

# **UCLA**

## **Paroles gelées**

### **Title**

Radical Chic(k): The American Roots of Marie de France

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rc5w1bm>

### **Journal**

Paroles gelées, 15(2)

### **ISSN**

1094-7264

### **Author**

Purdy, Susan

### **Publication Date**

1997

### **DOI**

10.5070/PG7152003071

Peer reviewed

## Radical Chic(k): The American Roots of Marie de France

---

*Susan Purdy*

Let us leave textual criticism to academic drudges and formal criticism to aesthetes, and recognize that what has been said need not be said again, that an expression does not work twice, does not live twice, that all words, once uttered, are dead....

(Antonin Artaud, "An End to Masterpieces").

If we believe this, believe that what has been said need not be said again, that it doesn't work twice, doesn't live twice, that words, once uttered, are dead, then we must believe as well that the words of the exceedingly long-dead Marie de France should be left, with her remains, to rot in some vault or crypt in France. And, if her words are dead, if textual is as inevitable as bodily corruption, does her identity amount to no more than a name on a book or an inscription on a grave? Is all that we, and our students, are to know of her is that her name was Marie and that she came from France?

It can be argued that translation, at least, constitutes a sort of second life for the medieval text and for its author, attracting a new public, one made up, this time, not of Antonin Artaud's academic drudges, but of what he would, perhaps, have called "drudges-in-training," namely students of a moribund (if not already dead) literature they are working feverishly to revive, as if translation were some futuristic, neo-linguistic CPR. For if we admit, for the sake of argument, that what has been said need not be said again, then we can argue as well that the text in translation does not say it again, and that it does not, in fact, even constitute a retelling or revival of the original, but is, rather, an interpretation, a gloss, a new text which will become, in turn, the subject of yet another academic post-mortem.

But if the translated text is, in fact, a new text, is it a new text by the author of the original or simply a new flower on an old grave? In other words, is it really Marie de France that our students are reading or is it not a new author—the author, this time, of the

translated text? And, if so, what of authorial identity? Does the identity of Marie de France lie in her (arguably dead) words or has it been reincarnated in the form of a new semiotic system, one which Marie herself may not have recognized? Is she, indeed, lost in translation, an anachronic, academic X-file? Has her medieval French identity been translated beyond recognition, erased, effaced and overlaid by another as surely, for the anglophone student, as if she had never existed at all?

The answer, I believe, despite Artaud and at the risk (one I'll gladly run) of being called an academic drudge, lies in textual criticism. For it is there and only there, at the level of the words themselves, that the measure of difference between the linguistic and semiotic codes of the original and the translated text can be taken and its import assessed. It is at this point, therefore, that I shall attempt to crack these codes, using among the many possible points of entry the poetics of semantic overdetermination which informs the prologue to Marie's *Lais* and, specifically, the heavily overdetermined metaphor of the botanical monograph which serves to define not only the lexical substructure of the prologue but also its direction and its force.

In any language, any word can, of course, be overdetermined; it is the responsibility of the reader to take the measure of that overdetermination and to draw from what is being said only that which serves both to elucidate that text in its immediate and its historical context and to delimit within that context a semantic field which may bloom and branch elsewhere, but whose fecundity is rooted in the seeds of that text only. For the medieval reader, overdetermination in its semantic form served to satisfy a collective sense of anticipation and expectation; its lexical nodes were knots of meaning which could then be dissected to serve the exigencies of individual memory. It was, of course, that memory, firmly rooted in a collective commonplace impervious to individual interpretation and the threat of *mouvance* which it engendered, which provided the measure of the text's hermeneutic density. The immediacy and inherency of the medieval collective commonplace is, for the most part, lost to the modern reader; what remains of it is accessible only through a process of inference and displacement, intertextuality and interreferentiality. What has replaced it, however, and what is accessible to the modern reader that to the medieval reader, *ipso facto*, was not, is, of course, the fruit

of a delayed, deferred and poly-branched post-textual hermeneutic perspective.

To say, then, that, for the modern or for the medieval reader, overdetermination effectively annihilates the interpretive density of a text, replacing it with a semiotic superficiality, is to deny or to ignore the extraordinary power of the residual hermeneutic impulse, the hypogrammatic instinct which reconfigures amorphous textual residue into a lexical construct accessible only through individual memory and responsive only to individual control.

