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Boris Vian, Inventor of America

Marc Lapprand

During his short life, Boris Vian introduced American culture to France in his two favorite forms: jazz and literature. Having never crossed the Atlantic, he invented an imaginary America where his own passions thrived while remaining a lucid defender of the United States' enormous cultural contributions.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Marc Lapprand

Professeur titulaire · Marc D Lapprand · Université de Victoria · Canada

Marc Lapprand is a French literature modernist. His passion for the work and life of Boris Vian has led him to co-supervise the editing team of his Complete Works published by Fayard (15 volumes), and eventually to lead the editorial team of Vian's Complete Prose Works for Gallimard's prestigious "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade," (2 volumes, 2010). He is currently working on Oulipo. He also has developed an interest in evolutionary psychology and literary Darwinism.

Demobilized GIs and the American Forces Network kept Boris Vian (1920-1959) in touch with everything American culture exported in abundance after the Liberation, from jazz to crime novels and science fiction. The writer-musician-translator was very familiar with them, unlike most of the French, who had been cut off from the United States during the Occupation. [1] As early as adolescence, Vian relied on the culture of the place he called the *uhessa* for many of his artistic resources. Never having been there, he pictured the country, both its good and bad sides, through novels, movies, records, articles, travel narratives, jazz criticism and probably essays. He must have read Hugues Panassié's *Cinq mois à New York* (*Five Months in New York*, 1947), a collection of travel stories and jazz criticism, [2] and, among the host of writings on the excesses of American society, Georges Duhamel's *Scènes de la vie future* (*America the Menace: Scenes from the Life of the Future*, 1930). [3] Hence, a set of constructions built with fervor, conviction and imagination but not much concern for accuracy permeates his work and forged the funny, vibrant style that quickly became his trademark. But Vian was more an "inventor of America" than a cultural go-between. His America was all the more convincing because he knew it second-hand and reconstructed it with a poetic imagination more existential than political.

Vian, who never set foot in the United States, may have had unrealistic musings about America, but they never veered into idealism. While admiring some of its cultural products, he was not especially interested in the everyday lives of its citizens, as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were when they spent several months there in 1945 and 1946. His writings denounce the shortcomings for which the country is commonly known, starting with racism and puritanism. Moreover, he did not have to leave France to enjoy what mattered to him most: American jazz and motion pictures. They, as well as, of course, literature, captured his imagination throughout his life. To a certain extent, his prose work, theater and songs were Americanized. Was this a matter of cultural appropriation or Americanization?

Vian was never truly an Americanophile. With caustic humor, he clearly expressed everything he liked as well as loathed, or at least made him dubious about, a transatlantic culture that enjoyed a surge of esteem after the Second World War. Americans were perceived as liberators and bringers of material well-being. That is how Vian became an inventor of America, or, as Leslie Fiedler said a decade after his death, an "imaginary American." [4] He did this in two different yet complementary areas: jazz as a musician and a knowledgeable critic, and literature as a translator. After the war, Vian was active on many fronts with no apparent concern for intellectual consistency. He was a novelist, a jazz musician and journalist, an emcee at the famous *caves* of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and the editor of "Chroniques du menteur" ("The Liar's Chronicles") in *Les Temps modernes* (1946-1947) with the temporary but kindly approval of Sartre, alias Jean-Sol Partre in *L'Écume des jours* (*Froth on the Daydreams*, 1947). [5] Vian even invented an American writer named Vernon Sullivan, claiming to be his translator while actually writing the novels himself.

