

Language & Power
LCMND 2011 Conference Program
Friday, September 23, 2011

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**9:00 a.m. Registration
and coffee table at the Radisson Inn, Downtown Fargo
10:00–10:20 a.m.**

**Welcome and opening remarks, Skyview Space, 16th Floor
Kent Sandstrom, Dean of NDSU's College of Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences
Robert Kibler, Conference Program Co-chair & Bruce Maylath, LCMND President**

**10:30–11:45 a.m. Plenary Session 1.A & 1.B
The Language & Power of Government and Media**

1. Karen P. Peirce, North Dakota State University:
"Fighting Nature's Power: Ethos in Press Releases and Media Coverage Surrounding the 2011 Red River Flood in Fargo"
2. Diana Wegner, Douglas College:
"The Genre Change and Loss: The Discursive and Social Dynamics of Public Participation, Advocacy, and Municipal Governments"
3. Sarah Aleshire, Minot State University:
"The Power of Language in ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*"

**11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Lunch (at your choice of downtown restaurants)**

2.A) 1:30-2:45 p.m.

The Intersection of Language and Rhetorical Power in Urban Space, in Military Service, and in Serving Time

1. James J. Floyd, University of Central Missouri:
"The Power of Uncontested Terms and Terministic Screens in the Rhetoric of Military Service"
2. Kathleen Rettig, Creighton University:
"Rethinking Incarceration"

2.B) 1:30-2:45 p.m.

The Power of Gender in Language

1. Mitzi M. Brunsdale, Mayville State University:
"Pippi and Kalle and How They Grew: Power-Role Reversal in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy"
2. Michelle Resene, University of South Dakota:
"Is It Really the Shrew That Shakespeare Is Seeking to Tame? The Shifting Dynamic of the 'Sister' Pair in Shakespeare's Early to Middle Comedies"
3. Michelle Sauer, University of North Dakota:
"Queer Time and Lesbian Temporality in Medieval Discourse about the Side Wound"

3.A) 3:00-4:15 p.m.

Language and Power in the Sonic and the Graphic

1. Tatjana Schell and Kellam Barta, North Dakota State University:
“Differentiation in Regional Pronunciation of the Word ‘Bison’”
2. Steven Hammer, North Dakota State University:
“From Electric Dylan to the iPad DJ: The Impact of Emerging Technologies on Sonic Authenticity”
3. Christine Grossman, North Dakota State University:
“Beyond ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’: The Power(s) of Cartoon Mice as Literary Devices to Confront Xenophobia—Case in Point, Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* and Anti-Semitism”

3.B) 3:00-4:15 p.m.

The Power of Language in Middle and Early Modern English

1. Sean Flory, Jamestown College:
“Poetic Prophecy and Controlling the Queen: The Poet as Politician in *The Faerie Queene*”
2. Jason Miller, University of North Dakota:
“Monstrous Sabotage: Merlin’s Role in the Rise and Fall of Arthur’s Kingdom in the Middle English Prose Merlin”

4.A) 4:30-5:45 p.m.

Le pouvoir et la langue de française: Truong, Montesquieu, Ionesco

1. Holly Baker, University of South Dakota:
“‘Becoming Suspect’: Performing Subaltern Subjecthood and the Problem of Language in Monique Truong’s *The Book of Salt*”
2. Sante A. Viselli, University of Winnipeg:
“Quelques réflexions sur l’Amérique du Nord dans l’oeuvre de Montesquieu”
3. Vincent L. Schonberger, Lakehead University:
“The Revitalization of the Power of Language in the Avant-Garde Theatre of Eugène Ionesco”

4.B) 4:30-5:45 p.m.

Cyborgs and Software: Examining Language’s Intersection with the Power of Technology

1. Chris Lindgren, North Dakota State University:
“Applying Rhetorical and Literary Analyses to Software”
2. Andrew Mara, North Dakota State University:
“Identity as a Chimera Builder”

6:30 p.m. Annual Banquet
Radisson Inn (included with registration fee)

Saturday, September 24, 2011

5.A) 8:30–9:45 a.m.

Rhetorical and Metaphorical Power in the Language of Religion

1. Dale Sullivan, North Dakota State University:
“St. Paul, Rhetoric, and the Discourse of Power”
2. Russel Hirst, University of Tennessee:

“A Fusion of Powers Human and Divine: Augustine’s Tabernacle Analogy”

3. Alexandra Glynn, North Dakota State University:

“‘Early Christians’ as Text in the 2nd Century of the Roman Empire”

5.B) 8:30–9:45 a.m.

Language as a Weapon: Marginalization and Resistance in Central American and Mexico

1. Carol Pearson Martinson, North Dakota State University:

"Language as Weapon: Anacristina Rossi and *La Loca de Gandoca*"

2. Paul Worley, University of North Dakota:

“‘Get the Rich!’: Maya Language and Rehearsing the Revolution in Armando Dzul Ek’s ‘Chan weech’”

6.A) 10:00-11:15 a.m.

Employing the Language of Christianity in Attempting to Invoke the Power of the Trinity

1. Carolyn D. Baker, Mayville State University:

“Not Guilty!: The Protestant Puritan Bible Hermeneutics of Anne Hutchinson”

2. Mark William Brown, Jamestown College:

“Language, Symbol, and ‘Non-Symbolic Fact’ in D. G. Rossetti’s ‘Woodspurge’”

6.B) 10:00-11:15 a.m.

The Power of Language in Fiction and Traveling Writing

1. David A. Godfrey, Jamestown College:

“The ‘Old Word Jugglery’: Language, Self, and Society in Edith Wharton’s Work”

2. Eric Furusest, Minot State University:

“Listening to Eudora’s Welty’s Stories: An Enchanted Northerner’s Education”

3. Christopher Lozensky, University of South Dakota:

“Henry Morton Stanley and the Fetishisms of Victorian Travel Writing”

7.A) 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

The Threatening Power Language: Attempts to Squelch David Wojnarowicz and His Response

1. Laura McLaughlan, independent scholar:

"Through Sewn Lips: Rereading the Journals of David Wojnarowicz"

2. Jessica Shumake, University of Arizona:

“The Anti-Christ at the Smithsonian: David Wojnarowicz’s *Contested Legacy*”

12:45–2:00 Lunch

LCMND Annual Business Meeting

Radisson Inn, Passages Café, Willow Room, 2nd fl.

Language and Power
Bruce Maylath
LCMND President's Opening Address

As I point out to students in my linguistics courses, language follows power. Some years ago at a linguistics conference, Max Weinreich famously joked, "A language is a dialect with an army and a navy." With a look back through history, it's clear that the monarchs who controlled armies and navies made their own dialects the standards as their military forces invaded Alsace-Lorraine and Ireland, then the Americas, then Africa, Asia, and Australia and the South Pacific. Here in North America, French and English forces fought each other for domination. Currently, *TIME* magazine has a special issue on news racks featuring its choices of the 100 most influential sites in world history. One is Quebec City's Plains of Abraham. The battle fought there in 1759 was brief but decisive during what Americans call the French and Indian War, English Canadians call the Seven Years' War, and French Canadians call *La guerre de la Conquête*. When it ended, the outcome allowed English to overpower French in the race to dominate North America.

Locally, neither French nor English would prevail in the Red River Valley until much later. At the valley's upper end, Dakota was the language you would have heard spoken just 150 years ago. Unless something is done, English will soon totally overpower all indigenous languages in North Dakota, as it already has with Hidatsa and Mandan.

