

The French Review

From the Editor's Desk

This issue gives me an opportunity to highlight our Literature rubric. The *French Review*, the official scholarly journal of the AATF, publishes articles and reviews related to every facet of French and Francophone studies (film, pedagogy, culture and society, etc.). By tradition and by inclination, literary history and criticism have always had pride of place in our journal, each issue of which includes three articles related to literary studies (along with two rubrics of book reviews—Creative Works, Literary History and Criticism—that cover a total of approximately forty books in each issue). The current volume (85) of the *French Review* illustrates how our Literature rubric has evolved over the years, with higher numbers of articles devoted to literary texts, authors, and themes that reflect the cultural richness and diversity of an increasingly interconnected Francophone world.

In our October 2011 issue (85.1), we published articles on the Martinican poet-essayist Aimé Césaire, on the French *polar* writer Fred Vargas (including a film adaptation of one of her novels), and on the “Algèrianisme” literary and political movement of colonial-era Algeria. The December 2011 issue (85.2) included articles on the Franco-Tunisian novelist Albert Memmi, on the French poet Charles Péguy, and on the Haitian novelist Jean-Claude Fignolé. In the first issue of this calendar year (February; 85.3), the articles of the Literature rubric were devoted to novelists from Algeria (Malika Mokeddem) and France (Colette, Marie NDiaye).

The current issue includes an article on *La Victoire du Phébus*, a seventeenth-century political “tragédie à clés”; another that offers a different perspective on Malika Mokeddem (this article is centered on her novel *N'zid*); and a third that reexamines the Cameroonian novelist Ferdinand Oyono's famous book, *Une vie de boy*. In the forthcoming April issue (85.5), readers will find articles on a recurring central character in several of Fred Vargas's novels (Vargas fans will no doubt also want to reread the article in volume 85.1), on the evolution from Négritude to Antillanité to Créolité in Francophone Caribbean literature, and on Molière's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*. In May, our annual Special Issue (85.6), which will be devoted to *les Lumières*, will include several articles related to literary themes (and too many authors to list here), as well as to the political and cultural topics of the period that still concern us today.

Also noteworthy are the interviews of authors that we publish on a regular basis. In this volume: Sylvie Gracia (85.1) and Fatiha Benatsou (85.3). Looking ahead to October 2012, the first issue of volume 86 will once again include three annual *articles-bilans* that will review literary developments over the past calendar year: poetry, the novel, and the Avignon theater festival.

In other news, all AATF members are reminded of the call for articles for the Special Issue of volume 86, which will be devoted to the future of French and Francophone studies in the United States (as a point of comparison, readers should be interested in the first article of the current issue, “The Literature Problem in the *Lycée*: French Education Debates Today”). Also, all those who appreciated the informative and humorous “Lettrismes” short article published in the October and December 2011 issues (85.1 and 85.2) are encouraged to contribute to this rubric, which, like “Actualités du monde francophone,” is designed for

shorter texts devoted to current issues. Details on the Special Issue and on the two new rubrics are found in the Announcements section (p. 809).

Even in this important year of elections in both France and the United States, I do not normally make comments in my *French Review* editorials about specific political topics or controversies. However, a particularly bizarre piece of political news caught my eye as I was finishing up the preparation for this issue. It seems that one candidate for the Presidency of the United States disparaged another candidate (both of whom will remain nameless) because he knows how to speak French... *On ne sait s'il faut en rire ou en pleurer*. While we have not yet regressed to the level of "freedom fries," I suppose we should expect, during the rhetorical convulsions of this electoral cycle, to hear loud calls for the removal of such notorious Francophiles as Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Jefferson from the ranks of the Founding Fathers.

Edward Ousselin, Editor in Chief