L’AFFAIRE MORAND

In 1959, the newly (re)elected President of France Charles de Gaulle blocked the candidature of the writer Paul Morand to the Académie française, warning that he would take the unprecedented step of exercising his right of absolute veto should Morand be elected to that august assembly. The scandal that erupted around the “Affaire Morand,” led in the Académie by the writer François Mauriac, was based on Morand’s collaboration with the Vichy Government during the Occupation of France. The scandal flooded the national newspapers and laid bare the extent to which the wounds of the Occupation still continued to fester fifteen years after the liberation of France. That de Gaulle himself felt it necessary to intervene points to the urgency of the question, for those on both sides of the situation, of how to deal with the very real fact that French citizens had not only materially but ideologically collaborated with the enemy, thus suggesting a sort of national “flaw,” one to be suppressed and denied at any cost. Paul Morand’s case is particularly enlightening, not only because of de Gaulle’s intervention but because Morand himself had spent the postwar years exploring this very question in his literary works, ceaselessly interrogating the power of the past to impact and re-formulate the present. In 1968, de Gaulle withdrew his objections and Morand was elected to the Académie. It is perhaps no coincidence that the post-1968 period, during which the dominant myths of the Occupation came under renewed scrutiny, should coincide with Morand’s “re-entry,” as it were, into the literary canon.

Morand is perhaps best known for his short stories and travel essays published in the 1920s and 1930s. Prefaced by Marcel Proust, translated by Ezra Pound and hailed as one of the “four M’s” of the Grasset publishing empire (Mauriac, Maurois, Montherlant and Morand), he was acknowledged during this early stage of his literary career as one of the great contemporary writers of France. After the war, however, his literary reputation was ruined by his collaboration with the Vichy government. Although he continued writing after the war and, indeed, published some of his most original and noteworthy works during that period, he never regained the acclaim of his early years as a writer. These postwar works are highly unusual for two reasons. First, prior to the war Morand dealt almost exclusively with the contemporary period and garnered fame as a cosmopolitan portraitist of his era. During the Occupation and in all his later works, Morand abruptly shifts his attention to the past in what amounts to an almost total turn toward
historical fiction and nonfiction. Secondly, the various historical events and periods Morand chooses as the contexts for these works all reveal uncanny and often inverted links to the period of the Occupation and to acts of collaboration. From Napoleonic Spain to the Boxer Rebellion, the French Revolution, nineteenth-century Russian fur trade in Spanish California and late nineteenth-century Germany, Morand manipulates the past, teasing out certain similarities, in what amounts to an obsessive rewriting of the Occupation in historical guise.

As the title of this book suggests, the postwar oeuvre of Paul Morand provides an excellent illumination of the politicized atmosphere of literature during that period. Beyond the obvious problem that Morand’s collaboration posed for his personal and literary reputations, these works presented a further challenge to the dominant myths of the Occupation, myths in large part promulgated and personified by the figure of de Gaulle himself. Morand’s debacle before the Académie française may have had less to do with his actions during the war than with the nature of his writing afterward, in the menace that his exploration of the Occupation posed to what Henri Rousso has described as the “résistantialiste” ideology of the Gaullist regime. In his magisterial book, *Le Syndrome de Vichy*, Rousso delineates the manner in which France was depicted, after the Liberation, as having presented strong and widespread resistance to its occupiers. The vast majority of the French, according to this portrayal, either actively or passively sought to undermine both the Vichy government and the Nazi occupiers, while only a handful of “traitors” actually collaborated. The history of the development and solidification of this résistantialisme between 1944 and 1968 is already well-explored territory, by Rousso, Alan Morris, Richard Golsan and many others, as is the ensuing phase, known as the “mode rétro,” beginning after de Gaulle’s death and during which the Occupation came under new scrutiny by writers, historians, filmmakers and critics, many of whom belong to the postwar generation, who sought to critique and re-evaluate the prevailing versions of the Occupation by exploring the more ambiguous side of both resistance and collaboration.¹

Morand’s postwar works may be said to participate in both these “movements” – as a dissenting voice during the Gaullist period and as a curiously premonitory voice with regard to the mode rétro. By turning his attention to history and to the relation between the past and the present in the writing and “making” of history, both within the fictional and nonfictional contexts of these texts and in

