

A Postwar Surrealist Network: Claude Serbanne's Networking Activity in *Cahiers du Sud**

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Cahiers du Sud and Surrealism

THE REPUTED Marseille-based magazine *Cahiers du Sud* (1925–1966) played an important role in the promotion and distribution of the Surrealist ideas inside a cultural network that extended beyond the cultural areas that were within the immediate reach of Surrealism. Although during the first two decades of the twentieth century Paris was considered to be the capital of Surrealism and even, as some may argue,¹ the capital of the cultural world, Édouard Jaguer, a French poet and literary critic, suggested another perspective. In his view, as far as the cultural network regrouped around *Cahiers du Sud* was concerned, it could be asserted that the light was coming from Nice and Marseille instead of Paris.² Also, it is worth noticing that Jaguer's statement mainly suggested that the authentic international dimension of Surrealism (and therefore, that of the subsequent network of supporters of Surrealism) could be identified and thus efficiently organised in a more 'neutral' area, unbiased by any allegiance to various rival fractions of Surrealism. Surrealist rivalry has quite a long history, it generated many conflicts leading to a series of exclusions from the group led by André Breton although, in most cases, the excluded ones did not abandon the core ideas of the movement. Hence, not only did Marseille benefit from this neutrality but it also had a real opening towards other cultures, European, Mediterranean or Arabian etc. Situated at the crossroads of such different cultures, Marseille had no claims regarding the status of a 'capital,' claims which most often than not implied a certain feeling of self-glorification of the centre, insensitive to external impulses. *Cahiers du Sud* mirrored the international dimension of the Surrealist phenomenon active in the most unexpected areas (Scandinavia, Hungary, Turkey etc.), serving as a backlash for post-surrealist avant-garde networks that flourished in the following years, the most spectacular evolution being that of the CoBrA group, that reunited artists from Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam.³ In the aftermath of the Second World War, *Cahiers du Sud* was also engaged in familiarizing the

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French public with the effervescent Surrealist groups of Eastern Europe, presenting them in a very convincing manner and regardless of their affinities, and despite the fact that some of them grew closer to the contesting group of the Revolutionary Surrealists formed around Christian Dotremont, future founder of CoBrA.

The history of the magazine *Cahiers du Sud* has already been documented in a series of specialized works and publications⁴ and both the archive of the magazine and that of its founder, Jean Ballard, are available at the Alcazar Library in Marseille.⁵ More recently, an inventory indicating the actual presence of the Surrealist movement in the pages of *Cahiers du Sud*⁶ has been published in *Mélusine*, a magazine dedicated to Surrealist research around the world. The author of this inventory states that starting with 1926 *Cahiers du Sud* promoted an innovative type of literature, including the one belonging to Surrealism. André Gaillard, Joë Bousquet and Léon-Gabriel Gros were some of the most important contact persons and internal collaborators who contributed to the consolidation of an innovative direction of the magazine. As shown in the article published in *Mélusine*, representatives of the Romanian avant-garde like Benjamin Fondane or Ilarie Voronca also started writing for the magazine during the 1930s and 1940s. To a great extent, they can be considered dissidents of Surrealism although they remained extremely familiar with the Surrealist movement.

In 1946 two young critics from Marseille, René Renne and Claude Serbanne, become active figures of *Cahiers du Sud* and contribute to a more sustained activity of the magazine. They start a thematic column present in almost every number, called 'Courrier d'ailleurs,' intending to show the latest tendencies in literature and arts around the world. Although neither one of the two critics were incorporated to a Surrealist group per se, their interest seemed very authentic, keen to survey the activity of the international surrealist groups, as depicted in the column signed 'Renne et Serbanne.' In the issue nr. 280 of 1946, Serbanne even presents a thematic dossier of international Surrealism, accompanied by translations and small portraits of the authors. This episode concerning the relationship between the magazine and the Surrealist movement is also included in the above-mentioned article from *Mélusine*, nevertheless in a slightly inaccurate and superficial manner:

*A maverick surrealist act? Some young men's hoax (Renne and Serbanne)? The Surréalistes étrangers thematic block built around Achille Chavée and Georges Hénein presents fifteen fictional representatives of the surrealist diaspora accompanied by pieces of pastiche!*⁷

In what follows, I will try to provide a broader analysis of the role that this special issue of the magazine and the column 'Courrier d'ailleurs' played in disseminating the artistic production of the Central and Eastern European surrealists (especially the Romanian, Hungarian and Czech ones) and also to draw out a series of possible reasons that made the French literary historians misread this special issue of *Cahiers du Sud* that proves an intense networking activity of Claude Serbanne.

