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Commentary

Teaching Language Competence Through Lists and Constructs

Simon P. X. Battestini

Georgetown University

Compared to the majority of scientists, language teachers* tend to suffer from a lack of confidence. They commonly deal with unstable material, have to convince themselves of their varied skills and bear many of the psychological features of their adolescent audiences as they negotiate their moves between two uncertain worlds.

Heterogeneity characterizes their surroundings. Classes of students differ at the same level, year after year, and many different individuals make up a class. Departmental colleagues vary in terms of national origins, social background and experience but also in terms of teaching compartmentalization and research interests.

Language teachers are indeed concerned primarily with vocabulary (lists) and grammar rules (constructs), but also with literary criticism and cultural studies. Increasing numbers of them are involved in film studies and drama, journalism and television, ancillary or tool-language, computer-assisted methods and programs, which all add to the fragmentation of their working landscape. As individuals they vary also in perspectives, methodologies and choice, range and use of audio-visual aids. While the spoken medium is the ultimate aim for the majority of language teachers, many still rightly insist on the importance of writing skills,

It may be that language teachers benefit little from the only true science in their field: linguistic discoveries are largely ignored. A kind of dismembered socratic dialogue characterizes most classroom student-teacher interfaces.* Their former

*For practical reasons, I am using "language teachers" to designate various types of professionals, all concerned with teaching and researching communicative media.

*The unity of such an otherwise nonsensical verbal exchange exists. It is based on a unique linguistic or lexical feature and their variables; the emphasis is on forms of expression, not on content and frequently the question is rhetorical, proving the point.

association with classical languages continues to lead them to pay respect to ancient views and behavior patterns such as the use of often inappropriate Latin grammatical categories, of translation in the early stages of learning, of fascination for the literary text, and of Western civilization as the privileged term of reference.

Yet in this apparently confusing world the great majority of language teachers do much more than survive. They make sense** in their otherwise chaotic world and the majority of them manage to be efficient. We attempt here to show how and to what extent.

During the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics in March 1986, 14 special interest sessions were organized on different topics.[1] About 60 papers were presented and discussed. The 8 revised versions published in this journal come from 6 of these sessions. They may be considered as a fair sample of the current discourse among language teachers.

A common core may be seen. Detailed collections of ideas, values, facts (lists), leading to organized propositions of interpretation (constructs). This core aims to improve teaching and comprehension of a text and to facilitate expression and understanding of other modes of doing, feeling and thinking. All eight papers are teleologic and indeed, didactic. What may appear as a vain enterprise, because of the great diversity of the contents and forms as well as the relative fragility of the constructs, may be described as the teaching and learning of an essential "nothingness". It is a cumulative process which is the act of storing forms, of multiplying and improving them and their diverse possible structurings. Most of the progress in the sciences started with the choice of a well-defined object, went on with relatively unified methodologies and resulted in a set of rules or laws universally accepted. In language research and teaching, results, more often than in the sciences, attain notoriety by virtue of their innovation and because they manage to diminish, if not contradict, previous renowned and established works. Therefore, we must be aware of the nature of the feasibility of these works. They are more or less important intrinsically, but their future is relatively limited. Their authority is provisional and relative. Much ado about nothing? perhaps. If so what is the purpose of such intellectual exercises?

Language teachers, as shown in this collection of texts, respond optimally to certain scientific ideas and use materials and/or methods themselves reflecting contemporary ways of life. Indeed most teachers make use of formulations. Reducing tokens to type, use to mention, speculation to concision, theory to practice, form part of their daily activities following in such matters the general trends of the sciences. Ultimately what they produce is subjects who now know that the world is not transformed by them but that it is themselves who will shape their set of relationships to their surroundings. They may use formalization, detailed description, classification, with a view to obtaining an optimum understanding and an efficient explanation. Because of their kaleidoscopic landscape, heterogeneous subjects, multiple techniques and perspectives, but chiefly because they have to teach another worldview, language teachers, like sorcerer's apprentices, develop their own methodology to control their reality. They tend to consider their methodology superior to others and as a reference from which to evaluate their colleagues.

When Monique Bilézikian promotes a comparison between a relatively easy to

**Literally the "making of sense" is to create order in chaos which, to Semiotics and Glossematics, is to give to forms of expression formal contents or vice versa.

define student discourse and a literary text, she does it to evaluate the differences and through them she gives herself an acceptable basis as scientists do with their universal scales of references from which variables may be accurately measured, evaluated and compared. Simultaneously she transforms students from passive consumers of a highly valued literary text into active and conscious subjects of their own improved written medium. Michèle Morris uses statistics on textual samples to establish a solid base from which to engage in non-speculative analysis. This allows her to verify scientifically her hypothesis and reach objective conclusions. Roger Bensky, after many years of teaching and directing drama, draws up a set of valuable rules to be applied, beyond the stage, to many fields of public life. Experience, power of analysis, applicable concepts, a sense of service and efficiency combined with a rare feeling for an authentic communicative process, composed of context, bodily expression, intentions and reactions, as well as language, show how impalpable variables may improve the coding and the decoding of any message. Judith Hanna studies dance to understand how forms in motion, reflect or signal, remind or announce, patterns of gender relationships. She describes a measurable object to aid the conceptualization (even if in a metaphoric way) of social values, showing how expressive forms are logically intermingled with content forms. David Armstrong argues that the object of linguistics has been abusively reduced to codified human sound waves. He claims similarities between purely visual systems of communication and purely verbal, vocal systems and refuses to see only differences, as semiotic and philosophical analyses suggest. William Panici observes the variables of a single narrative theme (the Myth of Orpheus) and shows the importance of the determinant cultural factors on the forms of its representation. Therefore Panici demonstrates the plasticity of the forms, their relativity to the evolution of thinking patterns and values within the same society and from one society to another. Margareta and David Bowen argue that "language qualifications are only the most obvious aspect of interpreting performance." Equally important are the origins of the culture of the interpreter/translator, as well as the specificity of the text, its style as well as its cultural origin. Variability of the source and of its cultural context condition the act of translating/interpreting, itself resulting from the variables of the agent and his/her own cultural context and the vision he/she may have of the culture in which the target text will be inscribed. Both authors see translating/interpreting as the cross-cultural communicative process par excellence. Through multiple quotations, results of research and the use of different perspectives on the future of the French language in Africa, Paulin Djité explains its present failure, giving evidence of its regression. He concludes: ". . . if Francophonie was a bold idea and a compelling possibility the conditions under which it could have become reality are practically non-existent." This would prove that a language A cannot attempt to invade and express a culture B without being adapted to such an extent that it would become within a short span of time another language or being rejected. Djité's observations show that there may be a limit to possible variabilities of the cultural context of one language.

At this point I would like to examine two concepts, namely axiology (as the study of lists) and ideology (as the study of constructs). We could see "axiology" as inventory, a set of items in which one practises possible choices, a paradigm. "Ideology" differs from axiology as the set of relationships between the elements of axiology. One may compare both concepts to the elements of language teaching, namely language, literature and culture:

	AXIOLOGY (lists)	IDEOLOGY (constructs)	COMPETENCE (the aim)
LANGUAGE	DICTIONARY vocabulary, locutions	GRAMMAR composition	LINGUISTICS all levels
LITERATURE	ANALECTS narrative, descriptive, and reflective	STRUCTURES plot composition	LITERARY CRITICISM(S) aims methods
CULTURE	ENCYCLOPEDIA of a given culture	EPISTEME ideologies	SOCIAL SCIENCES cultural studies

The optimal competence of language teachers in three different sets of disciplines may not be reached in terms of contents; ordinarily one "specializes" in one or two sub-domains of literary criticism and/or cultural studies in addition to a solid competence in grammar. It seems that unity may only be attained through a methodology which would be applicable to any of the three to five subjects mentioned above. "Axiology" and "ideology" as used here belong to Semiotics as defined by Julia Kristeva:

> . . . the science of significances, science also of science as type of significance, (which) opens a particular epistemological domain: anti-totalitarian, anti-subjective, anti-theological, non-homogeneous but differentiating, transformative, renewing continuously its own trajectory.[2]

Semiotics may be rather considered as a versatile know-how, conveniently applicable to all possible contents and forms taught and researched by language teachers. Structuralism, grammatology, deconstruction are to many "scarecrow" words for practices and sets of ideas used by all those experienced in the teaching of language. It is regrettable that the metalanguage of semiotics often obscures the usefulness of the methodology from language teachers and others. Without subscribing to all facets of Kristeva's obviously triumphant definition, all teachers may identify three aspects of their most common activities: they build on differences, they teach by transformation, and at least indirectly, or implicitly, they train their students in self-criticism along with a critical knowledge. That language learners have to deconstruct their world, first perceived as an inventory of values, objects, behavior, ideas, and then as a set of articulations between them, is well known. Many units of their language have to be reexamined in the light of new perspectives coming from the target language and leading to a necessary and thoroughly critical exercise of all what constituted them. The structuralist claim that the meaning of a linguistic unit relies more on the set of relationships it maintains with units other than itself would lead to the logical consequence that learning a new language the total reappraisal of the natural and cultural environment of the learner.

What may be expected from intimate experience of different "ideologies"? Early in the learning process there is an attempt to reject, to condemn the Other, before experiencing a feeling of scepticism if not of nihilism. Probably one must forget provisionally certain logical constructions before being able to accept and introject new ones from grammatical rules to cultural patterns. The feeling of vacuity and loss of equilibrium between two stable

worlds may be compared to adolescence. Next comes a gradual awareness of the internal coherence of the other: language and culture. What may be compared to xenophobia and schizophrenia is progressively replaced by a mild paranoia. This may explain partly why foreign language teacher often see themselves in the role of either persecutor or persecuted. Life in many language departments may be difficult. Lacan insists upon the role of existential events in the triggering of these troubles. There may be two refuges (tenure and relaxation being excluded): 1) the creative projection of false reality; 2) specialization (discussed above). Both cases constitute withdrawal from the center of the arena.

From the exercise of decentralizing themselves, students and teachers learn rapidly the somehow relative futility of their efforts and yet find in their progress a legitimate justification for their personal methodology. In order to understand, students alternate decentralization and recentralization on one of the two languages, on one of the two cultures and in turn. Doing so they learn to build provisional orders and the provisionality of any order, and gradually acquire in this process certain skills. They accept strategies made of new forms and new configurations of forms, increasingly complex and progressively disconnected from circumstances and content. The rules of a chess game are the same whatever the pieces or the board are made of . . . and wherever and whenever it is played, although with the repetition of playing experience, one improves the quality of his/her playing. These forms are now at the disposal of the individual who may not only repeat them at will, or to respond to a given stimulus, but also play with them.

The pleasure of mastering new roles creates a feeling of superiority over common monolingual mortals. A new sense of freedom occurs which may ensure, with the quality of informed choices, a reliable decision-making process. Similar reactions may be observed in literary and cultural studies.

In class, every linguistic element or rule is normally taught within an artificial situation evoking the cultural situation to which it belongs. To support the teaching of the language many courses are traditionally offered about its culture. For example, American students learning French are trained to understand the French culture much more often than they are invited to look critically at themselves as from another culture. There may be some misunderstanding in this respect. Let us imagine a quite common situation in which an American student or business executive encounters his/her French counterpart. They ask each other questions. It is difficult to imagine the French citizen inquiring about France and vice versa. In fact French persons will be questioned about their country. They will have to express themselves and/or their culture. Yet rarely do we promote courses providing American students with the necessary French vocabulary and locutions to describe American culture. They have been trained to express the Other instead of expressing themselves as part of their own culture. That French and Francophone cultures have to be taught is not challenged here but if the aim of the teaching of a foreign language is to provide fluency in this language we have to understand that the expression of the true self is a necessary step prior to the expression of worlds other than one's own. Learning to express the American culture in the French language is helping the American student to acquire the French worldview but using a content so obvious to the student that the emphasis forcibly rests on the foreign ways of perception and cognition to be acquired. Complementing this newly opened perspective on themselves, the students may now turn towards the content of the French culture as the next logical step. It seems that we should be teaching first the foreign perception of the learner's own culture, then the foreign

perception of the foreign culture and eventually compare the indigenous and foreign perception for their peculiar worldviews and their attitudes towards other cultures.

When Monique Bilézikian starts from the "degré zéro" of fluency of students to provide them with the tools to appreciate (and learn) the relatively more complex use of the language of a literary text, she does exactly this. After recognising the strangeness of the text and justifying it through intentions and effects the gap between the "register" of students and author is seen as a desired improvement to produce similar effects from similar intentions. It was Dewey, I believe, who taught that any successful educational task starts with a concrete evaluation of the base of application, continues with clearly defined aims and follows with the choice of efficient and appropriate method(s) to draw the student from step one (the present state or degré zéro) to step two (the projected state). Roger Bensky proceeds in a similar way as he tends to transform his objects (learners) into subjects (now acting themselves), developing in their own right hidden-but-becoming-obvious-skills for a much improved performance. When Michèle Morris, in the course of reading a literary text, experiences its effect, provides herself with the means to reduce the initially subjective understanding into an objective explanation, she too transforms the eventual passive impression felt by the students into a here and now active and reflective process vis-à-vis a text and to any elsewhere and tomorrow existential situation.

These texts used by language teachers may in fact be seen as "pretexts". They do not constitute the aims of the teaching even if some are definitely better than others in helping to attain objectives. If I may I would risk the idea that, like phonemes, they are discreet units but of the literary discourse. They serve a purpose which they do not constitute. Texts, sentences and cultural items used in class may rarely be used in real life. Nevertheless it is through them that certain forms and reactions to them will be eventually stored in the competence of learners. So out of "useless" (but wrapped and organized) contents, the language teacher creates the use of an implicit knowledge along with an increased number of forms and creation of new ones. This game of previously stored forms and newly created ones consists of the reordering of worlds always first perceived as chaos or insignificant, but constantly reconstructed on a provisional basis. This is sustained by the awareness of being a skilled, master-builder. The sense of skill derives from the use of forms and their permitted or unpermitted intricacies; the sense of derision stems from the use of nonsensical sentences*, long-forgotten authors and irrelevant texts**, and initially unaccepted types of doing, feeling or thinking***).

The final product of language teaching may well be an "I" able to deconstruct and reconstruct him or herself. Confusion, heterogeneity, provisionality, may be seen as normal manifestations of the human environment outside (or on the fringe) of a vernacular-monolingual-monocultural-self-centered world. This does not constitute a denial of such a reassuring world, since it is recognized that bi- or multi-lingual people also need roots. The difference here is that students, just as teachers, have learnt to relativize themselves in whatever situation, assuming that they may escape from it at any time to choose any other . . . or resort to Sartrian imagination. No other disciplines may

*Such as "my mother's umbrella is bigger than my uncle's hat . . ."

**In Nigeria in the 1970s I had to teach The Princesse de Cléves. Time and space conjugated their efforts to complicate my task as I was trying to make relevant my teaching to twentieth century Nigerian students more concerned with problems of development than of the heart.

***Such as belching or cleaning your teeth with a finger after your meal, kissing your mother's guest on her mouth, pinching your wife's friend, which are all excellent manners to Others to whom we are the 'barbares'.

claim as well as language, literary and cultural studies to equip students with efficient communicative skills and train them for cross-cultural problem-solving and structuring disparate elements with regard to intentions and effects, leading in turn to sound ethical judgement and humanistic qualities.

It may well be that Semiotics, as the science of signs and the methodology of these studies, produces the type of individual needed today for reducing the gaps between the artificial compartments of knowledge, and between Pure Sciences and the Humanities.

