**Cope, (Robert Knox) Jack (1913 – 1991)**

Molly Hall, University of Rhode Island

**Young Jack Cope**

(url: http://www.literarytourism.co.za/index.php?

option=com\_content&view=article&id=60:jack-cope&catid=13:authors&Itemid=28)

‘Jack’ Cope was a South African novelist, poet, editor, and short story writer. Born June 3, 1913 in Mooi River, Natal, South Africa, he spent his early career as a local journalist in Durban before moving to London, England as a foreign political correspondent. As a pacifist, he met with hostility there during the years of World War II and returned demoralized to South Africa to work as a cultural critic and editor for an anti-Apartheid newspaper, *The Guardian*, in Cape Town until 1955. After leaving the newspaper, he separated from his wife of sixteen years and began his infamous affair with South African poet Ingrid Jonker in the early 1960s. During this time he also became the editor of *Contrast,* a bilingual literary magazine in English and Afrikaans, continuing as editor there for twenty years until 1980.

During that time, he was also the editor of several volumes of South African poetry, and his book *The Dawn Comes Twice* (1969) was banned by the government. Best known for his novels and short stories, he wrote of the racial history of South Africa, focusing on events such as the Bambata Rebellion in 1906 in *The Fair House* (1955). His later work depicts the fight for racial equality by Black South Africans against the white population in power whose efforts to erode Black culture resulted in Apartheid amongst other institutionalized forms of racism. Returning to England in 1980, he continued to publish. Unlike many of his peers, he had chosen to spend the bulk of his productive years in South Africa, rather than retreating to the comfort of exile in England or America. His creative and editorial work helped to shape contemporary South African literature. Though most of his work focused on the racial injustices of South African politics, he occasionally explored themes more akin to those of his modernist peers such as loneliness and isolation. Cope passed away in Hertfordshire, England on May 1, 1991.

**Selected List of Works**

Novels

*Marie: A South African Satire* (1948)

*The Fair House* (1955)

*The Golden Oriole* (1958)

*The Road To Ysterberg: A Novel* (1959)

*Albino* (1964)

*The Dawn Comes Twice* (1969)

*The Rain-Maker* (1971)

*The Student of Zend* (1972)

*My Son Max* (1977)

Short Story Collections

*The Tame Ox* (1960)

*The Man Who Doubted and Other Stories* (1967)

*Alley Cat and Other Stories* (1973)

*Selected Stories* (1986)

*Tales of the Trickster Boy: Stories of the Trickster Boy Hlakanyana and His Adventures in the Great World Retold from the Original Folk-Tales* (1990)

**Further Reading**

Cornwell, Gareth, Dirk Klopper, and Craig Mackenzie (2012) *The Columbia Guide to South*

*African Literature in English Since 1945*, New York: Columbia UP.

Haresnape, Geoffrey (1989) ‘Belief in Song: Jack Cope and South African Poetry in English,’

*Contrast: South African Literary Journal*, 17(3), 44-52.

Maughan-Brown, David (1987) ‘The Image of the Crowd in South African Fiction,’ *English in*

*Africa*, 14(1), 1-20.

Zug, James (2007) *The Guardian: The History of South Africa’s Extraordinary Anti-Apartheid*

*Newspaper*, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State UP.