

The French Review

From The Editor's Desk: Report for the French Review, 2003–2004

FR statistics for articles submitted 1 June 2003–31 May 2004 (vol. 77)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Submitted</u>	<u>Accepted</u>	<u>Rejected</u>	<u>Under Evaluation</u>	<u>No Decision</u>
Literature	66 (68.04%)	17 (25.76%)	33 (50.0%)	11 (16.66%)	5 (7.58%)
Pedagogy	14 (14.44%)	5 (35.71%)	6 (42.86%)	2 (14.29%)	1 (7.14%)
Society/ Film	5 (5.15%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	—	—
Linguistics	10 (10.31%)	4 (40.0%)	1 (10.0%)	5 (50.0%)	—
	2 (2.06%)	—	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	—
Totals	97 (100%)	28 (28.87%)	44 (45.36%)	19 (19.59%)	6 (6.19%)

As with each October issue, Volume 78 begins with “L’Année littéraire.” William Cloonan diagnoses the state of the novel in 2003, Martine Antle highlights the theatrical season, and Michael Bishop lays out the year’s work in poetry. James Mc Nab assesses the year as it pertains to French society, culture, and politics; including the difficult relations between the United States and France. He also looks at the Year of Algeria (Djazair), which was celebrated throughout France. One of the highlights was the first official visit of a French president since independence in 1962.

Teaching is at the heart of our mission and this year’s *French Review* offers a wide selection of articles devoted to pedagogy. In this issue we feature pieces on how to design realistic writing assignments (based on real life) for beginning, intermediate, and upper-division courses at both the high school and university levels. A second article complements the first by showing us how to use the Web to enhance intermediate writing skills. In December “Toward a Pedagogy of the Francophone Text in Intermediate Language Courses” (this is perhaps the most challenging level to teach) proposes using Acadian and Cajun literature because the author finds that they share a cultural base with traditions in the United States which makes them easier to teach than stories from other, more distant cultures. This thesis is provocative since it suggests that other literary traditions and cultures such as those of Africa are too difficult initially for intermediate students and should come after the Acadian and Cajun selections. The *French Review* would like to hear your thoughts on the subject—so write a letter to the Editor expressing your views and experience. Also in December there is a stimulating essay about cloze windows (completing blanks in literary texts where the words have been removed) that shows how this approach encourages students to understand how writers bring grammar, language, and ideas together in the creative process. February brings an essay on how to design and teach a course in African cinema and March an article entitled “*Tartuffe* in Text and Performance: A Blueprint for Collaboration” which shows how well an interdisciplinary approach can work when a professor of French and a professor of theater bring both their disciplines to bear. Finally, in the April 2005 issue there is an innovative essay entitled “L’Utilisation de simulations boursières en classe de français commercial.”

French literature plays a prominent role in Volume 78. In addition to *L'Année littéraire* the October number features an article on how Stendhal's reading of the Cardinal de Retz influenced his literary criticism and underscores the relevance of that criticism today. In December an essay entitled "Revelation and Dissimulation in André Gide's Autobiographical Space" examines Gide's narratives as the interplay between the notions of "coming out" and the "closed" and the resulting dramatic tension. This number also contains an interview with Marie Nimier, an author "dans le vent," whose novels include *La Girafe* and *La Nouvelle Pornographie*. February brings a study of how in his *Olive* DuBellay improves upon his Italian models by creating expressions of the ineffable and the power of the poet. In another essay the author reflects on the themes of sex, love, illness, faith, and death in the theater of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt. In March Julien Green is the subject of an essay which explores the impact of Romanesque art on his literary works, while in April "Le Discours du malaise dans *La Peste* d'Albert Camus" plumbs the paradoxical presence and expression of love in a time of political crisis.

I am delighted to announce that in April the *French Review* will publish for the first time anywhere six unpublished letters of Jean Giraudoux to his American muse, Mrs. Adams, later Madame de la Mornière; who was also known by her maiden name of California Meade. Not only did California Meade serve as the inspiration for several female characters in Giraudoux's early works, but she also remained a faithful friend while he was recovering from injuries suffered at the front during World War I. Theirs was, as Giraudoux put it, an "amitié amoureuse."

