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271 *From the Editor's Desk*

ARTICLES

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

276

Albert Alhadeff

**"Julian Barnes
and *The Raft of
the Medusa*"**

Barnes's 1989 essay on Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819) studies the ineffable links between "art and catastrophe" with the *Raft* as a welcome tool to further his thesis. Yet, I argue that Barnes chose the wrong painting to advance his case, for his argument suffers from a curious excision: blacks, who play a major role in the oil, are notoriously absent from his exegesis. Probing this question, I posit the possibility that Barnes's thesis willfully omits mention of blacks because blacks, as the *Raft* testifies, adversely affect his argument.

PEDAGOGY

294

Sarah Poole

**"Le Texte,
autrement:
Opening the
(language
classroom)
door to slam"**

This piece presents the phenomenon that is *le slam*. Examples from different exponents are presented to illustrate its characteristics and range. Its potential value as teaching tool is then contextualized against a background of recent trends in SLA theory. The work of a specific *slameur*, Grand Corps Malade, is homed in on as being particularly accessible to the student of French. Finally, various activities designed to help learners explore this fast-developing manifestation of popular culture for its linguistic and cultural richness are suggested, and examples are given of the type of creative work they can generate.

C O N T E N T S

LINGUISTICS

308

**Larissa Sloutsky
et Catherine
Black**

**“Le Verlan,
phénomène
langagier et
social:
récapitulatif”**

Depuis les années quatre-vingt, le verlan s’est propagé au-delà des “zones chaudes” de la banlieue parisienne. Cet article se propose de faire un récapitulatif de ce jeu langagier, issu des milieux déshérités, qui dérouté encore les non-initiés. On établira les liens entre l’argot, le français populaire et le verlan pour démontrer les origines de ce dernier ainsi que ses fonctions. Puis, la réflexion portera sur les procédés de codage et la source de renouvellement du vocabulaire du verlan qui mettront en évidence sa fonction identitaire qui prime à présent sur les fonctions cryptique et ludique des origines.

FILM

326

**Tama Lea
Engelking**

**“Senegalese
Women,
Education, and
Polygamy in
*Une si longue
lettre* and *Faat
Kiné*”**

For both Mariama Bâ and Ousmane Sembene, Senegal’s future is inextricably linked to the role of women. In her 1979 novel, *Une si longue lettre*, Bâ describes the dynamic changes Senegalese women were experiencing following independence. Sembene takes over where Bâ leaves off in his 2000 film *Faat Kiné* to follow the next generation of women into modern day Dakar. A focus on education and polygamy in these two works provides a context for appreciating how the status of Senegalese women has evolved since independence, but this study also reveals how progress is impeded when women are caught in the confrontation between tradition and modernization.

LITERATURE

342

Jason Herbeck

**“Raphaël
Confiant’s *Le
Meurtre du
Samedi-Gloria*:
Crime and
Testimony”**

This paper proposes a close reading of Inspector Dorval’s *closed* case from both a narratological and socio-cultural perspective, arguing that what may at first blush appear to be irrelevant clues—information that, decidedly unrelated to Beausoleil’s murder, is disregarded by both Dorval and the reader—are in fact pieces of circumstantial evidence related to an unnamed crime scene of far greater proportions. Whereas Beausoleil’s murder is effectively solved, Confiant’s novel diverges from the traditional detective narrative, divulging in the very diversity of its testimonies a wealth of incriminating declarations with respect to France’s continued influence on and control of its Overseas Departments.

Nancy Arenberg
**“Mobile Bodies
 and Kindred
 Sisters in
 Djébar’s *Ombre
 Sultane*”**

Assia Djébar’s, *Ombre Sultane*, published in 1987, delves into antiquity by integrating an intertext, the myth of Sheherazade, into the text, thus creating a sustained dialogue with the past. The extraordinary bond between the two sisters Sheherazade and Dinarzade is grafted onto the modern story of two co-wives, Isma and Hajila. This essay will focus on the solidarity between the co-wives as well as offer a new spatial perspective of Hajila’s ventures into the outdoors, a subversive urban territory. For Hajila, urban strolling empowers her to break out of traditional feminine passivity, as she crosses gender borders to explore “masculine” spaces.

