

# The Critical Response to Erskine Caldwell

---

---

*Edited by*  
Robert L. McDonald

Critical Responses in Arts and Letters, Number 28  
*Cameron Northouse, Series Adviser*



**Greenwood Press**  
Westport, Connecticut • London

# Contents

<i>Series Foreword by Cameron Northouse</i>	xv
<i>Preface</i>	xvii
<i>A Caldwell Chronology</i>	xix

## INTRODUCTION

<b>Erskine Caldwell's (Non)Readers and the Problem of Literary Reputation</b>	1
Robert L. McDonald	

## Part 1. THE 1930s: "GREAT HOPES" AND CONTROVERSY

<b>Two Judgments of "American Earth" (1931)</b>	17
T. K. Whipple	
Malcolm Cowley	
<b>A Hardboiled Idealist (1931)</b>	21
Norman Macleod	
<b>The Poetry of Unfeeling (1931)</b>	21
Gerald Sykes	
<b>Review of <i>Tobacco Road</i> (1932)</b>	23
James Gray	
<b>Poor Whites (1932)</b>	25
Jonathan Daniels	
<b>Raw Leaf (1932)</b>	26
Edward Dahlberg	
<b>Passion and Pellagra (1932)</b>	27
Jack Conroy	

<b>American Humor (1932)</b>	28
Kenneth White	
<b>Farm and Mill (1933)</b>	29
Jonathan Daniels	
<b>Review of <i>God's Little Acre</i> (1933)</b>	31
Edwin Rolfe	
<b>Review of <i>God's Little Acre</i> (1933)</b>	34
Bennett A. Cerf	
<b>Modern American Writing (1933)</b>	35
Whit Burnett	
<b>"God's Little Acre": An Analysis (1934)</b>	37
Lawrence S. Kubie, M.D.	
<b>Caldwell Repeats Himself (1935)</b>	44
Horace Gregory	
<b>Priapus in Georgia (1935)</b>	46
William Troy	
<b>Caldwell: Maker of Grotesques (1935)</b>	48
Kenneth Burke	
<b>Erskine Caldwell's New Short Stories (1935)</b>	54
Harold Strauss	
<b>—and Other Stories (1935)</b>	56
Robert M. Coates	
<b>Review of <i>Kneel to the Rising Sun</i> (1935)</b>	58
James Gray	
<b>Sweet Are the Uses of Degeneracy (1936)</b>	59
John Donald Wade	
<b>Pictures of the South, Drunk on Cotton (1937)</b>	73
Hudson Strode	
<b>A Compelling Album of the Deep South (1937)</b>	75
Robert Van Gelder	
<b>Erskine Caldwell (1937)</b>	77
Vernon Loggins	
<b>Star-Dust Above "Tobacco Road" (1938)</b>	79
J. H. Marion, Jr.	
<b>New Short Stories by Erskine Caldwell (1938)</b>	84
Harold Strauss	
<b>Erskine Caldwell's Picture Book (1938)</b>	85
Donald Davidson	
<b>Naturalistic Modes: The Gothic, The Ribald, and the Tragic (1939)</b>	93
Shields McIlwaine	

## Part 2. 1940–1968: THE CONSEQUENCES OF CRITICISM

<b>Jeeter Lester, Agrarian Par Excellence (1940)</b>	107	X
Peter A. Carmichael		
<b>Lynching Bee (1940)</b>	114	
Richard Wright		
<b>Caldwell Comes a Cropper (1942)</b>	115	
Margaret Marshall		
<b>Duck Soup for Tobacco Roaders (1943)</b>	117	λ
Stanley Walker		
<b>Erskine Caldwell's Terrifying World (1944)</b>	118	
Dan S. Norton		
<b>Review of <i>Stories by Erskine Caldwell</i> (1944)</b>	121	
Harry Sylvester		
<b>American Lower Depths (1944)</b>	124	
Jonathan Daniels		
<b>Review of <i>Tragic Ground</i> (1944)</b>	125	
James Gray		
<b>The Two Erskine Caldwells (1944)</b>	126	ν
Malcolm Cowley		
<b>Folk and Culture in the Novels of Erskine Caldwell (1945)</b>	129	
John Miller Maclachlan		
<b>Erskine Caldwell: The Nearly Animal Kingdom (1947)</b>	137	
George Snell		
<b>Vice Is What Sells! (1948)</b>	146	
"Patsy"		
<b>Erskine Caldwell: The Dangers of Ambiguity (1950)</b>	147	
W. M. Frohock		
<b>One Side of Caldwell (1951)</b>	158	
Granville Hicks		
<b>Chamber of Horrors—Southern Exposure (1952)</b>	159	
Edward Wagenknecht		
<b>Notes on Erskine Caldwell (1953)</b>	161	
Robert Hazel		
<b>Erskine Caldwell: A Note for the Negative (1956)</b>	168	
Carl Bode		
<b>Caldwell's Characters: Why Don't They Leave? (1957)</b>	171	
Robert Cantwell		
<b>[Southern Local Colorists] (1963)</b>	181	
John M. Bradbury		
<b>From <i>Violence in Recent Southern Fiction</i> (1965)</b>	182	
Louise Y. Gossett		

## Part 3. 1969–1995: RECONSIDERATIONS

<b>Erskine Caldwell and Southern Religion (1971)</b> James J. Thompson, Jr.	193
<b>Rediscovering Erskine Caldwell (1975)</b> Morris Renek	204
<b>True Myth-Maker of the Post-Bellum South (1975)</b> Calder Willingham	205
<b>Repetition as Technique in the Short Stories of Erskine Caldwell (1977)</b> Scott MacDonald	208
<b>The Comedy of Frustration (1977)</b> Richard Gray	220
<b>Reasons for Reading, Studying, and Teaching Erskine Caldwell (1979)</b> Scott MacDonald	236
<b>Is That You in the Mirror, Jeeter?: The Reader and <i>Tobacco Road</i> (1979)</b> Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr.	250
<b><i>The Sacrilege of Alan Kent and the Apprenticeship of Erskine Caldwell (1979)</i></b> Guy Owen	254
<b>Caldwell's Fiction: Growing Towards Trash? (1989)</b> Sylvia Jenkins Cook	262
<b>Canonize Caldwell's <i>Georgia Boy</i>: A Case for Resurrection (1989)</b> Ronald Wesley Hoag	272
<b>The Rhetoric of Exhaustion and the Exhaustion of Rhetoric: Erskine Caldwell in the Thirties (1993)</b> Jay Watson	285
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	299
<i>Index</i>	303