

SurveyLA

Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

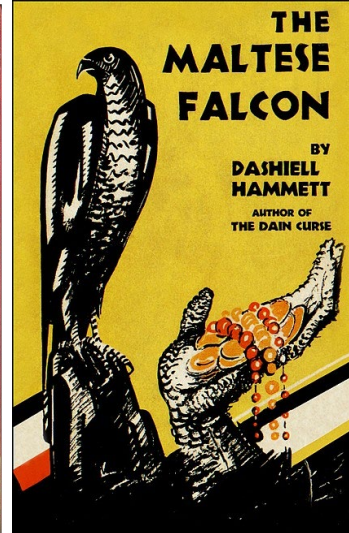
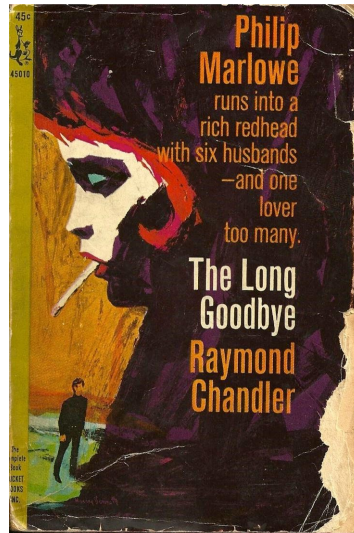
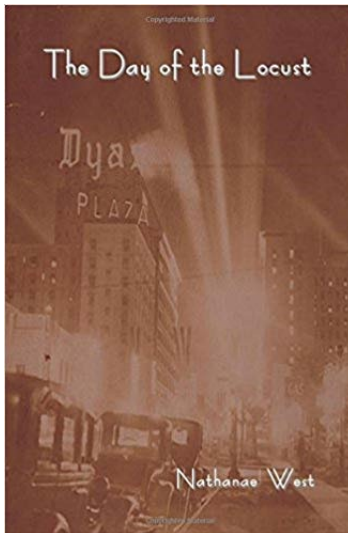
LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: Public and Private Institutional Development

Sub-Context: Cultural Development and Institutions

Theme: Literature

Sub-theme: Writers and Residency in L.A., 1929-1980



Prepared for:

City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
Office of Historic Resources



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PREFACE

This sub-theme is a component of Los Angeles' citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating historic resources associated with the careers of significant literary writers whose work was influenced by their residency in the city from the late 1920s to the year 1980.¹ Refer to HistoricPlacesLA.org for information on designated resources associated with this sub-theme as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

CONTRIBUTORS

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INTRODUCTION

The subjects of the sub-theme are creative writers – of fiction, poetry, and essays – who made important individual contributions to the body of American literature in the genres, or literary categories, discussed below during their residency in Los Angeles. Some writers were long-term residents, while others stayed intermittently. But all are notable for the ways in which their work reflects the city which had become as complex and varied as New York or Chicago.

The period of significance begins in the late 1920s. An earlier Los Angeles had a long tradition of local creative writers and essayists, such as Charles Lummis in the 1890s and John McGroarty in the early 1900s. But it was during the late 1920s that the city began to attract the attention of a new type of creative writer who made use of its physical setting and social order. While the older authors such as Lummis and McGroarty tended to be boosters, these later writers took a more critical view.

The Los Angeles of these later writers was a diverse urban setting. Its places and people reflected all aspects of human nature, including the unattractive. For the most part these later writers were from somewhere else – either a different section of the U.S. or a foreign country – and brought to the city an outsider's critical eye. In some cases, such as the members of the

¹ 1980 is the end date for SurveyLA and may be extended over time.

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Watts Writers Workshop, they were native Angelenos but had been excluded from the dominant culture and so had a similar critical point of view.

The sub-theme is in two parts. The first is a narrative which looks at the genres of the works by these writers and the social groups into which the writers divided themselves. Three genres and a distinct social group are examined, together with representative writers and samples of their works.²

- L.A. Noir: This consists of crime and detective fiction, in which the Los Angeles setting is a significant literary element.
- Social Realism: This consists of fiction, poetry, and essays highlighting problems of poverty and racism in Los Angeles.
- Hollywood: This consists of fiction set in the world of the motion picture business and which offers a critical view of the surrounding social environment.
- The Exiles: This consists of works by Europeans, both temporary refugees and permanent residents, who brought a critical attitude shaped by their status as outsiders.

These categories overlap, particularly in the involvement of many writers – regardless of genre or social group – in the motion picture industry. The narrative explores this involvement.

The critical views of our writers had two targets. The first consisted of things specific to the city, in particular its architecture and landscape. The writers generally viewed them as, at best, lacking in good taste, and more commonly as garish and flimsy, with little sense of permanence. Some writers related these qualities to the semi-arid climate, which permitted lightweight construction and required constant irrigation to create an unnatural lushness. Others saw them as a product of a materialistic culture which demanded ostentatious display.

The second target of our writers was the social order in general, an order which Los Angeles shared with other large and diverse industrial cities. Common problems of poverty and racism were explored within an Angeleno setting. Perhaps only the promise of California life – the possibility of a second chance in an environment without the historic limitations of older cities – made the existence of these universal problems harder to bear. One expected to find slums in New York or Chicago, but not in the City of Angels.

² Properties associated with writers not covered within these genres or categories may be evaluated using the “Guidelines for Evaluating Properties Associated with Significant Person in Los Angeles.”

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The second part of the sub-theme looks at the types of resources associated with the writers. There are two categories:

- **Residences:** These are the homes of the writers. They vary in building types and include hotels, apartment buildings, bungalow courts, and single family houses. They also vary in level of affluence and duration of occupancy.
- **Gathering Places:** These are locations – restaurants, bookstores, coffee houses – which provided venues for writers to meet with each other and with the public. These gathering places were often portrayed in their works of fiction.

For the most part, the resources discussed are extant and many are designated. But, in some cases, particularly gathering places, a lack of extant examples requires the discussion of long-gone locations. Further research may reveal additional extant resources.

The subject of literature is wide and relates to many other contexts and themes of the citywide historic context. These include the following:

- The Entertainment Industry Historic Context, in particular the theme of Residential Properties Associated with Important Persons in the Entertainment Industry.
- All ethnic/cultural contexts, in particular the Women's Rights Historic Context for information on Feminist literature and the LGBT Historic Context for information on writers influencing LGBT culture.

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*Raymond Chandler Square, Hollywood and Cahuenga Boulevards
Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 597
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

NARRATIVE CONTEXT

Los Angeles has always had its writers. But their work was often a matter of promotion rather than criticism. In the 1890s Charles Fletcher Lummis wrote a series of romanticized histories of Southern California, which highlighted its Hispanic past, and used his house, El Alisal (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 68), as a model for the ideal Angeleno home. In 1913 John Steven McGroarty wrote his *Mission Play*, an idyllic portrayal of pre-Yankee life, and made his home in Tujunga (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 63) into a celebration of the simple life possible in the outlying districts of the city.³

By the late 1920s Los Angeles had become too large and diverse to live with this earlier view of itself. The passenger car spread settlement in all directions. Industry arrived in the form of oil wells and auto plants. Sizable ethnic communities – Mexicans, Filipinos, Japanese, and Chinese, along with African Americans from the South and Jews from Eastern Europe – brought variety to the dominant Anglo-American culture. All this provided rich material for creative writers.

Added to this was Hollywood. The film industry had always required a number of writers for its silent plots. This demand increased markedly with the coming of sound in the late 1920s and the need for dialogue. Most of the authors discussed in this narrative, even if they did not work

³ Andrew Rolle and Arthur Verge, *California: A History*, Seventh Edition (Wheeling IL: Harlan Davidson, 1963 [2008]), pp, 224-225; *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments of Los Angeles*, edited by Jeffrey Herr (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, 2002), p. 426.

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directly for the studios, has some relationship to the movies, if no more than an attraction to Los Angeles with the hope of become screenwriters.

L.A. Noir

Perhaps the most popular of the Los Angeles based literary forms is the crime or mystery novel. It makes use of the economic and ethnic diversity of the city, and its stress on describing the urban setting allows it to highlight architecture and landscape. As a genre it has assumed the name L.A. Noir, based on the bleak view of human nature that it shares with certain films from the 1940s, some of which were based on the novels described in this Narrative.

The crime or mystery novel has a long heritage. But the so-called hard-boiled detective story, from which L.A. Noir evolved, dates from the late 1920s. In it all characters are to some degree flawed and the writing style is that of the newspaper reporter. Its first master was Dashiell Hammett, whose works includes *Red Harvest* of 1929, *The Maltese Falcon* of 1930 and *The Glass Key* of 1931. These works set the pattern – “cynical in mood” as well as “fast in pace,” and “often narrated as vernacular, direct, first-person confessionals” by the protagonist, or main character.⁴

An early Noir writer to gain success by making use of Los Angeles was James M. Cain (1892-1977). Cain was originally from Baltimore and a journalist by profession. He settled in Southern California in 1931, after writing for *American Mercury* and the *New York World* and serving for a brief period as the managing editor of the *New Yorker*.⁵

His reputation was assured through two novels written in the 1930s – *The Postman Always Rings Twice* in 1934 and *Double Indemnity* a few years later. A third well-known work, *Mildred Pierce*, came out in 1941.⁶ *Postman* and *Double Indemnity* led critic Edmond Wilson to characterize Cain as a “poet of tabloid murder” and are considered among the first to use the physical setting of Los Angeles as a significant literary element in a crime novel.⁷

All three works share the same grim view of amoral ambition leading to disaster. All three also make use of Southern California as a setting appropriate for this behavior. Cain is particularly good at architectural observation, from the shabby monotony of the roadside motel in *Postman*,

⁴ David Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles: A City in Fiction* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), p. 82.

⁵ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 93; *Writing Los Angeles: A Literary Anthology*, edited by David L. Ulin (New York: Library of America, 2002), p. 108. For a biography, see Roy Hoopes, *Cain* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982).

⁶ *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 108, dates *Double Indemnity* from 1938, while Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 93, gives the dates as 1936, when it was published as a serial, and 1943 when it came out as a book.

⁷ *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 108.

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through the middle-class tracts of Glendale in *Mildred Pierce*, to the Spanish Colonial Revival mansions of Los Feliz in *Double Indemnity*.⁸



James M. Cain
(Los Angeles Public Library)

Cain articulated his view of the city's architecture in an essay entitled "Paradise" for the *American Mercury* in 1933. He noted that the native setting is essentially a desert, and that the apparent arboreal lushness is an alien import. The variety of architectural styles, many imported from elsewhere, follows from the artificiality of the landscaping.⁹

Even the Spanish Colonial Revival, which could claim appropriateness to climate and culture, was "a mongrel Spanish that is corrupted by every style known on earth, and a few styles not hitherto known."¹⁰ Added to this dominant style were exotica such as a gas station designed as "a replica of the Taj Mahal, faithfully executed in lath and plaster" along with structures "in the shape of lemons, oranges, pagoda, igloos, windmills, mosques, and kangaroo heads."¹¹

Cain also maintained that the "sunlight, and the immense expanse of sky and earth that it illuminates," tended to give all these styles "the unmoving quality of things seen in a desert."¹² This light "sucks the color out of everything that it touches," even from efforts of architects

⁸ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, pp. 93-100.

⁹ In *Writing Los Angeles*, pp. 108-112.

¹⁰ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 109.

¹¹ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 110.

¹² In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 110.

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designing well.¹³ “If they erect a beautiful house, as many of them have, the sun robs it of all force and life; if they erect a monstrosity, it passes unnoticed, it is merely one more thing along the road.”¹⁴

Cain also set a pattern for later Noir writers by establishing a link to Hollywood. Following the lead of Dashiell Hammett and his San Francisco-based *Maltese Falcon*, all three of Cain’s works were put on the screen. *Double Indemnity* was first, in 1944, followed by *Mildred Pierce* in 1945 and *Postman* in 1946. Of the films *Double Indemnity* is considered the best, with direction by Billy Wilder and a script written in part by our second L.A. Noir author, Raymond Chandler.¹⁵

Chandler (1888-1959) was a contemporary of Cain. He was born in Chicago but raised in England. He first arrived in Southern California in 1912 and made a career for himself as an executive in the oil industry. He was fired for alcoholism and, at the age of 45, turned to crime fiction. His first efforts were short stories published in the magazines *Black Mask* and *Dime Detective*, in which he perfected his hard-boiled style.¹⁶

By the late 1930s Chandler was ready to expand to the novel. This provided him space to “convey a real sense of Los Angeles.”¹⁷ In choosing the detective novel as a “vehicle for presenting Los Angeles” he was able to “involve an extraordinary range of humanity.”¹⁸ The detective novel also allowed him to “encompass a great many different places,” thereby creating “the whole of Los Angeles in much the same way that such nineteenth-century novelists as Dickens and Balzac created London and Paris for future generations.”¹⁹

Three novels established Chandler’s reputation as a master of L.A. Noir – *The Big Sleep* of 1938, *Farewell, My Lovely* of 1940 and *The Long Goodbye* of 1953. Beginning with *The Big Sleep*, Chandler took Cain’s spare style and attention to setting and added a reoccurring protagonist, the private detective Phillip Marlowe. Marlowe is the narrator of the story, commenting on the settings through which he moves.²⁰ “Marlowe is like Vergil in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*: he says what the reader might say about the world of Los Angeles were he to encounter it himself.”²¹

¹³ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 110.