¹ Explorations of the *mode rétro* abound. Among the most comprehensive are Rousso and Morris. See also Richard Golsan, Colin Nettelbeck, Pascal Ory, Lynn Higgins.
their extradiegetic links to the period of the Occupation, Morand provides an implicit critique of the contemporary process of historicizing the Occupation. At the same time, Morand’s vision of collaboration raises the very questions of concern to many of the revisionist studies of the rétro period: the relationship of the past and the present, the various modes of representation of history and their political and literary consequences, the role of individual and collective memory, the psycho-social “working through” of a traumatic historical event, and the vexing question of “tainted aesthetics” and the role of art and literature in collaboration

Alan Morris has argued that the Gaullist, résistantialiste process may best be characterized as one of mythification, while the mode rétro functions as a demythification of the resulting paradigm. While one might take issue with the terms mythification and demythification, as Morris himself acknowledges, his arguments point to the forces of historicization operating during both periods. Morand’s historical prose figures both these movements, presenting historical situations and figures in the course of becoming history, while at the same time, via his exposition of the ambiguities of both the objects of this historicizing thrust and the forces effectuating it, examining the nature of the creation of history itself. In Le Flagellant de Séville (1951), to take just one example, the hero Don Luis sets out on a path of collaboration with the Napoleonic Occupation of Spain from 1808 to 1813. The ambiguities and ambivalences of his actions are ironically underscored when he returns to Spain in 1824, after many years of exile in France, to find that he has been proclaimed a hero by the current political establishment. Morand skillfully explores the processes by which the past (here the Napoleonic occupation) is reinscribed and historicized. However, rather than exploiting his new renown, Don Luis renounces his former identity and becomes Don Pablo, the flagellant of Séville, who achieves mythic status as an itinerant penitent.

Many issues are at stake in Morand’s late oeuvre, from the genres of historical fiction, biography and autobiography, to the very act of historicization itself in the context of the postwar era. Morand’s handling of these issues suggests that literature furnishes perhaps the best space, one of its own creation, within which the complex and highly political question of our ties to the past may be most tellingly examined. Before engaging in such an endeavor, however, a slight detour is called for in the form of a brief return to the past, mirroring Morand’s own postwar gesture, in order to recall Morand’s early literary success and to better situate the acuteness of his own detour after the war.
In his 1921 preface to Paul Morand's first collection of short stories, *Tendres Stocks*, Marcel Proust hails the young Morand as the prime example of "the new and original" writer in France, and places him at the end of a lineage stretching back to Renan and Stendhal (Proust, 12). Proust goes so far as to extend to Morand a curious invitation to visit the "Hôtel de Balbec," a principal setting in Proust's own novel: "Mais si, avant qu'il devienne ambassadeur et rivalise avec Beyle Consul, il veut visiter l'Hôtel de Balbec, alors je lui prêterai le fil fatal" (Proust, 30). Proust extends the baton, or rather the thread, of literature itself to the soon-to-be twentieth-century rival of Stendhal. But even as Proust plays Ariadne to Morand's Theseus, offering to pass on the secrets of the literary labyrinth, he also affectionately labels Morand "notre minotaure," referring to Morand's taste for casting young girls as the protagonists of his stories. Proust seems to deliberately conflate, in his figure of Morand, the Theseus-like pretender to Stendhal's legacy and the half-human monster of Crete. Another such curious characterization of Morand's literary persona is found in an earlier letter from Proust to Morand's future wife, Hélène Soutzo, in which Proust also evokes Stendhal in reference to Morand. Alluding to Stendhal's novel *La Chartreuse de Parme*, Proust notes that Morand embodies both the youthful naïveté of a Fabrice and the sophisticated refinement of a Mosca, and indeed, of Stendhal himself. How is such a combination possible, he asks, and ends the passage: "Mais j'espère qu'il ne finira pas chartreux, même à Parme" (Proust, Lettre, 148-49). Read in conjunction with Proust's preface, this letter interjects a note of caution into Proust's accolades. Read today, with the advantage of historical hindsight, the letter also appears ironically prophetic. For after his triumphant conquest of literature, Paul Morand was, in fact, destined to end up in seclusion, as something of a monk: "un chartreux," though not, it seems, at Parma.

