THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, 1900–45

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1. Essays, Studies

A vol. to be consulted with profit for this section is Demougin, *Dictionnaire des littératures,* i, since its extensive listings of authors, works, themes, movements and even lit. characters represent a judicious blending of information and critical appraisal drawing on the history of ideas, of lit. forms, and of socio-political attitudes. Although the articles on Bernanos, Breton, Eluard, Gide, Giono, and Giraudoux are among the many which could be seen as exemplary in this regard, the columns they occupy in no way detract from a host of smaller entries devoted not only to an Élie Faure, an Isaac Lang Goll or an Émile Guillaumin, but to many lesser-known French, Belgian, Swiss, and French Canadian writers and, separately, to their works; thus René Maran’s first novel, *Batoula,* and Henri Pourrat’s *Gaspard des Montagnes* each occupies more space than for example *Les Caves du Vatican.* The coverage of Boisdeffre, *Histoire,* i, ii, is inevitably partial for our period, but it remains a useful consultative work on Surrealism, the development of criticism, and war and Resistance literature; Vol. i concentrates on the novel and theatre; Vol. ii, poetry, ideas and a ‘dictionnaire des auteurs’. Weisgerber, *Avant-Gardes,* i, ii, treats notions and movements which can be classed as avant-garde as they concern both West- and East-European countries: Vol. i, *Histoire,* has articles of particular relevance here on the avant-garde itself, futurism, expressionism, Dada, and A. Balakian’s pages on French Surrealism; Vol. ii, *Théorie,* incl. further short articles on Dada and Surrealism and numerous scattered references to artists and writers such as Apollinaire, Aragon, Arp, Breton, Cocteau, Duchamp, Eluard, Gide, Jarry, Picabia, Reverdy, Ribemont-Dessaignes, Soupault, Tzara; useful subject bibliographies. S. Bann, “L’an 2000 n’aura pas lieu”: the avant-garde past and future’, *CC,* 7:265–78, exposes some of the uses and abuses of such terms as avant-garde, Dada, and Surrealism. Roger Cardinal, *Expressionism,* Paladin, 1984, 151 pp., refers in passing to French avant-garde contemporaries, 1900–20, of German Expressionism. Gérard de Cortanze, *Le Surréalisme,* M.A. Éd., 224 pp. *Mélusine,* vii, introd. Henri Béhar and Pascaline Mourier-Casile, *L’Âge d’homme,* 322 pp., entitled *L’Âge d’or — L’Âge d’homme,* is a rich and rewarding collection, broad in scope and precise in reference, incl. 12 papers concentrating on identifying the meaning of, and relationship
between, myth, utopia and the here and now, both in Surrealism in general (P. Durand, A. Tamuly), Breton (M. Eigeldinger, J.-Cl. Blachère), and Tzara (A.- M. Amiot); 12 further essays appear under ‘Variétés’, ‘Réflexions critiques’ and ‘Documents’. Russell, Poêts, has important sections on Dada, Surrealism, and Apollinaire, in an effort to explore the response of the modern writer to socially problematic situations. Other, more thematically orientated, poetry studies incl. Bourgeois, Poêtes, presenting the response to the thematics of death of nine authors: Char, Ponge, Eluard, Perse, Cayrol, Estang, Grosjean, Renard, and Emmanuel. Timms and Kelley, City, incl. D. Kelley’s chapter on the city poetry of Apollinaire and P. Collier on ‘Surrealist city narrative: Breton and Aragon’. R. Riese-Hubert contributes two articles on the relations between the arts: ‘The tableau-poème: open work’, YFS, 1984, no. 67: 43–56, where the juxtaposition of figures and writing in the tableau-poèmes of Miró, Ernst, and Klee are seen to be in a process of transgression one to the other; ‘La critique d’art surréaliste, création et tradition’, CAIEF, no. 37: 213–27, where, with particular reference to Breton, Le Surréalisme et la peinture, the questions are asked whether surrealist criticism can exist without recourse to poetry, and whether Surrealism and painting are not preferable to surrealist painting, prompting the reply that Lautréamont’s metaphor is a basis and a justification for surrealist art criticism. I. Higgins has also written two articles: ‘Tradition and myth in French Resistance poetry: reaction or subversion?’, FMLS, 21: 45–58, referring to a number of poets such as Aragon, Desnos, Emmanuel, Eluard, Masson, Seghers, and Tardieu, analyses the meaning of the word patrie which evokes not only a state of mind or a group living by certain values but also a certain attitude of mind to past, future, and hence to legend for which language and unconstrained speech are a vital medium and objective; Resistance poems are, therefore, not reactionary but acts contributing to the transformation of history into the proverbial myths discussed further in Id., ‘“Assurer les relais”: literary heritage in resistance’, FMLS, 21: 274–90, where particular use is made of Seghers’s review Poésie 40, and concluding with a clarion call for the combined study of language, literature, and culture. Among the authors referred to in H. R. Kedward, Occupied France. Collaboration and Resistance 1940–1944, Oxford, Blackwell, 88 pp., are, briefly, Brasillach, Céline, Drieu La Rochelle, and Vercors, while Kedward and Austin, Vichy France, a varied and vigorous collection of papers from the 1984 Sussex conference, incl. several interesting essays exploring the relationship between literature, ideology, and political choice: S. Beynon John on the ideology of/in Saint-Exupéry’s Pilote de Guerre; I. Higgins illustrates the themes of soil, language, and the construction of