The case of the ‘foreign Surrealists’

THE MAGAZINE issue N°. 280 of 1946 features 17 authors under the thematic heading *Surréalistes étrangers* bearing the following reference: ‘choisis et présentés par Claude Serbanne’ (selected and presented by Claude Serbanne). According to Serbanne’s descriptions of the authors in question, they represent 14 countries/nations. While Serbanne also takes care of the translation of several texts (especially the ones from Scandinavian languages), the task of translating the English texts is undertaken by Léon-Gabriel Gros, who was the editor-in-chief of the magazine at that time. This is how the complete list of the authors depicted in Serbanne’s small anthology looks like, including their name and nationality: Toni del Renzio (England/Italian), Roland Penrose (England), Jindrych Heisler (Czechoslovakia/France/Czech), Arthur Lundkvist (Sweden), Ole Sarvig (Denmark), Achille Chavée (Belgium), Douchan Matitch (Yugoslavia), Josef Mrozy (Poland), Heino Saar (Sweden/Estonian), Sadi Cherkeshi (England/Turkish), Gellu Naum (Romania), Virgil Teodorescu (Romania), Charles-Henri Ford (USA), Hugh Chisholm (USA), Jeanne MacGahey (USA), Manuel Aguelar⁸ (Venezuela [!]), Georges Henein (Egypt/France/Egyptian). As the majority of these authors are also included in several other academic publications⁹ as representatives of international Surrealism, it is quite superficial to say that Serbanne’s anthology dealt with fictional authors. Consequently, further investigation is needed in order to establish the grounds for such false information and to determine to what extent it entered the specialized literature dedicated to this particular subject matter.

By all means, it seems that the information published in the article from *Mélusine* was taken from the 1993 ‘chronicle’ of the magazine:

The publications of great quality in the magazine cannot make us disregard the remarkably orchestrated farce played by Serbanne and Renne, two young critics of Marseille and Nice who led both the public of Cahiers du Sud and the editorial board of the magazine into believing that they had been able to put together a thematic block consecrated to ‘foreign Surrealists.’ Their trick was only disclosed afterwards: Serbanne and Renne had indeed published, besides some ‘reliable’ texts of authors like Georges Henein and Achille Chavée, a series of pastiches emanated by ghostly authors whose unpronounceable names were supposed to mark the dispersion of surrealists in the United States, in Scandinavia, the Middle East and in Eastern European countries.¹⁰

A certain reticence towards the status of the ‘foreigner’ seems to affect the tone of this statement (see the expression ‘noms unprononcables’) and underestimates Serbanne and Renne’s capacity to draw bridges between different points of the Surrealist world.

There is also another publication where a significant point concerning the history of *Cahiers du Sud* is made by omission, meaning that neither Serbanne’s nor Renne’s names are mentioned in the 300 pages-long exhibition catalogue dedicated to the archives of the magazine,¹¹ leaving us to believe that these young critics’ adventure has left little traces in the local histories. Deeper research of materials pertaining to the oral history of the magazine brings us closer to the rumour mill started at the expense of the issue

containing the material of *Surréalistes étrangers*. In René Kochmann's interviews with the editors of *Cahiers du Sud* (Jean Ballard, Jean Lartigue, Jean Tortel), besides other anecdotes concerning the history of the magazine, we can also read about their contacts with the Surrealists. Thus, Ballard talks about his encounter with André Breton who had found refuge in Marseille during the 1940s, and also recalls publishing one of Breton's poems (*Plein marge*) in his magazine. Jean Lartigue and Jean Tortel mention the *Surréalistes étrangers* episode and appear somewhat amused in a retrospective view by Serbanne's initiative to present these artists. In Jean Tortel's words, the chief editor of *Cahiers du Sud* at the time of this event, this is what happened:

The board had decided that every issue should be preceded by a thematic block that would set the tone, if you like, of the magazine. There was Lautréamont, Sade, and I think there were also some issues on the African Americans. And then, there came this famous thematic dossier... that, actually, was... quite an admirable thing, an extraordinary hoax on the foreign Surrealists, that was not taken as such by the *Cahiers*, was it. The *Cahiers* believed it to be true. (Laughter)

R.K.: Could you give more details on what this hoax was all about?

J. T.: It was René Renne and his friend, both very familiar with the surrealist movement, who had this brilliant idea of inventing about thirty Czech, Japanese, Swedish, Finnish surrealists and so on!

R. K.: And this was not immediately disclosed?

J. T.: Not officially, no. But I remember that a few years later Mandiargues told me: 'What you did at Cahiers was something remarkable, wasn't it! Indeed the most beautiful, the most beautiful surrealist issue there ever was...because you invented all those surrealists!' I was very careful not to tell him that we...I confess that I didn't know anything. And both Ballard and Gros took it for granted, I am sure!

R.K.: But, now they do know about it?

J.T.: Yes, they do, Ballard does. And the whole thing amuses him...

R.K.: It was a nice hoax!

J.T.: Oh, well, it was one of the nicest hoaxes after the war! It is a pity, though, that it was kept a secret in some way; but the surrealists know about it, because as I told you, it was Mandiargues who told me about it.¹²

However, when René Kochmann verifies the information of his interview with Jean Lartigue, the subeditor in charge of the magazine, he speaks of it in terms of a 'partial farce':²

Partially, it was a hoax. René Renne and Claude Serbanne, two very cultivated young men, for that matter, and in many respects quite interesting characters, found it enjoyable to build up this whole story...They deceived us and just like every critic or any reader of Cahiers du Sud, we played along (laughter) back then! Let's say this was a joke in the life of a rather serious magazine like Cahiers du Sud. I cannot deny that. Eventually, it was a valid move.¹³

Both reactions concerning Serbanne's scheme are quite jovial and understanding in tone, although it is generally agreed upon that they had witnessed a farce. On the contrary, the historiography proper dedicated to the magazine gives a much more negative picture of the event.

Bearing all these pieces in mind we can easily trace back the trajectory of the information regarding the thematic block of the magazine. Thus, we may infer that it was not until later, probably a few years after the *Surréalistes étrangers* episode, that this rumour, by then already familiar to the Surrealist circles (for example, André Pieyre de Mandiargues, mentioned in Tortel's interview was a figure very close to Breton and to certain Surrealist circles) had reached the ears of the editorial board and remained a sort of unverified legend that made its way inside the history of the magazine. In fact, Lartigue adequately phrased his statements by using the expression 'partially a farce,' because the name of the Venezuelan author, Manuel Aguelar, featuring in the list of surrealists was actually Serbanne's own pen name (or heteronym) that he mainly used to sign his poetry. Apparently, the editorial board was unfamiliar with this particular detail at the time, though Serbanne had already revealed Aguelar's identity in various publications and mentioned it in his correspondence. For a clear picture of this event (which would also help us draw the line between the Aguelar case and the case of *Surréalistes étrangers*) further details concerning Serbanne's part in the construction of an international Surrealist network after the Second World War are needed.

Claude Serbanne: the node of a communication network

MORE POSITIVE appreciations addressing the figure of Claude Serbanne and his activity at *Cahiers du Sud* are provided by Edouard Jaguer, a literary critic who was in his turn part of the artistic scene flourishing after the War, including the lines of the CoBrA group.