To this point, the events mentioned involve military power. Language then flows through the holes left behind. However, language is bound intimately with other sorts of power. Susan Gal's now well-known study "Peasant men can't get wives: Language change and sex roles in a bilingual community" documents what happened in the 1970s in Hungarian-language communities in eastern Austria. Strung along the border with Hungary, many of these communities were agricultural. As children in these communities grew up, males were content to stay on the farm—and to speak the local language, Hungarian. Their sisters, however, wanted what they saw as a better life for their children—and children-to-be. They were motivated to learn the national language, German, and to seek out native German-speaking mates. Thus began the decline of Hungarian in eastern Austria.

Linguists have found that women generally are more likely to change their language or to switch languages, in order to follow socioeconomic power. Thus, those of us who listen to Minnesota Public Radio's *Prairie Home Companion* recognize that when Garrison Keillor jokes about Norwegian bachelor farmers, he speaks a sociolinguistic truth: like their counterpart Hungarian-speaking bachelor farmers in Austria, Norwegian-speaking farmers in Minnesota ran the risk of remaining bachelors if they didn't acknowledge the new reality and act as their sisters did in switching to the socially and economically attractive language of imperial power.

In New York, sociolinguist William Labov launched his own renowned study discovering that lower-middle class women are most likely to switch dialects. Unlike their brothers and husbands, they had more opportunities to gain exposure to and thus to imitate the dialects of power. While the males in their families were commuting to work in construction, police, or firefighting positions, many of the females were commuting to office towers, where they worked as the support staff to upper-class and upper-middle-class professionals. The latter spoke the dialect of the Hudson Highlands, which you can hear in recordings of Franklin Roose-

vult or William F. Buckley, or the dialects of these same classes living in the Hamptons or Connecticut.

Of course, if language were only about power, we'd see people acting much more consistently and en masse. However, we now know from the past 40 years' sociolinguistic research that language is just as much about local identity, as it is about communication—or power. To force the masking or elimination of someone's variety of language, whether it be Brooklynese or African-American Vernacular English or the *parôle* of Winnipeg's St. Boniface—is to change the speaker's identity. Worse, to eliminate a language—whether it be Dakota or Mandan or Irish Gaelic or *la langue de le Canada*—borders on not only linguistic genocide but cultural genocide, when one realizes that language is the chief repository of culture.

North Dakota State University

Not Guilty! The Protestant Bible Hermeneutics of Anne Hutchinson Carolyn D. Baker

In a 1937 article entitled “The Case against Anne Hutchinson” Edmund S. Morgan claimed that Anne Hutchinson, “the godly wife of a pious and successful merchant... broached doctrine that was absolutely inconsistent with the principles upon which the colony had been founded.” In Morgan's view, Hutchinson “began to affirm a new basis for absolute truth: immediate personal communion with the Holy Ghost” (“Case Against” 637).

Morgan believed that Bay Colony Puritans saw this as “a troublesome development”. This group might have accepted her immediate revelations had they been for the purposes of “illuminating the meaning of Holy Scripture” (637). But for Morgan, these Puritans did not see it this way. Instead, the Bay Colony believed that Hutchinson was claiming revelations apart from Scripture. “To accept her doctrine would mean abandonment of the fundamental belief for which the Puritans had crossed the water—the belief that truth for man was to be found in the Bible. It would mean a complete change in their daily lives, in their church, in their state (637).

And for this reason alone, Morgan believed Hutchinson was tried before the General Court in November 1637, then formally excommunicated from the Colony, and forcedly required to winter under house arrest at the Joseph Weld Thomas' Roxbury home. Because of this heresy, Morgan believed that she was brought to trial in March 1638 by the Boston Church, and then formally banished from the Colony thereafter. Soon her house, family—once located in modern day Queens (?), New York—was ransacked and burned by attackers.

But did the punishment match the crime? And what if there was no crime?

What if Hutchinson's exegetical methods were the same as other orthodox Puritan preachers of her day? What if her immediate revelations *were* for the purpose of illuminating the meaning of Scripture? By exploring Hutchinson's hermeneutics contained in the proceedings of the trial which led to her excommunication, I would like to propose that her hermeneutical techniques as seen in the transcript, *The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson at the Court at Newtown*, were like the generally received and normal methods of many Puritans. In fact, they were specifically like those of her revered teacher, John Cotton. (Incidentally, His testimo-

ny at Hutchinson's trial never condemned or exonerated her hermeneutical practices!) By evidence that is indeed cumulative, I will ultimately counter Morgan's claim that "immediate personal communion with the Holy Ghost" was an anomalous experience for many Puritan readers of Scripture; and that for Hutchinson this was also a normal way to read the Sacred Text.

To begin with, Hutchinson's responses at her trial serve as specific, insightful examples of how the Massachusetts Bay approached the Christian Scriptures. Her answers to her examiners— Governor John Winthrop (Deputy Governor), Simon Bradstreet (Assistant in the General Court), Mr. Thomas Dudley (Deputy Governor) John Endicott (Assistant in the General Court), and other Bay ministers — especially John Cotton her teacher, steep themselves totally in the orthodox hermeneutical practices of that Colony.

So then how did John Cotton, Hutchinson's revered teacher and embodiment of approved Puritan interpretive practice, read Scripture?

Mayville State University

**Pippi and Kalle and How They Grew: Power-Role Reversal
in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy
Mitzi M. Brunsdale**

The worldwide phenomenon of Swedish journalist Stieg Larsson's posthumous Millennium Trilogy," *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played With Fire*, and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*, grew out of equally popular children's books written in the 1940s by Swedish author and animal rights activist Astrid Lindgren. According to critic Christine Holmlund, Lindgren's outrageous Pippi Longstocking and her less well-known boy detective Kalle Blomkvist arose from her [Lindgren's] conviction that children have a right to self-respect and autonomy, but they also deserve to feel they belong in a community, so that Pippi and Kalle defy societal rules of decorum long popular in Europe and America. Lindgren's child characters' reversal of traditional gender power roles inspired Larsson's spooky, tattooed, victimized young Lizbeth Salander and his do-gooding, womanizing journalist Mikael ("Kalle") Blomkvist, unconventionally united in uncovering international corporate and governmental corruption, so that they similarly turn traditional male-female power roles and societal norms upside down.

Larsson had planned no less than ten novels in his Millennium series, but when he died unexpectedly in 2004 at fifty, he had completed only three, a partially finished fourth, and synopses for the fifth and sixth. His posthumously published first three novels almost immediately became an enormous international publishing phenomenon. *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* appeared in Sweden in 2005; *The Girl Who Played With Fire*, 2006; and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*, 2007 (in the United States 2008, 2009, and 2010 respectively), and by 2010, they had sold approximately 3 million copies in Sweden alone and over 40 million copies in 40 countries. In 2010, the Swedish film version of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* also demolished box office records across Europe, and a U.S. version starring international stars Daniel Craig and Christopher Plummer, appears in December 2011.

Larsson's original title of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* was *Män som hatar kvinnor* ("Men Who Hate Women"), keynoting his central theme, that male-dominated contemporary Western society brutally victimizes women. His fortyish semi-autobiographical investigative reporter Mikael Blomkvist reflects views Larsson voiced in his *Expo* magazine articles, while twenty seven-year-old severely traumatized computer genius Lizbeth Salander harbors a savage hatred for men like those who abused her and continue to victimize the helpless. Together, Salander and Blomkvist battle corruption, injustice, and inhumanity, focusing on institutionalized misogyny, corporate crime, welfare-state hypocrisy, and international intrigue.

