

Louky Bersianik's L'Euguélonne!
Problems of Translating the Critique of Language
in New Quebec Feminist Writing

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ABSTRACT

Louky Bersianik's L'Euguélonne:

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In recent years in France and Quebec, women have been developing innovative ways of writing, writing which challenges male-dominated society through the close examination and manipulation of its language and symbols, and through the "deconstruction" of its discourses.

L'Euguélonne by Louky Bersianik is an example of this new women's writing. The translation of such a work presents special challenges to the translator, particularly in those passages dealing with sexism in the French language. This thesis includes the translation of selected passages of L'Euguélonne, with emphasis on those sections dealing with language, and a theoretical discussion of the problems encountered in the translation, and of questions of sex and language in general.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Voler son langage à
un homme [sic] au nom
même du langage, tous
les meurtres légaux
commencent par là.

Roland Barthes

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Louky Bersianik is one of the best known of contemporary Quebec feminist writers, and her "triptych novel", L'Euguélonne, was a best-seller in Quebec when it was first published in 1976.¹ But like so many "novels" published in Québec in recent years, it does not fit well into the traditional literary category of novel. It is, in fact, an examination and denunciation of the misogyny of our societies and languages, which uses satire, parody and allegory.² Because of its structure and content, it has been called the "feminist bible" of Quebec. The title itself is derived from the same Greek roots as "evangelist" and related words, and means "The Bringer of Good Tidings" ("eu-", 'good' plus "angelos", 'messenger').³ And like the Bible, L'Euguélonne is divided into short chapters and numbered verses or sections. The book provides us with a genealogy of this feminist messiah and the story of

¹ (Montréal: Les Editions La Presse). An English translation has now been published: The Euguélonne, trans. Gerry Denis, Alison Hewitt, Donna Murray, Martha O'Brien (Victoria, Toronto: Press Porcépic, 1981).

² See Jennifer Waelti-Walters, Fairy Tales and the Female Imagination (Montréal: Eden Press, 1982), pp. 113-114.

³ In French, the Gospel is "l'Évangile", making this meaning of the title more apparent. Many more meanings can also be found in this polysemic title.

her "Emasculate Conception",¹ and then, through analysis, inversion and parodies, examines the dominant social, psychological and religious discourses of our male-dominated society.

The Christian Bible puts a great deal of emphasis on the importance of language. "The Word" is a synonym for the Gospel, and the "Gospel According to John" begins with, "In the beginning was the Word..."² L'Euguélonne begins with, "These are the first words of the Euguélonne in this the present era of our Prehistory." (section 1).³ The Euguélonne brings a new Word, a Word for the disenfranchised half of the human species.

The Euguélonne is a creature from another planet, a woman but not a human being (section 667), looking for the male of her species (section 21). She believes at first that the human species is a unified race with the female and male of the species living in relative harmony

¹Panel I, chapters XXIII and XXIV, pp. 52-54. Further references to L'Euguélonne will be made by section number or chapter number.

²Authorized King James Version.

³All English quotations from L'Euguélonne are my translation.

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and equality, a species that is whole, unlike her own, but as she explores and discovers human society, culture and language, she finds that all is not well on this planet for the female of the species. To learn more, she shuts herself up in the "Great National Warehouse of Words" (presumably the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec) (section 630) until she has absorbed all the accumulated mass of words that is the body of knowledge, history, culture and ideology of humanity. The words of "Man", she finds, are terribly one-sided. The male of the human species has monopolized the whole species, but this fact is clouded by the deceptiveness of Man's language.

The Euguélonne reveals what she has discovered to her friends and to the reader, and so doing, she gives a critique of the whole range of sexism in Quebec society, discussing marriage, religion, psychiatry, the legal system and so forth. Most of this presented no particular difficulties for translation into English since the whole of Western society shares much of the same intellectual, religious, social and cultural tradition. For example, Freudian psychology, and in particular its sexist aspects, are an important influence in both the French-speaking and English-speaking worlds. Likewise, we share similar male-dominated legislatures, and medical and cultural establishments.

However, much of the book, particularly the second "panel", deals with language and how the French language specifically plays a rôle in the oppression of women. In these passages, the translator has two basic choices: to translate literally and explain what is being said about the source language, or to adapt them into a discussion of the target language. In the published translation of L'Euguélonne, the translators made the former choice. When Paul Wilson reviewed this translation in Books in Canada, he commented:

...[Bersianik's] lengthy critique of the sexism inherent in the French language is amusing and erudite but not particularly relevant.... French is much more gender-ridden than English and thus her satire, in translation, frequently loses its edge.

It is true that a discussion of sexism in the French language is not necessarily relevant to speakers of English. But even though Bersianik deals specifically with her own language, she is making the point that human language in general plays a role in the perpetuation of sexist attitudes

¹"Life After Man," 11, No.2 (Feb., 1982), 11.

and practises.¹ Wilson ignores the fact that much of what Bersianik says about French applies equally to English (as I will show below). He dismisses her discussion of language by simply saying, "French is more gender-ridden than English." However, gender is only one of the aspects of language discussed in L'Euguélonne. But this criticism points to a problem with the literal translation of the passages dealing with sexism in the French language. Bersianik's purpose is not scholarly, but political. An erudite discussion of sexism in the French language may be interesting for some people, but the equivalent political message for the English-speaking reader is an analysis of sexism in the English language. That is why, in my translation, I chose to adapt the passages dealing with language.

The passages on language, particularly those dealing with aspects of language where there are important differences between French and English, present the greatest

¹Ann Bodine states that sex differentiation in language (differences according to the sex of the speaker or the sex of the person spoken to or spoken about) is universal; and that such differentiation is usually if not always associated with sex-based hierarchy. "Sex Differentiation in Language," in Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, ed., Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1975), p. 148.

challenge to the translator since the subject matter is the language itself, and the original author's message must be recreated, to one extent or another, to suit the target language. It is for this reason that I have chosen for my thesis the translation of those parts of the book dealing specifically with sexism in language, with a discussion of the various aspects of sexism in language dealt with by Bersianik and the problems I encountered translating these passages into English.

Chapter II

Generic and Gender

A man's book is a book.
A woman's book is a
woman's book.

Christiane Rochefort

Two important aspects of sexism in the French language discussed in L'Euguélonne are gender and the "generic" use of the masculine. I have chosen to deal with them in one chapter, since they are related and a discussion of one leads to the other. There are, however, important differences in how I handled them in the translation. Major adaptations had to be made in the sections on gender, since French has grammatical gender and modern English does not. On the other hand, Bersianik's comments on the use of the masculine as a generic in French could, for the most part, be transferred directly into English, since the pseudogeneric use of the word for the male of the human species and of the masculine third-person pronoun are common to both languages.

Bersianik's critique of the generic use of the word "homme" in French, which corresponds to the similar use of the word "man" in English, is devastating. However, she makes one factual error. She states that all human languages use a single word for the human species and the male of the species (section 682). This is not the case in many languages. In Japanese, for example, "hito" corresponds to 'man-species' and "otoko" corresponds to 'man-male' and there is no confusion between the two words. The same is true of Chinese, the language (or more accurately, the languages) of about a quarter of humanity, as

well as of many other languages. Even many of the languages of Europe have a distinct word meaning 'human being' as opposed to 'man-male' ("Mensch" in German and Yiddish with cognates in other Germanic languages, and "czlowiek" in Polish with cognates in other Slavic languages).¹

In English, unlike French, the distinction between 'man-species' and 'man-male' is made partially by use of articles. "A man", "the man" or "the men" usually mean 'man-male', whereas "man" without an article more often designates the species.² However, this is anything but a strict rule. "Man" with no article is also frequently used for the adult male, resulting in confusion between the two meanings.³

¹Oxford English Dictionary, 1971 edition. "Man" (introduction): "In all the Teutonic languages, the word had the twofold sense of 'human being' and 'adult male human being', though except in English, it has been mainly superseded in the former sense by a derivative (German, Dutch, 'mensch'; Swedish, 'menniska'; Danish, 'menneske'...)" Further references to this work will use OED.

²see OED, "Man" I.2: "[English uses] the word as a quasi-proper noun, without article..."

³This usage dates back at least to Shakespeare, e.g. "Man is enimie to virginitie." All's Well that Ends Well, Act I, scene 1. In OED, "Man" II.4.b.

The confusion between male adults and the entire species is not strictly linguistic, neither in languages, such as French and English, which use one word for both, nor in languages, such as Japanese, where there are two distinct words. It seems that almost any word used to designate human beings or adult human beings can also be used for adult males only. Blunders such as news stories talking about "members of Parliament and their wives" still occur frequently. Similarly, an informant who has lived in Japan for many years claims that such pseudogeneric use of "hito" ('person') and "ningen" ('human being') occurs in Japanese. The example she cited discusses the fulfillment a "person" gets from going to work and supporting a family, clearly a male rôle in Japanese society, even today.¹

Bersianik gives an example of this kind of pseudo-generic in L'Euguélonne (section 691); the Euguélonne cites an ethnographic article which discusses the customs,

¹ Rebecca Jennison, International Women's Studies Conference, Concordia University, Montréal, August, 1982. "'It is when a hito (person) gains employment, begins to work and support a family that (he) is first able to live as an independent ningen (person)...' from a required Junior High School textbook."

rituals, costumes, history, etc. of a group of Eskimos, and then goes on to talk about "THEIR WIVES". I discovered a similar example in a recent issue of the New York Times

Book Review:

The world Michel encounters in Greenland has been partly demolished by civilization. The Greenlanders live in houses, not sod huts or igloos. For several decades, they have been encourage to give up hunting, and now they fish badly or work desultorily in factories. But mostly they collect welfare and drink tubs full of beer. They swap their wives in odd communal ceremonies and live on the edge of oblivion, their traditions almost forgotten. (My underscoring)¹

If one were to ask what the population of Greenlanders was, the figure given would certainly include the total human population, women, men and children. But here we find that "they", the Greenlanders, swap "their wives". In that last sentence, at least, "they" clearly refers exclusively to the adult male Greenlanders. However, the "they" in the sentence before must include the women; it is unlikely that only the men collect welfare. Thus we have two consecutive sentences with "they" as the subject,

¹Paul Zweig, "From Palm Forest to Ice Floe," review of Tété-Michel Kpomassie, An African in Greenland, trans. James Kirkup (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), The New York Times Book Review, July 10, 1983, p. 7.

but apparently with distinct antecedents. And what of the "their" in the second part of the last sentence cited? Grammatically, "their" has to have the same antecedent as the subject, "they", which clearly refers only to men, so we are left wondering if the women, too, have forgotten their traditions.

Thus the pseudogeneric seems to work at two levels: at the conceptual level, with the frequent and unconscious assumption that words which are unmarked for sex, such as "Greenlander", "people" or "the typical Canadian", refer to 'men-male' only,¹ and at the linguistic level, as in English and French, where one word stands for both the entire human species and the adult males of the species. The latter occurs in a limited number of languages; the former seems to be widespread among the languages of humanity. Throughout the societies of humankind, in sociological, anthropological, psychological, religious, literary and everyday discourse, men are considered to be the essence of the species, or at least the norm, and women are viewed

¹For several more examples, see Julia Stanley, "Prescribed Passivity: the Language of Sexism," in Views on Language, Reza Ordoubadian and Walburga Von-Raffler Engel, ed. (Murfreesboro, Tenn.: Inter-University Publishers, 1975), pp. 106-107.

as accessories or abnormalities,¹ or simply forgotten. This phenomenon, however, goes far beyond the scope of this thesis, so I will limit myself here essentially to the linguistic aspects.

The two levels of generic are doubtless related. There is a parallel between our confusion over whether "the Greenlanders" refers to the whole population or only to the adult males, and the two distinct meanings of the words "man" and "homme". I would speculate that the latter, the linguistic ambiguity of using one word to designate both the entire species and the male adult portion of the species,² is historically the result of sexism in the societies where it occurs.

Languages are continually changing and evolving. There is constant striving for clarity and regularity

¹One famous example is Edward Sapir's article, "Abnormal Types of Speech in Nootka," in Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality, David G. Mandelbaum, ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), pp.179-196. Sapir discusses special forms used speaking to or about children, fat people, hunchbacks, lame people, left-handed people, women...

²"The Great Ambiguity" as Bersianik calls it, Panel II, chapter X.

in language, which offsets tendencies towards irregularities and ambiguities which arise when changes in pronunciation result in similar sounding words, or from borrowings, shifts in meaning and so forth. For example, changes in the English vowel system resulted in the language having one form, "let", descended from two distinct Old English verbs, one with usual sense of modern-day "let", and the other with the meaning of 'hinder'.

The language could not tolerate two homonyms with such conflicting meanings because of the ambiguities they would produce in certain contexts. For example, Hamlet's phrase, "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me," could easily be misinterpreted by a twentieth-century reader. As a result, "let" in the meaning of 'hinder' did not survive except in legal usage such as "without let and hindrance" and in the sports term "let ball".¹

As languages change, they tend to reflect, over time, the attitudes and ideologies of the societies in which they evolve:

¹ Leonard Bloomfield, Language History, rpt. of chapters 17-27 of Language (1933), Harry Hoijer, ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), pp. 398-399.

All living languages, it may be assumed, are of their nature efficient and viable systems of communication serving the different and multifarious social needs of the communities that use them. As these needs change, languages will tend to change to meet the new conditions.

So it seems unlikely that such a confusing feature as the double meaning of "homme" and "man" would arise and survive in languages if the societies where they were spoken treated women as full-fledged human beings. The fact that English and French, as well as other European languages, lost their distinct words for the adult male of the species during approximately the same period of history is probably a reflection of the place of women in European society.

In Old English, "man" usually meant the entire species and "were" was the word for the male. Likewise, in Latin, "homo" was the species (as in "homo sapiens") and "vir" the adult male. As one might guess from their similarity, "were" and "vir" share a common Indo-European ancestor

¹ John Lyons, Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p.43.

(compare Sanskrit "vīra").¹ But the two words disappeared,² and "man" and "homo", in a semantic shift which would be bizarre in anything but a profoundly sexist society, came to mean both the entire human species and the male adult minority of the species, words which both include and exclude the human female.³

I took the liberty of making a slight change in my translation to correct Bersianik's slip by changing "...in all languages..." to "...in so many languages..." (section 682 in the original and 683 in my translation). Her unconscious ethnocentricity is comparable, in a way, to the unconscious sexism she is trying to make us aware of.⁴ Just as there is a tendency to consider men as the

¹The OED states that in Old English, 'a human being' was the prevailing sense of "man", and "were" was used for the male adult, sometimes in combination with "man" ('human being' to form "wereman". Similarly, "wife", meaning 'woman', was used in combination with "man" to form "wife-man" which eventually evolved into "woman".

²"Were" survives only in "werewolf" and "wergeld" and "vir" survives in Latin derivatives such as "virile".

³Otto Jespersen calls this a defect in the English language. Quoted in Stanley, p. 97.

⁴Bodine warns of the danger of the linguistic background of investigators coloring studies of sex differentiation. pp. 148-149.

norm for the whole of humanity, as Sapir and Zweig did, people in the Western "developed" countries tend to consider themselves as the human norm in language, culture, family structure and so forth.

How important is this "Great Ambiguity" of French and English? Have feminists exaggerated its effect as some male scholars claim?¹ Or does it tend to shape our perceptions, to reinforce that tendency to take the human male as the norm and view women as appendages? Should it be retained for the sake of linguistic purity: no "tampering" with the language allowed?

¹Roger W. Wescott, for example, a university professor of linguistics, lapses into the most unprofessional drivel when faced with the increasing use of "chairperson" instead of "chairman". Forgetting that the meanings of words change over the centuries, he states incorrectly that Old English "wif" meant 'wife', then instead of presenting any kind of serious argument, he tries to trivialize feminist demands by presenting what amounts to a parody of historical linguistics. Purely on the basis of phonetic similarities, he suggests several "reconstructed Proto-Indo-European roots" for "wife" and "man", deriving "wife", for example, from an Italic root meaning 'defect' (hence his "derived meaning" 'weaker sex'), or from a Germanic root meaning 'wither' (hence his "derived meaning" 'one who (both blooms and) ages rapidly'). He claims to do this without violating the "known phonological, morphological and semantic laws of probability [sic]." Verbatim, 1, No. 2 (sept., 1974), pp. 15-16.

