

Topic Page: [Styron, William, 1925–2006](#)

Summary Article: **Styron, William**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1925–2006, American novelist, b. Newport News, Va., grad. Duke, 1947. His fiction is often powerful, deeply felt, poetic, and elegiac. He became well known for his novel *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967; Pulitzer Prize), a fictional recreation of the 1831 slave rebellion in Virginia led by Nat Turner. Because Styron's account does not strictly adhere to historical fact and because he was a white man depicting a black man's experiences, the novel elicited harsh criticism, especially from African-American intellectuals. Styron's other novels include *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951), *Set This House on Fire* (1960), and the best-selling *Sophie's Choice* (1979; film, 1982), the post–World War II tale of a Polish emigré living in Brooklyn, N.Y., and struggling with her haunting history as an Auschwitz survivor. Styron also wrote short stories, novellas, a screenplay, and a play; *A Tidewater Morning: Three Tales from Youth* (1993) is a trilogy of autobiographical novellas. *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness* (1990) describes Styron's harrowing 1980s bout with clinical depression. Essays, reviews, and occasional pieces were collected in *This Quiet Dust and Other Writings* (1982), and mainly autobiographical essays in *Havanas in Camelot* (2008); his collected nonfiction was published as *My Generation* (2015).

See conversations ed. by J. L. W. West 3d (1985);

selected letters ed. by R. Styron, his wife (2012);

memoir by A. Styron, his daughter (2011);

biography by J. L. W. West 3d (1998);

studies by M. J. Friedman (1974), R. K. Morris and I. Malin, ed. (2d ed. 1981), A. D. Casciato and J.

L. W. West 3d, ed. (1982), J. K. Crane (1985), J. Ruderman (1987), S. L. Murthy (1988), S. Coale (1991), G. Cologne-Brookes (1995), E. Herion-Sarafidis (1995), and D. W. Ross, ed. (1995).

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Styron, William. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/styron_william_1925



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