INTERVIEW

**Koffi Anyinefa
 and Micheline
 Rice-Maximin**
**“Entretien avec
 Véronique
 Tadjó, écrivaine
 ivoirienne”**

Dans cet entretien enregistré en 2004 (actualisé pour les besoins de cette publication), l’écrivaine ivoirienne Véronique Tadjó, Grand Prix Littéraire d’Afrique Noire en 2005, médite d’abord sur les problèmes sociopolitiques de l’Afrique du Sud et sur le potentiel économique, sur le capital symbolique de ce pays où elle vit depuis 2001. Elle parle ensuite de son œuvre romanesque et poétique, de ses grands thèmes, de son écriture influencée surtout par l’oralité traditionnelle ainsi que de ses textes destinés à la jeunesse, textes qu’elle illustre très souvent elle-même. C’est sans doute cette versatilité formelle qui la distingue entre autres parmi les plus grands écrivains africains francophones contemporains.

NOTE

383 Colette Dio: “La Vie des mots”

REVIEWS

LITERARY HISTORY AND CRITICISM

- 386 JEFFERSON, ANN, *Biography and the Question of Literature in France* (Laurence M. Porter);
 387 FERNANDES, MARTINE, *Les Ecrivaines francophones en liberté: Farida Belghoul, Maryse Condé, Assia Djébar, Calixthe Belaya* (Josée S.J. Lauersdorf);
 388 BOURGEOIS, CHRISTOPHE, *Théologies poétiques de l’âge baroque: la muse chrétienne* (Russell Ganim);
 390 DESCOTES, DOMINIQUE, éd., *Pascal, auteur spirituel* (Stéphane Natan);

- 391 REGUIG-NAYA, DELPHINE, *Le Corps des idées—Pensées et poétiques du langage dans l'augustinisme de Port-Royal: Arnauld, Nicole, Pascal, Mme de La Fayette, Racine* (Stéphane Natan);
- 392 GUELLOUZ, SUZANNE, *Le Classicisme* (Marie-Odile Sweetser);
- 393 CHAOUCHÉ, SABINE, éd., *Ecrits sur l'art théâtral (1753–1801)*, Vols. I et II (James P. Gilroy);
- 395 MCCREADY, SUSAN, *The Limits of Performance in the French Romantic Theatre* (Marie-Pierre Le Hir);
- 396 WHIDDEN, SETH, *Leaving Parnassus: The Lyric Subject in Verlaine and Rimbaud* (Dorothy M. Betz);
- 397 DE GEORGES-MÉTRAL, ALICE, *Les Illusions de l'écriture ou la crise de la représentation dans l'œuvre romanesque de Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly* (Herta Rodina);
- 398 NELSON, BRIAN, éd., *The Cambridge Companion to Emile Zola* (Laurey Martin-Berg);
- 399 WIMMERS, INGE CROSMAN, *Proust and Emotion: The Importance of Affect in A la recherche du temps perdu* (Phillip Bailey);
- 400 EGGER, ANNE, *Robert Desnos* (Edward Ousselin);
- 401 EMANUEL, MICHELLE, *From Surrealism to Less-Exquisite Cadavers: Léo Malet and the Evolution of the French Roman Noir* (Christophe Wall-Romana);
- 402 WAGSTAFF, EMMA, *Provisionality and the Poem: Transition in the Work of Du Bouchet, Jaccottet, and Noël* (Michael Bishop);
- 404 BISHOP, MICHAEL, éd., *Autour de Gérard Titus-Carmel: recitativo obbligato and The Endless Theory of Days: The Art and Poetry of Gérard Titus-Carmel* (Michael Brophy);
- 405 FAUVEL, MARYSE, *Scènes d'intérieur: six romanciers des années 1980–1990* (William Cloonan);
- 406 HIPPOLYTE, JEAN-LOUIS, *Fuzzy Fiction* (Gervais E. Reed).

FILM

- 408 *Frontières* (Davida Brautman);
- 408 *Molière* (Edward Ousselin).

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

- 409 ROUX, NICOLE, *C'est la guerre, LES ENFANTS!* (Jacques M. Laroche);
- 411 HENRY, PATRICK, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust* (Margot M. Steinhart);
- 412 VEIL, SIMONE, *Une Vie* (Lois Vines);
- 413 BÉLIT, MARC, *Le Malaise de la culture: essai sur la crise du "modèle culturel" français* (Tom Conner);
- 414 PRICE, SALLY, *Paris Primitive: Jacques Chirac's Museum on the Quai Branly* (Ronald C. Rosbottom);
- 415 COURCOL, CHRISTINE, et THIERRY MASURE, *Ségolène Royal: les coulisses d'une défaite* (Samia I. Spencer);
- 416 LÉVY, BERNARD-HENRI, *Ce Grand Cadavre à la renverse* (Liliane Lazar).