Bersianik clearly takes the view that the Great Ambiguity does distort our perception of the two sexes of humanity. In her opinion, it "keeps half of humanity in the shadows" (section 699). She cites several examples of how, so often, the Imperceptible Shift (Panel III, chapter X) is made, quite unconsciously, from talking about the species to talking about the males of the species. This shift can occur, of course, without necessarily involving the word "man", as in Bersianik's Eskimo example, but the use of a single common noun, "man", for those two distinct meanings certainly makes the unconscious shift easier. Bersianik gives one very striking example from what is, in fact, originally an English-language source (section 702). In a common reference book, the author, Charles Rycroft, commenting on the term, "homosexual", notes that it,

derives from the Greek "homos" meaning 'same', and not from the Latin "homo", a 'man'; hence "homosexual" can be applied to women as well as men. ¹

Rycroft has allowed the ambiguity of the English word, "man", to distort in his mind the meaning of the Latin word, "homo". In his mental dictionary, the two words

¹A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 62.

are classified) as equivalents: "homo" means "man". But "homo" in Latin does not carry the two distinct meanings of the English word. "Homo" means only 'man-species'. It does not mean 'man-male', "man" as opposed to "woman". So while it is true that the "homo-" of "homosexual" comes from the Greek for 'same', if it did come from the Latin, it would still not exclude women.¹

I found another example of this tendency to forget that "man" has two meanings in a somewhat less prestigious, but quite popular, book. When Peter M. Bergman compiled his The Concise Dictionary of 26 Languages,² he chose a list of 1000 English words and gave one equivalent for each of the other 25 languages. In the back of the book, there is an index for each of these 25 languages, referring the reader to the English equivalent by number. "Man" is one of the 1000 words, but only one, and in the equivalents, there is total confusion over which of the two meanings is intended. In the Germanic languages, for example, "Mensch"

¹See also: Casey Miller and Kate Swift, Words and Women (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1977), p.24.

²The Concise Dictionary of 26 Languages (New York: Bergman Publishers, 1968).

is given in German, and its cognate in most of the others: "mannisk" in Swedish, "menneske" in Danish and Norwegian, and "mensch" in Yiddish. But in Dutch, we find, not "mens", the Dutch equivalent of "Mensch", but "man". In the Slavic languages, we find the word for 'man-species' in all four; likewise in Greek, "anthropos"; Hebrew, "adam"; Swahili, "mtu" and Esperanto, "homo". But in Japanese, the entry is "otoko no hito". In Japanese, "hito" means 'man-species'. "Otoko" means 'man-male' and can stand alone. "Otoko no hito" means specifically 'a person who is a man', clearly 'man' as opposed to 'woman' (it would, for example, be the answer to someone asking if 'a particular person is man or a woman'). The Dutch and the Japanese are inconsistent with the rest of the list.¹ This confusion extends to the indexes. If we look up "hito" in the Japanese index, we are referred to the same entry as, "otoko no hito": Bergman has imposed the "Great Ambiguity" on the Japanese. And if some hapless individual speaking German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Yiddish, Swahili, Hebrew, Greek, Esperanto or another language were to look up in their index under

¹As far as I was able to check the precise meanings in other languages. The five Romance languages listed each have a double-meaning equivalent of the English "man".

their word for 'man-male', they would be not of luck: it is not listed at all, or, in the case of Yiddish, they would be referred only to the entry "husband", a second meaning of the Yiddish "man".¹ In part, this a problem of a single-word equivalent dictionary, but even in such a restricted format with only 1000 words, there is no reason to leave out the word for 'man-male', which was omitted for most of the languages (particularly considering that Bergman found room for such "important" words as "garter", "fur coat", "horserace" and "scrambled eggs"). The mistake was doubtless only possible because the base language, the language of the compiler, is plagued with the "Great Ambiguity".

Thus Bersianik's condemnation of the "Great Ambiguity" seems quite valid. For the sake of clarity alone, there is good reason to rid ourselves of this two-headed monster. But the greater problem with the ambiguity of "man" is that it is inherently sexist: it makes it far easier to exclude or forget women when we are talking about "Man", the human species. The examples already given show how the writer of a text can slip from a generic

¹The use of "they/their" for a singular antecedent in this sentence is deliberate, and in my view, quite grammatical. See my discussion below pp. 23-32 on third-person pronouns.

"man" to a male-only interpretation without even realizing it. At the same time, the pseudogeneric use of "man" distorts the perceptions of the reader. In a study of introductory textbooks in sociology, Joseph W. Schneider and Sally L. Hacker found that the use of the word led many people to think male rather than male and female, and they recommend to publishers of textbooks to avoid the use of the generic "man".¹

Like the pseudogeneric use of "homme" and "man", the use of masculine pronouns in French and English in a generic sense tends to exclude and obscure women, to "put them in the shadows". However, in the case of pronouns, there are important differences between French and English, which must be taken into account in the translation of L'Euguélonne. In English, in fact, there is far more possibility of getting around the problem using the resources of the language as it stands. Firstly English already possesses a gender-neutral third-person pronoun, "they", and secondly, English is not affected by the limitations of a gender-marking language such as French.

¹"Sex Role Imagery and Use of the Generic 'Man' in Introductory Texts: A Case in the Sociology of Sociology," The American Sociologist, 8 (Feb., 1973), p. 17.

In French, all nouns and all pronouns are either masculine or feminine. (the problem of gender will be examined in more detail below). Every noun in French, whether it is a common noun, a proper noun or an indeterminate noun, has a number and a gender which strictly determine what pronoun will replace it. English was a gender-marking language once, with the typical three Indo-European genders, feminine, masculine and neuter, but it now has no grammatical gender.¹

In English, the choice of third-person pronoun is determined by whether the antecedent is feminine or masculine (in fact or by attribute), or inanimate. The main split is animate/inanimate with the animate category divided in two for singular third-person pronouns. There

¹Gender as we know it is essentially an Indo-European phenomenon, with three classical genders (Lyons, p. 283). Some modern Indo-European languages, such as most Germanic and Slavic languages, have retained the three genders. The modern Romance languages, such as French, have lost the neuter gender of Latin. English still has three genders for singular third-person pronouns, but there is no gender concord; their reference is determined by so-called "natural" gender based on real or attributed sexual characteristics. Certain other language families, such as the Bantu languages of Africa also have gender-like noun categories, but others have nothing resembling gender.

is a great deal of flexibility in this system. Animals can be "it's", or "she's" or "he's", depending on whether physical gender is deemed to be relevant. Likewise for human infants. Inanimate objects can be personified and referred to by the animate pronouns ("she" seems to be the more frequent choice; the reasons for this would go beyond the scope of this discussion).

When the antecedent is clearly identified, the choice of pronoun is clear. The problem arises with the choice of pronoun for an indeterminate antecedent such as "someone", "no one" or "anyone", or when the sex of the person is unknown, or for a hypothetical member of a mixed-sex group (e.g. "We want to hire a secretary. ___ should know shorthand, typing and dictaphone." "The average Canadian ___ doesn't smoke, but ___ is overweight."). In such cases, according to normative grammarians, the proper pronoun to use is "he": "he", when used generically, like "man" used generically, includes the feminine,¹ in spite

¹For example: "...the natural feeling...that "he" is one-sided prompts us to use both "he" and "she", "his" and "her"... In choice English, however, this accuracy is often quite out of place since the idea of oneness of man and woman is present to our feeling..." George O. Curme, English Grammar (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1947); pp. 211-212.

of the fact that in other circumstances it excludes the feminine, and in spite of the fact that we often forget whether it is including or excluding the feminine in particular instances.

In the original L'Euguélonne, women, in the chapter entitled "300 + 1 = 1" (Panel III, chapter VII), are picketing the Académie française, the supreme decision-making body of what is right and proper in the French language, an institution which has no single equivalent in the English-speaking world. That is not to say that there is no prescriptive grammar force in the English-speaking world: this power is spread out among book and periodical editors, school text writers, old-fashioned teachers and assorted pedants.¹ For this loose network of protectors of male privilege in language, I have invented the name, "Guardians of Grammar" as a rough equivalent for the Académie française (section 668). It is not an ideal translation, since the "Guardians of Grammar" is not as concrete a target of protest as the Académie française, but it is the best adaptation I could

¹One authority with a great deal of influence is H.W. Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (Oxford University Press, 1926). This book, however, does not have the same institutional authority as the Académie française.

devise. Many other adaptations had to be made in this chapter because of the lack of grammatical gender in English. For example, the section from which the title of the chapter is taken (669) had to be reworked. In the original, it begins with the following picket sign:

ANIMAL > FEMME

EXEMPLE:

Trois cents femmes et un petit chat se
sont BALADES dans la rue.

MEME L'ANIMAL masculin L'EMPORTE SUR L'ETRE
HUMAIN féminin.

In French, with its grammatical gender, the masculine serves as a generic for concord with the past participle, even when there are 300 women and one small cat — or 300 women and a truck as the next picket sign points out! In English, with no grammatical gender, exactly the same thing does not occur since there is no concord for gender with the past participle. Also, if a pronoun were to be used, it would be the neutral "they" third-person plural, unmarked for gender (in French, the pronoun for 300 women and a truck would be "ils", masculine plural). However, an adaptation of this "300 + 1 = 1" title is possible, because in English, too, 300 women can be overshadowed grammatically by a single male presence when it comes to the use of the "generic" "he". If there are 300 women alone in a room, we may say, according to the rules of

the Guardians of Grammar, "Everyone please take her boots off." But if there are 300 women and one solitary man, we are all taught in school, we must say, "...his boots." For about the last decade, feminists have been attacking this rule as sexist. Their demands are often attacked and ridiculed as being an attempt to change the English language, as advocating a kind of Orwellian "Newspeak", or "Sispeak" as one writer called it.¹

However, as Ann Bodine points out, the opposite is true: feminists are finally resisting the attempts of prescriptivist grammarians to alter the language. The fact is that in spite of centuries of prescriptivists telling us that it is "wrong",² English-speakers have persisted in using "they" as a sex-indefinite singular pronoun. The OED gives three modern meanings for "they". Only the first is strictly plural. The second is sex-indefinite singular (following any, no, every, each or equivalent to "he or she"), and the third is the indefinite pronoun equivalent to "one", as in "They say..."

¹Stefan Kanfer, "Sispeak: A Misguided Attempt to Change Herstory," Time, October 23, 1972, p. 79.

²See, for example, Fowler's article on "they".

Bodine's research indicates that "they" can occur in all four contexts which she identifies as requiring a sex-indefinite third-person pronoun: (a) mixed-sex, distributive; (b) mixed-sex, disjunctive; (c) sex-unknown; and (d) sex-concealed. As an example of the distributive, Bodine gives, "Anyone can do it if they try hard." For the disjunctive, she gives, "Either Mary or John should bring a schedule with them." For sex-unknown, she gives, "Who dropped their ticket?"¹ An example of sex-concealed would be, "Who walked from Montreal to Quebec City when they were sixty-nine?" In spite of what prescriptivists may have led us to believe, before the 19th century, singular "they" was widely used.² What the prescriptivists

¹Ann Bodine, "Androcentrism in Prescriptive Grammar: Singular 'They', Sex-indefinite 'He', and 'He or She'." Language in Society, 4 (1975), pp. 129-146.

²Bodine, "Androcentrism," pp. 131-133. I found another interesting quotation recently in McMaster News (magazine of the McMaster Alumni Association), May, 1983. As part of McMaster's Humanities Lecture series focusing on the use and abuse of the English language, Prof. Harold Guite of the Department of Classics discussed, "The English Language and the 'Trahison des Clercs'." He stated:

I will even concede that I have had to unlearn some of the lessons that I learned at grade school.

I was taught never to say "I", never to split an infinitive, never to begin a sentence with "and" or "but", never to use a plural verb after a collective subject,

in fact did was analyze the pronoun "they" as plural only, and then proceed to try to change the language to fit their conception of it. It is they who have tried to tamper with the language. From the point of view of usage, there is no reason to proscribe the use of singular "they". Its use is sanctioned by common spoken language and by some of our best literature.¹

Those who try to defend the use of "generic" "he" by claiming that it is more logical than singular indefinite, "they" base their argument on the same circular reasoning as the prescriptivists mentioned above: "they" is only plural, therefore "they" can only be plural and it is illogical to use it in a singular sense. But even if we concede for the sake of argument that "they" is exclusively plural, it disagrees with a singular, indefinite antecedent by one feature: number. "He" also disagrees with a singular, indefinite antecedent by one feature: gender. However, as Bodine points out, the plural

and never, within the same clause, to use a plural referent to "anyone" or "no-one". I used to be fierce about the last of these, until I discovered that Jane Austen does it. (p. 8)

¹Miller and Swift give several other examples, pp. 121-122.

logically includes the singular more than the masculine includes the feminine.¹ In addition, in the various uses of singular "they", the distinction between plural and singular is often inconsequential semantically (in some instances, e.g. "everyone", the referent is, in fact, plural although the pronoun is grammatically singular),² whereas the use of generic "he" can lead to confusion with sex-definite "he" in the same way that "man" (species) is confused constantly with "man" (male).

The problem noted in the picket signs in the original L'Eugélonne is more difficult to solve since French has grammatical gender. In French, if there are 300 women one little tom-cat, or even 300 women and a truck, the grammatical agreement is masculine. This is a very basic feature of the grammar of French and other gender-marking languages, affecting the forms of adjectives and

¹Bodine, "Androcentrism," p. 133.

²The use of "they" in a singular indefinite or collective sense may date back a long way in the history of the Indo-European language family. In his discussion of grammatical gender, Muhammad Hasan Ibrahim cites the work of classical philologists which suggests that in Proto-Indo-European plural neuters were used in a singular collective meaning. Grammatical Gender, its Origin and Development (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), p. 31.

past participles as well as articles and pronouns.¹

The masculine is the dominant term of the gender system of French, or in other words, the feminine is the marked term. This means that "elles" tells us that everything referred to is feminine; "ils" tells us that at least one of the persons or things referred to is masculine. The protesters in L'Euguélonne therefore demand either the creation of a neuter form or the abolition of grammatical gender, or else a change in the concord rules pending the abolition of gender (section 673), all changes which would be very difficult to effect.

The fact that French is gender-marking and modern English is not is the most important difference between the two languages when we are considering problems of sex and language. In French, every noun, every pronoun and every adjective is marked for gender. Gender is grammat-

¹The whole problem of gender-marked third-person pronouns is not a very wide-spread one among the languages of the world, first of all because, as noted above, the phenomenon of gender as we know it appears only in a limited number of languages, and secondly because of the existence of third-person pronouns is itself far from universal. As Lyons points out, the very notion of the third person is essentially negative (neither first person or second person), and many languages have no true third-person pronouns (e.g. classical Latin), p. 277.

ical, but this grammatical gender overlaps with sexual or "natural" gender.¹ While gender is arbitrary for most nouns for most purposes in French, the sexual side of gender comes into play when dealing with people,² or when inanimate objects or abstract notions are personified and given sexual attributes. For example, "la liberté" is invariably represented as a woman in paintings, and when the moon and the sun are represented as lovers in poetry, "la lune" is the female and "le soleil" is the male.³

Throughout L'Euguélonne, Bersianik is always conscious of the gender of the words she uses to refer to

¹"Natural" gender is not necessarily sexual. Nouns can be classified according to other natural properties such as shape. Swahili has several noun classes with a large degree of correspondance between the noun classes and semantic categories. Lyons, pp. 284-286. See also, Susan Ervin, "The Connotations of Gender," Word, 18, pp. 249-269.

²With a few exceptions such as "la sentinelle" ('sentry') and "l'estafette" ('courier'), words designating men are masculine; words for women are usually feminine unless the feminine form is lacking, e.g. Madame le professeur.

³This practise can create headaches for translators. For example, in German, the sun is feminine and the moon is masculine, the opposite of French. See, Marina Yaguello, Les Mots et les femmes (Paris: Payot, 1978), p. 107.

human beings. She often uses gender for her own purposes.¹ For example, "victime" is feminine. This is an accident of history. But in sections 178-179, in the course of her allegorical story of the "Massacre of the Parameciae",² she uses this fact to produce an effect. The paragraph begins by describing "celui qui a été assassiné" ('he who has been murdered'). The pronoun following is obligatorily the masculine "il". But when the "victime" of the Massacre awakes, the pronoun becomes the feminine "elle" because "victime" is feminine. This kind of play on gender is difficult or impossible to translate into English.³ I did my best to find equivalents for them in my translation of L'Euguélonne. For instance, in section 481, the tormentors of the woman who has dared to seek an abortion say that the law is the same for all, "Le ou "

¹This use of gender by women writers in French is apparently not new. Ellen Moeurs states that writers such as Mme. de Staël, George Sand and Simone Weil consciously chose words for their gender. Literary Women (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1977), pp. 322-323.

