

The French Review

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Devoted to the Interests of Teachers of French

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**Ruth Carver
Capasso**

***"La Bibliothèque
rose, Children,
and Imperialism
in Nineteenth-
Century France"***

La Bibliothèque rose illustrée, a collection of children's works published from mid-nineteenth century, is a useful corpus to study constructions of childhood. Focused on family life and sentimental education, the novels often use figures of the Other to shape children's developing self-identity. This study of four novels from the collection shows how images of colonial experiences taught about racism, power, and gender. Ultimately, portraits of the colonized were exploited to acculturate French children, and children's literature functioned as a colonizing tool to assimilate the young into their broader culture.

PEDAGOGY

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**Richard Durán
and George
McCool**

***"If This Is
French, Then
What Did I
Learn in
School?"***

Despite its emphasis on oral proficiency, the current teaching of French generally fails to take into account the changes that accompany the shift from the written language to its spoken form. The divergence can be so severe in the case of certain fundamental structures that it leads to critical gaps in oral communication. This article advocates at least some exposure to "New French" at all levels of study. We focus on the modifications most problematic for students and suggest ways to introduce them in the classroom.

C O N T E N T S

IN YOUR CORNER: FOCUS ON THE CLASSROOM

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Thomas P. Finn

**“Incorporating
the *comédie-
musicale* in the
College French
Classroom”**

This essay traces the evolution of the unexpected popular and critical success of French musicals during recent years and describes a course the author designed and taught on the *comédie-musicale moderne*. Using diverse materials in combination with a variety of Internet sites, the author describes how the course expanded and enriched the traditional notion of “text” to include thematic, visual, and lyrical elements by making the musical production itself the focus of study. The article offers examples of classroom techniques and a list of resources that can help other instructors integrate all or part of this approach into their curricula.

LINGUISTICS

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**Freeman G.
Henry**

**“From the First
to the Fifth
Republic:
Antoine de
Rivarol, Johann
Christoph
Schwab, and the
Latest ‘Lingua
Franca’”**

Johann Christoph Schwab’s distinction as prizewinner of the Berlin Academy’s 1782/1784 competition that examined the universality of French language has long been obscured by the legend of corecipient “Count” Antoine de Rivarol. If recent scholarship has set the record straight, D. Robelot’s little known 1803 French translation of the German text contains supporting documents that elucidate Franco-German cultural and intellectual relations prior to and following the Revolution. Schwab’s systematic and penetrating analyses—far superior to Rivarol’s panegyrics—are of note and portent: if they confirm the position of French as common idiom for the foreseeable future, they also project an English-language potential and intuit globalization and the international language phenomenon as we currently know it.

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José Santos

“Mythe des origines et nostalgie chez Taos Amrouche”

Fondamentale dans l'œuvre de Taos Amrouche est la quête des origines, ainsi que le mythe qui les entoure. Cette étude se propose d'analyser la manière dont la légende s'est créée, principalement dans *Rue des Tambourins*, roman autobiographique—comme tous les romans d'Amrouche—où la narratrice, hantée par l'exil, revient sur son enfance. Pourquoi ces sentiments mêlés, de fascination et de rejet, se sont-ils greffés autour d'un pays au demeurant ambigu, à la fois terre misérable et véritable Eden? Et comment devons-nous interpréter la nostalgie, ce deuil des exilés, qui ronge les héroïnes, les empêchant d'être jamais heureuses?

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Ann L. Murphy

“The Figure of the Labyrinth in Patrick Modiano's *Rue des Boutiques Obscures*”

Commentators on the work of Patrick Modiano have shown how stylistic, thematic, and narrative aspects of his novels participate in a hesitation between clarity and uncertainty, between closure and undecidability. This paper shows how in his 1978 *Rue des Boutiques Obscures*, allusions to the figure of the labyrinth contribute to maintaining this tension, which is also that of the postmodern aesthetic. At the same time that various manifestations of the labyrinth figure, and allusions to the Cretan labyrinth myth, support classical or modernistic faith in the possibility of solving the mystery presented by the text, they also constantly cast doubt on that possibility, finally suspending the text in a state of postmodern irresolution.

INTERVIEW

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Carine Bourget et Irène Assiba d'Almeida

“Entretien avec Ken Bugul”

Lors de cet entretien réalisé en mars 2001, Ken Bugul porte un regard rétrospectif sur sa trilogie autobiographique (en particulier *Riwan ou le chemin de sable*, Grand Prix littéraire de l'Afrique Noire 1999 de l'ADELF), et sur le tournant que son œuvre a pris. Elle élabore sur le féminisme et les problèmes des Africaines, ainsi que sur les thèmes récurrents de la folie et de l'aliénation dans ses romans. Elle dévoile les bienfaits de la polygamie telle qu'elle l'a vécue, parle de la place de l'islam et du mouridisme dans sa vie, et donne un avant-goût de son prochain roman.

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Our Cover: La Bibliothèque nationale de France, Courtesy of Marc Grosvalet

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