The poetics of semantic overdetermination are, indeed, radical, not least because their elaboration itself must exceed the bounds of convention and take the measure of that individual control. I shall argue that Marie's Prologue is itself a determinate construction, a text, whose roots run deep and whose flowers bloom wild; it is a prologue not only in the sense that it precedes the ostensible object of its elaboration, but also in the sense that it promotes, prepares and, indeed, models it. Its simplicity can be measured by the extent to which it conforms to a certain expectation on the part of the reader, its complexity only by the extent to which it does not.

But what of the uninformed anglophone reader, the student to whom the language of the prologue is itself inaccessible, whose motivation is, more often than not, defined by boredom and dread and whose budding hermeneutic instinct has its roots not in medieval French but in modern American popular culture? If our students are to become as culturally literate in medieval, middle or modern French as they are in their own language, they need to learn to apply their own profound, albeit sometimes eclectic and unsystematic, knowledge of North American popular culture to the canons of another culture. I think that we often tend to underestimate, if not to ignore, our students' instinctive grasp of their own language and culture and to assume that the critical faculties which have enabled them to find their way through the incredibly and increasingly complicated maze of North American culture have no value in the classroom. If we were, however, to tap into their own cultural experience, personalize their learning and use what they already know as a base and a bridge for the understanding of francophone culture, I believe that our students' knowledge and interest would increase, not only appreciably, but profoundly, dramatically and, dare I say, radically. So, when I speak of radical

chic(k), it is in the most basic, etymological sense of the word "radical" and the most modern sense of the word "chic" and its anglicized near-homograph "chick."

And so, should you ask, what do Marie de France and Tom Wolfe have in common? The answer, or, rather, one of the many answers, is "radicals." For they are radicals both, free radicals—and, of course, writers, concerned as much with the ever-present threat of literary oblivion as with the politics of literary dissemination and concerned, too, with a certain taxonomy of language, with roots, stems, tongues and trees, with Wolfe's literary "clutter and vine." For Marie, of course, who was French, and medieval, it was more a matter of radicals, folios, florilegia and stemmata codicum—but the dream of immortality through writing in the twelfth century was as rooted in the paradigm of the botanical monograph as ever it has been in the twentieth. Then, too, there is their radical chic, because patronage, in any era has its price. And it seems that Marie, who was a woman, was a kind of radical chick, too, because, if the roots of her writing lie, as dutifully and as decorously as any medieval reader would expect, with the king, its seeds fall and its flowers bloom, nonetheless, unashamedly, riotously and rampanly elsewhere, wildly overdetermined, oversexed and incredibly fecund therewith.

Marie de France was, as I have said, concerned with the dissemination of her works, but I have not yet considered the extent to which her metaphorical elaboration of that concern might itself have informed her desire. When she says in her Prologue that the dissemination of a literary text follows the evolution of bud to blossom to bloom, we are reminded of Freud's *Dream of the Botanical Monograph*, in which he notes that the "the elements botanical and monograph... constituted 'nodal points'.... These elements turn out to have been 'overdetermined'" (Hilton 4). Marie's monograph is not a dream in the literal sense; quite the opposite, in fact, for she says that she often worked on it late into the night. It is, nonetheless, true that, for her, the dissemination of the *lais* presupposes their textualization and that, in this textualization, the overdetermination of the co-nodal botanical, textual and erotic models all find their roots in the predetermined, pre-Saussurian, "preexisting arboreous associations of language" itself (Hilton 7).

In order to understand the process by which the convention of flower as book can be interpreted in the context of the Prologue, we can here appeal to the linguistic principle of the asymmetric semantic implication relation. According to this principle, and to use an example given by Keith Allan in his book, *Linguistic Meaning* (180), "F is a flower" has for one of its hyponyms the proposition "F is a pansy." The relation is considered to be asymmetric because it does not necessarily follow from this relation that if F is a flower, then F is a pansy. If we then operate a simple linguistic substitution, we can then infer that, in French, "F is a fleur" has for its hyponyms the propositions "F is a *pensée*," "F is an *immortelle*," "F is a *ne m'oubliez pas*." The terms of Marie's desire begin to acquire a certain clarity. However, the asymmetry inherent in the relation determines that, although F can be a *ne m'oubliez pas*, this does not necessarily imply that F is a *ne m'oubliez pas*—or an *immortelle* or a *pensée*. It does, however, imply, rather nicely, that a *pensée* is a *fleur*. The literary implication of this principle is simple: the semantic overdetermination of the word *fleur* (or *flur*) does not imply that of its hyponyms, but is, in fact, effectively subverted by the individuation process. Marie's *flur* could be a *pensée*, an *immortelle* or a *ne m'oubliez pas*; it could even be a *narcisse*, a *stigmaté* or a *jalousie*, but it is not necessarily any one of those things. The collective commonplace resists semantic individuation, but in this very individuation lies the seed of its proliferative possibility.