¹⁴ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 111.

¹⁵ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, pp. 93-94.

¹⁶ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 121; *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 170. For a biography see Frank MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler* (New York: Dutton, 1976).

¹⁷ MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler*, p. 64. He gained this sense in good part by having lived in a series of flats, duplexes, and small houses in a variety of neighborhoods since the early 1920s. See MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler*, p. 37, 41.

¹⁸ MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler*, p. 66.

¹⁹ MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler*, p. 67.

²⁰ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 122. Other Chandler works featuring Marlow are *The High Window* (1942), *Lady in the Lake* (1943) and *The Little Sister* (1949).

²¹ MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler*, p. 71.

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Raymond Chandler
(Los Angeles Public Library)

Marlowe's investigations take him from the fictional Bay City, a stand-in for Santa Monica, through Pasadena to the San Bernardino mountain resorts. But the center of his world is Hollywood. Marlow lives in the fictional Hobart Arms on Franklin near Kenmore, a typical apartment house with a barren lobby containing a single potted palm. His office is in the equally fictional Cahuenga Building, on Hollywood Boulevard near Ivar, a setting that has been honored by designating the intersection of Hollywood and Cahuenga Boulevards as Raymond Chandler Square (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 597).²²

Marlowe's office is on the sixth floor at the back. "Three hard chairs and a swivel chair, flat desk with a glass top, five green filing cases, three of them full of nothing, a calendar and a framed license bond on the wall, a phone, a washbowl in a stained wood cupboard, a hat rack, a carpet that was just something on the floor, and two open windows with net curtains that puckered in and out like the lips of a toothless old man sleeping."²³

Through the windows comes the atmosphere of late 1930's Hollywood in the early evening. "The rushing sound of the traffic had died a little and the air from the open window, not yet cool from the night, had that tired end-of-day smell of dust, automobile exhaust, sunlight rising from hot walls and sidewalks, the remote smell of food in a thousand restaurants, and perhaps,

²² *The Big Sleep*, in *The Raymond Chandler Omnibus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), pp. 70, 91; Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, pp. 120-121; *Landmark L.A.*, p. 469.

²³ *The High Window*, in *Raymond Chandler Omnibus*, p. 331.

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drifting down from the residential hills above Hollywood – if you had a nose like a hunting dog – a touch of that peculiar tomcat smell that eucalyptus trees give off in warm weather.”²⁴

As Marlowe makes his rounds, he provides a portrait of social class in Los Angeles through a description of where various levels live. At the top are the very wealthy who choose to isolate themselves. Marlowe’s typical description of an elite residence begins, not with the house, but with the barrier that shuts out the rest of society.

“Stillwood Crescent Drive curved leisurely north from Sunset Boulevard, well beyond the Bel-Air Country Club golf course. The road was lined with walled and fenced estates. Some had high walls, some had low walls, some had ornamental iron fences, some were a bit old fashioned and got along with tall hedges. The street had no sidewalk. Nobody walked in that neighborhood, not even the mailman.”²⁵

The home behind the barrier is secondary as an indication of social status. “It was a glaring white house that had the air of being brand new, but the landscaping was well advanced. It was modest enough for the neighborhood, not more than fourteen rooms and probably only one swimming pool.”²⁶ Or in another case, “The house itself was not so much. It was smaller than Buckingham Palace, rather gray for California, and probably had fewer windows than the Chrysler Building.”²⁷

A member of the upper-middle class, in contrast, owns a home which publicly displays his status. The District Attorney in *The Big Sleep* “lived at the corner of Fourth and Lafayette Park, in a white frame house the size of a carbarn, with a red sandstone porte-cochere built on to one side and a couple of acres of soft rolling lawn in front. It was one of those solid old-fashioned houses which it used to be the thing to move bodily to new locations as the city grew westward.”²⁸

The middle class lives in a variety of housing types. Some inhabit large, well-appointed apartment buildings with elevators. “The Rossmore Arms was a gloomy pile of dark brick built around a huge forecourt. It had a plush-lined lobby containing silence, tubbed plants, a bored canary in a cage as big as a dog-house, a smell of old carpet dust and the cloying fragrance of gardenias long ago.”²⁹

²⁴ *The High Window*, p. 372.

²⁵ *The High Window*, p. 339.

²⁶ *The High Window*, p. 340.

²⁷ *Farewell, My Lovely*, in *Raymond Chandler Omnibus*, p. 214.

²⁸ *The Big Sleep*, p. 64.

²⁹ *Lady in the Lake*, in *Raymond Chandler Omnibus*, p. 561.

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Other members of the middle class live in bungalow courts, such as one located near Marlowe's office in Hollywood. "It was called 'The La Baba,' a quiet dim place with a double row of tree-shaded bungalows. The central walk was lined with Italian cypresses trimmed short and chunky, something the shape of the oil jars in Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."³⁰

A third middle-class housing type is the suburban home in a newer section of the San Fernando Valley. One such location was a residence in Sherman Oaks.³¹ "It was a narrow English type bungalow with a high roof, leaded front windows, a garage to the side, and a trailer parked beside the garage. The early moon lay quietly on its small lawn. A large oak tree almost grew on the front porch."³²

The lower-middle class, in contrast, lives in the vast expanse of old cottages and bungalows that fill the flatlands south of Downtown. "1644 West 54th Place was a dried-out brown house with a dried-out brown lawn in front of it. There was a large bare patch around the tough-looking palm tree. On the porch stood one lonely wooden rocker, and the afternoon breeze made the unpruned shoots of last year's poinsettias tap-tap against the cracked stucco wall. A line of stiff yellowish half-washed clothes jittered on a rusty wire in the side yard."³³



*Olive Court Loop, Bunker Hill, circa 1951
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Finally, there are the slums. "Bunker Hill is old town, lost town, shabby town, crook town. Once, very long ago, it was the choice residential district of the city, and there are still standing a few

³⁰ *The Big Sleep*, p. 17.

³¹ *The High Window*, p. 431.

³² *The High Window*, p. 437.

³³ *Farewell, My Lovely*, p. 156.

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of the jigsaw Gothic mansions with wide porches and walls covered with round-end shingles and full corner bay windows with spindle turrets. They are all rooming houses now, their parquet floors are scratched and worn through the once glossy finish and the wide sweeping staircases are dark with time and with cheap varnish laid over generations of dirt. In the tall rooms haggard landladies bicker with shifty tenants. On the wide cool front porches, reaching their cracked shoes into the sun, and staring at nothing, sit old men with faces like lost battles.”³⁴

Chandler followed in Cain’s path with links to motion pictures. In addition to co-authoring the script for Cain’s *Double Indemnity*, Chandler saw many of his novels become films. The best known of these was *The Big Sleep*, released in 1946. It was directed by Howard Hawks and featured Humphrey Bogart as Marlowe. Chandler himself wrote the script with the aid of William Faulkner.³⁵

The third of our representative L.A. Noir writers is Ross Macdonald (1915-1983), almost a generation younger. He was born Kenneth Millar in northern California, but his parents were Canadian, and he was raised in Ontario. He pursued graduate work in literature at the University of Michigan before beginning his career as a novelist and continued to work on his dissertation while writing detective fiction.³⁶

During the summer of 1945 Macdonald spend a month of military leave in Los Angeles and visited Warner Brothers, where his wife, novelist Margaret Millar, worked as a screenwriter.³⁷ It left him with a distaste for the studios. He felt that motion picture writers “sold themselves into long-term slavery and then whimpered about betraying their art.” He and his wife settled in Santa Barbara – portrayed as the fictional Santa Teresa in his novels – and he returned to Los Angeles only for short stays.³⁸

Nevertheless, Macdonald is considered an L.A. Noir writer because of his use of the city as a setting for his work. He continued Chandler’s tradition of a reoccurring private detective, whom he named Lew Archer, as the narrator and moral anchor. Also continued are tart Chandleresque observations on Angeleno life, in Archer’s somewhat softened hardboiled style.

³⁴ *The High Window*, p. 357. The entire Bunker Hill area of Downtown Los Angeles was demolished and redeveloped for the Community Redevelopment Agency’s 1959 Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project.

³⁵ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 122.

³⁶ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 130; *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 385. For a biography see Tom Nolan, *Ross Macdonald: A Biography* (New York: Schribner, 1999).

³⁷ Nolan, *Ross Macdonald*, p. 75.

³⁸ Nolan, *Ross Macdonald*, p. 76.

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Archer first appeared in *The Moving Target* in 1949. Throughout the 1950s he is based in Los Angeles. He lives in “a two-bedroom stucco cottage on a fifty-foot lot off Olympic.”³⁹ His office is on Sunset Boulevard. He takes his meals at Musso & Frank Grill. Even his dentist is nearby. In all there were nineteen Archer books, the last being *The Blue Hammer* published in 1976.⁴⁰

Macdonald’s characteristic plot has Archer hired by a family member or a friend of someone in trouble. In the process of pursuing the case, the detective uncovers unsavory aspects of the various characters’ pasts, often including that of the client. The futility of trying to escape a previous life and begin anew in Southern California is a common theme in the Archer series.⁴¹

The client often lives outside Los Angeles – typically a beach town such as Santa Monica or the fictional Santa Teresa – but the investigation takes Archer into the city. The city is generally where evil ones live, trouble is found, and death occurs. Then, having completed his task, Archer returns to the client with the truth, however unpleasant it may be.

The L.A. settings vary. They may be powerful and potentially sinister institutions, such two found in *The Barbarous Coast*, both housed in imposing structures protected by barriers. A sanitarium “occupied walled grounds which had once belonged to a large private estate in the open country between Sawtelle and Brentwood” with “a white Edwardian mansion” at its center.⁴² A motion picture studio in the San Fernando Valley filled “a country block surrounded by a high white concrete wall,” behind which the “white-columned colonial façade of the administration building grinned emptily into the sun.”⁴³

But more commonly the setting is a residence. Occasionally this is an apartment building, but of a type less glamorous than that found in Chandler. In *The Way Some People Die* a murder takes place in the Casa Loma, a four-story white frame structure on a Hollywood side street a block from Sunset. There is no lobby with potted palms and an elevator. Instead Archer gains entry by way of the rear parking lot.⁴⁴ The cars in the lot, rather than the building, reflect aspired-for status; they “were nearly all new, and a Pontiac 8 was the cheapest one I saw. The people who lived there spent their money on front.”⁴⁵

³⁹ *The Barbarous Coast* (1956), in *Ross Macdonald: Four Novels of the 1950s*, edited by Tom Nolan (New York: Library of America, 2015), p. 270.

⁴⁰ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, pp. 117, 128-129; *The Way Some People Die* (1951) and *The Galton Case* (1959), in *Ross Macdonald: Four Novels of the 1950s*, pp. 29, 721, 778.

⁴¹ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, pp. 128-134.

⁴² In *Ross Macdonald: Four Novels of the 1950s*, p. 407.

⁴³ In *Ross Macdonald: Four Novels of the 1950s*, p. 291.

⁴⁴ In *Ross Macdonald: Four Novels of the 1950s*, pp. 29, 58.

⁴⁵ In *Ross Macdonald: Four Novels of the 1950s*, p. 29.

