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THE SENTINELLE AFFAIR: A STUDY IN MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE PRACTICES

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**THE SENTINELLE AFFAIR:
A STUDY IN MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE PRACTICES
BY
JASON PETERS**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ENGLISH RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION**

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

2015

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DISSERTATION

OF

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ABSTRACT

Rhetorical historiography needs to disrupt existing archival arrangements of language differences. These arrangements preserve an ideology of linguistic modernity that effaces and oversimplifies the complex multilingual practices of actual language users. By disrupting the principles of selection and arrangement that make up an archive's evidential value, rhetorical researchers can undermine ideologies of linguistic modernity and can recover an array of rhetorical resistance strategies that multilinguals have historically taken towards the political and socioeconomic dominance of English. This project does this disruptive work by analyzing the multisitedness of Mount St. Charles, a Catholic high school in Rhode Island. In its original planning and construction, Mount St. Charles was viewed on one hand as part of a system of English-language diocesan high schools and on the other hand as part of a system of French-language *écoles des hautes études*. The project thus constructs Mount St. Charles as a site of interaction for local linguistic and material economies through which the socioeconomic value of French literacy and English literacy were negotiated in relation to each other. The project opens a space in which researchers in rhetoric and composition can begin to write translingual histories of language difference in the United States. Using the disruptive and multisited methods of this project, other researchers can critically engage the historical suppression of multilingual identifications in the construction of whiteness.

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the tireless support of my co-major professors, Dr. Nedra Reynolds and Dr. Caroline Gottschalk-Druschke. I hope that seeing the development of my thought has been as rewarding for them as their guidance and advice has been helpful for me. Dr. Kenneth Rogers first directed me to the archives of the Emmanuel d'Alzon Library at Assumption College. These archives—both the collections of the French Institute and the USJB collections held there—were central to this dissertation. I would not have embarked on this project without the encouragement of Dr. John Trimbur. Our conversations over the years have had an enormous impact on my ability to think translingually. The influence of those conversations is on every page of this dissertation.

Many scholars and archivists of Franco-American history guided me in my attempts to navigate the multilingual seas of French-English relations in North America. In particular, the work of Robert Perreault, former archivist for the Association Canado-Américaine (ACA), was helpful to my analysis of Daignault's writing style in chapter three. Dr. Leslie Choquette, director of the French Institute at Assumption College, guided me in my attempts to understand the ideology of *la survivance*. Dr. Choquette and Nina Tsantinis, the archivist for the French Institute, pointed me to the Paul P. Chassé Papers, which form the basis of chapter four. Elizabeth Maisey—the archivist in charge of processing the Union St. Jean Baptiste Archives for the d'Alzon Library—arranged permission for me to photograph five of the scrapbooks in the USJB Archives in their entirety. I cannot describe how important

it was for me to have complete digital copies of these scrapbooks while writing. The depth of my analyses and my ability to cross-reference a range of historical artifacts are due in large part to Liz's assistance.

The many librarians of the Robert L. Carothers Library at the University of Rhode Island; the John D. Rockefeller Library at Brown University; and the James P. Adams Library at Rhode Island College all cheerfully fulfilled two years worth of semi-weekly interlibrary loan requests on my behalf. The librarians at the Rhode Island Historical Society guided me through the Society's unmatched collection of Rhode Island newspapers in both French and English.

The U.S. Department of Education's Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program substantially funded four years of doctoral study. The Javits Fellowship enabled me to pursue a wide range of coursework throughout the humanities and social sciences over the first two years of my degree. This firm grounding in rhetoric and composition; linguistics; history; and English literary study helped me formulate this dissertation as a truly interdisciplinary project.

Finally, I want to thank my wife, Amy, and my two children, Elliot and Phineas. My wife is the only person who really knows what this work demanded from us and the only person who can see how much of me is in it. Her unconditional love and unwavering support is a daily gift. In a way, I wrote this dissertation to explain to our children why their *mémère* speaks French but their father does not. Kids, I finally "did my dissertation." Now on to our next adventure.

For Amy
and
pour nos enfants

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CHAPTER 1

STUDYING LANGUAGE IN THE ARCHIVES

Re-arranging the Archive

Woonsocket, Rhode Island, is a small, former textile manufacturing city in the Blackstone River Valley of southeastern New England. Its Harris Public Library is housed in a sprawling, 1970s-era brick and concrete building in the city's Social Flatlands, a central district of incredibly flat land that was redeveloped in the 1960s into a small financial center. The library's building looks like most suburban office space from the period (see Figure 1). Rows of large, rectangular plate-glass windows



Figure 1. Woonsocket Harris Public Library. (Photo courtesy of the author)

convey a kind of institutional order and stability synonymous with the surrounding bank headquarters and office buildings. The library grounds are neatly landscaped, in a way that requires minimal care. However, there are signs of architectural mischief here, too. The rooftops of each of the building's three wings, for example, rakishly slant off in different directions, creating the illusion that the library is actually a small cluster of buildings, each situated at a slightly different angle on its plot, the peak of each cozy, gabled roof only partially visible over the tops of the neighborhood, a neighborhood which of course isn't actually there, as this is all architectural *trompe-l'œil*. The building is in fact surrounded by an oversized parking lot that is rarely half full.

