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| **Jolas, Eugene (1894-1952)** |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Eugene Jolas was a journalist, editor, translator, and poet who embodied the transatlantic character of modernism between the World Wars. The task of *transition*, the Paris-based literary journal he edited with his wife Maria Jolas and others between 1927 and 1938, was to translate European culture for Americans, and vice-versa. *transition*’s list of contributors reads like a who’s who of the international avant-garde. Jolas’ wealth of contacts in the literary world grew out of his previous job writing the column “Rambles Through Literary Paris” for the *Chicago Tribune* Paris edition. The romantic, imagination-driven strain of modernism that Jolas promoted led to a close relationship with Expressionism and Surrealism. Publishing non-Anglophone experimental writing in translation or (after 1933) in the original language was a major focus of *transition*. Jolas also provided English translations of key European modernist texts outside the magazine, including Alfred Döblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1931). |
| Eugene Jolas was a journalist, editor, translator, and poet who embodied the transatlantic character of modernism between the World Wars. Born in New Jersey but raised in the borderland of Alsace-Lorraine by his French father and German mother, and moving frequently between Europe and America from 1909 until he settled in Paris in the 1920s, Jolas was a translator in every sense of the word. The task of *transition*, the Paris-based literary journal he edited with his wife Maria Jolas and others between 1927 and 1938, was to translate European culture for Americans, and vice-versa. (*Bridge* and *Continents* were among the other names he considered for the magazine.) *transition*’s list of contributors reads like a who’s who of the international avant-garde. Jolas’ wealth of contacts in the literary world grew out of his previous job writing the column “Rambles Through Literary Paris” for the *Chicago Tribune* Paris edition. The romantic, imagination-driven strain of modernism that Jolas promoted led to a close relationship with Expressionism and Surrealism. Publishing non-Anglophone experimental writing in translation or (after 1933) in the original language was a major focus of *transition*. Jolas also provided English translations of key European modernist texts outside the magazine, including Alfred Döblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1931).  Throughout the 1930s, Jolas promoted the search for a new literary language. His numerous books of poetry, including *The Language of Night* (1932), *Angels and Demons* (1937), and *Vertical* (1938), reflect this search for new modes of expression. In *transition*, this concern was summed up in the “Revolution of the Word” manifesto of 1929. James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* (1939), serialized for more than a decade in the magazine as “Work in Progress”, also set the tone for linguistic experimentation. The Jolases were close friends and supporters of Joyce, contributing to the genesis of *Finnegans Wake* and later helping the author and his family escape from Paris to Switzerland in 1940. Following his death in 1941, Maria Jolas even acted for a time as Joyce’s executor. During the Second World War, Jolas served in the Psychological Warfare Division, and in the postwar period he led efforts to reestablish a free press in Germany. The Eugene and Maria Jolas Papers are held in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University.  Link: http://bit.ly/L7luqN  Jolas' papers in the Beinecke |
| Further reading:  (Jolas)  (Jolas, Eugene Jolas: Critical Writings, 1924-1951)  (McMillan)  (Perloff) |