(Jazz) music soothes the savage beast

Vian suffered from a heart condition; jazz gave him the will to live. He grew up in an affluent family that enjoyed every kind of music, which filled their fashionable villa in Ville-d'Avray near Paris. The acquisition of his first trumpet at the age of 14 set him on the path to his future passion. Jazz soon became a family affair: the three brothers, Boris, Alain and Lélio, often played together and at dances in a ballroom on the family property. It was still the age of swing. In April 1939, Vian attended his first Duke Ellington concert at the Palais de Chaillot: from then on there was no turning back. Before long, Ellington became his idol. [6] In July 1948, Ellington even stayed with him at his home in Paris and was the godfather of his daughter Carole, born April 12 the same year. Vian named the ill-fated heroine of *Froth on the Daydream*

after the title character in Ellington's 1920s piece *Chloe (Song of the Swamp)*. The version he listened to was Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's adaptation from the early 1940s. The warm welcome that the great American jazz musicians received in France made Vian feel all the more dismayed at how little the American GIs with whom he sometimes jammed knew about them. These experiences inspired him to write a semi-autobiographical short story, *Martin m'a téléphoné* (*Martin Called Me*), in October 1945. [7]

"He loved jazz, he lived for jazz, he listened to jazz, he expressed himself in jazz," said French crooner Henri Salvador. [8] Vian helped to popularize the genre in France in two complementary ways: first as a trumpet player in well-known bands; second, and primarily, as a music journalist. His hundreds of contributions to the newspaper *Combat* and magazines *Jazz Hot*, *La Gazette du Jazz* and *Jazz-News*, among others, fill three full volumes of his complete works. [9] Lucien Malson, who in the 1950s edited *Jazz Hot* with Vian, André Hodeir and Frank Ténot, was the first to publish his jazz columns after his death. In the foreword, he wrote:

> *For a long time—I want to say since adolescence—Boris Vian has cared more about jazz than anything else. If Vian the writer loses interest in novels one day, Vian the critic will love jazz for the rest of his life.* [25]

In January 1957, Vian became the artistic director for jazz and variety music at the Philips record label, where he had created the "Jazz pour tous" LP collection two years earlier. He wrote many liner notes about artists ranging from Miles Davis to Kid Ory, Mahalia Jackson (whom he called the world's greatest gospel singer), Count Basie, Erroll Garner, Louis Armstrong and his quintet and, of course, Ellington. All the great names and cutting-edge styles including be-bop and cool jazz are there, not to mention all the singles that were also recorded.



Louis Armstrong, record cover from the "Jazz for All" collection

Source: Collection Christelle Gonzalo



Sydney Bechet, record cover from the "Jazz for All" collection

Source: Collection Christelle Gonzalo

What is striking about Vian's stance on the cause of black jazz musicians is his form of racial purism. He defended their cause as an oppressed people, as Mezz Mezzrow did in *Really The Blues* (1946). In April 1948, he wrote in *Combat*:

> *The problem is as follows: black music is increasingly burdened by white elements that are sometimes sympathetic but always superfluous, or at least advantageously replaceable by black elements. Must we continue to congratulate, criticize, encourage or excite the whites in question? Or must we simply advise them to hang themselves by their suspenders? [...] In theory, I was all for integrated groups, but I've come to realize how selfish this is. Of course it's great to play with blacks. But who benefits from it? Certainly not them.* [26]

A few days later in *Jazz Hot* he wrote, "Call me a racist, but I insist that whites will never be equal to blacks in jazz." [10]

Vian backtracked on this radical position later, but took the issue so much to heart that he called Madeleine Gautier and Marcel Duhamel's French translation of Mezz Mezzrow's book *Really the Blues*, published as *La Rage de vivre* (1951), "racial treason":

> *Comments on the translation by Madeleine Gautier, "the empress of French blues" English text: Now, when your hair drags the ground—bucks are flyin' around*. Gautier's text: When your hair grows to drag on the ground, when dollars fly like butterflies. Remarks (for example): Where is "grows to drag on the ground" in the original? [...] As for the butterflies, it's a poetic addition by Mame [sic] Gautier. She could have also put pterodactyls, because it's not in the text. No, madam, it is not serious work to betray the black race.* [27]

The humor of this remark defuses its potentially serious character, but Vian, while showing his broadmindedness, sometimes put himself into awkward positions. He wrote:

> *Art. 1. THIS PRESS REVIEW IS NOT A PULPIT FROM WHICH I THUNDER. Art. 2. WHEN I AM HARD ON A READER, IT IS OBVIOUSLY FOR LAUGHS.* [28]

