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‘Sins, crimes and guilty passions in France’s stories of war and occupation’

Abstract

This article explores a variety of literary, filmic and dramatic narratives in order to highlight the importance of the themes of remorse and guilt in texts produced during the German occupation. The moral and emotional landscape is one of fear, secrecy and transgression, where happiness and domestic stability are often unrealizable. Two major interlinked situations emerge from these readings, the first enacting a dramatic release, the second an entrapment in perpetual repetition. It is noted that in more recent literary and critical readings of France’s relation to these difficult and often traumatic years, the situation of the perpetual repetition of remorse is also the dominant one.