanded Dreiser scholarship “beyond naturalism,” especially New Historicist, cultural studies, Lacanian, and feminist approaches. They identify the need to focus on Dreiser’s artistry but at the same time to continue to study the life, especially his early years. Important subjects in the biography that need to be explored include his relationships with female correspondents and his philandering—and the reasons behind them. Lingering scholarly problems include the absence of a comprehensive up-to-date bibliography, the difficulties experienced by the journal *Dreiser Studies*, and a general lack of awareness of Dreiser’s international reputation. The arguments over textual issues—as with the “old” versus the “restored” texts of *Sister Carrie*—are not going away anytime soon.

Clare Eby provides a comparative study of Dreiser as cultural critic in her *Dreiser and Veblen: Saboteurs of the Status Quo* (Missouri). Veblen shared Dreiser’s concern with the effects of consumer capitalism, and,

like Dreiser, he pioneered the positioning of cultural critics as confrontational intellectuals, prototypes for critics today, the "all-purpose intellectuals" called for by Richard Rorty.

The biographical focus this year is on Dreiser's relationship with his literary secretary and lover, Marguerite Tjader, who has written her story, *Love That Will Not Let Me Go: My Time with Theodore Dreiser* (Peter (Lang), ed. Lawrence E. Hussman. Tjader's reminiscences include correspondence and contributions to the left-wing magazine *Direction*, edited by her in the 1930s and '40s. The information on Dreiser's contemporaries is valuable, as is her perspective on the interrelationships between Dreiser's life and art, especially his "philosophy of love." Hussman offers an account of his own meeting with Tjader in "My Time With Marguerite Tjader" (*DrS* 29, i-ii: 3-17), in which he examines her influence on Dreiser's religious beliefs. Thomas P. Riggio's "The Dream Life of Theodore Dreiser" (*DrS* 28, ii: 3-21) rounds out the biographical studies. Riggio argues that Dreiser's understanding of dreams personally and in his fiction should be viewed in relation to Freud; he gives 11 transcriptions of Dreiser's dreams, which, not surprisingly perhaps, largely dwell on sex, religion, and anxieties about success.

In "Thesis and (Ant)ithesis: Dreiser's 'McEwen of the Shining Slave Makers' and the Game of Life" (*DrS* 28, ii: 34-43) Ian F. Roberts goes beyond the usual analysis of the opposition of egoism to altruism to examine the portrayal of life as a game between antithetical powers, as expressed in Dreiser's "ant parable." Nature consists of opposing forces, Darwin and Spencer suggested to Dreiser. Shawn St. Jean looks at *The Genius* (1915) for its sense of sexuality as a primal but dualistic force, torn between an unchecked, natural "pagan" sexuality and a "controlled" expression associated with "modernity, society, even Christianity." The protagonist's relationships with various women demonstrate this polarity; Eugene Witla is "exemplar and fool simultaneously." St. Jean also identifies interesting sources from Homer's *Odyssey* ("Whom the Gods Would Destroy": 'Pagan' Identity and Sexuality in *The 'Genius,'*" *DrS* 29, i-ii: 34-50). *The Financier* (1912) is the subject of two essays. Alex Pitofsky ("Dreiser's *The Financier* and the Horatio Alger Myth," *TCL* 44: 276-90) disputes the notion that the novel is a retelling of the Alger myth, as proposed by Robert Penn Warren; Dreiser departs from Alger's narrative formula, and his "ethically neutral representation of Frank Cowperwood demonstrates his difference from the Alger framework," especially in his sense of the actual interplay between commerce and

ethics. Kevin W. Jett's "Vision and Revision: Another Look at the 1912 and 1927 Editions of Dreiser's *The Financier*" (*DrS* 29, i–ii: 51–73) questions the roles of Dreiser and his personal secretary, Louise Campbell, in the revisions; Jett ponders the artistic merits of the deletions and the softening of the character of Cowperwood that made "a moral reading audience more sympathetic." And *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911) receives attention for its combination of sexual slavery and urban myth from Katherine Joslin in "Slum Angels: The White-Slave Narrative in Theodore Dreiser's *Jennie Gerhardt*" (*Women, America, and Movement*, pp. 106–19).

Three writers address *Sister Carrie* (1900). Mohamed Zayani's *Reading the Symptom: Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and the Dynamics of Capitalism* (Peter Lang) offers a chapter that analyzes the novel's rhythmic effects as they mirror the structures of capitalism; textual tensions are compared with the contradictions of capitalism. Den Tandt's *The Urban Sublime* (see above) features two chapters on Dreiser—chapter 4, "Sublime Horizons, Vitalist Mysteries: Theodore Dreiser's Naturalist Metropolis," and chapter 6, "The Discovery of the Urban Market: Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*." In *Sister Carrie* Dreiser "uses a mixture of documentary and romantic discourse in order to produce a pseudo-totalizing spectacle of the early modern scene." Dreiser "dialogizes" his "literary mapping" to lend the city an air of unknowableness, in dialectic with the observable and documentary vision. Den Tandt describes *Sister Carrie*'s "oceanic panoramas" as instances of the author's "epistemological ambiguity." Though heavy on the jargon, Den Tandt is helpful in framing the complexities of Dreiser's urban vision. Charles R. Lewis, "Desire and Indifference in *Sister Carrie*: Neoclassical Economic Anticipations" (*DrS* 29, i–ii: 18–33), argues for the centrality of "economic identities and relations" in Dreiser's "representations of desire, such as sexual drive, the longing for fame, or the exhibitionist wish to be seen as spectacle." Like the traveling salesman, the marketplace of *Sister Carrie* is everywhere, especially in its indifference to desire coupled with its identity as desire. Relevant neoclassic economic theories ("marginal utility analysis," for instance) are used here. Finally, Carol S. Laranger's "'Character and Success': Teaching *Sister Carrie* in the Context of an On-going American Debate" (*DrS* 29, i–ii: 74–86) lends a hand to teachers by revealing the context of contemporaneous debates on the role of character in success, including the ideas of Theodore Roosevelt in his essay, "Character and Success" (1900), and in *The Strenuous Life* (1901).