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Teaching Students to Read XVIIth Century French Prose

by Monique Bilezikian

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The transition from language to literature classes is indeed a difficult one for students. A comprehensive summary of the scholarship on techniques for the different levels in the curriculum is presented in Edith Muyskens' article "Teaching Second Language Literature: Past, Present and Future".[4] In view of her excellent compilation and analysis there is no need to repeat her findings in detail here; but I do want to discuss a few points which I found particularly helpful in addressing the problem of bridging student transition from language to literature classes known as "the gap".

The main obstacles facing the students include the lexical and structural differences between the language in the textbooks and those found in the literary texts. To avoid "dissatisfaction and discouragement at the lexical, syntactic and semantic levels" Georges Santoni discusses the necessity of prefacing the reading of the literary text with a variety of preparatory exercises at the three levels.[8] With proper preparation the discussion and interpretation of the text will become that much more accessible to the students who then will have the necessary tools to decipher the text in a foreign language. In another approach, Claire Kramsch suggests "an interactional methodology for discussion" where "the teaching of literary texts can be integrated into a general approach to the teaching of language as social discourse".[2]

I propose an approach where the analysis of the style of the classical authors and the students' own writing, will allow the latter to appreciate the specificity of a literary genre, the dynamic of the text and thanks to the author's *parole* (according to Saussure) the cultural aspect of the work.

This approach on the teaching of 17th century works of prose was derived in part from an article published in *The French Review* entitled "Theoretical Acrobatics: The Student as Author and Teacher in Introductory Literature Courses".[9] The author, Peter Schofer, proposes that the students write their own pieces in order to better understand "a precise problem or technique in the work to be studied." For example, the role of the narrator, the role of the I, and the structure of a sonnet can be investigated by reading literary texts. Schofer's goal is "to integrate language, literature and literary theory into a successful approach to introductory literature courses."

In my opinion, this method, very convincingly brought forth by Schofer can be

This paper was presented as part of a special interest session on "Literature Revisited for the Teaching of Language and Culture" at the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1986.

profitably developed even for more advanced literature courses beyond the Introductory classes, such as a survey course of a particular century. The pedagogical goal for the model presented below would be to help the students develop an appreciation of the different styles of the 17th century by adding the concept of a double *écart** (déviation); first between their own text and a classical work and second, between the cultural codes of the two periods since our students/receptors would not receive the texts in the same manner the contemporary readers did.

For example, an introduction to Madame de Sévigné would start by asking the students to write a letter to a friend announcing important news. Adopting Roland Barthes' term, this level of writing could be called the *degré zéro*. After writing the letters and discussing the linguistical and structural aspects of them the class will then read Madame de Sévigné's letter of December 15, 1670 to M. de Coulanges announcing the aborted marriage of the Princess of Orléans, called *la grande Mademoiselle*, to a nobleman below her station.[10]

Let us imagine a student letter for example at the *degré zéro* of writing where the student expresses happiness at the thought of going on a junior year abroad program. It is great, wonderful, exciting. . . Several students will read their letters in class in order to better understand the function of the I, the relationship between the I and the you of the receiver, verb tenses, fictitious receptors, etc. . .

After discussion and recognition of the rules of the epistolary genre in their own letters, the students will then be able to read the letter by Mme de Sévigné and discuss it at three different levels.

A— At the level of syntactical and lexical codes, the students will start by noting in the first part of the letter the use of superlatives and recognize the hyperbole so frequent in the 17th century. The synonyms and antonyms of this first part are often perplexing to the student readers: they do not give the reader a useful clue to what the big news is; the playfulness and deceitfulness confuse the readers and do not allow them to define a paradigm to uncover the mystery of the letter. At this point, it would be useful to review the concept of paradigm and to show how this author has erased all possibilities of an indexing device which could lead to a paradigm elucidating the mystery. Hence, the letter accumulates a variety of superlatives some of which are contradictory; some of which are close in their semantic field like *incroyable* ("unbelievable"), *imprévu* ("unforseeable") and yet they do not produce any clues to the "big news".

The students should continue to identify the devices which frustate the answer of the riddle: What is the news? —M. de Lauzun is getting married —To whom? —To Mademoiselle d'Orléans.

In the next part of the letter the analysis of the series of verbs in the imperative mood, *devinez* ("guess what"), *jetez votre langue aux chiens* ("give up"), will help the students understand how Mme de Sévigné perpetuates the riddle making it a kind of children's game or a *jeu de salon*.

B— The cultural enrichment level: Gerald Prince has rightly stated that one of the difficulties our students have is "interpreting and understanding the symbolic nature of a literary text and its cultural, social, and historical dimensions".[5] This understanding is made possible by decoding the cultural system not only by the given information (the princess wants to marry a man of lesser rank) but by the way the information is given. The repetition of the word *chose* ("thing") in the place of naming the event underlines how startling this nameless phenomenon (marrying below her rank) was in the social practices of the court. It seems that the unthinkable "thing" which escapes all definition is at the heart of the riddle. This repetition and the accumulation of contradictory adjectives in the beginning of

*Michel Bénamou defines "écart" as the difference between what a decoder/receiver expects and the message. (p. 64).

the letter point out to modern readers the social values of the court. After this decoding it is easier for students to understand how any threat to the societal structure was treated by the court, in this case, ridicule and denial.*

The students can also decode the sociological impact through the accumulation of the bride's titles. While disclosing the identity of the bride the many signifiers all designating the same referent, the princess, seem to widen the differences between her and her suitor.

C— From the reader-response point of view: the students are soon aware of the plurality of the receptors of the letter

sender (S) ⟶ message (M) ⟶ receiver (R)

R1 _____M. de Coulanges
R2 _____Mme de Coulanges
R3,4,5,6. . .the potential contemporary readers, the friends in Lyons
Rn _____the potential non contemporary readers.

The message was received by the courtiers in a very different way than it is by our students. It is important to "make them cognizant of the extent to which their interpretive responses are dependent on their own emotional/intellectual disposition and their experiences as readers".[7] The news has lost its emotional impact; but students can be made aware that even without the emotional involvement which they had in their own letters, they are manipulated by the author to respond in a way which Mme de Sévigné stages her news. The fictional comments which Mme de Sévigné expects her readers to make range from *cela est faux* ("it is wrong"), *voilà une belle raillerie* ("it is a joke"), to *une injure* ("an insult"). In other words, such an event is impossible to accept, an adjective which does not figure in the list at the beginning of the letter.

They can map her strategies and see how she plays with her readers, frustrating their expectation, building up the suspense. For example, the series of questions will clarify the function of the fictitious dialogue between the author and the receivers of the letter, M. de Coulanges (the *vous* in the text), and his wife Mme de Coulanges. An astute student will observe that both become characters in the text with the roles of disbelievers, questionners, and skeptical receptors of the news. A possible scenario is imagined by Mme de Sévigné herself in which a note of surprise, of scandal may cross her readers' mind just as it did hers:

> "Si vous criez, si vous êtes hors de vous-même, si vous dites que nous avons menti, que cela est faux, qu'on se moque de vous, que voilà une belle raillerie, que cela est bien fade à imaginer; si enfin vous nous dites des injures: nous trouverons que vous avez raison, nous en avons fait autant que vous.*

To reinforce what they have learned the students can rewrite their first letters using some rhetorical figures already seen in class to better incite in their readers curiosity or envy; or they can write a "pastiche". In both cases they can once again exchange their letters in class and comment on each other's success in generating the expected reaction. Another assignment could be to summarize their understanding and appreciation of some of Mme de Sévigné's letters across time/cultural boundaries.

Our second example from La Bruyère's *Les caractères*, concerns the parallel por-

*Bénamou[1b] considers literary texts privileged vehicles for understanding the social and moral values of an era.

*"If you shout, if you are besides yourself, if you say that we have lied, that it is false, that you are made fun of, that it is a joke; that it is nothing to imagine, if finally you insult us: we will find you right; we had done the same ourselves".

traits of Giton and Phédon.[3] In the first step the students will write a friend's portrait comprising a short physical description of a few lines and a description of the behavior of this person in his/her milieu. The need for adjectives will become obvious in the physical portraits, and a quick reading of these assignments in class will produce a monotonous repetition of these adjectives: brown, blond, big, small, thin. . . . The second description, that of the behavior necessitates the use of many verbs. They can describe the tastes and the feelings of the person: "he likes. .", "she detests. . ." (but how is it known?), or they can reveal the behavior in certain situations: "he plays cards every night instead of studying", "she studies in the library every Saturday". . . Class discussion of these short exercises will highlight the essential rules of the genres as they did with the Mme de Sévigné's letter. The portrait can be from "outside" as if a camera was following the character and recording its moves, or the portrait can be "from inside" revealed by a narrator well acquainted with the character and giving us the benefit of his or her observation and even some judgment of the behavior described. For contrast an additional text could be quickly read such as Cardinal de Retz' *Mémoires*, where portraits "from inside" are combined with a descriptive behavior and a scale of value judgment.[6]

In La Bruyère, the reading of the two texts allows students to establish parallels and contrasts. The following chart summarizes the similarities but especially highlights the differences on the syntactical and lexical levels:

Text 1: GITON	Text 2: PHEDON
physical description	*physical description*
on	*on*
verbs	*verbs*
numerous, often with negative qualifiers	with negative connotation[1] in negative form
adverbs	*adverbs*
scarce	with negative connotation
adjectives	*adjectives*
with positive connotation	with negative connotation
with negative connotation	
THE RICH MAN	THE POOR MAN

This chart points out the following:

1-In the physical description attention will be drawn to the symmetry in the syntax: a series of nouns accompanied by adjectives in both passages but without a precise repetition which would be monotonous.

2-The different uses of *on*: in the first text (Giton), *on* designates the others whom the rich man controls at his will; in the second passage (Phédon), *on* refers to the others who control the poor man.

3-The charting of Phédon's portrait gives the following information for verbs:

-with negative connotation: "he forgets to. . ."

-with expression of negative connotation of social behavior: "he talks softly in the conversation", "he runs to do small favors"

-in the negative forms

4-The numerous adverbs which have a negative connotation in the second text: *mal* ("bad"), *médiocrement*" ("poorly"), "*furtivement*" ("furtively").

5-Finally the numerous adjectives in the second passage like "lowered", (*baissés*, *abaissés*) lower the stature itself of the poor man.

After this discussion the students will conclude that people acted according to their rank in society, according to their

fortune or lack of it; it is the sole explanation given by La Bruyère as the past, birth, education, moral and intellectual background do not even enter in consideration.

In *Les caractères* the king's intendants, the financiers who used their position to get richer at the expense of the people were guilty of the kind of abuses producing the social unrest which culminated in the revolution of 1789. The following questions can be addressed for discussion: what will be the result of the importance given to money? How can the social rapports be defined if the criteria change from nobility titles to money? Can this society survive? In fact the portraits of Giton and Phédon mark the point of departure of a discussion of La Bruyère announcing the 18th century.

Much still remains to be done in refining the techniques for bridging the gap from language to literary studies at all levels, even at a level where we take literary sophistication for granted in our students' preparation. This one model offers the students an awareness of style and structure of the text. It introduces literary concepts and terms in an interesting and effective manner. It also encourages the development of literary criticism skills, all of which are essential in advanced literature courses.

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The Play of Pronouns in Diderot's *La Religieuse*

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1. Introduction

Readers at large and literary critics, from Spitzer and May to Chouillet, have long recognized the dramatic force of Diderot's novel, *La Religieuse*.[3] Structural, thematic and stylistic studies have pointed to various devices which increase the novel's impact on readers. This reader has often been struck by the prominence of pronouns in Diderot's style, and has hypothesized that their use functioned as a stylistic device. In other words, we surmised that there was a linkage between the novel's dramatic effect and Diderot's use of pronouns, particularly the subject pronouns **je** and **on**, and the object pronouns **me** and **moi**. If the novel succeeds so well in giving the reader a sense of Suzanne's heroic struggle against the increasingly hostile world in which she is thrown, we sensed that it is partly because of Diderot's masterful handling of these pronouns. We tried to verify this hypothesis and to show how a close study of language can contribute to a deeper understanding of style and literary meaning.

2. Importance of pronouns in French.

Among the 50 most frequently used words in 20th century French, according to the *Frequency Dictionary of French Words* by Jullian, Brodin and Davidovitch[5a], are 15 pronouns. Some only function as subjects, others can be used as subjects or objects, others yet are only objects.

The following chart ranks there pronouns by frequency, as reported in that dictionary:

Table 1

Subject Pronouns	Subject or Object Pronouns	Object Pronouns
il (7th)	qui (15th)	se (14th)
je (12th)	ce (17th)	que (25th)
on (27th)	vous (22nd)	le (36th)
tu (46th)	elle (26th)	me (40th)
	nous (29th)	en (45th)
	lui (44th)	

(This paper is a slightly revised version of my paper, given in French at the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, in a Special Interest Session on "Literature Revisited for the Teaching of Language and Culture," March, 1986)

These rankings illustrate the well-known tendency in French to avoid repetition of nouns as subjects or objects, a tendency abundantly manifested in 18th century texts.

2.1. Relative frequency of some pronouns in La Religieuse.

Our hypothesis, based on several careful readings of Diderot's novel, was that the pronouns **je** and **on** were inordinately frequent, therefore significant and worthy of careful attention. We surveyed a sample of 7390 words (or a little over 11% of the total), scanning all pages ending in 5 (e.g., 45, 55, etc., to the end) in the Garnier-Flammarion edition of *La Religieuse.* We made similar counts in two other 18th century novels, also written in the first person, Marivaux's *Le Paysan parvenu*[6] and Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse.*[8] Finally, we took an equivalent sample of a 20th century work, Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes.*[1] The validity of our sample is confirmed by a comparison with a survey of the complete text of *La Religieuse,* done by Chouillet: out of a total of 65,577 words, he has counted 2,098 **je** or 3.2%.[2a] Our own count yields exactly the same proportion.

Table 2 shows the results of our survey. The number of **je** is based on occurrences of that pronoun when it represents the "I" of the narrative voice (i.e., Suzanne, Ja-

Table 2

La Religieuse	
Number of Words in our Sample:	7390
Number of Subjects:	958 (13% of words)
Number of Subject Pronouns:	825 (86% of subjects)
Number of ***je*** (= Suzanne)	235 (24.5% of subjects, 3.2% of words)
Number of *on:*	92 (9.6% of subjects, 1.2% of words)
Number of Object Pronouns:	672 (9% of words)
Number of **me/moi** (= Suzanne):	171 (25% of object pronouns, 2.3% of words)
La Paysan parvenu	
Number of Words in our Sample:	7685
Number of Subjects:	1016 (13% of words)
Number of Subject Pronouns:	839 (82.6% of subjects)
Number of ***je*** (= Jacob)	171 (17% of subjects, 2.2% of words)
Number of *on:*	47 (6.1% of subjects, 0.6% of words)
Number of Object Pronouns:	717 (9% of words)
Number of **me/moi** (= Jacob)	113 (15.8% of object pronouns, 1.4% of words)
La Nouvelle Héloïse	
Number of Words in our Sample:	7305
Number of Subjects:	811 (11% of words)
Number of Subject Pronouns:	557 (68.7% of subjects)
Number of ***je*** (= letter writer)	162 (20% of subjects, 2.2% of words)
Number of *on:*	43 (5.3% of subjects, 0.6% of words)
Number of Object Pronouns:	547 (7.5% of words)
Number of **me/moi** (= letter writer)	97 (17.7% of object pronouns, 1.3% of words)
Le Grand Meaulnes	
Number of Words in our Sample:	6765
Number of Subjects:	659 (9.7% of words)
Number of Subject Pronouns:	475 (72% of subjects)
Number of ***je*** (= François):	60 (9% of subjects, 0.9% of words)
Number of *on:*	23 (3.5% of subjects, 0.3% of words)
Number of Object Pronouns:	286 (4.2% of words)
Number of **me/moi** (= François)	33 (11.5% of object pronouns, 0.5% of words)

cob, the various writers of Rousseau's epistolary novel, and François in *Le Grand Meaulnes*.) The count of pronouns **me** and **moi** also refer to the same voice.