Let us consider, for a moment, the process by which syntax serves both to promote and to subvert this individuation process. Priscian, to whom Marie refers in her Prologue, states that the etymologically diverse nouns *corpus*, *flos*, *virgo*, and *vox* become the morphologically similar *corporalis*, *floralis*, *virginalis* and *vocalis* (Hertz 130-31). Rhyme would appear, therefore, to depend not on radical, but on grammatically determined case and person criteria. It is here that authorial intention comes into play. For, if, for example, the author selects the subject case *flos* and *virgo*, the potential mnemonic effects of rhyme are displaced and any inherent lexical associations can be determined by semantic analysis only. *Floralis* and *virginalis* are, however, selected by textual syntax; their form is relevant much as, for Riffaterre, "the intertext is relevant because it is selected by the text" (33). Their reciprocal semantic determination is reinforced by formal phonemic criteria. As Saussure, in another context, remarks: "la pensée, chaotique de

nature, est forcée de se préciser en se décomposant... dans la langue, on ne saurait isoler ni le son de la pensée ni la pensée du son" (156). Leaving (reluctantly) aside the critical implications of the botanical *fleur/pensée/son* lexical complex and the morbidly fascinating *décomposant*, let us turn once again to Marie, who chose to order her syntax in such a way that *flurs* rhymed with *plusurs* and *fluriz* with *oïz*. *Plusurs* itself initiates a motif of expansion and excess immediately taken up by *ad expandues* and reiterated over and over again within the lexicon of the Prologue. Moreover, because the numerators involved are indeterminate, the focus of the reading eye shifts from the entity to the quantity itself. Another shift, this time from the nominal *flurs* to the verbal *fluriz* and its rhyme, *oïz*, can, of course, be considered, itself, an expansion in terms of kinetic poetical function, a microcosmic linguistic equivalent of the process of literary dissemination.

Small wonder, then, that Marie's contemporary, Alain de Lille, should lament, in the Prose Prologue to his *Anticlaudianus*, that his book "does not bloom with the purple of flowering eloquence" (40). If the seeds of immortality are indeed embedded (and I use the word advisedly) in the text, the proper functioning of the botanical lexicon can be seen as essential to the move from orality to textuality. Is this, then, how we are also to understand Marie's reference to Priscian, an accedus to whose writing defined the dangers of the shift from orality to textuality as "*Praua pronunciatio quam praua copulatio*" (Raynaud de Lage 149)? I am reminded here of Steiner's "intercourse and discourse, copula and copulation." "[T]hough homologous" he says, "they interact" (28)

The taxonomy of erotic and botanical overdetermination has, indeed, spilled over into the Marian critical lexicon. Joubert speaks of a "vegetation dionysiaque" (10). Even Bédier, who dismisses Marie's art as mnemonic rhyming technique, is not himself immune to a certain semantic contagion. His criticism is itself a gem of Derridean residue; her art, he says, is but emotion "*à fleur de peau*" (Rothschild 19). Is this not Jonin's "symbiose de la chair et du végétal" (493)? And Joubert, incidentally, refers to her "jouissance linguistique" (10). But, what of this symbiosis? For if *gloser* is indeed eroticized, as, undoubtedly, then, is *surplus*, how else are we to interpret Jonin's assessment that Marie "a plus fleuri que la verge d'Aaron" (485)? Perhaps Bédier's theory of (near) rhyme as a simple mnemonic device might have some merit after

all.<sup>1</sup> And yet, it is not so simple, for Marie could, of course, have chosen to rhyme *oïz* with *ociz* or *plusurs* with *plurs*; she could, indeed, have chosen to place both *fluriz* and *flurs* in syntactically weak positions, thereby negating the effects of rhyme altogether. Yet, because she did not, because she chose instead to rhyme them and with the words she did, the principle of overdetermination found in that configuration a particular and fertile phonemic and lexical form.