Claude Serbanne and René Renne signed artistic and literary chronicles together and, at that time (from 1945 to 1949), stood as some of the best informed and illuminating individuals of what was a sadly conformist French 'artistic press' of the post-war period. For those who during those years were committed to an authentically illuminating perspective on what was going on in the avant-garde world, from Stockholm to Mexico, from Atlan's workshop to that of Onslow-Ford, Renne-Serbanne's chronicles in the CdS could not be overlooked, and we can say that, in this respect, the light came from Nice and Marseille instead of Paris.¹⁴

A closer analysis of Claude Serbanne's letters pertaining to that period indicates that he had access to information coming from reliable sources like editors, critics or even from artists themselves, from books and various small scale publications sent to him for a review in *Cahiers du Sud* or for other magazines that in few cases remained only an editorial project.

Who was in fact Claude Serbanne? As he is unaccounted for in dictionaries or anthologies, it seems important to refer to the presentation he makes of himself on a social

network for graphic designers, a presentation that is also provided on his Facebook account. With an extra emphasis on the afterwar period, a time during which he held the column *Courrier d'ailleurs*, his CV offers the following information on this period and *Surréalistes étrangers*:

In a remote past, after the end of the war and following an uneven research and the active participation in various avant-garde movements in painting and poetry. Publication of studies and critical texts in *Cahiers du Sud*, in collaboration with René Renne, then in the USA (*View* magazine) and in various European countries (Blok in Czechoslovakia, Helhesten in Copenhagen, Index in Budapest, Centaur in Amsterdam, etc.). Meetings with Atlan, Leonor Fini, Dominguez, the Belgian surrealist, Asger Jorn and the Danish abstract-surrealists (who later on formed the Cobra movement). Publication of poems under the name Manuel Aguelar (*Ode à Varèse*, *Ode à Léonor Fini*, *Melanotic Sarcoma*, etc.).

In New York at the beginning of 1946, around the *View* magazine, a meeting with André Breton and amicable contacts with many painters close to the surrealist movement, discovery of artists who were still unknown in Europe.

1947, Mexico. Meeting with Rivera and Frida Kahlo, Benjamin Péret, Remedios Varo, Paalen, etc.

After a long period of peregrination between Mexico and Brazil as a photographer, return to France and—necessity calls—a series of ‘traditional’ professional activities having to do with publicity and marketing.

Paintings and drawings/ Musical compositions.¹⁵

In 1945, Serbanne and his friends René Laplayne and René Renne embark on an intense letter exchange with various art magazines, they start publishing articles and literary texts abroad and plan the publication of their own magazine which would be called *ETC*. The name of the magazine was also mentioned in the correspondence addressed to the Belgian surrealist Marcel Mariën dating from 1945.¹⁶ Although the articles for the first issue of this magazine were already selected and ready for print, the publication underwent several deferrals during 1946. According to the letters addressed to Mariën at the end of 1946, Serbanne had decided to redirect the texts to another magazine he knew as foreign correspondent¹⁷ called *Centaur* and located in Amsterdam. These letters also prove Serbanne’s exceptional dynamism in connecting countries and continents: he sends texts by his peers to different foreign magazines, submits articles to translation or even handles the translations himself in some cases. His correspondence reveals a type of personality strongly committed to making contacts and networking. Thus, Serbanne used to send the postal address of either magazines or of his fellow authors to his other correspondents (for example, he gives Toni del Renzio’s address to Marcel Mariën or writes the addresses of Gellu Naum and Georges Henein to Mezei Árpád etc.) and he also encourages his partners to adopt a more direct approach in their relations to one another. Consequently, concrete cooperation takes shape – Mezei, founder of the Európai Iskola group (The European School) in Budapest, in a letter addressed to Serbanne, admits that the idea of organizing an exhibition in Budapest with the Czech group Skupina

Ra was to a certain extent inspired by their correspondence.¹⁸ Serbanne also wrote reviews for *Cahiers du Sud* or other magazines promoting the booklets of the Romanian Surrealists in Bucharest, and, in addition, mentioned them in laudatory terms to Mezei or Mariën. The symbolic capital of the young Serbanne is significantly increased by this intermediating activity recommending him as a very well informed author and critic. The information he has just received from his correspondents is always put to good use, for the benefit of the column *Courrier d'ailleurs*, and his access to small scale modern, progressive magazines offers him the possibility to present them to a wider audience in his column. As a quasi-indirect consequence of his networking activity, he also had the opportunity to publish abroad, in the USA, the Netherlands, Hungary or Egypt.