If I have begun with commentary from so illustrious a reader as Proust, it is because it is little noted today that during the 1920s and 30s, Morand was considered to be one of the best contemporary writers in France. Jean Cocteau, Valéry Larbaud, Jean Giraudoux, Léon Daudet and Bernard Grasset, among others, joined Proust in drawing attention to the author of *Ouvert fa nuit* (1921), *Fermé la nuit* (1922), *L'Europe galante* (1925), and *Rien que fa terre* (1926). Ezra Pound translated *Tendres Stocks* in 1934, and Céline declared that in the year 2000 only Morand, and of course he, Céline, would still be read (Lacarme, 24). In his 1989 preface to Morand's *New York* (1930), Philippe Sollers seizes upon the Proust-Céline-Morand triangle as a triptych based not on resemblance but rather on stature, representing the three greatest French writers of...
the twentieth century (Sollers, 7). However, Sollers’s rendering of the history of literature is acutely conscious of the vagaries of historicity. Céline and Morand, he suggests, have more in common than artistic talent. Both stood on the “wrong side” during the last World War, an allegiance which, as Sollers points out, had far-reaching effects not only on the individual destiny of each but, perhaps, on the entire course of literature itself as well:

Que ne sont-ils restés tous les deux de l’autre côté du Channel ou de l’Atlantique au lieu de se mêler à l’explosion du Vieux Continent? Une toute autre histoire de la littérature aurait pu se dérouler alors. (Sollers, 8)

Sollers here suggests that both writers would have been better advised to have remained within the course of their purely literary careers, Céline with Pont de Londres and Morand with New York, rather than to have taken a political position during the war. Morand did decide to involve himself (prompted, as he himself stated, by his allegiance to Pétain and Laval) by abandoning his post in London and returning to France during the summer of 1940, just days after de Gaulle’s “Appel aux Français” (Guitard-Auviste, 230). After an initially hostile reception in Vichy, Morand was later made director of the bureau of “Censure cinématographique.” Between 1940 and 1943, he contributed articles to both La Gerbe and Combats, pro-collaborationist journals, and to Voix françaises, a Catholic, pro-Pétain review. His collection of wartime chronicles, Chroniques d’un homme maigre (1941) clearly spells out Morand’s support of Pétain and Laval. In Paris, he and his wife Hélène, an ardent fascist supporter, entertained both ranking German officials and known Nazi sympathizers, including Alfred Fabre-Luce, Drieu la Rochelle, Jacques Benoist-Méchin, Abel Bonnard and Marcel Jouhandeau (Guitard-Auviste, 223). In 1943, he was appointed to the post of ambassador of the Vichy government to Romania, an Axis ally, and in 1944, was transferred to a similar post in Switzerland where, after serving only 44 days, he remained in self-imposed exile after the Liberation (Hebey, 395).

Although Morand continued to publish, both his pre- and postwar works remained largely ignored after the war. The effects

2 Morand’s allegiance to Laval was not, as Guitard-Auviste suggests, limited to his family’s long friendship with the former. Morand established himself early on as a writer of right-wing tendencies. His 1934 novel France-la-doulce was an open attack of Jewish dominance of the film industry in France. In a 1933 article, “De l’air, de l’air...” he implored France not to be outdone by Hitler in the “killing of vermin”. During the Occupation, he contributed regularly to several collaborationist papers.

3 The list of Morand’s articles appearing in collaborationist reviews and papers may be found in George Place’s bibliography of Morand’s works.
of his involvement with the Vichy government upon his literary reputation became all too clear during his ill-fated bid for election to the Académie française in 1958. After a bitter polemic within the Académie itself, the new president of the Republic, Charles de Gaulle, threatened to exercise his right of veto, opposing Morand’s election: “because of the partisan hatreds the writer would provoke within the Académie” (Rousso, 68). In 1968, de Gaulle withdrew his opposition and Morand was elected. As noted earlier, it was perhaps no coincidence that the post-1968 period, during which the dominant myths of the Occupation came under renewed scrutiny, should coincide with Morand’s “re-entry,” as it were, into the literary canon. Bordas’s La littérature en France depuis 1968 includes Morand under the rubrique of “Grandes figures du siècle,” acknowledging Morand’s omission from its earlier anthology, La littérature en France depuis 1945, as a mistake which it now sought to rectify (Lecarme, 24). A flurry of interest ensued in France, and in 1992, two volumes of Morand’s complete short stories appeared in Gallimard’s prestigious series, La Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Proust, who had offered Morand the “fil fatal,” certainly could not have foreseen the labyrinthine path Morand would eventually follow, nor could he have imagined that Morand would indeed “end up chartreux” in a postwar seclusion which had such a profound impact upon his literary career.