The urge to further delineate that configuration, to read more, find more, remember more, write more is almost, at this point, overwhelming, so it is now that we must return to our own roots and determine which the seeds of Marie's text can be found to flower in an English country garden. And it is here that I also make the leap from chicks to birds of a radically different kind, for it is the Prologue in the Penguin Classics edition of the *Lais*, translated by Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby, that I shall now examine.

Burgess and Busby's avowed aim is "to provide a plain English prose translation of Marie's *Lais* which renders them as closely as the semantic differences between Old French and Modern English will allow" (37). But what exactly are these "semantic differences?" Are they not, in fact, differences in meaning? And if so, is this meaning denotative or is it connotative? The distinction is critical here, denotative or referential meaning being of far less critical import than connotative, where interpretation comes inevitably into play.

The translators continue: "We hope that the general public and students of literature with no old French will be able to read this translation with profit and pleasure (to use a medieval idea) in the knowledge that it is not too much a deformation of the original" (37). But how much is "too much a deformation?" Marie herself, in the Prologue, writes of translation and of reading itself as gloss and as refinement of meaning and she would, as a medieval writer, have been well aware of the various deformations inevitably wrought upon texts by scribal error and the vagaries of oral dissemination. And she would have been well aware, as well, that her very existence and identity as a writer depended upon that dissemination, as open to deformation and fraught with misinterpretation as it might be.

So, when Burgess and Busby write, in their version of the Prologue, that "When a truly beneficial thing is heard by many



people, it then enjoys its first blossom, but if it is widely praised, its flowers are in full bloom" (41), does the admitted semantic difference of their text constitute a deformation in the critical sense? Is Marie's poetic identity deformed to such an extent that it is no longer recognizable as hers? Or can her poetics of semantic overdetermination survive the translators' admitted semantic difference?

While it is true, as we have seen, that through the asymmetric semantic implication relation, we can infer that if *F* is a *pensée*, *F* is a *fleur*, it is equally true that that particular relation holds in English only on a superficial level, a *pensée* being, prosaically, just a pansy, much as a rose is a rose or, even, a cigar sometimes just a cigar. Yet the overdetermination of the word "flower" allows that Marie's flower be a pansy or a rose or even a narcissus. A self-reflective identity would certainly survive semantic difference—as would, inevitably, a forget-me-not. For, if our students may never have heard of the *Romance of the Rose*, they have probably heard of the (admittedly fading and ultimately forgettable) Blossom of television fame, of Soundgarden, of Tom Wolfe's florists Clutter & Vine or even of Joyce's Molly Bloom. The point is that the allusions are, with the semantics, different, but that what is lost for the anglophone reader at the denotative level can be found again at the level of connotation, if only we know where to look. And, for all the times Marie spoke of sound, of sight, of art, memory and the flowering of her own particular corner of the "sensual garden" (Wood 58), "en plus (en surplus) elle nous a appris qu'un texte était un miroir, une glace sans tain, ... un air de Mozart qu'on jouerait dans une forêt du Douanier Rousseau" (Jonin 10).

And so it would appear that Marie's word is, as Tom Wolfe would have said, a "painted word" and that she herself was, with Tom Wolfe, no shrinking violet. The explicit and the implicit ideal reader of her text are no more the same and no more limited by time, place and language than are its pretext and its subtext; it may be that it is her king who is at the root of all good, but it is her language that is its flower. As for the determinacy of a radical chic, the formulaic deprecation which sets the tone of her prologue, it seems that, for this (over)determined radical chick, it is, to quote, in another context, the fortuitously named Chauncey Wood, "all quite out of place in the sensual garden, as it no doubt was meant to be" (58) and it is also, finally, that displacement which allows for

the possibility of translation as a process through which, despite Artaud, the word can live again and, despite, this time, another Thomas Wolfe, you can, at least textually, go home again.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> On Bédier, see Rothschild 18.