This systematic count shows that indeed in *La Religieuse* Diderot includes more subject pronouns (86% of all subjects) than Marivaux (82.4%), Rousseau (68.3%) or Alain-Fournier (72%) in their novels, and more object pronouns as well (9% of total words)—the same percentage as in Marivaux's novel, but higher again than the 7.5% in Rousseau's and the 4.2% in Alain-Fournier's.

3. Subject Pronouns

Diderot's novel, as do the others we surveyed, presents a wide gamut of subject pronouns, distributed among various grammatical categories, i.e.: personal pronouns (je, tu, il, lui, elle, nous, vous, ils, eux, elles), relative pronouns (qui, lequel and variations thereof), demonstrative pronouns (ce, ceci, cela, celui-ci and variants), interrogative pronouns (qui, qui est-ce que, lequel and variants), impersonal pronoun (il), indefinite pronouns (on, tout, aucun, chacun, quelqu'un, rien, personne, certains, etc.) The first pedagogical application of this text will therefore be to furnish multiple examples of subject pronoun usage.

However, only two object pronouns concern us especially here: **je** and **on.** The importance of **je** is highlighted in Table 2. Chouillet also underlines the significance of this pronoun's frequency, which establishes a sort of index of subjectivity.[2a] Our comparative study further points to its relative weight, not only when compared to all subjects and to other subject pronouns, but in contrast with **on.**

4. The Pronoun ON

Unquestionably, **on** is an excellent example for study since this indefinite pronoun can stand for many different subjects. In contemporary spoken French, **on** often replaces **nous**, **ils**, or even **je**. But it also occurs significantly in written language.

4.1 Frequency of ON *in written French.*

The written language found in our three 18th century and one 20th century novels, includes the following percentages of **on**:

Table 3

Novel	ON/all words	ON/all subjects
La Religieuse	1.2%	9.6%
La Paysan parvenu	0.6%	6.1%
La Nouvelle Héloïse	0.6%	5.3%
Le Grand Meaulnes	0.3%	3.5%

On is thus twice as frequent in Diderot's novel as in Marivaux's or Rousseau's and is used four times less often in Alain-Fournier's. To try to understand why, let us first examine how Diderot uses **on**.

4.2 ON *and its various meanings in* La Religieuse.

Our survey reveals at least 8 different categories of meanings for **on.** We present only a few representative examples of each, which can serve as paradigms:

4.2.1 ON = people (general indefinite).

A. On is sometimes used in a form equivalent to the passive in English. This form is most common in contemporary French, though not very frequent in Diderot's novel.

"ce qu'**on** appelle des fêtes" (p. 165)

B. More often, it is an indefinite pronoun representing a general plural (= **they**, **one**):

"Vous avez de la figure, de l'esprit et des talents; mais **on** dit que cela ne mène à rien avec de la vertu" (p. 88)

"Quand **on** s'oppose au penchant général de la nature" (p. 195)

4.2.2 ON = someone (singular indefinite).

On stands for one person only, unidentified or yet unknown:

"**on** me fit demander au parloir" (p. 41)

"lorsque tout à coup **on** frappa deux coups violents à la porte" (p. 169)

4.2.3 ON = Suzanne's family or relatives.

Elsewhere Suzanne stands apart from her sisters, and her family as a whole is seen as an undifferentiated enemy:

"Mes soeurs établies, je crus qu'**on** penserait à moi [. . .]
On avait fait des dots considérables à mes soeurs." (p. 41)

"Je suis une malheureuse qu'**on** déteste et qu'**on** veut enterrer ici toute vive." (p. 420)

4.2.4 ON = religious authorites.

As she tells more about her convent experiences, other enemies are signified by **on**: this pronoun often comes to designate a group of authorities, mothers superior and others in the hierarchy, against whom Suzanne is pitted:

"le jour fut pris pour ma profession; **on** ne négligea rien pour obtenir mon consentement; mais quand **on** vit qu'il était inutile de le solliciter, **on** prit le parti de s'en passer [. . .] je fus renfermée dans ma cellule; **on** m'imposa le silence; je fus séparée de tout le monde, **on** m'abandonna à moi-même; et je vis clairement qu'**on** était résolu à disposer de moi sans moi." (p. 48)

This passage illustrates not only the anonymity of the enemy, but the passivity and helplessness of Suzanne. **On** is the subject of active verbs, while **me** or **moi** are objects, and **je** (Suzanne) is the subject of only of two passive verbs.

4.2.5 ON = a specific nun or mother superior.

On may stand for the mother in charge of novices in the first convent:

"Il ne se passe pas une histoire fâcheuse dans le monde qu' **on** ne vous en parle; **on** arrange les vraies, **on** en fait de fausses" (pp. 44–45)

As the novel progresses, there are numerous examples of this type of representation, when **on** designates the mother superior who persecutes Suzanne. Some of the most striking occur in the dialogues between the archdeacon and Suzanne:

"Pourquoi, me dit-il, ne vous confessez-vous point?

—C'est qu'**on** m'en empêche.

—Pourquoi n'approchez-vous point des sacrements?

—C'est qu'**on** m'en empêche." (pp. 113–114)

This answer, and others that are almost identical, are given ten times in two pages, and thus become a litany of complaints. Here again, **on** is a hostile subject while **me** represents a victimized object.

4.2.6 ON = the sisters as enemies.

In another frequent use of **on**, Diderot refers to the sisters who persecute Suzanne, they are her undifferentiated enemies:

"**On** m'arracha mon voile; **on** me dépouilla sans pudeur. **On** trouva sur mon sein un petit portrait de mon ancienne supérieure; **on** s'en saisit; je suppliai qu'**on** me permît de le baiser encore une fois; **on** me refusa. **On** me jeta une chemise, **on** m'ôta mes bas, l'**on** me couvrit d'un sac, et l'**on** me conduisit, la tête et les pieds nus, à travers le couloir." (p. 82)

It is significant to note that this very passage was revised by Diderot. The first version read as follows:

"On m'arracha mon voile. On me dépouilla sans pudeur; on me jeta une chemise grossière; on m'ôta mes bas; et l'on jeta là-dessus un sac d'étoffe grossière; et l'on me conduisit nu-tête et nu-pieds à travers les corridors."[7]

In the final version, "On trouva . . . on me refusa," Diderot included four more

on, which emphasize the strength of the oppression.

By contrast, when Suzanne speaks about a compassionate nun, or refers to the few who might treat her kindly, the pronouns **elle** or **elles** are used.

4.2.7 ON = WE (Suzanne is part of the community).

In the rare instances when Suzanne feels part of the religious community, **on** signifies her and the sisters. For example, she refers to the mystical Mother de Moni:

> "d'abord **on** l'écoutait; peu à peu **on** était entraîné, **on** s'unissait à elle; l'âme tressaillait, et l'**on** partageait ses transports." (p. 65)

Or she questions Dom Morel about being released from her vows:

> "—Et quelles espérances pour une religieuse?
> —Quelles? D'abord celle de faire résilier ses voeux.
> —Et quand **on** n'a plus celle-là?
> —Celles qu'**on** trouvera les portes ouvertes un jour . . . " (p. 195)

Here **on** means not only Suzanne, but all those who, like her, wish to leave the convent.

4.2.8 ON = JE (Suzanne).

Finally, in a few cases **on** represents Suzanne herself. The most interesting occurs during a conversation between her and the lesbian superior at Arpajon:

> "Je ne sais pas si je suis si belle que vous le dites; et puis, quand je le serais, c'est pour les autres qu'**on** est belle, et non pour soi." (p. 165)

This striking shift from **je** to **on** can be seen as an effort by Suzanne to seek refuge in the anonymity of the group, in the law that applies to all, as she becomes increasingly uneasy about the situation.

4.3 The significance of ON.

Having surveyed the multiple uses of the indefinite subject pronoun in this novel, one wonders why Diderot chose to use it so often. Two answers come to mind:

First, the pronoun lends unquestionable economy and conciseness to Diderot's style. Not only is this word shorter than the various nouns it represents, shorter even than some other pronouns, but the verb which follows is also shorter, because of its 3rd person singular ending.

Second, and more importantly, a semantic reason: by merging all of Suzanne's enemies in the ubiquitous, amorphous **on,** Diderot underscores the immensity of his heroin's struggle: ultimately, Suzanne is pitted against an impersonal, dehumanized world. By blurring the distinctions between the various hostile forces she fights, he stresses the importance of the individual **je**.

4.4 ON *versus JE.*

We established that, in *La Religieuse,* both **je** and **on** are used more extensively than in the other works we surveyed. We can view **je** against **on** in a dramatic conflict. These two pronouns become a metaphor of Suzanne's fight against oppression, depersonalisation. Nowhere is the conflict more evident than in a two-page excerpt, pp. 74 and 75.

While p. 74 shows Suzanne acting as a leader in the fight "against despotism," her gradual loss of influence and increasing powerlessness are related on p. 75. An examination of subject pronouns shows graphic evidence of this shift:

Table 4

p. 74	p. 75
48 subjects	46 subjects
28 JE (= 60%, vs. 24% in the novel)	9 JE (= 19% of subjects)
7 ON (= 15%, vs. 9.6% in the novel)	25 ON (= 54% of subjects)
13 ME (= 46% of object pronouns)	20 ME (= 50% of object pronouns)

The proportion of **je** to **on** is almost reversed on those two pages. The nuns and their oppressive superiors, Suzanne's enemies, are represented by the impersonal, indefinite, anonymous **on,** and **je** loses out, while **me** is the victim.

On the other hand, when she is free, a page taken from the end of the novel (p. 205) shows a complete absence of **on,** while there are 29 **je** out of 49 subjects.

5. Other pronouns: ME, MOI

While most other pronouns could be studied from the double perspective of grammatical usage and semantics, the object pronouns **me** and **moi** deserve particular attention. As Suzanne is the frequent object of persecution, the pattern **on** (**elles**) + verb + (**me**/**moi**) is most common. It may even be reinforced by doubling the use of **moi**: "et je vis clairement qu'on était résolu à disposer de **moi** sans **moi**." (p. 48) The only active role the subject has in this instance is to see that her fate is controlled by **on**.

Since she is so often cast in this role of object, she cannot escape taking herself as an object. Typically this would be translated by the use of a pronominal form. However, the separation between the subject as self and soul (**je**) and the object as victim and body (**moi**) is nowhere more evident than in this remarkable expression: "Je jetai les yeux sur **moi**". (p. 95)

Table 2 shows how often the first person singular object pronouns are used: in *La Religieuse,* they represent 25% of all object pronouns. If their frequency is added to that of the subject pronoun **je**, the resulting percentages obtain:

Table 5

	Number of JE + ME/MOI in our samples:	Percentage of total words
La Religieuse:	406	5.5
La Paysan parvenu:	284	3.7
La Nouvelle Héloïse:	259	3.5
La Grand Meaulnes:	93	1.4

This comparison establishes a subjectivity index, which supports the emphasis accorded the narrative voice. Chouillet states: "The energy of language is therefore linked to the physical presence of the speaker."[2b] Suzanne, the speaker, is all the more physically conspicuous through the pronouns that represent her. Diderot is indeed, to use Friedenthal's term, the "discoverer of the self"[4] and, in *La Religieuse,* succeeds remarkably in making us believe in the reality of Suzanne's self.

6. Conclusion

Our systematic study supports our hypothesis that pronouns are particularly significant in Diderot's novel, because of their frequency and because of their function as signifiers.

The very high use of pronouns, as subjects and as objects, contributes to the conciseness of Diderot's style.

While **je** is the 12th most frequently used word in modern French[5b], Chouillet has determined that it ranks 2nd in frequency (after "de") in *La Religieuse.*[2a] Diderot's style is therefore not only extremely subjective, it is also impassioned and rhetorical because of the reiteration of **je**, **me** and **moi**.

Like a leit-motiv, these pronouns, together with **on**, underscore the conflict Diderot exposed in his book. "It is a struggle for freedom," wrote Friedenthal.[4a] Significantly, **je** wins over **on** in number of occurrences: numerically, David has conquered Goliath. If one takes Suzanne's final escape into freedom as a victory, David wins. However, if one views her sudden demise as a defeat, then Goliath/**on** has prevailed. There is perfect cohesion between form and content. The play of pronouns is an excellent stylistic device to show the conflict between the person and the forces of oppression and depersonalization.

7. Pedagogical applications

7.1. The text abounds in excellent examples of pronoun use, and students could memorize some of the short dialogues in order to improve retention of forms and word order.

7.2. Diderot's novel can be seen as a case study in the diverse meanings of the indefinite pronoun **on**.

7.3. Parts of this text can serve to design exercises, substituting **tu**, **vous**, **nous,** etc., to **je**, for useful drills centered on pronouns and verb forms.

7.4. For more advanced students (in Composition courses, for instance) rewriting direct questions or short dialogues into indirect discourse would give additional practice in handling pronouns, verb tenses, etc.

For instance, the short exchange cited above (**4.2.5**) would become:

> "Il **lui** demanda pourquoi **elle** ne **se** confess**ait** point. Elle répondit qu'**on l'**en empêch**ait.** Il **lui** demanda aussi pourquoi **elle** n'approch**ait** point des sacrements . . . "

The comparison of this version with the original would show how much dramatic effect was lost and highlight the strength of Diderot's text.

7.5 Various pages can be analyzed to measure the relative quantitative and qualitative importance of active, passive, and reflexive verbs. Such a study would show that when Suzanne is struggling (against her family, her convent, societal constraints), she is represented by **je** + a verb in the active voice.

7.6 Similar surveys could compare the importance and use of **je** in *La Religieuse* and in some 20th century novels also written in the first person and dealing with some conflict between the "I" and society (e.g. Albertine Sarrazin's or Violette Leduc's novels.).

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Can These Dry Words Live?

A blueprint for teaching text as performance now.

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Introduction

Homo Ludens in the classroom? It is now axiomatic to proclaim that performative processes—ranging from mere vocalization of literature, to interactive role-playing, through to full staging of dramatic works—have become part and parcel of the pedagogic arts. Whether one has in mind the heightening of rhetorical effect through an appeal to the senses, or loftier ideals such as "the student as whole person," the uses of dramatization and theatricalization in the exercise of a teacher's craft no longer need theoretical legitimacy.

However, beyond the choice of appropriate textual materials or the structuring of a model situation for verbal and gestural exchange, the operational basis for transforming the student into a competent performer is rarely circumscribed, except within the confines of acting schools.

In fact, the information, both theoretical and practical, which a well-motivated teacher, unschooled in theater arts, could use in order to successfully incorporate performative processes is siphoned off into many seemingly unrelated disciplines, some of which are not recognized by academe. Their total range would span the following: literature, foreign languages, esthetics, history of ideas, philosophy, religion (especially sacred ritual and mysticism), linguistics, semiotics, psychology, psychotherapy, acting, dance, mime, music, architecture, martial arts and the gamut of psycho-technologies, such as "centering" and "meditation". Clearly, only rare individuals become competent in all these areas.