²Three other students, Wendy Johnston, Tima Newman and Maureen Sullivan, and myself published a translation of this story (the first five chapters of Panel II of L'Euguélonne) in Canadian Women's Studies/Cahiers de la femme, 1, No. 3 (spring, 1979), pp. 71-73.

³In our translation of the allegory, we tried to adapt Berstanik's use of the feminine noun "paramécie". Since the word in English retains the forms of the Latin neuter noun ("paramecium", pl.: "paramecia"); we changed it to a Latin feminine: "paramecia", pl.: "parameciae".

la coupable doit être punie..." The subject is both masculine and feminine, so according to the usual rules of French grammar, the masculine takes precedence over the feminine and the past participle, "puni" agrees with the masculine. But Bersianik has ironically added the "e" to make it agree with the feminine. "Le ou la coupable" is obviously "la coupable". My translation for this is "The guilty one must be punished...whether she's a man or a woman!" English does not have grammatical gender agreement with the past participle, but it does have the generic use of the masculine pronoun. "He", however is far from truly generic. If the antecedent clearly refers to all women or mostly women, "she" is usually used. For example, "A secretary...she..."¹ Thus, I have tried to preserve Bersianik's use of gender concord to produce irony by inventing a similar play on the English third-person generic pronoun.

In section 470, we find another type of play on gender. Bersianik presents us with a poem on the con-

¹See my translation of section 669. See also Einar Haugen, "'Sexism' and the Norwegian Language," Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Vol. IV, Paul J. Hopper, ed. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V., 1977), pp. 88-89.

dition of the housewife with a recitation of the days of the week and the months of the year in feminized forms (they are all masculine words). In my English version, I made puns on the days of the week, and then for the months of the year, taking note of the fact that three months are women's names and two others are derived from men's names with corresponding feminine forms (July and August), I "feminized" all the names. For most of them, I used women's names and for the last four, I added the ending "-ess".

Another important aspect of gender in French which the protesters are concerned with is the lack of feminine forms for many agent words. These are usually words for functions and occupations which have traditionally been male reserves. Thus the language never developed feminine equivalents (necessity is the mother of invention in language as elsewhere).

One of the main demands addressed to the Académie française is for the creation of such missing feminine agent words. The protesters give a list of words with no feminines in section 675, 38 of them from "administrateur" to "témoin". Their objection is that when the word for the person fulfilling a certain function is necessarily

masculine, this tends to exclude women from that role. Someone thinking of a possible candidate for a job as, for example, "un chef de cuisine" will be more likely to picture a man because the term is always masculine. An ad for "un professeur" implies that a man is wanted for the job.

This demand, in fact, has been meeting with some positive response in recent years in Quebec. Newly invented feminine forms are being used more and more frequently. For example, Le Devoir newspaper, considered a leader of opinion, now uses the word "écrivaine" as a matter of course when referring to a woman writer, and the Quebec government has an official policy of creating feminines for job titles when these are lacking. Increasingly, the feminine is put on an equal footing with the masculine in such documents as collective labour agreements. Feminists in Quebec rarely hesitate to create a feminine form whenever they find it necessary. Such liberties with language seem to be less current in France. For example, in Le Perroquet manchot by Hélène Parmelin, the protagonist is stymied by the lack of a feminine form for "successeur". She does not feel comfortable using the masculine to refer to herself, but she cannot come up with

an alternative.¹ A Quebec feminist faced with the same problem probably would have simply added a mute "-e" to form a feminine.

The problem of feminine forms for agent words in English is quite different since English is not a gender-marking language. The only nouns marked for gender in English are marked lexically ("girl" is inherently feminine and "boy" is masculine) or morphologically (words with a "-woman" suffix or with feminine endings such as "-ette" or "-ess" are clearly feminine). Words with the suffix "-man" are either considered masculine, or treated as generic in the same way that "man" is treated as generic. Other nouns designating human beings apply equally to both sexes (e.g. "cousin"), or have a kind of psychological gender attached to them because of traditional gender roles.² For example, "carpenter" tends to bring to mind a man, whereas "nurse" brings to mind a woman in spite of the fact there is nothing in the grammar or in the words themselves to mark them for gender. In much the same way that French-speaking women feel excluded

¹Le Perroquet manchot (Paris: Stock, 1974), p. 83.

²Stanley lists further examples, p. 100.

by the generic use of the masculine forms of agent words and by the lack of feminine forms for many of these, English-speaking women feel excluded from certain functions and professions by the use of words which are lexically, morphologically or psychologically masculine.

What I call psychological gender is not a problem of language. It is a matter of stereotypes we attach to certain functions in society, stereotypes which can be corrected without any reform of English. Words with no inherent sex identification or gender suffix can quite easily change or lose their psychological gender. "Secretary" was identified with men before World War I; today it is clearly identified with women except for certain special usages. "Teacher" used to be used only for men, then it came to be used more for women, and today it is no longer clearly identified with either sex. It is essentially gender-free. Words such as "engineer" and "nurse" could as easily become gender-free.

For the French language, the consensus among those in Quebec who favour any kind of reform of the language seems to be that feminine forms should be given equal

place with masculines, at least in certain contexts.¹

In English, there are two main schools of thought on what actions will bring more equality to women in the use of agent words. Stanley, for example, suggests that we mark gender explicitly, creating pairs of terms: e.g. chairwoman/chairman, spokeswoman/spokesman, saleswoman/salesman, etc. asserting that "the use of neutralized forms perpetuates the invisibility of women in positions outside their traditionally defined roles."² Others contend that gender-marked agent words should be avoided or abolished in favour of neutral terms, that marked words such as "chairman" and "chairlady" should be replaced by terms which can be used equally for women and men (and not just for women as is often the case: for example,

¹There is a wide range of views on just when the feminine forms should be used side by side with the masculine. Le Devoir, for example, uses "écrivaine" and "auteure" when referring to women, but uses the masculine generic for mixed sex and sex unknown situations. Others, such as many unions and activist groups, favour the use of both feminine and masculine rather than the masculine generic. For example, L'Association nationale des étudiants du Québec has been renamed L'Association nationale des étudiants et étudiantes du Québec.

²Stanley, p. 108.

with "chairperson" and other "-person" words¹), and that the neutrality of these terms should be asserted linguistically by replacement of the pseudogeneric "he", and socially by striving for true sexual equality of opportunity for all such functions and occupations.²

Bersianik's choice was, of course, for the creation of missing feminines in French, and the use of feminine forms on an equal basis with the masculine, "d'ici à ce que les genres soient abolis," (section 675). As a translator, I had to make the choice between the two possible

¹Miller and Swift comment on this problem, pp. 113-114.

²Alleen Pace Nilsen asserts that the effect of specifically feminine terms such as "chairwoman" is to give the impression that women cannot be included in the existing terms (quoted in Stanley, p. 98). However, she favours education to make male-marked terms truly generic rather than any attempt to change the language (quoted in Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, ed., Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1975), annotated bibliography, p. 221. Both quotations are from "The Correlation Between Gender and Other Semantic Features in American English," an unpublished paper presented at Linguistic Society of America meetings, December, 1975). Dorothy Hage notes that while some "-ess" words were coined to include women, they are now used to exclude women with the result that, "...women are present only when specifically referred to by one of these words, and the rest of the time they are invisible." "There's Glory For You," Aphra, 3, No. 3, p. 5. In 1974, the voters of California decided to remove "-man" words and "he", "him" and "his" from their constitution. "California Voters Pamphlet, General Election, November 5, 1974," Proposition 11, pp. 40-43, Hartford Courant, November 7, 1974, p. 4; cited in Miller and Swift, p. 115.

options in English. I chose the latter. In my translation, the protestors call for the use of neutral terms and the abolition and replacement of gender-marked terms (sections 673-675). The two principal reasons for my choice are the imbalance between the connotations and denotations of existing feminine/masculine pairs, and the impracticality of the wide use of paired terms as suggested by Stanley.

Feminine/masculine pairs, in English as in French, often have quite different meanings. Mistress/master, governess/governor and priestess/priest are three important examples. Feminines derived from words for persons in positions of authority frequently denote the wife of the man holding the position rather than a woman holding the position (e.g. "ambadress", "mayoress").¹ In other pairs, there are important differences in connotation. "Bachelor" has none of the negative implications of "spinster". Those interested in women's writing usually reject such words as "authoress" and "poetess" in favour of "women writers" and "women poets". For example, in

¹In a paper presented to the Canadian Asian Studies Association Annual Conference in Saskatoon, May 26-27, 1979, E. Patricia Tsurumi uses the term "female emperor" in preference to "empress", "because the latter is ambiguous." "Historians and Japan's Early Female Emperors," p. 1.

the introduction to her anthology of English-language poetry by women, Louise Bernikow writes:

We have been taught to think of "greatness" as transcending time, space and gender. In these terms, women artists are simple "artists" and it is insulting to call them anything else. "Poetess" invites a shiver.

In my translation, I agree that the creation and use of specifically feminine terms gives the impression that women cannot be included in terms not marked as feminine.

The practical reason for rejecting the use of feminine/masculine pairs is highlighted by the experience of recent years in Quebec where such pairs are frequently used in French by feminists and people on the political left. The main criticism leveled against this usage is that it is often awkward and uneconomical. Its defenders contend that, in spite of these problems, this is the only way to prevent women being lost behind the masculine generic in French. While pairs are often used in such contexts as the names of organizations and manifestoes, they usually

¹The World Split Open: Four Centuries of Women Poets in England and America, 1552-1950 (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), preface by Muriel Rukeyser, p. 10.

give way to the generic masculine in general writing and speaking. Attempting to promote the use of feminine/masculine pairs in English as Stanley suggests would meet with at least as much resistance from the language and its users. The elimination of gender-marked words in English is a much more attainable goal, especially since neutral alternatives already exist in many cases (e.g. "bartender" instead of either "barman" or "bargirl" is an easier solution than trying to introduce "barwoman"), and it would be a step towards the long-range goal of the eradication of sexual stereotyping, toward a time when we will be more concerned with a person's qualities and abilities as a poet or a nurse or a doctor without regard for their sex. For while words are important, they are still in large part a symptom of social attitudes. As Robin Lakoff writes:

The presence of the words is a signal that something is wrong, rather than...the problem itself.

¹Language and Woman's Place (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), p. 21.

Chapter III

Naming

Iago:

Good name in man and woman,
dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of
their souls:

Who steals my purse steals
trash; 'tis something, nothing;

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has
been slave to thousands;

But he that filches from me my
good name

Robs me of that which not
enriches him,

And makes me poor indeed.

Othello, Act III, scene 3.

Naming, the privilege to name, is an important aspect of power, and a central symbol of power in any human (i.e. language-using) society. Mary Daly writes:

It is necessary to grasp the fundamental fact that women have had the power of naming stolen from us. We have not been free to name ourselves, the world, or god.¹

In what is frequently called the Judeo-Christian tradition, the first namer, the first linguistic power-wielder, was the first "man", Adam, and his naming of animals and plants was an integral part of his "dominion" over God's creation on Earth (Genesis I and II).

Since that beginning of language, men have been naming women, and all the other "creatures" of God's dominion. The names that men, and often women, call women are part of society's control and oppression of women, just as the "right to name" of white colonizers has been an important element in their domination over "savage peoples".²

¹Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 8.

²cf. Louis-Jean Calvet, Linguistique et colonialisme (Paris: Payot, 1974), pp. 56-60.

In L'Euguélonne, Bersianik provides us with a lengthy list of pejorative names for women in the French language (Panel II, chapter LXVI). There was no basic problem in rendering this passage into English, since there is no lack of names in the language of Shakespeare to put down, label, stereotype and stigmatize women. For many of the words in the original, there are more or less equivalent words in English (e.g. "salope"/"bitch", "garçonne"/"tomboy", "vieille fille"/"old maid"). For others, it was simply a matter of listing English terms of misogyny taken from a variety of sources: dictionaries of synonyms, from my own vocabulary and that of friends; from conversation heard in the streets, and so on. This vocabulary is basically slang, and since slang is the most ephemeral part of the lexicon of any language, many of the terms found, for example, in Roget's Thesaurus,¹ seemed outdated or were altogether unfamiliar to me (e.g. "gammer"). At the same time, Roget's Thesaurus and other written sources do not contain more contemporary terms, including many which have come into use in recent years as a direct reaction to the modern women's liberation movement. "Women's Lib" and "libber" are examples.

¹Roget's Thesaurus (London: Longmans, 1936).

By truncating the word "liberation", a word with distinctly positive connotations, misogynists have divorced the word from its basic meaning in order to trivialize the women's movement and attach their own negative connotations to the word. These terms are verbal weapons which can be used against anyone espousing equality for women without the attacker admitting that they are against the values of "equality" and "liberation".¹

This naming dehumanizes women, just as naming dehumanizes people of other countries, races, religions, etc., making them easier to kill in wars, send into exile, or exterminate in death camps. It is common to say that the "Other" are nothing but animals, like the "little yellow monkeys" we warred against in the 1940's and the assorted "sub-humans" that died in Nazi concentration camps.²

¹Ironically, it is often those accusing feminists of "Orwellian Newspeak" who resort to this Newspeak technique. See Miller and Swift, pp. 118-120.

²Women too, of course, have been subjected as a group to mass violence and murder on many occasions. See Mary Daly, Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), "The Second Passage", pp. 107-312.

When women are compared to animals, it is usually either to label them as sexually repulsive: a "cow", or a "dog", or as sexually desirable: a "bunny", a "bird", a "chick", a "kitten" or a "vixen". Either way, the woman named is reduced to the single dimension of her usefulness as a sexual object. It should be noted that the sexually-desirable-animal images tend to be those of immature or small, defenseless animals, probably because the woman who is immature (physically or intellectually) and easy to dominate is considered to be more desirable by men who want a sexual plaything. "Baby" and "doll" reflect the same kind of thinking. When women do not match the stereotypes of what is sexually desirable and sexually available, either in appearance, or even more importantly, in behaviour, they are regarded as abnormal and probably (horrors!) lesbians: "dykes", "bitches", "butches" and "amazons".

Other names reduce women to orifices: an "abyss", a "cravice", a "cunt", a "crack"; often the image is one of uncleanness: a "douche bag", or a "cesspool". Other names stereotype women as being of inferior intelligence (again the parallel with racist naming is striking): they are "dumb blondes", "flighty females" and "dingbats". They are weak, constantly in need of male protection and

assistance: "blubbing females" and "damsels in distress". They are never mature, remaining "girls" and "babies" long after they have become "old bags". When women do show undeniable intelligence and achievement, they are put down for showing qualities which are "unladylike" because they are seen as competing with the male of the species. When they are young, they are "tomboys"; later they become "castrating bitches", "cheeky broads" and "viragos"; as they age they are called "old battleaxes" and "hags".

The saying goes, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," but in reality, names do have great power. Dominant groups of people use the power to name as a tool to dominate other groups and "keep them in their place". When the Europeans came to the Americas, they frequently denied the native peoples the names by which they called themselves, using instead such names as "Nez-Percés", "Blackfoot" and "Delaware".¹ They named the Inuit "Eskimos", a perjorative name borrowed from Indians, and saddled many of the Indian nations with second-hand and fabricated names. The term "Indian" itself is, of course, a misnomer.

¹Calvet, p. 57.

The right to name oneself is an important part of human freedom. Leaders of the black liberation movement in the United States in the 60's emphasized its importance. In a speech in 1967, Stokely Carmichael said:

The need of a free people is to be able to define their own terms and have those terms recognized by their oppressors. It is also the first need that all oppressors¹ must suspend.

Along with its many other achievements, this movement has succeeded in making many racist terms taboo among large segments of North American society. Likewise, the women's movement is demanding the right for women to define themselves. "Don't call me girl!" has become a favourite slogan. Like blacks, women have begun making the oppressors more careful in what they say, although resistance to such "tinkering with language" is still strong.² Women have been able to make the use of "Ms." widespread in the English-speaking world, although in Quebec, no French equivalent has taken hold ("Mad." is sometimes used),

¹Morgan State College, January 16, 1967. Quoted in Haig A. Bosmajian, The Language of Oppression (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1974), p. 45.