Larsson's Millennium novels crescendo into a searing denunciation of covered up violence, even murder, women, who Larsson felt are often denied self-respect and authority in even the most supposedly enlightened societies—like Sweden's. His implicit ironic comparison between Larsson's idealistic Mikael Blomkvist and Astrid Lindgren's pompous boy detective Kalle Blomkvist emphasizes the skewed roles that Larsson saw men and women playing in today's Western industrialized societies: men, convinced of their own importance and secretly fearing their own impotence, too often abuse women who possess far greater potential for improving society than their tormentors do. He deliberately chose epigraphs for *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* from historical accounts of women warriors like the Amazons, and noted that historians had often struggled to deal with such women who ignored gender distinctions, especially in the area of armed combat, remarking that even today, taking a woman along on a typical Swedish moose hunt causes acrimonious controversy. Accordingly, he embodied his vision of a more appropriate relationship between the sexes in Lizbeth Salander, his transformation of Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking, that irresistible children's dream of empowerment, and in Mikael Blomkvist, his development of Kalle Blomkvist, the boy "master detective" who cannot see that Lindgren slyly made the little character Kalle patronize, Eva-Lotta Lisander, really deserves the credit. In Larsson's view, modern men like Mikael Blomkvist should be the gun-bearers for women like Lizbeth Salander, unconventional and powerful enough not just to accompany men on hunts for moose who brutal trample human rights, but to lead those hunts and do the justifiable killing themselves.

Mayville State University

**"The "Old Word Jugglery": Language, Self, and Society
in Edith Wharton's Work
David A. Godfrey**

"A standard; the word perhaps gives me my clue. When I said, in my resentful youth, that I had been taught only languages and manners, I did not know how closely, in my parents' minds, the two were related," wrote Edith Wharton in her memoir, *A Backward Glance* (52). Because the two were intimately linked in her own mind as well, language plays a crucial role in establishing the relation of self to society throughout her canon. What she terms a "standard" is of course an ideal or cultural norm, an index of the way things ought to be rather than a description of the way they are. Consistent with her explicit statement in "The Great American

Novel” that “As she [America] has reduced the English language to a mere instrument of utility . . . so she has reduced relations between human beings to a dead level of vapid benevolence” (651), Wharton repeatedly associates a failure of language with a failure of relationships. This paper focuses on three such failures.

First I take up Wharton’s exploration of language’s capacity to transcend the reality of everyday life and to legitimize not only existing ideal and real cultures but to call forth alternative ones as well. By presenting an alternative ideal world, language can be used to destroy an established one. This is precisely what happens in her first novel, *The Valley of Decision* (1902). Odo Valsecca, her idealistic hero, eventually learns his lesson: “Sentimental verbiage: he saw it clearly now. He had been the dupe of the old word-jugglery which was forever confounding fact and fancy in men’s minds. For it was essentially an age of words: the world was drunk with them, as it had once been drunk with action; and the former was the deadlier drug of the two” (II.289-90).

Secondly, I explore how language as a “mere instrument of utility” legitimizes (explains and justifies) the commercially derived values of Wharton’s nouveaux riches to the virtual exclusion of all other values, especially ethical and moral ones. Finally, I take up in some detail Wharton’s severe criticism of the cowardly way members of her old New York upper class use a “full and elaborate vocabulary of evasion” to unintentionally subvert the social order.

Jamestown College

A Fusion of Powers Human & Divine: Augustine’s Tabernacle Analogy **Russel Hirst**

De Doctrina Christiana, St. Augustine’s treatise on the sort of education that produces the most powerful sorts of thinkers and speakers for doing God’s work in this world, is particularly interesting to rhetoricians because of its lengthy treatment of the art of preaching. Many studies have explored Augustine’s advice to Christian preachers, focusing on his defense of right appropriation of classical learning to the art of preaching. This eloquent defense of oratorical art has, through the ages, gone a long way in legitimizing classical rhetoric as part of the intellectual training of preachers.

At the core of Augustine’s treatise is the theme of power: how to develop intellectual and oratorical power and how to wield them in promoting the Kingdom of God. But if this focus is on power that humans can work to obtain, what does Augustine have to say about the Power of God and its operation in establishing the Kingdom?

Augustine answers this question via an extremely effective analogy: divine power is at the core of rightly operating human power, just as His presence was at the core of the Israelite sanctuary: the Tabernacle. Augustine urged his audience to appropriate and adapt classical learning to God’s purposes just as the ancient Israelites “plundered their Egyptian masters” and used the gold, silver, jewels, linens, etc. to “build a tabernacle unto God” wherein God’s presence could dwell among the Israelites—and therefrom teach, guide, defend, and empower them.

This analogy is not much studied in rhetorical studies of Augustine, yet its theme is the very one Augustine and his spiritual and intellectual descendants most emphasize. And it has particularly important application to *The Education of a Christian* (alternate translation of the book title *De Doctrina Christiana*). This is Augustine's treatise on the nature of power in Christian oratory: learning, he asserts, should be consecrated to God, and it is accelerated and expanded by connection to God, the most intelligent Being in the universe. The spiritually oriented (redeemed) human mind penetrates to the profoundest truth and greatest power. Faith thus becomes generative of knowledge, all kinds of knowledge. "Crede, ut intelligas" (believe, so that you may understand) he urged.

To expand: in the Biblical narrative upon which Augustine bases his analogy, the service Jehovah required of the Israelites was to build a moveable house of worship (the Tabernacle) and the Arc of the Covenant, in which they, the People of God, could carry about with them the Presence of God. The Tabernacle of Jehovah was a fusion of human and divine effort, putting the supernatural at the core and shaping all else around it. It was made of materials from the natural realm, but these were brought together by human beings cooperating with a divine plan. God had gifted the foremen and other workers on the Tabernacle Project with special knowledge and skill, a *techne* for working the natural materials into a divine blueprint.

In other words, Augustine argued that, although Christians should bring in classical rhetorical theory, and all appropriate classical learning, including understanding of nature (science) to help develop intellect and power in God's people, secular learning must be winnowed and configured, and subordinated, according to wisdom from God. When this is done, he believed, the faithful become like the ancient Tabernacle: they are built up from the elements of this world combined with elements of the supernatural world, consecrated to divine purpose and guidance, empowered by an indwelling Presence, and working in cooperation with that Presence. The work and the glory: transforming humankind into eternal Sons and Daughters of God—that is, into beings who are becoming more and more like God their father, as nearly all Christians have believed. The importance of this for studies in rhetoric is that this goal of transformation into something defined by theology is, for true believers, the spring nurturing rhetorical theory's growth—since instruction and persuasion via language is a God-ordained tool of human transformation.

Although this sort of prose strikes many ears as overwhelmingly theological, it is the kind of explanation that leads on to understanding the rhetorical theory of supernaturalists. I refer to Christian thinkers and to supernaturalists of all kinds. Whether it strikes us as wonderful, outrageous, or something in between, we've got to give it much more than a nod of acknowledgement as we dig down to the sources of power for major theorists of rhetoric throughout much of Western history.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Henry Morton Stanley and the Fetishisms of Victorian Travel Writing Christopher Lozensky

“Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” With these words, Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) immortalizes the climax of *How I Found Livingstone in Central Africa* (1872)—the archetypal moment when, after several months and some 700 miles in the swamps and jungles of the “dark continent,” Stanley finally finds the object of his quest: David Livingstone, the once-famous missionary who had allegedly disappeared in central Africa. That this phrase, which made Stanley the laughing stock of the Royal Geographical Society, has retained its currency in popular parlance is a testament to the mythic stature of the man who coined it; however, the fact that Stanley probably never actually uttered those infamous words and only added them to his account sometime after his initial meeting with Livingstone suggests that the myth of Henry Stanley is founded on fiction as much as fact.

