

The French Review

From the Editor's Desk

After five years as Review Editor, it is at once a humbling and an exhilarating task to begin serving as Editor in Chief of the *French Review*. Humbling, because Chris Pinet is a tough act to follow, and because one of the Editor's main duties is to maintain a tradition of editorial excellence that stretches back to the founding of the journal in 1927. Exhilarating, because the *French Review* is not only one of the best scholarly journals in the world, it has a special place in French and Francophone studies. As an AATF publication, as the most widely read journal in the field, it is in many ways *la vitrine* of our profession. At a personal level, to be entrusted with the general management of such an institution is without a doubt the greatest honor of my career.

By way of introducing myself, let me briefly say that I spent part of my childhood in Senegal and in Côte d'Ivoire, that I was later a *lycéen* in Tours, a student at the Université François-Rabelais, and a teacher at the Institut de Touraine. I have now been living in the United States for two decades. Having studied at the University of Kentucky and at Ohio State University, I now teach French film and culture at Western Washington University—which, since I am often asked, is in Bellingham (in between Seattle and Vancouver). Although this is my first year as Editor, there are already several people I have to thank. Wynne Wong, the former Managing Editor, was very helpful during the period of transition. As the person who now has the most institutional memory within the editorial team, Ronnie Moore, our Typesetter, has been consistently dependable and effective. Jayne Abrate and Ann Sunderland, respectively Executive Director and President of the AATF, have been very supportive. I would especially like to thank Chris Pinet, who during his years of service as Editor in Chief painstakingly maintained very high standards for the *French Review*, and whose advice has been invaluable. His influence will continue to be felt, since most of Vol. 84 and part of Vol. 85 are the result of his planning and scheduling. This is a good time to remind our readers, and especially those who wish to write articles and reviews, that work on an issue of the *French Review* begins over a year before its publication. Our journal has an excellent record in terms of evaluating submitted articles and replying to authors in a timely fashion. However, editorial and printing deadlines are set well before an issue is mailed to our readers.

Since several colleagues have asked me about the process and the likelihood of publishing in the *French Review*, I would like to make two apparently contradictory statements: our journal is very selective (nearly two thirds of the submitted articles are not accepted for publication); and yet, more colleagues should try to publish (both articles and reviews) in the *French Review*. To continue in this seemingly paradoxical vein, there are advantages—and here I speak from personal experience—to receiving a rejection letter from the Editor of the *French Review*. The evaluation process is thorough, relatively quick, and accomplished by some of the best scholars in their fields. The (blind) evaluations which are sent on to the authors provide detailed comments and suggestions that are useful to those who wish to revise and resubmit their manuscripts. Most of the articles that actually are accepted also require considerable rewriting, as a result of the high level of quality demanded by our evaluators. Here again I speak from personal experience, having submitted fifteen articles to the *French Review* over the years. The numerous evaluations I received, which pointed

out weaknesses and called for improvements, helped me to improve my scholarship and my writing. As for the rejection letters, well, let's say they build character (they can also, through the process of rewriting, lead to publications in other journals).

I am therefore in a good position to encourage more colleagues to try to publish in the *French Review*. Our evaluation process, while it can be somewhat ego-bruising, really does provide useful feedback to authors. We have rubrics adapted to all fields of French and Francophone studies, and we reach a wider readership. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage some of our colleagues to publish in the "Note" rubric, which is designed for shorter pieces (2,500 words, instead of the usual 5,000 words for articles). The "Note" rubric—which calls for the same high standards in terms of research and writing—is particularly adapted to texts that address practical pedagogical issues and techniques. Instructors at all levels who have successfully implemented innovative teaching methods should consider the possibility of publishing in this rubric. Authors are also encouraged to submit review-essays in the "Note" rubric. In addition, I should mention the importance of writing reviews of books, films, and teaching materials. Reviews are valuable tools for colleagues (as well as for librarians) who need to make informed decisions when it comes to choosing the best recent publications. In terms of procedure, reviewers should always contact the appropriate Review Editor first, to check if a book is not already under review, and if it meets our reviewing guidelines.

This is in many ways a year of transition for the *French Review*. Several new colleagues have joined the editorial team. As the new Managing Editor, Michel Gueldry (Monterey Institute of International Studies) probably has the most stressful and time-consuming job. Most of the current Review Editors also recently started. Stacey Katz Bourns (Harvard University) is now Review Editor for Linguistics. I would like to thank her predecessor, Albert Valdman, for his many years of service to the *French Review*. Michèle Bissière (University of North Carolina, Charlotte) has stepped in as Review Editor for Film. She succeeds John Anzalone, who is now Assistant Editor. Sarah Jourdain (Stony Brook University) has succeeded Carolyn Gascoigne as Review Editor for Methods and Materials (this rubric was previously called Course Materials and Methodology). And Nathalie Degroult (Siena College) has replaced me as Review Editor for Creative Works. We also welcome Michael Brophy (University College Dublin), Jean-François Fourny (Ohio State University), and Najib Redouane (California State University, Long Beach), who are now serving as Assistant Editors. Furthermore, this is a year of transition in terms of the submission procedures to the *French Review*. We are progressively shifting to an all-electronic process of submission for articles (book reviews are already submitted electronically), which will have a positive impact in environmental terms.

Edward Ousselin, Editor in Chief