²See Miller and Swift, pp. 118-120.

and women are still obliged to announce their marital status.

The power of naming and defining reinforces the hierarchies of society by restricting the opportunities of individuals according to how they are labelled. Each of us is defined, i.e. limited, by whatever social grouping we find ourselves in by birth or circumstance. While physical characteristics associated with race and sex are natural phenomena, the special traits, the roles prestige and power attached to these are defined by those in power. As Simone de Beauvoir said, "One is not born a woman, one becomes a woman." "Femininity" and "masculinity" are defined by society, and women cannot aspire to certain roles (often positions of power) without losing their "femininity", and men cannot exhibit certain traits without being seen as "unmanly".¹ Both sexes are limited, but it is women who are excluded from power, and men who hold it. Men are limited in some ways by sexism, certainly, but women are oppressed by it. Dale Spender writes,

¹For a discussion of "femininity" and "masculinity", see Stanley, pp. 100-102.

femininity is not a symbol of women's making in the way that masculinity is a symbol of man's making.

Names and symbols are tools of power, as Bersianik shows in section 478, and the appropriation of the power to name and define themselves is essential to women's liberation.

¹"The Namer and the Named," manuscript (University of London), cited by Cheri Kramarae, "Proprietors of Language," in Sally McConnel-Ginet, Ruth Borker and Nelly Furman, ed., Women and Language in Literature and Society (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 59.

Chapter IV

Voluntarist Action

Toute révolution devrait
s'accompagner d'une
réforme du dictionnaire.

Victor Hugo

Bersianik does two things in her examination of language in L'Euguélienne: she shows that the French language, and human language in general, is sexist and she calls for certain changes in the French language to remedy this situation. In my discussion of the problems in translating these passages, I have argued in favour of such voluntarist action on language and suggested changes to English which sometimes differ from the changes called for in the original text. What I attempted to do as a translator was not to convey to the English-speaking reader what Bersianik said about French, but rather to adapt her message to English and show the English-speaking reader how the English language is sexist, and what changes would be desirable and possible.

Is it possible to improve the lot of women by "tampering" with language? The idea is controversial. Those who argue against voluntarist action on language contend that language reflects society, and therefore any attempt to make changes directly to language is ill-conceived.¹

¹Nilsen favours, "educating children and the general public to the way language is rather than...trying to change the language," p. 221. Einar Haugen states, "The language expresses faithfully...the realities as the vast number of men and women have seen it down to our day. As long as this is true, it is a good thing that the language tells us so," p. 91.

There is a great deal of truth in this view. However, the relationship between language and society is more dynamic than this position would suggest. Language and society affect one another. Language is not simply a passive reflection of society. Neither is thought completely dominated by language.¹ The dominant ideas of a society are certainly reflected in the evolution of its language, but at the same time, our language affects and limits how we think.² In addition, voluntarist action on language is not a new idea. Deliberate changes have been made to languages before. An important example is modern Hebrew. A state revived a language which was dead

¹This is an oversimplified version of the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, a distortion often made by those who wish to attack the idea that language can affect thought. As Jeanette Silveira writes:

The 'strong' version of Sapir-Whorf says that language is the only cause of thought content and also implies that thought does not affect language. This hypothesis is clearly incorrect, discussing it is just setting up a strawperson. The 'weak' version...says that language is a cause of thought content and leaves open the possibility that thought affects language.

"Generic Masculine Words and Thinking," in Cheris Kramarae, ed., The Voices and Words of Women and Men (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 173, ftn. 8.

²For a survey of literature on the power of language to shape perception, see Miller and Swift, pp. 124-138.

for most purposes and made it a modern language capable of meeting all the linguistic needs of an industrialized society and developing a vital literature. This action was made possible by social needs and desires: fervent nationalism and the need for a common language for people coming from many countries to form a new society, but it was a conscious, planned action applied to language.

Historically, voluntarist action on language is not uncommon. Yaguello points out that the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions were all accompanied by government-decreed language changes.¹ Language usage is governed throughout the world by institutions such as the Académie française, the BBC in England and the Office de la langue française in Quebec.

Many of the changes that feminists are now demanding are, in fact, reversals of voluntarist action by men who considered the masculine gender to be "more worthy than the Feminine."² Bodine cites, for example, an English grammarian of the late 18th century who advocated

¹Yaguello, pp. 182-183.

²J. Poole (1646) in Bodine, "Androcentrism," p. 134.

the replacement of indefinite "they" by generic "he",¹ and an act of the British Parliament in 1850 which officially replaced "he or she" with "he".²

The simplest form of action to remedy sexism in language is simply to be conscious when speaking and writing that women do account for more than half of adult humanity. Often the female half of humanity is "left in the shadows". For example, Jewish writers who note the high literacy rate in shtetl society tend to speak of almost 100% literacy when they mean almost 100% male literacy.³ Translators should take care not to add sexism to a text. When Ibsen wrote "The Doll's House", he had

¹L. Murray (1795) in Bodine, "Androcentrism," pp. 135-136.

²Quoted from B. Evans and C. Evans, A Dictionary of Modern American Usage (New York: Random House, 1957), p. 221; in Bodine, "Androcentrism," p. 136.

³For example:

As early as the seventeenth century, these self-governing bodies succeeded in making elementary schools — centred on the Bible and the Talmud — practically universal for shtetl Jews. Between the ages of 5 and 13, every boy attended school, regardless of his social standing or economic position. (my underscoring)

Amos Elon, The Israelis (Great Britain: Winderfield and Nicolson, 1971), p. 59.

Nora say:

Jeg tror at jeg er først og fremst et menneske,
jeg, ligesåvel som du, — eller ialfald, at
jeg skal forsøge på at bli'e det.

I believe that I am first and foremost a human
being, just as you, — or at least that I will
try to become one.

The first translator of the play translated "menneske"
('human being') as "man", and so had Nora say she thinks
she is a man.¹ Similarly, Marx's statement that, "People
(Menschen) make their own history..." is almost universally
known in English as "Men make their own history..."²

The banishment of sexist appellations such as "girl"
(for adult women) and "libber", the way words such as
"boy" (for adult black men) and "nigger" have largely
been eliminated, and the reappropriation by women of their
right to name themselves is also simple, from the linguistic
point of view at least.

More difficult to achieve is the elimination of
generic "he" and "man", and of gender-marked agent words

¹Haugen, p. 83.

²"The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte."

Such as "chairman". This involves defying widely accepted grammar rules concerning the use of the masculine generic and replacing the highly productive suffix "-man" in its generic sense.¹ Such changes are more difficult to implement, and there is less agreement on exactly what action should be taken. As noted above, for example, not all feminists favour the elimination of gender-marked words. Some prefer the expanded use of words marked for the feminine to rectify the imbalance. For generic "man" and "he", some suggest coining new words to replace them. Miller and Swift discuss some of these suggestions, one dating back to 1859.² However, none have met with any success so far. In her novel, Woman on the Edge of Time, Marge Piercy coins a generic third-person singular pronoun, "person" nominative, and "per" accusative and genitive, for her world of the future, along with certain other language changes to suit her new non-sexist society.³

But changes are taking place in the real world of

¹Productive in the linguistic sense that it is a building block for coining new words.

²pp. 116-120.

³Woman on the Edge of Time (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1976).

today. The feminization of titles and agent words in French is becoming widely accepted in Quebec. The Office de la langue française has published a brochure entitled La Féminisation des titres.¹ Rather than prescribing any one feminine term where a feminine is lacking traditionally, it takes a descriptive approach and lists those actually coming into use. While there is not always agreement on which is the best feminine term, the idea of feminization of titles is taking hold, and only those opposed to any innovation to remedy sexism in French still oppose it. According to Robert Dubuc, assistant director of the Linguistics Department at Radio-Canada, resistance to feminization of titles, "ne vient pas du système morphologique lui-même. La grande objection à la féminisation, c'est notre peur de la nouveauté."² Language reforms can be suggested and promoted; usage will eventually decide which will become part of the language.³

¹Cited by Renée Rowan, "Encore ce problème du féminin des titres...", Le Devoir, April 11, 1983, p. 5.

²Cited by Jean Royer, "Variations sur le sexe des mots," Le Devoir, Feb. 19, 1983.

³"...la décision revient toujours au locuteur, à la locutrice en l'occurrence, et c'est l'usage qui inventera ces formes nouvelles," Marie-Eva de Villers, "Madame 'la' juge: les ressources du féminin," Le Devoir, Feb. 24, 1976, p. 24.

"Ms." in place of "Mrs." or "Miss" is one innovation which has taken hold in English-speaking North America. Although there is still resistance to its use,¹ it is now so widely understood and used that it seems to be here to stay. Changes are also taking place in legal usage as the California example cited above (p. 41), and textbooks and dictionaries are being reformed.² More recently, the National Council of Churches in the United States has released a new translation of Bible readings which eliminates male bias in references to God and generic masculine references to humanity. It is often a more accurate rendering of the original texts. For example, in the passage of Genesis cited above (p. 46), I noted that the first namer in the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition is a man. The first namer is pictured as a

¹See Miller and Swift, p. 91.

²

...a new, nonsexist era is dawning at McGraw-Hill, one of the world's largest publishing houses. In a sweeping assault on 'sexist assumptions', the company will try to eliminate male-female stereotypes from its nonfiction publications.... A list of forbidden phrases includes 'the fair sex', 'the better half', and 'the girls or the little women', and lists such forms as 'suffragette', 'usherette' and 'aviatrix'. 'Co-ed' should be changed to 'student' and 'sweet young thing' to 'young woman', the guidelines say.

Grace Glueck, "McGraw-Hill Bars Sexism in Nonfiction," New York Times, September 12, 1974. Cited in Bosmajian, p. 140. See also Alma Graham, "The Making of a Nonsexist Dictionary," Ms., 11, No. 6 (December, 1973), pp. 12-16.

male named Adam. However, the word "adam" in the Hebrew is simply 'human being' and in the first chapter of Genesis, "adam" is created, male and female. And with regard to the male image of God which familiar translations of the Bible give us,

...the editors of the new lectionary contend that using "father" as a metaphor for God ascribes to God a sexual identity not supported by close study of the scriptures.

Most feminists, however, do not wait for such official approval before remodeling the language to their own needs. The Euguélonne tells the women protestors that she does not agree with going to the Guardians of Grammar and pleading for changes.² She tells them not to wait for permission, but to speak and write as they please, "for the spirit of language is in the tongues of the people and not in paper rules," (section 677). More and more, women, French-speaking, English-speaking and others, are writing their own language rules, and "wrenching back some

¹ Charles Austin, "New Bible Text Makes God Male and Female," New York Times, October 15, 1983, pp. 1,8.

² As Mary Daly writes, "M-A-Dness is Male Approval Desire," Gyn/ecology, p. 18.

wordpower,"¹ in a sense making their own languages.

¹Daly, Gyn/ecology, p. 9.

Chapter V

Women's Language

Sujet de composition:
"Montrez que la discrétion
est une qualité précieuse,
surtout chez une jeune fille."

Archives de la Maison-mère des
Soeurs de la Présentation, à
Saint-Hyacinthe (1899)

Apprendre à écrire avec les
mots qui manquent.

Jeanne Hyvrard

Many feminist writers speak of "male language"; i.e. the standard language defined by male powerholders, as a language which is not their own, a language which traps them in its many built-in assumptions and biases. They feel a need for a "women's language" which will allow them to express themselves fully. Adrienne Rich, for example, writes, "This is the oppressor's language/Yet I need it to talk to you."¹

Are there fundamental differences between men's language and women's language? Sexual differentiation in language certainly exists. It is a universal phenomenon according to Bodine, who has made an extensive study of past and present scholarship on the subject, reviewing studies of sex-based differences in no less than twenty-three languages dating back as far as the 19th century.² Yaguello gives further examples of studies on sexual differentiation in the first chapter of her book entitled, "L'Héritage des anthropologues."³

¹"The Burning of Paper Instead of Children," In Poems: Selected and New, 1950-1974 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), pp. 148-151.

²"Sexual Differentiation," p. 148.

³Yaguello, pp. 15-29.

Many of the studies mentioned by Bodine and Yaguello, particularly the earlier ones, look upon "women's languages" as deviant forms of language, more often than not occurring in far-off exotic places. The underlying assumption, of course, is that men's speech and language are the norm.¹ There is no need to speak of "men's languages". The anthropologists discuss language "in general" and "women's language". But whatever the norm, sex-based language differences do exist.

The word "language" has a whole range of meanings, so we have to qualify the statement when we say that "men and women speak different languages". In the strictest sense, the language of a community or society is the entire system of "words, their pronunciation and the methods of combining them used and understood by a considerable community."² It is in this sense that French, English, Xhosa and Tibetan are languages. For easy reference, I will call this "language₁".

¹Yaguello, p. 23.

²Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Toronto: Thomas Allen and Son Ltd., 1976).

"Language" can also be used for the vocabulary and style associated with a particular activity or with a particular group of people within a society. For example, the "language of midwives" or the "language of the tavern". This I will call "language₂".

Thirdly, "language" can refer to the manner of speaking of a particular individual at a particular time. For example, "obscene language", "effective language" or "threatening language". I call this "language₃".

Within any given language₁, there are invariably a great many languages₂, variations according to age, class, region, sex, activity and so on, the degree of variation depending to some extent on the size and complexity of the society or societies which use the language₁. There are countless languages₃, or varieties of speech, within any language₁.

The idea of separate women's languages₁ is an old myth of armchair anthropologists.¹ Women and men live together in all human societies whatever the nature of their relationships within those societies. Any given

¹Yaguello, p. 18.

society has a single language₁ which the members of that society use to communicate and relate to one another.

Certain domains of activity and forms of social interaction may be the exclusive province of women or of men, and so the languages₂ associated with them are parts of "women's language" or "men's language". There are also certain distinct rules of behaviour when women and men are interacting. When examining sexism in language, differentiation which occurs during interaction between the sexes is probably more important.

When they interact, different groups in any given society, and their respective roles and status, are identified linguistically and paralinguistically (through body language). How we speak to one another is probably as important as what we actually say in determining, displaying and reinforcing social relations. The subject matter of a conversation may be impersonal and apolitical in the extreme, but the language₂ used by the interlocutors is invariably either a confirmation of their established social relationship, or a manoeuvring and "feeling things out" to determine what that relationship will be. The classic example of this in sociolinguistics is the encounter between A.F. Poussaint and a policeman cited by Susan Ervin-Tripp:

A scene on a public street in contemporary

U.S:

"What's your name boy?" the policeman asked...

"Dr. Poussaint, I'm a physician..."

"What's your first name, boy?..."

"Alvin."

1

The content of this verbal exchange is minimal on the surface: the policeman asks for Poussaint's name and he gives it. But the underlying social content is multifarious. Poussaint is obliged by the policeman to speak the way the policeman expects given the officer's perception of their relative status (based on racist attitudes), i.e. the language₂ of black submission to whites. The policeman refuses to waver from his initial use of the language₂ of white supremacy. The clues are quite easy to recognize for most English-speaking North Americans, even those with relatively little direct experience with black/white interaction (e.g. the use of "boy" as a form of address to an adult black male).

Such broad conscious recognition of the power relationships found in verbal interaction does not exist for relations between the sexes (perhaps because the contemporary women's movement is not as old as the black

¹"Sociolinguistics," in Language, Culture and Society: A Book of Readings (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1974), p. 269.

liberation movement), but general awareness has been growing in recent years. More and more, women have been demanding equality in how they are spoken to and spoken of. "Don't call me honey" appears on buttons, and the Financial Times recommends that its readers stop calling their secretaries "girls".

At the same time, women have been asserting the right to define what they can say and how they can say it. Traditionally, "women's language" has often meant restriction on the possibilities of expression. The females of the species are socialized very early to limit what they say and how they say it, particularly in formal and semi-formal contexts, and particularly in interaction with the opposite sex. Little boys, too, are taught to adjust their language for "mixed company", but society is generally far more tolerant of "naughty language" and assertive behaviour on their part. Overtly or not, they are taught to express themselves in strong terms and act like "little men", while girls are taught to speak and act in a "lady-like" manner, often more politely than males in a comparable situation and, in general, deferentially to the opposite sex.¹

¹See Elena Gianini Belotti, Du Côté des petites filles (Paris: Editions des femmes, 1975), translation of Dalla parte delle bambine (Milano: Feltrinelli Editore, 1973), pp. 73-75.

