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MOST ANALYSES of Violette Leduc's writing have concentrated on its autobiographical dimension, dealing almost exclusively with her best known volume, *La Bâtarde*. *Violette Leduc: Mothers, Lovers, and Language* offers readings of three less familiar first-person narratives — *L'Asphyxie*, *Ravages*, and *Thérèse et Isabelle* — and approaches them not as fragments of a multi-faceted autobiographical corpus, but rather as autonomous works of fiction.

This study, which reads Leduc's narratives from a feminist and psychoanalytic perspective, has a double focus. Part One scrutinizes the intricacies of her treatment of feminine bonding, seeking to bring new insights — inspired *inter alia* by theorists such as Melanie Klein, Freud and Luce Irigaray — to bear on her representations of mother/daughter and lesbian relations. Part Two examines Leduc's use of language in *Thérèse et Isabelle*, probing the extent to which this novella contains examples of feminist and/or 'feminine' discourse. By exploring Leduc's lyrical evocation of feminine homosexuality from both a gender-related and a more traditional, formalist standpoint, the writer exposes the limitations of a purely feminist approach to her work.

Violette Leduc: Mothers, Lovers, and Language focuses on those elements of Leduc's writing which look forward, however instinctively, to the complex investigations of gender and language produced by French feminist theorists in recent decades, and illuminates the degree to which it is 'recuperable' for feminism.