

STUDIES IN TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE

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Abstract. Just as in fiction, discursive strategies in history can reveal the very nature of a project. The positivist historiography that prevailed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries regarded historical facts as givens. Accordingly, it held as its ideal of writing the objective text, that is, the text from which the historian's mediation would be carefully erased. The New History, on the other hand, considers all research to be grounded in a researcher and seeks to indicate by various means that the text does not generate itself. In *Carnival in Romans*, for example, Le Roy Ladurie explicitly resorts to various facets of the "I": that of the *histor*, going about the job of uncovering the evidence; that of the commentator, providing historical parallels and explanations; and even that of the emotional self (Barthes' *personne passionnelle*), making judgments on events and people in the narrative. These changes in writing conventions point to the emergence of a new historical paradigm. At the same time, they overturn the view of the historical text as a non-problematic vehicle for reporting "reality"; this text, for the New Historians, becomes a construct, and is presented as such. (PC)

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Abstract. Most critics of Marguerite Yourcenar largely ignore the existence of the complex network of prefaces and postfaces which accompanies her fiction. On the basis of the success of her historical reconstitutions and of the classical perfection of her style they characterize her work either as the best illustration of a sexless literature or as a case of denial of femininity. But her prefaces cannot be read simply as an exposition of her thinking about history or as a linear history of her writing. While an authoritative voice exposes her method and asserts a will to aesthetic perfection, the writer as historical subject tends to efface this

authority by insisting on the details and accidents that accompany every beginning and every genesis. The will to historical knowledge leads her to expose multiple lines of historicity which reveal, in the fragmented writing of the prefaces, the impossibility of maintaining the fiction of a unified subject. Her *cogito* could not be "I write, therefore I am," but "I write, therefore I am other." (CG)

**History and His-Story in André Malraux's *La Corde et les souris*.
Lawrence D. Kritzman 57**

Abstract. In *La Corde et les souris* Malraux attempts to overcome human transience and mortality by memorializing the ephemeral through the artifice of writing. The rhetoric of the self-portrait takes the form of a historical narrative in which the relationship of history to memory as textual archive affords the Malrucian subject a "reprieve" by effacing the inherent status of contingency. The text thus becomes a veritable cultural mausoleum that sublates the implicit negation of death and allows the author to become more than a conscience without memory. (LDK)

**Paulhan Before Blanchot: From Terror to Letters Between the Wars.
Steven Ungar 69**

Abstract. Readers of Blanchot's writings make up at least three generations which, in turn, point to the relevance of locating his practices of modernity in relation to literary and social history. An initial inquiry sets Blanchot's early writings against those of Jean Paulhan in the 1936 period of the Popular Front, rather than in the early part of the Second World War, as is commonly supposed. By pushing the early writings back to the period between the wars, we can better understand the place of political concerns in Blanchot's subsequent narratives and essays. (SU)

**Toward an Analysis of Fascist Fiction: The Contemptuous Narrator
in the Works of Brasillach, Céline and Drieu la Rochelle.
Mary Jean Green 81**

Abstract. Attempts to analyze the nature of French fascist literature have often foundered on the difficulties of defining fascism as a political ideology and on the apparent heterogeneity of the writers themselves. This paper seeks to discern the traces of political ideology in the fiction of Brasillach, Céline and Drieu la Rochelle, the three principal French fascist novelists of the 1930s, through an

examination of the literary techniques used in the works themselves. In this reading, the feature common to the texts is not the expression of a collective enthusiasm often identified with fascism but rather the repeated use of a distanced, even contemptuous, narrative voice. This technique can be related to a recognized feature of fascist ideology, a spirit of social hierarchy and antiegalitarianism, and serves to distinguish these texts written under the sign of fascism from the fiction of the same period inspired by an ideology of the Left. (MJG)

Forgetting to Remember: *Anamnesis* and History in J. M. G. Le Clézio's *Désert*.

Kathleen White Smith 99

Abstract. Unlike most of Le Clézio's previous works, *Désert* has a specific historical framework. The story of the young boy Nour records the struggle of the Saharaoui people of the western Sahara to claim their land from the French invaders of the early twentieth century. A second narrative, set in the present, continues that story through the experiences of Lalla: unlike the story of her predecessor, the narrative in which she figures has no clear reference to the current, militant political situation established in the western Sahara by the independence movement known as Polisario. Containing both story and document, text and context, Le Clézio's novel offers a lesson in reading for history in a fictional text. Through the notion of *anamnesis*, a term prominent in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory as well as in mythic thought about memory, the two narratives come into focus as a single historical presence. Each story serves as a subtext for the other in an intratextual reading of the novel. The meaning of the early struggle for freedom emerges in the (re)telling of that history in the narrative of Lalla. Each new "reading" of history is an interpretation that becomes itself a projection of a new story, a new form of the desire for meaning, through another narrative. Le Clézio's most recent novel is both an entry into history and a witness to the historical process. (KWS)

Language, the Uncanny, and the Shapes of History in Claude Simon's *The Flanders Road*.

Lynn A. Higgins 117

Abstract. Asking whether it is possible to read *The Flanders Road* both as text and as history, the essay studies repetitions that structure the novel as they relate to historical events evoked therein, from the Revolution to the Algerian War. The tangled and looped itinerary of a cavalry retreat finds its analog in the narrative

“line”; generic variations emerge when (hi)stories are told again and again; these, and even certain kinds of wordplay make the novel, and ultimately history, seem uncanny. But it is the novel’s self-conscious strangeness, as it enfolds historical knowledge, that constitutes a commentary on how history is told and even how it is experienced. (LAH)