A girl who interacts with boys as an equal is labelled a "tomboy". The social pressure to be "lady-like" continues into adulthood, and this expected verbal behaviour limits women's expression, particularly in their interactions with men and in public. If women talk in a "lady-like" way, what they say is trivialized, but if they talk more assertively they are accused to trying to imitate men or are called "viragos" and "agressive bitches". A woman who speaks with authority is not a "real woman"; a "real woman" never speaks with authority, so is never taken seriously.¹ In order to gain acceptance into male-dominated institutions, women often imitate male discourse in content as well as form.²

This is why so many contemporary feminist writers have been searching for a new language of their own, one that meets their needs without restriction and is not just

¹This seems to be a widespread problem in the world. A similar observation has been made about Japanese: Sugaku Akiko, Nihon go to onna (The Japanese Language and Women) (Tokyo: Ganha Shinshō, 1979), p. 34.

²For example, H el ene Deutsch cited in Benofte Groult, Ainsi soit-elle (Paris: Grasset, 1975), pp. 56-57.

an imitation of men's language either in what they say or how they say it. This approach seems to be much stronger in the French-language women's movement. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron write:

...the combination of activism in language and politics..is the most characteristic of French feminisms...nowhere else have groups of women come together with the express purpose of criticizing and reshaping official male language and, through it, 1 male manners and male power.

The feminist examination of language in English-speaking North America has been more from the perspective of the social sciences, with extensive research by linguists, sociologists and anthropologists.² The approach is more descriptive than creative. Fiction writers do not seem to be as concerned with problems of sex and language and how language might be changed to better meet the needs of women. One important exception, although she does not write fiction, is Mary Daly who says she does "gynocentric writing".³

¹New French Feminisms: an Anthology (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), Introduction, p. 6.

²See, for example, Mary Ritchie Key, Male/Female Language (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1975). See also studies already cited, the bibliography in Thorne and Henley, and my annotated bibliography.

³Gyn/ecology, pp. 24-27.

Feminists in Quebec are at the crossroads of French and North American feminisms. While remaining very much North Americans, they have also been strongly influenced by the intellectual traditions of France. Feminist writers in Quebec, such as Louky Bersianik, find their inspiration in both the work of American linguists and sociologists, and the manipulation of language and symbols and the "deconstruction" of male discourse found in France. This combination makes for writing which is both an effective analysis of sexism in our society, and a poetic and often humorous work of creation. It also presents special difficulties for the translator, particularly when it takes the language itself as the subject matter. It is, however, important that this kind of writing be made accessible to English-speaking readers. I have attempted to examine some of the problems of translating an example of this new feminist writing and make a contribution to that endeavor.

TRANSLATION EXTRACTS

From Panel II:

Chapters LXIV, LXV and LXVI.

From Panel III:

Chapters I, II, III, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X (in part),
and XI.

LXIV THE WEDDING PRESENTS

468. The lights suddenly went out, and then lit up again in another part of the stage which was cluttered with props. A grand piano was covered with articles for cleaning and cooking. A royal throne stood on a dais, and in front of the throne, there was a huge wicker basket with a big white ribbon decorating its handle.

Offstage, there was a loud noise. It was the wedding party arriving. A mob of people flooded onto the stage. The reception must have already taken place, since most of them looked rather tipsy. They were coming to escort the newlyweds to their new home.

- Here's your home, my daughter, said the father of the bride. Here you are Queen. You're going to ascend your throne, and we will crown you and shower you with gifts. We will teach you the rites of your new station.

He helped his daughter onto the throne and carefully arranged the bridal gown himself so that it was spread out all around her.

469. And then, said the Euguélonne, the mother of the bride came forward holding the "crown" in her hands. This crown was made of a roll of toilet paper printed with delicate little flowers and hung with graceful ringlets of the same material.

Deeply moved, the mother climbed the few steps to the

throne and crowned her daughter with pure maternal pride.

Each guest came forward in turn, and taking an article from the basket, a brush, saucepan, broom, frying pan, mop, tea kettle, rags, toaster, bag of dirty laundry, or iron, threw their "present" into the basket as they said in turn:

- 470. - Moonday, you're washed out.
- Twosday, you're tuckered out.
- Weddingsday, you're clutching.
- Thirstday, your nerves are frayed.
- Fryday, you're burnt out.
- Sadderday, you're played out.
- Sondag, you're oozing.
- Janewary, you're boozing.
- Phoebewary, you're losing.
- Marsha, you're churning.
- April, you're burning.
- May, you're bleeding.
- June, you're knocked up.
- Juliette, you're f...ed up.
- Augusta, you're running.
- Septembress, you're rambling.
- Octobress, you're trembling.
- Novembress, your belly swells.
- Decembress, you're winded.
- The next year, you give birth.

471. When the basket was filled, said the Euguélonne, one guest took a garbage can and dumped it out on the bride, covering her with rubbish. Another presented her with a small casket which he opened right under her nose, spilling the contents on her dress. It was apparently precious dust collected in a church on Ash Wednesday. A joker came next carrying two bleating sheep in his arms. He deposited them in the bride's lap as he told her she would have to chase balls of wool from room to room for the rest of her life.

Finally came a performance of the whole series of rituals enumerated in the maternal poem, a practical demonstration for the bride. Among other things, I remember them bringing her a magnificent dish of dubious-looking water into which they dipped her fingers ten times. After each dipping, they devoutly wiped them with a silk rag.

LXV MR. OLD-WIVES'-TALES

472. Just before this last episode, the young bridegroom, seeing that all the gifts and attention were going to his young bride, got annoyed and asked:

- And what about me? Don't I get anything?

- My boy, said his father, be content with being a *piton bank*, and get your love-making machine ready.

This joke got laughs not only from all the wedding guests, but from the whole audience in the hall.

473. Later, after the ceremony of ritual acts, that disarming little phrase was heard once more:

- Bah, old wives' tales!

This time it was Upsilon who'd made the remark.

474. In the second act, said the Euguélonne, four glass walls were brought on, and the young bride was chained inside. The chain was just long enough to allow her to move from one wall to the other. Then the walls were closed around her.

Then Upsilon's voice was heard again. This time it was expressing neither "bah's" nor careless disdain, but rather uncontrollable rage:

- Ah, c'mon now! You think we're a bunch of idiots? It's all old wives' tales! Nothing but old wives' tales! he shouted repeatedly as he noisily walked out, followed by Epsilon and Mr. Alfred Omega.

475. During the second act, said the Euguélonne, I remember seeing a funny commercial on a television set set up outside the glass walls; it was intended for the young bride. She was being offered a fantastic dishwasher, and the offer was embellished by the following short drama:

(The mother of the family to her children):

- Go do your chores, go take your baths, go wherever you want, but leave me alone. Tonight, it's my turn to do the dishes.

(The children disappear. The husband comes into the kitchen and says in a tone of affectionate reproach):

- Mother, you promised to let me do the dishes...

(The mother of the family pushes her husband away and starts to place the dirty dishes in the fantastic dishwasher):

- Tonight, I'm doing the dishes. And nobody's going to deprive me of that joy!

476. It's too bad that Mr. Old-Wives'-Tales Upsilong wasn't there to hear that, said the Euguélonne.

LXVI THE CLASSIC WIFE

I also remember, from the second act, a gripping "monograph" on the classic wife.

We were told, in fact, that the terms of this incomplete monograph could apply at one time or another to any woman on earth, married or not, young, widowed, virgin, old, divorced, or "just standing there".

Most of these terms have no masculine equivalent, or else one which is relatively much more subdued. I was amazed that men — who made the language — had found such a vast, limitless repertoire of laudatory and delicately shaded epithets with which to describe their companions.

To begin, an actor came up to the glass cage and pointed a finger at the prisoner:

477. - *Here is the prostitute you kill every night, he said. Here is the hag that you drag through the garbage each day.*

Then the other actors, including the actresses, began to move in a circle around the cage. Each in turn shouted an insulting name at the bride and then strutted off as if they had just come out with a particularly brilliant flash of wit.

478. - Abyss

- Adultr~~ess~~

- Amazon
- Angelmaker
- Babe
- Baby
- Bad woman
- Bag
- Battle-ax
- Beldame
- Better half
- Bird
- Bitch (hence the expression "son-of-a-bitch")
- Blubberer
- Bluestocking
- Boyish
- Bra-burner
- Brazenfaced hussy
- Broad
- Bunny
- Butch
- Castrating bitch
- Cesspool
- Chambermaid
- Chatterbox
- Cheeky broad
- Chick
- Chippy

- + Cleaning lady
- Cocotte
- Concubine
- Cookie
- Courtesan
- Cow
- Crack
- Crevice
- Cunt
- Dame
- Damsel
- Debauched
- Deflowered
- Demimondaine
- Dingbat
- Divorcee
- Dish
- Doll
- Dog
- Douche bag
- Dowager
- Doxy
- Drab
- Dragon
- Drudge
- Dumb blonde

- Easy lay
- Easy woman
- Emancipated woman
- Eunuch
- Fallen woman
- Fancy woman
- Female
- Feminine woman
- "Feminist"
- Fille de joie
- Filly
- Fishwife
- Fissure
- Flighty female
- Floozy
- Fornicatress
- Fox
- Foxy lady
- Frail sisterhood
- Frigid woman
- Gash
- Geisha
- Girl Friday
- Gold digger
- Gossip
- Hag

- Harlot
- Harridan
- Henpecker
- Hetaera
- Hippopotamus
- Hole
- Homenaker
- Housekeeper
- Housewife
- Hoyden
- Hussy
- Hysterical woman
- Iceberg
- Icicle
- Jade
- Jewish American Princess
- Kept woman
- Kitten
- Knocked up
- Lady of ill repute
- Lady of the house
- Libber
- Loose woman
- Madame
- Maggie
- Maid

- Man-eater
- Man-hater
- "Mannish woman"
- Meat
- Minx
- Mistress
- Moll
- Mother-in-law
- Nanny
- Ninny
- Nymphomaniac
- Old biddy
- Old hen
- Old maid
- Peach
- Pick-up
- Piece of ass
- Pin-up
- Powder puff
- Princess
- Prissy old maid
- Procuress
- Prude
- Pussy
- Queen of the home
- "Real woman"

- Rival to man
- Saucy tart
- Scarlet woman
- Second fiddle
- Sex kitten
- Shady lady
- Shameless hussy
- Shrew
- Silly goose
- Siren
- Skit
- Skirt
- Skivvy
- Slattern
- Slave
- Slavey
- Sleeze bag
- Slut
- Sow
- Spit-fire
- Stepmother. Ugly stepsister
- Streetwalker
- Strumpet
- Sweet young thing
- Suffragette
- Tart

- Ternagant
- Tomboy
- Toots
- Tramp
- Trash
- Trollop
- Trull
- Twat
- Unwed mother
- Uppity woman
- Vagina dentata
- Vamp
- Viper
- Virago
- Virgin
- The Virtuous Woman of the Good Book
- Vixen
- Waitress
- Wallflower
- Wanton woman
- Wench
- Whale
- Whore

The actors stopped walking around the stage. One of them pointed a finger at the prisoner.

479. - Here is the prostitute you kill every night, he said.

- Here is the hag that you drag through the garbage each day, said another.

- Here is your domesticated shrew, said a third.

- Household spider, black widow, degenerate.

- Fresh meat on the shelf.

- Reckoned up.

- Weighed up.

- Measured up.

- Bargained for.

- Sold.

- Left on the shelf.

- Consumed.

- The leftovers sent back.

- "Love 'em and leave 'em".

480. One of the actors came and stood in front of the woman and said angrily to her:

- If you're pregnant again, I'm leaving you!

There was commotion among the actors as the woman began suddenly to writhe about in her cage. She vomited, cried out, fell over backwards, and screamed, screamed, screamed! Again and again she screamed, MERCY! MERCY! MERCY! MERCY! mercy! mercy!"

The actors huddled together like conspirators, and out of their solid, homogeneous group came whisperings, hushings and hissings, and occasional expressions of

shock. Some of the conspirators literally "ran out" of breath. Little by little, they raised their voices, higher and higher, shriller and shriller, so unbearable was the disgust they felt.

481. "What! What has she done? What has she done? It's not possible! Criminal activities! Abortive activities! For shame! Another clandestine abortion! These women are crazy! Stark raving mad! What's got into them all! Unthinkable! They say she's dying? Well, good! That'll teach her! No, but really.... By what right! What are we coming to! It's obvious we're moving towards hystero-
cracy! And what about the *Primacy of the Phallus*? Secreted away? Neither seen nor heard? Replaced by the *Primacy of the Uterus*? Never! We have our pride! And what about the fathers? What are you doing with the fathers? They exist, after all! It's still them who "make" those children for them! They still have something to say about it! It's an act against nature! The fruit of her womb! The sacred fruit of her womb! It's murder! God said, "Thou shalt not kill"! They say she's suffering the tortures of the damned? Well good! That'll teach her! She's damned, now and forever! She's a criminal in the eyes of the law, in the eyes of God and in the eyes of men! And in the eyes of other women! She's guilty of murder! The Massacre of the Innocents! Your mother let you live, didn't she? So! If she'd gotten an abortion,

you wouldn't be here, would you? May the criminal "mother" die! May her blood fall on us and on her "other" children! We accept the responsibility! You can be sure that fear of blood won't keep us from accepting our responsibility. The seed of the male is sacred! It must not be wasted! It's counted somewhere, like each single hair on our heads! What? They say she's suffering? She's pleading for mercy? Too late! She should've thought of that before! You only reap what you sow! She has to quit school? Well, good! That'll teach her! No, but by what right? She'll have to give up her career? Great! What the hell does a woman want with a career anyway? Eh? I'm asking you! So much the better! That'll make one less of them to take our jobs! And what business has she got acrewing around at her age anyway? And outside of marriage too! Moral standards are breaking down completely! It's shameful! Young people have no principles! What? She's married? Well, isn't that something! Why did she do it then, since she has the right to have as many children as she can? Her child wouldn't have been a little bastard! He would've been legitimate! He would've had a name! Obviously, the ones that aren't married haven't got a name to give to their child... Maybe that's an extenuating circumstance in their cases... You say she had to prostitute herself to pay for the abortion? She's really something, isn't she! Doesn't

make any difference anyway, does it? She's a slut anyway!

And how, how did she do it? With pure Lysol? (What an

idiot! She would've done better to use it to clean the

floors! Be careful: don't use it undiluted; it burns

the linoleum! And how else? With knitting needles?

Stupid twat! She would've done better to use them to

knit socks for her husband! Poor man! It's a fact:

he's killing himself at work! Deserves more consideration!

No, really... She's perforated her uterus? Well, good!

That'll teach her! Somebody stuck a probe into her?

The idea! I just ask you! Women get such ideas! You

wonder where they get it from! They put her in the

hospital? Society is very generous to take care of her!

Give her a D&C without any anaesthetic! That'll teach

her! She's all torn up? "Sew her up completely so she

can't screw anymore!" And her accomplices? Where are

they? In the hands of the law, I hope! It's our duty

to turn them in! And to turn in those criminal "mothers"

too! Especially if we're the flouted fathers of those

murdered children! It takes courage? And what about

manly courage? What's the good of being a man, anyway?

It's a good thing there are laws! It's a good thing

there is justice! Justice for all! Without regard for

class, race, sex... It's a good thing the law has a long

arm! The laws are good laws! No matter what, they must

not be changed! The legislators are wise! And what about

the decline in the birth rate? It's a good thing there are still impartial judges! If she doesn't die from it, she'll have to be thrown in jail! It's not because she's a woman... Why are you worrying about equality of the sexes? The law's the same for everybody. The guilty one must be punished... whether she's a man or a woman... There's no excuse... Not because she has other children who need her! That's no excuse! Those have been born already: they have nothing to fear from the abortionists! Oh, they had a close shave! Poor kids! Now they're safe! They've already been born! We should have a *Fetusman*! A protector of the Fetus! We've already got an *Ombudsman*, the protector of the citizen! The fetus is a citizen like any other! How is it different from a human being like you or me, eh, I ask you? The fetus belongs to the State! And what about cheap labour for the future? Have you thought of that? And what about "cannon fodder" as they say jokingly? Have to get it somewhere. Where would we get workers, soldiers, poor people, housekeepers and prostitutes, for God's sake, if all the women got abortions! You have to be realistic, dammit! A State, whatever State it may be, always needs its generations of poor people, soldiers, workers, prostitutes and housekeepers, it's plain as could be! It's history! You can't stop progress! Besides, it's not me who says it! It's even written in the Gospel! Oh, look! What's that? Looks like blood!