"Francophone literature" is a problematic term that is used to refer to all literature written in French or to literature written in French outside of France. Here I am referring to the latter. As has been the case for some years, the *French Review* receives many submissions and publishes many articles devoted to Francophone literature and sometimes introduces lesser known authors. This year is no exception. In October we feature an interview with the French/Algerian writer, Leïla Sebbar, whose most recent work is *Je ne parle pas la langue de mon père*. Then in December there is an article on the Cameroonian writer, Ferdinand Oyono, and how he appropriates the uses of smoke and light originally directed against the colonized by their colonizers in order to turn the abuse back on the colonizers in *Une Vie de boy*. In February there is an interview with Azouz Begag, a second generation writer of Algerian parentage best known for *Le Gone du Chaâba*, widely taught in the United States. His latest book is *Le Marteau pique-cœur*. In March we feature a study of the quest for reconciliation with self and death in *Le Chemin Saint-Jacques* by the French-Canadian writer Antonine Maillet. In the same issue one of our authors calls attention to the difficulty of categorizing writers as Francophone (the question raised above) in the case of writers like Marie Ndiaye (*En famille* is the novel considered), whose father is Senegalese and mother French, but who was born in France, as was Begag, both of whose parents were Algerian. Sebbar's father was Algerian and her mother French, but she was born in Algeria. The permutations are endless and we must be careful not to pigeon-hole novels or their authors, thereby oversimplifying and reducing them and their works to convenient stereotypes. The March issue also presents an interview with the Madagascan writer, Michèle Rakotoson, who was forced to flee Madagascar under dictatorship and has battled to preserve rural culture and language. In April there is an analysis and critique of the notion of "métissage" and post-colonial politics in Kim Lefèvre's *Moi, Marina la Malinche*. Lefèvre proposes a third space for the progeny of mixed marriages (not unlike those described above), suggesting that métissage is not necessarily uniquely a symbol for the celebration of the mixing of cultures. Métissage subsumes negative aspects of the very colonial history it purportedly undermines. An article entitled "Revisiting 'Nos Ancêtres les Gaulois': Scripting and Post-scripting Francophone Identity," under the "Society and Culture" rubric presents the exploration of mixed identities in the comedic routines of the Cameroonian, Francis Bebey, and the tri-lingual Kabyle from Algeria, Fellag.

Clearly there is overlap among the topics of "Society and Culture" and "Literature." Other articles under the former include a piece entitled "French Gay Activism and the American

Referent in Contemporary France" in the October number. This essay shows how the French gay movement at the *Centre gai et lesbien de Paris* was influenced by the American model while retaining a specifically French identity. In December the author of "Women and Absolutism in French Opera and Fairy Tales" shows how the fairy tale writer, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, criticized Quinault and Jean-Baptiste Lully for their glorification of Louis XIV and their disempowered heroines by transforming these "mondain" women into heroines in her own works. In an article appearing in February, "The Pedagogical City of Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *L'An 2440*," the author suggests that Mercier offers a teacher-less educational model as a cautionary tale about post-revolutionary France and the dangers of uniformity, consensus, and a too-powerful centralized government. "Does French Matter? France and Francophonie in the Age of Globalization" appears in March. It is a hard-hitting piece that demonstrates how the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie has pursued Francophone alternatives to globalization "à l'américaine" (World Trade Organization). The authors also explain that the poorer members of the OIF have taken a critical stance toward it.

Last but not least, we have several articles on film. The first (December) is an examination of how to "read" the body in Claire Denis's *Beau Travail*, a film about French legionnaires. The author shows how "le regard" (that of the camera among others) explores all aspects of the body and the senses in order to express desire in an almost abstract way. In February we see how Jacques Rivette's feminist film "Céline et Julie vont en bateau" owes a debt to Alain Resnais's "L'Année dernière à Marienbad." The same issue contains the already mentioned "Stratégies pour l'enseignement du cinéma africain." In April there is an interview with Eliane Victor, "la grande dame de la télévision française," who started the program, "Les Femmes... aussi" in 1964.

A special issue will be published in May 2005 in honor of the annual meeting of the AATF which will be held in Québec in July 2005. It is to be entitled "Le Québec et le Canada Francophone." There will be a special cover. I will discuss the issue in full in the May issue.

I want to urge our members and readers to continue to submit first-rate articles on pedagogy for that rubric and accounts of successful teaching practice for "In Your Corner: Focus on the Classroom." I also want to welcome Virginia M. Scott of Vanderbilt University as a new Assistant Editor for Pedagogy. She succeeds Sharon Shelly, who has taken over duties as new Managing Editor of the *French Review*. Virginia has published several high quality articles in our pages including one in December discussed above. Thanks go to Rosalie Vermette who has finished a three-year term as Advertising Manager. She is succeeded by Margaret Dempster of Northwestern University. Margaret has already begun the challenging task of attracting new advertisers and keeping old ones by attending the annual meeting in Atlanta last July and getting to know the "exposants" at the conference. Marie Lathers, an Assistant Editor for Literature, has stepped down after five years of stellar service to our publication. I thank her for her thorough, incisive, and penetrating evaluations. Her successor is Kathryn M. Grossman of Pennsylvania State University, no stranger to the *French Review*.

Finally, please remember to celebrate the La Semaine du Français (7-13 November). It is more important than ever that we fly our colors. En avant et bonne rentrée!

Christopher P. Pinet

Correction: We apologize for the error on page 1206 of the May issue. Phan Huy Duong's *Un Amour mêtèque: nouvelles* was originally published in 1944.