The period we are dealing with additionally denotes his strong sympathies for the Surrealist movement. He prepares several thematic presentations of international Surrealism, like *Surréalistes étrangers* or other projects assigned to *ETC* or *Centaur* that remained unpublished. One of his major accomplishments is the 122 pages long *Trivlens Plageaand* anthology,¹⁹ published in Danish, with a selection of authors that bears his signature and is based most probably upon the material collected for some of his older magazine projects. Compared to the selection of *Cahiers du Sud*, the anthology offers a broader and more representative perspective on Surrealism, including the French Surrealists, ineligible for the *Cahiers du Sud* thematic issue. Consequently, the list of authors presented by the *Trivlens Plageaand* anthology also includes names like André Breton, Hans Arp, Yves Bonnefoy, Aimé Césaire, Leonora Carrington, Giorgio de Chirico.²⁰ His part in designing an efficient communication network for artists was more likely to be recognized outside the borders of France, in Scandinavia or, to a certain extent, in the Eastern European countries. He facilitated their access to the francophone world, though he was not the exclusive node towards the Surrealist centres. Painters like Marcel Jean, Victor Brauner also managed to introduce Breton to the name of some authors that seemed more or less obscure in Paris. According to Edouard Jaguer, the drama of Renne and Serbanne comes from the fact that even though at the time when they co-signed the *Courrier d'ailleurs* column, they had a considerable notoriety and managed to bring to the public's attention unfamiliar names like that of Asger Jorn, after a few decades this relationship was reversed: the CoBrA artist became widely known and critics like Renne and Serbanne got lost in the tunnels of time. In his study on Asger Jorn (who insisted to have his first catalogue published in France to be prefaced by Renne and Serbanne), Jaguer makes several references to *Surréalistes étrangers* and the *Trivlens plageaand* anthology and also draws a summary of the permanent coauthors' individual activity:

Besides, just like Fernando Pessoa, Serbanne multiplied his heteronyms (disguised under foreign names) with every possible opportunity, thus replacing the art critic with the poet. Once a Parisian, then an inhabitant of Nice, he became the poet Manuel Aguelar, a self-proclaimed Venezuelan, author of an 'Ode à Varèse' and an 'Ode à Esteban Francès,' one of the most brilliant poems that the Surrealist painting ever inspired. René Renne was, in his time, a 'lyrical-abstract' painter whose signature is to be found on the surrealist tracts of the period.²¹

In the Ballard Archive of Marseille there is a letter signed by Serbanne, dating from 1960, dealing with literary issues and the possibility of a new project: the prospect of writing detective novels that would cover his living expenses. Serbanne inquires whether Ballard could help him with the publication of such texts and in response, quite cordially eloping the Aguelar farce episode that seemed not to have affected the relationship of the two, the senior editor in chief leaves room for further interest in Serbanne's literary activity.²² Jaguer's article also confirms the fact that Aguelar's identity was no news to the members of the international Surrealist network like Jaguer himself, and archival sources that mention the Venezuelan poet bring us to the conclusion that in fact the whole farce was addressed to the *Cahiers du Sud* editorial board while all the other correspondents were aware that he used Aguelar's name as a pseudonym/heteronym.

Manuel Aguelar, the fictional hybrid

IN SPITE of the fact that between 1946 and 1949 Aguelar's name is mentioned in three distinct issues of the magazine,²³ his true identity was never revealed inside the journal and Claude Serbanne appears only as the translator of Aguelar's poems from Spanish. As for all the other poets, the *Surréalistes étrangers* thematic issue also includes a small presentation of the Venezuelan poet:

Manuel Aguelar is a very young Venezuelan poet who lives outside the reach of literary sects. His activity mainly concerns the Surrealism. Still under the strong influence of Lorca and César Moro, Aguelar has so far only published the large lyrical effusions 'Ode à Varèse' (1943) and 'Sept Chants' (1945).²⁴