### Works Cited

- Alain de Lille. Prologue to the *Anticlaudianus*: or, *The Good and Perfect Man*. Ed. and trans. James J. Sheridan. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973. 39-42.
- Allan, Keith. *Linguistic Meaning*. Vol. 1. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986. 2 vols.
- Artaud, Antonin. "An End to Masterpieces." *Selected Writings*. Ed. Susan Sontag and trans. Helen Weaver. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1988. 252-59.
- Burgess, Glyn S. and Keith Busby, ed and trans. *The Lais of Marie de France*. New York: Penguin, 1986.
- Hertz, Martin, ed. *Prisciani Grammatici Caesariensis Institutionum Grammaticarum*. Lipsae: B.G. Teubneri, 1855.
- Hilton, Nelson. *Lexis Complexes: Literary Interventions*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1995.
- Jonin, Pierre, trans. *Les lais de Marie de France*. Traduction des classiques français du Moyen Age 13. Paris: Champion, 1977.
- Joubert, Claude-Henry. *Oyez ke dit Marie: Etude sur les Lais de Marie de France*. Paris: J. Corti, 1987.
- Raynaud de Lage, Guy. *Alain de Lille: poète du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Institut d'Etudes Médiévales 12. Montreal: Université de Montréal, Institut d'Etudes Médiévales, 1951.
- Riffaterre, Michel. "The Mind's Eye: Memory and Textuality." *The New Medievalism*. Ed. Marina S. Brownlee, Kevin Brownlee and Stephen G. Nichols. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991. 29-45.
- Rothschild, Judith Rice. *Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France: Themes and Variations*. Vol. 1. North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures 139. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Publications of the Department of Romance Languages, 1974.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Paris: Payot, 1975.
- Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. New York and London: Oxford UP, 1975.

- Wolfe, Tom. *Mauve Gloves and Madmen, Clutter and Vine, and Other Stories, Sketches and Essays*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976.
- Wood, Chauncey. "The Author's Address to the Reader: Chaucer, Juan Ruiz and Dante." *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture*. Ed. Patrick J. Gallacher and Helen Damico. Albany: State U of New York P, 1989. 51-60.

# STATES OF IDENTITY

*Limits and Possibilities  
of Writing "French"*



STATES OF IDENTITY  
STATES OF IDENTITY  
STATES OF IDENTITY

**Special Issue**  
**Paroles Gelées 15.2 1997**

*Selected Proceedings from the UCLA  
French Department Graduate Students'  
Second Interdisciplinary Conference*



# STATES OF IDENTITY

*Limits and Possibilities of Writing "French"*

SELECTED PROCEEDINGS FROM THE UCLA FRENCH  
DEPARTMENT GRADUATE STUDENTS' SECOND ANNUAL  
INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE. APRIL 25-27, 1997

*Ce serait le moment de philosopher et de  
rechercher si, par hasard, se trouvait ici  
l'endroit où de telles paroles dégèlent.*

Rabelais, *Le Quart Livre*

**PAROLES GELEES**  
Special Issue  
*UCLA French Studies*  
Volume 15.2 ❧ 1997

Sponsors:           Borchard Foundation  
                          UCLA French Department  
                          French Consulate of Los Angeles  
                          Campus Programs Committee of the Program  
  Activities Board  
                          UCLA Center for Modern and Contemporary  
  Studies  
                          UCLA Graduate Student Association

Co-Editors:           Diane Duffrin  
                          Markus Müller

Assistant Editor:    Heather Howard

Conference           Markus Müller, Committee Chair  
Organizers:          Anne-Lancaster Badders           Natalie Muñoz  
                          Diane Duffrin                        Marcella Munson  
                          Heather Howard                    Michael Stafford  
                          Stacey Meeker

Design and Layout:  Joyce Ouchida

*Paroles Gelées* was established in 1983 by its founding editor, Kathryn Bailey. The journal is managed and edited by the French Graduate Students' Association and published annually under the auspices of the Department of French at UCLA.

Information regarding the submission of articles and subscriptions is available from the journal office:

*Paroles Gelées*  
Department of French  
2326 Murphy Hall  
Box 951550  
Los Angeles, California 90095-1550  
(310) 825-1145  
gelees@humnet.ucla.edu

Subscription price (per issue):    \$10 for individuals  
  \$12 for institutions  
  \$14 for international orders

Back issues available for \$7 each. For a listing, see our home page at <http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/parolesgelees/>.

