

# The French Review

## *From The Editor's Desk: Report for the French Review, 2002–2003*

FR statistics for articles submitted 1 June 2002–31 May 2003 (Vol. 76)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Submitted</u>	<u>Accepted</u>	<u>Rejected</u>	<u>Under Evaluation</u>	<u>No Decision</u>
Literature	93 (67.4%)	31 (33.3%)	36 (38.7%)	17 (18.3%)	9 ( 9.7%)
Pedagogy	16 (11.6%)	7 (43.8%)	7 (43.8%)	1 (6.2%)	1 ( 6.2%)
Civilization	21 (15.2%)	7 (33.3%)	3 (14.3%)	7 (33.3%)	4 (19.1%)
Film	6 ( 4.3%)	3 (50.0%)	1 (16.7%)	2 (33.3%)	0
Linguistics	2 ( 1.5%)	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	0	0
Totals	138 (100%)	49 (35.5%)	48 (34.8%)	27 (19.6%)	14 (10.1%)

Volume 77 promises a wide range of articles that run the gamut from Maupassant's aborted flight to Mars to the anticolonialism of Isabelle Eberhardt, who dressed as a man, married an Algerian man, and was a misogynist.

Though we do not publish large numbers of articles on film, two stand out this year. In February there is a compelling piece on the uses of body language in the film, *Rosetta*, by the Dardennes brothers, the Belgian filmmakers who have taken the world of cinema by storm. The April issue presents an essay entitled "From Le Moko to le Pew: Pépé's Transmogrifications," a real "pièce de résistance," which shows how remakes of Pépé le Moko presented male heroes as oversexed but effeminate, thereby reinforcing stereotypes of the French. This article also shows the limits of Said's theory of Orientalism.

Society and cultural offerings include an essay on Jean Meslier, a priest who by day preached the gospel, and by night wrote attacks on established religion, the monarchy, and divine right, while defending free love, divorce, and a form of rural communism based on the defense of the poverty-stricken masses. The December issue contains a study of colonialism as presented in children's literature (*La Bibliothèque rose*) of the nineteenth century. The works were written by women whose goal was to acculturate children and reinforce class values while denouncing slavery and racial prejudice. An author in the February issue surveyed young French adults after September 11 in order to determine their views on Americans and this American tragedy. There is also a piece on the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and those who wrote for it between the two world wars. Many of these writers offered a critique of Western values and offered the philosophy of Asia, and especially India, as an alternative. In March another author introduces us to French Techno culture and the political and philosophical questions surrounding it. Let me know if you are won over! In the April issue there will be a study of the highly provocative novel, *Poupée, anale nationale*, by Alina Reyes, which is an allegory of the dangers posed by the fascism of the National Front to the French Republic. In the current issue there is a survey of graduate studies in French/Francophone culture that suggests that growth in this interdisciplinary area has slowed in the face of traditional, compartmentalized approaches to the study of French.

Francophone literature, both from France and other French-speaking nations, always

plays a central role within the pages of the *French Review*, and this year is no exception. In this issue there is an essay on Paule Constant's fiction that explores mother-daughter relationships in which the mother rejects the daughter and encourages dependence much as the colonizers did with the colonized. The figure of the labyrinth and its relation to the library is explored in an article on Patrick Modiano's *Rue des boutiques obscures*. The difficulties of exile and identity are examined in the writings of Taos Amrouche, an Algerian woman writer who was part of the first postwar wave of immigration and remained in France. The article on Maupassant's exploration of the possibilities of escape from the "real" world through an aborted flight to Mars appears in February, as does an interview with one of the wild children of literature writing in French, the Belgian writer, Amélie Nothomb. In March one author takes a close look at the theme of repentance proffered by the Vichy government and discredited by Sartre in *Les Mouches* and Camus in *La Peste*. Also in March, a study of Proust's influence on Rebatet, an author stigmatized by collaboration with the Nazis, reveals the high literary quality of his love story, *Les Deux Etendards* (pace Cohen). In another essay we learn how Montaigne's uses of and borrowings from the ancients reflect his own originality in the "Apologie de Raimond Sebond." April brings a fascinating look at misogyny and anticolonialism in the writings of Isabelle Erhardt, and an intriguing piece on the work of the Moroccan writer Abdelhark Serhane and his critique of life, politics, and social conditions in contemporary Morocco. There is also a very persuasive case made about the limits and arbitrariness of postmodern theory in the works of Patrick Modiano, a writer often cited as a model postmodern author. The writer shows that the concept of the "personal" author is no more dead than is the need to consider an author's motivations.

Pedagogy is always a major focus of the *French Review*, and Volume 77 is no exception. In the current issue an author examines how classroom interaction among nonnative students may serve as a means of both discovery and acquisition through a variety of corrective measures. The December number contains an article on changes from written to spoken French and the gaps in oral communication that result. The authors offer approaches on how to teach these differences and bridge the gaps. Another essay shows how to incorporate the *comédie musicale* in the classroom. In February one author shows the advantages of teaching advanced French composition through the use of e-mail homework submission and correction, and in March there is a consideration of the transfer of errors from one speaker to the next in nonnative classroom interaction, a problem for all teachers and students. Another essay offers a Web-based approach to teaching the culture of Québec. An April essay presents a twenty-nine question survey that was used to determine what students do and do not know about Paris and presents a five-day lesson plan to teach them what they need to know. Another pedagogical piece proposes ways to teach the themes of isolation and discontinuity fueled by shame, fear, and anger in three novels dealing with multicultural France and her immigrant population.

When possible we try to publish articles on linguistics, especially those that suggest pedagogical applications, and 2003–04 is no different. In the current issue there is an essay that shows how a "français standard québécois" has developed from standard French and has been promoted by the Québécois to describe québécois life. In December an author presents an historical survey of linguistic and political tensions concerning the role of French in the world, especially during the Revolution. An author in February uncovers how the French resisted recent attempts at orthographic reform.

In addition to our yearly "Année littéraire" offerings and "l'Année culturelle," we include interviews with Ken Bugul (December), the Senegalese woman author who had to change her name to publish her first novel, due to controversy caused by opposition to a woman publishing such a scandalous work. The interview with Amélie Nothomb, noted above, appears in February.

Finally, May 2004 will bring another special issue featuring a wide selection of articles by authors from countries outside of France writing in French. This number will be published in honor of the joint meeting of the AATF and the Fédération internationale des professeurs

de français (FIPF) to be held in July 2004 in Atlanta. I will have more to say about this issue when it appears.

In closing I want to congratulate Margot Steinhart, the new president of the AATF, on her election. We know that Margot will do an outstanding job of guiding us through the next three years. I also want to thank her for six years of sterling service as Review Editor for Course Materials and Methodology. Thanks to Margot more high school teachers published reviews of teaching materials in our pages. She also expanded the reviews of electronic teaching materials. Wynne Wong, who published a fine pedagogical essay in the December 2002 issue of the *French Review*, has succeeded her and will do a first-rate job of maintaining the high standards set by Margot.

In light of the francophobia that swept the United States last spring and summer, it is more crucial than ever that we all participate in full in the fifth annual Semaine du Français next month from 7–13 November. Let us make a concerted effort to inform our students, coworkers, and administrators of the historical ties that bind the United States and France and the common interests that must fuel our future relationship. En avant, professeurs de français!

Christopher P. Pinet