Is the task, then, an impossible one for a teacher untrained in the myriad ways of the stage? We think not and, while in no way claiming to have expertise in all the above-mentioned disciplines, we would like to attempt to spell out the rudiments of a praxis based on long experience in acting, directing and teaching. Tasks and concepts will be explained dialectically, with an eye to immediate application.

Paper presented at the Working Seminar on the Function of Theatric Expression in the Teaching of Language, Literature and Culture at the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1986.

Thinking Now

The very first step is conceptual, but fraught with tangible consequences. It is this: the text was written then, the performance of the text is now. Obvious? Not to most teachers of languages and literature, who must make students aware of the text as an unfolding through time, but who tend to overlook or ignore cognizance of the text as deployment (unfurling) in space. Yet for the performer of the text—whether he verbalizes it or not—time and space are one. If I perform the text as if I were an Olympian deity who knows the beginning, the middle and the end (ie: both the totality of the text and its teleological structure), there is perhaps recital from the heights, but not performance, since I can only perform in the now, by inventing the pulsation of the now.

Consequently, it is right now, as you watch me and hear me from the tenth row, that I am meeting the text, that I am producing the text, that the author is writing the text: I, the performer; I, the persona; I, the energy of the word. There may well be reference in my text to a "then" (past tense) or to a "when" (future tense). Yet, it is in the now that I see these dead or not yet real events. In essence, the actor can only conjugate the grammar of life in the present tense. (present tense = tension of the presence). In theatre, the presence is all there is to become.

If this fundamental intuition of the now is taken quite literally, it is a major key to effective performance. Memorization of a sequentially disposed text is replaced by ongoing experience of the text, by the impact of the words in this point of time and space. There is no longer some hapless individual to whom theatric transfiguration has been denied, trying to remember the external form (empty shell) of an experience long dead; there is rather a presence sharing with me the very same time and space and whose experience I am now witnessing. In other words, there is a true enactment.

Breathing Now

In order to act—or enact—now, I must have the means, or the power, to do so. Power to live with the words of my character, to give the breath of life to the persona I must become. Power to em-body.

Here again, a reminder of the obvious: power to animate the words comes first and foremost from the way we breathe the character. Therefore, the next step we must envision is the phenomenon of breathing. Now a truism: you and I both breathe as a matter of course. However, most of the time (except in moments of great exertion or in peak experiences), our breathing is shallow and we do not consciously modulate its depth or its rhythm. Furthermore, in relation to speech, we only gain breath in order to enunciate our own range of discourse (our personal idiolect). Our habitual breathing is therefore both shallow (weak in power) and narrow in expressive potentiation. It is solipsistic by definition: unfit for expressing anything beyond our automated self-image and our habitual perceptions of reality. No competent performer can manage with solipsistic breathing, since he or she must em-body characters who breathe differently and whose discourse, unlike the performer's idiolect, is determined by a pre-existing author.

The problem is therefore the following: how do I increase the depth of my breathing so that I may find the power to embody the words of my character right now? The answer is simple: to gain breath, you must first lose it, ie: to inhale fully, you must first exhale fully. **Plenitude of breath comes from the void.**

Standing comfortably with feet slightly apart to assure balance, you pull back your shoulders and look fixedly at an imaginary candle two yards away, about four feet in height. You decide to blow out this huge

candle with all the breath in your body, doing so very noisily and very forcefully. When your entire frame is empty of breath, you "freeze" and prolong the seeming asphyxiation for a slow count of three. Then you reverse the process, breathing in from the lower belly and on up to the top of your lungs, until you feel like a balloon about to burst. There, too, you "freeze", holding in this mass of air to a slow count of three, after which you repeat the entire process a second, then a third time.

You have thus completed three binary sets of in-depth breathing, with a pause at the nadir and zenith of your physical being. Be careful to always extinguish the imaginary candle with your very last reach of breath, since the flame will resist you to the end. Some dizziness will probably ensue. If you become excessively dizzy, perform the exercise flat on your back, on the floor, with your legs apart, hands loosely by your side. The candle is now a light bulb hanging overhead, which you want to explode with your breath. In final days of rehearsal, do six sets of this exercise morning and night, to combat fatigue and to prepare your entire organism for optimal levels of performance. This will also greatly assist in fighting stage fright and general stress.

A secondary, yet crucial, result of this mode of breathing is the awareness of oneself as the center of a field of energy: a force field deployed in three-dimensional space. Although we live our daily lives in 3-D, most of us do not behave as if this were so. Daily space, for most Western city-dwellers, is basically functional and compartmentalized, ie: an atomistic space, neatly carved up into container spaces for tasks, pedestrian rituals and solid objects. Seldom is space perceived as vibrant and organic. Most of us rather see it as passive and inert. Territory to be occupied, but not space. Conversely, the breathing we have just described (we may call it "cognizant bio-rhythm"), helps us to enter a living space, a psychic eco-system animated primarily by our own demiurgic power, a space of embodiment, of in-spiration. This is the metamorphic space of theatric performance, where new meaning is forged with every breath.

Speaking Now

While you and I are witnessing a performance, the bearer of the character, the "embodier" of the persona, is always thinking now, breathing now, speaking (or about to speak) now. His every utterance legitimizes or threatens my presence as witness to the symbolic enactment we call a play. The determining factor is the ability of the performer to see himself quite literally as the space of the voice. In essence, aside from mime dramas, the performative experience will be shaped and constituted by human voices intersecting in living space. Theatrically speaking, the word is always flesh or fire, silences being gestation or ashes.

Voices are both presences and tools. To increase the power of embodiment, the performer has first deepened his breathing capacity. Furthermore, the concentration on the invisible candle he had to extinguish in order to gain optimal reach of breath has shown him the need to physicalize and transmute the ambient space, and to project his power over real and imagined distances. Experience of these elements will be fully exploited in voice production and speech. We will now explain some principles of voice which we have found indispensable when working with novice actors. If followed with utmost conviction, as keys to unlocking powers, they will effectuate a veritable transformation in vocal range, resonance and audibility.

The first key is again conceptual: The performer must behave as though every utterance were of fundamental importance to maintaining the equilibrium of the world. In other words, if I do not produce this utterance right now in the

appropriate manner, the earth will no longer turn on its axis, resulting in a cosmic cataclysm on stage. Nothing you have to say in the performance arena is indifferent to the life of the character, since this later is in truth a mere shadow which urgently demands that every word augment its substance, that its every physical manifestation, including its language, anchor it more firmly in reality.

The second key is both conceptual and organic: **you must give every utterance a real target in space,** ie: you persuade yourself (through meditation if necessary) that the utterance is in fact a solid projectile sent by you, the speaker, on a specific and clearly visualized trajectory within the space encompassing the acting area and the audience. The further you extend the range of your "projectile", the more you actually project your voice. If you are breathing deeply, if you are concentrating intensely, no voice strain will occur, and the strength you experience allows you to embody not only your character, but the trajectory of your character, with renewed feeling and vitality. It may only be once you have understood and begun to execute this particular technique that you finally comprehend the "Quo Vadis", the destiny of your character, ie: its movement toward crisis or completion.

The third key needs a further leap of faith: you do not speak TO your partners in performance; you speak THROUGH them. In other words, you imagine your utterance actually traversing the body or the head of your stage partner, so that the words will strike the wall of the theatre behind him (we'll pretend it's impervious) and ricochet back to the audience. Thus your partner, as in some martial arts, is merely a moving point on the trajectory of your energy (of your text). This notion may seem absurd at first glance. However, the reader is assured that it has great effect in the work leading to performance, and is cordially invited to test it for him/herself. Auto-suggestion is a fundament of acting, which is, after all, the art of creating a meaningful and persuasive illusion. Since an illusion tends towards evaporation by its very nature, one only maintains it and empowers it by techniques of condensation and intensification. What we have just shared with our readers is one of the most powerful inductive voice techniques available to actors.

Finally, a key to gaining vocal range. This latter is produced not by forcing the voice, but by increasing resonance. The rule is deceptively simple and often unknown beyond acting schools: consonants provide resonance; vowels provide none. The consequence should be apparent: the actor should visualize and stress consonants in every single utterance. (This also happens to be a trade secret of good public speakers). If this rule is observed, along with the prescriptions for breathing and for targeting of utterances, not only will no voice strain ensue but the performer will seem to have acquired a new vocal apparatus. With long and hard practice in the requisite state of mind, one can permanently deepen and alter one's voice.

Colleagues, especially, will be most interested by the possibilities this affords on the professional level, not all teachers possessing well-trained speaking voices. Be that as it may, it remains certain that performers who observe the principles we are explaining will intensify beyond measure their energy field and thus their capacity to bring their character's dry words to the fullness of theatric life.

Silent Now

As crucial as voice and speech may be in the life of the character, it must never be forgotten that life is also composed of silences. But what IS silence? Leaving erudite speculation aside, we can first say what silence is *not*: It is *not* mere cessation of speech, a "filler time" in which one simply waits for speech to resume. To think in this way is antithetical to expressive performance, in which the now is never empty and inert, but always a space of pulsation.

We stated previously that if words are flesh or fire, then silence is the domain of "gestation" or "ashes", ie: words emerge from or descend into silence. However, since time and space are one in the "now" of the performative consciousness, the emergence and the descent must acquire a spatio-temporal dimension in order to be perceived by others as generating meaning. In other words, silence is linked to physical movement in the world of performance, since the character is only convincing, his story only captivates and holds my attention as audience, if I see him as moving along a trajectory. Sometimes, a gesture, a turn of the head, a change in posture will suffice to show me whether the character's words are now in gestation or are being reduced to ashes right now. However, unless he disappears completely from the performance arena and from the story, the ashes are those of the phoenix. The silence is, then, a passage through the ashes, not a total eclipse of fire; a pregnant silence, or a silence already impregnated with the utterance to come.

The body of the performer thus becomes the dynamic intersection of the text and its subliminal silence, inviting the audience to become, in turn, the silent moving space where the text is now embodied, the communal space of its incandescence.

Objects Now

Finally, a word or two on the way a good performer encounters physical objects in the space of the performance. Again, a general rule which proves useful: if utterances are solid objects (projectiles) moving through space, then conversely, physical objects brought on stage must become—if I am to manipulate them in any way—moments or mediators of my utterances. In other words, an object with which I will interact during the performance must always undergo a "conversion", a symbolic transmutation, thanks to which it never behaves like a blind spot on the retina of the viewer, like a black hole absorbing the light of meaning.

As in real life, our stage objects reveal and betray us; constitute a mute yet eloquent grammar in their own right; augment us or diminish us, translate our sorrows, our hopes and our joys. They, too, must join the performance.

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Gender "Language" Onstage: Moves, New Moves and Countermoves

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The gender language of dance images onstage focuses on a compelling issue of human life in our time: the continuing social and cultural reconstruction of gender roles and meanings. Dance is no longer the province solely of élite ticket-paying theatre-goers and critic-reading audiences. Now a melange of dance genre can reach nearly the entire nation through television and convey images and models of what it is to be male and female.

In this paper, I will summarize some semantic aspects of the visual language of a Western theatre art, namely, the "high" culture of ballet and its succeeding genres (what is called modern and postmodern dance), based on perceptions of critics and dancers, cultural history, and long-term researcher participant observation as a dance student and audience member. Because of space limitations, I will only offer a few illustrations.

This is a revision of a paper presented at the Special Session on Nonverbal Communication of the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, March 11, 1986. I appreciate the comments of Jean Cunningham and William John Hanna on earlier drafts. The paper is part of a larger study reported in *Dance, Sex, and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire,* University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Since I refer to dance as language, I should briefly summarize what this means.[13,14,15] Dance requires the same underlying brain faculty for conceptualization, creativity, and memory as verbal language. In a dance performance as in spoken and written languages, we may not see the underlying universals and cultural structures and processes but merely their evidence. Structures are a kind of generative grammar, i.e., a set of rules specifying the manner in which movements can be meaningfully combined. Semantics refers to the meaning of movement, whether it is the style itself or some reference beyond the movement. As in languge (with its words, sentences, and paragraphs), dance has movement vocabulary, steps and phrases which may comprise realistic or abstract symbols. Moreover, dance also has devices and spheres of encoding meaning, e.g., metaphor and metonym.[14] Dance, however, assembles these elements together in a manner that more often resembles poetry, with its suggestive imagery, rhythm, ambiguity, multiple meanings, and latitude in form, rather than prose. As spoken and written language, the dance may both reflect and influence society.

Having said that dance is a language--

recognizing that Western culture has an exaggerated esteem for language and its prerogative for describing and defining reality--I must add that there are alternative ways of knowing. The nonverbal, too, glosses experience, formulates ideas, attitudes, and a sense of relatedness. Gardner points out that there are different types of competencies, including bodily kinesthetic competence.[9] Gazzaniga argues that "the normal person does not possess a unitary conscious mechanism where the conscious system is privy to the sources of all his or her actions . . . the normal brain is organized into modules. . . . All except one work in nonverbal ways such that their method of expresssion is solely through overt behavior or more covert emotional reactions".[10]

Feminist Perspectives

Throughout time, most history, philosophy, religion, and art have been crafted/managed by men. Only recently has there been a women's studies movement and a significant body of feminist scholarship. This development enables us to consider the implications of male dominance in dance and contemporary danced images in the United States that convey what it is to be a man and a woman.

Feminist perspectives generally hold that patterns of dominance/submission and inclusion/exclusion based on gender tend to favor male dominance to the detriment of women. Patriarchal societies generally permit men to enjoy higher status and more benefits than women. Even matriarchal societies often give special privilege to a woman's male kin. Jaggar has classified the multifarious feminist views in four categories, each of which has different presuppositions and implications.[18] Most germane to a discussion of images of gender in dance is the liberal feminist perspective which, in simplistic terms, views non-feminist women as victims of their socialization or sex-role conditioning and asserts the need for educational reform to eliminate discrimination and to achieve liberty and equality.

The issue of socialization raises questions about the inevitability of sex roles in society--what is nature or nurture, i.e., culturally patterned. How do cultures create, maintain, and challenge divisions? What might be the intent and consequence of dance performance in this process?

Dance as a Social Construction of Reality and a Medium of Socialization

Expressions of sex and gender evolve physically and socioculturally during one's lifetime as a way of knowing about oneself and others; these expressions serve in all societies as a basis of dominance/submission and inclusion/exclusion. Culture is a system of ideas about the nature of the world, and how people should behave in it, that members of a community as social beings generally share. Ideas are encoded in public symbols, literary texts, art, drama, religious practice, and *dance*. These forms, through which people represent themselves to themselves and to each other, are accessible to observation and inquiry.

Both the reality and illusion of performance onstage are socially constructed through individuals producing, choreographing, dancing the dance, watching it, and writing about the performance.[3] Active physical beings create images that are read and felt by performers and audience members whose social beings play a role in shaping the consciousness and reflexivity of these images. Everyday precedents of meaning in nonverbal communication movement are so well established in a culture that they are part of the choreographers'/dancers'/spectators' inheritance. Seeking signs and symbols people can relate to, choreographers take the everyday patterns and transform them for their aesthetic purposes. Signifiers of gender differences appear in contrasting posture, precedence, elevation, movement

quality, and touch. The occurrence of sex-associated movement contributes to the information dancers and spectators draw upon in making and viewing performances.

According to Bandura's social learning theory, an individual tends to reproduce attitudes, acts, and emotions exhibited by an observed live or symbolic (e.g., film, television) model.[1] It may be cognitively registered and used or remain in subconscious memory until a relevant situation activates it. Because dance is part of the cultural communication system that may convey information purposefully or serve as an open channel that could be used, modeling of gender-related dominance patterns may occur through dance observation of who does what, when, and how, alone and with or to whom.