CREATIVE WORKS

- 418 AUDET, MARTINE, *Les Manivelles* (Michael Bishop);
- 419 BARREAU, CATHIE, *Visites aux vivants* (Michelle Chilcoat);
- 420 BEIGBEDER, FRÉDÉRIC, *Au secours pardon* (Najib Redouane);

- 421 CASTILLON, CLAIRE, *On n'empêche pas un petit cœur d'aimer* (Jennifer K. Wolter);
- 422 CAUVIN, PATRICK, *Venge-moi!* (Roland A. Champagne);
- 423 CHANDERNAGOR, FRANÇOISE, *La Voyageuse de nuit* (Ann Williams);
- 424 DAI, SIJIE, *Par une nuit où la lune ne s'est pas levée* (Marie-Agnès Sourieau);
- 425 DIOP, SÉMOU MAMA, *Le Dépositaire* (Jeanne-Sarah de Larquier);
- 426 GRANGÉ, JEAN-CHRISTOPHE, *Le Serment des limbes* (Nathalie G. Cornelius);
- 428 GROBÉTY, ANNE-LISE, *La Corde de mi* (Noémie Parrat);
- 429 GUÈNE, FAÏZA, *Du rêve pour les oufs* (Véronique Anover);
- 430 HÉLIE-HAMEL, CÉCILE, *Comprends-tu ça Laurette?* (Ritt Deitz);
- 431 LEROY, GILLES, *Alabama Song* (Samia I. Spencer);
- 432 NÉMIROVSKY, IRÈNE, *Chaleur du sang* (Mary P. Schmid Combal);
- 433 OLMI, VÉRONIQUE, *Sa passion* (Susan Petit);
- 434 PINEAU, GISÈLE, *Mes quatre femmes* (Florence Ramond Jurney);
- 435 QUEFFÉLEC, YANN, *L'Amante* (Karlis Racevskis);
- 436 REZA, YASMINA, *Le Dieu du carnage* (Randi L. Polk);
- 437 RIOUX, HÉLÈNE, *Mercredi soir au bout du monde* (William Cloonan);
- 438 ROAUD, JEAN, *Préhistoires* (Gervais E. Reed);
- 439 SVIT, BRINA, *Un Cœur de trop* (E. Nicole Meyer);
- 439 VICTOR, GARY, *Les Cloches de la Brésilienne* (Jason Herbeck);
- 440 WABERI, ABDOURAHMAN, *Aux Etats-Unis d'Afrique* (Moussa Sow).

LINGUISTICS

- 441 CORTEZ, YVES, *Le Français ne vient pas du latin!* (Patrick Reidenbaugh);
- 443 GLESSGEN, MARTIN-DIETRICH, *Linguistique romane: domaines et méthodes en linguistique française et romane* (Kathryn Klingebiel);
- 444 SANAKER, JOHN KRISTIAN, KARIN HOLTER, et INGSE SKATTUM, *La Francophonie: une introduction critique* (Margaret M. Marshall).

COURSE MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

- 445 KECK, CHRISTIANA E., and ALLEN G. WOOD, eds., *Global Business Languages* vol. 11 (Randi L. Polk);
- 446 VOLTAIRE, *Candide*. Ed. David A. Ross, and PREVOST ABBÉ, *Histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*. Ed. E. Joe Johnson (Florian Vauléon);
- 448 ROCHESTER, MYRNA BELL, and EILEEN M. ANGELINI, eds., *Pierre et Jean: Guy de Maupassant* (Céline Brossillon-Limpantoudis);
- 449 BLAIR, ROBERT W., *Power-Glide French Ultimate Year 1* (Elizabeth Bishop).

451 EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

- 452 LIST OF EDITORS
- 453 GUIDE FOR AUTHORS
- 455 ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 456 DISSERTATIONS IN PROGRESS

467 **AATF**

- 468 INFORMATION PAGE
- 469 OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION
- 471 REGIONS AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
- 471 MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION FORM
- 472 CHANGE OF ADDRESS PAGE
- 473 ROSTER OF CHAPTER PRESIDENTS
- 474 NATIONAL FRENCH CONTEST ADMINISTRATORS

477 **FRENCH CULTURAL SERVICES**

481 **QUEBEC CULTURAL SERVICES**

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