Laranger suggests teaching *Carrie* with Alger's *Ragged Dick* (1867) and Cather's *The Song of the Lark* (1915) and drawing out the comparison of headlines from Dreiser's day and those from our own.

iv Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson

Only two articles appeared this year on Sinclair Lewis. In "Sinclair Lewis's Cautionary Tale *It Can't Happen Here* (1935): Against the Socio-Political Background in Germany and the U.S.A. in the 1930s" (*OL* 52, i [1997]: 35–53) Frederick Betz and Jörg Thunecke note that though its title is often quoted (without attribution) the novel has been largely ignored, relegated to the status of a period piece of little interest to readers unwilling to investigate its topical references. Betz and Thunecke place it in the tradition of the dystopian novels of Jack London, Aldous Huxley, and George Orwell, but argue for the importance of its own historical context. They find its satire relevant today in light of the continuing worldwide struggle between democracy and totalitarianism. In contrast, in "Circling the Wagons" (*The Image of the Frontier*, pp. 205–09) O. B. Goodman compares Lewis's *Dodsworth* (1929) with Cather's *The Professor's House* (1925) in terms of their isolationist philosophy, or "defensive Americanism."

Anderson attracted a bit more attention. Walter B. Rideout in "The Most Civilized Spot in America: Sherwood Anderson in New Orleans" (*Literary New Orleans*, pp. 1–22). Rideout retells the story of Anderson's arrival in New Orleans, life with the *Double Dealer* crowd, his deep love for the city and its people, his writing practices, the creation of *Dark Laughter* (1925), and his relationship with Faulkner. David D. Anderson defends Anderson as a major fictionist and offers close discussion of the careful structure of two later collections, *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921) and *Horses and Men* (1923) ("The Structure of Sherwood Anderson's Short Story Collections," *Midamerica* 24 [1997]: 90–98). He concentrates on "Anderson's concept of the oneness of disparate human experience."

Two intriguing comparisons of Anderson also appeared. Paul W. Miller brings Cather and Anderson together as followers of Howells but also as admirers of 19th-century Russian authors. In "Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson—and Ivan Turgenev" (*Midamerica* 24 [1997]: 80–89) he points out that while Cather turned away from Tolstoy and Turgenev to James and Wharton as models, only to return to the Russian

writers later, Anderson steadily admired them for the “shared intensity of feeling” they aroused in him. Though from fear of being considered derivative Anderson denied having read Turgenev before he wrote his early stories, including *Windy McPherson’s Son* (1915), the influence of Turgenev’s *A Sportsman’s Sketches* (1852) is pronounced, especially in *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919). Hilbert H. Campbell reassesses the 1937 clash that Anderson had with Thomas Wolfe. In “He ‘Told Old Sherwood Off’: The Relationships of Thomas Wolfe and Sherwood Anderson” (*TWN* 22, i: 54–66) Campbell turns to previously unpublished material, especially Eleanor Anderson’s diaries, to delineate how the relationship between the older and younger writer was beset by misunderstanding and bad luck—not to mention the effects of Wolfe’s drinking. Campbell provides a detailed look at their relations over time and their abrupt, sad end; like Hemingway and Faulkner, Wolfe fell under Anderson’s influence, but then renounced him.

v Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos, Meridel Le Sueur

Three writers passionate in their critique of America’s social ills in this period received some renewed attention, with increasing work being done on Dos Passos. Sinclair’s and Dos Passos’s discursive strategies in telling the Sacco and Vanzetti story are compared by Rocco Marinaccio in “Dago Christs or Hometown Heroes? Proletarian Representations of Sacco and Vanzetti” (*CentR* 41 [1997]: 617–23). Sinclair’s *Boston* (1928) and Dos Passos’s *Facing the Chair* (1927) portray Sacco and Vanzetti in terms of their ethnicity as persecuted immigrants but do not allow their foreignness to fuel the popular notions of the time that all leftist radicals were foreigners. Both authors attempt to assuage anxiety over the national identities of the accused and that of the proletarian movement itself. They “Americanize” Sacco and Vanzetti and thereby attempt to assimilate them and their radical politics. A new edition of Sinclair’s 1926 novel *Oil!* has appeared (Calif., 1997), with a foreword by Jules Tygiel. The story of an independent oil industry developer and his son, set in Southern California, *Oil!* portrays the many conflicts among oil field workers, public officials, capitalists, and socialist organizers—even Hollywood starlets. Several major oil strikes of 1921 led to this important novel that manages to connect the oil fields of Long Beach with world events; it was eventually published in 29 languages and was immensely respected for its socialist arguments. Its portrayal of the scandals of the

era both lent credibility to Sinclair's muckraking and got the book banned in Boston.

Dos Passos is the subject of a good portion of the new interdisciplinary study of socially conscious fiction by Laura Browder, *Rousing the Nation: Radical Culture in Depression America* (Mass.). This useful volume employs textual analysis and social history to explore fiction, drama, poetry, and film of the period. Chapter 2, "Dos Passos Issues a Challenge: Can Language Make a Revolution?" views the *U.S.A.* trilogy (1930–33) as a work not of history but of historiography, "a nearly 1400-page debate on the question of who is entitled to tell the truth about American history and how that truth can be told most effectively—or to be more precise, who will get to influence public opinion." Dos Passos showed his fellow novelists "how to turn stale American rhetoric on its head, how to create a new literature that would both enrage and entertain readers."

Dos Passos and race and gender are increasingly of interest. Janet Galligani Casey's new book, *Dos Passos and the Ideology of the Feminine* (Cambridge), departs from previous sorts of analyses of the topic, arguing that Dos Passos's fiction foregrounds gender and challenges prevailing categories of masculine and feminine; further, the full extent of Dos Passos's radicalism is obscured by a gender-laden cultural agenda. While he was metaphorically "feminized" for his "sociopolitical affiliations and even his personal demeanor," he indeed "appropriates the feminine" as a "site for radicalist challenges" and attempts to historicize women. Casey sees not only the feminine dimension of his work but also how that dimension contributed to the odd presence/absence of his reputation as being too experimental for "the proletarian camp" and "too political for the modernists." Revisiting Dos Passos through gender as well as class will help us see him more clearly and broaden our definitions of modernism.