However, this laughing matter may have had another meaning a few years earlier in a reply to a reader:

> *I leave you here, and without wanting to give you any advice, let me say again that ignoring this letter or answering it on the fly, as you do most of the time, would be very embarrassing for you with regard to many people [which ones, for God's sake?]. In any case, it would be judging you once again.*
> *Dear Schauenberg, if you knew how little I care about being judged by people who do not understand what they read...* [29]

Whatever his polemical positions about jazz, its performers and its faithful fans, Vian managed to work them into his earliest works of fiction. The first, *Vercoquin and the Plankton* (1946), [11] was a novel read by Queneau, who opened up the doors of Gallimard to him. The hilarious adventures of his friend Jacques Loustalot, aka "the Major", who became a surly character in his first fictional works, can be read as a guide to planning the kind of surprise parties that the Zazous of the time used to throw. Parties take up half the novel—parts one and four, respectively: "Swinging at the Major's" and "The Jitterbugs' Passion". But this filiation thrives especially in *Froth on the Daydream*. In his introduction to the Fayard edition, Gilbert Pestureau called it "an Ellingtonian masterpiece". "It is mainly jazz that nourishes both the lyricism of *Froth on the Daydream* and the poignant strength of the unhappy but eternal love story," he wrote. [12] Vian continued in this vein, but differently, in *Les Fourmis *(*The Ants*, 1949), a collection of 11 short stories shot through with jazz. Nine pay tribute to musicians: Sydney Bichet by referencing *Didn't He Ramble* in "Les Fourmis" ("The Ants"); Louis Armstrong (*My Sweet*) in "Les bons élèves" ("The Good Pupils"); Billy Strayhorn (*Clementine*) in "Le Voyage à Khonostrov" ("The Journey to Khonostrov"); Rex Stewart (*Without a Song*) in "L'Écrevisse" ("The Crayfish"); Muggsy Spanier (*Lonesome Road*) in "La route déserte" ("The Deserted Road"); Jack Teagarden (who becomes Jacques Théjardin in "L'Écrevisse") in "Blues pour un chat noir" ("Blues for a black cat"); Bix Beiderbecke in "Le Brouillard" ("The Fog"), "who died of it" (an allusion to *In a Mist*); Johnny Hodges (*Blue Goose*) in the eponymous "L'Oie bleue"; and Fats Waller (*Ain't Misbehavin'*) in "Le Figurant" ("The Extra"). A subtle game is going on here, for the reader can only discover the allusion by the French translation of the song's title (*In a Mist* for *Le Brouillard*) or by the French adaptation of the performer's name (Jack Teagarden for Jacques Théjardin). All of these songs predate the war, yet Vian was a fierce advocate of bebop. How can this choice be

understood? One hypothesis is that he distinguished emerging jazz from its more classical antecedents still being played by the champions of the New Orleans, Chicago and swing styles, which would be seen as more suitable for his fiction.

American jazz musician and writer Mike Zwerin, who considered Vian one of the best jazz critics of his time, wrote, "In a way, Boris Vian [...] was an American living in a Frenchman's skin." [13] It is worth noting that New York radio station WNEW chose Vian to introduce jazz records made in France in the 1930s and '40s. He wrote the humorous texts in English for the 45 or so programs he recorded with American radio host Ned Brandt. Sadly, none of the recordings are known to exist, but Gilbert Pestureau tracked down the manuscripts and typescripts in the Boris Vian Foundation archives and published them in *Jazz in Paris* (Pauvert, 1997). For example: "No. 23. This is your old pal Boris Vian saying bonjour from Paris and bringing you more comic jazz from France." [14]

