



Between Genders: Narrating Difference in Early French Modernism

Nathaniel Wing

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Between Genders studies representations of gender in a group of early and mid-nineteenth-century French texts. The five texts examined are diverse in both literary form and theme: two novels, Honore de Balzac's *La Fille aux yeux d'or*, Theophile Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, a novella by Charles Baudelaire, "La Fanfarlo," Claire de Duras's pseudo-confession narrative, *Ourika*, and an autobiography of an intersexual, currently known under the title *Herculine Barbin*. These texts all share a preoccupation with experiences of gender and with vicissitudes of gender identities. *Between Genders* demonstrates how gender differentiation becomes a defining issue in early French Modernism. It also explores how border crossings among seemingly distinct terms of identification (heterosexuality, homosexualities, androgyny, etc.) put in question the idea of identity and provoke reconsideration of other important issues: esthetic, ethical, and political questions that are the subject of intense scrutiny and contestation throughout the period. Nathaniel Wing is Professor of French at Louisiana State University.

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