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Recherches croisées: Aragon/Elsa Triolet 1

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appellerait aujourd'hui "l'acte de la parole" (108). Une lettre de Perse à Jacques Rivière en 1910 propose comme idéal "un poème qui montre à ses lecteurs comment lire la poésie" (134). *Oiseaux* réaliserait au mieux cet idéal. La carence d'appréciations critiques relatives à ce poème est étonnante hormis une interprétation métaphysique suspecte. La philosophie ontologique n'élucide pas *Oiseaux*, qui disloque la hiérarchie Forme > Objet > Image > Mot. Mais elle suggérerait l'idée "d'espace de lecture et marquerait le point culminant de l'effet Saint-John Perse, étant la dernière œuvre fournissant le modèle de lecture métaphorique qui remplace le texte lui-même" (133). Car *Chant pour un équinoxe*, qui tendrait plutôt à "déconstruire" l'effet Saint-John Perse, "pourrait être une critique de l'incapacité des premières œuvres à assumer l'idéal du poète" (166), ce qui informerait les théories de lecture ontologique. Mais "déconstruction" n'est point nihilisme puisque Perse propose cette forme idéale de lecture intégrale à travers des milliers de masques, de textes, de personnages, aussi bien qu'à travers nous-mêmes, lecteurs empiriques (168).

Dans un texte d'une grande densité, pour le moins original, Winspur a donc fait, comme il le dit, "l'anabase" de la critique persienne, et exposé ses points faibles tout en nous proposant une approche intrinsèque de lecture profonde. L'expérience en vaut bien la peine.

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*Recherches croisées: Aragon/Elsa Triolet* 1. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1988. Annales Littéraires des l'U de Besançon, no. 364; Série Linguistique et Sémiotiques, 9. Pp. 251. 135 F.

*Recherches Croisées* will publish the proceedings of the seminar devoted to studying the Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques's Aragon-Elsa Triolet collection. The collection holds over 100,000 items, including almost all of Aragon's extant manuscripts, all of Elsa Triolet's manuscripts, research materials developed for their books, and manuscripts and letters sent to the couple by authors and writers. This first volume brings together the papers read in 1986.

Apel-Muller's article on Aragon's *Les Voyageurs de l'impériale* is a masterpiece of historical criticism. He examines the drama surrounding the wartime (1942) publication of the historical novel which includes sections dealing with antisemitism and the Dreyfus affair. Public record is sketchy about who was responsible for the censorship that deformed this first edition; Aragon himself claimed to know little about the matter and attributed the heavy cuts and rewrites to anonymous foreigners (i.e. Nazis). Using corrected page proofs and unpublished correspondence from three different holdings Apel-Muller shows that it was none other than Paulhan, Gaston Gallimard, and the Gallimard corrector who made the changes in view of an anticipated external censorship. He further argues that Aragon was fully cognizant of the facts but lied—by omission and commission—because he appreciated the difficult situation. The interpretation exonerates the censors and indicts the censored. Informative by virtue of its clarity and its sources, controversial due to the topic and its treatment, the article stands as an important source for Aragon scholarship, for the problem of censorship, and for the life of French letters during the war years.

Peytard studies the process of revision that Aragon carried out for the 1960s-70s edition *Œuvres romanesque croisées*, focusing on three major additions to the

fourth part of *Les Communistes*. Peytard combines a solid grounding in the textual apparatus with a sophisticated stylistics and poetics.

Limat-Letellier's paper examines Aragon's self-reflexive *Théâtre/roman*. She distinguishes between the "empirical manuscript" and the "fiction of the manuscript"—when the narrator says his text is ripped at a given point, is the manuscript torn? The structuring of the "gigantesque puzzle-collage" (69) prompted Aragon to cultivate the metaphor of (shuffling) a deck of cards for his text. While material factors prevent the critic from reconstructing previous orderings of the sequences in extensive fashion, Limat-Letellier does advance hypotheses about a number of specific reshufflings.

There are pertinent stylistic observations in the suggestive study of *Aurélien* by Follet, author of a book on the novel. Condé discusses the preparation of an electronic text of *Les Communistes* which incorporates and identifies all of its different states and variants. Insights on Aragon's creative process can be found in Lance-Otterbien's piece on *La Semaine sainte* manuscripts as well as in her interview with the writer Jean Ristat. Weill analyzes thematic, word play, and sources entailed in the character names of *Les Communistes*. Delfranc's "Genèse de *Bonsoir, Thérèse*" outlines the manuscript sources extant for Elsa Triolet's first novel in French.

The papers in *Recherches croisées* are consistently serious and scholarly; the series is indispensable reading for the specialist.

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FISHER, DAVID JAMES. *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988. ISBN 0-520-05787-2. Pp. 378. \$37.50.

From *fin-de-siècle* idealist to ardent anti-fascist and fellow traveler during the waning days of the Popular Front, Romain Rolland's life spanned two centuries of French history. Although Fisher's book examines in greatest depth Rolland's activities in the twenties and thirties (during which Rolland was living in self-imposed exile in Switzerland), Fisher begins by examining his antiwar stance in 1914, in order to set the stage for Rolland's subsequent rise as a spokesperson for international justice.

Fisher discerns in Rolland five forms, or "languages," as he calls them, of intellectual engagement: the language of oceanic sensibility, the language of the free mind, the language of pacifism, the language of antifascism, and the language of fellow traveling. Alternating between periods of intense commitment and almost total disengagement, Rolland demonstrated convincingly that "to be engaged is not to be married to the politics of dogma or blind faith" (7).

It was significant, according to Fisher, that Rolland returned to France in 1937 to live out his final years in the small town of Vézelay. Disenchanted with Swiss opportunism, which to him smacked of incipient fascism, and sensing the oncoming global struggle between the Western democracies and the Axis powers, he wanted desperately to rediscover his native soil before dying. His return to France also signaled his unwavering support for the beleaguered Popular Front government. With the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, and the fall of France in 1940 to the Wehrmacht, Rolland's dream of international brotherhood and peace evaporated during the war and occupation. Rolland continued to work during the period 1940-44, turn-