Proust’s evocation of the Cretan myth is unusually apt, for approaching Morand’s work is rather like entering a labyrinth, sure of a destination, but ceaselessly enticed by the complexity of the maze itself. The size of Morand’s œuvre is not only large, over one hundred works, but varied in genre as well: poetry, short stories, travel journals, essays, theatre, chronicles, film adaptations, biography and one extraordinary memoir. Morand tried his hand at practically every generic form, and while it is generally accepted that he excelled in the short story, he was no dilettante in the other domains. Within the work as a whole, the range of subjects is as varied as their forms: six-day cycling races, sexual deviance, hotels in Asia, voodoo, growing potatoes in Paris, Napoleonic Spain, the Habsburg Empire, and Coco Chanel, to name only a few.

Then there is the famous “legend” to get by, a legend which appears everywhere, threatening to engulf the reader in its exotic

---

4 Ironically, in Morand’s 1941 novel, L’Homme pressé (Paris: Gallimard, 1941), the hero purchases an ancient “chartreuse” or charterhouse, in the Piedmont, which he dismantles for the antique columns discovered under the chapel. It is as though Morand not only acknowledges the fate lent him by Proust, but also signals his impending turn to the past.
possibilities: the legend of Morand the globetrotter, the modernist and the diplomat, Morand of the “années folles” and their most privileged transcriber. This is the young Morand, the regular at the “Le Boeuf sur le toit,” friend of Proust, Cocteau, Milhaud, Coco Chanel, Suzanne Lalique, Satie, Larbaud, Ravel, Auric. Morand the cosmopolitan, the dandy, the eroticist: “cet écrivain réputé, mondan invité, voyageur pressé, diplomate à ses heures” (Schneider, Figaro).

It is certainly tempting to linger here amongst the glittering stories of Ouvert la nuit and Fermé la nuit, to peer through Morand’s lens into the bedrooms, the train compartments, the jazz clubs, the private yet ever so public life of his era, an age of political and sexual turmoil through which Morand moves with the ease of a familiar. How seductive his legend of voyager, the last of the great travelers descending through Stendhal and Claudel, relating his long voyages around the world: North America, Asia, Africa, and, of course, Europe. Hiver-Caraïbe, Paris-Tombouctou, La Route des Indes: the titles of his travel writings alone evoke the cosmopolitan. And all written in that “style Morand,” terse, rapid, electric. Morand’s place among the great stylists of the century has been well established. “Le Prince du style,” master of the ellipsis and the litote, Morand introduced speed into modern style (Charrière, Figaro). His short stories condense into thirty pages what another might barely accomplish in three novels. Philippe Sollers has captured this Morand better than anyone: “Dans ses nouvelles, “l’homme pressé” est sans cesse aux aguets, multipolaire, immergé dans le système nerveux de l’époque” (Sollers, Le Swing). Morand at the front lines of his era, this is the Morand most often evoked, perhaps to divert our attention from that other legend, no less notorious, which risks overshadowing the first: the legend of Vichy.

For when dealing with Morand, one is confronted with a problem encountered with so many of his contemporaries, Céline, Montherlant, Drieu la Rochelle, and Anouilh, among others, whose literary greatness is tainted by their political leanings and their activities during the Second World War. Morand was a collaborator under the Vichy regime and his writings, both during and before the war, demonstrate a clear ideological adhesion to many principles associated with National Socialism, including anti-communism, xenophobia and antisemitism. The extent of his activity during the war, beyond the knowledge of the posts he occupied, remains vague. What is clear, however, is the impact of this second “legend” on Morand’s place in literature. For many years after the war, his works went unread and unnoticed by the majority.