Boris Vian vs. Vernon Sullivan

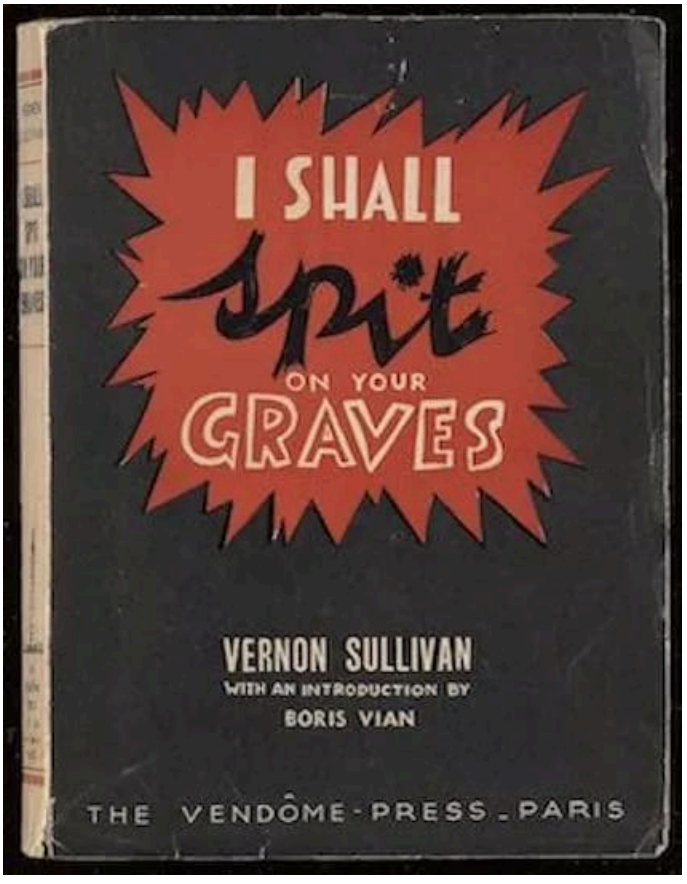
In 1946, Vian invented a mixed-race American writer named Vernon Sullivan and published *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes* as his translation of Sullivan's *I Spit on Your Graves,* a thriller so dark and steamy that, it was claimed, no American publisher would go near it. Hastily written in August, it was released by Scorpion in November. [15] When the truth came to light, what began as a hoax to boost Scorpion's sales became a runaway bestseller ensuring that Vian's name would go down in posterity. The spoof features all the earmarks of the hard-boiled novel: violence, tough guys, murder and sex. But it also allowed Vian-Sullivan to address racism, an issue he deeply cared about. The protagonist, Lee Anderson, wants to shockingly, not to say sadistically, avenge his younger brother's lynching by whites. He has the advantage of being light-skinned enough to "pass". To research the book, Vian read "Who is a Negro?", an article in *Collier's* magazine (August 1946) about light-skinned blacks who, like the fictional author Vernon Sullivan, go through life as whites. [16]

Easily blending in with the upstanding residents of Buckton, the fictional town where the novel is set, Anderson searches for the ideal expiatory victims. He finds them in the Asquith sisters, whom he rapes and murders. The description of the crime is blood-curdling: *I Spit on Your Graves* is worlds away from the romantic *Froth on the Daydream* written just a few months earlier. Anderson breaks all the rules of civilized behavior by taking his rage out on two innocent victims. The mask of the false translator makes anything possible, including peppering the novel with word-for-word "translations" of Americanisms ("Sûr!" for "Sure!", "Sainte fumée!" for "Holy smoke!", etc.). Anderson can be seen as a metaphor for Vian's position as what Sharon Monteith calls a "white negro" in the world of letters of the time. Monteith compares Richard Wright and Vian, who read Wright before creating the pen name Vernon Sullivan. In many ways, she argues, *I Spit on Your Graves* "was prescient of the creative dialectic that emerged in a transatlantic exchange of adventure stories and melodramas characterized by a love of American popular culture." [17]

Vian translated "Down By the Riverside" and "Bright Morning Star", Wright's harrowing short stories about the plight of blacks in the Deep South. Sartre invited Wright, the grandson of a slave, to write for *Les Temps modernes* after the war. Vian/Sullivan was already betting on two sides, real and false translator, as if it were a game. In *The Empire Builders*, which premiered at the Récamier Theater in December 1959, the father says, "There are times I wonder if I'm not playing with words. [...] Maybe that's what they're

for." But the game is a dangerous one because the fictional Sullivan eclipsed the real Vian when *Froth on the Daydream* came out. The novel fell into almost total oblivion until the 1960s, and by then it was too late for the author to reap the benefits.