To date, most studies of Stanley have been biographies concerned with either condemning or canonizing the man behind the myth, leaving a dearth of theoretically informed work on his writing, itself. In response to this lack and in alignment with the LCMND conference theme of “language and power,” I offer a historical and psychoanalytic account of how fetishisms operate along lines of race, gender, and class in *How I Found Livingstone*. In *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995), Anne McClintock observes that “male theorists of imperialism and postcolonialism have seldom felt moved to explore the gendered dynamics” of white European men as “direct agents of empire” (5)—a point that is still well-taken, especially with regard to studies of Stanley. McClintock, herself, makes a passing reference to Stanley in a section tantalizingly titled “Fetishism in the Contact Zone” (226-31, esp. 230). “Colonial protestations notwithstanding,” says McClintock, “a decidedly fetishistic faith in the magical powers of the commodity underpinned much of the colonial civilizing mission” (227). The power of commodity fetishism was not, however, always exercised equally by both European and African parties, nor was it the only form of fetishism in the “contact zone.” Drawing on Sigmund Freud’s account of fetishism in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), along with subsequent elaborations and reformulations of it by McClintock, Peter Melville Logan, André Lussier, and Louise J. Kaplan, I analyze how, in key passages of his account, Stanley’s language encodes fetishistic shows of his power as a white, male, masculine, European subject over and against a feminized African Other. These fetishized scenarios simultaneously underscore and obfuscate the unequal power relations, as well as the symbolic and physical violence, subtending the myth of Henry Morton Stanley. Without losing sight of biographical interpretations completely, psychoanalyzing *How I Found Livingstone in Central Africa* in this way nevertheless offers a more critically engaged approach to the racism, sexism, and classism of the myth behind the man.

University of South Dakota

Through Sewn Lips: Rereading the Life Writing of David Wojnarowicz **Laura McLauchlan**

Issues of language and power are fundamental to the collected work of writer, and visual artist, David Wojnarowicz (1954-1992). Perhaps his most famous image is his self portrait with sewn lips titled "Silence=Death." John Rechy describes *In the Shadow of the American Dream: The Diaries of David Wojnarowicz* (ed. Amy Scholder) as "an account of a life lived fully on the edge." Wojnarowicz's life writing—his diaries, letters, and autobiographical journalism—led him out of silence and isolation, helping this lone man, raised by an abusive father, to leave a collection of writing directed against all forms of human oppression.

An openly and primarily gay-identified writer such as David Wojnarowicz challenges many teachers of life writing, and of American literature, who may avoid this gifted writer's work as too upsetting in its subject matter—including accounts of homosexual rape, child prostitution, along with its vivid documentation of adult homoerotic pleasures—even while recognizing his writing has high literary merit. An alternate title of this paper might be: "Who is Afraid of Teaching David Wojnarowicz?" After all, one may be tempted to avoid trouble in a university lecture hall, or a three-hour seminar for fourth year students, such as I have taught, just as much as one may be tempted to avoid uncomfortable conversations and unpleasant confrontations. In oblique answer, critic Judith Butler challenges her readers to look for occasions when self and cultural "other" may meet and recognize a shared humanity. Sometimes such meetings can and do take place through literature.

Joan Scott underscores the importance of studying the literature of experience—memoirs, and autobiographical accounts of various kinds, such as I observe that Wojnarowicz has written—in terms of historical and cultural context. Scott's essay emphasizes the importance of academic study and scholarship in rereading and evaluating the contributions of such autobiographical writing, often reputed to rest on the "authority of experience," a concept which Scott thoroughly critiques. Both Butler and Scott emphasize the importance of engaged conversation and debate within a larger discursive community in order to achieve lasting change, constituting a break from oppression.

In conclusion, I argue that David Wojnarowicz's image "Silence=Death" can be read, with his life writing, as an angry challenge to North American culture: to loosen the stitches which have silenced meaningful exploration of the lived experience of all those we "other" as different and tacitly less human than ourselves.

Independent Writer

Why the 1862-69 Dakota Prisoners-of-War Letters Should Be Translated into Dakota English Rather than Standard English **John Peacock (Spirit Lake Dakota)**

I am the editor of a project by two fluent Dakota-language-speaking elders to translate into English fifty letters originally written in the endangered Dakota language by Dakota prison-

ers of war at Camp McClellan in Davenport, Iowa, between the end of the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 and the prisoners' release in 1869. The letters were retrieved from faded manuscripts at the Flandreau Dakota Community in South Dakota and the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. After the manuscripts were xeroxed, painstakingly transcribed, and translated into literal word-for-word English following the Dakota word order – the question arose whether the final idiomatic English translations should be into Standard English, Dakota English, or some combination thereof. How and why this question arose is the subject of this paper.

Standard English (StE) is more familiar to academic conference audiences and book publishers, but Dakota English (DakE) is closer to whatever English the letter writers might have heard or spoken in 1862 as well as to the way sentences are formed in the Dakota language, e.g. topic/comment constructions and backing/filling repetitions:

Dakota: Wicasta den kaska unkanpi dena waziyata aye cin o nunpapi kihan om wounhdakpi kta iyececa.

English in Dakota word order: Men here imprisoned we are these north they go together the two of us if with to them talk will, it seems.

DakE: These men imprisoned here that are going north, if two of us go with them, we shall talk to them, it seems.

StE: If two of us go with the men imprisoned here that are going north, maybe we'll talk to them.

According to Beverly Olson Flanigan's "American Indian English and Error Analysis: The Case of Lakota English," "[D]ivergence . . . from the norms of so-called StE. . . is often viewed as evidence of 'errors' or 'mistakes' or simply 'bad grammar' . . . usually carrying . . . the spoken or unspoken connotation of . . . the inability of the natives to master StE." Thus, a white conference attendee hearing a Dakota English translation of one of the Dakota letters expressed the hope that it would be "corrected."

But the fluent speaking translators believe, to paraphrase William L. Leap in *American Indian English*, that English discourse within Dakota settings needs to follow Dakota rules of speaking English, not conform to expectations established in the non-Dakota world.

Is a conference presentation or a book publication a Dakota setting, however, especially when most readers or attendees are non-Dakota? Given the pitfalls for the translators and their editor as they try to serve as honest cultural brokers between the letter writers and their Dakota and non-Dakota audiences today, is it any wonder that some Dakota traditionalists frown on publishing the translated Dakota letters at all, just as there are Dakota who believe it is "too early" to have a full public discussion of the Dakota War of 1862.

Leap concludes: "Whether [Native Americans] use the standard code, Indian English, or some other language variety inside or outside of home and community settings depends on political, not grammatical factors."

This paper, in other words, discusses the whole issue of whether to translate the Dakota letters into Dakota English or Standard English as fundamentally a matter of the relation between language and power.

Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore

**Is It Really the Shrew Shakespeare Is Seeking to Tame?
The Shifting Dynamic of the “Sister” Pair in
Shakespeare’s Early to Middle Comedies
Michelle Resene**

Kenneth Branagh’s film rendition of *Much Ado about Nothing* (2003) delights critics with Emma Thompson’s portrayal of the strong-willed Beatrice. Meanwhile, Kate Beckinsale’s Hero comes across as flat and uninteresting. The perception of Beckinsale’s character as ineffectual is due in part to Branagh’s textual omissions: he cuts nearly all of Hero’s lines from the play. Hero’s limited speaking part is not the only reason for a modern audience’s lukewarm reaction to the character, however. Even the other characters in the play have long viewed Hero as a disappointment when placed alongside her cousin who, as Benedick observes, “exceeds her as much in beauty as the last of May doth the first of December” (1.1.182-3). In *Shakespeare’s Division of Experience* (1981), Marilyn French dismisses Hero as a “non-character” (128). Irene Dash’s *Wooring, Wedding, and Power: Women in Shakespeare’s Plays*, written the same year, supports this view, adding that Hero is a “conformist” (252). Beatrice, on the other hand, is praised by Dash and others as an “outspoken, independent, delightfully alert woman” (Dash 252). For French, Dash, and other critics, Beatrice becomes the voice of feminism while Hero is condemned to silence. A similar fate is shared by her “sisters” in Shakespeare’s other comedies – Luciana in *The Comedy of Errors* (1592-94) and Helena in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1594-96).