---

5 For an excellent analysis of these issues see Andrea Loselle, “The Historical Nullification of Paul Morand’s Gendered Eugenics.”
of readers and he virtually dropped from the scene. His ill-fated bid for the Académie in 1958, rather than resuscitating interest in his work, served to demonstrate how powerful an influence his "Vichy connection" exerted upon his literary reputation.

In recent years, as we have noted, interest in Morand has regained momentum, due in large part to the efforts of Jean-Louis Bory, Jean-François Fogel, Philippe Sollers and Ginette Guitard-Auviste, his principal biographer. However, critical interest has been limited for the most part to his work of the twenties and early thirties, in particular, to the early short stories and travel books. Morand's political leanings are certainly evoked, as is his later involvement with the Vichy government. The end result is not that the early Morand does not emerge in all his facets, but that it is only the early Morand. There exists another Morand, the Morand of 1945 and beyond: the exile, the frustrated Academician and, perhaps most importantly, Morand the historian.

Morand's radical shift away from the contemporary to the historical is often noted but rarely examined in detail. And yet, in the course of Morand's literary career this shift stands as the single most remarkable development in his writing: an almost complete abandonment of that upon which his early works are based and upon which his own reputation rested: the observation of the contemporary world. In place of his voyages through space, recording his era, Morand substitutes voyages into the past, through time, traveling back to Revolutionary France, Napoleonic Spain, the court of Louis XIV, turn-of-the-century Austria and nineteenth-century California in search of material for both his fictional and non-fictional works.

Interesting in and of itself, this shift is even more critical because of its timing. Morand published his first historical work, Isabeau de Bavière, a play, in 1938, followed by a biography of Maupassant in 1942; then, immediately after the war, he turned almost exclusively to historical fiction. The aesthetic questions surrounding this shift are compounded by its obvious relationship to Morand's experience of the Second World War and to his collaboration during that period, a relationship confirmed by the works themselves. In all of the immediate postwar works and, to a lesser but no less significant degree, in his works of the late fifties and sixties, the historical contexts and the accompanying fictional and nonfictional narratives reveal a singular obsession with the collision between an individual and an event, most often political: the French Revolution in "Parfaite de Saligny," the Inquisition in "Le Dernier Jour de l'Inquisition," the Spanish Civil War in "La Folle amoureuse," and
Napoleon’s occupation of Spain in *Le Flagellant de Séville*. In virtually all of the texts, the choice of the hero or heroine is, perhaps not surprisingly, collaboration, in one form or another, and the result is eventual ostracization. In the texts centering around explicit collaboration, Morand’s exploitation of historical situations reveals his use of history as an inverted image of the situation in France in 1940-44. Perhaps the most explicit example occurs in *Le Flagellant de Séville*, published in 1951. The historical situation in Spain furnishes a neat parallel to the situation in France in 1940: Spain is occupied, Napoleon’s brother Joseph is placed upon the throne, there is both collaboration with the occupier and organized resistance, England emerges on the side of the resisters; the entire situation demands to be read as a sort of inverted image of the occupation of France.

Most of the full-length studies on Morand recognize the apologetic turn to history in his postwar works. Ginette Guitard-Auviste frequently draws parallels between Morand’s situation after the war and that of many of his protagonists. Pascal Louvrier and Eric Canal-Forgues also emphasize the autobiographical character of Morand’s later works in a manner which echoes the way in which their biography often tends to amalgamate the man and his fictions:

Dès 1944, Morand pressent rapidement le fossé qui s’établit entre le pays qu’il a connu et celui qui est en train de naître sous lui: une France qui “déjà avait une autre figure, portait d’autres habits, parlait une langue neuve”. (Louvrier, 275)

The citation in this sentence comes from Morand’s 1956 novella “Parfaite de Saligny.” By failing to note this source, the authors effectively cloak the description with an air of authority implying that Morand’s words describe 1944, when in fact, the “new France” in question is, in the context of the novella, that of 1793. Louvrier and Canal-Forgues slyly, perhaps unwittingly, suggest the relationship between the historical and fictional context and Morand’s present, but offer no insight on how Morand uses history or of the implications of such an enterprise.

