

## Summaries of articles

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Des femmes de la francophonie

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## SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

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### **Des femmes de la francophonie : Presentation**

*Cécile Coderre et Arpi Hamalian*

This issue of *Recherches féministes* offers an overview of current research on francophone women living in Canada and in other regions of the world. The articles concern women in Francophone minority situations (Linda Cardinal ; Monica Heller and Laurette Lévy ;) and facing a double discrimination based on sex and language (Maurice Saint-Germain and Marc Lavoie) ; on the creative work of three women cineasts (Christiane Lahaie) ; and on the relation between sex and language in the French Antilles where French is dominant over the popular language, Creole (Ellen Schnepel). A research note on the political action of a feminist group in Cameroon (Marie-Louise Eteki-Otabela) and a « dossier » on the feminisation of French, with testimonies from Quebec (Hélène Dumais, Céline Labrosse and Jacqueline Lamothe), France (Anne-Marie Houdebine-Gravaud) and Switzerland (Thérèse Moreau), complete the issue.

### **Research on Francophone women living in minority situations : questions for feminism**

*Linda Cardinal*

The author of this text examines the feminist discourse on Francophone women living in minority situations or living outside Quebec since the 1960's and 1970's. The author's objective is to analyse the political and theoretical foundations of this discourse. Particular attention is given to the notions of double and triple discrimination and to the production of ethnicity. The text situates the construction of this feminist discourse in the socio-political context of minority Francophone women's groups and doing so tries to break down a certain dualist vision which characterizes the women's movements in Canada and Quebec and their feminist questioning. Finally the author proposes a formulation of gender relations which adopt, as a starting point, the experience of women in public and private spheres.

### **The relative economic status of Francophone women in Canada**

*Maurice Saint-Germain and Marc Lavoie*

Using the base characteristics of the language spoken at home and mean total income, this study shows that there are long-term persistent status differentials and gross income differentials between Francophone women and Anglophone ones, in favour of the latter. Even when age and education are taken into account, net income differences are related to language orientation. Capital investment income comparisons reveal differentials along linguistic lines which are shown to be greater than along sex lines. Unemployment rates of Francophone women are higher than for Anglophone women, even though their participation rates in the labor market are lower than that of the latter. In addition, Francophone women are under-represented in financial affairs and in the higher-status professional activities while the civil service appears to constitute a refuge for them. They have made some progress in educational education which, though still less than those of Anglophone women, have mainly benefited those women who had earned a university degree.

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## **Franco-ontarian women in mixed marriages : femininity and ethnicity**

Monica Heller and Laurette Levy

The goal of this article is to explore the relation between femininity and ethnicity by studying the linguistic practices and ideologies of two Franco-Ontarian women married to two Anglophones. The study of mixed marriages gives a unique opportunity to analyze the couple's power struggle as man and woman and also, in these cases, the struggle as between Francophone and Anglophone. Through exploring their linguistic practices we can discover the strategies that these women adopt to cope with their living situations and how they draw from their linguistic resources in order to benefit from any available opportunities. We will examine the consequences of these women's strategies on their « francophonie », on their roles as women, and the impact of these strategies on the relation between femininity and ethnicity in their lives.

## **Moving visions of women : three films by women cineasts**

*Christiane Lahaie*

Through elements of semiology and a structuralist approach (the point of view in narrative film as a way of producing meaning), this essay tends to demonstrate that the shift from a neutral point of view to a more personalized one, both visual and cognitive, emphasizes the growing autonomy of women in three films by three female directors : *Coup de foudre* (1983) by Diane Kurys, *Sans toit ni loi* (1985) by Agnès Varda and *Anne Trister* (1986) by Léa Pool.

## **The other tongue, the other voice : Language and gender in creole studies in the Caribbean**

*Ellen M. Schnepel*

Since Douglas Taylor's early work (1951) pointing out sex-based characteristics of the language of the Black Caribs, little research addressing the differential relations of gender towards language has been generated in creole studies in the Caribbean. Conceived as a theoretical contribution to the state-of-the-art while providing empirical evidence from language-planning efforts in Guadeloupe and Martinique in the French Antilles, this article sets out to survey the attention given to language and gender in the region. It concludes with a balance-sheet of issues which need to be addressed.

## **Ten years of struggle for the Collectif des femmes pour le renouveau (CFR) : reflections on the Cameroun women's movement**

*Marie-Louise Eteki-Otabela*

For the last decades the international community has taken for granted that the priority for African women was the question of development. At a moment when development policies and programmes are being seen as clear failures, there is a rediscovery that within African societies women have other priorities. Based on the reality of women in Cameroon, this article shows that a feminist vision of the problems facing African societies is perhaps the only real alternative to the totalitarian systems in power in these countries. The author describes the feminist struggles of the *Collectif des femmes pour le renouveau*, their positions on certain social questions that are usually seen as being specific to women, and argues that for these feminists, social change in Africa today depends on a personal political choice, a choice to do politics differently.

## **Fifteen years of linguistic feminisation in Quebec : 1976-1991**

*Pierrette Vachon-L'Heureux*

In this note, the author presents a brief historical outlook of the work on linguistic feminisation done by the Quebec Office de la langue française, including the Office's proclamations on the feminisation of titles, functions and texts.

## **A fragment of Quebec feminism in the 1980's : linguistic feminisation**

*Jacqueline Lamothe and Céline Labrosse*

Our remarks are intended to present a simple picture of what has been experienced, thought about and theorised regarding the willingness to have feminine representation in French by a group of female professors at the Université du Québec à Montréal, who in turn rallied an important part of this university community to their cause. This linguistic feminisation in French, as concerned and practised during these last twelve years, constitutes a specific step in the transformation of discourse and its instrument : language.

## **Regarding the representation of women in the names of occupations**

*Anne-Marie Houdebine*

The author recalls the different stages of progress and the propositions of the French commission for French terminology regarding the feminisation of the names of occupations, the difficulties encountered and the part she played in this work, including her linguistic and feminist motivations.

## **Attention, the chief (« la cheffe ») is coming!**

*Thérèse Moreau*

French everywhere being a sexist language, women in Switzerland had to find an original solution to be included in speech. Until the 1971 referendum, they had been barred on grammatical grounds from the political system by the Federal Tribunal : the masculine forms designated men and men alone. In 1981 an ERA amendment was voted with an injunction to establish laws in accordance with sexual equality. For geographical, historical, psychological and social reasons, a maximal solution was chosen for the language, and compliance with the law has made Switzerland a leading force for non-sexist French.

## **Non-sexist writing in Québec : *Pour un genre à part entière***

*Hélène Dumais*

The author examines a new language approach increasingly in demand and widespread in Quebec: non-sexist writing. First, she gives the historical background of the guidebook on this subject, *Pour un genre à part entière*, and then she outlines and comments on the non-sexist workshop she developed in 1988 which she subsequently conducted in diverse workplaces (government departments, school boards, universities, etc.). Reflections on how this phenomenon is likely to evolve, derived from remarks made during the workshops and from her personal observation of the situation, complete her explanation of this innovative concept, non-sexist writing.