

Contents

Introduction — 1

- An aesthetic-ethical turning point — 4
- The end of literary intransitivity — 6
- A remediating literature? — 10

Facing Oneself

Chapter 1

The quest for visibility — 17

- The empire of the first person — 17
- A literature for the democratic age — 20
- From expressiveness to contemporary autobiography — 22

Chapter 2

The quest for singularity — 30

- Literature and the idealization of difference — 30
- Wild intimacy — 32
- Be yourself*, the weight of a societal summons — 36

Facing Life

Chapter 3

Reassuring the subject — 43

- The culture of personal development — 43
- The narrativist principle — 49
- Ambiguity of genealogies — 51

Chapter 4

Reconstructing the self — 55

- Writing as resistance — 55
- Erasure and reinvention of the self — 59
- The perfectionist quest — 63

Facing Trauma

Chapter 5

The powers of writing — 71

The culture of trauma — 71

From historical sufferings to private traumas — 74

Autobiography and psychotherapy — 77

Chapter 6

The virtues of reading — 83

The bibliotherapeutic dream — 83

The catharsis model — 89

Literature as exorcism — 91

Facing Disease

Chapter 7

Literature in the clinic — 97

Autopathographies of AIDS — 99

Illness as an opportunity to write — 103

Medical humanities and narrative medicine — 110

Chapter 8

The work of mourning — 115

The voice of the dead — 118

The difficulties of writing — 121

The origin of literature — 125

Chapter 9

Projectionist ethics — 127

The powers of empathy — 129

Altruistic ideology — 131

Literature and the ethics of care — 135

Chapter 10

Equipping knowledge — 142

Semantic education — 147

The societal virtues of literature — 151

The powers of irony — 156

Facing the World

Chapter 11

Reconstructing territories — 163

- The geographical question — 163
- Thinking the global — 171
- Protecting the world — 175

Chapter 12

Remaking community — 178

- The clinic for the precarious — 178
- The literature of the unseen — 182
- In search of a *we* — 187

Facing Time

Chapter 13

Retrospective justice — 195

- The specters of history — 196
- The work of recognition — 201
- Victims in the present — 204

Chapter 14

A substitutive memory — 209

- The era of hypermnesia — 211
- On literature considered as a museum — 213
- The resurrection of the anonymous — 217

Conclusion — 222

- The practices and mystics of repair — 222
- A new ethical and political doxa — 225
- The therapeutic (re)interpretations of literature — 230

Bibliography — 239

Index of Names — 273