Similar to nonhuman ritualized displays and human ritual, theatrical dance frames messages and thereby bestows power on them. Dance may be understood as a medium through which choreographers/directors/ producers manipulate, interpret, legitimate, and reproduce the patterns of gender cooperation and conflict that order their social world. Dance images may reinforce ongoing models, evoke new responses, weaken or strengthen inhibitions over fully elaborated patterns in a person's repertoire, and facilitate performance of previously learned behavior that was encumbered by restraints. Distanced from the everyday, the dance performance permits safe exploration of dangerous challenges to the status quo without the penalties of the everyday life situation.

Moves

The history of ballet begins with Louis XIV of France (1643–1715). At first, men not only managed dance productions, but they even performed women's roles. Later, women danced their own roles; they gained ascendancy on stage by the 18th century. During ballet's Romantic era, the ascendancy of the female by 1840 created a revulsion against male dancers and the discovery of the charm of *danseuse en travesti*. Women danced female and male roles. Their female roles were generally the untouchable, elusive sylph or the earthy, sexual peasant, but not chattels for male enjoyment. There were also erotic, macabre *wilis*, vengeful ghosts of betrayed unmarried women; they dance faithless men to death as in the 19th century ballet "Giselle," still popular today. Men, however, continued backstage as managers, choreographers, and ballet masters. Before long they reasserted themselves as popular performers.[24]

Classical ballet relies on conventionalized understandings of roles of men and women that are deeply embedded in courtly roots of romantic attachments. The *pas de deux* partnering roles are often analogues of patronage by the stronger of the weaker sex portrayed constage as virginal, disembodied sylphide or wanton, and referred to offstage as vulnerable child-woman, kitten, or siren. The woman "looks up" to the man, rises *en pointe* to meet him. Rising on the tip of the toes in some positions renders the dancer insubstantial. Unable to stand alone, the male supports or assists her. When a man carries a woman draped around his shoulders like a scarf, the chauvinistic overtones are unmistakable.

The image of woman onstage often reflects her social reality offstage. Thought to be part of the demimonde until the third decade of the 20th century, a female dance career of public display was an avenue of social mobility for attractive, talented lower class females who preferred the glamour of dance to the factory sweat shop, agricultural labor, or domestic work. With economic success limited for female dancers, they were usually fortunate if they became mistresses of wealthy men.[12]

Contemporary ballet choreographers and directors, almost always male, "mold ballet's young women to the ideal of feminine that equates beauty and grace with excessive thinness," an aesthetic that is

"both punitive and misogynist".[11] Relentless pursuit of the unnatural "ideal" female body arrests puberty, imbalances hormones, contributes to hypothermia and low blood pressure, and often leads to psychosomatic disorders of starvation, vomiting, and use of laxatives. Anorexia and injury are interconnected.[11]

New Moves

Modern Dance.

At the turn of the 19th century, a rebellion, taking the form of what was called "modern dance," began against ballet and all that it represented. Birthed and nurtured by women, modern dance was in part a reaction to male domination in both dance and society at large. Women looked to themselves for inspiration as they chose to be agent rather than object and formed female-dominated dance companies. They developed innovative movement vocabularies, themes, costumes, production patterns, and schools. Dancing without partners, they used weight and strength, created images of women as neither virginal nor siren but whole and complex individuals in roles of stature, and they even caused women's dancing in public theatres to become respectable. Asserting themselves against traditional female destiny, ground-breaking modern dancers such as Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan through onstage images helped to decorset the wasp-waisted women and open up changes in female education, health, and professional opportunity. Braless, corsetless, and barefoot, the modern dancer's free style of dress symbolized physical freedom and a renewed, diversified self-image.

Women heralded new moves, but *men, too,* participated in portraying women in ways that diverged from the traditional. They choreographed in the modern dance idiom images of women in a manner similar to the feminist protrayals.

Modern dance has influenced ballet and its male participants. The genres now often blend. Modern and post-modern choreographers, such as David Gordon and Laura Dean, are even invited to choreograph for classical ballet companies.

Two Temperaments.

Not until Anna Pavlova (c. 1881–1931) "does the idea of combining the two temperaments of virgin and bacchante in one ballerina achieve force." Pavlova was both in "La Bayadere".[5a]

Female Roles of Stature.

Since the 1960s, in contrast with the earlier ethereal (human-like nonhuman), wanton, and virginal traditional images, and the combination of two temperaments in one woman, choreographer Kenneth Macmillan has provided roles of stature for women in a number of his dances. Examples include "The Burrow" (based on the Anne Frank story), "The Invitation" (from Lorca's play "The House of Bernarda Alba"), and "Romeo and Juliet."

A woman's stature may appear through her symbolic dance style. Although George Balanchine, ballet's foremost 20th century choreographer who created more than 150 dances during his 50 years in the United States, comes from the old world of Russian ballet, his neoclassic ballet in the new world sometimes reflects a contrasting ambience. "His women do not always live for love, and their destinies are seldom defined by the men they lean on. Sexual complicity in conflict with individual freedom is a central theme of the Balanchine *pas de deux*, and more often than not it is dramatized from the woman's point of view." The "Diamonds" section of "Jewels" performed by Suzanne Farrell is illustrative: "Off-center balances maintained with light support or no support at all . . . divergently shaped steps unthinkably combined in the same phrase . . . invisible transitions between steps and delicate shifts of weight . . . based on risk."[4a] Merrill Ashley's portrayal of the

modern liberated woman is not an illusion but a fact which she demonstrated "when Robert Weiss became disabled in the middle of 'Ballo della Regina' and she finished the performance without him."[5b]

Equality.

Kinetic visualizations of men and women in relationships without dominance and subservience appear in the era of equal rights for women and a move toward androgyny. For example, Eliot Feld "uses technique to say something about how the people in the ballet are feeling and how they are related to each other. . . . Boy and girl are more nearly equal here . . . men and women partner each other to share something . . . the partners adapt to each other rather than dominate each other."[26] In many of his pieces, modern dance choreographer, Paul Taylor sends "his dancers hurtling through space and into and out of each other's arms with no regard for the conventions of partnering or sexually determined dynamic modulation."[6]

Guiltless Protagonists.

Martha Graham, making modern dances over nearly six decades, bequested future generations a history refocused in dance from a woman's point of view. Almost every one of her dances contains a dagger or a bed, because " 'those objects are so close to life. We sleep in a bed from the time we are born,' she explains, gliding serenely over the sexual issue that her dances grapple with so forcefully, 'and while we don't, perhaps, actually *use* one, there are many times when we do wield a dagger in speech, or surreptitiously in our hearts.' "[29]

Graham's dances speak of the women's struggle for dominance without guilt. Her women in such stories as Oedipus, Jocasta, and Oresteia become human protagonists, where previously they had been "the pawns of gods and men."[27a] For Graham, a traditional feminine stance could be adopted only as a weapon or a sign of weakness. She seldom found a way for men and women to be equals.[27b]

Identity as Victim.

Female choreographers recount the anguish women face as females, being victims of love, bodily violation by men, and the battle of the sexes. Graham's work presents such images. Her 1984 "Rite of Spring" shows the female as sacrificial victim of rape and death. Pina Bausch's "Rite of Spring" has "no promise of rebirth. The only one who dared to love becomes the victim, and falls seemingly dead."[20]

Lesbian Relations.

Women have choreographed dances about female bonding and lesbianism. "Les Biches" (meaning the little does and colloquially, young woman or little coquettes), created in 1924 for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, was Bronislava Nijinska's daring ballet that presents a clear though delicate lesbian relationship in a duet performed by two women. The work reflects the easy amorality of the '20s and augurs the new morality heralded by the '60s.

The Dance Exchange in Washington, D.C. on March 29, 1985, featured Johanna Boyce's choreography, "Ties that Bind," based on life history interviews with lesbian performers. These two women performed an autobiographical contact improvisation (a form of modern/postmodern dance) duet about their relationship, its intimacy, and outsiders' curiosity about them.

Male choreographers have also made affectionately sororal pieces. In "Antique Epigraphs," Jerome Robbins, inspired by the Saphic "songs of Bilitis," eight women

strike figural poses, lift each other, and grasp each other's waists or buttocks.

Gender Role Reversal and Androgyny.

These are yet other forms of new moves in dance imaging that challenge the status quo. During the 1960s a reaction, called post-modern dance, occurred against modern dance psychological themes and narrative stories. Movement in and of itself became a predominant concern. Moreover, choreographers at times turned gender upside down or deemed it irrelevant.

"Intentional Divisions/Implicit Connections," conceived by Bill T. Jones and choreographed in conjunction with Julie West, is a jolting reminder of changing social patterns in the United States. Jones, a large, muscular black man who exudes strength, danced with West, a petite white woman. Jones throws West over his shoulder, not an unusual act onstage. However, moments later, in a reversal noteworthy for the dramatic contrast in the two dancers's looks, the diminutive woman flips this man who is at least twice her size and weight!

Gender role reversal in movement also appears in contemporary ballet. The Houston Ballet performance of Jiri Kylian's "Symphony in D" is illustrative. In an about face from the classical ballet in which women "fly" through the air into the arms of men who catch them, Kylian has women break the flight of an airborne man. Three extended their arms to catch the prone body of a man as he terminated his leap. Two women lifted a man. Later a man joined a woman's dance and displaced her in the women's group of partners lined up in a row.

Originated by black males, tap dance used to be for men only. Some white men became tappers. Nowadays, quite a few young white women are displaying techniques learned from the dancers of former generations. Both gender and racial paterns have been reversed.

Asexual Female Images.

Historically perceived as sex objects, women's denial or downplaying of their sexuality conveys a strong statement of women's choice and autonomy. For example, Yvonne Rainer's "Trio A" is the "doing" of a thing rather than the "performing" of it "toward a removal of seductive involvement with an audience. The performers . . . , for instance, never confront the audience; the gaze is constantly averted as the head is in motion or deflected from the body if the body happens to be frontally oriented."[19]

Countermoves

The women's preeminence onstage in ballet and in the creation of new dance forms and thematic images spawned a backlash. Men made efforts to reassert their dominance as well as derogate women with images as calculating bitch, clinging vine, and male castrator. Another countermove was the male travesty company that spoofed the feminine in ballet.

Athleticism.

One of the early modern dance pioneers, Ruth St. Denis, married Ted Shawn who studied with her and became her husband, co-choreographer, and co-founder of the Denishawn School. Later Shawn founded his own all-male company. Self-styled "Papa" of American modern dance, Shawn said male dancers were necessary: "Imagine a symphony played only by piccolos and violins." Reflecting a prevalent male chauvinism and "put down" of women as well as a turbulent personal relationship with St. Denis, he wanted to restore male dancing to the dignity he believed it possessed in Greece. He presented the male dancer as "jock"

and proselytized dance through championing athletics (his dances include fencing, dribbling a ball and shooting baskets) and "virile" dancing.[28]

Retaking the Spotlight.

The phenomenon of Rudolf Nureyev's defection from the Soviet Union and his six digit income galvanized a reaction against 19th century ballets which were fixated on the ballerina at the expense of the male dancer. He modified these ballets. Nureyev's career may be understood in part as "an attempt to gain and hold center stage without a repertory that places him there. So he has become the usurper, encroaching on the ballerina's territory with extensions of the Prince's role or taking over 'roles that were more fantastic.' "[5c]

In his staging of "Romeo and Juliet" for the San Francisco Ballet, Michael Smuin has more significant roles for male dancers and more boy-boy scenes than is customary.[4b] Ben Stevenson's "L" for the Houston Ballet is an all-male percussion jazz piece in which men hold each other's arms, and they flip each other as they might flip women.

The situation of males taking over female roles has gone as far as male dancer Satoru Shimakazi, in 1982, restaging and performing in pioneer Isadora Duncan's two Scriabin works, her 1929 "Mother" and 1922 "Revolutionary."[6] Men also retake the spotlight through gay themes and travesty.

Gay Themes.

Ballets with homosexual themes and love duets began to emerge following the Nijinsky forerunners in the 1920s, but with great tact and usually disguised as something else.[2,21,17,23] Gay themes tend to decrease images of women in dance or present them negatively.

As in theatre and cinema, the theme of the unhappy homosexual was an early one in dance. "Monument for a Dead Boy," choreographed by Rudi Van Dantzig, was one of the first ballets to deal with the making, life, and death of a homosexual.[17] During the seventies there were ballets such as "The Goldberg Variations," "Weewis," "Mutations," and "Triad" that showed the joy and tenderness of different ways of love.

Parodies and Passing Drag.

Travesty appears in the several all-male dance companies with the word Trockadero in their titles. The men dance as females as well as males. Most critics recognize Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo as entertaining burlesque that lovingly and excellently parodies the act of performance, specific ballets, and particular styles through informed in-jokes. The Trocks distinguish stylistic differences among ballets and know the ballets they make fun of so perfectly that they are able to portray roles and roles within roles. Raymond argues, however, that "all transsexuals rape women's bodies by reducing the real female form to an artifact, appropriating this body for themselves."[25]

Derogation of Women.

Erik Bruhn, a great *danseur noble*, refused to dance "Swan Lake" until he had choreographed a "corrective" version in which the evil magician Von Rothbart is supplanted by evil females. In Bruhn's version, the mother is portrayed as bullying, and the villain has become a woman called the Black Queen, "alter ego of Siegfried's domineering mother."[26c]

Anti-woman messages astonish in Jerome Robbins's "The Cage," premiered in 1951 by the New York City Ballet. The story of female spiders who kill their lovers after using them for impregnation is "angry . . . decadent in its concern with misogyny and its contempt for procreation."[22] The piece was theatrically alive in the 1980s.

William Forsythe's "Love Songs," premiered in the United States in 1983 by the

Robert Joffrey Ballet, presents an ugly view of man-woman relationships suffused with women deserving of violence against them.

Unisexuality and Role Reversal.

Unisexuality and role reversal in dance may be viewed as eliminating the specific positive character of sex and gender. Alwin Nikolais, a pioneer in eschewing male and female polarized stereotypes, responsed to criticism of being dehumanizing: "I work with the human figure as affected by an environment I set up for it to move in . . . I've always abhorred the idea of male and female as opposed, as if we were all walking around in heat. Modern society forces you to be a sexual object rather than a person."[8]

Conclusion

Danced images evolve from and resonate with the contextual past, present, and future. The images both reaffirm what is in society and suggest what might be. The stage of "pretend" and "play" is apart from the real world, and, therefore, performance is a safe arena to explore the dangerous without the penalties of the real world. Socially constructed kinetic discourse conveyed male dominance in the ballet tradition beginning with Louis XIV. Modern dance, birthed by women in rebellion against the status quo of ballet and the society at large, gave females new gender images of independence, stature, leadership, and even eliminated gender with androgyny and role reversals. Losing out to the ballerina in the spotlight during the 19th and early 20th century, and to the modern dance matriarchs in the first half of the 20th century, men reasserted themselves onstage. Their choreography featured men and even men alone; moreover, they appropriated movements formerly categorized as female and performed both sexes' roles, and derogated women.

Onstage we see a host of sexual and gender motifs in dance. Theme and variations range from the sublime to the ridiculous. Dance conveys the Christian image of the superiority of the virgin and the danger of the siren. Not only are there displays of male chauvinism, but at the same time images embody feminist thought. We see the battle of the sexes played out. Dance is sometimes like myth, an idealized disguise to hide unorthodox practice or an ideal which is achieved by none. Weaving prevailing attitudes toward gender before our eyes, dance also challenges us with alternative life styles: unisexuality, homosexuality, asexuality.