Dos Passos and race are addressed by Jon Smith in "John Dos Passos, Anglo-Saxon" (*MFS* 44: 282–305). *U.S.A.* is "the speech of the people" instead of a nationalist work, and its response to the racialism of its time takes the form of its trilogy structure. Smith sees the use of this structure as evidence of Dos Passos's allegiance to conservatism, since the trilogy was exported to the United States from Britain along with other "epic impulses" that reflect "the Anglo-Saxon legacy." The trilogy in his day was a nationalist genre that symbolically attempted to redress the divisions that followed the Civil War.

In "An Elegy for the Unknown Soldier" (*John Dos Passos Newsletter*

and *Review* 2: 1–4) Melvin Landsberg comments on Dos Passos's "effrontery in satirizing the august commemoration" of the body of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C., 11 November 1921, in his "The Body of an American" section of *Nineteen-Nineteen* (1932). His *Three Soldiers* (1921) had just appeared, a coincidence that "struck a note of opposition to officially sanctioned versions of wartime service." The later satire seems more superficial compared to *Three Soldiers*, but it is still "a brilliantly written modernist elegy" with roots in Milton's "Lycidas" and Shelley's "Adonais." Dos Passos's bitterness in exposing the chief mourners "as the veritable killers" is pronounced. And John Trombold explores Dos Passos's political reversal from the *U.S.A.* trilogy to *Adventures of a Young Man* (1938) "in light of the relative imaginative power of the past and the future"; Dos Passos disavows "revolutionary futurism" for "nostalgic historicism." Trombold insists on the importance of identifying Dos Passos's life with his fiction ("From the Future to the Past: The Disillusionment of John Dos Passos," *SAF* 26: 237–56). Calder M. Pickett takes to the air with a comparison of *U.S.A.* in the classroom and on a radio program called "The American Past" at the University of Kansas. Dos Passos provides basic insights into American culture, including history and propaganda as well as literature ("Broadcasting with *U.S.A.*: A Reminiscence," *John Dos Passos Newsletter and Review* 2: 4–6).

Meridel Le Sueur's critique of capitalism in her children's books of the 1940s and 1950s is described by Julia Mickenberg in "Communist in a Coonskin Cap? Meridel Le Sueur's Books for Children and the Reformulation of America's Cold War Frontier Epic" (*LeS&U* 21 [1997]: 59–85). After reviewing Le Sueur's association with the Communist Party and her writings on behalf of Native Americans, Mickenberg turns to her relationship with Alfred A. Knopf and the intersection of her adult fiction with her children's stories about such figures as Johnny Appleseed, Abraham Lincoln, and Davy Crockett. Crockett's tale stresses that the capitalists and not the Indians are Crockett's enemies; similarly, emphasis is laid on Lincoln's hatred of slavery—Le Sueur's comment on the 1950s South. Anthony Dawahare in "Modernity and 'Village Communism' in Depression-Era America: The Utopian Literature of Meridel Le Sueur" (*Criticism* 39 [1997]: 409–31) offers an overview of her career as one of the minority of American proletarian writers concerned with working women of the Depression. Critics differ in their assessment of Le Sueur's feminist versus Communist Party affiliations, he points out, but the author needs to be "resituated in the broader culture of the

1930s,” that is, within literary movements such as romanticism and naturalism as well as popular culture. She is best seen as “a modern anti-modernist writer who seeks to overcome the alienation of American capitalism through an irrationalist philosophy that privileges intuition, ‘mass feeling,’ and agrarianism.”

vi Regionalists and Western Writers

Can New York City be considered a “region”? Two New Yorkers helped define its urban landscape in the period. Abraham Cahan’s Yiddish text *Yankel der Yankee*, which first appeared in *Arbeiter Tseitung* in 1895 and was published in English as *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* (1896), receives a new reading by Aviva Taubenfeld in “‘Only an “L”’: Linguistic and the Immigrant Author in Abraham Cahan’s *Yekl* and *Yankel der Yankee*” (*Multilingual America*, pp. 144–65). Hannah Berliner Fischthal also treats Cahan in “Abraham Cahan and Sholem Asch” (*Yiddish* 11, i–ii: 1–17), examining Cahan’s troubled relationship with Asch and Asch’s *The Nazarene* (1939). Cahan, an atheist, rejected what he saw as the pro-Christian effect of *The Nazarene*, whereas Asch saw true Judaism embodied in Jesus.

Delia Caparoso Konzett defines Anzia Yezierska as an important critic of the American Dream in “Administered Identities and Linguistic Assimilation: The Politics of Immigrant English in Anzia Yezierska’s *Hungry Hearts*” (*AL* 69 [1997]: 595–619). “Her aesthetics of displacement transforms a site marked by a lack or enclosure into one of desire, difference, and disjunction where conflicting cultural norms and questions of citizenship are contested and constantly renegotiated,” Konzett notes, pointing to the importance of language in social exclusion and the hybridity of immigrant languages. Yezierska tries to transform “immigrant English” from dead metaphors to a new reality. Lisa Muir writes in “Lady Liberty’s Colonization and Anzia Yezierska’s Bread Givers” (*CentR* 41 [1997]: 635–43) of Yezierska’s critique of Emma Lazarus’s famous poem, “The New Colossus,” whose words grace the Statue of Liberty (the “Mother of Exiles” in a “world-wide welcome” of immigrants into a land in which they can “breathe free”). Yezierska discloses a class-based set of hierarchies promulgated by the poem, particularly for Orthodox Jews who were being assimilated into the American middle class. Lady Liberty is an “empty icon” in Yezierska’s autobiography, emblematic as she may be for Jewish women immigrants. Finally, Yezierska is also

treated by Susan Dominguez in “Snapshots of Twentieth-Century Writers Mary Antin, Zora Neal [*sic*] Hurston, Zitkala-Să, and Anzia Yezierska” (*CentR* 41 [1997]: 547–52). Dominguez surveys the American assimilation of these women in general, including issues of religion, literature, and naming. She gives brief biographical and career sketches of the four but no argument about their role as assimilated writers.