It was, then, also through literature, more specifically satire, that Vian became the inventor of America by creating Sullivan. This literary act fit in with his positions as a musician: he protested the fact that blacks were oppressed by an ultra-racist system (the theme of *I Spit*) and forced to perform before segregated audiences. In February 1947, as people began talking about the novel, Vian was preparing the retro-translation of *J'irai cracher* into English, which came out as *Shall Spit on Your Graves*. The translator was his friend Milton Rosenthal, an ex-GI and occasional American correspondent for *Les Temps modernes*. After returning to the United States, Rosenthal corresponded regularly with Vian, giving him detailed insights on the everyday lives of Americans, which, naturally, were an important source of information for him.



I Shall Spit on Your Graves, Vernon Sullivan, Paris: The Vendôme Press, 1948

Source: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Digital Collections, Yale University



J'irai cracher sur vos tombes, Vernon Sullivan, translated from the American by Boris Vian, Paris: Les éditions du Scorpion, 1948.

Source: Librairie La Jument Verte

In April 1948, Vendôme Press released *I Shall Spit on Your Graves* in English with almost the same cover as the French edition. Amusingly, in June 1947 Hélène Maurice-Bokanovski published *Le Grand Horloger* by Kenneth Fearing, the real translation of *The Big Clock* (1946) by Vian. Clearly impressed by his translations, Maurice-Bokanovski wrote to him on December 3, 1946:

> *Sir: I have read your translations with great interest, particularly those of Vernon Sullivan, and wonder if you would be willing to translate for us an American book by Kenneth Fearing, The Big Clock, which we intend to publish at Éditions des Nourritures terrestres.* [30]

It is noteworthy that Vian's dual career as a false and a real translator began at about the same time, and that he was particularly successful in the latter. He translated 11 books, 11 short stories and three plays, all from English with the exception of two plays by Strindberg. After *The Big Clock*, he translated two major Raymond Chandler novels with help from his wife Michelle, who, unlike her husband, was a real Anglicist: *The Big Sleep* and *The Lady in the Lake* (with the note "Translated from the American by Boris and Michèle [sic] Vian"), both of which appeared in La Série noire in 1948. Michelle Vian recounted that, one day when her husband dropped by at Gallimard, Marcel Duhamel asked him to choose a novel to translate from a selection of titles; a month later the job was done. [18] In the 1950s, Vian translated science fiction short stories and two novels by Alfred Van Vogt that have become cult favorites: *The World of A* and *The Pawns of Null-A*, which Rayon fantastique published in 1953 and 1957. He then became known as a connoisseur of American popular culture. After *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes*, he wrote three more novels

under the pseudonym Vernon Sullivan: *Les Morts ont tous la même peau* (*The Dead All Have the Same Skin*, 1947), *Et on tuera tous les affreux* (*To Hell with the Ugly*, 1948) and *Elles se rendent pas compte* (*They Do Not Realize*, 1950). *The Dead All Have the Same Skin* was a success, but the other two sold poorly and print runs were reduced.

As the Vernon Sullivan hoax came to light, Vian wrote his second "noir" novel, *The Dead All Have the Same Skin*, published by Scorpion in September 1947. In a way, it is a mirror image of *I Spit on Your Graves*, in which Lee Anderson is a black man with white skin. In *The Dead All Have the Same Skin*, a blackmailer tries to convince Dan Parker, a white man, that he has black blood. Vian was increasingly painting himself into a corner, continuing to pass off his novels as translations. In a scathing afterword to the second Sullivan novel, he attacked critics incapable of seeing *I Shall Spit* for what it was: "They say nothing about the story itself, the 200 printed pages," he wrote. "It is not that book in particular. It is all of them. That is what they call reviewing a book. It is bewildering." [19] However, in "Les nègres et l'obscénité en littérature" ("Negroes and Obscenity in Literature") an article published in *Les Lettres françaises* (July 25, 1947), Joseph Zobel, the author of *La Rue Case Nègres*, accused Vian of trickery and bad faith. "*I Spit on Your Graves* is neither a Negro novel nor an American one; neither pornographic nor obscene," he wrote. "It is a lie, a hoax, a piece of demagogy." [20] Vian retorted: "An individual claiming to be a black man from Martinique has stated that no black person wrote this book."