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More typical is the private house set in the hills. In *The Way Some People Die* a gangster lives on “a hilltop between Santa Monica and Pacific Palisades.” The house beyond a guarded gate “was a wide low ranch-style bungalow painted adobe gray. In spite of the red-tile roof, it looked a little like a concrete strong point. The man who came out of the gatehouse completed the illusion by strolling sentry-like with a shotgun under his arm.”⁴⁶

Closer to the spirit of Midcentury Modern is the Coldwater Canyon house described in *The Barbarous Coast*.⁴⁷ Like the Casa Loma, it too becomes the setting for a murder. The house is situated near the summit, where the hills “fell away from the ridge in folds like heavy drapery” toward the horizon. The building itself is “a raw new redwood house suspended on cantilevers over a steep drop.”⁴⁸ It features a “sliding glass wall at the rear of the living-space” and an “outside terrace which overhung the canyon. A girl was laying on a metal chaise in the sun.”⁴⁹

Social Realism

Like the detective novel, the genre of Social Realism has a long tradition. But Los Angeles before the 1920s was not considered large enough or adequately diverse to have the urban problems needed for a good realist story. By the Depression of the 1930s this view had changed. Communities such as Bunker Hill and South Central now attracted the attention of writers.

Social Realism portrays the life of Angelenos without advantage. They are generally the unseen in society – the poor, the disabled, the people of color – for whom the path to middle-class stability and self-worth is closed. It is a literature of description, in which the setting plays a role at least as important as individual character. Social Realism provides a view of life in Los Angeles – physically and socially – generally not seen by the more advantaged.

An early Realist is John Fante (1909-1983). He came to Los Angeles from Colorado in 1930 and lived in an apartment hotel on Bunker Hill, where he wrote short stories while working a day job as a restaurant busboy. He eventually got a position as a scriptwriter and spent the next several decades producing screenplays. He also continued to work on fiction and in 1939 published his novel *Ask the Dust*. It is a portrait of life among the less well-off of Bunker Hill based on his own experiences as a struggling writer.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ In Ross Macdonald: *Four Novels of the 1950s*, p. 33.

⁴⁷ In Ross Macdonald: *Four Novels of the 1950s*, pp. 261-262

⁴⁸ In Ross Macdonald: *Four Novels of the 1950s*, p. 262.

⁴⁹ In Ross Macdonald: *Four Novels of the 1950s*, p. 263.

⁵⁰ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, pp. 182-183; *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 218. For a biography see Stephen Cooper, *Full of Life: A Biography of John Fante* (New York: North Point Press, 2000).

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Fante's protagonist in *Ask the Dust* is Arturo Bandini, like Fante an Italian-American with a few short stories to his credit but low on cash. His world is the cheap apartment hotels and rooming houses of 1930s Bunker Hill. Bandini's hotel is the Alta Loma, "built on a hillside in reverse, there on the crest of Bunker Hill, built against the decline of the hill, so that the main floor was on the level with the street but the tenth floor was downstairs ten levels."⁵¹



John Fante
(Los Angeles Public Library)

On leaving his hotel, Bandini heads south on Olive Street, lined with "horrible frame houses reeking with murder stories."⁵² At the foot of Bunker Hill, is Fifth, "where the big street cars chewed your ears with the noise, and the smell of gasoline made the sight of the palm trees seem sad."⁵³ South of Fifth is a different world – the Biltmore Hotel with its line of Yellow cabs, uniformed doormen and women with silver fox furs. Our protagonist also visits other landmarks – the Grand Central Market, the Old Plaza, Chinatown, and the Central Library.⁵⁴

But Bunker Hill remains the center of Bandini's world. Fante's view of it is more positive than that of Chandler described above. For Fante, this world is "the site of both a vital community and frustrated dreams of a migrant population that crowded the city in the twenties and thirties."⁵⁵ This community is one of diversity, "peopled not only by déclassé migrants from the Midwest but also by an assortment of immigrants and ethnics – blacks, Filipinos, Portuguese,

⁵¹ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 222.

⁵² In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 219.

⁵³ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 219.

⁵⁴ In *Writing Los Angeles*, pp. 219-222

⁵⁵ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 186.

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Mexicans – crowded together with poor whites in a few square blocks in the center of the city.”⁵⁶

Fante continued to write fiction outside of his studio job but remained generally unknown until the 1970s. Today four novels are considered the basis of Fante’s reputation, all with Arturo Bandini as the protagonist. In addition to *Ask the Dust*, they are *The Road to Los Angeles* of 1933, *Wait Until Spring, Bandini* of 1938, and *Dreams from Bunker Hill*, a final novel from the early 1980s.⁵⁷

A contemporary of Fante’s is Chester Himes (1909-1984).⁵⁸ Himes was an African American from a middle-class Missouri background who ended up serving time for armed robbery. He began writing while in prison and, after his release, was encouraged to continue by authors such as Richard Wright and Langston Hughes. Himes came to Southern California in the early 1940s with the intention of becoming a screenwriter but ended up working a number of wartime jobs, including construction in the San Pedro shipyards.⁵⁹

It was this shipyard experience that provided the material for his first novel, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*. Published in 1945, the setting is the wartime Harbor district of “huge industrial plants flanking the ribbon of road – shipyards, refineries, oil wells, steel mills, construction companies – the thousands of rushing workers, the low-hanging barrage balloons, the close hard roar of Diesel trucks and the distant drone of patrolling planes, the sharp, pungent smell of exhaust.”⁶⁰

The shipyards offer jobs to all regardless of race but still reflect the attitudes of the larger society. The African American protagonist, Bob Jones, works as a supervisor of an all-black team. During his work he encounters constant racism, from the gatekeeper who accuses him of being late to the dock guard who harasses him for smoking. A fellow black worker relates how he was refused a chance for additional training open to whites.⁶¹ After a particularly rough day, Jones notes that “The white folks had sure brought their white to work with them that morning.”⁶²

⁵⁶ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 187.

⁵⁷ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 185.

⁵⁸ No known resources in Los Angeles associated with Chester Himes have been identified to date.

⁵⁹ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p.196; *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 293. For a biography see Edward Margolies and Michel Fabre, *The Several Lives of Chester Himes* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997). Margolies and Fabre note that Himes worked at, by one count, twenty-three jobs in a span of four years during the war, including a period as a trainee at the San Pedro shipyards. He also lived at several addresses in Los Angeles and elsewhere (pp. 48-49).

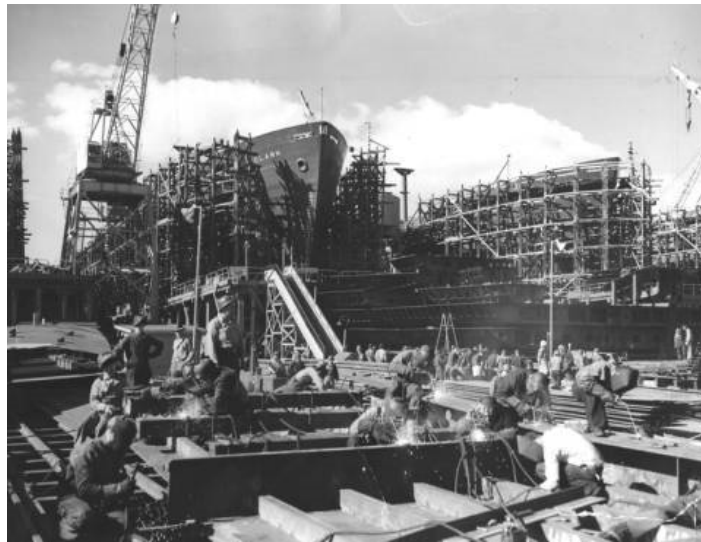
⁶⁰ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 297.

⁶¹ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 197; In *Writing Los Angeles*, pp. 295, 298.

⁶² In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 298.

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*Shipbuilding in Los Angeles Harbor during World War II
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Jones gains psychological release through driving. He has a 1942 Buick Roadmaster, purchased before automobile production ceased and plants shifted to war work. The Buick gives him pride, in that “every time I got behind the wheel and look down over the broad, flat, mile-long hood I thought about how the rich white folks out in Beverly couldn’t even buy a new car now and got a certain satisfaction.”⁶³

Jones and his fellow black workers cruise the avenues of South Los Angeles – San Pedro, Avalon, Central – and the numbered streets that intersect them.⁶⁴ During their cruises they see themselves as equal to other drivers, regardless of race. On one such cruise, Jones relates, “some white guy in a Nash coupe cut out in front of me without signaling.” Jones takes offense. “I kept on his tail until I could pull up beside him, then I leaned out the window and shouted, ‘This ain’t Alabama, you peckerwood son of a bitch. When you want to pull out of line, stick out your hand.’”⁶⁵

Inevitably, things do not end well. Jones runs into trouble at work for objecting to the behavior of his white bosses, and then is wrongfully accused of rape by a white woman co-worker. He tries to escape by car and, after a chase through his beloved streets, is picked up by the police. They give him the option of jail or the army.⁶⁶

⁶³ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 293.

⁶⁴ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 293.

⁶⁵ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 296.

⁶⁶ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, pp. 197-198.

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Himes published a second novel, *Lonely Crusade*, in 1947 which dealt with the same theme of an African American “reduced to emotional cripple by racism,” combined with the anti-communism of the late forties.⁶⁷ He then abandoned Social Realism for the detective genre. He moved to France and produced such popular works such as *Cotton Comes to Harlem* from 1965 and *Blind Man with a Pistol* from 1969, featuring Harlem detectives Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones.⁶⁸

A realistic portrayal of the African American experience in Los Angeles two decades later is the focus of *From the Ashes: The Voices of Watts*. This volume of fiction, poetry and essays, published in 1967, contains the work of members of the Watts Writers’ Workshop. Both the Workshop itself and the individual writers are significant parts of Los Angeles history.

Budd Schulberg, discussed below as a Hollywood novelist, founded the Workshop in September of 1965 in the wake of the Watts Uprising. His goal was to encourage residents to develop their literary skills through presenting their work to each other, and to introduce writers of talent to the literary world beyond. It began in a room in the Westminster Neighborhood Association, a settlement house run by the Presbyterian Church on Beach Street near 103rd Street.⁶⁹



Senator Robert F. Kennedy at the Watts Writers’ Workshop, 1968
(Los Angeles Public Library)

By the Spring of 1966 both enrollment and financial support had grown to the point that the Workshop moved to its own quarters in an abandoned furniture store. The property, located on 103rd Street (later demolished), was transformed into the Watts Happening Coffee House and

⁶⁷ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 198.

⁶⁸ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 196; *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 293.

⁶⁹ Budd Schulberg, “Introduction,” *From the Ashes: Voices of Watts* (New York: New American Library, 1967), p. 3.

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served as an art center and community meeting place.⁷⁰ A gathering room contained a stage for poetry readings, plays and musical performances. With its new home secured, the Workshop sponsored public meetings and political rallies, such as that for Senator Robert Kennedy in 1968.⁷¹

The Workshop also found a place to live for its less-well-off members. Frederick Douglass House, on Beach Street near the Westminster Neighborhood Association, started as an abandoned nine-room ruin that could be rented for ninety-five dollars a month. The Workshop was able to raise funds through appeals to successful writers, and eventually through the National Endowment for the Humanities, in order to convert it into a residential facility for writers in need.⁷²

Unfortunately, NEA support and other funding eventually dried up and the Workshop lasted less than a decade. But during its existence it became a well-known entity in the community, with annual participation in the Watts Summer Festival parade and other local events. By 1966 it had also gained attention beyond the neighborhood. NBC-TV devoted an hour of prime-time television to a show on “The Angry Voices of Watts,” which included readings by some of the members as well as camera shots of the neighborhood.⁷³



*Watts Writers' Workshop Float, 1968 Watts Summer Festival
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Schulberg edited and wrote the introduction to *From the Ashes*. Representative of the anthology is the work of Johnie Scott. Described by Schulberg as a twenty-year old “who drank wine and

⁷⁰ Also discussed in the African American History of Los Angeles Context.

⁷¹ Schulberg, “Introduction,” *From the Ashes*, pp. 12-13.

⁷² Schulberg, “Introduction,” *From the Ashes*, pp. 19-21.

⁷³ Schulberg, “Introduction,” *From the Ashes*, p. 13.

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dropped red-devils with the most abandoned of the desperate black children of 103rd Street,” he became “a kind of poet laureate of ghetto Watts.”⁷⁴ One of the original members of the Workshop, Scott was featured on the 1966 NBC television program.⁷⁵

Scott eventually was appointed director of the Pan-African Studies Writing Program at Cal State Northridge. “Writing saved my life,” he later said. “The two-way exchange of opinions at the workshop was vital to me, just having the opportunity to hear other voices and to know I wasn’t alone, that I was part of a serious dialogue taking place that would have impact nationwide.”⁷⁶

From the Ashes contains Scott’s essay “The Coming of the Hoodlum,” in which he relates his experience as the first young black man from Watts to go to Harvard.⁷⁷ “Hoodlum” describes the environment of Watts in which he grew up and the difficulty in fitting into the privileged white world of the Ivy League.