Stéphane Sarkany, in his highly biographical study of cosmopolitanism in Morand’s oeuvre, suggests that the works written after 1945 constitute an effort of “moral elucidation,” aimed less at an apology of his past actions, than at a blueprinting of future conduct (Sarkany, 169-73). Sarkany’s observations are provocative and deserve more attention than the four-page chapter he devotes to them.

Likewise, Jean-François Fogel’s ideas on the importance of the concept of time in Morand merit more than the passing commentary they receive. In his view, the notion of speed in Morand’s
early works has less to do with space, that is, with the amount of ground covered, than with a race against time. Fogel perceptively notes that time is indeed the central question in all of Morand’s works, and hints that the post-1945 move to history may be only a subtle shift of gears (Fogel, 44-48).

It is my intention to carry these observations one step further and to examine several of Morand’s postwar works and the ways in which the past is made to comment upon the present. Arguing that these texts constitute an obsessional rewriting, in historical guise, of the experience of the Occupation and its aftermath, I shall attempt to elucidate the mechanisms: stylistic, thematic, and structural, which make such an endeavor successful. In addition, I will explore the implications of Morand’s uses (and misuses) of history with regard not only to the works themselves, but to the larger question of the role of the past in the present as well.

The decision to remove this project of rewriting from the more immediate context of the Occupation of France and to place it into historical contexts offered several specific advantages to Morand. Most obviously, for a writer who as a former collaborator found himself in a quite precarious situation after the war, history no doubt provided a tool for establishing a certain distance between himself and the recent debacle in France. History emerges as a sort of safe haven, certainly not without resemblance to the relative safety of Switzerland where Morand remained after the war. History itself, as we have seen, also provided previous instances of collaboration, models against which Morand could, in a sense, superimpose collaboration “Vichy style.” Morand’s manipulation of these models is such that a link is created between the past (the historical context) and the present, through a refashioning of their connections of similarity and difference which repeatedly refers the historical situation beyond the work. The experience of the Occupation comes to be seen in a new, redemptive light when read against Morand’s fictional pasts.

One technique of detaching the contextual event from its historical position consists of the periodic “lifting out” of the protagonist from his historical context by inserting the character into an order transcending history. The many references to mythological and biblical figures serve to establish a network of “mythic” recurrence operating outside of the historically specific. This network functions to minimize the link between the narrative and the particular historical moment in which it is located. A similar effect is produced by the presence of extended parallels, either explicit or implicit, with other texts. Le Flagellant de Séville reveals strong ties to the art of Goya, most particularly to the series The
Caprices and The Disasters of War. Each chapter carries as epigraph the title of one of Goya’s works and many descriptions of particular scenes are directly inspired by Goya’s paintings and sketches. At the same time in this novel, another parallel is drawn, less obviously, to Stendhal’s La Chartreuse de Parme. Don Luis emerges as a Spanish Fabrice in his love for the Emperor and as a Count Mosca in his political dealings. “Parfaite de Saligny” contains many parallels with Flaubert’s Education sentimentale, and “La Folle amoureuse” is loosely based upon a nineteenth-century Russian legend, itself gleaned from the history of Russian trade in California. The intertextual systems in these works, I shall argue, operate as a sort of subtext which periodically erupts through the fabric of the narrative, calling attention to the fictionality of the narrative by means of its ties to other texts. This has the effect of dislocating the story, in a sense, from itself. We shall see, in the final chapter, this technique carried to the extreme in Venises, in which a complex system of references to other literary representations of Venice subtends the entire work and in which the city itself functions as an intertext.

Another striking feature of these works is the recurrence of the figure of a pariah. Each of Morand’s protagonists emerges as an example of an historical loser. In the fictional texts, don Luis is shunned after the ouster of Joseph Bonaparte, Loup de Tince is executed for counter-revolutionary activities, and the mad Eschlastica waits in vain for the return of her Russian lover. The actual historical figures cast as main characters also reflect this destiny: Nicolas Fouquet, Ferdinand Lassalle, and others from works not considered extensively in this study: Sophie Dorothee de Celle, wife of George of Hanover, and the entire Habsburg dynasty. Morand admits to his taste for great failures and to his repetition of stories of historical condemnation:

"J’ai toujours aimé les causes perdues: Fouquet, Caillaux, Berthelot, Laval. Quand ils furent envoyés en forteresse, trainés en Haute Cour, mis ignominieusement à la retraite, attachés au poteau, mon affection pour eux a crû d’autant.... L’échec après le succès, ce devait être encore le thème de mes livres entre 1950 et les années soixante; après Fouquet, Le Flagellant de Séville, Les Clés du souterrain, Le Dernier Jour de l’Inquisition, Hécate.... (Morand, Venises, 84)

Invariably, however, in Morand’s reworking of history, his protagonists’ failures and persecutions are ultimately redeemed by the very history which served to condemn them.