Ellen Glasgow dominated Southern women writers of the period, but a new book on Julia Peterkin, a South Carolina plantation mistress and writer, has sparked new interest. *A Devil and a Good Woman Too: The Lives of Julia Peterkin*, by Susan Millar Williams (Georgia), amounts to a rediscovery of Peterkin, who embarked at age 40 on a writing career that would produce five realistic novels on the lives of African American farming people in the region, earning the praise of W. E. B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes. Her semi-autobiographical work employs a white woman’s point of view on a dying plantation culture. With a good deal of detachment, she conveys in a terse, economical style her memorable characters and situations—best of all, with a deadpan humor. H. L. Mencken saw in Peterkin’s work the promise of a revolution against sentimental Southern literature. She published stories in *Smart Set* to begin with, then released the novels, including the best-known, *Black April* (1927), which became a best-seller. It was described by Donald Davidson as a literary milestone for representing black folk culture on the Gullah coast, but it also served as “the first novel in English of the Negro as a human being.”

Glasgow is read by Mark A. Graves in “Competing Conceptions of Southern Womanhood in Ellen Glasgow’s *Virginia* and *Barren Ground*” (*CLAJ* 41: 417–30) as a conflicted Southern belle. Chapter 3 of Susan Lurie’s *Unsettled Subjects: Restoring Feminist Politics to Poststructuralist Critique* (Duke, 1997), “Women’s Development and ‘Composite’ Subjectivity: Feminism and Social Evolution in Ellen Glasgow,” discusses how Glasgow’s efforts to bring to light “an otherwise covert configuration of female subordination with race and class privilege” in *The Voice of the People* (1900) addresses class and gender through a Darwinian and psychological framework. In *Barren Ground* (1925) Glasgow links oppression of non-elite men and elite women to Freud’s Oedipus complex, but also shows the resistance through pregnancy of the feminist subject to this dynamic. The gains of “feminist agency,” however, are “undetermined by their respective coarticulations with privileges in race and class.”

Midwestern writers, especially lesser-known ones, have attracted numerous critics this year. David D. Anderson reassesses Louis Bromfield's output of 30 volumes; Anderson continues his past "eco-critical" focus on Bromfield's "relationship with the earth, and the uniquely American philosophy that made him what he was" and offers a general overview of his works ("Louis Bromfield and Ecology in Fiction: A Reassessment," *Midwestern Literature* 28 [1997]: 48–57). Anderson's goal is to help overcome neglect of Bromfield by pointing to his Jeffersonian "unity of purpose" in such novels as *The Farm* (1934), which Anderson considers Bromfield's best work. Dorys Grover takes Bromfield to France, furnishing a biographical sketch of his life there and his relationships with other American writers abroad, concluding with his frustration at not being able to write a sustained work about France, returning to the United States in 1938 ("Louis Bromfield in France," *Midamerica* 24 [1997]: 115–21).

A number of women writers of the Midwest are being discussed, such as Anne Ellis, whose unusual career is outlined by Jennifer S. Brantley in "Fatal Pie and Drops of Frosting: Anne Ellis's Acts of Community Building in *The Life of an Ordinary Woman*" (*Women's Life-Writing: Finding Voice/Building Community*, ed. Linda S. Coleman [Bowling Green], pp. 153–67). Ellis, a plainswoman who began writing only when she became ill in her mid-50s in 1929, recalls her long life in the mining camps of Colorado in the late 19th century, detailing the daily pioneer life and constructing "multiple communities" of herself as a child, as a writer, and with us as readers, in a style clear, simple, and driven by the structures of memory. Similarly, Melody M. Zajdel presents "Grace Stone Coates: A Lyric Girlhood" (*MMisc* 25 [1997]: 28–37). Coates's collection of short stories, *Black Cherries* (1931), draws its combination of lyricism and feminism from nature as perceived by the child narrator, who develops an unusually strong, self-conscious narrative voice as she tells her family history. And realist Ruth Suckow's 1942 novel *New Hope* has been reprinted with a foreword by Patricia Ellen Martin Daly (Iowa). This "affirmative," "Edenic," Christian novel of small-town farm life opposes the events of the town with those of World War II; such scope allowed Suckow to be compared in her day to Anderson, Cather, and other leading figures.

Laura Ingalls Wilder is the subject of three books. Ann Romines's *Constructing the Little House: Gender, Culture, and Laura Ingalls Wilder* (Mass., 1997) notes that though *Little House on the Prairie* (1935) has been

through millions of copies, it is still a “contested text” because it raises unsolved feminist and gender questions, as well as the question of genre—is it a juvenile work?—and certain concerns about its racist discourse in its cultural retelling of the frontier myth. Romines also contributes “The Little House and the Big Rock: Wilder, Cather, and the Problem of Frontier Girls” (*WCPMN* 41 [1997]: 25–32), a comparison that offers close readings of the cultural dynamics of *Shadows on the Rock* (1931) and the Little House series, beginning with *Little House in the Big Woods* (1932). Romines comments on the narrowly circumscribed experiences in a frontier girl’s life and how the overall patriarchy of frontier society affected writing by such women. John E. Miller’s biography, *Becoming Laura Ingalls Wilder: The Woman Behind the Legend* (Missouri), traces how the little girl described in the books became the skillful author. Miller examines the ten years of journalism that led up to the first novel in 1932, as well as the importance of her relations with her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane. And Jane M. Sukramanian’s *Laura Ingalls Wilder: An Annotated Bibliography of Critical, Biographical, and Teaching Studies* (Greenwood, 1997) supplies a much-needed scholarly reference for Wilder studies. A well-organized, annotated bibliography, it includes teaching kits and contemporary reviews of Wilder’s books. Sukramanian reveals Wilder’s early popularity during the Depression as well as her recent escalation in critical research and commentary, focusing on her relevance to an understanding of pioneer women and juvenile fiction in general.

