

Hemingway's work and concludes that art and its permanence is about the only solid thing mankind has in Hemingway's world of constant war and futile politics. Brian Way's "Hemingway the Intellectual: A version of Modernism" suggests that Hemingway is a genuine child of his age, creator of a literary style with little attention to older modes of thought and form. Like other artists of the twenties and thirties, Hemingway simply practised his unique method without theorizing.

Faith Pullin offers "Hemingway and the Secret Language of Hate" in which she claims that "Hemingway has no real interest in character and therefore no genuine comprehension of, or expertise in, the fictive treatments of human relationships" (p. 181). As a result, she says, Hemingway fails to create real people in his fiction; he is best at rendering "place" and "things." Frank McConnell traces in "Stalking Papa's Ghost: Hemingway's Presence in Contemporary American Writing" the influence Hemingway has had on other writers like Norman Mailer, Kurt Vonnegut, and Thomas Pynchon. McConnell calls such writers "dandies," suggesting by the term and his tone rather deep-seated reservations about this school of writers, sons and grandsons of Hemingway.

The book is useful primarily in the rich allusiveness to many peripheral and cultural matters: nihilism, existentialism, modernism, political and moral questions, analyses of style, feminism, and others. Some of the essays are clearer and more direct than others. On the whole, however, the book is a useful addition to the now considerable body of Hemingway criticism.

Robert Pinget

BETWEEN FANTOINE AND AGAPA

Trans. Barbara Wright

New York: Red Dust, 1982. Pp. 83. \$8.95

Robert Pinget

THAT VOICE

Trans. Barbara Wright

New York: Red Dust, 1982. Pp. 114. \$10.95

Reviewed by Daniel P. Deneau

English translations of many of Robert Pinget's sixteen or more works of fiction have been supplied through the years by Calder and Boyars (London) and Grove Press (New York); but recently, with some assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council of the Arts, the Red Dust press has published (or plans to publish) at least eight Pinget texts, translated by Barbara Wright. In the "Preface to the American Edition" of *Cette Voix*, Pinget himself pays tribute to Wright, "whose profound knowledge of French," he says, "enables her to render its slightest inflections into English." The two slim texts to be noticed here make a particularly interesting combination for readers endeavoring to gauge changes in Pinget's work: *Entre Fantoine et Agapa*, Pinget's first book, was published in 1951; *Cette Voix*, in 1980.

Between Fantoine and Agapa is a collection of twenty short prose pieces, as well as a "Journal" of about twenty pages. In a brief "Preface" which may say everything really important about the brief book, Pinget calls the prose pieces "exercises which neither the logician, nor the philosopher, nor the moralist, will find to his taste." On the other hand, the texts will give "the imaginative reader" "the feeling of being released from the prisons of rationalizing reason." Generally the exercises do progress, do have something which might be called chronological movement; but what interests a reader is not traditional story or plot (causality) but

rather the outrageous or illogical combination of details. For example: "The truth is that Marie has just hanged her mother. We realized this on account of the spinach not growing any more. But we don't dare start an investigation. Why not? Because Marie is a redhead." In *some* cases—particularly "Vishnu Takes His Revenge" and "The Cucumbers"—the illogicality is delightful, and some of the exercises might make surprising and welcome additions to those numerous college textbooks crammed with well-worn plotted stories. Students and their teachers well might question: are these exercises the work of a child, a madman, or a serious artist? Pinget also notes that "this little volume contains in embryo all the forms taken by my later work"—a comment which may deserve careful testing.

That Voice is, of course, a text containing not only numerous sentences which fade into a series of periods, but also characters and events which have as little stability as wind-swept cumulus clouds. At first one may read with the hope that some certainty will arrive, that some kind of traditional coherence will at last begin to emerge. But at the end all that remain are a few names, places, objects, which have been repeated in different combinations in an intricate collage. The text speaks of a slate, a meeting in a cemetery, papers or dossiers, an old man (dying or murdered), a nephew, a servant. At times the tone is conversational or gossipy (the repeated "pssps" is obviously onomatopoeic). "Cut" and "a missing link" are used frequently to signal gaps or hesitations or transitions. At times there is word play, as well as some humor and vulgarity: "A candle was burning at the deceased's bedside. A handle was churning up his diseased backside." Given the complete fluidity of the text, there is no conventional closure; perhaps Théodore, the nephew, actually ages, but, more importantly, toward the end the gossipy tones seem to disappear, short paragraphs predominate, new and peaceful images arrive.

If one reads such a text searching for some significance, I fear that at best Pinget may remind one that "life is just a few years of drifting nothings" (p. 60). The justification for *That Voice*, as in the case of other new novels, surely is in the very process of reading and not in some residual meaning. One listens to the tones (at times one must read aloud); one dreams of the "invisible manitou" which haunts the text; one's mind drifts along with the narrating voice that combines and recombines memories and imaginings.

Between Fantoine and Agapa seems to be a defiant, outrageous, youthful book, and in the long run probably a relatively unimportant one. *That Voice*, spoken by an older Pinget, is a verbal symphony which probably will be appreciated and reread only by readers already accustomed to other new novels. Finally, if the amount of criticism written in English is at all indicative, Pinget does not have a wide audience in English-speaking nations. Let us hope that Barbara Wright and the Red Dust press are preparing texts which one day will be in great demand.

Addendum: The Red Dust press has now published Pinget's *Someone* (1984), Barbara Wright's translation of *Quelqu'un* (1965). The novel begins with a lost bit of paper and gradually turns into another remarkable labyrinth, where, however, characters have far more stability than those in *That Voice*. Pinget can be witty, vulgar, trivial—and, we must remember, at times wonderfully sensitive, as he is in a long sequence (pp. 129-33) describing the narrator's holiday with the retarded servant boy, Fonfon. The volume contains two appendices: Barbara Wright's "The 'Trials' of Translating Pinget," reprinted from the *Review of Contemporary Fiction* (1983); and a speech delivered by Pinget on October 1, 1982, at New York University. The latter seems to be a valuable piece of self-analysis. Among other things, Pinget enumerates four kinds of repetitions which occur in his works and, lest there be any doubt, verifies that "my books are to be listened to, rather than to be read."

H. Ernest Lewald, ed. & trans.

THE WEB: STORIES BY ARGENTINE WOMEN

Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1983. Pp. 170.

\$8.00

Reviewed by María-Inés Lagos-Pope.

The Web, a collection of short stories by contemporary Argentine women writers in English translation is a welcome and timely publication. For the first time a broad selection of stories by representative women authors from a Latin-American country is accessible to the American public.