## Contents

*List of illustrations*  page viii  
*Acknowledgments*  ix  
*A cultural and political timeline*  x  

Introduction: History and literary history  1  
1. Farewell to the twenties  9  
2. Looking for America: The presence of the past  35  
3. Lost and found: Historical fictions  58  
4. Backward glances: Biography and autobiography  107  
5. The Southern past  154  
6. Black memory  184  
7. History and the party line  208  

Epilogue: The world of tomorrow and the world of yesterday  239  

*Appendix: Literary prizes and bestsellers*  245  
*Index*  253