Mourning Dove’s *Cogewea* (1927) is the subject of two essays. Mary Murphy’s “Searching for an Angle of Repose: Women, Work, and Creativity in Early Montana” (*Many Wests: Place, Culture, and Regional Identity*, ed. David M. Wrobel and Michael C. Steiner [Kansas], pp. 156–76) presents Montana writers at the turn of the century, including Mourning Dove, rodeo rider Fannie Sperry Steele, and poet Gwendolen Haste. Cathryn Halverson points out that *Cogewea* made Mourning Dove the first female Native American novelist; the tale of a half-white, half-Okanogan heroine wooed for her money and ranch by a white Easterner presents the frontier not as a traditional site of regeneration but as a place of contestation (“Redefining the Frontier: Mourning Dove’s *Cogewea*, *The Half-Blood*: A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 21, iv [1997]: 105–24). Bess Streeter Aldrich appears in a new edition, *The Collected Short Works, 1920–1954*, edited and introduced by Carol Miles Petersen (Ne-

braska). Although Aldrich was a highly paid and widely read frontier writer in her day—her most famous work was the novel *A Lantern in Her Hand* (1928)—she also produced a large body of short fiction that promoted values of honesty, hard work, friendship, and family life, in contrast to the naturalists of the same period. Some of the pieces appear in this new edition for the first time since their original publication.

Owen Wister receives interesting treatment by Barbara Will in “The Nervous Origins of the American Western” (*AL* 70: 293–316). Women were not the only ones who received prescriptions for nervous disorders from doctors like S. Weir Mitchell; whereas the nervous women were put to bed, nervous men were told to “go out West” and write about their travels and adventures. Among the ranks of nervous men trekking westward was Wister, the father of the American western. Will reads Wister as “Mitchell-inflected” and sees his representations of the West as reflections of his negotiating his individual manhood in the characters of the Tenderfoot and New Woman living in a world of stable values, reaching for a “balanced” view of life. What they seek, Will feels, is a “mythical space” where “an improbable yet potent new national hero” could emerge. Zane Grey mostly escapes the psychoanalyst’s couch in Stephen J. May’s *Zane Grey: Romancing the West* (Ohio, 1997). May’s illustrated study explores Grey’s biography from childhood (especially his relations with his father) through his writing career, dwelling upon his choice of romance as evidence of his own inner emotional struggles and the influence on him of Wordsworth, Hugo, Conrad, Irving, Hawthorne, and Cooper. His ambivalence about Mormonism, his place in the critical scene today, and his written work receive extended treatment. Grey’s accomplishment was “shaping and defining the ideal American character” in the ethical terms of the then-disappearing frontier in his novels of 1903 through 1926, which form an “extensive mythology of the West.” May provides an excellent bibliography.

The American desert was the locus for two interesting characters of the period, John C. Van Dyke and Mabel Dodge Luhan. Van Dyke wrote *The Desert* (1901), a tremendously popular work that marked a major shift in how Americans regarded the desert, moving from traditional scorn to admiration of its wild beauty. Van Dyke’s writings “offered Americans an aesthetic vocabulary to address the new region,” comment David W. Teague and Peter Wild in the introduction to their new edition of Van Dyke’s letters, *The Secret Life of John C. Van Dyke: Selected Letters* (Nevada, 1997). The letters reveal Van Dyke’s upper-class

life and conflicted orientation toward writing and to the reading public. Luhan, an even more colorful denizen of the desert, comes under study by Helen Barolini in “Mabel Dodge Luhan: In Search of a Personal South” (*SWR* 83: 280–94). Luhan’s flamboyant life as a self-generated celebrity and promoter of Native American life in New Mexico is the subject. This is a fascinating portrait, but Barolini would have done well to include some footnotes, or even some dates.

Mary Austin receives the lion’s share of regionalist interest, with new studies of her life appearing each year. A new book by Mark T. Hayer, *Dancing Ghosts: Native American and Christian Syncretism in Mary Austin’s Works* (Nevada), is based on research at the Huntington Library and elsewhere on the overlooked issue of Austin’s attempts “to meld Native American and biblical stories into new syncretic forms.” Readers of Austin’s nature works do not always recall that she also wrote on the life of Christ. Anna Carew-Miller’s “Mary Austin’s Nature: Refiguring Tradition Through the Voices of Identity” (*Reading the Earth*, pp. 79–95) employs “persona criticism” to recover the “real” Mary Austin. Literary constructions of the writer’s voice do not “add up to a historical figure”; thus, we must learn to read her representations of nonhuman nature instead, opting for a radical rather than Victorian version of her surroundings.

The question of the “real” Mary Austin and what her work “really” is occupies most of her other critics as well. Janis P. Stout’s *Through the Window, Out the Door* rebuts masculinist readings of Austin, turning to Austin’s employment of “feminine” narrative structures set in the home and her use of ideas from other women writers on themes such as departure, wayfaring, nostalgia for home, and related issues of journeying versus “home-centeredness.” Austin is a “pivotal figure in the literature of the West and in the history of women’s move into professionalism in the early twentieth century.” Stout gives a useful overview of Austin’s life and career and capably ties her work to the education and development of women writers. She also offers “Mary Austin’s Feminism: A Reassessment” (*SNNTS* 30: 77–101), which describes Austin’s feminism as challenged by “conflicting urges,” especially in her novels. In line with the feminist emphasis on Austin, Christopher McBride gives a close reading of one of Austin’s stories in which the woman emerges victorious (“Austin’s ‘The Return of Mr. Wills,’” *Explicator* 57: 36–37).

