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André Pieyre de Mandiargues' "Declarations of Love" in the "Nouvelle Revue Française"

As the *Nouvelle Revue Française* resumed its activities after World War II, Jean Paulhan immediately involved André Pieyre de Mandiargues as one of its writers. Mandiargues would collaborate with the *NRF* up until the 1980s. His pieces were mainly reviews and critical essays, and they touched upon subjects as diverse as painting, sculpture, books, cities and monuments, as well as animals and plants.

Taken in their entirety, Mandiargues' contributions for the *NRF* are nothing short of a Wunderkammer. In his pieces, which he called "*témoignages d'amour*" (declarations of love), the boundary between art criticism and idiosyncratic remarks is blurred. Erudite contents are mingled with personal recollections, and tight arguments go hand-in-hand with ideas and images elicited by free association. Far from being solely an invitation to observe and understand, love for Mandiargues amounts to a category of criticism in its own right.

This contribution aims at examining the main stages in the critical and meta-critical discourse developed by Mandiargues in his reviews. I will first reconstruct his theory of aesthetics by identifying and categorizing the objects on which Mandiargues casts his eye. I will then examine what Mandiargues' "love" consists of, especially with reference to the notions of *plaisir* and *jouissance* theorized by Barthes and Bataille. I will conclude my intervention by suggesting that, as he writes his reviews, Mandiargues is also exploring the review as a genre. His "declarations of love" boast a metatextual side to them through which Mandiargues could reflect on his activity and role as a reviewer, and, by extension, on the aims of the literary journal.

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