Copyright © 1997 by the Regents of the University of California.  
ISSN 1094-7294

## CONTENTS

---

Introduction .....	5
<i>Editors</i>	
Program for <i>States of Identity:</i> <i>Limits and Possibilities of Writing "French"</i> .....	7
Blanchot, Speaking in Tongues: Otherness in Translation .....	11
<i>Denis Hollier</i>	
In Response to Denis Hollier's "Blanchot, Speaking in Tongues: Otherness in Translation" .....	29
<i>Janet Bergstrom</i>	
The Metaphor of Translation .....	37
<i>Andrea Loselle</i>	
Marcel Mauss's National Internationalism: An Approach to the <i>Essai sur le don</i> .....	43
<i>Luke Bresky</i>	
Radical Chic(k): The American Roots of Marie de France .....	55
<i>Susan Purdy</i>	
Discordant Locations for the Me-ospheric Void: Théophile Gautier vs. <i>La Sylphide</i> .....	65
<i>Regina Fletcher Sadono</i>	
The Bodypolitics of Feminist Science Fiction: Elisabeth Vonarburg's <i>Le Silence de la cité</i> .....	75
<i>Lorie Sauble-Otto</i>	



Identity Crises: Positions of Self in Simone de Beauvoir's <i>Memoirs</i> .....	83
<i>Kimberly Carter-Cram</i>	
Proust's Poetics of Recontextualization .....	95
<i>John S. LaRose</i>	
Exile and Identity in the Plays of Maryse Condé .....	105
<i>Melissa McKay</i>	
Classical Aesthetics, Modern Ethics: Lacan, Kierkegaard, Sophocles, Anouilh .....	115
<i>Joseph S. Jenkins</i>	
The State of the Stage: Representation from Corneille to Diderot .....	129
<i>Benjamin Kolstad</i>	
Ordering Information .....	138
Call For Papers .....	139

## Introduction

---

When we began preparations for the Second French Graduate Student Conference at UCLA, we learned very quickly that the concept of "being late" is a phenomenon that haunted not only the Romantics. To follow an original event of any kind is a challenging task, but the successful outcome of our conference *States of Identity: Limits and Possibilities of Writing "French,"* documented by the high quality of the present proceedings, demonstrate that there can be original "seconds," as paradoxical as this might sound.

Our "Call for Papers" for a conference on "identity" in the context of 'French' writing generated national and international responses from students in different disciplines such as Art History, ESL, Philosophy, Theater, as well as French, German and Comparative Literature thus underlining the interdisciplinary appeal of this conference.

Denis Hollier's thought-provoking keynote address on the very timely and controversial question of teaching literature in translation inaugurated the three-day event. Hollier's talk was complemented by insightful responses from Janet Bergstrom and Andrea Loselle from the perspective of film and poetry. We want to thank all three of them for setting the stage for an intellectually challenging yet collegial discussion among students, faculty and the many guests from outside the academic community.

Though the papers presented by the graduate students in six panels contributed much to our knowledge regarding individual aspects of "identity" in different cultures and time periods, the subsequent discussions made it clear that attempts to reach "sameness" regarding a given problem were inevitably deferred by new questions and concerns. What remained was the realization that in spite of the plurality of opinions, we had achieved "identity" in the overarching collective gesture of intellectual

exchange. It is this discovery that justifies this conference and our work in the humanities in general.

This conference and the publication of its proceedings would not have been possible without the generous financial support from our sponsors and we want to thank the Borchard Foundation, the French Consulate at Los Angeles, the UCLA Graduate Student Association, the Center for Modern and Contemporary Studies and the Campus Programs Committee of the Program Activities Board. Last but not least, we want to express our gratitude to the UCLA French Department and its faculty, whose continued support, encouragement and presence during the panels was much appreciated by the graduate students. A special thank you is due to Jean-Claude Carron for his introduction of the keynote speaker and tireless personal *engagement* in the organization of this conference.

Our last acknowledgment goes to the graduate students of the French Department who contributed in many ways to the successful outcome of this event and sacrificed much precious time to meetings and other organizational tasks. We hope that the success of the first two conferences will serve as motivation and inspiration to those who are currently working on next year's conference, which we are all eagerly anticipating.