Huh? Blood? Shit! There's blood everywhere! Yech!

It's disgusting! The ground is flooded with it! The whole earth is flooded with the criminal blood of aborted women and the innocent blood of fetuses! Water! Air! It's transcendental pollution! Water to purify our feet which have walked through the blood!"

482. The woman in the cage was lying in her own blood. She screamed no more. The actors all rushed off stage and a chorus of running taps could be heard...

A little later, men and women poured onto the stage to mop up the mess.

483. Finally, said the Euguélonne, the third act showed the woman in revolt, in a state of permanent rebellion against her situation. We saw her break her chains; we saw her go on strike in her home, in the factories, in the offices; we saw her take to the streets with her fellow women and demand equal rights, not only in theory, but in practice.

The remarkable thing, said the Euguélonne, was that she was pelted with the same insults that she'd had dumped on her a little while before when she was in the cage and hardly moved at the end of her chain... There was even a new insult added: *dyke*, because, so they said, how could a woman rebel and demand equal treatment with the human male unless she was *abnormal*...

Chapter I

THE OBELISK

Here is what the Euguélonne said in this the present era of our Prehistory:

631. - When I left the National Library, I climbed to the top of the highest mountain. There, there was a large gathering in the shade of beautiful, century-old trees.

A prophet, who everyone referred to by the reverent name of St. Siegfried, was preaching a new religion. He was surrounded by his disciples, some loyal, some dissident, but all very zealous.

632. By asking around a little, I was able to find out the names of two or three of these many emulators: one was St. Thomas of Aco, another was St. Francis Capricioso, a third was St. Jacques Linquant.

St. Jacques Linquant was, I was told, at once very ontologically shakespearean (TO BE OR NOT TO BE THE PHALLUS), very possessively man-about-town (TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT), and finally very ambulatorily triangulomaniacal (THE OEDIPAL PROCESSION ONLY OCCURRING AROUND THE PHALLUS, which would tend to prove that by turning around in a circle it is possible to achieve the wonderful Triangular Movement of the Virile Circle, or the inverse — due allowance being made for the basal dialectic of all contra-

dictions inherent in the spatio-temporal-humano-masculinoid condition. — i.e. the Phallic Circuit of the Triangle around the Central Pivot viewed as the Primary and Primitive Primacy of the n^{th} degree of Introjection (according to the evolution of the Median Subject). This was the fundamental, dynamic principle of St. Jacques Linquant.

633. In the crowd, said the Euguelionne, I recognized Doctor Phipsi literally drinking in the words of St. Siegfried. With him were Epsilon and her brother, but I didn't see Alfred Omega.

Soon Exile, Omicronne and Migmaki came to join me while the children scattered among the trees.

We listened with a great deal of respect to the thoughts issuing from the lips of the Master. They seemed sensible enough to us, and full of beginnings for the knowledge of human beings as seen from the new perspective of the Depths, in other words, Man viewed in the pits...

But suddenly, he changed his tone completely. He took on the ridiculous appearance of an old rooster strutting on his spurs, announcing sunrise at high noon.

634. - *The Phallus, said St. Siegfried, is a monolithic monument. It is the Transcendental Obelisk occupying a central place for Every Man worthy of the name.*

The Phallus, said St. Siegfried, is for Men what the sense of smell is for some animals. It is a royal gift,

given to the species not only for survival, but for raising itself above all existence, for self-glorification, for singing its own praises through all Eternity.

And this is my Teaching, said St. Siegfried. The Phallus is the Fundamental Value of every human individual. It is the Trademark of Humanity, and its Secular Investiture. It is the Neo Plus Ultra of the human condition; it is the Essential Norm of the Human Being; it is his sine qua non condition. Outside of the Phallus, there is no salvation! Consider it well, my privileged brothers, my poor deprived sisters...

635. The individual born without a Phallus is an incomplete individual. He is Lacking something. Throughout his life, he will feel this original Lack; throughout his life, he will have to compensate for this primordial and inevitable Ananké. He will waste all his efforts in hopeless striving, since this Lack is an irreparable defect, an irreversible verdict of Nature. But this hapless individual must accept this Lack in complete humility, or risk entirely ruining a life already half ruined from the start.

Because, continued St. Siegfried, the individual born without a Phallus is a born loser. A cripple. Physically and mentally disabled, he could become dangerous if he ever got the notion in his head to rebel against his inevitable lot. But no one is responsible

for this failure of Nature with regard to him (I was going to say with regret to him...), not even himself. So he must accept his initial deficiency and transform his defeat into a meritorius make-do which, without being of positive value to Humanity, will at least be of some... substitute value.

This individual, said St. Siegfried, must inevitably build his life around this Lack. A large number of substitutes are available to him. He is permitted to make use of them as long as he does not abuse them, and above all, as long as he never thinks that the substitute is equal to the Original!

I will specify later what the principal substitutes are.

636. But now, and without further ado, I would like to speak in praise of the Individual born with a Phallus.

From the beginning, he has all the odds in his favour. For make no mistake about it, my brothers, my poor sisters, there exists nowhere on this earth or in the universe any conceivable Power outside of the Phallus. There exists no conceivable Intelligence outside of the Phallus. There exists no conceivable Libido outside of the Phallus. There exists no conceivable Energy outside of the Phallus. I prophesy today that if the ESSENTIAL Phallus ever disappeared, the world would be in an Energy crisis, a

Libido crisis, and an Intelligence crisis (not to mention the inevitable Gas crisis...).

637. Now as I have already stated, the Phallus is monolithic and always erect. How could it be otherwise? Is it not Power in its purest form? Everything that appears to have Power has borrowed that Power from the All-Powerful Phallus.

The Phallus is as full as a rock, as full as a cliff; there is no question of it being hollow! The hollow, my brothers, should make you tremble, both in thought and in word! The Phallus is Full and can contain nothing but itself. I repeat, the Phallus is monolithic and always erect like an Obelisk. It would be vain to attempt, as Moses did with his rock, to make a spring gush from it.

The Phallus is not a phountain. The Phallus is not a crock. The Phallus is not a container, not just a container... What could be more ridiculous than a container, I ask you. The Phallus is a tree of stone which needs neither sap nor foliage.

The Phallus is monolithic. It is the rock of Gibraltar. It would be vain for you to try to find water in it to quench some untimely thirst.

638. On the sides of this triumphal Obelisk are inscribed the countless names of its Victories. All the Victories of the All-Powerful Phallus may have been won at the

*expense of Life, but remember that Life is not one of
the Fundamental Values inscribed in the Catalogue of
Men.*

II ZAZIE OUTSIDE THE SUBWAY

Frenzied applause followed these eloquent remarks, said the Eugué lionne, while my friends and I looked at each other with big question marks in our eyes. Was this fellow making fun of his audience, or was he really serious? The warm and adoring response of the crowd left not a shadow of doubt in our minds. St. Siegfried was not joking. He speaking *ex cathedra*. He was as serious as a pope! We were philled with a phormidable desire, not for the Phallus, but to laph...

639. Then someone in the crowd shouted:

- Bravo! Hurrah! Long live the Phallus! Because
*Power grows out of the end of the Phallus!**

These words brought a tremendous burst of enthusiasm from the crowd. Exile gave us a little nod. Then as soon as the crowd had quietened down, she shouted too:

640. - *Power grows out of the end of the Phallus.*

Now, Money grows out of the end of Power.

Therefore, Money grows out of the end of the Phallus.

The impious words of this blasphemous syllogism were

*Historic statement made at Vincennes (Université de Paris VIII) and quoted by Françoise d'Eaubonne and Simone de Beauvoir.

greeted by an outcry of indignation from the crowd. St. Siegfried called for silence with a slight calming gesture.

- My dear lady, it is obvious you are suffering from your Specific Lack and manifesting a strong *penis envy*, which is quite normal, in any case, for persons of your sex...

641. - Penis envy my ass, yelled a small, saucy voice.

- Who said that? inquired St. Siegfried unflustered.

- Me, said a cheeky-looking girl straddling the limb of a tree.

- What's your name? asked the Master.

- Me? My name's Zazie. What's yours?

- Let's not talk about me. Tell me, Zazie, where do you go to school?

- In the subway, like everybody else! And you?

- Let's not talk about me, said St. Siegfried. So then, my little Zazie, wouldn't you like a little thing like the one your little brother has and you, alas do not?

-Whatcha talkin' about anyway? asked Zazie. D'ya mean Joey's weewee? If that's it, you're a silly old dingdong, you are. Confidentially, I'll tell you what I do want. I'd rather have boobs like mommy than a weewee. It'd be a lot handier for catchin' fellas.

- But wouldn't you find it useful to have a little spigot like Joey's?

642. - Spigot my ass, said Zazie, I can go peepee without

one, so I don't see why I'd need any more plumbing. What good would it do me? And besides, mister, still just between you an' me, I got things too that my brudder don't have. Believe it or not, when he sticks his fingers up his nose, it's not me that's envious of his little spigot, as you call it, 'cause mister, I can stick my fingers up someplace, and it's not up my nose, I can guarantee you that. And that "someplace" is even where I hide my marbles! Still just between you an' me, eh? Anytime you might feel an envy for a hiding-place like that, I can tell you this: it's really nifty!

Laughter broke out everywhere. But St. Siegfried was not convinced, and he was still trying persuade the child to make a complete confession.

- You mean to say, little Zazie, that you have never, never, felt envy for your little brother's little thing?

- Sometimes I do, said the child yearningly.

- There now, you see, said the Master. And when does that happen?

643. It's always when my mother makes me do the dishes that I get envious. 'Cause he always gets out of it.

D'ya think that's fair?

III THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

St. Siegfried had difficulty quieting the crowd and getting their attention again following this mischievous outburst, so clearly heretical, yet coming from such a young person.

- Let's leave that for now, he said. This child is suffering from a psychological deformation with very detrimental and infinitely deplorable consequences for her future as a woman. There's nothing I can do but express my regret...

Let's get back to the subject at hand. Now where was I? Ah yes! The praise of the Phallus! I will continue to impart my teachings to you on this marvellous subject by reciting the EIGHT BEATITUDES.

644. 1 - *Blessed are the Individuals born with Phalluses, for they are wholly in the image of this monolithic block. Never are they moulded in a hollow form. Therefore have they no hollow organs, no hollow muscles. In other words, they have no repugnant organs or organs of inferior quality.*

2 - *Blessed are the Individuals born with Phalluses, for they are without those vulvar organs, the Eyes, organs which open and close, which have a hidden origin, which are sensitive to light, which are in the image of individuals with no Phalluses. The Individuals born*

with Phalluses have Eyes like Greek Statues, monolithic, hermetic, blind, expressionless eyes, for they have no need to See. They have already seen everything from their solid gold interiors. And they have no need to Cry, for they have been cast in the lava of volcanoes, for they have been forged into bronze weapons, for they have been frozen in the fossilized spittle and tears of a Precambrian crocodile.

3 - Blessed are the Individuals born with Phalluses, for they are without those hollow organs, the Nostrils, those two vulgar holes, those two common pits, those two crude cavities, those two detestable little Nothings, all round and concave. No, the Individuals born with Phalluses do not have nostrils. But They have Noses! They have Noses in the image of their Phalluses! A protuberant organ, full and always erect. They have a monolithic Nose which can contain nothing but itself.

4 - Blessed are the Individuals born with Phalluses, for they do not have Mouths. They do not have thick, horizontal gashes cutting through the vertical plane of their noble silhouettes... Mouth...now there is a word you never pronounce without discomfort, for the Mouth, dear brothers and poor sisters, is the Sacred Wound of the Face...a wound which shamefully brings to mind another wound... The mouth is a sketch of the crevasse where so many of the wretched (however Blessed in the

beginning) are swallowed up whole, caught in the trap of their own blindness (although They are All-Powerful). If I say that they are swallowed up wholly, it is because — and this is an open secret — it is not the Phallus that enters the woman, it is the whole Man become Phallus, according to the ontological principle that says that the Phallic Part of Man is his Whole! No, the Individuals born with Phalluses can never have Mouths in their faces, especially since that cavernous organ has TEETH! the perfect image of the organ just mentioned above, which is often used to castrate Phallic Individuals and devour their beings. They have no Mouths, but they have two monolithic Jaws which never open and which never close.

5 - Blessed are the Individuals born with Phalluses, for they do not have Ears. Why would They have such ridiculous little funnels attached to their monolithic skulls. What have they to listen to? Have they not their sterling silver inner music singing their own praise? What more, what better would they have to Hear? No, the Individuals born with Phalluses have no Outer Ears, for they are already filled with the flattering murmur of their own Names.

645. 6 - Blessed are the Individuals born with Phalluses, for they have no Anuses, no Intestines, no Stomach, no Hearts, no other hollow organ, no Brains. Especially

no Brains, for Brains are made up of circumvolutions and invaginations... And is it in any way conceivable for Individuals born with Phalluses to have organs which, by their very shape, bring to mind other organs with their sinuous folds which are the shame of individuals born without Phalluses? For the Individuals fortunate enough to be born with Phalluses, the Phallus wholly takes the place of the Brain.

7 - Blessed are the Individuals born with Phalluses, for they have no inner Space, for there is no breach in their Phallic Individuality, for they are Perfect Fullness, being perfectly full of themselves, and being able to contain nothing but themselves. That is why Individuals born with Phalluses have no Bodies, Or rather, they are monolithic, Phallic Bodies in the image of their members. And their Members are in the image of their Phalluses, full and monolithic. They have bodies in the image of their arms and legs, in the image of their hands and feet, in the image of their fingers and toes. The latter, though a reduced version, are the perfect image of their monolithic bodies, for they are truly extremist, and allow nothing to come after them. They are finished members, cylindrical, with rounded ends, whose growth has stopped at its maximum level.

646. 8 - Blessed are the Individuals born with Phalluses,

for they are Superior Beings! Not depositories of Creative Energy, since they can contain nothing, but rather they ARE Creative Energy. And by virtue of this, they hold all rights, and by virtue of this, they hold all Powers, over everything that lives, over everything that moves, over the Apathetic and the non-monolithic.

VI THAT WORD "MAN" WORD FOR WORD

663. And what is MAN, said the Euguélienne, if he still exists? Is he gender, is he sex, is he species? And what is A Man? Is he a woman, is he a Man, is he a wolf, is he an hircocervus, is he an owl?

664. What is Man? said the Euguélienne. An invention? Then who has the patent? A copy? Then who has the Original? A phantom? Then where is the Living Being?

665. Why is it said that Man is a wolf to Map? And why is he a Werewolf to woman? And why are children taught in school that the Masculine takes precedence over the feminine? Why does the Masculine conquer the world while the feminine washes the dishes? Why does the Masculine read the paper while the feminine takes care of the children? And why do we read in dictionaries under the word "MAN" that he is considered "especially" as having the qualities of courage, boldness and uprightness, "characteristic of his sex"? And why must woman pass through an interminable veil of tears in her desperate efforts to make your species whole again? And why is it not good for Man that woman is Human? Why is woman made to feel guilty for being woman? And why does Man make fun of her when he sees her struggling, as if it were his cow or his dog demanding equality? Why has Man domesticated woman

the way he domesticated cows and dogs? And why is it that Man is surprised and irritated when woman demands equality? Why does he scoff and shrug his shoulders or smirk knowingly when he talks about it in public, just as if it were his cow or his dog who was calling him to account for the laws and grammar rules? Or for those ludicrous rules that say the king always takes precedence over the queen, whether in chess or in Buckingham Palace? And why do all the Men on earth accept as a matter of course that your species is male? And why are there so many women on earth who accept that as a matter of course? And why have the males of your species monopolized the species the way they have monopolized money, the way they have monopolized power, and the way they have monopolized knowledge? 666. And why must it be, on your planet, that some are lapidaries and others are lapidated? And why, asked the Euguélionne, why do you still believe that there is nothing more Human than to be inhumane?