In 1947, *Ode à Leonor Fini* appears in the *Index* collection (similar in many respects to the *Infra-Noir* collection initiated by the Romanian Surrealists in Bucharest) published in Budapest in a bilingual edition and preceded by a small essay on Aguelar by Mezei Árpád. Interestingly enough, the text substitutes Aguelar's identity with that of Serbanne's and the only thing remaining unchanged is the use of his heteronym. It becomes obvious that Mezei was aware of the fictional aura that surrounded the Venezuelan author and, bearing that in mind, he decided to include him in the logics of evolution of the French lyrical poetry:

Manuel Aguelar is a poet of the French South and a member of a group of poets from Southern France. Even though this group has not officially joined the surrealist movement of Paris, it embodies a particular spirit of the French modernity that stems from surrealism. Aguelar is an extremely complex character: in arts, he is what we would call a worldwide renowned authority, he is presently working on a book on Matta supported by a publishing house from the USA and, above all, he represents one of the strongest connection points of the modern artistic movements in the world – and a direct consequence of such a position is

related to the fact that the recent exhibition of the Czech artists in Budapest is actually indebted to his influence.²⁵

Serbanne's name does not occur in this presentation (not even as a translator of the text) and the identity of the French author is completely assumed, although an element of peculiarity concerning his name is visible, as the author seems to indulge in a rapprochement to a southern identity, that should be understood here as a Mediterranean identity. However, all the other pieces of information from the text are connected to Serbanne's activity as a correspondent and as a dynamic art critic.

In the pages of the *Trivlens plageaand* anthology published in Denmark, Manuel Aguelar's identity is explicitly pointed out. The Danish translation of *Ode à Varèse* is included in the anthology and the name of the author appears as follows: Manuel Aguelar (Claude Serbanne), explicitly signalling the idea of 'the double' in their relationship.²⁶

What reasons could there eventually be for the use of this heteronym?

On a more general level, a possible explanation could rely on the 'exoticism' of Surrealist thought and the interest it took in the culture of remote continents like Africa, North America or South America that fascinated the Parisian group.²⁷ Thus, Serbanne's project was all the more legitimate if we take into account Surrealism's Mexican and, with the participation of César Moro, Peruvian connections. In this context it becomes obvious how his name also triggers a definite framework of interpretation (linked to Lorca, Dalí and other Hispanic writers).

However, there is also a pragmatic level attached to the use of a pseudonym. His choice becomes relevant in relation to the climate of Marseille/*Cahiers du Sud* and, as we have already pointed out, it is disclosed in his correspondence with authors from abroad (Hungary, Denmark) and through the Danish anthology it makes its way back to France (we know that the book itself reached Paris and remained in the Breton archive). Still, in the case of his correspondence with the editorial board of *Cahiers du Sud* the mystification of Aguelar's identity is conserved. One of the decisive elements that led to the development of the whole story relies on the fact that *Cahiers du Sud* declined several poems by Serbanne, *Melanotic Sarcoma* and *Paula*, that he had previously sent for publication. Nonetheless, the editing board continued to pay interest to Serbanne's articles and translations.²⁸ We may infer that such a refusal stands as one of the main reasons why Aguelar's texts were presented as translations and also, as a key element that made Serbanne think of the Aguelar farce in the first place. Eventually, the perpetration of such farces (along different periods of the literary history and across different countries) probes the exigency of the publishers from immemorial times and leads us to the conclusion that more often than not the editors are likely to be influenced by the sonority of an author's name and tend to treat one and the same text differently should it be signed by a different person. The way in which the Aguelar case was subsequently recollected, although in a hyperbolic key and extended to all the authors of *Surréalistes étrangers*, proves that Serbanne's farce became a source of amusement in the literary milieu and was interpreted as such.

Instead of conclusions: dislocated identities, hybrids of Marseille and of the Surrealist world

ANY RECONTEXTUALIZATION of the Aguelar case and, implicitly, of the *Surréalistes étrangers* thematic issue, according to the specific place and historical period when they occurred, is eventually a confirmation of the importance of location: Marseille is and has been a hybrid cultural space. On the one hand, we could associate this hybridity to the Mediterranean character of a seafaring city and, on the other, to its predilection for cultural exchange between Southern Europe, Northern Africa and the traditional culture of Provence.