In this essay, I re-examine the claims of feminist critics over the past thirty years that Luciana from *Comedy of Errors* (1592-94), Helena from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1594-96), and Hero from *Much Ado about Nothing* (1598) are ineffectual, uninteresting characters when compared to their “sisters” Adriana, Hermia, and Beatrice. I then assert that the relationship between Shakespeare’s female protagonists is much more complex than it initially appears. Through an in-depth analysis of Shakespeare’s use of language in developing his heroines, I will show that the proto-feminist ideals that Adriana, Hermia, and Beatrice appear to enforce are undermined by their eventual amalgamation into the patriarchy while Luciana, Helena, and Hero, present their own form of protest to the male dominated societies they find themselves a part of by the ends of the plays. They emphasize the importance of the relationship between females and the necessity of one woman supporting another in the face of male dominance.

While critics may fail to acknowledge them, the danger these “submissive” women pose is recognized and even feared by the other characters in the plays, and so they are viewed at times as temptresses or sirens. Even Shakespeare appears uncomfortable with the Christian wantons he has created and works to shift the dynamic of his “sister” pairs beginning in *Twelfth*

Night (1601) where the submissive heroine, Viola, takes center stage. In this play, Viola's only protest about the treatment of women comes in the guise of a man, and both she and Olivia are silent at the play's end. Shakespeare continues the trend of silencing his female protagonists in the final scenes of his later comedies including *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter's Tale* making their protests in the earlier works that much more significant.

University of South Dakota

Rethinking Incarceration **Kathleen Rettig**

Jimmy Santiago Baca wrote the autobiography, *A Place to Stand*, to explain to his two sons how he lived his life before, during, and after he served five and a half years in the Arizona Florence Prison. He hopes his book helps stop the violence and the violent deaths that plague his extended family and he wants his sons to hear his version of his life to counter-balance the town and family gossip. Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, explains how, over the centuries, punishment has changed from torturing the body to torturing the soul, moving from public spectacle to isolated institutions. Prisons were not originally envisioned to house a wide-range of crimes. By the latter part of the twentieth century, incarceration became the sentence for crimes as diverse as drug use and premeditated murder.

Baca learns how to read and write in prison by teaching himself. He is denied the opportunity to work on a GED. Foucault believes education is essential to empower an individual to reform. Both Baca and Foucault explain how imposing violent restraints on individuals represents an abuse of power and instead of providing positive change, results in criminalizing individuals. Baca explains the connection between literacy and an individual's power to control his own life path, making decisions that help him return to the community and stay in the community. Foucault explains how using incarceration indiscriminately and incarcerating for long periods of time increases the crime rate, causes recidivism, and produces delinquents. Both books detail how socializing and educating law breakers reduces delinquency. For both authors, criminal behavior is not part of human nature; it is more often the result of poverty.

Through different approaches, Baca and Foucault draw similar conclusions regarding the dangers of indiscriminate incarceration. Baca reaches his understanding of the prison system as a poor, illiterate bright young man serving five and a half years in a maximum-security prison in Arizona. Foucault, growing up in an educated affluent family, studies the changes in conceptualizing punishment before and after the Enlightenment, and through intellect and logic outlines the relationship between abusing power and abusing poor uneducated powerless citizens.

Creighton University

**Queer Time & Lesbian Temporality in Medieval Discourse
about the Side Wound
Michelle M. Sauer**

Theorists working on queer temporalities, including Judith Jack Halberstrom, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Carla Freccero define “queer time” generally as perverse moments that develop against the standard heterosexual institutions of marriage and reproduction, and envelop non-procreative and same-sex expressions of physical desire among other practices. Further, to use Heather Love’s phrase, medieval nuns often engaged in “feel[ing] backward”—a non-normative way of remembering that differs from traditional memory in its preoccupation with loss and failure and in its concern with mobilizing that loss and failure for strategic purposes. In short, feeling backward allows a subject to transform her abject marginalization into opportunity. Building on these notions of queer time, I am seeking the intersection of the lesbian past and present within the literature and architecture of anchoritism, and by remembering such, hope to contribute to the growing awareness of a lesbian premodern.

Christ was often feminized in the Middle Ages, configured as mother and sister as well as spouse and lover. This feminization is constructed in numerous manners in both art and literature, from explorations of his “bleeding and feeding,” to his maternal generosity. Recent scholarship has further revealed the medieval configuration of Christ’s side wound as a vagina. One aspect that has been glossed over in these explorations is the lesbian potential of such an encounter between a feminized Christ and a female mystic who sucks Christ’s side—her lips on his (vaginal) lips, resulting in an experience akin to divine cunnilingus. I will strive to locate the woman-woman eroticism present during such an encounter, and to consider the potential impact this had on the mystical marriage of Christ and female holy woman, especially as it is configured as a “lesbian” (or perhaps “lesbian-like”) relationship.

Since the mystics’ erotic identities cannot be severed from their body memories and therefore from their uses of time and space, it is not surprising that they dwell within what Halberstam refers to as “queer time and space.” The pleasure derived from mystical contemplation and prayer and traveling back and forth between past and present not only challenges the normative sexual practices of the medieval sensibility, but also poses a threat to heteronormative temporality and spatiality—particularly notions of time and space that are intimately connected to sex between a man and a woman, and, therefore, structured around reproduction and family. The mystics are then doubly queered, or as Judith Bennett terms it, “twice marginalized,” both because they experience same-sex desire, although it is shrouded by a veneer of heterosexuality, and because they give pleasure to themselves and refuse to relegate their mind and body to the present moment and the physical reality of their enclosure in a convent or anchorhold.

This reverberation of queer time, disjointed travels throughout time and space, leaves us with after-images of Christ’s vaginal wound—a trope that continues today—being licked, sucked, and tongued by female saints. The idea of queer time, coupled with explorations of queer space and homospatiality, engage the possibility of same-sex desire in such an encounter, which increases our understanding of the polyvalent, ambiguously-gendered, intersexed Christ that dominated late medieval Incarnational theology. The simultaneous sexualization and feminization of Christ produces a multitude of queer possibilities—if he is gendered male, it is

easier to think of him as aggressively sexual, especially in penetrative actions, but if he is gendered female, passive sexuality, including cunnilingus, becomes an uncomfortable subject. Undoubtedly, the material body of Christ provides a wide array of queer possibilities to be explored.

University of North Dakota

Differentiation in Regional Pronunciation of the word Bison **Tatjana Schell and Kellam Barta**

In the spring of 2011, we—along with our colleague, Teresa Black Cloud—conducted field research to investigate differentiation in pronunciation of the middle consonant sound in the word *bison* in the North Dakota-Minnesota area: specifically, the difference between the voiced /z/ and the voiceless /s/. A review of relevant literature turned up very little recognition of the North Dakota-Minnesota region, and even Harold B. Allen's *The Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest* (1976) fails to highlight this voiced-voiceless distinction. Based on anecdotal data, we hypothesized that we would find an isogloss, or transitional area, roughly corresponding to the vertical border between North Dakota and Minnesota. The presence of our school's mascot, the NDSU Bison, as a possible influence on pronunciation made this a particularly interesting investigation.

The campus of North Dakota State University was a convenient location to begin our investigation, as the school draws students from all over the North Dakota-Minnesota region. We interviewed 20 NDSU students using guided conversations (a linguist's interview technique) to elicit the target word (*bison*) from our subjects with minimal influence of the observer's paradox. We recorded each subject's pronunciation of *bison* as well as the influence exerted on him or her by hometown and heritage. On a map of the region, we plotted each subject's pronunciation on the location of his or her hometown.

