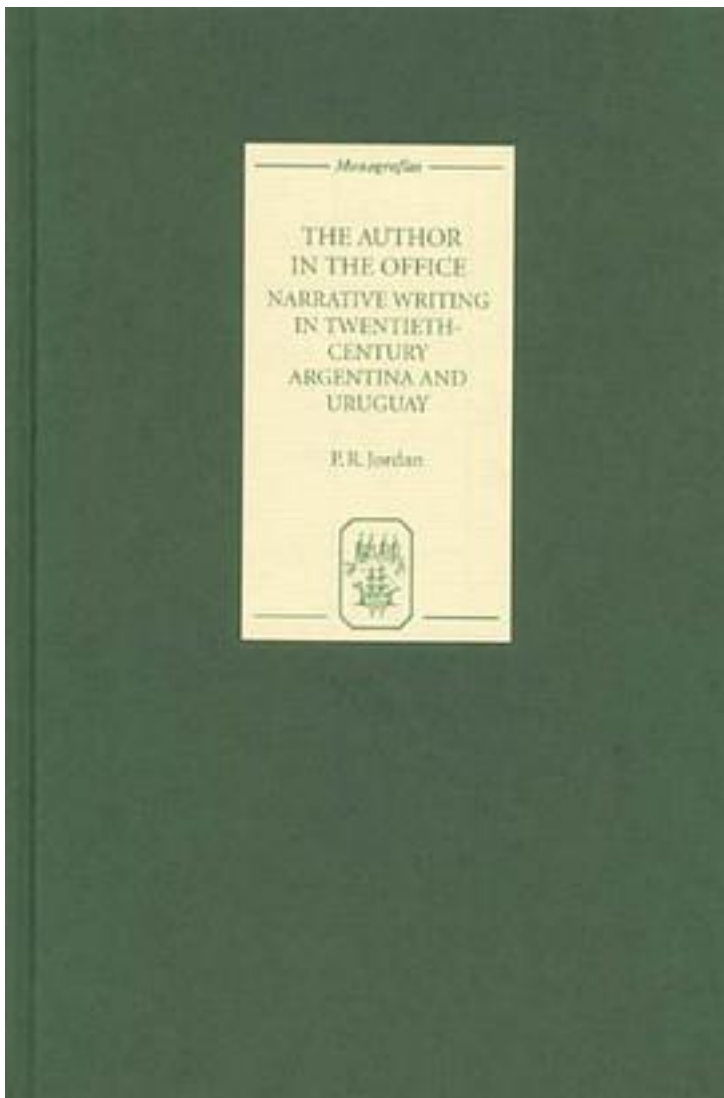


The Author in the Office



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出版者:Boydell & Brewer Inc

出版时间:

装帧:HRD

isbn:9781855661264

Martel's La bolsa (1891) initiates, and Dorfman's Reader (1995) concludes, a study of the white-collar citizens of Buenos Aires and Montevideo in their daytime habitat: the office. The literary background is the European literature of bureaucracy: Balzac, GaldA3s, Gogol, Dickens, Dostoyevsky, Kafka; the theoretical approach is through the sociologists Max Weber and C. Wright Mills; the historical context is the twentieth century: the decline of European power and the ascendancy of the USA; two World Wars; the Wall Street crash; communism and fascism. Through the eyes of Arlt, Benedetti, CampodA3nico, CortAzar, De Castro, Denevi, FernA3ndez, Marechal, Mariani, MartA-nez Estrada, Onetti and Ricci, we observe life on both sides of the River Plate, as the two countries succumb to polarisation, repression and, eventually, military dictatorship. This is the twentieth century, viewed by a bewildered, frequently anguished participant: the person at the next desk. PAUL R. JORDAN lectures in Hispanic Studies at the University of Sheffield.

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