In such a context, the ‘dislocated’ identities of the Surrealist group members become extremely interesting. If we consider, for instance, some of the authors who found their way into the anthologies, we could mention Toni del Renzio, an Italian poet who lived in Great Britain, Jindrych Heisler, a Czech surrealist who settled in Paris after 1947, Heino Saar, a young Estonian poet, who lived in Sweden, Sadi Cherkeshi, a Turkish poet from England, or Georges Henein, an Egyptian poet who shifted locations from Cairo to Paris and back. It was at their side that Manuel Aguelar naturally fit in. We could argue that both the group of authors and the *Courrier d'ailleurs* column capture the city’s image like a mirror and their intercultural and hybrid aspect is a reflection of Marseille and its environs.

Given the censorship of the Surrealist activities in Czechoslovakia, Romania or Hungary after 1947, many of Serbanne’s correspondents became inaccessible and Surrealist events or publications ceased to exist in those countries. Hence, with the exception of the CoBrA adventure with its Western and Northern European artistic network, the enthusiasm of the two co-authors Renne-Serbanne sensibly diminished. Serbanne’s expertise in Scandinavian cultural life and his outstanding communication skills recommend him though as a quite influential figure for artists like Jaguer and Jorn.

Serbanne’s activity in the 1940s inaugurates a new type of cultural model that not only became largely cultivated across the twentieth century but also gained momentum in the era of digital networks. CoBrA embraced this type of model beforehand and numerous present day institutions are built according to its principles, evoking a cultural model that is no longer structured around an absolute centre (like Paris or New York in the past decades) but functions like an organized network defined by links and relative centres that have a telling effect beyond any type of cultural or political borders.

□

Notes

1. Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2004.
2. ‘On peut dire que à cet égard, le lumière venait de Nice et de Marseille, et non de Paris.’ Édouard Jaguer, “*Livre de bord au bord d’un livre*,” in id. *Cobra au coeur du XXe siècle* (Paris: Galilée, 1997), 133.
3. See Jaguer, *Cobra au coeur du XXe siècle* ; Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Cobra – un art libre*, Paris: Hachette, 1983.