The optimistic liberalism of Harvard did not fit Scott’s view of life. “My own morality was not based on a Western system of good and evil, traceable to Plato and Hesiod, Jesus and St. Augustine. Rather, it was a social and cultural orientation to the slums – in which evil was taken for granted and upon it erected a value system of happiness and terror.”⁷⁸

Social Realism as a genre continued into the 1970s in the works of Charles Bukowski (1920-1994). He was born in Germany to an American soldier stationed there after the First World War and a German mother. The family came to the United States when Bukowski was three and eventually moved to Los Angeles. He matured during the Depression, which left a mark on his work, attended Los Angeles City College for a time just before World War II, and then began a period of taking jobs – including twelve years with the post office – and traveling, during which he began writing poetry and short fiction.⁷⁹

It was also during this period that Bukowski began a lifetime drinking habit that has made him somewhat controversial.⁸⁰ He is either “celebrated as a poet of the down-and-out or derided as two-dimensional and dissolute.” Nonetheless, Bukowski “may be remembered finally for his gift

⁷⁴ Schulberg, “Introduction,” *From the Ashes*, p. 12.

⁷⁵ *From the Ashes*, p. 95.

⁷⁶ “Writing Out of the Ashes: The Watts Writers’ Workshop,” at www.arts.gov/about/40th-anniversary-highlights/writing-out-of-the-ashes-writers-workshop, accessed June 2019.

⁷⁷ In *From the Ashes*, pp. 97-116. His experience was difficult, and after a troubled year at Harvard he won a scholarship to Stanford, see *From the Ashes*, p. 95.

⁷⁸ In *From the Ashes*, p. 115.

⁷⁹ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, pp. 191-192; *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 510. For a biography see Neeli Cherkowski, *Hank: The Life of Charles Bukowski* (New York: Random House, 1991).

⁸⁰ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 192.

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at capturing, without sentiment or regret, the smallest and quietest of incidents, the everyday counterlife that runs parallel to the grandiosity of the public sphere.”⁸¹

By the 1960s Bukowski had gained a reputation through publication of his work in small-circulation journals. His first novel, *Post Office*, appeared in 1971, and had as its protagonist Henry Chinaski, who would be a reoccurring character in the later *Factotum* (1975), *Women* (1978), *Ham on Rye* (1982) and *Hollywood* (1989).⁸² Based in part upon the author during his own time at the post office, Chinaski is described as a “drink-sodden, working and womanizing protagonist” who finds himself “in a series of episodic, picaresque” adventures “in a comic-absurdist Los Angeles compounded of petty bureaucratic civil servants, con men, and lost women.”⁸³

Bukowski’s use of the Los Angeles setting can be found in his poetry as well. One work, “waiting,” provides a look at life in a marginal city neighborhood during the Depression of the 1930s. It describes a district “where every 3rd lot was vacant” and starving dogs roam the alleys. One neighbor tries to rob the narrator’s house and a second attempts to burn down his own home to collect on the insurance. The parks are “full of socialists, communists, anarchists, standing on the park benches orating, agitating.” Looming in the future is the Second World War.⁸⁴

Hollywood

Hollywood began in the early 1900s as a middle-class suburb known for sobriety. But by the 1920s it had come to define an industry – the making of motion pictures – and the society that evolved around that industry. It is unique enough to be the focus of its own genre. Those writing in the genre of the Hollywood novel were themselves, in one way or another, part of that world.

Their views are critical. The social order is portrayed as amoral, built around self-promotion and the symbols of material success. The physical environment is a product of these qualities – garish, flimsy, and based on artifice. Some writers preferred to treat it through satire, while others took a more realistic view. But all saw it as corrosive.

The author of the most savage portrayal is Nathanael West (1903-1940). He had a tragically short life, dying in an automobile accident in his late thirties. He grew up in Manhattan and attended Brown University. After publishing several unsuccessful novels, he migrated to Hollywood to become a screenwriter. It was West’s work at Republic Studios and the

⁸¹ *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 510.

⁸² Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 192.

⁸³ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 192.

⁸⁴ In *Writing Los Angeles*, pp. 510-512.

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neighborhood around his home on North Ivar Street which provided the background for his fourth novel, *The Day of the Locust*.⁸⁵



Nathanael West
(Los Angeles Public Library)

This work made his reputation. It was published in 1939, the year before his death, and is considered a classic of the Hollywood novel. In *Locust* West focuses on those living on the margins of Hollywood – studio workers of lower rank, dreamers trying to break into the business, and retired migrants from the Midwest seeking some purpose to their lives in the popular culture rituals of the movies.⁸⁶

The protagonist is Tod Hackett, a young painter hired as a set designer. The two other primary characters are Faye Greener, a would-be actress with no qualms about using others to gain her goal, and Homer Simpson, a hotel bookkeeper from Iowa who moves to Los Angeles for his health and becomes obsessed with Faye. They are surrounded by “an assortment of Hollywood discards – has-been comics, bit players, stunt men, drugstore cowboys, and prostitutes.”⁸⁷

The Hollywood West portrays is both tacky and tragic. The heart of the story is the fate of Homer Simpson. His pathetic pursuit of Faye, and his emotional disintegration that follows from her casual use and then rejection of his affection, leads to the novel’s most vivid scene. Homer comes to a violent end during a riot at a movie premier, stomped to death by an enraged mob of fellow Midwestern migrants who mistake him for a child molester.

⁸⁵ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 157, *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 225. For a biography see Jay Martin, *Nathanael West: The Art of His Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970). Martin maintains that West was always “more interested in Hollywood as a source of material than as a career,” and that he was fascinated by the “grotesque character” of its more unsavory members, which “appealed to West’s pessimistic view of human life” (p 213).

⁸⁶ Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust* (New York: New Directions, 1939 [1962]).

⁸⁷ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 157.

An integral part of West's Hollywood is its architecture. The artificiality of its social life is reflected in its buildings. Tod and Faye live in the San Bernardino Arms, an apartment building of which "the façade was the color of diluted mustard" and with windows "framed by pink Moorish columns which supported turnip-shaped lintels."⁸⁸ A screenwriter, somewhat more successful, lives "in an exact reproduction of the old Dupuy mansion near Biloxi, Mississippi."⁸⁹

Tod takes refreshment at the Cinderella Bar, "a little stucco building in the shape of a lady's slipper, on Western Avenue."⁹⁰ Elsewhere are found "Mexican ranch houses, Samoan huts, Mediterranean villas, Egyptian and Japanese temples, Swiss chalets, Tudor cottages, and every possible combination of these styles."⁹¹ Homer Simpson meets his end in front of "the rose-colored domes and delicate minarets of Kahn's Persian Palace Theatre."⁹²

Characteristic of the artifice of Hollywood architecture is the house that a real estate agent convinces Homer to rent. Described by the agent as "Irish," the exterior features "an enormous and very crooked stone chimney, little dormer windows with big hoods and a thatched roof that came down very low on both sides of the front door." The machine-made metal hinges are "stamped to appear hand-forged," and the apparent thatched roof is made of a "heavy fireproof paper colored and ribbed to look like straw."⁹³

The living room, on the other hand, is Spanish, complete with "a variety of cactus in gaily colored Mexican pots" and wall sconces "in the shape of galleons with pointed amber bulbs projecting from their decks." Around the windows are "red velvet draperies hung from black, double-headed spears." The bedrooms in contrast are "New England," each featuring "a spool bed made of iron grained like wood, a Windsor chair of the kind frequently seen in tea shops, and a Governor Winthrop dresser painted to look like unpainted wood."⁹⁴

To Tod these architectural confections are as flimsy as the sets he is hired to design, "all of plaster, lath and paper."⁹⁵ He expresses his contempt in a painting on which he works throughout the novel entitled "The Burning of Los Angeles," which consists of "a great bonfire of architectural styles, ranging from Egyptian to Cape Cod colonial."⁹⁶

⁸⁸ West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 8.

⁸⁹ West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 21.

⁹⁰ West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 164.

⁹¹ West, *The Day of the Locust*, pp. 6-7.

⁹² West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 225.

⁹³ West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 44.

⁹⁴ West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 45.

⁹⁵ West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 7.

⁹⁶ West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 241.

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In 1941, two years after *The Day of the Locust*, a second classic Hollywood novel was published. This was *What Makes Sammy Run?* by Budd Schulberg (1914-2009). Unlike West, Schulberg grew up around the motion picture business; his father was at one time the head of Paramount. This familiarity allowed for a realistic portrayal, but it also earned him hostility from many members of the business.⁹⁷

Sammy is Sammy Glick, the ultimate “slick operator, the Hollywood hustler, whose rise to studio head is achieved through a combination of plagiarism, deception, and sheer chutzpah.” The story is told through the eyes of Al Manheim, a writer who is one of the first to be betrayed by Sammy. Manheim is fascinated by Sammy’s behavior and, in his search to understand what makes Sammy run, becomes the novel’s moral center.⁹⁸

The other characters are what have become standard Hollywood types – the all-powerful studio head concerned about his status with his financial superiors in New York, the vain and insecure actor on the make, the liberal screenwriter who has contempt for the business but keeps on writing for it. Schulberg is generally less caustic than West and presents his characters with a degree of sympathy.⁹⁹

Even Sammy receives some understanding. Midway through the story Manheim travels to New York and visits Sammy’s mother and brother who still live in Sammy’s childhood home, a Lower East Side tenement. From this visit Manheim gains a view of Sammy as yet another classic figure – the slum kid trying to overcome the shame of his background.

In these passages the story shifts from the genre of the Hollywood novel to that of Social Realism. Schulberg himself later described Sammy as an example of “the ultra-aggressive, ruthless and belligerently self-centered type” which could be found “among second-generation Americans from impoverished immigrant families” in which “the father has lost his prestige due to his inability to cope with his new environment.”¹⁰⁰

Schulberg also portrays the physical setting of Los Angeles less caustically than West. To be sure, there are the judgmental asides on ostentatious excess. In a characteristic passage Manheim notes that a successful writer lives in “the largest example of the worst kind of architecture I have ever seen. Hollywood Moorish.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Legend has it that an enraged Louis B. Mayer wanted to exile Schulberg. To this Schulberg’s father replied, “For Christ’s sake, Louie, he’s the only novelist who ever came *from* Hollywood. Where the hell are you going to deport him, Catalina Island?” *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 273.

⁹⁸ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 169.

⁹⁹ Budd Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?* Anniversary Edition (New York: Random House, 1941 [1990]).

¹⁰⁰ Introduction to Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. xvii.

¹⁰¹ Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 52.

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Sammy himself eventually ends up in a house “on top of a hill like a feudal castle.”¹⁰² It is “of baronial proportions, an interesting example of the conglomerate style that is just beginning to disappear in Hollywood, a kind of Persian-Spanish-Baroque-Norman, with some of the architect’s own ideas thrown in to give it variety.”¹⁰³ The entry is “a spacious hallway suitable to a public building.”¹⁰⁴

But the Los Angeles of *Sammy* is also that of actual places, more or less accurately described. Olvera Street is a tourist destination that “was a little too much like a set on the back lot” to pass for a true historic site.¹⁰⁵ The relatively new Westwood campus of UCLA might be “the model for Hollywood’s version of campus life,” while the nearby Old Soldiers Home in Sawtelle is “where veterans of our more recent wars live out their days watching the cars go by.”¹⁰⁶



Café Trocadero, circa 1938
(Los Angeles Public Library)

Described in detail is the Café Trocadero in West Hollywood, “a chic, handsomely tailored night club with creamy walls, subtle illumination that retouched the women’s faces like fashionable photography. A startling south wall made up entirely of glass looked out and down on the houselights and the street lamps and the red neon smears of Hollywood, Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Culver City, and the rest of the sprawling communities in the long valley between the Hollywood Hills on the north and the ridge dotted with oil wells sloping up behind MGM, fifteen miles to the south.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Shulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 267.

¹⁰³ Shulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 263.

¹⁰⁴ Shulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 267.

¹⁰⁵ Shulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁶ Shulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁷ Shulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 149. The Trocadero was located on Sunset Boulevard opposite the intersection with Sunset Plaza Drive in what was then unincorporated land just outside the city limits.

