**Caillois, Roger (1913-1978)**

# An elected member of the *Académie Française*, Roger Caillois explored a panoply of disciplines, from mineralogy to anthropology to sociology and literary criticism. Raised and educated in Reims, France, Caillois worked with André Breton (1896-1966) and befriended other key members of the surrealist group, namely, Max Ernst (1891-1976), Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) and Paul Éluard (1895-1952). Caillois understood the radical nature of the surrealist movement and saw in it the importance of a global movement, though his brief tenure with the group was ruptured by the publication of his open letter to Breton in 1934 in which he articulated a critique of Surrealism. He continued to work with earlier surrealists such as Tristan Tzara (1896-1963) and later collaborated with Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) to develop Surrationalismwhose duty, as Bachelard explains, ‘It is to take over those formulas, well purged and economically ordered by the logicians, and recharge them psychologically, put them back into motion and into life’ (113). After co-founding the Collège de Sociologie (1937-1939) with Georges Bataille (1897-1962), Caillois was invited to sojourn in Argentina during World War II where he met writers such as Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) and continued to actively oppose Nazism. Upon his return to France, Caillois translated and published *La Croix du Sud* (*Southern Cross*) series thus introducing Latin American literature to the French-speaking public; he also founded and edited *Diogènes,* an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal. Although Caillois differed in opinion with some of modernism’s greatest contributors (Breton, Lévi-Strauss, Borges), his collaborations brought forth strides in modern thinking. In talking about his work with Bataille, Caillois states: ‘We wanted to arrive at an entirely new kind of society, in which the imperatives of instinct, emotion, and desire took precedence over economic ones’ (Caillois 2003, 145). His background in sociology and anthropology, as well as in the sacred, married to his appreciation of art and literature, gave birth to a universal understanding of the rituals of communal life and humanism.

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# List of works

Caillois, R. (1953). ‘Diogènes and Neo-Humanism’, *Diogènes* 1 (4): 114-122.

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**References and further reading**

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Panoff, M. (1993) *Les frères enemies: Roger Caillois et Claude Lévi-Strauss*. Paris: Payot.

**Paratextual material**

The journal *Diogènes* can be accessed on line at: *<*<http://dio.sagepub.com>>.