From the Editor’s Desk

ARTICLES

L’ANNÉE LITTÉRAIRE

14 The motif pervading this discussion of the novel in 2011 is the centenary of a maison and a man who have both had an enormous influence on French publishing from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. 2011 is the hundred-year anniversary of the founding of Les Éditions Gallimard as well as the hundredth birthday of one of France’s most distinguished and influential editors, Maurice Nadeau.

William Cloonan

“The Year of the Century: The Novel in 2011”

33 Although heavily weighted toward dance theater, the 2011 Avignon Festival also featured many non-dance works conceived and directed by such provocative French and European artists as Arthur Nauzyciel, Romeo Castellucci, Pascal Rambert, Angélica Liddell, and Vincent Macaigne. Their pieces offered a bracing mix of both freshly minted narratives and established stories retold in new ways, often raising questions of what and how we remember.

Edward Baron Turk

“Avignon 2011: Staging and Dancing the Past and Present”
encore l’optimisme des Lumières confronté au désastre de Lisbonne en 1755 (194–97).

Une réaction mesurée contre le catastrophisme de l’Europe est saine mais assimiler tout l’environnementalisme à une secte millénariste née de son malaise culturel et historique est faux. Chez Bruckner, la prolifération du vocabulaire du fanatisme, du charlatanisme religieux et des superstitions sectaires, et la polémique hargneuse qui confond les divers mouvements écologiques grèvent la pensée. On doit ferrailler contre les utopies de Charles Fourier et les chimères vertes, mais tout n’est pas ridicule ou totalitaire chez Jacques Ellul, Ivan Illich ou Serge Latouche; Al Gore n’est pas l’Unabomber et un monde sépare Coline Serreau de Earth First!. Certes, certains écologistes sont anti-modernistes ou pire, mais tous ne sont pas zoophiles (146–52), technophobes ou “progressistes anti-progrès” (107).

Monterey Institute of International Studies (CA)        Michel Gueldry


Although the title may at first appear puzzling, it is in fact most expressive and fitting. As the subtitle indicates, this book includes an English translation of Olympe de Gouges’s renowned Les droits de la femme. When the latter first appeared in a 1791 French pamphlet, it was located “Between the Queen and the Cabby,” i.e., between two relatively neglected—and routinely omitted—sections: a dedicatory letter to Queen Marie-Antoinette and a lengthy tirade against a taxi-cab driver who, according to Gouges (1748–93), overcharged her for a ride. Yet more than simply referring to the location of Gouges’s most famous text within her lesser-known pamphlet—included here in its entirety in both English and French—the title also evokes connotations of class and gender. Both of these constitute significant themes in this engaging, highly readable book by John Cole on one of the most revolutionary feminist texts in French history and its context.

Cole thus sets out to replace Gouges’s Rights of Woman in its commonly overlooked pamphlet context and to situate it and its author in French Revolutionary history, a goal that he accomplishes admirably. After an introduction where he describes Gouges’s biography as a tragedy in five acts and provides a useful overview of scholarship on the author, Cole offers a faithful English translation of Gouges’s entire pamphlet in which he even copies the successively smaller fonts used originally (also present in the title). He follows the structure of the French version precisely, dutifully indicating the gender of French words when it matters yet would not be apparent from the translation. This constitutes the first English translation of the pamphlet and it will be valuable especially for those who acknowledge its importance and influence beyond France yet are unable to access it in French.

Cole subsequently discusses all pamphlet sections systematically and in great detail. Of particular interest are his analyses of the lesser-known sections, such as Gouges’s unconventional dedication to Queen Marie-Antoinette, her revolutionary proposal on behalf of married women, i.e., a democratized social contract between man and woman, another proposal in favor of persons of color and, of course, her incident with the taxicab driver. Cole argues that although
some of these pamphlet sections are not significant in themselves, they did determine why French revolutionaries ignored Gouges’s proposals. Since this offers an answer to a very common question, readers will greatly appreciate this reconstitution, translation, and recontextualization of Gouges’s text.

Cole’s assessment of Gouges’s work is not biased by his interest in it and he points out numerous problematic areas, sometimes with wonderful humor (see p. 185, for instance). In a chapter where twelve black and white illustrations show vividly how French revolutionaries mocked their royals, he ascribes “courage to the point of recklessness” (66) to Gouges when she addresses Queen Marie-Antoinette. And when comparing the Rights of Woman articles to their 1789 male counterparts from the Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen, he acknowledges Gouges’s declaration’s “conceptual deficiencies” and “verbal infelicities” (136). Yet in spite of this, the reader cannot but agree with him when he concludes that Gouges’s work is nevertheless an “astonishing achievement” (231).

An appendix containing a facsimile of the entire original pamphlet follows the text; notes, a bibliography, and an index conclude the book. Although the bibliography is already divided into “Gouges’s works” and “Other works,” this reader would have liked to see modern texts listed separately from those that appeared during the French Revolution. This work will be of interest to scholars and students alike in the fields of history, French, and women’s studies. The pamphlet texts, in French or English, lend themselves readily for classroom use.

University of North Texas

Marijn S. Kaplan


This Association des Professeurs de Lettres colloquium includes five talks on the history of pedagogy in secondary schools, and five on contemporary issues. In the preface, Vignest appeals for a universal patrimony of the intellect. Whether modern foreign languages other than French should be taught is not addressed. Laurenti’s Présentation asks what ‘humanistic culture’ means today, and whether the teaching of ancient languages can be justified as leading to modern ones, or whether students should merely learn everyday French to cope with our increasingly commercialized Western culture. Sylvain Menant’s overview of collèges under the Ancien Régime (21–34) reminds us that after the Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes in 1685, all such institutions were Catholic, nearly all the teachers were priests, and all the students were male (the brilliant women intellectuals of the period attest to effective home schooling). The Enlightenment Encyclopédie, however, was as much an attempt to professionalize agriculture and industry as to oppose the Church. The study of pagan authors—provided that the texts were bowdlerized—was, however, accepted as providing models of refined linguistic expression, effective argument, and admonitions to control the passions and the unbridled imagination. The year after the expulsion of the Jesuits from France, Rousseau’s Émile (1762) tried to secularize education “dans une perspective hédoniste, [comme] le moyen d’épanouir la personnalité juvénile et de découvrir les voies d’un bonheur terrestre” (34).