This subversion of history is reflected in the manner in which the historical event serving as context is consistently absorbed into “another” story, a technique which furthers the process of detachment noted above. Don Luis’s story is also one of blind jealousy,
Loup de Tincé’s real objective is love and not political involvement, the fascist dona Escholastica forgets her politics when in love with a communist, Fouquet is caught up accidently in Louis XIV’s unresolved oedipal complex. The effect is that of a weakening of the ties which bind the protagonists to their particular historical positions, thus enabling Morand to project their experiences onto his own.

This is not to imply that these techniques somehow negate or strip the historical event of signification. On the contrary, I shall argue that history fulfills several important functions within the narratives. At its most general level, history as a referent works to ensure the vital sense of verisimilitude surrounding the narratives. Morand crams the works full with historical information: names, dates, descriptions of social and political milieux, battles, etc, all of which are scrupulously accurate. Or almost all, for the use of history, far from being an autonomous, objective tool, reveals itself to be as subject to the demands of Morand’s ideological super-system as the components of the fictional narrative. We shall examine in detail the rare historical “errors” which, although they appear slight: a date miscalculated by several months, the wrong person in the right place, are thrown into sharp relief by the accompanying abundance of accurate information. Now it is true that these errors have come to my attention perhaps only because I was in the process of tediously verifying Morand’s accuracy, and one might argue that to a reader who is reading from a less pointed perspective, these errors would most probably remain imperceptible. But this is exactly the point. Morand appears to go to great extremes in order to render these errors practically invisible and upon closer examination it is revealed that these are no mere lapses but in fact examples of a careful manipulation of history directed toward a specific end, or rather to a specific effect, namely the reader’s attitude toward the central figure. The most striking example of this manipulation occurs in *Le Flagellant de Séville* where the reader’s response to the protagonist, don Luis, depends a great deal upon a subtle historical sleight-of-hand on the part of the author. Because this novel offers a clear example of this particular use of history and also contains many of the other structures with which we are concerned, Chapter One will be devoted to its extended examination. As the longest work of the four historical fictions in question, it can be expected to contain more structures and more uses of these structures than the other three fictions I shall consider, which are short stories.

Another function of the historical situation operates on yet another level, between the event itself and the larger notion of History. In each of the texts in question it is repeatedly emphasized
that the historical event around which it revolves is most significant not in and of itself, as an isolated event, but because of its position as both the end of one era and the beginning of another: the French Revolution as the watershed between the Ancien Régime and the Republic; the Napoleonic Wars in Spain as the end (for all practical purposes) of an autonomous monarchy and the beginning of the cortès; the death of Mazarin as the advent of Louis XIV. It is indisputable that these events marked great changes, some more radical or more enduring than others, and Morand is certainly not alone in marking these points in history as crucial. But what is significant is that these events are not represented as mere turning points but as points of definitive rupture with the past.

Morand will in turn exploit this notion of rupture as a metaphor for his act of superimposing, as it were, two distinct historical “events”: the event constituting the context of the work and the “event” of the Occupation of France. In Chapter One I will suggest that Morand perversely reproduces, unwittingly, the model proposed by Walter Benjamin in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* of a constellation, formed of fragments of the past and the present, in the wake of what Benjamin terms an “blasting out of the continuum of history” (Benjamin, 263). Specific models of Morand’s use of history and of points of historical rupture will be examined in Chapter Two in relation to two of Morand’s postwar novellas “Parfaite de Saligny” and “La Folle amoureuse.” In this chapter I will again evoke Benjamin in relation to Morand’s work and will briefly examine a 1959 play, *Le Lion écarlate*, as a possible means of dealing with the paradoxical similarities between Morand’s and Benjamin’s ideas on history.