VII 300 + 1 = 1

- Where did you get the idea that our species was male? shouted someone in the crowd. And who do you think you are, making judgements on Humanity?

667. - I am a stranger, said the Eugué lionne. That is why I have taken the liberty of talking to you in this way. *I am a woman, but I am not Human.* I am not a woman of your species. Do you think I would be able to see through any of this if I were Human. Like all of you, I would be under the mythological weight of all the generations who have come before you, and I wouldn't be able to tell where the shoe pinched. But I am, said the Eugué lionne, a stranger to your Humanity, and all those women among you who have discovered your Achilles' heel are, like me, strangers to your Humanity. Like me, they have only been able to see it from the outside. For my part, said the Eugué lionne, I watch and I listen.

668. Just then, a group of demonstrators appeared. Women of all ages were waving placards addressed to the Guardians of Grammar demanding a revision of grammar rules and an in-depth study of semantics and current language usage from the perspective of sexual discrimination.

One of the placards read as follows:

669.

THE MASCULINE EMBRACES THE FEMININE

It is "illogical" to say:

"Everyone please take off their boots."

But it is "logical" to say:

"Everyone please take off his boots." when there are
300 women and 1 man in the room.THE masculine ALWAYS TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER THE feminine.On another sign was written:*A doctor is "he", but a nurse is "she".*THE generic IS ALWAYS masculine EXCEPT WHEN IT'S feminine.670. Other placards made plainly-worded statements about
the sad fate of the feminine and of femininity:*One of the strongest insults to a man is an insult
to a woman (his mother):**YOU SON-OF-A-BITCH!*

ENERGY = VIRILITY

SOFTNESS = FEMININITY

EXAMPLE FROM A DICTIONARY:

*EFFEMINATE: having feminine qualities (as weakness,
or softness) inappropriate to a man: not manly in
appearance or manner. (Webster's)*

A PROVERB:

*A woman, a dog, and a hickory tree, the more you
BEAT them, the BETTER they be.*(NO COMMENT)

671. Then these women who were angry with grammar and semantics passed around a petition which listed an astonishing number of discriminatory expressions taken either from literary language or from everyday usage.

For example:

- WHY does a MASTER wield authority, while a MISTRESS waits patiently for her lover and master to come to her?

- WHY are CHEFS male, while most of the COOKS on this planet are women?

Just imagine having dignitaries pointed out to you:

- There's the governess of Vermont with her husband, their two children and the children's governor.

672. Just imagine one business executive saying to another:

- I'll get my boy to type this up.

There followed after the petition a large number of suggestions and demands for the glorious Guardians of Grammar aimed at correcting this situation which the women found so intolerable. Here are a few of them:

673. 1 - The invention of a word which will eliminate the ambiguity between Man-Species and Man-Male. Or the ABOLITION OF THE WORD MAN, since in this double usage, it is completely meaningless, because it is at once the permanent sign for Humanity AND the ambiguous and deep-rooted sign for the human male. The fact is it cannot be retained to designate only Man-Species (although this would be the best solution from an etymological point of

view), because the word, *MAN*, is so strongly attached to the meaning, *MALE*, that the ambiguity would persist. On the other hand, it cannot be retained to designate only the male, since this would be a serious error in etymology, and would only perpetuate the confusion between the male and species.

2 - The use of neutral forms to replace gender-marked titles for professions and social functions.

674. 3 - That the use of *THEY* as sex-indefinite singular, sanctioned as it is by everyday use, good literature and common sense, be accepted as "correct". Example:

Nobody come in without wiping their feet.

4 - That plurals be used more when a plural meaning is intended. This not only eliminates the false generic *HE*; it makes more sense. Example: Good teachers never humiliate their students. Instead of: A good teacher...

5 - We no longer want to be the words for servile and subordinate tasks. Therefore, we want words such as these, with no male equivalents, to be abolished:

- housewife
- whore
- maid
- spinster
- old maid
- governess

675. We want an end to job discrimination institutionalized in the language itself. We do not want words to divide our jobs into "women's work" and "men's work". We reject being suffixed to "male" functions as if our work is only a pale imitation of the "real thing". Therefore the following words must be abolished and replaced with neutral terms:

- adulteress
- authoress
- bag lady
- bar girl
- chairlady
- charlady
- divorcee
- mistress
- poetess
- policewoman
- priestess
- seamstress
- songstress
- bag man
- barman
- chairman
- con man
- craftsman
- garbageman

- hit man
- junkman
- linesman
- policeman
- ragman
- repairman
- tradesman

A job does not have a sex. Neutralize this linguistic tyranny and let people find their places in society as individuals.

And we want no more of the silly game of using the new neutral terms such as "chairperson" for women only while still using the male term for men. We do not need a new poor relative of the male term to replace the old one, but a truly non-discriminatory word for both sexes.

676. The demonstrators gathered signatures for their manifesto while one of them read it out loud. Most of the people there wouldn't sign it because they found the demands extravagant, But the demonstrators were not discouraged. They remained calm, courteous and determined.

The Eugélonne signed the petition, but she told the women she did not support them entirely.

VIII THE GENERIC

677. - But why ask permission from the Guardians of Grammar? asked the Euguelionne. Why beg and beseech, why let yourselves be ridiculed again? The members of that august group are, in any case, totally powerless to really change one iota of syntax and grammar, and women who are admitted to that exclusive club are, if you'll excuse the expression, as rare as pope's shit, and most who are, are incredibly unobtrusive. It's mentalities which have to be changed, for the spirit of language is in the tongues of the people and not in paper rules.

Don't wait any longer for permission to act, speak and write as you please.

Make mistakes on purpose to reestablish the balance between the sexes. Invent neutral terms, make grammar more flexible, subvert spellings, turn the situation to your own advantage, establish new styles and new expressions, circumvent problems, deviate from literary genres, simply turn the whole thing upside down.

You're demanding that certain discriminatory words be abolished, but I must warn you that all the accredited experts are Men...

Feminine words are almost always formed by annexing endings to masculine words. A notable exception is "widow", which is, of course, a term for marital status, and your

language overflows with marital status terms for women. Feminized words are usually considered less serious in meaning. What woman would want to be called a "poetess" if she were aware of the connotations that word has had in the past? As one woman said in the 18th century, "I am no Poetess; which reproachful name I would avoid, even if I were capable of acquiring it." (Oxford English Dictionary). Professional titles have prestige, authority and dignity only in their neutral forms. Don't let Men monopolize them.

If you study the meanings of these feminized words, you'll find that they are never equivalent to the masculine/neutral words from which they are formed. And these words are not at all necessary in a society where women and men are supposed to be equal.

But even if it is discriminatory, language is not the same kind of repressive apparatus as economic, legislative and judicial systems can be. *It can be reformed, it seems to me...can't it?* If it can't be, it should be gotten rid of.

• Language is a very pliable material on which hundreds of generation before you have left their marks. It awaits your marks, Women of the earth, may the linguists among you take up the task without delay.

678. - We've done that, the demonstrators said, although we are neither linguists or semanticists. We've drawn

our inspiration from the excellent work of such women linguists as Mary Ritchie Key.* We're offering the results of our research to the Guardians of Grammar, not as rules to be imposed from on high, but as suggestions for a first step forward in reforming the sexual discrimination perpetuated by language.

679. - Some of these changes may seem awkward at first, said the Euguélonne as she glanced over a copy of the proposals given to her by one of these determined women, because people are not used to them. Others will come easily from the start because they are so sensible. Use them as often as possible, and people will become accustomed to them. The best will prevail and enter into the language.

You can expect a lot of derision from some of those Guardians of Grammar, perhaps even some hysterical, or should we say "testical" reaction, but I am sure you will always respond with more calm and common sense than your critics.

Then the Euguélonne told the crowd some of the suggestions:

Woman friend, or simply lover; girl friends are

*Male/Female Language (Metuchen, N.J.: Harper and Row, 1975).

adolescents; and *mistress* is a term belonging to a kind of relationship which is anything but equal. Marge Piercy invented *pillow friend* in her fictional depiction of a future, non-sexist society.*

Chairperson or simply *chair*; we do not need two words according to sex for one function: *chairman* and *chairwoman* (or worse, *chairlady*). And let us put a stop to the silly game of using *chairperson* only for women while retaining *chairman* for the males.

Police officer is clearly preferable to *policeman* and *policewoman*.

Bartender is much better than *bar girl* unless skimpy clothes are the prime requirement for the job.

Garbage collector describes clearly what the job is; similarly for the collectors of junk and rags and other things.

And what is so "awkward" about using "-person" as a suffix? Is it as awkward as applying for a job as a "-man" when you're not a Man? We expect the "Manpower" centres to start giving us -man jobs as a matter of course when they start giving Men jobs as barmaids, nursemaids, governesses, and majorettes.

*Woman on the Edge of Time (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1976).

IX YOU'VE REALLY GOT BALLS? LADY!

680. - Well, the "ground-breaking" work you've done for the benefit of the gentlemen who watch over your language is very interesting, said the Euguélionne, but I'm afraid it may turn out to be useless...

- That's what we're afraid of too, said the women with bitter irony.

- You've realized that the spirit of the language doesn't easily lend itself to what you wish to accomplish. Or should we perhaps say that the English language is singularly lacking in spirit when it comes to forming truly equal feminine terms to designate "animated beings" in certain professions (or masculine terms for certain other professions). This is proven irrefutably by the results of your work. When it comes to you, ladies, English is as stubborn as a mule, rearing up like an old Saxon horse to resist all your efforts to advance in Men's society...

681. English, as you must have noticed, said the Euguélionne, is, in essence, a masculine language. *The feminine has no place in it except as an annex to the masculine.* To the noble masculine gender, the feminine is only a humble adjunct. The duchesses, mayoresses and mistresses of this world are the faithful little helpers of the dukes, mayors and masters, at best the "power behind the throne", but

much more often, the powerless decorations beside the throne. Would you rather be a master or a mistress, a governor or a governess?

682. But at least in English, you're not forced to use feminine endings which are so often confused with diminutive endings to form feminines from "normal" nouns. Neutral words are possible if you stop assuming the male is the norm. Ladies, gender in English is social: "secretary" and "soldier" have gender; "teacher" and "singer" do not. Break the vicious circle of stereotypes and make grammatically neutral words truly neutral.

683. In languages where all nouns have gender according to the laws of their grammar, the linguistic problem is thornier (though the social one is no more prickly). In such languages (French, for instance), the masculine almost always takes precedence over the feminine (grammatically and in every other way). Such fundamental laws of language are very difficult to repeal. You, Women of the earth, who speak those languages will have to work to redress the imbalance, to make feminine words equal to masculine words, and to create the thousands of feminine nouns and the many masculine nouns which are missing from your languages, missing because your languages have evolved in sexist societies.

In such languages, you cannot accept the masculine as a common gender, as a supposedly neutral gender, because

when you do so, you are inevitably caught up in that same confusion which arises, in so many languages, from having a single word to designate the male and the species, MAN in the case of English.

684. But you Women of the earth who speak languages with no genders know all too well that those languages can be just as sexist as the ones that distinguish gender. The masculine still takes precedence over the feminine, although it may be in different ways. Throughout the world women are the Silenced Majority.

685. English has only remnants of grammatical gender. The words which designate human beings are, for the most part, neither feminine nor masculine as such. However, you must always be aware of all the hidden, background meanings, the connotations of words which usually designate either women or men. If you are not very wary of what lies beneath words, you will constantly stumble into traps, and English will long remain the language of a male chauvinist people. A "nurse", for example, is almost always assumed to be a "she" in spite of flatulent claims that "he" is generic.

686. But nouns are not the only words which "put women in their place." The use of adjectives like "effeminate" is a sort of sexual racism because the term implies that a non-"virile" human being, a woman or a man who does not fit the "he-man" image, is a docile, weak and silly

individual. And consequently, a woman who shows strength, energy and courage is strangely referred to as "virile"... as if it were a compliment. It's not even uncommon to hear men remark to a woman who has qualities they admire, "You've really got balls, lady!"

687. But you may still want to ask me why all this quibbling about the quirks of language. And why I, who am not even Human, would dare to tinker with your *natural language*. But why shouldn't I play the *she-Dévil's advocate*, for your *natural language* is the *natural* product, that is to say, the predictable consequence, of an *unnatural* society, where half the members are not full members.

X THAT IMPERCEPTIBLE SHIFT

A little while ago, someone asked me where I'd gotten the idea that your species was male. Well I'm going to tell you just how it happened.

688. I was in the "library" as you call it, said the Euguélionne, and I kept hearing a steady humming sound all around me, a murmuring in all possible registers saying: *Mmman, Mmman, Mmman, Mmman, Mmman, Mmman, Mmman!*

I realized that it was Man that was being talked about in all those books around me as they urged me to look at them, to go through them.

"Man is a generic term which embraces woman," the philosophers used to say jokingly. It was, in fact, a real joke, because as I read all those lovely eulogies, I realized that Man was a generic term which embraced only the Human male.

The human condition was the condition of the Human male; the men of certain times were the males of those times; the new-born child was male; the freedom, imagination, history, immortality of Men were those of the Human male. This was constantly reaffirmed with each step I took through those books, and I learned, before long, from a reliable source, that strictly speaking, the women of the Earth were not Humans, said the Euguélionne.

689. At first, I paid no attention to a certain peculiar

phenomenon, although as a reader bombarded by it, I was unwittingly paying the price for it. What I'm talking about is a certain imperceptible shift in meaning. I would read "man" and my mind, naturally enough, would translate in each instance either "man-species" or "man-male". I would immediately think that one or other of the two meanings was clearly indicated by the context, and that there was no possibility of confusion.

690. What a mistake, or rather I should say, what naivety on my part! I should have known that the word "man" was unreliable. There should have remained at least a reasonable doubt in my mind after all the time I'd spent visiting the "men" of this planet.

Because I had so often witnessed this peculiar phenomenon in everyday life on earth...I had seen, in fact, the daily bread of Men, and only the crumbs fell to the women. Women were the experts at picking up the crumbs of Humanity. They were first-rate crumb-pickers and no one could deny them the honour of being the greatest at picking crumbs in the history of the world. They were even full of gratitude for being allowed to gather discreetly, for their own use, whatever particles had imperceptibly shifted off the tables of the rich. No one ever dreamed of denying them this insignificant privilege, a privilege which had been granted to them for all time without any argument...probably through some sort of

throwback...

691. To give one concrete example of this imperceptible shift, I remember reading an ethnographic study of the men of an Eskimo region. All their traits and characteristics were described; their history was recounted; their ancestors, their rituals, their costumes, their myths and everything about them had been conscientiously catalogued. In the article, each of the subjects studied was headed with a subtitle in bold-faced type.

I was very surprised to see that the last subtitle read: **AND THEIR WOMEN.**

So, I said to myself, the inhabitants of this region are males. Therefore, I said to myself, the women of the region have neither ancestors, nor history, nor costumes, nor traditions.

The expression "Men of this region", which dominated the whole article and which meant "human beings of this region", had shifted imperceptibly towards the meaning, "males of this region", stripping the women of the region of their entire historical dimension. And in this context it amounted to saying: the human being observed here is male and only the male is human.

XI THE GREAT AMBIGUITY

698. It is this shift of the word MAN from the species to the male, "this imperceptible shift", that makes all the difference, said the Euguélionne.

Every time I hear that word MAN in the generic sense, said the Euguélionne, every time I see it written, it seems like a fraud, a violation, a slick con game, a conspiracy, an usurpation.

Mman, mman, mman, mman, mman! Through all the books that have been written about him, through all the broadcasts, all the films that take him as a subject, it is always believed that it is the human being that is being discussed, and then suddenly you realize that the human being has only one sex. How can you be Men? asked the Euguélionne.

699. If reformers of all kinds, if revolutionaries of every stripe, did their best to once and for all abolish the word MAN in the generic meaning it has usurped from the species, then they would be making a fundamental revolution, a revolution which could lead to total revolution, and a revolution without which, it seems to me, that total revolution would be impossible to achieve.

Eros will never be revolutionary, said the Euguélionne, as long as the word MAN leaves half of Humanity in the shadows, the way you lock away your prisoners...