Linda K. Korell also reads the importance of gender in Austin’s work. In “‘The Immanent Pattern’: Recovering a Self in Mary Austin’s *Earth*

Horizon" (*ABSt Studies* 12 [1997]: 261–75) Korell points to Austin's "insistence upon an essential spiritual pattern, the 'earth horizon'" through which she links two gendered autobiographical genres, the "classic male story of the developing self's progression through time" to attain independence, achievement, and self-knowledge, and the feminine spiritual autobiography that tells "a more marginalized or decentered story of developing interior emotional, psychic, or spiritual wholeness," a combination that leads to some troubling contradictions. In an excellent essay, "The Undomesticated Nature of Feminism: Mary Austin and the Progressive Women Conservationists" (*SAF* 26: 73–96), Stacy Alaimo places Austin in opposition to the Progressive Conservation Movement, which sought to enshrine "the race" and protect "the home" by conserving natural resources. Austin saw nature "not as a repository of resources for household use, but as an undomesticated, potentially feminist space." She "disentangles women from domestic ideologies by invoking nature and releases nature from the grip of utilitarian philosophies by casting it as a woman." This "sexual but not maternal land" is peopled by her "desert mistresses," who are at odds with the traditional female fictional creations of homes and gardens.

vii The Harlem Renaissance

Susan Mizruchi's important new book *The Science of Sacrifice: American Literature and Modern Social Theory* (Princeton) provides an illuminating context for discussion of W. E. B. Du Bois. Arguing that "to understand the past is to learn to read it as literature teaches us to," Mizruchi brings to light "some unexpected affinities and connections among a variety of writers and books," including Melville, James, Crane, Norris, Stein, and Du Bois. Her comparison of American literary realism and naturalism to the discipline of social science works through the religious notion of sacrifice. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) is viewed within Mizruchi's paradigm of sacrificial thinking as the basis for collective life; Du Bois imagines black American culture at the turn of the century as a culture of death and sacrifice, a notion similar to views held by social scientists of the day—sympathy versus survival as a ground for collective human existence.

Du Bois's "invisibility thesis" as the basis for our present-day "whiteness studies" comes under examination by Mike Hill in "Souls Un-

dressed: The Rise and Fall of the New Whiteness Studies" (*Review of Education, Pedagogy, Cultural Studies* 20: 229–39). Du Bois's ideas fuel whiteness studies but are actually more far-reaching. Hill reviews this concept in his discussion of the new collection, *Off White*, which he feels would benefit from a more clearly Du Boisian orientation. In "More Than Words: Representing Blackness as American" (*CentR* 41 [1997]: 471–78) Anne Carroll finds that Du Bois's poetry and song in *The Souls of Black Folk* argue that African American culture "was the most significant, most expressive, and most distinctive aspect of American culture." Finally, Claudia Tate's *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race* (Oxford) devotes a chapter to *Dark Princess, A Romance* (1928). Tate reads this novel through the psychoanalytic model of the "fantasmic," or a recurring pattern of fantasies projected by an individual upon new experiences. The "princess" in this novel represents a desire to achieve racial justice, but she is also the signifier of a beloved woman: racial justice eroticized, the son's desire for the mother.

Nella Larsen's 1929 novel, *Passing*, is introduced by Thadious M. Davis (Penguin, 1997). *Passing* also figures in Tuzyline Jita Allan's comparative study, "The Death of Sex and the Soul in Mrs. Dalloway and Nella Larsen's *Passing*" (*Virginia Woolf*, pp. 95–113). In an attempt to "broaden the track of revisionist modernism," Allan compares the two authors' "subterfuges" of writing "lesbian desire." Corinne E. Blackmer claims in "The Veils of Law: Race and Sexuality in Nella Larsen's *Passing*" (*Race-ing Representation*, pp. 98–116) that *Passing* only "passes for a conventional narrative of racial passing"—it is rather a revision, for instead of a tragic mulatto figure it stresses "the interpretive anxieties and sexual paranoias that make convention-bound people reluctant to allow others the freedom to travel freely throughout the many worlds, identities, and sexualities of American society." In addition to literary analysis, this is a solid reading of important legal decisions regarding sexuality and race. Nell Sullivan traces Larsen's handling of racial rejection herself in *Passing*; Sullivan describes Larsen as deeply scarred. Larsen portrays her feelings through Clare Kennedy and the Lacanian device of *aphanisis*, or the disappearance of the subject behind the signifier ("Nella Larsen's *Passing* and the Fading Subject," *AAR* 32: 373–86). Carla Kaplan compares *Passing* to Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* (1922) in "Undesirable Desire: Citizenship and Romance in Modern American Fiction" (*MFS* 43 [1997]: 144–69), noting modernism's "guilty pleasures" of "undesirable desire." Mod-

ernists “participated in complex on-going debates about citizenship, identity, and race” by asking who is desirable and who is not—that is, who is American and who is not.

Claudia Tate treats Larsen in chapter 4 of her *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels*, “Desire and Death: Seducing the Lost Father in *Quicksand*,” by Nella Larsen.” Tate sees the novel’s conclusion, where the narrator deserts Helga Crane, as Larsen’s own sense of the missing father. Karen M. Chandler looks at *Quicksand* (1928) from the point of view of melodrama (“Nella Larsen’s Fatal Polarities: Melodrama and Its Limits in *Quicksand*,” *CLAJ* 42: 24–47). Resisted by her critics as sensational and detracting from her realism, melodrama is a key element in Larsen’s work; it reveals how readers are emotionally engaged, and it illuminates “Larsen’s vision of the moral and cultural uncertainty of an African-American woman’s life in the modern era.” Kimberley Monda, “Self-Delusion and Self-Sacrifice in Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand*” (*AAR* 31 [1997]: 23–29), presents Helga Crane as a demonstration of the author’s criticism of “white racist constructions of black women’s . . . legitimate sexual desires.” She traces the idea of sexual self-repression to Larsen’s rejection by her mother. Helga succumbs to her aunt’s exoticizing objectification of her as primitive, but in refusing Axel Olsen’s proposal of marriage Helga also rejects her mother’s oppression and discovers identification with her black father. She turns to Harlem, but she ends up sunk in her domestic quagmire all the same. In “The Clothes Make the Woman: The Symbolics of Prostitution in Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand* and Claude McKay’s *Home to Harlem*” (*TSWL* 16 [1997]: 107–30) Kimberley Roberts compares the two writers’ sexualized “fallen” women as a stereotype promoted by whites and a scapegoat for black and white sexual anxieties. The prostitute is employed in these two urban novels of the 1920s as a black body that is “an economic quantity for consumption by white audiences.”

