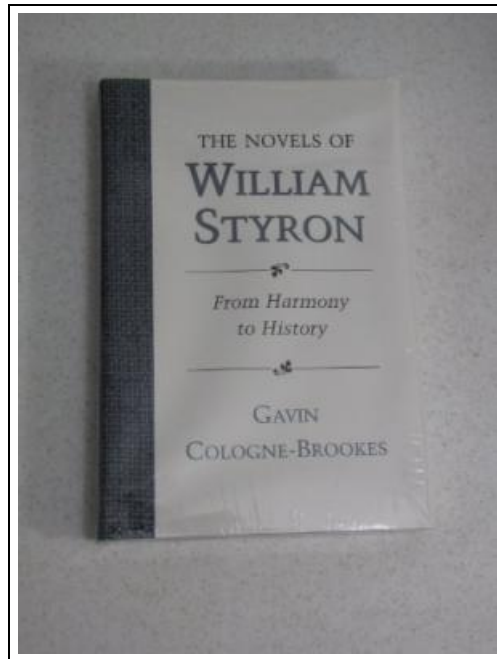


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Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge and London, 1995. Hardcover. Condition: New. 288 pages. Hardcover with dustjacket. New book. LITERARY CRITICISM. In *The Novels of William Styron*, Gavin Cologne-Brookes presents the first comprehensive study of William Styron's work. Using the concept of narrative evolution, he illumines not only Styron's novels but also an entire genre. By examining the various narrative voices in Styron's fiction, Cologne-Brookes traces a gradual shift away from modernist forms of aesthetic experimentation and personal isolation toward an engagement with society and history. In *Lie Down in Darkness* and *The Long March*, the authorial point of view reveals art as a strategy for achieving personal order in a strife-filled world. That perspective, however, is gradually undermined in *Set This House on Fire* and *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, and finally satirized in *Sophie's Choice*. Styron's early narrators seek to mold the conflicting voices of their stories into harmony. As, under the influence of Albert Camus and George Orwell, his work begins to confront political and historical issues - slavery, the Holocaust - the impulse toward harmony is weakened and finally dispelled. Cologne-Brookes shows that Styron confirms his change of direction in his more recent writing-the essays in *This Quiet Dusk*; his retrospective comments on his work in *Darkness Visible*; the stories in *A Tidewater Morning*; and his work-in-progress, *The Way of the Warrior*. He also links Styron to other American whose works equally suggest a firm sense of the novel's role in political and historical debate. Drawing on the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Georg Lukacs, Cologne-Brookes acknowledges previous Styron criticism - with its emphasis on Freudian, existentialist, and southern concerns-but offers new perspectives on Styron's importance. He considers Styron not so much a southern writer as one whose influences include southern roots. Critically incisive and entirely...



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