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Schulberg survived the criticism *Sammy* received in Hollywood and went on to have a successful career as a novelist, scriptwriter, and social activist. He published a second novel, *The Harder They Fall* in 1947, and wrote two well-known screenplays – *On the Waterfront* in 1954, for which he won an Academy Award, and *A Face in the Crowd* in 1957. His involvement in the Watts Writers' Workshop is described above.¹⁰⁸

The tradition of the Hollywood novel continued into the postwar period in some of the fiction of Joan Didion. Born in Sacramento in 1934 and a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, she lived for a time with her husband, writer John Gregory Dunne, in Los Angeles. Both worked on motion pictures and Dunne wrote a non-fiction examination of how a studio functioned in the late 1960s.¹⁰⁹

Didion first became known for her essays on Southern California in the 1960s. These essays focus on the fragile nature of Los Angeles – both geologically and socially – and the importance of the freeways. For Didion, driving on them is a form of communal experience and a means of losing oneself in a greater whole.¹¹⁰

One of Didion's best-known works of fiction, *Play It as It Lays*, elaborates on these themes. Published in 1970, the novel's theme is survival in a world of alienation and pending disaster, natural and personal. Its settings include various parts of Southern California, most notably the desert and the freeway.¹¹¹

But *Play It as It Lays* is also a late-1960s version of the earlier Hollywood novel. Its characters are rooted in the world of the motion picture business, and this world is at least in part responsible for their problems. Didion can be seen as revisionist, writing about Hollywood in a realistic manner in contrast to the earlier caricatures of West and Schulberg. Yet her Hollywood is still portrayed as a "tawdry and nihilist setting" not so different from that of the earlier authors.¹¹²

The protagonist, Maria, is a one-time actress considering a comeback. Her estranged husband is a director who worked on her first two films. Her close friend and confidant is a producer. Other characters include a screenwriter with whom Maria is carrying on an intermittent affair, actors

It was built in a Colonial Revival style in 1929 and remodeled in 1938. It closed in 1946. This information is from the "Historical Data" and "Description" on the note to "Trocadero, exterior" photograph, Order Number 00045344, Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

¹⁰⁸ Biographical information from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Budd-Schulberg, accessed June 2019.

¹⁰⁹ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 241. A study of Didion's work is Mark Royden Winchell, *John Didion*, Revised Edition (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980 [1989]). On Didion's and Dunne's Hollywood work, see Winchell, pp. 90-100. See also John Gregory Dunne, *The Studio* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1968).

¹¹⁰ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 247.

¹¹¹ Didion, *Play It as It Lays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1970).

¹¹² Winchell, *John Didion*, p. 93.

on the make, and a powerful agent who controls her return to the movies. The final scenes in the novel are set in the desert between Barstow and Las Vegas, where Maria, her director husband, and her producer friend are gathered for location filming.

The architecture and landscape of Los Angeles are not a major part of *Play It as It Lays*, but there are enough references to the physical setting to provide a sense of place. The freeways occupy a dominant role and life on the West Side is continually noted. Maria comments in passing that “In January there were poinsettias in front all the bungalows between Melrose and Sunset,” and that La Brea is the proper street to look for a Christmas tree.¹¹³

In contrast, the San Fernando Valley is a symbol of the stable if dull middle class life of which Maria is not a part. It is also a location for great unpleasantness, in that it is where Maria goes for an illegal abortion. As she drives along its boulevards “Taco Bells jumped out at her.”¹¹⁴ She is to meet her guide to the abortionist at a Thriftmart, and she “could see the big red T, a forty-foot cutout letter which seemed peculiarly illuminated against the harsh unclouded light of the afternoon sky.”¹¹⁵

On the drive to the operation, the guide praises the neighborhood. “Nice homes here. Nice for kids.”¹¹⁶ The operation takes place in a tract house in Encino. “The walls of the bedroom were cream-colored, yellow, a wallpaper with a modest pattern. Whoever had chosen that wallpaper would have liked maple furniture, a maple bedroom set, a white chenille bedspread and a white Princess telephone,” Maria observes of the middle-class setting far from her tasteful but troubled Hollywood life.¹¹⁷

The Exiles

The Exiles are defined by their outsider status rather than by the particular subject matter of their work. Raised in cultures distinctly different from that of the United States, they were able to perceive features of Los Angeles life and landscape that were too familiar to be noticed by the natives. The Exiles continued to identify themselves with their cultures of origin, regardless of their length of stay, and reinforced this identification through association with each other.

There are two groups that stand out during the period of significance. The first consisted of German-speaking writers who were refugees from National Socialism. Many, but by no means

¹¹³ Didion, *Play It as It Lays*, p. 99.

¹¹⁴ Didion, *Play It as It Lays*, p. 76.

¹¹⁵ Didion, *Play It as It Lays*, pp. 76-77. Didion has always been fascinated by shopping centers, which, like the freeway “symbolizes an ethos of economic growth and personal mobility.” See Winchell, *John Didion*, p. 27.

¹¹⁶ Didion, *Play It as It Lays*, p. 78.

¹¹⁷ Didion, *Play It as It Lays*, p. 81.

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all, were Jewish, and their rejection of the Third Reich was as much a matter of political repugnance as flight from persecution. Perhaps because of language, they tended to hold themselves separate from the surrounding English-speaking literary environment and, with one exception, wrote little about Los Angeles. Most returned to Europe after the war.¹¹⁸

The second group was the British. Unlike the German speakers, they were exiles by choice rather than necessity, and tended to make their stays permanent. This group was more willing to engage with the surrounding setting and to comment on Los Angeles. Yet they too saw themselves as a group apart and maintained the critical eye of the outsider.

The community of German-speaking writers was so large, and so concentrated in West Side neighborhoods such as Pacific Palisades, that it became known as “Weimar on the Pacific.” The name came from the city of Weimar in Germany, famous as a center of literary achievement and political liberalism. It had been the home of such notable writers as Goethe and Schiller in the late 1700s, and was the site, after the end of the First World War, of the convention which produced the constitution for the so-called Weimar Republic that ended in 1933.¹¹⁹



Thomas Mann
(Los Angeles Public Library)

Perhaps the most prestigious of the German-speaking exiles were two novelist brothers, Thomas and Heinrich Mann. Thomas was considered the more intellectual, having achieved fame for a series of works including *Buddenbrooks* (1901), *Death in Venice* (1912) and *The Magic Mountain* (1925). He was very much the traditional German in his formality. Financially secure,

¹¹⁸ Ehrhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007).

¹¹⁹ Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, p. 1.

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he spent his time in his home's study completing *Joseph the Provider* and writing *Doctor Faustus*.¹²⁰

Heinrich was considered the more accessible to the general reader. He was best known among Americans as the author of the novel upon which the film *The Blue Angel* was based. Other German and Austrian novelists included Alfred Döblen, famous for his grimly realistic *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Franz Werfel, the author of *The Song of Bernadette*, and Lion Feuchtwanger, a writer of popular historical fiction whose home in Pacific Palisades became a gathering place.¹²¹



Bertolt Brecht
(Los Angeles Public Library)

For the most part, the German exiles wrote little about Los Angeles. The exception was Berthold Brecht (1898-1956), who arrived in 1941. While living in the tolerant Berlin of the 1920s, Brecht wrote satirical works that questioned accepted norms and mocked middle class mores. He is best known for such musical plays as *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930), both of which were collaborations with composer Kurt Weill.¹²²

In personal style Brecht was the opposite of Thomas Mann. He affected a working class appearance and vocabulary. Unkept and always with a cheap cigar, he went out of his way to show his rejection of bourgeois life in Los Angeles as he had in Berlin. "For six years Brecht

¹²⁰ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 164.

¹²¹ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 164.

¹²² *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 284. According to Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, p. 85, Brecht actually lived in Los Angeles proper for a single month, July of 1941, in a first-floor apartment at 1954 Argyle Avenue in Hollywood. He then moved to Santa Monica, where he lived until he left the United States. For a biography see Frederic Ewen, *Bertolt Brecht: His Life, His Art and His Times* (New York: Citadel Press, 1967), in particular pp. 380-395 for his time in California.

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endured what he facetiously called his ‘exile in paradise,’ lamenting the shallowness of Hollywood and the small-minded moralism of America,” an attitude that led in 1947 to a summons to appear before the Un-American Activities Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, and to his subsequent return to communist East Germany.¹²³

Brecht expressed his critical view of American society in general, and Los Angeles in particular, in a series of poems and journal entries. A poem series entitled “Hollywood Elegies” focuses on the movie capital and “excoriated Hollywood’s money worship, its commercialism and disregard for art, and its commodification of sex.”¹²⁴ It notes that this Hollywood is not a good place to be if you have not made it according to its rules:

The village of Hollywood was planned according to the notion
People in these parts have of heaven. In these parts
They have come to the conclusion that God
Requiring a heaven and a hell, didn’t need to
Plan two establishments but
Just the one: heaven. It
Serves the unprosperous, unsuccessful
As hell.¹²⁵

Brecht also had a fascination with the city’s landscape, in particular the vegetation. In his journal – in which he uses only lower-case letters – he notes that Los Angeles was “tahiti in the form of a big city,” through which “an incessant, brilliantly illuminated stream of cars thunders through nature,” as he views the San Fernando Valley from above. But “all the greenery is wrested from the desert by irrigation systems, scratch the surface a little and the desert shows through: stop paying the water bills and everything stops blooming.”¹²⁶

This artificiality of the landscape follows from the constant need to promote yourself in a capitalist society, as Brecht notes in a journal passage, written in the vulgar style he preferred, with no capital letters or use of punctuation in standard abbreviations: “custom here requires that you try to ‘sell’ everything, from a shrug of the shoulders to an idea, ie you have always to be on the look-out for a customer, so you are constantly either a buyer or a seller, you sell your piss, as it were, to the urinal. opportunism is regarded as the greatest virtue, politeness becomes cowardice.”¹²⁷

¹²³ *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 284. Ewen, in *Bertolt Brecht*, p. 383, attributes this hostility to Brecht’s “unreconstructed, unreformed, and unregenerate Marxism,” his unwillingness to master English, and his personal dislike of “easy-going” Americans with their “nice fellow” style.

¹²⁴ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 164.

¹²⁵ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 285.

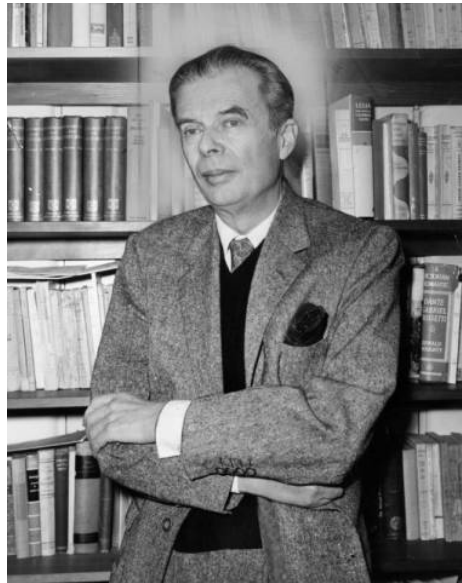
¹²⁶ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 290.

¹²⁷ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 291.

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The British writers were less abrasive in style and more amenable to making Los Angeles a permanent home. Yet they also maintained the critical eye of the outsider. The best known was Aldous Huxley (1894-1963). He began writing as a British journalist in the years after the First World War, including commentary on architectural matters in *Athenaeum* magazine. He first visited Los Angeles in 1925, immigrated in 1937 and lived out the rest of his life in Southern California.¹²⁸



Aldous Huxley
(Los Angeles Public Library)

After his 1925 visit Huxley published an essay that described “the jangling, kaleidoscopic chaos of the ‘City of Dreadful Joy’ with a mixture of fascination and distain.”¹²⁹ Despite his later years of residence, he maintained this outsider’s view of Angeleno life.¹³⁰ Los Angeles was no more a home “than some villa in Lucca where he had halted for a short time” in his early career. “California – like Lucca, or like some Hindu town visited only overnight – remained a place to be inspected, to be interpreted by ironic description and apt parallels.”¹³¹

Two of Huxley’s works make ample use of the Los Angeles setting. The first, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, dates from 1939. Its plot centers around “the California quest for eternal youth,” in which a wealthy entrepreneur lives in “an ersatz medieval castle on top of the

¹²⁸ Aldous Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1939 [1993]), Author’s Biography opposite Title Page. A biography and critical study is Harold H. Watts, *Aldous Huxley* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969).

¹²⁹ *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 55.

¹³⁰ Watts, *Aldous Huxley*, p. 26.

¹³¹ Watts, *Aldous Huxley*, p. 23.