The geographical data lend themselves to multiple interpretations. One interpretation suggests a vertical isogloss running through New York Mills, MN, and Alexandria, MN, with predominantly voiced /z/-speakers to the west and voiceless /s/-speakers to the east. A second interpretation suggests a horizontal isogloss roughly corresponding to the border between North Dakota and South Dakota and slashing across central Minnesota, with predominantly voiced /z/-speakers to the north and voiceless /s/-speakers to the south. These data, along with our heritage language data, are ultimately inconclusive. Notably, though, speakers who grew up in the Fargo area overwhelmingly pronounced the voiced /z/ in *bison*, and speakers who grew up in the Minneapolis area

Additional anecdotal data led us to further explore possible social influences on the regional pronunciation of *bison*. According to colleagues, students at The University of Manitoba in Winnipeg not only share our mascot, the Bison (or "Bisons"), but they also tend to pronounce the middle consonant of the word with the voiceless /s/, in contrast to speakers in close proximity to NDSU. In light of this new data, we suggest a socially-driven interpretation of our data as a whole: Speakers of the voiced /z/ tend to reside within a sphere of influence exerted by

the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area—a sphere of influence that contrasts geographically and socially with the metropolitan areas of Winnipeg and Minneapolis, respectively. We believe that Fargoans share a sense of local identity as members of a “little big city” which stands in opposition to its surrounding, much larger metropolitan areas: Fargo has many of the advantages of metropolitan living, but includes a small-town feel. This sentiment is represented in Marc de Celle’s *How Fargo of You*, and we believe that citizens of the greater F-M area may indeed encode this sense of local identity in the way they speak—specifically, that this sentiment manifests in a preference of one pronunciation of *bison* over another.

This research opens up several questions for further exploration. Which heritage language influence initiated this pronunciation anomaly, and why is this influence not apparent in NDSU speakers? Is it possible that the presence of a popular local university mascot with strong ties to sense of local identity could actually co-opt speakers into changing their pronunciations of the word that indicates that mascot? We think so, and we hope to continue investigating this phenomenon.

North Dakota State University

**The Regeneration of the Power of Language in
Eugène Ionesco’s avant-garde theatre
Vincent L. Schonberger**

Twentieth century French writers: Samuel Beckett, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, have, in different ways, questioned the meaning of reality and of existence. Painters like Picasso, Braque, Dali and Mondigliani fragmented and distorted the images of the universe in their non-representational paintings. Ionesco’s way of depicting modern man’s existential anguish (Angst, angoisse) and problem of communication was to develop the theatre of the absurd in which anything was possible, where the accepted rules of the theatre, even the rules of language were questioned.

Ionesco tried to reduce the over-intellectualized literary content of language in *La Cantatrice chauve* where he uses language not as an instrument of literal and logical communication but as a provocative tool in order to provoke the spectator through the multiplication a repetition of a series of quasi meaningless sounds. In Ionesco’s plays language is no longer used to make the spectator think but to provoke him, to make him uncomfortable, uneasy, to disturb him and force him to react unconsciously to what he hears and sees. Mrs. Smith’s telling her husband that their daughter is called Peggy, that they live in the vicinity of London, that their name was Smith, and the Martins’ discovery that they “live in the same room” and (...) sleep in the same bed” (p. 18) and that they are the parents of the two-year old girl, Alice, create tragicomic and absurd reactions in the audience and invite tragic laughter. Ionesco goes beyond Antonin Artaud’s concept for “total theatre” for he strips language of its intellectual function. He adds a new dimension to language itself by empowering it with a dramatic effect that is not conveyed by the literal meaning of words but is inherent in their dramatic rhythmic usage. Indeed, Ionesco strips language from its a priori “raison d’être”, from its ideological and denota-

tive meaning, he examines it under a microscope in order to exhibit its destructive forces, in order to reconstruct it, in order to restore language its poetic powers. By showing the absurd nature and meaninglessness of conventional language, Ionesco's intention is to shatter the ossified and fossilized crust of common language by the use of humour and satire.

Ionesco bypasses the dichotomy between the designative and symbolic modes. By disengaging language from its purely practical function and by mixing the semantic (verbal) and aesthetic (non-verbal) modes, he creates a more fluid and playful perspective, a distanciation technique that allows his *dramatis personae* to be both actors and characters. Ionesco's protagonists may not communicate well with each other on the designative, rational, literal, informative level. At the same time, Ionesco does not believe in the meaninglessness of language. What he seems to implicate, is that the "ontological emptiness" of our lives could be greatly improved by a more poetic, more personal more magical use of words. Ionesco is quite aware of the fact that it is not enough to escape from the tyranny of words. His principal objective of is to unmask and shatter the meaningless absurdity of conventional language through humour and ridicule, to show that modern man has preferred the superficial comforts of rational logic, filling his absurd existence with empty platitudes, meaningless clichés and enticing political and advertising slogans.

Ionesco wants to depict for us the absurdity of man's situation in the universe, his dehumanization, his loss of individuality, his mechanization, his robotization his metamorphosis into rhinoceroi through the misuse and repetition of empty clichés and political propaganda. In his play; *Rhinoceros*, a political drama of mass conformism and mass-hysteria, Ionesco shows how in a world of mass communication reason is manipulated by propaganda. Modern man is controlled and directed by the logical arguments of manipulators who exploit his reasoning capabilities and disguise the non-logical aspects of reality in order to justify any form of exploitation or oppression, whether fascist or socialist.

Lakehead University

The Anti-Christ at the Smithsonian: David Wojnarowicz's Contested Legacy Jessica L. Shumake

My presentation is a case study of the late David Wojnarowicz's struggle for rhetorical agency in a public museum. Specifically, I analyze public museums as flash points in the scramble for identification; I propose that we tend to think of identification with a work of art, text, or person as effective insofar as it prompts an audience to action or occasions a shift in consciousness. Wojnarowicz practiced art that courted trouble, refused historical amnesia, and resulted in what Kenneth Burke refers to as scrambles and "flare-ups in the Human Barnyard" (Burke 23). The scene of my analysis is the *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. The exhibition opened October 30, 2010 and ran until February 13, 2011. To summarize briefly, the Smithsonian received complaints from a small, albeit vocal, group of conservative activists regarding purportedly anti-Christian, blasphemous, and homoerotic imagery. The Secretary of the Smithsonian, G. Wayne

Clough, removed a film installation by Wojnarowicz with the aim of fortifying the institution against threats from prominent Republicans to decrease federal support and increase federal scrutiny. Clough's stated goal was to "sustain the long-term strength of an institution" he "cares deeply about [so as] to allow it to serve" its "educational mission" (Clough "Statement"). However, I argue that an important part of the Smithsonian's educational mission was compromised with the removal of Wojnarowicz's film *A Fire in My Belly*. Namely, the decision to censor foreclosed debate on whose interpretations of the sacred, specifically the crucified Christ, are representative enough to merit national visibility in a public museum.

Following Michael Cobb, I argue that attempts to silence and censor have always conditioned LGBTQ publicity in the "U.S. public sphere—a sphere that necessarily always shapes the positions from where anyone, especially queers, can speak" (Cobb 9). That is, Wojnarowicz's censorship is a testament to his agency in the face of rhetorical constraint. Further, his post-mortem agency renders him a martyr to the cause of representing non-normative sexualities in the absence of a public sphere that is readily accessible to all comers. Interestingly, Wojnarowicz's film installation was the only item removed from the Hide/Seek exhibit, which renders his work peripheral within an already marginalized and stigmatized group of LGBTQ artists. Conceivably censoring Wojnarowicz's work from the exhibition was a strategic move on the Secretary of the Smithsonian's part; it was an attempt to throw a bone to a dissenting partisan constituency in the midst of calls from those stakeholders to close the show early. The question then is the appropriateness of Clough's decision to censor Wojnarowicz.