4. Alain Paire, *Chronique des Cahiers du Sud 1914–1966*, Paris: IMEC, 1993 ; Nicolas Cendo et alii, *Rivages des Origines: Archives des Cahiers du Sud*, Marseille: Archives de la Ville de Marseille, 1981.
5. See <<http://www.bmvr.marseille.fr/home/bibliotheques/decouvrialcazar/niveautrois.dot>>.
6. Martine Monteau, “Le surréalisme au fronton des Cahiers du Sud,” *Mélusine* 31 (2011): 55–68.
7. Monteau, “Le surréalisme au fronton des Cahiers du Sud,” 65. Translations from French by BIJ.
8. There are two published versions of his name – *Aguelar* and *Agüelar*. In what follows, I will use the *Aguelar* version of his name except for quotes and bibliographical references in which the other version is used.
9. See Keith Aspley (ed.), *Historical Dictionary of Surrealism*, Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2010.
10. Paire, *Chronique des Cahiers du Sud*, 337.
11. See Cendo et alii, *Rivages des Origines*.
12. René Kochmann, *Cahiers du Sud*, Tours, 1968 (manuscript, Ballard Collection, Bibliothèque Alcazar, Marseille), 79–81.
13. Kochmann, *Cahiers du Sud*, 73–74.
14. Jaguer, *Cobra au coeur du XXe siècle*, 133.
15. See <<http://www.drawin.fr/bio-3320.html>>; <<http://www.facebook.com/claude.serbanne>>.
16. Claude Serbanne, [Correspondence with] Marcel Mariën, Archives et Musée de la Littérature Bruxelles, ML 10150/0001-0012, <<http://www.aml-cfwb.be/catalogues/general/cotes/ML/10150/0001-0012>>.
17. Claude Serbanne is mentioned as editor in the colophon of *Centaure*. In the pages of this magazine, he publishes texts like: *Charles Henri Ford* (May 1946) and *L'art en France* (co-written with René Renne, October 1946), see Andreas Kramer and Robert Vilain (eds), *Yvan Goll: A Bibliography of the Primary Works* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), 164–167. On some occasions, he also uses writing paper with the logotype of *Centaure* for his correspondence. (V. Claude Serbanne to Mezei Árpád, 4. I. 1947. Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Budapest, Kézirattár, Mezei Árpád Collection).
18. “Les Tchèques m’ont envoyé quelques catalogues intéressants. Je leur écrirai aussi et je leur proposerai aussi d’exposer ici. Mais, ces sont des développements pour lesquels la responsabilité retombera sur vous.” Mezei Árpád to Claude Serbanne, 25 March 1947, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Budapest, Kézirattár, Fond Mezei Árpád.
19. Claude Serbanne (ed.), *Tivlens Plagaand. Surrealistisk Anthologi*. Digte og Prosa Udvalgt af Claude Serbanne, Paa Dansk ved Steen Colding, Copenhagen: Forlag Aarhus, 1947.
20. Referring to this anthology, one of Breton’s correspondents acknowledged it to be the first of its kind written in Danish but he also suggests that a new publication should only include the ‘real’ surrealists: “Cher Breton! Je vous inclus envoi un recueil de poésies avec des contributions par tout le monde, comme outre poésie surréaliste include des poèmes plus ou moindre en contact périphérique avec le surréalisme – C’est le premier livre à son espèce en la Scandinavie – J’espère plus tardif qu’on peut ici en Danemark publier un nouvel livre que exclusivement include le surréalisme véritable.” Wilhelm Freddie to André Breton, 1.3.1948, <http://www.andrebretton.fr/en/item/?GCOI=56600100633921>
21. Jaguer, *Cobra au coeur du XXe siècle*, 134.
22. Claude Serbanne to Jean Ballard, 18 August 1960; Jean Ballard to Claude Serbanne, 23 August 1960, Ballard Collection, Marseille.
23. *Ode de poche pour Joan Miró*, *Ode à Esteban Frances* (n° 280/1946); *L’Ode à Varèse* (n° 285/1947); *Chant de Monsieur le Lieutenant*, *Chant de Pacheco à Sonora* (n° 294/1949).
24. *Cahiers du Sud* 280 (1945), 393.

25. See Manuel Agüelar [Claude Serbanne], 'Óda Leonor Finihez franciául és magyarul, Mezei Árpád tanulmányával,' *Index* 19–20 (1947), my translation, BIJ.
26. "Manuel Aguelar er Claude Serbannes « dobbeltnavn »." Serbanne (ed.), *Tvivlens plageaand*, 9.
27. Louise Tythacott, *Surrealism and the Exotic*, London – New York: Routledge, 2003.
28. Jean Lartigue to Claude Serbanne, 24. 6. 1946, Ballard Collection, Bibliothèque Alcazar, Marseille.

Abstract

A Postwar Surrealist network: Claude Serbanne's networking activity in Cahiers du Sud

The literary journal *Cahiers du Sud* (1925–1966), edited in Marseille, was among the ones that were ready to present Surrealist authors, beginning with the interwar period. After the second world war, two young critics called René Renne and Claude Serbanne initiated a new thematic column within the journal, called *Courrier d'ailleurs* (Mail from elsewhere), where they presented the new literary trends of foreign countries and zones, with a special interest in Surrealism. In 1946, a whole thematic issue was dedicated to the 'foreign surrealists' (*Surréalistes étrangers*), where British, Czech, Romanian, Swedish, Estonian, Egyptian authors were published, and Serbanne presented a whole panorama of surrealist writing. Many of the authors were living at that time outside their native countries. Serbanne himself invented a 'foreign surrealist' from Venezuela whose poems were included into the thematic issue. The paper analyses the thematic issue and the networking activity of Serbanne as a model for later international Surrealist groups like CoBrA.

Keywords

Cahiers du Sud, Claude Serbanne, network, surrealism, Marseille