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Santa Monica Mountains” and searches for a way to postpone death. Much of the entrepreneur’s business is focused on his development of a cemetery satirically patterned after Glendale’s Forest Lawn.¹³²

Named the Beverly Pantheon, the cemetery features administrative offices in a Tower of Resurrection, music piped throughout by a Perpetual Wurlitzer, and the Pantheon itself, a giant iceberg of a structure resembling the looming presence in Arnold Boecklin’s painting of the Isle of the Dead. The cemetery is in essence a real estate scheme, in which each acre is purchased at five hundred dollars, improved at a cost of ten thousand, and then divided into burial places that together bring in one-hundred-sixty thousand.¹³³

Huxley also provides a less satirical outsider’s view of the everyday landscape of Los Angeles in the late 1930s. The narrator, a scholar from Britain, passes through a variety of settings as he is driven from Union Station to the ersatz castle. First is the Old Plaza district, “a slum of Africans and Filipinos, Japanese and Mexicans.” Then comes the Downtown of tall buildings and Caucasians, where on “every corner there was a drug-store,” and chewing gum was “incessantly ruminating” in the jaws of passers-by.¹³⁴

Finally our scholar reaches the outlying districts, “a vast, untidy, suburban world of filling stations and billboards, of low houses in gardens, of vacant lots and waste paper, of occasional shops and offices and churches – primitive Methodist churches built, surprisingly enough, in the style of the Cartuja at Granada, Catholic churches like Canterbury Cathedral, synagogues disguised as Hagia Sophia, Christian Science churches with pillars and pediments, like banks.”¹³⁵

There are two incidents, both set in the San Fernando Valley, which show Huxley’s awareness of local history. The first involves a variation on the link between the completion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct and the rise of Valley property values. An entrepreneur has an informant on the staff of the City Engineer’s Department. The informant passes on the confidential information that a certain district is to receive a water line, a decision that will be announced in six weeks. This gives the entrepreneur time to buy land at twelve dollars an acre before it rises to one hundred once the decision is made public.¹³⁶

The second incident portrays the 1930s Dust Bowl migration to Los Angeles, through an encounter with a character simply called the man from Kansas. In dealing with this character, Huxley moves from satire into the realm of Social Realism, comparable to Fante and Bukowski.

¹³² Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 165.

¹³³ Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*. pp. 14-15, 229.

¹³⁴ Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, p. 5.

¹³⁵ Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, p. 5.

¹³⁶ Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, pp. 37-39.

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In doing so he shows an understanding of both the origins of the Depression-era Dust Bowl in the states of the Great Plains and the impact of poverty on behavior.

The man from Kansas and his family are seeking work in the orange groves still extant in remote sections of the San Fernando Valley. Similar to the Joads in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, they have arrived in "an ancient Ford" which carries "a squalid cargo of household goods" along with the "haggard, unshaven man," a "woman with a piece of sacking wrapped around her shoulders" and "three dull-eyed, anaemic children."¹³⁷

The "poor fellow from Kansas," Huxley explains, was typical of those who relied on raising wheat in the western Plains. "Like all the others, he had abandoned any idea of subsistence farming to think exclusively in terms of a cash crop; and he had gone on thinking in those terms, even when the crop no longer gave him any cash. Then, like all the others, he had got into debt with the banks. And finally, like all the others, he had learnt that what the experts had been saying for a generation was perfectly true: in a semi-arid country, it is the grass that holds down the soil; tear up the grass, the soil will go. In due course, it had gone."¹³⁸

"The man from Kansas was now a peon and a pariah" and Huxley is brutally realistic as to what follows.¹³⁹ "Poverty and suffering ennoble only when they are voluntary. By involuntary poverty and suffering men are made worse." He holds up "this poor devil from Kansas" as an example, who "was compensating himself for his misfortunes by brutality to those weaker than himself. The way he yelled at the children...It was an all too familiar symptom."¹⁴⁰

Huxley's second L.A.-related novel, entitled *Ape and Essence* and published in 1948, is set in a Los Angeles devastated by nuclear war – "what was once the world's largest oasis is now its greatest agglomeration of ruins in a wasteland."¹⁴¹ The wrecks of familiar landmarks become settings for a social life which has reverted to prehistoric savagery. Pershing Square is still the center, where "from a shallow well in front of the Philharmonic Auditorium two women are drawing water in a goatskin."¹⁴² Books from the shelves of the Central Library are used as fuel for a community cooking fire.¹⁴³

The adjacent Biltmore Hotel's Coffee Shop has become a primitive weaving workshop. The Cocktail Bar serves as a second workshop for carving human skulls into drinking gourds.¹⁴⁴ The

¹³⁷ Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, p. 20. Spelling of "anaemic" is the author's.

¹³⁸ Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, p. 107-108.

¹³⁹ Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, p. 108.

¹⁴⁰ Huxley, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, p. 106.

¹⁴¹ Aldous Huxley, *Ape and Essence* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), p. 62.

¹⁴² Huxley, *Ape and Essence*, p. 90.

¹⁴³ Huxley, *Ape and Essence*, p. 91.

¹⁴⁴ Huxley, *Ape and Essence*, pp. 92, 99.

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Main Lobby has been converted into a maternity ward, with mothers lying “on the tattered remnants of ancient beds and sofas.”¹⁴⁵ Its monumental stairway also serves as a path of entrance for the ruler of this primitive society, “His Eminence the Arch-Vicar of Belial, Lord of the Earth, Primate of California, Servant of the Proletariat, Bishop of Hollywood.”¹⁴⁶

Also appearing is Exposition Park. The Coliseum is the communal gathering place over which the Arch-Vicar presides. “By the smoky and intermittent light of torches we see the faces of the great congregation.”¹⁴⁷ Huxley describes the participants as being “like massed gargoyles, spouting the groundless faith, the subhuman excitement, the collective imbecility which are the products of ceremonial religion,” in a scene that combines fascist rally with revival meeting.¹⁴⁸

A second Englishman is Christopher Isherwood (1904-1986), best known for his Berlin stories which became the basis for the musical *Cabaret*. Isherwood migrated to Los Angeles in 1939 and spent most of his life in Santa Monica. He wrote screenplays as well as novels, and published his *Diaries* in which he recorded impressions of Southern California.¹⁴⁹

Isherwood’s first impressions in 1939 were not favorable. He considered Downtown as “perhaps the ugliest city on earth.” When driving to Hollywood he “was amazed at the size of the city, and at its lack of shape.” It reminded him of “a world’s fair, quite new and already partly in ruins.”¹⁵⁰ He was more favorably inclined toward the Hollywood neighborhood into which he settled, with its “little white houses, wooden or stucco, wide open to a technicolor blue sky.”¹⁵¹

Isherwood was particularly impressed with the relationship between architecture and landscape. The houses are set against “a background of brushy brown-green hills. A suburb of little gardens crowded with blossoms and flowering bushes; its architecture dominated by its vegetation. A suburb without privacy; the houses look into each other’s bedrooms and share a street-long lawn which is seldom subdivided by fences. I recognized the look of these houses and this lawn instantly, from many scenes out of silent-screen kid-gang comedies.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Huxley, *Ape and Essence*, p. 101.

¹⁴⁶ Huxley, *Ape and Essence*, p. 104

¹⁴⁷ Huxley, *Ape and Essence*, p. 107.

¹⁴⁸ Huxley, *Ape and Essence*, p. 108.

¹⁴⁹ *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 231. For a biography see Peter Parker, *Isherwood: A Life Revealed* (New York: Random House, 2004).

¹⁵⁰ In *Writing Los Angeles*, p. 231.

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Parker, *Isherwood*, p. 377.

¹⁵² Quoted in Parker, *Isherwood*, p. 377.

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Christopher Isherwood
(Los Angeles Public Library)

A quarter century later Isherwood offered an updated view of the Los Angeles setting. *A Single Man*, published in 1964, describes a day in the life of a gay professor of English whose partner has just died. While most of the settings are given fictional names, they are patterned after specific places. The result is a portrayal of Los Angeles in the early 1960s, from its old and new residential sections to its institutions of public higher education.¹⁵³

A district resembling neighborhoods in northeastern Los Angeles gives the impression that “you are back in the tacky sleepy slowpoke Los Angeles of the thirties, still convalescent from the depression, with no money to spare for fresh coats of paint. And how charming it is! An up-and-down terrain of steep little hills with white houses of cracked stucco perched insecurely on their sides and tops, it is made to look quaint rather than ugly by the mad, hopelessly intertwined cat’s cradle of wires and telephone poles. Mexicans live here, so there are lots of flowers.”¹⁵⁴

Isherwood is less enamored by the newer areas, where “the little hills have been trucked away bodily or had their tops sliced off by bulldozers, and the landscape is gashed with raw terraces.”

¹⁵³ Christopher Isherwood, *A Single Man* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964).

¹⁵⁴ Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 41.

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The architecture too lacks appeal. “Tract upon tract of low-roofed dormitory dwellings (invariably called ‘homes’ and described as ‘a new concept in living’) are being opened up as fast as they can be connected with the sewers and the power lines.”¹⁵⁵

Also illustrative of the early 1960s is Isherwood’s description of the fictional state college at which, George, the protagonist, teaches. It is based on California State University, Los Angeles, where Isherwood was a visiting lecturer.¹⁵⁶ “A clean modern factory, brick and glass and big windows, already three-quarters built, is being finished in a hysterical hurry.” When completed “it will be able to process twenty thousand graduates. But, in less than ten years, it will have to cope with forty or fifty thousand.”¹⁵⁷

Isherwood notes the social role of the state college in a diverse city. Exiting the cars in the parking lot “is the male and female raw material which is fed daily into this factory, along the conveyer belts of the freeway, to be processed, packaged and placed on the market: Negroes, Mexicans, Jews, Japanese, Chinese, Latins, Slavs, Nordics, the dark heads far predominating over the blond.”¹⁵⁸

Also noted is the stress on practical education, but George, our protagonist, is not totally without hope. He laments “vocational advisors” who channel students into “some solid technical training – pharmacology, let’s say, or accountancy, or the varied opportunities offered by the vast field of electronics,” but he sees that “there are still, incredibly enough, quite a few of them who persist in writing poems, novels, plays!”¹⁵⁹

Finally, Isherwood, like Joan Didion, finds driving the freeway to be a significant personal experience. “George feels a kind of patriotism for the freeways.” His ability to cope with their complexity and rhythm “proves his claim to be a functioning member of society.”¹⁶⁰ For “this is no mad chariot race – that’s only how it seems to onlookers or nervous novices – it is a river, sweeping in full flood toward its outlet with a soothing power.” If you are competent, “you discover, in the midst of its stream-speed, a sense of indolence and ease.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 42

¹⁵⁶ Parker, *Isherwood*, pp. 584, 588, 613.

¹⁵⁷ Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 42.

¹⁵⁸ Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 47.

¹⁵⁹ Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 47.

¹⁶⁰ Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 33.

¹⁶¹ Isherwood, *A Single Man*, p. 35.

RELATED RESOURCES

There are two kinds of resources related to writers. The first are places in which the writers lived. The second are gathering places, in which writers met each other and the public.

Residences

Residences consist of a variety of building types. They range from hotels through apartment houses and bungalow courts to single family homes. Writers tended to move often, so that there may be several resources associated with a single author. Generally, as writers became successful, they moved from transient lodgings to more permanent and comfortable settings. But this was not always the case.

Hotels were typically the first place writers settled, and in some cases remained for long periods of time. Two hotels are well known. They are the Hollywood Roosevelt (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument Number 545) and the Chateau Marmont (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No 151). Both date from the 1920s and both are closely associated with motion pictures. Financiers of the Roosevelt included Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Louis B. Mayer, and the first Academy Awards ceremony took place there in 1929. The Chateau Marmont was and remains a hotel of choice for movie stars.¹⁶²

Writers also stayed in these two hotels. They were typically notable authors whose works did not specifically focus on Los Angeles. Two examples are indicative. Sinclair Lewis, a guest of the Marmont, was best known for his fictional re-creations of Midwestern small-town life in works such as *Main Street* (1920) and *Elmer Gantry* (1927). William Faulkner portrayed the American South in a series of novels that includes *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), and occasionally wrote scripts for the studios. He stayed at the Roosevelt.¹⁶³

A third hotel is also associated with writers. This is the Hollywood Knickerbocker, just north of Hollywood Boulevard at 1714 Ivar Street. When it opened as a residential hotel in the summer of 1929, it called itself the “largest” and “the most luxuriously furnished apartment-house of the film capital.”¹⁶⁴ Although it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Knickerbocker is not as well-known as the Roosevelt or the Marmont, and after a period of decline it has been converted into senior citizen housing.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² *Landmark L.A.*, pp. 433, 465.