Several male writers inspired essays, but not on the scale of Larsen, which continues a lengthy trend toward the study of African American women writers. In “The Narrator’s Editorialist Voice in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*” (*CLAJ* 41 [1997]: 70–92) F. Walker Patton points to James Weldon Johnson’s unique narrative voice that editorializes on the African American condition in a carefully staged way to avoid censure. The ex-colored man is not a standard third-person narrator and not a “limited” one either, but an attempt to “enlarge the perimeter of

the African American ‘circle’” of discourse. Johnson is also the subject of Neil Brooks’s “On Becoming an Ex-Colored Man: Postmodern Irony and the Extinguishing of Certainties in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*” (*Race-ing Representation*, pp. 84–97). Postmodernism is preferable to irony as a way of reading this text because “the narrative allows all constructions that seek to map a stable center for self or other that the narrator might use as a guide in self-definition.” Irony assumes a stable referent, but postmodernism does not.

George Schuyler appears in Fritz Tysin’s “Black Pulp Fiction: George Schuyler’s Caustic Vision of a Pan African Empire” (*Empire: American Studies*, ed. John G. Blair and Reinhold Wagnleitner [Gunter Narr, 1997], pp. 167–79), a discussion of the re-publication of *Black No More* (1931) and other works of Schuyler’s that established fictional new world orders; Schuyler’s satire and his characteristically idiosyncratic narrative strategies made him “the Negro’s Mencken.” Schuyler is also discussed in Matthew Frye Jacobson’s *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Harvard). *Black No More* is a “meditative” satire on race, with “tremendous insight into the social relations on the white side of the [racial] divide” as well as satire of black culture. It is important in understanding early modern notions of “Anglo-Saxonism” and American nativism.

Jean Toomer is the subject of the first chapter, “Jean Toomer: Beside You Will Stand a Strange Man,” in Jon Woodson’s *To Make a New Race: Gurdjieff, Toomer, and the Harlem Renaissance* (Miss.). Toomer is a poète maudit, an “Ouspenskian” writer in his psychological development and artistic achievement; art is a higher consciousness and a form of vision. Toomer attempts through his art to present the “Gurdjieffian system” to the Harlem Renaissance, but he violated its tenets by centralizing race differently than Gurdjieff taught. Toomer is compared to Hart Crane as an “obsessive” writer and a promoter of the “superior logic of the metaphor.” In contrast, Charles Scruggs and Lee Van Demarr in their *Toomer: Jean Toomer and the Terrors of American History* (Penn.) focus on his major work, *Cane* (1923), in order to redress the imbalance between the emphasis placed on his “spiritualist” tendencies and the critical neglect of his important role in African American literary history. The authors place him in the World War I context and see him as a political writer influenced by socialism and African American politics. They helpfully supply the omissions of other biographers concerning his early

influences (such as Waldo Frank), and they perform a valuable reading of *Cane*'s relations to its readers, or "spectators." In her well-documented study, "In the Land of Cotton: Economics and Violence in Jean Toomer's *Cane*" (*AAR* 32: 181–97), Barbara Foley also examines *Cane*, asking whether it relates socioeconomic realities of the period in rural Georgia or subsumes history under myth. She explores the political implications of Toomer's idealism, defining him as a limited realist whose simultaneous materialism and idealism frame history in a complex way.

A few lesser-known Harlem Renaissance figures received one essay apiece. Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* (1928) is the subject of Margo V. Perkins's "The Achievement and Failure of *Nigger Heaven*: Carl Van Vechten and the Harlem Renaissance" (*CLAJ* 42: 1–23). This novel, beginning with its title, was calculated to appeal to and to satirize the racist sensibilities of the era; Harlem is seen as a space where African Americans could have a culture of their own within a racist world, both circumscribed and a place of refuge, pointing to the black characters' moral superiority—and perhaps that of the author. In "The World Would Do Better to Ask Why Is Frimbo Sherlock Holmes?: Investigating Liminality in Rudolph Fisher's *The Conjure-Man Dies*" (*AAR* 32: 607–20) Adrienne Johnson Gosselin writes of the 1932 novel, published two years before Fisher's death. It was the first nonserialized detective novel to use a black detective and the first in the genre to use multiple detectives. The story concerns the murder of N'Gana Frimbo, an African conjure man, but he is not dead; instead, he joins the detectives in search of his attacker. And Walter White receives a reading in "We Are Not Free! Free! Free! *Flight* and the Unmapping of American Literary Studies" by Neil Brooks (*CLAJ* 41: 371–86). Brooks interrogates Shelley Fisher Fishkin's notion of remapping American culture as racially hybrid by turning to White's little-known 1926 novel, *Flight*, which "illuminates the impossibility of mapping the American racial or cultural landscape in anything but the most provisional manner." Skeptical that literature could lead to new racial understandings, White presents in his story of a Creole woman's engagements with race some difficult paradoxes that would need resolving for new cultural "maps" to be made.

Finally, Judith Messer's "African American Women and Education: Marita Bonner's Response to the 'Talented Tenth'" (*SSF* 34 [1997]: 73–85) examines Bonner's social realist stories of a multiethnic Chicago as a Western response to the Harlem Renaissance call for self-improvement

through education. A Radcliffe graduate, Bonner wrote of lower-class blacks as a statement to the black intelligentsia of the day; she challenged many of the ideas of Du Bois, Alain Locke, and Marcus Garvey in regard to black women.

viii H. L. Mencken

Mencken is well-represented by his namesake journal, *Menckenia*. Vincent Fitzpatrick provides a bibliography of 1994 publications ("Bibliographic Check List," *Menckenia* 148: 8–14), and Arthur J. Gutman gives a biographical survey that concludes with Mencken's racial ambivalences, a crucial topic in discussions of Mencken today ("Some Thoughts about 'Harry' 'AKA' Henry L. Mencken," *Menckenia* 146: 7–12). Les Payne asks, "Is Mencken Relevant to Blacks? Was He Ever?" (*Menckenia* 147: 1–9), answering in the affirmative. Despite his reputation as a racist, Mencken was "one of the sharpest critics of race relations in the Republic during the first half of the 20th century"; he knew and promoted and published James Weldon Johnson, George Schuyler, W. E. B. Du Bois, Jean Toomer, and Richard Wright.