The Editors

*Diane Duffrin*

*Markus Müller*

# ***States of Identity***

## ***Limits and Possibilities of Writing "French"***

*Selected Proceedings from the UCLA French Department  
Graduate Students' Second Annual Interdisciplinary Conference,  
April 25-27, 1997*

### **Friday, April 25, 1997**

SOUTH BAY ROOM OF SUNSET VILLAGE COMMONS

#### **4:45 p.m. Introduction of Keynote Speaker**

*Jean-Claude Carron, UCLA*

#### **5:00 p.m. Keynote Address**

*Denis Hollier, Yale University*

"Blanchot, Speaking in Tongues: Otherness in Translation"

#### **Respondents**

*Janet Bergstrom, UCLA*

*Andrea Loselle, UCLA*

#### **7:00 p.m. Reception**

### **Saturday, April 26, 1997**

NORTHRIDGE ROOM

#### **9:00 a.m. Panel #1**

##### ***Grafting Past to Present: Hybrid Identities***

Moderator: Michael Stafford

1. "Norman French, Latin and Scots English: Three versions of the *Leges inter Brettos et Scottos*," *Kristen Over (UCLA, Comp. Literature Program)*
2. "Verlan: An Expression of Beur Identity or Reversal by Inverse," *Amy Wells (Texas Tech University, Dept. of Classical and Modern Languages)*

3. "Marcel Mauss on Nationalism: An Approach to *The Gift*,"  
*Luke Bresky (UCLA, Dept. of English)*

**10:45 a.m. Panel #2**

***The Politics of Pedagogy: Translating Culture in the Classroom***

Moderators: Natalie Muñoz, Marcella Munson

1. "Silent Words: Language as an Obstacle to Immigrant Integration and Identity in French Society," *Katharine Harrington (Texas Tech University, Dept. of Classical and Modern Languages)*
2. "*The Guest in the Classroom: The Voice of Camus in Multicultural Academic Discourse*," *Ajanta Dutt (Rutgers University, ESL Program)*
3. "Radical Chic(k): The American Roots of Marie de France,"  
*Susan Purdy (University of Western Ontario, Dept. of French)*

**2:30 p.m. Panel #3**

***Bodies in Writing: Feminine Identity and the Literary Text***

Moderator: Heather Howard

1. "Discordant Locations for the Me-ospheric Void: Théophile Gautier vs. *La Sylphide*," *Regina Fletcher Sadono (UCLA, Theatre Arts Dept.)*
2. "The Bodypolitics of Feminist Science Fiction: Elisabeth Vonarburg's *Le silence de la cité*," *Lorie Sauble-Otto (University of Arizona, Dept. of French and Italian)*
3. "The 'I' Which Is Not One: Dual Identity in the Case of Simone de Beauvoir's Autobiography," *Kim Carter-Cram (Idaho State University, Dept. of Foreign Languages)*

**4:15 p.m. Panel #4**

***War and Remembrance: National Epitaphs of Self***

Moderator: Stacey Meeker

1. "Proust's Poetics of Recontextualization," *John S. LaRose (Louisiana State University, Dept. of French and Italian)*
2. "The Body and the State: Fantasies of Identity in Genet's *Pompes Funèbres*," *Leslie Ann Minot (UC Berkeley, Dept. of Comp. Literature)*
3. "Ecriture et Mémoire: Identity and Collective Memory in Jorge Semprun's *L'écriture ou la vie*," *Marcus Keller (California State University Long Beach, Dept. for German, Russian and Romance Languages)*

**Sunday, April 27, 1997**

SOUTH BAY ROOM

**9:00 a.m. Panel #5**

***Lieux de Mémoire: Negotiating Boundaries of Francophone Identity***

Moderator: Anne-Lancaster Badders

1. "Exile and Identity in the Plays of Maryse Condé," *Melissa McKay (University of Georgia, Dept. of Romance Languages)*
2. "Personal and National Narrative in *Une vie de crabe* by Tanella Boni," *Laura K. Reeck (New York University, Dept. of French)*

**10:45 a.m. Panel #6**

***Representation and the Reconsideration of Identity***

Moderator: Diane Duffrin

1. "Classical Aesthetics, Modern Ethics: Lacan, Kierkegaard, Sophocles, Anouilh," *Joseph Jenkins (UCLA, Comparative Literature Program)*
2. "The Stage of the Stage: Representation from Corneille to Diderot," *Ben Kolstad (UCLA, Comparative Literature Program)*

**Open Discussion**

**Closing Statement**

*Markus Müller, UCLA*