The images focus on a compelling issue of human life in our time: the continuing reconstitution of gender roles and meanings. This subject bears on the perpetual human struggle with questions of self-identity and interpersonal relationships.[16] In this era of challenges to dominance hierarchies and the onset of genetic engineering, an attempt to understand gender relationships is of special significance. My intention has been to enrich the discourse on male/female, body images, and social change by moving toward spotlighting and clarifying how gender is socially and culturally constructed and transformed in a significant medium of human transaction--the nonverbal communication medium of dance, now accessible nationwide through television.

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Word, Sign And Object[1]

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In any consideration of "nonverbal" communication, it inevitably becomes necessary to specify where the verbal ends and the nonverbal begins. Since I spend much of my time in an environment where unspoken communication is accepted as language, I find this specification particularly hard to make. I think that this distinction becomes particularly difficult as we attempt to classify different kinds of events within the context of a sign language conversation, and I think that at

[1]Paper presented in the special interest session on "Nonverbal Communication" at the 1986 Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics

some point it becomes necessary to conclude that the distinction may not be that important after all. Deuchar[6] has recently written on the question:

> —the "verbal" or linguistic has been sought almost entirely in the speech channel. This association of language with one channel exclusively has had an effect on sign language research, where attention was at first focused almost entirely on the activity of the hands (i.e., the manual channel), which was assumed to be the locus of verbal communication in signing.
>
> —evidence that nonmanual as well as manual behavior can function at various levels of the language suggests that we should be wary of equating one particular channel of language expression with one particular linguistic function. Such insight may lead us to dispense with the distinction between verbal and nonverbal communication in spoken as well as sign language research. We would then be free in doing research on spoken English, for example, to consider an utterance such as "Yes." and a head nod as alternative ways of fulfilling the same function in the grammar; while pointing would be seen as an alternative [or needed accompaniment] to a demonstrative "this" or "that." Thus the common procedure of selecting a structure and trying to determine its function would be replaced by selecting linguistic functions and establishing how they may be performed in various channels.

I will be less concerned here with distinguishing the verbal from the nonverbal and more concerned with examining the constraints, both neurolinguistic and semiotic, imposed by the selection of auditory as opposed to visual communication media. I intend to proceed by considering first some implications of the perceptual systems that underlie our communication systems and then by relating these to similarities and differences between visual-gestural and auditory-vocal communication. I will cast much of this in terms of problems in translation.

Inspiration for this paper comes principally from two sources: a recent article by Roger Shattuck[21] entitled "Words and Images: Thinking and Translation" and the work of W. V. O. Quine (1953) on translational indeterminacy. My paper draws its title from Quine's *Word and Object*.[16] I will be particularly concerned here with the relationship among objects in the world and the words and signs that represent them, paying particular attention to the role of the neurolinguistic potential of the visual and auditory perceptual systems and the governance of these systems by higher brain functions. Some definition of terms is needed here. I intend for the terms "word", "sign" and "object" to be understood essentially in their ordinary language senses. "Word" should be understood to mean the ordinary utterances of spoken languages, "sign" includes the gestured utterances of signed languages, especially ASL, and "object" includes primarily material or physical objects but also mental contructs, activities, etc.

Shattuck begins his article with the folowing quotation from a letter by Coleridge:

> Is *thinking* impossible without arbitrary signs? And how far is the word "arbitrary" a misnomer? Are not words, etc., parts and germinations of the plant? And what is the law of their growth? In something of this sort I would endeavor to destroy the old antithesis of words and things; elevating, as it were, words into things and living things too.

Shattuck uses this rumination on the Platonic conundrum as a jumping off point into a consideration of the visual basis of language. I think it is particularly useful for those of us who are interested in "nonverbal" or gestural forms of communication to remember that, from an adaptive and neurological point of view, vision is the primary sense among the primates. My colleague William Stokoe[23] makes a similar point with respect to the primacy

of vision in the development of the capacity for logical processing that underlies the emergence of grammar. Our language is shot through with expressions that point to this visual primacy: when we need to discover the facts about a crime we seek an eyewitness, not an earwitness. If we were dogs we would probably sniff out a nosewitness, but since we are primates and not carnivores we *look* for someone who *saw* it done. A primary problem, then, for human language in an acoustic medium is to render the objects of ordinary visual experience into auditory symbols. Shatuck suggests that this transformation process is properly viewed as an act of translation—in this case, translation of the contents of the mind into the words of a spoken language.

This implication of translation in the cognitive processes underlying language brings me nicely to my second source of inspiration: namely, Quine's treatment of the question whether it is ever possible to be certain that one language can be translated into another. Although this question has generated a great deal of argument and controversy,[5,29] we still appear to lack a satisfactory answer.[17] Quine poses the question as one of ontology and epistemology, not linguistics, and in this regard he is making a point similar to that made by Shattuck. Quine points out that the meanings of words are not the same as the objects they refer to, and we can extend this point to an explicitly Whorfian position with regard to the pervasive influence of culture and language on the way we interpret our perceptions.

These observations have important implications for how we should think about the nonverbal-verbal continuum. Study of signed languages will be particularly useful in helping us to understand how the visual becomes verbal. Of course, the main thing about signed languages is that they are used by deaf people and so are entirely visual, avoiding, to some extent, Shattuck's translation problem. I want to look at signed languages from two separate points of view: the nature of sign formation and development and the neurolinguistic processes underlying sign language use by congenitally deaf signers. The thing about signs that most immediately strikes the hearing novice is that they frequently appear "natural"—that is related in a fairly direct, pictorial sort of way to the objects they refer to. The semiotic term for this, of course, is iconism. Fundamental iconism in signs has, historically, been taken as indicative of primitiveness or "nonverbalness," and it was the seminal discovery of Stokoe[22] that this iconism in American Sign Language masked a more basic structure that, indeed, had a phonological type of organization. However, despite the application of linguistic descriptive devices to sign languages, the "feel" of an iconic quality in signing remains, to a much greater extent than it would for any spoken language. And it is clear that the iconic and indexic qualities of signs have more to do with the imaging capacity of the human visual system than with primitiveness.

The relationship of sign and object appears then, in many cases, to be closer than the relationship of word and object, though the iconic imagery in signs may be obscure or may inhere in "figures of sign". If you believe, as many ASL linguists do, that despite this heavy employment of iconic or nonarbitrary devices, signed languages nevertheless possess the requisite characteristics of natural languages,[24] then it is necessary to ask where "verbalness" begins and where "pure" gesture ends, if in fact such a strict dividing line can be located. An interesting example of the blurring of this line can be found through examination of the concept of duality of patterning as it is applied to signed languages. It has been argued that the process by which signed linguistic items become arbitrarily encoded out of an iconic stock can be traced in the historic development of signed languages, that through this process pictorial gestural items are compressed into a system that consists of a small number of conventionalized and largely arbitrary handshapes and body and

facial movements.[2] It is clear that through this process the conduit that allows for the creative flow of new signs from pantomime and gesture is not broken. Although we can certainly argue that a parallel process exists for spoken languages, we would be hard pressed to show that it is as invasive or as integral to spoken languages as it appears to be for signed languages. In this respect signed languages have been compared to writing systems such as the Chinese logographic system which involve the decoding of complex visual patterns.[14] It is interesting to note that similar visual processing strategies may be employed in the decoding of these two types of visual linguistic systems. This suggests that there may be continuity between non-verbal gesture on the one hand and spoken language on the other through visual linguistic forms such as signed languages and logographic written languages.

The interesting point about neurolinguistic studies of congenitally deaf signers and readers of logogographic writing systems is that they force us to pay attention to the perceptual processes that underlie the communication events. The initial studies of these systems focussed on sign and character recognition and arrived at the not terribly surprising result that recognition of these visual communication devices involves relatively heavy participation of the right cerebral hemisphere.[13,8,19] This is distinct from the way in which recognition of spoken words is usually accomplished by hearing people—namely through left hemisphere processing. Remember that, par excellence, the right hemisphere is specialized for recognition of complex visual patterns. Further study of both signing and logographic writing has revealed, however, that basic grammatical processes in these systems are controlled by left hemisphere activities very similar to those involved in the processing of spoken languages.[10,11,12] It has been suggested in this regard, that is is necessary to be very careful about specifying the level of processing that is involved.[12] At the level of the basic percept, the gross action of the part of the brain most adapted to the cognitive treatment of input in that perceptual system comes into play, but once material is recognized as having a linguistic function it is treated by centers in the brain that control specific linguistic, that is, grammatical functions.

These considerations have important implications for how we should think about language in general and translation in particular, and, in the present instance, translations of visual codes into auditory codes. The neurological processes underlying these acts of translation remain highly problematic, but we have several conceptual schemes to choose from. The recent death of the neurologist Norman Geschwind has refocussed interest on the question of whether higher brain functions, and language in particular, should be thought of as localized or holistic in the brain.[18] Geschwind was a modern pioneer of the localization hypothesis and did much to advance and disseminate knowledge relating to the nature of cerebral lateralization. Geschwind, however, was not concerned only with localization of function per se, but also with the interconnectedness of the various functional centers. This view of interconnectedness suggests the beginnings of a resolution of the localization-holistic polarization in neurolinguistic theory. Extreme localization theories are most conducive to linguistic theories that emphasize the separateness of language from other cognitive functions. As I suggested earlier, it is possible to take a more complex look at what is going on in language use. And here I think we will find greater use for neurolinguistic theories that stress the interconnectedness of functional areas throughout the whole brain. I will refer here particularly to work of Howard Gardner and his associates. My purpose is this. . . if we believe that two types of communication events are similar, our belief is reinforced by finding similar representation in brain function, even if it is only at a gross level.

I am arguing here that theories concerning the neural substrates of language and communication have been heavily influenced by traditional theories of what is linguistic and what is not, and that this has reinforced a fairly narrow view of linguistic abilities as highly localized to a relatively small area of the left cerebral cortex. Beginning with the observations of Broca and others in the 19th century, language in fact, has provided the model for modern theories of cerebral localization. According to the general notion of cerebral localization various aspects of behavior, such as language, can be compartmentalized and controlled by circumscribed areas in the cerebral cortex. A considerable body of data also suggests however, that important aspects of language ability are not so localized but involve the whole, intact brain, that is, that involve the right cerebral hemisphere as well. I will now attempt to describe these abilities at greater length.

I have already suggested that sign language use appears to involve large areas of the brain, the right side as well as the left. Recent literature concerning brain laterality for *spoken* language use increasingly supports the hypothesis that the right hemisphere is involved in associative or "metaphoric" aspects of language use. Terms that have been applied recently to right hemisphere participation in language use include the following: "semantic-lexical comprehension",[7] "apprehension of complex linguistic materials",[26] "connotative and associative rather than precise and denotative".[9] Recent studies by Gardner and his associates have indicated other aspects of language in which the right hemisphere is crucially involved. These include metaphor[27] and comprehension of verbal humor.[4] In all of these studies it should be noted that right hemisphere function is necesssary but probably not sufficient. A final area crucial to language use, in which the right hemisphere is implicated is that of cognitive treatment of affect.[20] What links together all of these right hemisphere contributions to language use is the notion of context[25]—linguistic context in the case of "connotation", metaphor and verbal humor; social context also in the case of verbal humor and in the case of those verbal processes which involve affect. I maintain that interpretation of contextual cues is intimately related to visual perception, and recall that the one thing we do know about the right hemisphere with some certainty is that it is implicated in the processing of visual input.

I infer from these considerations that any theory of communication must take account of these aspects and not simply account for language in its purely referential or grammatical aspects. Moreover, theories purporting to explain brain lateralization for language must account not for language per se as lateralized to the left hemisphere, but for the lateralization of various linguistic processes to the two hemispheres separately and the joint action of the two hemispheres in the reception and production of language. This latter point has the salutary characteristic of reminding us that human language is not just the unitary, sequential, logically organized communication system of the grammarian. Rather, it has a variety of uses and functions, and metaphor and related devices appear to be central to its operation. I maintain here and elsewhere[1] that one of the primary functions of metaphor (but not the only) is to "visualize" auditory language by taking advantage of the visual imaging capabilities of the right cerebral hemisphere.

I pointed out earlier that the neurolinguistic studies of signed languages suggest complex involvement of many parts of the brain in the processing of communicated information, and I think that this similar treatment of spoken language brings me full circle. Human communication devices, and I will make no attempt to separate the verbal from the nonverbal, are complex from perceptual and cognitive points of view and deserve to be viewed in all of their complexity.

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From Literature to Music and Film: The Myth of Orpheus and Eurydice

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One of the most successful ways to integrate the media while teaching culture is to develop an interdisciplinary course in literature, music and film. I had the opportunity to do so in another institution where the focus was to provide freshmen with an experience different from the traditional subject-oriented courses usually chosen in one's first year. The curriculum was taking on an international studies approach which meant a reemphasis on foreign languages in cross-cultural contexts. Writing was also an important component of the program. This meant careful coordination so that students had similar kinds of writing experiences, i.e. to summarize, to compare and contrast, to analyze a theme, to do a documented research paper, and even to make an oral presentation. In my course, the media, in part, dictated the approach, a bit of the tail wagging the dog. Here the interest lay in how each author, composer, or director refashioned the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice according to the medium in which he worked.

Trained in literature, experienced in and an avid enthusiast of opera and eager to learn something more about film, I designed the course from the point of view of continuities and contrasts. The theme of love, of course, was the inspiration for the choice of this particular myth. But I also tried to focus on how male/female relationships were viewed by those dealing with the myth. The cultural references understandably, are vast. Beginning with the classical mythographers of Virgil and Ovid and the philosophy of Orphism which rivaled Christianity in its day, we move to the *mise à la pratique* of the principles of the Florentine Camerata of the late sixteenth century in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (focusing here principally on the male lover). Then, we breach the baroque period to the point at which Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* reestablished similar principles. Offenbach's parody, *Orphée aux enfers* of 1858, shows how his version of the myth reflects the spirit of Paris during the Second Empire. Film, the great artistic medium of the twentieth century, offers yet another perspective on the myth heretofore impossible. Cocteau's version of *Orphée*, coming in the wake of WWI takes on a special meaning in the context of a rising Fascism and Nazism. And discov-

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eries by archeologists of the possibility of a black Orpheus give rise to Marcel Camus' magnificent film of the same name and set in the third world context of Rio de Janeiro during Mardi Gras time.

As one can well imagine, the above disciplines lead one into deep waters not so easily trodden in one semester by one instructor. Virgil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, of course, force one to come to grips with a pagan world which used myth to explain as an early science natural phenomena, or customs, or religion or used just for plain entertainment. Whether you agree with a Robert Graves, for example, who uses myth to explain a preliterate society with a matriarchal head (or earth mother), one must deal with this possibility.[6] As for Orphism, a reference to and/or brief discussion of how this religious movement challenged early Christianity is not inappropriate to help bridge the gap between pagan and Christian society.[7] If Orpheus could descend into hell and return, then so too could Christ! Fortunately for me, I had a competent colleague, a classicist, who was able to enlighten my students on this matter.

The leap to 1607 A.D. is obviously an immense one, not only in time but in sensibility and in cultural context. The question, "What is opera?", must be addressed without belaboring the point. Monteverdi's *Orfeo* rewrites the myth in light of the principles of the Florentine Camerata of the late sixteenth century. His opera is a great example of the principles codified by the Camerata. In their war against counterpoint, and their effort to form a perfect union of words and melody with the *former* surprisingly dominating the latter, the Camerata established three corollaries, i.e. 1) the text must be clearly understood, 2) the words must be sung with correct and natural declamation, and 3) the melody must not depict mere graphic details in the text but must interpret the feeling of the whole passage. These esthetic principles formed the necessary foundation for true dramatic music and thus made possible the creation of opera.[2] Behind all of this, of course, was the debate of what came first, the words or the music. At the same time, an aria such as Orfeo's "Possente spirto" begins to sow the seeds of decadence for the excess of ornamental vocal composition of the baroque period to follow. To give you a sense of how the voice range suits the character, in the first case, how Orpheus' florid singing succeeds in persuading Charon to let him enter his boat, in the second case, the basso profondo of Charon, the boatsman in Hades who eventually agrees to take Orpheus across the river, one must listen to the passage from Act III.