"Emancipated" women of the Earth, I know that you are accused of wanting to become Men. How is it then that they can't see the contradiction in calling the male by the name for the entire species? It is a contradiction that seems insoluble for your Academics, because they ask if they would have to correct every single book. Aren't those books the sacred heritage of Man? His most precious heritage?

Women of the Earth, they accuse you of taking yourselves to be Men, even though you've been identified as such from birth by masculine surname, and even though you are later identified by the surname of your husband's father joined to your husband's first name... Where is the woman in the name of a married woman? Hasn't she become a Man?

Women of the Earth, they accuse you of being Men, and yet they don't see the contradiction in referring to you very often by the masculine, by virtue of agreements made between Man and Grammar, and between Man and the Species to which you belong...

What if the reverse were true? How would Men feel if they were referred to by a feminine generic?

700. Do you think, asked the Eugélonne, that it is from lack of imagination that there is only one term in many of your modern languages to refer to the male and the species?

Ancient languages were more careful. They made the distinction. English, so rich in synonyms, could also have made this distinction between the male and species by following the example of its Old English ancestor or of the ancient tongues of Greece and Rome, languages which were nevertheless no less misogynous in their time... 701. When it comes to the female of your species, there is no end of words borrowed from fauna and flora to refer to her in your books. She is a flower or a bird, she is the moon and the earth, she is a pearl, a magpie, a vixen, a crow, a dove, a gazelle, a bitch, a fat sow. But a Man? Never! She is definitely not a Man! It would be a loss of prestige for woman to be a Man. It would show a lack of respect for her to suppose that she belongs to the species of Man. What is implied is that she had perhaps been a Man in the most distant past, but fortunately, she was emasculated. Fortunately, yes fortunately for Humanity, woman is no longer a Man!

What would happen if you read your books with a little more attention? If you started to demand some real concern for accuracy from your writers? Why, for example, do they oppose polygamy to polyandry, and rarely find it necessary to use the term polygyny?

And also, what do you think of all the errors of interpretation made completely in good faith, all because of the great Human ambiguity?

One day, I found this gem in an excellent specialized dictionary:

702. "The 'HOMO' in 'homosexual' derives from the Greek 'homos' meaning 'same', and not from the Latin 'homo', a 'man'; hence, 'homosexual' can be applied to women as well as men."

Ecce Homo! With this, I said to myself, I have the proof that woman is not Human. Fortunately for her, there are still the Greeks...

That's what happens when you become inured to the Great Ambiguity, said the Euguélionne. You'll never know what problems I, a stranger to your Humanity, have had distinguishing the specific meaning of your damned MAN from the generic meaning (and to make things worse, you go ahead and say "Mankind" as well as "Humanity") when I got it in my head to work my way through all of your books. I'll tell you this: it was quite a shock for my eyes! So it wouldn't surprise me if you found that word a bit battered the next time you go to the library, because in spite of myself, I've got a bit of magnetism in my eyes... But I really think that at the rate you're

*Charles Rycroft, A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 62.

going, the word MAN has seen its day. The future inhabitants of your planet may not even keep the word! They'll perhaps have languages derived more from the slang and everyday speech of today than from the languages of academic grammarians...

703. My flesh is happy, said the Eugélonne, and I was able to stomach everything in that library! However, would you be so kind, good people, to try to put yourselves in my place when I had this remarkable sentence in front of me:

"With man, unlike the pig, the uterus does not receive the sperm directly."

So Man has a uterus, I said to myself in complete and utter amazement. And how did he receive the sperm? And who sends him the sperm in this roundabout way, a rather dubious way when compared to the pig's.

And imagine my confusion when I saw these words printed beneath a photo of a graceful ballerina:

"With man, the foot can be arched in this manner."

But this virus of ambiguity is not always so innocent. What could be more gratifying for Men and more depressing for women than phrases such as these:

"What woman intellectual has been able to justify the claim to equality with men by writing a man's book?"

"For the literary woman in particular, style
is the man."*

Intellectual Men and Men of letters made these statements
in all modesty, no doubt! There's no longer any reason
to wonder why these good writers are so flatulent: it's
modesty swelling up inside them, right?

*Maurice Bardèche and Claude Elsen (cited by Françoise
d'Eaubonne).

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1. Sex-based Language Differences

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Basically a survey of research on sex differences in language, with chapters on "Sex and Gender", "Sex Differences in the Use of Words", "Conversation", "Linguistic Sex Differences", "The Cause of Language Divergencies", "Women in Society—Linguistic Aspects", "Women's Professional Names", "Address and Titles", and "Language Development in Children and Adults". Bibliography, pp. 136-148.

Brouwer, Dédé, Marinel Gerritsen and Dorian De Haan.

"Speech Differences between Men and Women: On the Wrong Track?" Language and Society, 8, pp. 33-50.

Studies the advantages and drawbacks of various methods of studying sex differences in language use:

introspection, questionnaires, elicitation and observation. A study using observation in Amsterdam's Central Station at the ticket booth found that the sex of the addressee significantly determined the utterance used. Concludes that statements about linguistic differences based on introspection may be a good starting point; but must be tested by quantitative analysis.

Dubois, Betty Lou and Isabel Crouch, ed. The Sociology of the Languages of American Women. San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University, 1979.

Proceedings of the Conference on the Sociology of the Languages of American Women held at New Mexico State University in 1976. Includes fifteen papers plus brief summaries of three workshops on "Intonation", "Investigating the Generic Masculine" and "Female/Male Conversation Interaction."

Dubois, Betty Lou and Isabel Crouch. "The Question of Tag Questions in Women's Speech, They Don't Really Use More of Them, Do They?" Linguistic Studies, 4 (1975), pp. 289-295.

Claim that Robin Lakoff, in Language and Woman's Place, because of her introspective method, made errors of fact, fabricated examples, failed to isolate variables, made errors of reasoning and disregarded the work of others.

In a limited study of tag questions, found that men use them more than women in both formal and informal situations.

Edelsky, Carole. "Question Intonation and Sex Roles."

Language in Society, 8 (1979), pp. 15-32.

Study to test Lakoff's (Language and Woman's Place) claims about sex differences in the use of question intonation. Concludes that listeners' attitudes have a strong influence on how equivalent intonation patterns are perceived according to the sex of the speaker.

Haas, Adelaide. "Male and Female Spoken Language Differences: Stereotypes and Evidence." Psychological

Bulletin, 86, No. 3 (1979), pp. 616-626.

Looks at informal observations and empirical studies on sex differences in spoken language in form, topic, content and use. In general, found that differences are sex preferential and not sex exclusive.

Hymes, Dell, ed. Language in Culture and Society. New

York: Harper and Row, 1964.

Contains several articles touching on or dealing with sex differences in language in many cultures, including Mary R. Haas, "Men's and Women's Speech in Koasati," (1944) and Samuel Martin, "Speech Levels in Japan and

Korea," (1958).

- # Kitagawa Chisato. "A Source of Femininity in Japanese: In Defense of Robin Lakoff's Language and Woman's Place." Papers in Linguistics (Tallahassee), 10 (1977), pp. 215-246.

Examines Lakoff's analysis of tag questions in Language and Woman's Place and the critique of it by Dubois and Crouch by comparing them with the use of the sentence-final particle "wa" in Japanese, a particle generally considered to be feminine. Found that while men do use "wa", how they use it is different and intonation is important in distinguishing different meanings of the particle.

- Kramarae, Cherie. "Gender: How She Speaks." In Ellen Bouchard Ryan and Howard Giles, ed. Attitudes towards Language Variation: Social and Applied Contexts. London: Edward Arnold, 1982. pp. 84-98.

Looks at studies on sex differences and concludes there is no evidence of categorical speech differences between men and women. Differences result from the different social networks of women and men. Listeners' stereotypes can affect perception of differences. More research is needed on variance accounted for by the gender of the listener.

McConnel-Ginet, Sally. "Intonation in a Man's World."

Signs, 3, No. 3 (Spring, 1978), pp. 541-559.

Examines past research on sex differences in intonation and outlines what is needed in further research and what would be required for a general theory of sex differences in intonation.

2. Sexism in Language

Feldman, Jacqueline. Le Jeu du dictionnaire. Paris:

Tierce, 1980; Montréal: S.C.E./Etincelle, 1981.

Etude de 500 termes portant sur la sexualité et l'évolution de leurs définitions à travers les éditions successives du Petit Larousse de 1906 à 1978. Elle trouve que l'ensemble du discours lexicographique repose sur une conception profondément misogyne de la société.

Hagè, Dorothy. "There's Glory For You." Aphra, 3, No. 3.

An examination of sexism in English. Concludes that language reflects sexism in the society, and that we should concentrate on attitudes instead.

Nilsen, Alleen Pace, Haig Bosmajian, H. Lee Gershuny and

Julia P. Stanley. Sexism and Language. Urbana, Ill.:

National Council of Teachers of English, 1977.

Articles on "Linguistic Sexism as a Social Issue",

"Sexism as Shown through the English Vocabulary", "Gender-marking in American English", "Sexism in the Language of Legislatures and Courts", "Sexism in the Language of Marriage", "Sexism in the Language of Literature", "Sexism in Dictionaries and Texts" and "Sexism in Children's Books and Elementary Classroom Materials". Appendix: Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in National Council of Teachers of English Publications.

Saporta, Sol. "Language in a Sexist Society." In Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Vol. 4. Paul J. Hopper, ed. Studies in Descriptive and Historical Linguistics, Festschrift for Winfred P. Lehman. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, B.V., 1977. pp. 209-216.

Examines asymmetries in vocabulary, syntax, verbs for sexual intercourse and linguistic usage. Concludes that it is hard to demonstrate either that language determines or is determined by attitudes.

Spender, Dale. Man-Made Language. London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.

Reviews research on sexism in language with the conclusion that since language is our means of classifying and ordering the world, we can be misled by it if it is

inaccurate. Chapters on inaudibility and invisibility, verbal interaction, woman talk, male subjectivity built into language, the politics of naming, and women and writing

3. Verbal Interaction

Eubanks, Sheryle B. "Sex-based Language Differences: A Cultural Reflection." In Reza Ordoubadian and Walburga Von-Raffler Engel, ed. Views on Language. Murfreesboro, Tenn.: Inter-University Publishing, 1975. pp. 109-120.

Examines hypothesized differences by looking at research and finds four of five correct: males talked more, males more often signaled beginnings and ends to conversations, males gave more elaborated judgemental statements, and females showed agreement or encouragement or apologized for their views and showed indecision and used tag questions, but no differences were found in the use of standard and non-standard forms.

Fishman, Pamela M. "Interaction: The Work Women Do." Social Problems, 25, No. 4 (April, 1978), pp. 397-404.

A "microsociological" look at power. Finds differences in the use of interactional strategies, and concludes that women are the "shitworkers" of routine interaction.

Henley, Nancy. Body Politics: Power, Sex and Nonverbal Communication. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977.

Sex differences in nonverbal communication. Women seem to be more sensitive to nonverbal clues than men are. Chapters on space, time, environment, language and para-language; demeanor, touch, posture, gesture and body movement, eye contact, facial expression. Appendix: suggestions for further research.

Kramarae, Cherris. Women and Men Speaking: Frameworks for Analysis. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1981.

Discussion of various analytical approaches to language and sex and a review of research under each approach: the "muted group" framework (posits a male-dominated hierarchy that determines the dominant communication system of our culture), the psychoanalytic framework, the speech styles framework (from the work of Howard Giles and his social psychology colleagues), the strategy model (speech as a socially situated action).

4. Change

Blakar, Rolv Mikkell. "How Sex Roles are Represented, Reflected and Conserved in the Norwegian Language." Acta Sociologica, 18, No. 2 (1975), pp. 162-172.

On the basis of experience with the Norwegian language,

concluded that there is a subtle interaction between language and social reality, and that language and language use could be changed into an ally of those who want social change.

Blaubergs, Maija S. "Changing the Sexist Language: the Theory Behind the Practice." Psychology of Women Quarterly, 2, No. 3 (spring, 1978), pp. 244-261.

Survey of various suggestions for changing sexist language and arguments in favour and against. Three main approaches: no change should be attempted, neutral terminology should be invented and used, and feminine terms should be promoted. Evidence is rapidly accruing against the first, while the latter two have not been experimentally pitted against each other.

Circuit, numéro 3 (décembre 1983), Dossier: "Les femmes et/dans/contre le langage." pp. 3-11.

Marie-Claire Lemaire sur l'innovation grammaticale par des femmes, Robert Dubuc sur le féminisation des titres, Johanne Dufour sur la recherche de Jacqueline Lamothe sur les différences de langage entre hommes et femmes dans les conversations à bâtons rompus, et Josée Ouellet Simard sur les femmes sur le marché québécois de la traduction.

Daly, Mary. Gyn/ecology: the Metaethics of Radical Feminism. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.

A book which puts into practise "gypocentric writing" by making up words, unmasking deceptive words, unmasking hidden reversals, listening to words in a different way, rejecting words which obscure women's existence or mask women's oppression, using pronouns and capitals in innovative ways, and delving into etymology to use words in ways both old and new.

5. General and Miscellaneous

Connors, Kathleen. "Studies in Feminine Agentives in Selected European Languages." Romance Philology, 24 (1971), pp. 573-598.

Examination of the use of feminine agentive suffixes in major Romance languages, English and German, with incidental examples from Slavic and Semitic. Derogatory and facetious use of feminines common. Historically, there are special labels for women attached to the household, entertainers, and women with power in poetic and religious discourse.

Ervin, Susan. "The Connotations of Gender." Word, 18, pp. 249-269.

Gender is an instance of an imperfectly correlated

grammatical system of classification. The article examines the factors which affect semantic generalization. Generalization of connotations is least important when the association of a word and a tangible referent is well-learned and automatic, and when the semantic referent is unambiguous and its properties are obvious.

Kimufa, Doreen. "The Asymmetry of the Human Brain."

Scientific American, March, 1973, pp. 70-78.

Evidence that women are superior at "left-hemisphere tasks" (such as verbal skills), and men are superior at "right-hemisphere" tasks (such as handling space).

Kramarae, Cherris. The Voices and Words of Women and Men.

Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980.

Asks the fundamental question, "How do language and talk function for women and for men?" Sections on "Social Meaning of Language Structure", "Evaluation of Voices and Writing", "Methodology in Language and Sex Research", "Language in Home and Classroom", and reviews.

McConnel-Ginet, Sally, Ruth Borker and Nelly Furman, ed.

Women and Language in Literature and Society. New

York: Praeger, 1980.

An anthology from a variety of disciplines: linguistics, psychology, anthropology, literary criticism, examining

questions of women and language in both everyday life and in writing.

Miller, Casey and Kate Swift. Words and Women. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1976.

A comprehensive short survey of sexism in language and the possibilities of language reform, with chapters on naming, generic use of "man", semantic polarization, the language of religion, male resistance to language change, language and liberation, etc.

Yaguello, Marina. Les Mots et les femmes: essai d'approche sociolinguistique de la condition féminine. Paris: Payot, 1979.

Etude générale sur les différences de langage entre les femmes et les hommes, sur le sexisme dans la langue française et sur les possibilités de l'action volontariste pour réformer la langue.

6. Women and Writing

Atsumi Ikuko. "Modern Japanese Women Poets: After the Meiji Restoration." Iowa Review, 7, No. 2-3 (1976), pp. 227-237.

Survey of important modern women poets in Japan including women prominent in movements for innovation in

forms and use of language.

Brown, Cheryl L. and Karen Olsen, ed. Feminist Criticism: Essays on Theory, Poetry and Prose. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978.

Articles on the theory of feminist criticism, which argue that such an approach is frequently necessary to the understanding of many modern women authors, plus examples of feminist criticism of women writers.

Marks, Elaine. "Women and Literature in France." Signs, 3, No. 4 (1978), pp. 832-855.

Examines the theoretical basis of contemporary feminist writing in French. Women's writing is shaped by four major areas: linguistic and structuralist theory, Marxian culture, psychoanalytic theory and deconstruction strategy. Some women writers are suspicious of the notion of a women's language; others favour it. Some criticize all theorizing, all abstract formulation as male. The study of language and of unconscious is seen as a priority for women desirous of liberation.

Marks, Elaine and Isabelle de Courtivron. New French Feminisms: An Anthology. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980.

Introductions on discourses of anti-feminism and

feminism, history of feminism in France and the contexts of the New French Feminisms, followed by translations of French feminist texts (including one by a Quebec writer, Madeleine Gagnon).

