

THE CITY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

The city's "Americanness" has been disputed throughout US history. Pronounced dead in the late twentieth century, cities have enjoyed a renaissance in the twenty-first. Engaging the history of urban promise and struggle as represented in literature, film, and visual arts, and drawing on work in the social sciences, *The City in American Literature and Culture* examines the large and local forces that shape urban space and city life and the street-level activity that remakes culture and identities as it contests injustice and separation. The first two sections examine a range of city spaces and lives; the final section brings the city into conversation with Marxist geography, critical race studies, trauma theory, slow/systemic violence, security theory, posthumanism, and critical regionalism, with a coda on city literature and democracy.

KEVIN R. MCNAMARA, Professor of Literature at the University of Houston–Clear Lake, is editor of *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature* (2014) and *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of Los Angeles* (2010) and author of *Urban Verbs: Arts and Discourses of American Cities* (1996).

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AND CULTURE

Twenty-first-century America puzzles many citizens and observers. A frequently cited phrase to describe current partisan divisions is Lincoln's "A house divided against itself cannot stand," a warning of the perils to the Union from divisions generated by slavery. America seems divided in almost every way, on almost every attitude. Civic dialogue on issues often seems extremely difficult. America is an experiment always in process, a remarkable union of 300 million diverse people covering all races and faiths. As a forum in which ideologies and interpretations abound, Literary Studies has a role to play in explanation and analysis. The series **Cambridge Themes in American Literature and Culture** addresses the key cultural themes that have brought America to its current moment. It offers a summation of critical knowledge on key cultural themes as well as an intervention in the present moment. This series provides a distinctive, authoritative treatment of the key literary and cultural strains in American life while also pointing in new critical directions.

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-84196-2 — The City in American Literature and Culture
Edited by Kevin R. McNamara
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THE CITY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

EDITED BY
KEVIN R. MCNAMARA
University of Houston–Clear Lake



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
 New Delhi – 110025, India
 79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108841962
 DOI: 10.1017/9781108895262

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First published 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: McNamara, Kevin R., 1958– editor.

TITLE: The city in American literature and culture / edited by Kevin R. McNamara.

DESCRIPTION: New York : Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Series: Cambridge themes in American literature and culture | Includes index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2021007097 (print) | LCCN 2021007098 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108841962 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108815321 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108895262 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: American literature – History and criticism. | Cities and towns in literature. | City and town life in literature. | Cities and towns – Social aspects – United States. | Cities and towns – Political aspects – United States. | BISAC: LITERARY CRITICISM / American / General | LITERARY CRITICISM / American / General

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PS169.C57 C586 2021 (print) | LCC PS169.C57 (ebook) | DDC 810.9/3587309732–dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021007097>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021007098>

ISBN 978-1-108-84196-2 Hardback

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Acknowledgments

It is always a pleasure to work with Ray Ryan, Edgar Mendez, and the rest of the staff at Cambridge University Press, including, this time, Victoria Parrin, who guided the project from manuscript to print, and it was particularly exciting to work on what was at the time a series in the making. Preliminary discussions with Ray and feedback from the anonymous readers at each level of the review process helped sharpen the project's focus. Nothing, of course, did more for that goal than the superlative work of the chapters' authors; I am especially grateful for their goodwill, dedication, and willingness to entertain my occasional suggestions. Finally, I am very grateful to Sam Arnold-Boyd (Cascade Indexing) for the wonderful index that she supplied and to my colleagues on the Faculty Research Support Fund Committee at the University of Houston–Clear Lake for defraying its cost.

We thank Joan Annsfire for permission to use portions of “Strike Day in Oakland” (2011); Gina Ferrara for permission to use portions of “Where a Great Heron Wades,” published in *Amber Porch Light* (CW Books, 2013); Brenda Marie Osbey for permission to use portions of “Mother Catherine,” published in *From All Saints: New and Selected Poems* (LSU Press, 1997), Katherine Soniat for permission to use portions of “Topped Columns, Blue Sky and Sea” published in *Alluvial* (Bucknell University Press, 2001), the University of Illinois Press for permission to use lines from Norman R. Shapiro's translation of Camille Thierry, “You,” published in his book, *Creole Echoes: The Francophone Poetry of Nineteenth-Century Louisiana* (2004), and Elizabeth Guzman, on behalf of Sybil Kein, for permission to use portions of “Erzuli,” published in *Gumbo People* (Margaret Media, 1999). Lines from “Gae, Gae Soulange” from *Creole: The History and Legacy of Louisiana's Free People of Color*, edited by Sybil Kein, 2000, are used by permission granted by LSU Press. “New Orleans,” copyright 1983 by Joy Harjo, from *She Had Some Horses* by Joy Harjo, is used by permission of W. W. Norton and Company, Inc. Danez Smith, “Dinosaurs in the Hood”

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For permission to use Louis Lozowick's *59th Street Bridge, New York* (1922), many thanks are in order: to the Lozowick estate's executor, the Mary Ryan Gallery; to the Kunin Collection and especially its registrar, Jenny Sponberg, who kindly arranged to have the canvas photographed on short notice; Robert Cozzolino and Dan Dennehy at the Minneapolis Institute of Art for supplying the photograph; and to Jennifer Marshall, Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Minnesota, who answered an out-of-the-blue email and put the editor in touch with the people he needed to reach.

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