Mencken is also the subject of two new books. *Minority Report: H. L. Mencken's Notebooks* is a reissue in the Maryland Paperback Bookshelf series (Hopkins, 1997) of a volume originally published by Knopf in 1956. It is a reflection on Mencken's long career read through a selection of his notebook entries. Mencken notes in the preface: "As I grow older I am unpleasantly impressed with the fact that giving each human being but one life is a bad scheme. He should have two at the lowest—one for observing and studying the world, and the other for formulating and setting down his conclusions about it." Richard J. Schrader's *H. L. Mencken: A Descriptive Bibliography*, prepared with the assistance of George H. Thompson and Jack R. Sanders (Pittsburgh), is an illustrated volume of 628 pages covering the period from 1899 until 1966. This fine record of primary items joins Betty Adler's secondary listings of articles and reviews in newspapers and magazines.

ix Edgar Rice Burroughs

Things are stirring in the jungle of Edgar Rice Burroughs. As a result of the vision of George T. McWhorter, the *Burroughs Bulletin* continues as

the leading publication. McWhorter offers “Edgar Rice Burroughs’s Worksheets for *Tarzan and the Ant Men*” (35: 12–13) and “*Tarzan and the Ant Men* Revisited” (35: 3–11), arguing that this work is a “seamless fairy tale,” a *Gulliver’s Travels* with a Victorian flavor, encompassing satire, mistaken identity, trickery, battle scenes, enslavement, and escape—even a rival for Jane’s affections. McWhorter reprints Burroughs’s story “Beware!” (originally published in 1922 under the pseudonym John Tyler McCulloch): it tells of anarchy and revolution faced by a princely hero (33: 3–35). Alan Hanson gives us “On the Trail of the Real Moon Maid” (34: 8–16), a discussion of the two versions of *The Moon Maid* (1925) in serial and book form; in portraying a repressive 21st century, the trilogy of which it is a part (including *The Moon Men* and *The Red Hawk*) is rooted in the author’s anxieties about the Russian Revolution and U.S. disarmament after World War I.

Robert L. Hunton broadens the usual picture of Burroughs in his “Burroughs’s ‘Bull’: The Quintessential Cowboy” (34: 3–7), focusing on the author’s western writings, such as *The Bandit of Hell’s Bend* (1925), *The War Chief* (1928), *Apache Devil* (1933), and *The Deputy Sheriff of Comanche County* (1941), which allowed Burroughs to refocus and redirect his energies temporarily when Tarzan settled into routine. Burroughs’s traditional view of the 1880s Southwest presents a harsh landscape dominated by the simple social structure and virtues of the cowboy’s rugged individuality and sense of personal freedom.

Robert J. Rubanowice’s “The Tarzan Series: A Twentieth-Century Case Against Civilization” (35: 14–20) asks the key question—whether Burroughs should be regarded as a writer of “sub-literature”—and concludes that despite his reams of improbable plots, stereotyped characters, recurrent freakish coincidences, and sometimes hilarious story lines, the answer is “no.” In Burroughs there is “the persistent message” that “civilization—and its maker, man—are terrible things.” Burroughs is seen as a cultural critic of misanthropic proportions.

Most interesting of all the work on Burroughs is Harry Stecopoulos’s “The World According to Normal Bean” (*Race and the Subject of Masculinities*, ed. Stecopoulos and Michael Uebel [Duke, 1997], pp. 170–91). Stecopoulos traces Burroughs’s beginnings as a fiction writer with *Under the Moon of Mars* (1911), first published in *All-Story Magazine* under the pseudonym “Normal Bean,” which reveals his anxieties about his profession and “one middle-class male’s cultural response to the instability of white identity” as portrayed in pulp fiction. Burroughs produced tales of

disenfranchised but noble white men who regain their “rightful identity.” He thus celebrates a bourgeois past against a working-class modernity—yet his characters’ cross-racial identification (like Tarzan and his apes) also points toward a sense of the “slippage between normalcy and fantasy, self and other,” and causes Burroughs to dissolve white identity even as he values it. (This point could be extended to other writers of the period, such as Jack London.) The essay concludes that “the uneasy pleasure of making and unmaking white identity” in turn-of-the-century “raced” popular culture makes Burroughs both predictably elitist and “flamboyantly transgressive.”

x General Interest

Geoffrey Smith has given us a 1,038-page record of first printings of American fictional works derived from 350 print and on-line sources in *American Fiction, 1901–1925: A Bibliography* (Cambridge, 1997). Each entry includes bibliographical description, contents lists for short story collections, and copyright information. Also included is British printing information. David E. E. Sloane has done a fine job of collecting essays on humor in *New Directions in American Humor* (Alabama), especially humor in popular culture and literature, minor writers, and the problems of translation; Donald Barlow supplies a bibliography. The collection *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (Chicago) will have broad value; the editors, Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou, have put together works from Karl Marx to Richard Wright, covering literature, autobiography, philosophy, art criticism, anthropology, sociology, politics, feminism, and more in a revisionary look at modernism that rejects the notion of movement or period in favor of “a set of critical constructs, . . . theories and practices” that reflect diverse, problematic, and conflicting interrelationships. The pivotal section is the one on the avant-garde and the international political climate. A companion piece is William B. Scott and Peter M. Rutkoff’s *New York Modern: The Arts and the City* (Hopkins), a liberally illustrated look at the modern arts, including literature (especially Stein and James Weldon Johnson). Also of interest is Penelope Rosemont’s *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology* (Texas), which includes in its 300 selections women poets, essayists, fictionists, and artists beginning with the 1920s.

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