

## Jean Toomer Cane

Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923) is regarded by many as a seminal work in the history of African American writing. It is generally called a novel, but it could more accurately be described as a collection of short stories, poems and dramatic pieces whose stylistic indeterminacy is part of its unique appeal. The ambiguities and seeming oddities of Toomer's text make *Cane* a difficult work to understand, which is why this lucid, accessible guide is so valuable.

Exploring some of the difficulties that both the writer and his work embody, Gerry Carlin offers an enthralling account of Toomer's eloquent and exquisite expression of the African American experience. The Author Dr Gerry Carlin is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Wolverhampton. He teaches, researches and has published in the areas of modernism, critical theory, and the literature and culture of the 1960s.

Seminar paper from the year 2003 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: A (1), Southern Connecticut State University (English Department), course: The Harlem Renaissance, language: English, abstract: Jean Toomer is one of the leading figures in the Harlem Renaissance. His major contribution to literature is *Cane*, a novel comprised of poetry and prose. *Cane's* structure is of three parts. The first third of

## Read Free Jean Toomer Cane

the book is devoted to the black experience in the Southern farmland. The characters inhabiting this portion of the book are faced with an inability to succeed. The second part of Cane is more urban oriented and concerned with Northern life. The writing style throughout is much the same as the initial section with poetry interspersed with stories. The concluding third of the novel is a prose piece entitled "Kabnis" and can be regarded as a synthesis of the earlier sections. Cane is therefore designed as a circle. Aesthetically, it goes from simple forms to complex ones and then back to simple forms. Regionally, it goes from the South up into the North, and back into the South again. The emphasis of Cane is on characters as well as on setting. The sections entitled "Karintha," "Becky," "Carma," "Fern," "Esther," "Rhobert," "Avey," and "Bona and Paul" illustrate psychological realism and truths about human nature. The reader is drawn into the characters' lives, and learns by sharing their everyday trials and feelings. Their characterizations become indistinguishably merged with the landscape that surrounds them. Characteristically, beauty functions as a deceptive tool in Cane. Flowers, women, and the word, all of which generally represent beauty, are reduced to emblems lacking dimension in Toomer's text. Meaning is flawed and violated. The reader is intentionally deceived by the forms of beauty and left with absence instead of

## Read Free Jean Toomer Cane

significance. By means of linking beautiful images with violent, explosive, and disturbing thematic openings, Toomer confuses his readers' sense of meaning. In *Cane*, Toomer moves the reader with deeply beautiful and intricate language by exploring many different kinds of beauty, such as the abstract qualities of aestheticism, the intimacy of nature's beauty and the immediacy of human beauty. However, though Toomer begins many of his pictures with seemingly beautiful imagery or qualifies a female character in his writing by her beauty, the breakdown of the aesthetic within his work is widespread. Although beauty seems to be in proportion with reality it is rather distorted. It gives way to nightmarish images and relationships. [...]

A Study Guide for Jean Toomer's "Cane," excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Novels for Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Novels for Students* for all of your research needs.

Jean Toomer achieved instant recognition as a critic and thinker in 1923 with the publication of his novel *Cane*, a harsh, eloquent vision of black American hardship and suffering. But because of his reclusive, introspective nature, Toomer's fame waned in later years, and today his other contributions to American

## Read Free Jean Toomer Cane

thought and literature are all but forgotten. Now, this collection of unpublished writings restores a crucial dimension to our understanding of this important African American author. Thematically arranging letters, sketches, poems, autobiography, short stories, a play, and a children's story, Frederik Rusch offers insight into Toomer's mind and spirituality, his feelings on racial identity in America, and his attitudes toward and ideas about Cane. Rusch highlights Toomer's reflections on America, its people, landscape, and politics, reveals his significance for the problems and issues of today, and helps us understand Toomer not only as writer, but also as social critic, prophet, mystic, and idealist. Exploring Toomer's attempts to find self-realization and transcend social and cultural definitions of race, this book offers a unique view of the United States through the life of one of its most significant and fascinating intellectuals.

This edition of Cane, includes Jean Toomer's previously hard-to-find essay, The Crock of Problems, in which the author discusses race in America and his own diverse ethnic heritage, and an extensive biographical note.

Reading Jean Toomer's 'Cane'[Lulu.com](http://Lulu.com)

?The Modern library,New York,1919????

????????????????????,????????,????????????????20??????????????

????????????????????????,????????????????????

"Mark Whalen's compilation offers a vital document for

## Read Free Jean Toomer Cane

understanding the contexts, intellectual debates, and tensions undergirding Toomer's work, including his simultaneous feelings of attraction to and estrangement from rural southern life, the influence of technology on race and urban existence in America and the contradictory pulls of folk culture and modernist experimentation. The collection also charts the motives underlying Toomer's abandonment of the style that distinguished *Cane*, and his growing fascination with the teachings of the mystic G. I. Gurdjieff in 1924."--BOOK JACKET.

*Cane* one of the major works of the Harlem Renaissance and Jean Toomer's imagist masterpiece, is now a part of the canon in Afro-American literature. Teaching Jean Toomer's 1923 *Cane* is a unique literary tool that explores the brilliance and far-sighted vision of Toomer, allowing *Cane* to be taught holistically as a discovery process, using the blues motif and the poetic essay. This book's text and figures ground a discussion of *Cane*'s enigmatic and figurative language, connecting the Harlem Renaissance to the Negritude Movement and to later Afro-centric literary movements. This book also reviews P.B.S. Pinchback's legacy as a non-Negro, able to pass easily in white society, the influence of Ouspensky, H. L. Mencken's critical work, *The Paris Brotherhood*, and «*Saccharum officinarum-G.*» Like the lunar arcs dividing *Cane*, the book works as an instructional map. The pictures from the first complete production also tell a remarkable story.

*Cane* is a difficult book in many ways: it is apparently sui generis, a collage of various genres, from prose to theater; it is one of the first books to have been written by a black author in the twentieth century and it roots the notion of black literature in black culture, while at the same time claiming the

## Read Free Jean Toomer Cane

right to be provocatively avant-garde and confusing in its use of ellipsis, ellision, broken syntax, and at times, surrealistic imagery. The purpose of this reading is to show that indeterminacy and obscurity of *Cane* are deliberate, and meaningful. Without punning facetiously on darkness, it seems clear that Toomer sought to create a difficult aesthetic to represent the black subject in American literature, in part to elevate the subject from the stereotyped and debasing representations which had been the general rule, and in part to mark out his own place in the American canon. The challenge of reading *Cane* is to accept that it is a work bursting, like Toomer himself, with unresolved contradictions, but that this tension is precisely the source of its seduction, and ambivalent sweetness.

*Cane* is a 1923 novel by noted Harlem Renaissance author Jean Toomer. The novel is structured as a series of vignettes revolving around the origins and experiences of African Americans in the United States. The vignettes alternate in structure between narrative prose, poetry, and play-like passages of dialogue. As a result, the novel has been classified as a composite novel or as a short story cycle. Though some characters and situations recur between vignettes, the vignettes are mostly freestanding, tied to the other vignettes thematically and contextually more than through specific plot details. The ambitious, nontraditional structure of the novel - and its later influence on future generations of writers - have helped *Cane* gain status as a classic of modernism. Several of the vignettes have been excerpted or anthologized in literary collections; the poetic passage "Harvest Song" has been included in multiple Norton poetry anthologies. The poem opens with the line: "I am a reaper whose muscles set at sundown.

The 1923 publication of *Cane* established Jean Toomer



# Read Free Jean Toomer Cane

[Copyright: 6296d8f59664e9441de1dfb14b0959b9](#)