



Duras: A Biography

Alain Vircondelet

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This is the first full-length biography of one of the best-known and most influential French writers of our time, as celebrated for her films (*Hiroshima Mon Amour*) as for her novels (*The Ravishing of Lol Stein*, *The Lover*). It takes Duras from colonial Indochina (where she was born in 1914) to wartime France, through the intellectual skirmishes of the 1950s and leftist movements of the 1960s, up to the present time. An autobiographical writer by nature, Duras has poured her exotic life into her books, and Vircondelet is the first to separate fact from fiction, leading us to a greater appreciation of her inimitable fiction. Although it gives a full, chronological account of Duras's life and work, Duras is not a conventional biography. "In order to give an exact account of her life, her inner workings," Vircondelet explains in his preface, "one needs to acquire and rediscover a secret, a kind of alchemy, the nature of her 'fluent writing,' as she calls it." Employing a kind of "fluent writing" himself, Vircondelet brings a rare empathy to his task, allowing him to discover secret connections between the life and work. Both a mesmerizing biography and an innovative work of literary criticism, Duras is a bold and unforgettable achievement. First published in France in 1991, the book has been updated by the author for this English translation. It is illustrated with 37 photographs.

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