LITERATURE, 1945 TO THE PRESENT DAY

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1. General

Philippe Gasparini, *Autofiction. Une aventure du langage*, Seuil, 352 pp., is a key work, providing an essential historical synthesis, and theoretical redefinition as *autonarration*, of a form that has come to epitomize turn-of-the-century writing on the self. *Genèse et autofiction*, ed. Catherine Viollet and Jean-Louis Jeannelle, with Isabelle Grell, Louvain-la-Neuve, Bruylant, 2007, 262 pp., presents a series of important contributions to the analysis of the genre by some of its foremost theoreticians (Doubrovsky, Lejeune, Gasparini, Vilain) and practitioners (Forest, Cusset, Laurens, Garreta), while the use of genetic criticism in this context proves an invaluable resource. Jean-Louis Jeannelle, *Écrire ses mémoires au XXe siècle: déclin et renouveau*, Gallimard, 427 pp., provides a major critical addition concerned with the other, public side of writing the self, reflecting notably on works by Malraux, de Gaulle, and Beauvoir, and offering an excellent theoretical investigation into the poetics and socio-historical dynamics of memorial practices.

Annelise Schulte Nordholt, *Perec, Modiano, Raczymow: la génération d’après et la mémoire de la Shoah* (Faux Titre, 315), Amsterdam, Rodopi, 335 pp., studies the common themes of an absent memory in the three œuvres and their respective dealing with the legacy of the OuLiPo and the *nouveau roman*, and highlights the essential and formal unity which exists between them. *Témoignages de l’après-Auschwitz dans la littérature juive-française d’aujourd’hui. Enfants de survivants et survivants-enfants* (Faux Titre, 327), ed. A. Schultz Nordholt, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 269 pp., widens the perspective, discussing the same authors and also, in this ‘post-memorial’ context, figures such as Kofman, Meschonnic, Vargaftig, and Goscinny. M. Silverman, ‘Interconnected histories: Holocaust and empire in the cultural imaginary’, *FS*, 62:417–28, shows the connection of fascism and colonialism in the language, images, and themes of Perec’s *W ou le souvenir d’enfance* and Modiano’s *Dora Bruder*, and explains how literary devices and imagination can ‘open up an alternative history’, one which, it is persuasively argued, ‘challenges the compartmentalization of metropolitan history, colonial history and the history of European genocide’. N. Bracher, ‘Le fin mot
de l’histoire. La tempête en juin et les perspectives de Némirovsky’, MCF, 265–77, questions the use of a multiple and changing narrative point of view, both ‘intimiste et omniscient’ in the first part of Suite Française showing, in comparison with Sartre, its peculiar adequacy to the purpose of representing the gap between individual conscience and historical event, and underlying its narrative achievement in the portrayal of the June 1940 Exodus.


Le Sens de l’événement dans la littérature française des XIXe et XXe siècles, ed. Pierre Glaudes and Helmut Meter, Berne, Lang, xii + 296 pp., envisions literary contructions of the notion of event, in its various complex and shifting socio-historical, hermeneutical and allegorical meanings, devoting chapters to its treatment in texts by Queneau (Les Fleurs bleues, Une Histoire modèle and Journaux, 221–30), Gary (231–53), Simon (255–70), Pujade-Renaud (271–84), and Echenoz (285–96).

Histoires inventées. La représentation du passé et de l’histoire dans les littératures française et francophones, ed. Elisabeth Arend, Dagmar Reichardt, and Elke Richter, Frankfurt, Lang, 269 pp. + 17 ills, engages with various recent forms of literary response to history and historiography. Interesting for our area, and sometimes shedding light on hitherto rarely studied authors, are studies on François Bourgeat’s 2004 La nuit Algérie (53–68), a comparison of Gracq’s Balcon en Forêt, Queneau’s Les dimanches de la vie, and Sartre’s Le Sursis (181–95), pieces on C. Simon (197–210), Aragon (211–27), Modiano (229–39), Quint (241–51), and Semprun (253–69), and a richly illustrated article on Jacques Ferrandez’s orientalist and historic comics, Les Carnets d’Orient (101–26). A. Tassel, ‘Poétique du reportage dans Témoin parmi les hommes (1956–1969) de Joseph Kessel’, RHLF, 108:913–29, underlines both the literary dimension of K.’s reportage, a genre defined by the author as ‘roman d’aventure réel’ and their sociological, historical, and anthropological contribution, focusing on the way their double architecture of surface and of depth serves to involve the reader.