I draw from Thomas Farrell's theory of the rhetorical forum because of his astute acknowledgement that decisions regarding appropriateness cannot be settled *a priori* and have real civic implications for "reinventing the boundaries of rhetorical community itself" (204). I further suggest that the Smithsonian's decision to censor both narrowed a space for civic engagement and highlighted the appropriateness of activist outrage over the inaction of the Catholic Church, the federal government, and the American Medical Association (AMA) at the beginning of the AIDS plague. Wojnarowicz's keen awareness of the rhetorical constraints he faced and his refusal to be silenced, though heretical to some and laudable to others, has amplified his voice and given him post-mortem agency, albeit paradoxically, through censorship. Further, the Smithsonian's censorship positions Wojnarowicz as a moral agent despite the backdrop of family violence, homelessness, sex work, poverty, and the AIDS crisis against which he struggled. As Wojnarowicz states in his memoir *Close to the Knives*, "[To] make the private into something public is an action that has terrific repercussions . . . [In so doing] the term 'general public' disintegrates" (121). Ultimately, I argue that Wojnarowicz's testimony and witness, as a multiply oppressed person, has terrific potential to reverberate to draw people with similar frames of reference out of silence and invisibility. Hence, practicing public rhetoric requires a commitment to asking whether there is a recurrent "gathering place," via Farrell, for hearing the testimony of a divested underclass in the public sphere.

University of Arizona

« Quelques réflexions sur l'Amérique du Nord dans l'œuvre de Montesquieu » Sante A. Viselli

La boussole ouvrit, pour ainsi dire, l'univers. On trouva l'Asie et l'Afrique, dont on ne connoissoit que quelques bords, et l'Amérique, dont on ne connoissoit rien du tout (Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, XXI, 21).

Une nouvelle géographie mondiale se dessine sur les traces de cette « boussole » symbolique dont parle Montesquieu dans *l'Esprit des lois*. L'Europe et le monde entier subissent, après la découverte du Nouveau monde, une révolution en profondeur. Les structures sociales, politiques et économiques se trouvent secouées par le dynamisme inhérent à cette révolution et qui touche tous les domaines de la vie et des connaissances. La découverte d'une pluralité de mondes étrangers à l'occident plonge l'univers dans une sorte de chaos « écho de ce monde en crise », selon ce mot d'Althusser. Le nouvel homme se trouve obligé de vivre au sein d'un temps multiple, d'un espace pluriel. C'est sous le signe de cette boussole symbolique que se place la colonisation de l'Amérique du Nord. Mais, comme nous le rappelle justement Montesquieu, tout « étoit destiné dans l'ordre des causes » (« De la politique », *Œuvres complètes*, vol. I, éd. Pléiade, 115).

Chose bien connue, le philosophe de la Brède s'intéresse à la géographie du monde. L'Amérique du Nord n'échappe pas à sa curiosité et les multiples références rencontrées surtout dans *l'Esprit des lois* témoignent du sérieux de son approche et de sa profonde réflexion sur les rapports que la géographie de toute cette partie du continent d'ailleurs encore très mal connue à l'époque où Montesquieu rédige son chef-d'œuvre entretient avec le climat, les productions, les mœurs et les peuples. Cette communication n'est qu'un court échantillon d'un travail sur lequel nous méditons depuis quelques années et sur lequel nous nous sommes déjà exprimé dans nombre d'études. La présente étude gravitera autour de trois axes principaux et, pour faire honneur à Montesquieu, la méthode sera sociocritique.

1. *Première partie* : nous procéderons à un repère des lieux nord-américains avec leurs particularités climatiques et anthropologiques.
2. *Seconde partie* : nous examinerons l'importance de cette géographie dans l'élaboration de *l'Esprit des lois*. Pour donner plus d'ampleur à cette étude, nous n'hésiterons à faire référence aux autres œuvres de Montesquieu, à ses sources littéraires et au témoignage oculaire d'un ressortissant du Canada connu par l'auteur, l'Intendant Michel Bégon.
3. *Troisième partie* : nous nous interrogerons sur les rapports entre la géographie nord-américaine et la 'littéralité' des textes de Montesquieu.

Cette étude ne se voulant guère exhaustive, nous limiterons notre analyse à l'évocation de quelques exemples topiques. La référence de Montesquieu à l'Amérique n'est nullement scientifique mais plutôt métaphorique. Le philosophe souhaite expliquer un phénomène qui, loin d'expliquer la chose, sur les traces d'un Descartes, esquisse une méthode de recherche, le but de son étude n'étant pas l'individuel mais le général. Déjà, dans son *Discours prononcé à*

l'Académie de Bordeaux en 1717, l'Amérique sert d'aiguillon pour la recherche mais l'image reste vague et creuse, dépourvue de réalité géographique :

C'est ainsi que ceux qui découvrirent un nouveau monde dans le siècle passé, s'emparèrent des mines et des richesses qui y étoient conservées depuis si longtemps, et ne laissèrent à leurs successeurs que des forêts, et des sauvages à découvrir.

Cependant, Messsieurs, ne perdons point courage : que savons-nous de ce qui nous est réservé ? peut-être y a-t-il mille secrets cachés : quand les géographes sont parvenues au terme de leurs connoissances, ils placent dans leurs cartes des mers immenses et des climats sauvages ; mais peut-être que dans ces mers et dans ces climats il y a encore plus de richesses que nous n'en avons (éd. Pléiade, vol. I, 8).

Cependant, n'allons pas imaginer un Montesquieu porte-parole de la colonisation – d'ailleurs, beaucoup a déjà été dit à ce sujet. Si l'exploration de l'Amérique se traduit en discours sémiotique chez lui, le philosophe nous met en garde contre la paresse du regard familier qui nous empêche de voir les richesses de chez nous, avance-t-il. La méthode reste de rigueur comparatiste et, dans cet examen de projection sur l'autre de notre propre univers transposé, il invite son lecteur à adopter une attitude critique.

Malgré l'attitude quelque peu sceptique devant les découvertes, Montesquieu ne résiste pas à l'attrait d'un monde qu'il connaît d'ailleurs très mal. Ses sources référentielles sur l'Amérique du Nord restent généralement livresques, bien que le philosophe ait eu le souci aussi de s'entretenir avec un témoin oculaire, ressortissant du Canada, l'Intendant Michel Bégon. L'entretien entre les deux personnalités est rapporté en détail dans le « Spicilège ». (Voir à ce sujet : Pierre Dupouy, « Montesquieu et le Canada », *Études sur Montesquieu, Archives des Lettres modernes*, déc. 1975, 3-16 ; et Yvonne Bezard, *Fonctionnaires maritimes et coloniaux sous Louis XIV, Les Bégon*. Paris : Albin Michel, 1932). Dans ses notes, Montesquieu rassemble, de manière un peu désordonnée, des renseignements sur ce pays encore mal connu par le public savant au début du XVIII^e siècle malgré les nombreux récits de voyage qui circulaient. La pièce de Bégon acquiert donc une importance capitale dans l'élaboration des œuvres de Montesquieu car il ne s'agit plus du témoignage d'un jésuite à la chasse aux démons ni d'un voyageur déchanté de son ancien pays (le baron de Lahontan par exemple), mais plutôt celui d'un haut fonctionnaire de retour de son mandat de quatorze ans au Canada. Entre autre, l'Intendant fait remarquer que « La plus importante colonie qu'eut la France, était le Canada » (Montesquieu, « Spicilège », *Œuvres*, éd. Nagel, vol. II, 788) et qu'il aurait fallu la peupler davantage –rien de nouveau, certes, depuis Champlain et Marc Lescarbot. Montesquieu note les remarques de Bégon mais il demeure hostile à l'établissement des colonies. Ceci dit, le philosophe ne méconnaît pas l'importance économique du Canada et il préconise une politique d'occupation de quelques places stratégiques, nécessaires au commerce. D'ailleurs, les colonies, au lieu de partager la puissance de la métropole, « ne feroient que (la) partager », dit-il dans les *Lettres persanes* (éd. Pléiade, vol. I, 311). Un empire colonial tel que le possède la France en Amérique du Nord au début du XVIII^e siècle –ce que Marcel Trudel appelle ce « colosse aux pieds d'argile » (*Initiation à la Nouvelle-France*, 81), porte en soi le germe de sa