To help once again in adding a dimension to this work I was unable to give myself, I was able to call on a colleague in music who was a specialist of this period and had done an enormous amount of research on this particular opera.

Needless to say, the notion that a work such as Monteverdi's *Orfeo* could be the *summa* of the principles of the Florentine Camerata while at the same time the germ of decadent vocal composition with vocal pyrotechnics as its goal was a challenge to make students comprehend. An even greater challenge was to have them understand how Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* of some 150 years later brings the cycle full round to subordinate the music once again to the text and remove all unnecessary ornament. Between 1607 and 1762, baroque music complemented a period rich in literature, art, philosophy and science. Algarotti's *Treatise on Opera*, a manifesto of operatic reform in 1755, and Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art* in 1764, focussing on Greek art forms and what they believed to be noble simplicity and calm greatness, combined in the notion of the "part subordinate to the whole."[3] Calzabigi, the librettist for Gluck's *Orfeo* cast the opera into three statuesque tableaux.[3] Musically growing out of Neopolitan *opera seria*, the French *tragédie lyrique*, the original Italian version of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* in Vienna of 1762 featured a castrato in the male role.[3]

By now the recitative/aria structure was well-established. Cleverly incorporating the best of all the above, Gluck's opera enjoyed great success in Italian in Vienna and in French in Paris two years later. Published in Paris in 1784, this work was the first Italian opera of the 18th century not by Handel to be accorded the dignity of print. The work succeeded too in its "yearning for free, simple, unaffected expression of human feelings."[2]

Coming this far in the course, how does one succeed in having students absorb the material. This is where the writing component of the course comes into play. A preliminary assignment asks students to use established reference works to seek above and beyond the syllabus another classical treatment of Orpheus and Eurydice, another opera based on the myth, and at least one modern treatment in literature. This assignment teaches students how to begin to use the library and helps to make them aware of how the myth succeeds in appealing time and time again. After the mythological treatments of the myth have been covered, a written assignment asks students to summarize the story. They are to follow an order in the assignment. As a matter of fact, all assignments in the course are given to the students in written form so there is no misunderstanding of what is expected of them. Once the Monteverdi and Gluck operas have been studied, another written assignment has students compare and contrast the two versions of the myth using an A + B or A/B method. Let me add that a handbook is used with the course, Elizabeth McMahan's *A Crash Course in Composition*, to help answer questions students may have about writing.[4] As you can see, the assignments are designed to train the students in a number of different writing techniques. Before the end of the course, they are asked to do several things; 1) to plan a two week period of the course itself by choosing and justifying two works to study, 2) to research another original version of the myth and to prepare an oral presentation of it using text, recording, or tape, and 3) eventually to write their own myth while taking into consideration the nature of myth and the people about whom myth is written.

I have postponed until now my discussion of the use of film in the course, simply because I wanted to proceed chronologically. And while Cocteau's *Orphée* provides a fascinating interpretation of the myth with Orpheus as a poet and hell being through the other side of the mirror, the real cinematic achievement, in my opinion, is Marcel Camus' *Black Orpheus (Orfeu Negro)* of 1960. Students were taught to read film in a number of ways. First, a guest lecturer gave an excellent overview of the subject. Second, a fine chapter called "Writing About Film" in Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing About Literature* was immensely useful for it reviewed some of the elements of the above lecture and offered sample essays one of which was Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, a Japanese *Macbeth*.[1] Finally, my own reading in film, scant though it was, helped to articulate some of the techniques discussed all along. In Portuguese, *Black Orpheus* is set in contemporary Rio during Mardi Gras time. Orpheus, a trolley car driver, is looking forward to Carnival with his sweetheart Eurydice. She, however, is stalked by a masked figure representing death. This Orpheus possesses all the qualities of the mythical figure. He is a guitar playing, sweet singing, pacifier of animals some of which share his own house. A folk hero of young boys who believes he can cause the sun to rise with his singing, this Orpheus also sings of "returning life." The signs of destiny (fate) are ever present: the caged bedroom of the live birds, the scarf kept by Orpheus and then torn in two during the Carnival, the loss of the amulet Eurydice wears around her neck, and Death stalking Eurydice throughout. When Eurydice dies, she is killed accidentally (and ironically) by Orpheus himself when he turns on the electricity in the trolley barn, sending a charge through the high wire to which

Eurydice is clinging. Orpheus has lost Eurydice. He goes off searching for her and his search takes him to a municipal building, a kind of witch's sabbath or voodoo house where Orpheus's lack of faith (doubts) cause him to lose Eurydice once again. This segment of the film gives one the sense of how a modern cultural context is used to help communicate an ageless myth.

Has the Orpheus myth now run its course? To quote Jean-Paul Sartre in 'Orphée noir,' his preface to Senghor[5]: "I shall name this poetry "orphic" because the untiring descent of the Negro into himself causes me to think of Orpheus going to reclaim Eurydice from Pluto." What about modern day black American Orpheuses such as James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Stevie Wonder, Simon Estes, and Vinson Cole? And in this day of changing male/female relationships and the greater responsibilities being assumed by women, perhaps we are on the verge of a Eurydice snatching the gift of music and poetry, or poetry and music, as you will, from Orpheus? Have we arrived at the age of the female Orpheus the likes of which we can see in figures like Gwendolyn Brooks, Alice Walker, Leontyne Price, and Jessye Norman?

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Diplomacy and Communication across Cultures: Degrees of Cultural Barriers

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The wall inscriptions in the necropolis of the Princes of Elephantine are one of the earliest recorded references to the use of interpreters in trade relations and for expeditions beyond Ancient Egypt's borders. The Princes of Elephantine were foreign affairs experts who were entrusted with highly important and often difficult political, economic and occasionally military missions.[5] The ability to interpret is mentioned as one of many other attributes, because it was considered secondary to the main function, that of administrator, trader, diplomat or warrior. The Princes of Elephantine were from a border area, probably half Nubian themselves.

This is a situation we find repeated throughout history, whenever interpreting had to be done between what was considered the "civilized world" and the "Barbarians", e.g. people outside the "superpowers" of their time. Often the interpreters were of mixed parentage or members of a minority.

A different approach to communication was taken by expansionist empires. Their languages became a lingua franca, sometimes for centuries, e.g. Latin in the Roman Empire and long after it had broken up, Spanish after the Conquista, French in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, English as the British Empire grew. However, with the spread of these languages, an interaction with other languages set in and led to new languages or dialects (vulgar Latin and the Romance languages from Latin, Pidgin from English, Creole from French).

Apart from the disadvantages of language change, whenever there was a very marked disparity between two strong cultures the solution of the lingua franca would be out of the question. European-Turkish relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are a case in point. The Sublime Porte saw Western Europe as an area to be converted and conquered and refused to adopt a common, Western language. Therefore interpreters had to be found and the first efforts to train them were made. Several European monarchs instituted schools to teach Turkish and other languages of the Middle East; France had one in Constantinople, one in Smyrna

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and then one in Paris (at the Jesuit College which later became Lycee Louis-le-Grand); the famous Ecole des Langues Orientales in Paris is the final result of these efforts.[4] In the case of the Habsburg Empire, training of interpreters for the extensive dealings with Turkey led to the establishment of the Diplomatische Akademie which is still in existence today.

It was only with the advent of nationalism and the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century that the use of several languages at international gatherings became more frequent. Gradually, the diplomats who had been raised by English nannies and French governesses would be out of their depth in spite of the early language training which was part of an elite education: international negotiation would become more technical and the number of working languages grew. Today, six languages are used at the high-level meetings of the United Nations, nine at the European Communities, and no diplomat could be expected to work without any interpretation whatsoever.

Various inter-allied negotiations during World War I, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, and the preparatory conferences for the League of Nations were the first major occasions at which both French and English were used. Wilson's interpreter was Colonel Bonsall, who had been a newspaper correspondent.[1] After the outbreak of hostilities he joined the US Army and was assigned to headquarters in Paris. There Colonel House, who was a man of one language himself, asked for Bonsall to act as interpreter for President Wilson and House himself during all the meetings.

At this point we should make some distinctions depending on the position in which the users of interpretation services find themselves. The case of the Paris Peace Talks appears as the normal one: the user has recourse to translation because he does not understand the other delegations' language at all and depends entirely on the interpreter. More frequently, however, users have some, albeit imperfect understanding of the other working languages. At a certain level of negotiations between the representatives of sovereign states, mainly for reasons of prestige or for media coverage, interpretation may be requested even if most of the participants are quite conversant with the languages spoken by their counterparts.

In the case of consecutive interpretation between two languages, a considerable degree of control is exercised over the performance of the interpreter because some participants always understand both. In large, multinational bodies, a limited number of working languages invariably means that many participants have to express themselves in a language other than their own, a situation which in itself leads to problems of communication across cultures. The situation of total dependence on the interpreters occurs only when languages like Turkish, Thai, Japanese, or Arabic must be used, which are hardly ever taught in secondary schools in Europe or in the United States.

In large intergovernmental bodies, the user will be protected by a hierarchy within language services. In the case of written translations, revisers and terminologists are responsible for consistency and the implementation of style rules. The chief translator will see to a stringent selection of candidates to translators' posts. It is taken for granted that almost every translation that is commissioned, or assigned, will be used, not only for information, but also as the basis of discussion. And the people who will either write the text to begin with, or who will be discussing it, may not necessarily be expressing themselves in their own language. They may find themselves having to use one of the official languages of the organization. In most cases, it is English. English texts may be produced by people who are not English speakers themselves and the whole text may be thrown off. When the source text is written in a language other than English, it must be put into a neutral, easily-understandable English, even for people whose English is not necessarily

that strong. Jean Datta calls this compromise "a tightrope walking act".[3] A chief interpreter and, in larger organizations, an assistant chief interpreter per language used, is responsible for recruitment and testing.

The role of the interpreter is also influenced by the following: international meetings have their specific purposes, and each delegation or participant may pursue specific ends, have a hidden agenda, so to speak. As professional interpreting developed, the users of these services became increasingly aware of the need to have well informed interpreters, well educated ones, so steeped in the speaker's culture that they are able to understand every nuance of the principals' reasoning. The case of Paul Schmidt[7] when working for the delegation of the Weimar Republic at Locarno and Geneva is a good example. He describes his particular tightrope-walking act, which would go well when he had been well briefed, and which led to complaints whenever the interpreter was treated as a "language machine". The importance of an interpreter's understanding of subject matter is discussed in great detail by Danica Selekovitch,[8] as well as the difference between general understanding and a specialist's understanding.

Schmidt also mentions the dilemma of nationality or origin for diplomatic interpreters: While the German Foreign office wished to have interpreters working into their mother tongue only, a practice common in the League of Nations as a matter of course, it was decided that "delicate negotiations could not be handled by a foreigner" and Schmidt translated into French for the German delegation at the meetings of the League of Nations, where the French version was the only official one for the record. The interpreter's nationality and clearance continue to be a major concern for most government language services today.

The professional organizations, which began to be formed as interpreting grew, use language classification systems to clarify their members' qualifications. The American Association of Language Specialists (TAALS) uses the following definitions for interpreters:

> A: Principal active language(s) into which they interpret and which they speak as a native.
> B: Other active language(s) into which they interpret.
> B*: Other active language(s) into which they interpret consecutively only.
> C: Languages from which they interpret regardless of difficulties of terminology or idiom.

The user has to make a choice between employing nationals only, possibly only native-born citizens of the country, who work into their B or B* language, or calling on foreigners or expatriates who had their high school and college education abroad. The "nationals only" rule is most strictly applied by the Soviet Union, which maintains a large Institute for the training of language specialists. Even for commercial translation, many countries' immigration rules are so strict that most of the work into foreign languages is performed by non-native speakers into their B language.[6] The layperson must bear in mind that "fluency" or "near-native fluency", the terms most frequently used to describe a person's language capability, are extremely vague terms—hence the need for a clearer definition by language ratings. Academically, the distinction between CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) and BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) as defined by the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education[2] is very useful in describing to students the levels to be attained by language study, but does not sufficiently describe the resources necessary to work into a language simultaneously.

Language qualifications are only the most obvious aspect of interpreting performance. Many attempts have been made to quantify the accuracy achieved by the interpreter, for "objective" tests in particular and for court interpreting. Ever since machine translation became a re-

search topic, the percentage of accuracy began to be talked about very much. Should it be 70 percent, or more, or less? Would an accuracy of 98 to 99 percent look fine to you? It depends on what the 1 or 2 percent error was.

Take the following case, which was reported by a colleague, a retired conference interpreter in Vienna who was involved with the matter as an investigator after the fact. In World War II, during the North Africa campaign, the Afrika Korps called in a native informant to ask about places in the desert where water could be found. This was in Libya, which had been colonized by the Italians and the native informant used Italian as his vehicular language. An interpreter, also local, had to go from Italian to German and from German to Italian to get the questions and answers across. On the basis of the information obtained, a patrol was sent out into the desert. Off the fifteen men went, full of confidence that there was water here, water there. They never came back. This is when our colleague was called in from Italy to investigate the matter. He had the whole exchange of questions and answers re-enacted, and the informant's answers ran something like this: (pointing to the map) "C'è aqua qui", "C'è salsamare qui.", "C'è acqua in questo posto qui" and so on. The interpreter rendered all these statements as "There is water here". Probably he did not know the word salsamare (brackish water), but for the patrol of fifteen Germans out in the desert, that difference between drinking water and brackish water was a matter of life and death. Now, if one tried to calculate a percentage of error, it would be something like 1.4 to 0.7 percent: in a discussion in which actual discourse took five or ten minutes at an average rate of about 140 words a minute, the total word count would be from 1400 to 700 words and salsamare may have come up ten times. Actually only one word, one unit of translation was wrong. But this very low percentage of error cost fifteen men their lives.

The striking feature of this example, of course, is insufficient knowledge of the source language on the part of the interpreter. But why did the native informant bring up the matter of brackish water at all? If the original question was framed correctly, as it was in the minds of the questioners, there appears to have been no reason for mentioning brackish water. Two possible explanations come to mind: Either fear, the native informant being very much aware that an invading army could shoot him out of hand and wanting to tell all he knew as proof of his cooperation, or an insufficient grasp of the situation (not a caravan, but fifteen men about to go out into the desert needing drinking water, but not vegetation for animals).

We hope to have shown that language is the first, but by no means the only factor coming to play in communication across cultures. The power relationships between the cultures involved and international etiquette, the explicitness of what is said by the principals, ongoing interpreter briefing and training are equally important. All participants in the communication process must contribute to making it work.

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Francophonie in Africa: Some Obstacles

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Introduction

The colonial policy which had imposed French as the sole medium of administration and instruction in Africa has been a failure.[19] This state of affairs has prompted the revival of French and a movement called Francophonie has been created to organize all efforts for its maintenance and diffusion. This paper examines some socio-political and linguistic facts, together with language attitudes data, which are or will prove to be major stumbling blocks in the success of Francophonie. The paper essentially argues that French is not the language of the masses and, to that extent, Francophonie is a vain enterprise.

