

English summaries

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ENGLISH SUMMARIES

S. MALINOWSKI-CHARLES, The esthetics of J.-P. Crousaz: between a rationalist and a subjectivist conception, RThPh 2004/I, p. 7-21.

Crousaz's Traité du beau (1714) is a crucial transition point between the rationalist and the empiricist conceptions of beauty. Crousaz endorses the rationalist principle of "unity amidst diversity", but redefines the archetype of beauty thus obtained as subjective rather than objective. This paper examines the ambiguities of this conciliation by analyzing: 1) its motivations; 2) its modalities; 3) its anthropological and theological significance.

M. A. BERNIER, The criticism of false beauties of eloquence in the "Traité du beau", RThPh 2004/I, p. 23-33.

In his Traité du beau, Jean-Pierre de Crousaz appears to condemn energetically the "false beauties" of eloquence, which he compares to the "pointless wit" that seduces feelings and serves to cloud judgement. However, a fascination for these dazzling and surprising beauties to which feeling is drawn is also manifest, thereby forecasting the break-up of a system of the beautiful founded upon a schism between ideas and feelings in favour of proceedings which should have pleasure as the basis of all future aesthetics.

S. CHARLES, Was free thinking really a free thought? Reflections on Crousaz' reading of A. Collins, RThPh 2004/I, p. 35-46.

The detailed analysis of Anthony Collins' Discourse of Free-Thinking provided by Crousaz is the only investigation of the Enlightenment on this pamphlet promoting the freedom of thinking. Crousaz's criticism has to do less with freethinking than with the possible license in the exercise of judging, which would be constrained neither by the rules of logic nor by the respect of tradition and the sacred. As a consequence, the Enlightenment displays a characteristic opposition on the prerogatives of reason, and this prompts the question whether freethinking was really a free thought.

J. MAYER, Crousaz: enlightened critic, though not very enlightening, of 18th c. scepticism, RThPh 2004/I, p. 47-55.

This analysis of the Examen du pyrrhonisme ancien et moderne written by Jean-Pierre de Crousaz (1663-1750), will allow us to precise which position the Swiss philosopher took in the battle against the rising of scepticism, particularly Bayle's, who was the main person aimed at by the critics of the Examen. By synthesizing the arguments contained in the Examen and by defining Crousaz's social position, we will try to clarify the true scope of this piece of work.

J. HÄSELER, Success and decline of Crousaz in the milieu of Huguenot refugees, RThPh 2004/I, p. 57-66.

The immediate posterity of Crousaz, as illustrated by the Encyclopédie d'Yverdon, sharply criticises his works for their prolixity, repetitions and lack of precision. The analysis of the reviews of Crousaz' works in four French-language scholarly journals written mostly by Huguenots in exile – from the Nouvelles de la République des lettres up to the Bibliothèque germanique – published within a period of twenty years lends itself to the following assumptions. On the one hand, protestant contemporaries closely followed Crousaz' scientific projects, regularly announced as “Nouvelles littéraires”. On the other hand, the journalists pointed to an increasing polemic tendency noticeable in Crousaz' style of argumentation from the 1720s onward. His Examen du pyrrhonisme ancien et moderne appears both to highlight his criticism of scepticism and to illustrate, quite perfectly his polemic style, preparing the decline of his reputation.