perte de « s'épuiser doublement ». La métropole se trouverait ainsi soumise à la double obligation de conquérir et de maintenir les conquêtes (éd. Pléiade, vol. II, 1007). Bégon le sait et la petite colonie du Saint-Laurent est devenue un grand empire et Montesquieu le craint : un empire qui va de Terre-Neuve au golfe du Mexique ne peut se faire qu'en y envoyant beaucoup de monde, ce qui pourrait être fatal à la métropole. L'écrivain prend ici la place du raisonneur froid et calculateur : il illustre par une belle et touchante métaphore la mise à mort de la mère : ce genre d'empire fait penser à « ces petits de cet animal, qui, en naissant font mourir leur mère » (éd. Pléiade, vol. II, 1008).

Le témoignage de Michel Bégon retranscrit dans le « Spicilège » alimentera certes la banque des données du philosophe sur le Canada et Montesquieu s'en souviendra lorsqu'il portera son regard sur les Sauvages canadiens. Ce sont surtout les Hurons et les Iroquois qui feront l'objet de subtiles remarques dans toute l'œuvre du philosophe. En voici un exemple : « On dit que les Iroquois ont mangé soixante-dix nations, et qu'ils ont fait rôti le dernier Huron » (éd. Nagel, vol. II, 636). Cette courte note à l'air anodin évoquera dans *l'Esprit des lois*, (I, 3) un trait fondamental de la pensée de Montesquieu. Ainsi, dans l'esprit du philosophe, la notion de droit des gens est liée à l'évocation de la guerre entre les Hurons et les Iroquois, ce qui mènera à la destruction de la Huronie. Il suffit ici de rappeler que Montesquieu, sans doute inspiré par Lahontan, le chevalier de Tonti, Lafitau et *Les Lettres édifiantes* se sert du Canada comme métaphore d'un univers délaissé, où triompherait la violence et « la fureur naturelle ». Chez de tels peuples réglés seulement par les mœurs, même pardonner serait une action contre le devoir de l'homme. Cependant, si le Sauvage canadien devient chez le philosophe la métaphore de la violence naturelle de l'être, il l'intrigue et suscite son admiration par certains côtés humanitaires et hautement souhaitables même dans le monde civilisé. C'est la pratique de l'adoption : « Les Sauvages du Canada, dit le philosophe, font brûler leurs prisonniers, mais lorsqu'ils ont des cabanes vides à leur donner, ils le reconnaissent de leur nation » (*Esprit des lois*, X, 3).

L'autre grande colonie française en Amérique du Nord est la Louisiane. L'intérêt qui lui porte Montesquieu est principalement d'ordre anthropologique. Il n'y a pas de texte qui traite des productions ou du potentiel relatifs à la colonie du Mississippi. Cependant, la Louisiane représente au début du XVIII^e siècle le grand espoir des Français. Bien connues sont les remarques de Montesquieu dans les *Lettres persanes* où il lance des critiques virulentes contre John Law traité de fripier ou de faiseur de Système. Comme nous venons de le voir sommairement pour le Canada, le tableau de la Louisiane esquissé par Montesquieu n'est pas du tout séduisant. De nouveau, l'intérêt que le philosophe porte à cette colonie est confiné à l'évocation des Sauvages, une autre métaphore qui décrit bien la bête noire qui hante l'esprit de Montesquieu : le despotisme.

En guise de conclusion, nous pouvons avancer que Montesquieu trace une géographie nord-américaine sans forme, floue et quelque peu douteuse. L'Amérique en général et le Canada en particulier sont plutôt des métaphores sonores de l'art d'écrire dont se sert l'auteur afin de convaincre son lecteur : il finira par l'émouvoir. Sans doute et inconsciemment Montesquieu oublie-t-il de suivre sa méthode prétendument scientifique pour donner libre essor à sa veine d'écrivain, ce qui assure d'ailleurs à son œuvre sa beauté et son intérêt.

**Genre Change and Loss: The Discursive and Social Effects of
Public Participation, Advocacy, and
Official Community Plans
Diana Wegner**

This paper reports the findings of two phases of an ongoing research project on the dynamics of text and context in municipal contexts where stakeholders negotiate power relations involved in land use issues (2009-2010) and homelessness initiatives (2010-2011). The focus of these dynamics is the genre of the Official Community Plan (OCP). The study utilizes a theoretical framework integrating rhetorical genre theory, the concept of uptake, and the study of enduring struggles. Genre is probed for both its breadth (range of instantiations) and its depth (the way it mediates and is mediated by activity), revealing both the local conditions of genre and the more hegemonic forces that favor reproduction and stability, especially as effects of institutional control. What explanatory power does genre theory offer for such analyses of language use in contexts of asymmetrical power relations? And how can they contribute to our understanding of what makes certain struggles durable?

As the OCP genre participates in social change, it gradually undergoes formal, textual change in the form of uptake from other texts and discourse in city genre systems. I examine uptake for both absences and presences of form. Textual absences and reductions are especially notable when they are prominent in other instantiations of the genre and in discourse elsewhere in the same activity system. I suggest that the refusal of such uptake signals a silence and textually codes a loss of agency.

This hypothesis of loss is supported by findings from both phases of my study of OCPs (2009-2011). In the first, textual uptake of the public process becomes skewed: in the context of municipal land use conflicts, such uptake into the OCP becomes a record of loss--the symbolic reduction and loss of public voice and in some cases the more tangible loss of undeveloped land, all of which re-inscribe the civic struggle for meaningful public participation in government decision-making. Similarly, in the second phase, textual uptake related to homelessness varies in OCPs from substantive to minimal. In some OCPs, it is actually blocked in sections where one would expect to find it. In these cases social change seems to code a reduction or even absence of "the homeless" and their "shelters." I believe this textual marginalization of the public and the homeless provides evidence that a) social change is in process *and* b) that it is dominated by the interests of governments. I argue that the durability of these struggles is in part an effect of their reconstitution in local governance texts like OCPs where they become textual representations of power struggle between local and senior levels of government.

I conclude that rhetorical genre analysis provides a productive approach for probing both intertextual influences and key contextual factors for insights into the social and political motivations for textual choices, here language that reduces the public's voice and sequesters the issue of homelessness in the OCP genre. Genre analysis helps us detect the role of formal genre change, which as Burgess suggests, is "an index of change" that is compensatory: what it pronounces and enables paradoxically codes a reduction of agency. This reduction and double-voicedness of OCP language signal the interests of the powerful in social conflict and change, and the more global, durable struggle for the homeless.

Methodology is both qualitative and ethnographic. Using a grounded theory approach, I developed themes from data drawn from recorded and transcribed interviews with a range of stakeholders from four municipalities, meetings in one city with stakeholder groups, and analysis of relevant sections of 13 municipal OCPs.

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