I. The Concept, Reality and Objective of Francophonie

The Concept of Francophonie

The idea of a Francophone community was first mentioned in March 1962 by Léopold Sédar Senghor, former president of Sénégal and now a member of the French Academy. Together with Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia and Hamani Diori of Niger, he campaigned for a movement which would express "un mode de pensée et d'action, une certaine manière de poser les problèmes et d'en trouver les solutions" (a mode of thought and action, a certain way of approaching problems and of solving them).[10] To this date, L.S. Senghor is still the one who provides us with the most original definition of Francophonie: "1. L'ensemble des états, des pays et des régions qui emploient le Français comme langue nationale, langue officielle, langue de communication internationale ou, simplement, comme langue de travail; 2. L'ensemble des personnes qui emploient le Français dans les différentes fonctions que voilá; 3. La communauté d'esprit qui résulte de ces différents emplois."*

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*All the states, countries and regions that use French as a national language, an official language, a language of international communication or, simply, a working language; 2. All persons who use French in all the above functions; 3. The community of thought which results from all these different uses.[10]

The Reality of Francophonie

The membership of Francophonie now includes 37 full or associate member states and 2 participating governments.[10] At the first summit in the history of the movement (Paris, February 17–19, 1986), 42 delegations were present of which 16 heads of states and 12 heads of governments. The member states of Francophonie can be subdivided into four major groups:

The first group is one in which French is the dominant and practically the sole language in the country or over most of the territory. Other languages are demographically less important. This group may be represented by France itself.

In the second group, French is one of the national languages. This group may be represented by Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and Luxembourg. In these countries, bilingualism or multilingualism is officially recognized, supported and promoted.

In the third group, French is the only official language, and in many cases, the sole language of administration and instruction. This group is mainly represented by French-speaking Africa and by those countries where the first language is a French creole (e.g, Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, etc.).

In the fourth and last group, French is one of the languages of limited use. This group includes Lebanon, Iran, and many north African countries.

Another important element of the reality of Francophonie is the number of agencies and associations that support the movement and the nature of that support. Financially, Francophonie is supported by the Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique (ACCT), an agency founded by African heads of states in 1970 in Niamey, Niger. The ACCT has a budget of about $20 million, 46 percent of which come from France, 35 percent from Canada and 12 percent from Belgium. All other member states contribute only 7 percent to the budget (Weinstein[24]). Francophonie is also supported by many other organizations such as the Association of Universities Partially or Entirely of French Language (AUPELF), the International Council of the French Language (CILF), the International Association of French Language Legislators (AIPLF), and many professional societies.

Recently, three new committees have been created by Mitterand's socialist government: 1. Le Haut Conseil de la Francophonie, 2. Le Commissariat Général de la langue Française, and 3. Le Comité Consultatif pour la Francophonie. These committees come in addition to the Ministère de la Coopération et du Développement, and the Direction Générale des Relations Culturelles, Scientifiques et Techniques of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (DGRCST).

The Objective of Francophonie

The main objective of Francophonie is to preserve and expand the status of the French language. As Jacques Chirac, Mayor of Paris and now Prime Minister of France puts it: ". . . afin que le Français ne devienne pas le Latin des modernes" (so that French does not become the Latin of the 20th century) (Chirac in Fraternité Matin, Feb. 1986). However, the ACCT claims that its objective is to help in education, in scientific and technological cooperation, in social and economic development, and in the promotion of the national cultures and languages. In the words of L.S. Senghor: "Pour nous, c'est une greffe sur notre culture. La Francophonie ne s'oppose pas, comme certains le craignent, aux cultures nationales, à la négritude ou à l'arabisme."*

Francophonie also aims at providing a political basis for the linguistic solidarity of peoples who share the same language. The first summit in Paris suggests that this is indeed an important objective. In the

*"For us, it is a plus to our culture. Francophonie is not in opposition to the national cultures, to "négritude" or "arabism" as it is feared by some" (Senghor[22]).

words of the Prime Minister of Canada, Brian Mulroney, the summit was "a golden opportunity for the developing countries to tell President Mitterand and myself about their disastrous economic situations and their debts, knowing that we will be meeting very soon with President Reagan in Tokyo" (cf. Fraternité Matin, Feb. 1986). In support of this, at the end of the summit, in lieu of Mitterand's press conference, it was Houphouët-Boigny, President of the Ivory Coast, who took the floor and called upon the rich nations to help the African "wretched of the earth." And, in the reading of the general report, Robert Baroussa, Prime Minister of Québec, listed 28 resolutions which were mostly political and economic.

II. The Importance of French in Africa

The Role of French in Africa

French in Africa is the dominant written medium. But, as J.P. Dannaud, former Director of the Coopération Culturelle et Technique, recognized in the early sixties, only 10 percent of Africans, Malagasy included, understand French; only 1 or 2 percent are fluent in it, and only 2 out of every thousand can actually think in French. (cf. Juin 1966).

The statistics today are not encouraging either. For instance, Partman found in 1979 that only 5.3 percent of Ivorians use what she calls "Standard Ivorian French" (as opposed to Standard French). And Lafage[13] reported that only 5 percent of the Ivorians speak Standard French. Numbers about other French-speaking African countries are similar, if not worse.

Many scholars and numerous studies blame the increasing numbers of school drop-outs on the exclusive use of French as the language of instruction and on the way it is taught (cf. Champion;[3] Dogbe 1979; Makouta-Mboukou;[16] and also World Bank Report[26]). In the words of a former minister of education of the Ivory Coast, "the school, instead of being a factor of development, has reached a point where it is a source of desintegration of society and a source of alienation of the individual. It has become an obstacle to harmonious evolution and political equilibrium for it does not integrate the child into his traditional environment, but gives him a means to escape it without providing him with what he needs to live up to the demands of the mainstream of modern society" (cf. Proceedings of the IVth Congress of the P.D.C.I.).

As a result, French in Africa today is the language of ordinary intercourse among the upper class. This is a natural result of circumstances. The major concern of the elite and the political rulers is to hold on to the privileges the knowledge of French provides. French is therefore the language of prestige and the only medium for official business.

The Attitudes Towards French

Almost all language attitude research indicate that the people do not despise French. The reasons for this are mainly instrumental: mastery of French not only confers a better socio-economic status, it insures access to scientific and technological knowledge.

A study of young native speakers of Baoulé by Marcomer[17] showed that 73 percent of them picked French when asked about the language they would choose if it was necessary for all to speak the same language. A similar study of young Dida by Ferrari[27] showed that 73.1 percent of the informants chose French over any other Ivorian language. Recently, a language attitude study of four major languages of the Ivory Coast (Baoulé, Dyula, Guéré and Wobé) conducted by this author showed that 61.66 percent of the 120 respondents rejected the idea of a local language, even their own, being chosen as a national language. The results were significant at $P < .001$. In fact, 75 percent of the respondents rejected the idea of a local language, even their own, being used as a language of instruction. These results

were also significant at $P < .001$. The main reason for these rejections was that the informants did not believe their languages could successfully meet the challenges of the modern world, Djité.[7] Duponchel[8] study elicited the reasons underlying such attitudes; and they are: (in order of importance):

1. that French is the language of the white man,
2. that French is the language of progress and modern life,
3. that French is the language of power, happiness and upward socioeconomic mobility, and
4. that French is a neutral language that does not create any ethnic rivalries.

Essentially then, the attachment to French has been shown to be instrumentally motivated. However, it is very important to realize that the predisposition to learn French does not necessarily translate into its actual mastery. The number of individuals still illiterate in French in Africa is enough evidence to support this assertion. It is no exaggeration therefore to suggest that these positive attitudes are merely the expressions of an ideal. As a consequence, French is not gaining any real new grounds. In the same language attitude study cited above (Djité[7]), Popular French (or Ivorian French *not Standard French*) comes in second positon for "languages most resorted to" (behind Dyula), in second position (behind Dyula again) for "languages spoken to/with friends."

III. The Importance of African Languages

The Linguistic Potential of French-Speaking Africa

The neglect of the local languages, although it has severely handicapped them, has not eradicated them. Today, the linguistic potential of French-speaking Africa is almost intact.

Many monolingual states such as Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and Madagascar, all things considered, could easily reduce the functional domains of French. This is a linguistic fact whether or not it is supported by the existing language policy. Over 50 percent of the population in Burundi speak some form of Swahili and 35 percent of the programs on the external service of Radio Burundi are in Kiswahili and 65 percent of the children educated in Kirundi have access to higher education (Decraene[4]). In Rwanda, Swahili is spoken by over 10 percent of the population and its is broadcast on national radio. Likewise, the North African states of Mauritania, Tunisia and Morroco, Arabic is dominant in almost all aspects of everyday life.

Many multilingual states also have dominant languages which in everyday interactions play a much more significant role than French. Such is the case of Diola, Malinké, Pular, Sérère, Soninké and Wolof in Sénégal, all of which are officially recognized as national languages. Research is under way to introduce some of them in the educational system.* Texts were already produced in Wolof in 1732, and recently, the late Cheik Anta Diop has translated Einstein's "Theory of Relativity" into Wolof to make the point that an African language can be used for scientific purposes. In Niger, Hawsaa (51%) and Songay-Zarma (21%) are the two dominant languages (Laya[14]). Hawsaa has a long tradition of writing in 'Ajami dating all the way back to the 10th century (Battestini, personal communication). In Togo, Ewé and Minā, two mutually intelligible languages are dominant in the south of the country; the north which has no known dominant language could be represented by Kabyè (or Kabrè) which has already been declared one of the national languages of Togo. Ewé which has a long tradition of literacy (first texts date from 1658) is, together with Kabyè, written in

*In 1973, L.S. Senghor signed a decree for the introduction of Wolof in elementary schools.

the government-owned newspaper (La Nouvelle Marche or Azõli Yeye). In Mali, Bambara and Fulfuldé are regionally dominant. "Kibaru" a rural newspaper, created in 1972, is written in Bambara, Peulh, Sonrhai and Tamasheq (Decraene[4]). In Zaïre, Swahili is spoken by over 10 million people and together with Lingala, Tshiluba (also Kiluba or Kiluba-Matadi) and Kikongo (also Kikongo Ya Leta), is a national language. In Congo, Lingala and Kikongo (also Munukutuba) are officially recognized as the national languages. In Burkina Faso where it was estimated in 1980 that 90 percent of the population was illiterate in French (Decraena[4]) Jula is dominant in the west and Mooré in the east.

Even in those countries where no dominant language is officially recognized, sociolinguistic studies of language use and language attitudes suggest some interesting patterns. In the Ivory Coast, scores of studies show that Dyula is more popular and more frequently used than French in domains other than the administration and the school (cf. Partman;[20] Lafage;[12,13] Hattiger;[9] Djité;[7] and many others . . .). In fact, it is not rare to see people speak Dyula or another local language in the office. The facts show therefore that language is not so divisive in Africa as some have tried to suggest it is. These divisions are not perceived as genuine by the people (Djité[7]). It is interesting to note that in most of the countries just discussed, the people will almost always address you in one of the local languages, usually the lingua franca or the regionally dominant language, unless they have reason to believe that you may not understand them. It is also interesting to note that, in some cases, these languages spread across political boundaries. Such is the case of Swahili in Burundi, Congo, Rwanda and Zaïre, of Lingala and Tshiluba or Kokongo in Zaïre and Congo, of Dyula in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Ivory Coast. All of this suggests the existence of monolingual nuclei with bilingual sattelites. The linguistic potential of French-speaking Africa definitely shows that most African languages have overcome the potential of "glottophagie" of French and are surpassing it functionally (Calvet 1974). Whether this is recognized or not, they will continue to pose a threat to the expansion of French and to the movement of Francophonie.

The Attitudes Towards the African Languages

As in the case of English during the French invasion from the 11th to the 15th century, African languages today are believed to be inadequate to access scientific and technological knowledge (Baugh & Cable;[1] Williams;[25] Decraene[4]). French is allegedly more precise, harmonious, clear and logical (Diderot[6]). Both in England and Africa, when French was imposed, it was to "elevate" the local populations to the brilliant culture and civilization that were inherent to French only.

This belief of the universal superiority of French was best expressed by Diderot when he wrote: "Nous disons les choses en Français comme l'esprit est forcé de les considérer en quelque langue qu'on écrive . . . Le Français est fait pour instruire, éclairer et convaincre . . ."*

This belief was certainly shared by the late Georges Pompidou, former president of France, when he said: "I have seen in Africa, for example, that people belonging to the same ethnic group think differently and have a different approach to problems depending on whether they spoke English or French."[21]

Some elements of the African elite also share this belief and have gone so far as to say: "Let's speak either French, English, Arabic, Chinese or Russian; but please, let's speak without wasting time."[15]

This kind of support to the unscientific belief that the language shapes the speaker's "Weltanschauung" has been cata-

*"We say things in French as the mind is forced to conceive them in whatever language we write . . . etc . . ."

strophic with regard to the general belief of the masses, in so far as it has convinced them that their mother tongue is inferior to French.

Another belief is the one according to which the multilingual situation of Africa is a barrier to national cohesion and understanding, and that French is the only neutral language which can guarantee national unity. This argument is being ridden to death by those who still see Africa as a chaotic grouping of "tribes." And it is no exaggeration to suggest that the impetus behind Francophonie is partly based on that kind of assumption. A closer look at the multilingual picture of Africa, as shown above, yields interesting patterns of monolingual nuclei and bilingual sattelites. Even if such was not the case, arguments that suggest that the fewer the number of languages, the greater the sense of unity seem to ignore the case of Belgium which has only two major languages.

IV. The Socio-Political Obstacles to Francophonie

The Economic Limitations

The economies of most French-speaking African states simply do not look good. They can not take care of their own problems and it would really be too much to ask them to support Francophonie. This explains their meager and symbolic contributin to ACCT (less than 7 percent for all 25 African member states).

This economic weakness reflects that of the former colonizer. France is no longer the exclusive trader with French-speaking Africa which has turned to the United States, Japan, West Germany and the Soviet Union for help. Culturally, economically and politically, it has a difficult time competing with the United States and Japan. In the face of its own difficulties, France will not be able to maintain its considerable support to ACCT and Francophonie for ever. Soon or later, the funds will have to be cut and put to more urgent priorities such as unemployment. The recent decisions to discourage the immigration of workers and the rise of xenophobia in France (spearheaded by Le Pen) are warning signs of this. Incidentally and ironically, the $20 million budget of the ACCT, at the first summit of Francophonie in Paris, is now said to be $13 million (100 millions of French Francs)[10]

The Political Problems

Tied in with the economic limitations are the political problems within most French-speaking Africa. To put it mildly, the policies of these countries are not helping the cause of Francophonie. The language which confers on the elite the power and priviledges they abuse may sometime soon suggest to the people that it is the cause of all the evil. Today, most of the people, simply because they are illiterate in French, are discarded from any participation in a democratic process. To help these people is not to impose on them literacy programs in French. The results of such programs can ony be limited quantitatively and qualitatively. To help them, from a practical and realistic point of view, is to run literacy programs in the languages they normally use in their everyday life (Calvet;[2] Champion;[3] Duponchel[8]).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have explored some of the major obstacles facing French and Francophonie in Africa. I have based my observations on sociolinguistic and sociopolitical facts. All these show that, if Francophonie was a bold idea and a compelling possibility, the conditions under which it could have become reality are practically non-existant. A language, no mater how universal, cannot and will not substitute another one in the expression of the true feelings and the cultures of the people. This is why French was not successful in its attempt to displace English

during the Norman-French invasion, and this is why the prospect of the success of Francophonie in the light of all the facts discussed above is rather bleak.

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