Not everybody was as clever as Zobel. Duhamel, the founder of Série Noire, fell for the hoax:

> *One day Boris handed me a manuscript and asked me to tell him if I thought it was original or a translation from the American. I read it. It supposedly takes place in Harlem and the systematic violence, a certain attitude towards blacks, seemed made up and put me off a little. But to me, Vernon Sullivan, the author, is definitely American. Boris looked quite content and Les Éditions du Scorpion published the book a short time afterwards. I Shall Spit on Your Graves was a bestseller! He got me.* [31]

Oddly, Vian translated only one book about music: Dorothy Baker's *Young Man with a Horn* (Gallimard, 1951), a romanticized biography of Bix Beiderbecke. The jazz cornetist was very important for Vian and inspired his trumpet playing. Vian was also an inventor of America in June 1946, when he submitted his third "Liar's Chronicle" to *Les Temps modernes*, "Impressions d'Amérique". It was rejected by Merleau-Ponty (Vian often found him too "pontyficating"), and for good reason. The "liar" pulled out all the stops for this special issue on the United States set to come out in the autumn. He wrote about meeting André Breton in Harlem, where he was living in exile disguised as a black man and speaking the local jive: "It is a loss for Surrealism," said his travelling companion Alexandre Astruc. His provocations in this issue of *Les Temps modernes*, which was published to summarize Sartre's long, recent trip to the United States, were bound to make waves. "We waited all morning outside the hotel door hoping to see a nigger get lynched, but New Yorkers are decidedly soft. They say there are still some tough guys in Nevada. We'll try to get out there. Our bags are packed." [21] Vian's translation of Wright's short story "Down by the Riverside" was published in *L'Âge nouveau* the same year. [22] Apparently, it did not bother him to have it both ways: on the one hand the serious translation of an important black writer, on the other an article with totally irreverent black humor (no pun intended). By inventing his America, Vian displayed his total freedom from the cultural norms of his time. It should not be forgotten that postwar France saw a surge of patriotism and morality exemplified by Daniel Parker and his Cartel d'action sociale et morale, which tried to have Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn* as well as Vernon Sullivan's first two

novels banned. While the United States captured the French imagination, it could also be perceived as an exporter of obscenity (if not pornography) and so-called "savage" music. Vian challenged the social climate and brandished his "Americanism" for what he believed was a good cause, i.e. the total emancipation of the individual. Fiercely anti-militarist, he wrote *L'Équarrissage pour tous* (*Slaughter for All*, 1947), a play that mocked D-Day but earned him admission to the Collège de Pataphysique to great fanfare. In 1955, he sang "Le Déserteur" ("The Deserter") on stage, sparking protests in some provincial cities. During his tour, Vian met with such a hostile reception in Dinard that he called off his concert in Deauville. He wrote an open letter to Paul Faber, a municipal councilor of the Seine, who wanted to censor the song, which was eventually banned on the radio. The mood in France was tense and divisive: after losing one colonial war in Indochina, the country was bogged down in another in Algeria.

As rock'n'roll swept the United States off its feet and Elvis Presley shook his hips on television, Henri Salvador, Vian and Michel Legrand, alias Big Mike, who had just come back from America, wrote four hilarious spoofs of the genre in early June 1956: "Rock'n'roll mops", "Dis-moi qu'tu m'aimes rock", "Rock-hoquet" and "Va t'faire cuire un œuf, man". [23] But Vian did not think highly of the genre. "If you want to adapt an Elvis Presley song," he wrote, "you may as well not bother and give the job to an illiterate person to respect the spirit of the model." [24] His invention of America was a parody of a non-existent original. In the same spirit, two years later Henri Salvador recorded "Le Blouse du dentiste" with lyrics by Vian.