¹⁶³ Information on Lewis at the Marmont and Faulkner at the Roosevelt was supplied by the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

¹⁶⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 1929.

¹⁶⁵ The actual date of construction needs further research. The Los Angeles County Assessor lists it as 1925 (Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Parcel Viewer, at losangelescountyassessor.net, accessed June 2019).

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Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel
1714 Ivar Street
(Los Angeles Public Library)

The relationship between L.A. Noir writers and the Knickerbocker is significant. James M. Cain was a tenant. Raymond Chandler had Philip Marlowe taking meals at a coffee shop at the “Mansion House Hotel,” based on the Knickerbocker. Ross Macdonald’s wife roomed there while she worked at Warner Brothers during the war, and Macdonald returned to stay for a month in June of 1959, during a difficult family time. The Knickerbocker was also the site of the 1963 meeting of Southern California chapter of Mystery Writers of America, which Macdonald attended when his novel *The Zebra-Striped Hearse* was nominated for an award.¹⁶⁶

The apartment house and the bungalow court were building types which also accommodated writers. As with hotels they were generally seen as temporary residences, but in some cases writers made use of these types for extended periods of time. An example is the Social Realist Charles Bukowski. From 1963 until 1972 Bukowski lived in the bungalow court at 5124 De

But the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety lists its building permit as 1929 (Search Online Building Records at www.ladbs.org, accessed June 2019).

¹⁶⁶ Information on Cain at the Knickerbocker was supplied by the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources; Nolan, *Ross Macdonald*, p. 236.

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Longpre Avenue in Hollywood. Now known as Bukowski Court, it is Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 912, due to Bukowski's residence there when he published his first book.¹⁶⁷



Bukowski Court, Hollywood
Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 912
(Photo by author)

This Spanish Colonial Revival cluster is a classic example of a 1920s bungalow court. It consists of four buildings, arranged in a single line front to back on one side of a narrow driveway. The first two are matching side-by-side one bedroom duplexes from 1923, the third is a single-family two-bedroom dwelling completed a year earlier in 1922, and the fourth is a two-story building from 1926 that extends the width of the lot and contains four studio apartments.¹⁶⁸

The modest nature and marginal neighborhood of the court reflect Bukowski's work as well as his style of life. He wrote *Post Office* while living in one of the units and used the court as a setting for the later *Women*. In the late 1960s the appearance of the court resembled a scene from one of Bukowski's novels – an old Mercury Comet was “parked on the front lawn, tins of bacon grease filled up the kitchen, cigar smoke stunk up the air, and newspapers littered the floors.”¹⁶⁹

The most common type of writer's residence is the single family home. Some were modest middle-class dwellings. Typical is one of the many homes occupied in succession by Raymond Chandler, at 6520 Drexel Avenue in Beverly Glen. Build in 1926, it is one of several of the same

¹⁶⁷ Matt Kettman, “Saving Bukowski's Bungalow, *Time Magazine*, September 14, 2007.

¹⁶⁸ Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Parcel Viewer, at losangelescountyassessor.net, accessed June 2019. According to Cherkovski, *Hank*, pp. 138-139, Bukowski rented an upstairs rear unit until a front unit became available.

¹⁶⁹ Kettman, “Saving Bukowski's Bungalow.”

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Spanish Colonial Revival style along Drexel which date from the building boom of the mid-twenties.¹⁷⁰



*Raymond Chandler Residence
6520 Drexel Avenue
(Photo by author)*

Others were upper-middle class, purchased once a writer achieved a degree of success. Typical is the home of James M. Cain, at 2966 Belden Drive in the Hollywood Hills. Built in 1924, Cain bought it in the 1930s after the publication of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. It is a French Norman Revival “upside-down” house, as Cain described it, with a single story facing the street and three levels at the rear as the grade descends.¹⁷¹



*James M. Cain Residence (view of the rear)
2966 Belden Drive
(SurveyLA)*

¹⁷⁰ Construction date of this and surrounding residences from Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Parcel Viewer, at losangelescountyassessor.net, accessed June 2019.

¹⁷¹ See Hoopes, *Cain*, p. 259. Date of construction is from Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Parcel Viewer, at losangelescountyassessor.net, accessed June 2019.

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Two single-family houses, both in Pacific Palisades, are of particular significance because of their relationship to the German exiles. The first is the Villa Aurora, the home of Leon Feuchtwanger. Its role in the life of the German-speaking immigrant community gained it designation as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 589. Located at 520 Paseo Miramar in Pacific Palisades, the large Spanish Colonial Revival house was designed by Mark Daniels and originally built in 1928.¹⁷² Thomas Mann referred to it as Feuchtwanger's "castle on the sea."¹⁷³



*Feuchtwanger House, Villa Aurora
Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 589
(L.A. Office of Historic Resources)*

Feuchtwanger, a prolific author of historic fiction in German, used his home as a gathering place for "Weimar on the Pacific." As such it has become "a cultural monument to German exiles." It is now owned and supported by the German government and the city of Berlin, and "hosts European writers, composers, and filmmakers as artists in residence." The Villa Aurora also awards an annual grant "to a writer who is being persecuted or forced to live in exile." In this way it can "keep alive the memory of the exiles from Weimar Germany who found sanctuary in Los Angeles."¹⁷⁴

The second significant resource related to the German exiles is the home of Thomas Mann. Initially, in 1941, Mann occupied a rented house at 740 Amalfi Drive. One year later he moved to a custom-built home at 1550 San Remo Drive.¹⁷⁵ Designed by J. R. Davidson, the San Remo residence is a two-story stucco house with a low-pitched hipped roof. It features a second-floor

¹⁷² *Landmark L.A.*, p. 469.

¹⁷³ Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, p. 290.

¹⁷⁴ Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, p. 290.

¹⁷⁵ Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, p. 247.

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balcony along the rear that gives it a Monterey-Revival feel.¹⁷⁶ Davidson himself referred to its relatively reserved design as “nostalgic German.”¹⁷⁷

The process by which Davidson got the commission provides insight into the relationship between the immigrant modernist architects from Austria and Germany, such as Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, and Davidson himself, and the more conservative established German writers now in exile. In 1938 Mann made a tour of modernist architecture in Los Angeles, with Neutra as his guide, and later noted in his diary his dislike of the “cubist glass-box style” which he found “unpleasant.”¹⁷⁸

The result was that Mann chose Davidson, who seemed more willing to listen to the client. The architect gave the author such features as a private stairway connecting his study to his bedroom so he could rise and work in total seclusion. Mann expressed his satisfaction to Davidson. “In times of such deeply depressing events there is a special spiritual meaning to this harmonious house and its surroundings.”¹⁷⁹

Gathering Places

Gathering places are resources where writers met with each other and perhaps presented their work to the public. In some cases, such as the Villa Aurora, they were private residences. But more typical were gathering places open to the public, such as restaurants and book shops. These were most often privately-owned small businesses, coming and going with changes in patrons’ tastes and neighborhood status. As such, few have survived.

Restaurants were the most prevalent. Unfortunately, only one of significance is known to remain, but it is one that appears in the life and work of many writers. This is the Musso & Frank Grill, located at 6669 Hollywood Boulevard. Opened in 1919, it has been enlarged and remodeled, but retains physical characteristics linked to the period of significance.

Among those patronizing the Grill were the Social Realist John Fante and the Hollywood novelists Nathaniel West and Budd Schulberg. West locates a scene from *Day of the Locust* in it, referring to it as Musso Frank’s restaurant, where his protagonist orders a steak and a double

¹⁷⁶ Esther McCoy, *Second Generation* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1984), pp. 20-21.

¹⁷⁷ Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, p. 171.

¹⁷⁸ Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, p. 170. Davidson maintained that Neutra’s personality alienated Mann. “At a party given by the writer Vicki Baum, Neutra launched his campaign to win Mann’s favor. But the novelist was so annoyed by Neutra’s over insistent manner that he muttered ‘get that Neutra off my back.’” Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 186.

¹⁷⁹ McCoy, *Second Generation*, p. 20.

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Scotch.¹⁸⁰ Schulberg also has the narrator of *What Makes Sammy Run?* dine at the Grill “as usual.” There he is served by Amelio, “the restaurant’s indisputable forensic star,” and, on his way out, “stopped to say hello to three writers who always ate at the same table by the door.”¹⁸¹ Detectives as well, including Macdonald’s Lew Archer, patronize Musso & Frank.¹⁸²



Musso & Frank Grill, circa 1991

*(Probable location of Stanley Rose’s Bookshop storefront toward the right, to left of streetlamp post)
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Bookstores, all long gone, were another favorite gathering place. A number of shops, including Louis Epstein’s Pickwick Bookshop on Hollywood Boulevard and Jake Zeitlin’s store in various successive locations, were patronized by writers. The one most commonly mentioned was Stanley Rose’s Bookshop. It was located at 6661½ Hollywood Boulevard, adjacent to Musso & Frank.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 346; West, *The Day of the Locust*, p. 222.

¹⁸¹ Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 136.

¹⁸² *The Way Some People Die*, in Ross Macdonald: *Four Novels of the 1950s*, p. 29.

¹⁸³ For the address of the Rose Bookshop see <https://lithub.com/how-la-became-a-destination-on-the-rare-book-trail>. The Sanborn Map for 1919/1950, Volume 10, Sheet 1020, shows four narrow storefronts in the same building that houses Musso & Frank. 6661½ was most likely the storefront identified as 6661B on the Sanborn Map, the second from the right. The building is intact, although altered, and the storefront is now numbered 6663. The Pickwick was located at 6743 Hollywood Boulevard (see “Hollywood: Final Chapter Ends for Bookstore,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1995). The business block housing it on the northeast corner of Hollywood and McCadden Place. Zeitlin’s final store was in a converted barn in West Hollywood (see Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 191). Confirmation of the locations and conditions of earlier Zeitlin stores requires additional research.

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Unlike Zeitlin's shop, which specialized in rare books and vintage editions, Rose's had a more proletarian atmosphere. According to Carey McWilliams, Zeitlin "drew the swells and big names," while Rose "served as a clubhouse for garrulous wise guys and writers on their way up." James M. Cain and John Fante were frequent customers.¹⁸⁴

Rose's was also known as a gathering place for screenwriters with reputations beyond Hollywood. It appealed to those who saw themselves as "disgruntled captives of the movie industry," including William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald.¹⁸⁵ Finally, Rose's, like the neighboring Musso & Frank, appears in fiction. The narrator of *What Makes Sammy Run?* browses there "as usual" before moving on to the Grill for dinner.¹⁸⁶

A somewhat different kind of gathering place is related to the Watts Writers' Workshop. This is a meeting space financed by a non-profit entity. There were three such spaces for the Workshop, two of which no longer exist. The Westminster Neighborhood Association, the first meeting place, was located at the intersection of Beach and 102nd Streets. It appears to have been demolished to make way for urban renewal projects that extend on Beach from Century Boulevard south to 103rd Street.¹⁸⁷

The second meeting place was the Watts Happening Coffee House, which occupied a former furniture store at 1802 East 103rd Street. The building did not meet code requirements for a place of assembly, but the City delayed eviction to allow the Coffee House time to find a permanent home. Finally, the roof collapsed after a rainstorm and the structure was razed to make way for the Watts Redevelopment Project. The Coffee House's cultural programs were relocated to the new Watts Neighborhood Center at 1827 East 103rd Street in 1971.¹⁸⁸

The third meeting place, Douglass House, appears to be extant but greatly altered. (This identification requires further research.) Schulberg describes Douglass House as being on Beach Street close to the Westminster Neighborhood Association, and two articles in the *Los Angeles Times* give the address as 9807 Beach Street. The current single-family residence which uses the address of 9805 Beach appears to be what was then numbered 9807. Schulberg describes it as a nine-room house and, while the house appears small, that is the number of rooms given in a Building Permit Application for remodeling in 1954.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 191.

¹⁸⁵ Fine, *Imagining Los Angeles*, p. 75.

¹⁸⁶ Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, p. 136.

¹⁸⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, February 21, 1966.

¹⁸⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 1971.