In Chapter Three, I will examine a nonfictional work, *Fouquet ou le soleil offusqué* (1959), Morand’s biography of Nicholas Fouquet. By extending the study of Morand’s historical techniques to a nonfictional text, certain literary traits emerge more clearly, in particular, Morand’s use of a highly figural language. In addition, Morand’s exploitation of the figure of a pariah, or historical loser, clearly parallels similar models in his fictions. I will pursue the discussion of such a figure in reference to other contemporary texts which bear upon Morand’s interpretation of Fouquet’s situation.

The last chapter is devoted to another “nonfictional” work, Morand’s memoir, *Venises* (1971). This text is important in many ways. Firstly, it is, quite simply, an extraordinary memoir. Secondly, this text is as much a city portrait, in the vein of his portraits of New York, Budapest, and London, as it is a memoir of his own life, and yet the two are inseparable. Venice serves as a sort of “sign” for Morand’s life, which is recollected as a series of encounters with the city, hence, perhaps, the plural of the title: Venice as many Venices seen at different points during the course of the author’s life.
Venises is also plural in that it is not only Morand’s Venice but also the city, or rather, cities of Byron, Chateaubriand, Goethe, Stendhal, Ruskin, Proust, Barrès, Lawrence, Corvo, and many others. Morand repeatedly alludes to Venice’s place in literary history, either by direct evocation or quotation of the great literary figures whose ghosts seem to inhabit the great city, or by slipping in a phrase or image, here and there, which immediately recalls the Venice of these writers. Thus Morand would situate himself not only in relation to the city, but also in the long literary tradition of those who “dipped their pens in the canals of Venice” (Morand, Venises, 33).

I will also examine Morand’s “use” of Venice and the ways in which the strategies revealed resemble those of the previous works, notably his manipulation of temporal and spatial relations and his use of history. I will suggest that the latter functions, as does the city of Venice, as a surrogate and as an instrument which permits Morand to represent his own experience through its dislocation onto an “other,” whether a character, a structure, a text, a city, or history itself.

It is this continual displacement of the self onto an “other” which permits Morand’s later works to be situated within the larger context of the politicization of literature during the decades following the Second World War. By obsessively inscribing and rewriting his own struggle to deal with the aftermath of the war onto and through his various historical protagonists, Morand reflects a similar if not identical gesture carried out individually and institutionally in France after the war. Although it may be argued that Morand mimics what might be termed a “universal response” to traumatic events, a topic which shall be raised throughout this book, more interesting is the manner in which this at once highly personal and universalizing reflection rehearses, as it were, the particularities of the same phenomenon operating on a larger scale during the contemporary period. Writers, historians, journalists and politicians alike scrambled to “represent” the Occupation by imposing upon its terms models of meaning, translating it through the various grids that constitute the making of history and literature. Michel de Certeau has argued that all history, like literature, is displacement, the removal of an event from itself and its reconstruction from a present perspective: “Le réel représenté ne correspond pas au réel qui détermine sa production. Il cache, derrière la figuration d’un passé le présent qui l’organise” (de Certeau, Histoire, 70). De Certeau’s use of the verb “cacher” may be especially significant as regards Morand’s endeavors, for Morand’s practice of displacement is just this movement of hiding one identity or operation behind another. As for de Certeau, this
displacement or concealment operates in the space articulated between the past and the present, in the web of relations created by Morand in this space. Alan Morris has admirably traced this same operation in the discourse of the Gaullist period as it came to bear on the interpretation/(re)creation of the Occupation. There were significant voices of dissent, as Morris acknowledges, seeking to "correct" the official history by pointing out dissonances between the Gaullist version and the far more ambiguous experiences of others. Morand certainly falls into this category of dissenters, but his work is unique in that it also self-consciously enacts the process of historicization at work, critiquing the system from within. As such his postwar oeuvre also belongs, if not chronologically then ideologically, to the mode rétro in its focus on the problematic nature of the representations of the past that constitute history. Of course, Morand works within a highly literary conception of history, but this only helps him to underscore the blurred boundaries between fiction and history as distinct discourses and to explore the political implications of this blurring in the highly particularized arena of literature in France.