In the afterword of *The Dead All Have the Same Skin*, Vian not only lashed out at an inept, if not prudish, critic, but above all proclaimed his freedom as an individual and an artist-creator. The four Sullivan novels take place across America from the South to New York, California and Washington, D.C. So what would be the point of going there since, as Raymond Roussel said, "imagination is everything for me"? A free-thinker, Vian had enough information to construct his own America. Was his vision of it so far off?

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NOTES

1. I would like to thank Philippe Gumplowicz for his helpful rereading of this article.
2. Hugues Panassié, *Cinq mois à New York* (Paris: Corrêa, 1947).
3. Georges Duhamel, *Scènes de la vie future* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1930).
4. Sharon Monteith, "How bigger mutated: Richard Wright, Boris Vian and the "Bloody paths through which we pushed logic into dread", 161. In Richard Gray, Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (ed.), *Transatlantic Exchanges: The American South in Europe—Europe in the American South* (Vienna: Verlag ÖAW, 2007). Unless mentioned otherwise, the translations are by the author.
5. Boris Vian, *L'Écume des jours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947)
6. Marc Lapprand, *V comme Vian* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2006), 51-58.
7. Christelle Gonzalo, François Roulmann, *Anatomie du Bison, chrono-bio-bibliographie de Boris Vian* (Paris: Éditions des Cendres, 2018), 34.
8. Comments made by Henri Salvador shortly after his death and reported by Noël Arnaud in "Les Vies parallèles de Boris Vian", *Bizarre*, n^o^ 39-40 (1966): 97.
9. Boris Vian, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Fayard, 1999-2003), volumes 6, 7, 8.
10. *Jazz Hot*, April 22, 1948, reprinted in Boris Vian, *Œuvres completes*, volume 6, 94.
11. Boris Vian, *Vercoquin et le plancton* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946).
12. Boris Vian, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 2, 14.
13. Boris Vian, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 7, 249.
14. Boris Vian, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 7, 316.
15. Boris Vian, *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes* (Paris: Éditions du Scorpion, 1946).
16. Boris Vian, *Œuvres romanesques complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2010), volume 1, 1158-1159.
17. Monteith, "How bigger mutated", 161-162.
18. Private communication to the author.
19. Boris Vian, *Œuvres romanesques*, volume 1, 824-825.
20. Reprinted in Noël Arnaud, *Dossier de l'affaire "J'irai cracher sur vos tombes"* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1974), 72.
21. Boris Vian, *Œuvres romanesques*, volume 1, 1058.
22. Richard Wright, "Là-bas près de la rivière", translation by Boris Vian, *L'Âge nouveau*, n^o ^27 (1946), 6-40.
23. Boris Vian, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 11, 26.
24. Boris Vian, *En avant la zizique*, reprinted in *Œuvres complètes*, volume 12, 63.
25. Boris Vian, *Chroniques de jazz* (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1971 [1967]), 8.
26. Boris Vian, "Le jazz: Faut-il zigouiller les Blancs?", *Combat*, April 1, 1948, reprinted in Boris Vian, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 7, 73.
27. *Jazz Hot*, October 1954, reprinted in Boris Vian, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 6, 439-440.
28. *Jazz Hot*, July-August 1958, reprinted in Boris Vian, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 6, 604 (in capitals in the original text).
29. *Jazz Hot*, avril 1954, reprinted in Boris Vian, *Œuvres completes*, volume 6, 417.
30. This letter is reproduced in facsimile in *Obliques*, n^o^ 8-9 (1976): 291.
31. Marcel Duhamel, *Raconte pas ta vie* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1972), 555. Duhamel confused Sullivan's first novel with *The Dead All Have the Same Skin*, which is set in New York.