¹⁸⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 1967 July 18, 1967; Schulberg, "Introduction," *From the Ashes: Voices of Watts*, pp. 19- 20; "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish," dated August 8, 1954, at Search Online Building Records at www.ladbs.org, accessed June 2019. The Los Angeles County Assessor uses the address of 9805 and gives the date of the structure as 1913, with remodeling in 1931. (Los Angeles County

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Sites Associated with Significant Writers

There is one designated site associated with significant writers in Los Angeles. This is Raymond Chandler Square at the corner of Hollywood and Cahuenga Boulevards (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 597). The site commemorates the location of Chandler's fictional Cahuenga Building, the office of character Philip Marlow and "the starting point for a series of legendary journeys through the heart of Los Angeles."¹⁹⁰

Tax Assessor Parcel Viewer, at losangelescountyassessor.net, accessed June 2019). The Sanborn Map of 1928/1950 show two houses on the site, with the front house using 9807 and the rear house 9805 (Volume 28, Sheet 2812). The Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety uses both addresses for the same parcel. There is no record of an original building permit – Watts in 1913 being a separate city – nor is there record of a demolition permit for the rear building. The only record of permitted work on either 9805 or 9807 during the 1966-1971 period was for fire damage repair to a single-family dwelling, estimated at \$1000, in April of 1969. The document states that at that time there was only one dwelling on the lot and uses 9807 Beach as the address (Application to Add-Alter-Repair-Demolish," April 30, 1969, at Search Online Building Records at www.ladbs.org, accessed June 2019).

¹⁹⁰ Historic-Cultural Monument Application for Raymond Chandler Square, 1994.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR WRITERS AND RESIDENCY IN L.A.

Summary Statement of Significance: Resources evaluated under this sub-theme are significant in the areas of Literature and Social History. Some may also be significant in the area of Ethnic History. They are associated with creative writers of novels, short stories, poetry, and essays who, during their residency in Los Angeles, made important individual contributions to the body of American literature. Properties relate specifically to writers who made use of Los Angeles society and settings as a significant element in their work and evidence the ways in which the products of their imagination used the reality of the Los Angeles urban environment. Related resources consist of residential buildings and commercial lodging – temporary and permanent – where writers lived, and meeting places which were patronized by the writers and/or made appearances in their creative works. Some resources may also be significant in the area of Architecture as significant examples of architecture styles of their period of construction and/or the work of important architects and designers.

Period of significance: 1929-1980

Period of Significance Justification: Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest*, which established the Noir genre, dates from 1929. 1980 is the end date for SurveyLA and may be extended over time.

Geographic Location: Citywide, with particular concentrations in Hollywood and the Pacific Palisades, South Los Angeles, and San Pedro

Areas of Significance: Literature, Social History, Ethnic History, Architecture (some)

Criteria:¹⁹¹

NR: A/B

CR: 1/2

Local: 1/2

¹⁹¹ If significant in the area of Architecture, Criteria C/3/3 also apply. See relevant themes of the "Architecture and Engineering" context.

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Associated Property Types:

Residential – Single family
Residential – Multi-family
Commercial – Lodging – Hotel/Motel
Commercial – Food – Restaurant/Tavern
Commercial – Retail – Bookstore
Institutional – Social Club/Meeting Hall –
Writer’s Club
Other – Site

Property Type Description:

Property types include temporary residential, such as commercial hotels, which are anonymous; permanent residential, including single-family and multi-family, which reflect the writer’s success and self-image; commercial establishment, such as restaurants and bookstores, which were patronized by the writers and/or appear in their works; meeting places such as writer’s clubs, created for aspiring writers and funded by non-profits.

Property Type Significance:

See Summary Statement of Significance above.

Eligibility Standards:

- Directly associated with the productive life of a writer, as described in this sub-context, during his or her residency in Los Angeles
- Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to the body of American literature
- Individual must have lived in or used the property during the period in which he or she achieved significance
- Contributions of individual writers must be compared to those of others who were active, successful, or influential in the same field
- Each property associated with an important writer should be compared with other properties associated with that individual to identify those resources that are good representatives of the person’s historic contributions
- For residential property types, the individual must have resided in the property during the period in which he/she achieved significance
- For multi-family, motel, or hotel properties, the apartment or room occupied by the person must be readable from the period of significance

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- Properties associated with the lives of living writers *may* be eligible, if the person's active life in the field of literature is over AND sufficient time has elapsed to assess both their field and their contribution in a historic perspective
- May be associated with individuals important in ethnic, cultural, LGBT, and/or women's history
- Retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance
- For the National Register, properties associated with individuals whose significant accomplishments date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional significance

Integrity Considerations:

- Retains sufficient integrity to convey significance
- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association the period of significance
- Some original materials may be altered or removed, particularly in cases where a property is not also evaluated for architectural significance under Criterion C/3/3
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- A good test for integrity is whether the significant writer associated with the resource would recognize it as it exists today

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APPENDIX A: DESIGNATED AND KNOWN RESOURCES ASSOCIATED WITH WRITERS AND RESIDENCY IN L.A.

This document includes designated and known historic resources identified in association with the “Literature: Writers and Residency in L.A., 1929-1980,” historic context and is not all inclusive. The list may be expanded over time to include resources identified through additional research and public input as well as resources dating from beyond 1980. More information on some of the resources on this list can be found in the historic context.

Known resources may be eligible for designation under local, state, and/or federal programs. However, inclusion in this list as a resource does not ensure eligibility. Properties must be fully evaluated under relevant criteria to determine if they meet significance and integrity thresholds.

Designated Resources Associated to Writers and Residency in Los Angeles

Name	Location	Property type	Comments
Chateau Marmont	8221 Sunset Blvd.	Commercial - Lodging - Hotel	HCM No. 151 Home of Sinclair Lewis
Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel	7000-7034 Hollywood Blvd.	Commercial - Lodging - Hotel	HCM No. 545; Listed on the National Register
Feuchtwanger House - Villa Aurora	520 Paseo Miramar	Residential - Single family	HCM No. 589
Raymond Chandler Square	Cahuenga Ave. and Hollywood Blvd.	Public Places - Squares	HCM No. 597
Nin-Pole Residence	2335 Hidalgo Ave.	Residential - Single family	HCM No. 892 Home of Anais Nin
Bukowski Court	5124 W Delongpre Ave.	Residential - Multi-family - Bungalow court	HCM No. 912
Venice West Café	7 E Dudley Ave.	Commercial - Food - Bar/Lounge	HCM No. 979 Coffee shop; hangout of beat poets; site of poetry readings; existed 1958-1966
Knickerbocker	1714 N Ivar St.	Commercial - Lodging - Apartment Hotel	Listed in the National Register. Home of James M. Cain; Home of Earl Stanley Gardener

Known Resources Associated to Writers and Residency in Los Angeles

Name	Location	Property type	Comments
Musso & Frank	6667 Hollywood Blvd.	Commercial - Food - Restaurant/tavern	Writer hangout

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Name	Location	Property type	Comments
	605 S Normandie Ave.	Commercial - Hotel	Home of Malcolm Lowry
Clark Hotel	Washington Blvd. and Central Ave.	Commercial - Lodging - Hotel	Home of Langston Hughes
Westwood Books	Broxton and Weyburn	Commercial - Retail	Writer hangout; Aldous Huxley and Thomas Mann
Louis Epstein's Pickwick Bookshop	Hollywood Blvd.	Commercial - Retail	Writer hangout
Stanley Rose's Bookshop	Hollywood Blvd.; Rossmore & 6th	Commercial - Retail	Writer hangout
Satyr Bookshop	Vine St./1649 Hudson	Commercial - Retail	Writer hangout
Beyond Baroque	681 Venice Blvd.	Institutional - Visual & Performing Arts - Art Center	"One of L.A.'s most unique and important centers for poetry, literature, and art"; non-profit arts center
Frederick Douglass House - Permanent site of Watts Writers Workshop		Institutional - Visual & Performing Arts - Art Center	
"House of Respect" (Watts)		Institutional - Visual & Performing Arts - Art Center	Residence and performance space for Watts 13
	1212 N Beverly Glen Blvd.	Residential	Home of Henry Miller
	12216 Shetland Ln.	Residential	Home of Raymond Chandler (during productive period) - still existing
	12704 Magnolia Blvd.	Residential	Home of Nathanael West
	1340 N Laurel Dr.	Residential	Home of Aldous Huxley
	1347 N Citrus Ave.	Residential	Home of Alfred Döblin 1942-1945
	1379 E Washington Blvd.	Residential	Home of Langston Hughes
	13827 Sunset Blvd.	Residential	Home of Lion Feuchtwanger
	14253 Sunset Blvd.	Residential	Home of Will Rogers
	1439 Stone Canyon Rd.	Residential	Home of Dalton Trumbo
	145 N Adelaide Dr.	Residential	Home of Christopher Isherwood and Don Bacardy

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Name	Location	Property type	Comments
	1802 E 103rd St.	Residential	Watts Happening Coffee House Cultural Center - Opened in furniture store after 1965 Watts riots
	1842 N Cherokee Ave.	Residential	Home of Alfred Döblin
	1870 Benedict Canyon Rd.	Residential	Home of Ludwig Marcuse
	2106 Lemoyne	Residential	Home of Frank Chin
	2741 El Roble Dr.	Residential	Home of John Steinbeck
	3052 N Lake Dr	Residential	Home of Upton Sinclair
	346 57th Ave.	Residential	Home of Robinson Jeffers
	415 S Ogden	Residential	Home of Diane Ward
	444 Ocampo Dr.	Residential	Home of Henry Miller
	4616 Greenwood Pl.	Residential	Home of Raymond Chandler (during productive period) - still existing
Casa de la Vista	5608 Briarcliff Rd.	Residential	Home of Will & Ariel Durant
	5734 Cazaux Dr.	Residential	Home of Nathanael West
	6233 Mulholland Hwy.	Residential	Home of Aldous Huxley
	6500 Yucca St.	Residential	Home of Leonhard Frank
	6520 Drexel Ave.	Residential	Home of Raymond Chandler (during productive period) - still existing
	6900 Los Tilos Rd.	Residential	Home of Franz Werfel and Anna Mahler-Werfel 1940-1942
	7136 Sycamore Trail	Residential	Home of Christopher Isherwood
	740 N King's Rd.	Residential	Home of Aldous Huxley
	826 S Berendo St.	Residential	Home of John Fante (1939 - year of publication of Ask the Dust)
	843 6th St.	Residential	Home of Katherine Anne Porter
	857 Iliff St.	Residential	Home of Raymond Chandler (during productive period) - still existing
	901 N Genesee St.	Residential	Home of Alfred Döblin 1942
	Franklin and Cherokee (corner)	Residential	Home of L. Frank Baum (Wizard of Oz)
Ellison Apartments	15 Paloma Ave.	Residential - Multi-family - Apartment	Home of John Thomas and Philomene Long (Poet Laureate of Venice); apartment was topic of poems
	117 Paloma Ave.	Residential - Single family	Home of Stuart Z. Perkoff

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Name	Location	Property type	Comments
	1260 N Wetherly Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Robert Craft
	145 1/2 S Doheny Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Aldous Huxley
	1461 Amalfi Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Vicki Baum 1933-1942
	1550 San Remo Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Thomas Mann
	1650 Amalfi Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Lion Feuchtwanger
	1744 Mandeville Canyon Rd.	Residential - Single family	Home of Lion Feuchtwanger
	1954 Argyle Ave.	Residential - Single family	Home of Berthold Brecht
	2041 Alvarado St.	Residential - Single family	Home of Carey McWilliams
	2060 Escarpa Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Martha Ronk
	2088 Mandeville Canyon Rd.	Residential - Single family	Home of Lion Feuchtwanger
	2245 Lakeshore Ave.	Residential - Single family	Home of John Thomas
	2477 Canyon Oak Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Vicki Baum
	2562 N Outpost Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Gore Vidal
	262 S Carmelina Ave.	Residential - Single family	Home of Salka Viertel; Home of Gina Kaus
	2966 Belden Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of James M. Cain
	301 S Swell Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Heinrich Mann 1942-1948; wife Nelly committed suicide her
	303 Grenola St.	Residential - Single family	Home of Emil Ludwig 1944-1945
	316 S Kentor	Residential - Single family	Home of Theodor Adorno
	325 Bel Air Rd.	Residential - Single family	Home of Dashiell Hammett
	333 Bel Air Rd.	Residential - Single family	Home of Emil Ludwig
	441 N Rockingham	Residential - Single family	Home of Thomas Mann 1940

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Name	Location	Property type	Comments
	5033 El Verano Rd.	Residential - Single family	Home of John Steinbeck from 1930 to 1934 while teaching part time at Occidental and working on novels. Built in 1880s; now red-tagged; not visible from street.
	689 Amalfi Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Lion Feuchtwanger
	701 Amalfi Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Aldous Huxley; Home of Emil Ludwig
	740 Amalfi Dr.	Residential - Single family	Home of Thomas Mann
	8021 Jovenita Canyon Rd.	Residential - Single family	Home of Robert Crosson