The library was founded in the nineteenth century as the Harris Institute Library, named for Edward Harris, a prominent textile manufacturer in Woonsocket who owned a large estate in the northern part of the city (Allaire 3). The original stone walls of his estate's entrance still stand, but they now mark the boundary line of the North End, a middle-class neighborhood of mostly single family homes. Harris himself probably never set foot here in the Social Flatlands, where his namesake library now stands. During his lifetime and into the twentieth century, the Social Flatlands were known as the Social district, the most densely populated neighborhood in Woonsocket, almost entirely composed of French-speaking immigrants from Québec (Sorrell *Sentinelle* 111), some of whom likely worked in Harris's factories where they made worsted from raw wool. He likely never imagined that his library, greatly expanded, would one day be housed here, in a part of the city he might only

have known as a *petit Canada*, a French-Canadian ghetto. There is no sign of that French neighborhood now, except in the ironic acknowledgement that something about the Social Flatlands was apparently once “social.”

I grew up in Woonsocket, a grandchild of those French-Canadian immigrants and a second-generation English speaker. As a teenager, I spent my afternoons in this library doing homework. I’ve returned here now, but with a different agenda. Walking under the brick archway of the main lobby entrance, I’m transported by a familiar loamy smell, quiet and damp, by the strange interior window, circular like a porthole, that looks onto a reading room, and by the black rubber floor mats. The brick archway was retrofitted at some point with handicapped-accessible sliding glass doors, which seemed to me even then an anachronous combination, like I was walking into a hatch built for time travel, part medieval bookish scholasticism, and part ultra-modern commercial real estate. I discovered modern American literature here. I remember standing in one of the dark corridors of the literature stacks, reading a critical essay on the e. e. cummings poem “l(a)” from a book randomly pulled from the shelf. The essay told me (in what I now recognize as a stock New Criticism fashion of reading) that the poem made use of the ambiguity of the lowercase letter *L* (“l”) and the number one (“1”) to evoke a feeling of solitude through a clever typographical play on the word “loneliness.”

Libraries are spaces that mediate between the social and the solitary. Their arrangements construct order out of the vast collection of human experience represented in writing. That order, then, is internalized by library patrons, as we rely

on it to navigate what otherwise would be a bewildering array of texts and artifacts. And here is my agenda, to come to the library of my childhood in order to turn away from imposed order back towards bewilderment, the agenda of every archival researcher. I remember an open staircase off to the side of the main lobby, which loomed over the circulation desk and looked unsafe for climbing. No signs indicated what was up there, and anyway I never wanted to find out, but I do now, because I have a suspicion about what was up there, a suspicion that I am about to confirm. Everything about this space, of course, is different now, twenty years later or more. Circulation has been moved to the opposite side of the lobby, and I have to actively search to find that staircase that once felt so overwhelmingly present in my mind. The upstairs are now administrative offices, but it turns out that there was once a second floor to the collections. The reference librarian tells me that the microfilmed newspaper collection used to be up there, until about five years ago when an addition was built with a new reading room for microfilm.

I'm interested in the way the spatial arrangement of the library arranged my awareness, mediating between written artifacts and my experience of myself in the midst of them. I would never have ventured up those stairs. The way the collections were arranged in the building in turn ordered my experience of them, ensuring which materials I was likely to notice and which I was likely to ignore, and by extension ensuring which aspects of literacy I was encouraged to develop and which would never even enter my consciousness. Because in fact, the Woonsocket Harris Public Library has in its microfilm collection a complete run of *La Sentinelle*, an infamous

French language newspaper published in Woonsocket from 1924 to 1928 by a lawyer named Elphège J. Daignault. *La Sentinelle* occupies a pivotal position in the history of the Franco-American population in Woonsocket and in the history of the French language in the United States. *La Sentinelle* was the unofficial organ of a secret society named *Les Croisés* (The Crusaders) whose immediate goal was to prevent the Catholic Church from instituting English-only education in its schools. *Les Croisés* also had an apostolic vision for their work. Like many of the French-educated élite, they perceived Québec to be the “cradle” (*berceau*) of French civilization in the New World (Daignault “Par L’Aide” 87). They had a diasporic sense of the scattering of the French people across North America in the wake of British conquest (Breton and Savard x). Their ultimate goal was to advance French civilization in North America both by re-unifying the disparate French settlements and by converting Anglo Protestants to Catholicism.

La Sentinelle was eventually banned by the Vatican, and fifty-six of its supporters were excommunicated from the Catholic Church, effectively ending their fight.¹ For the five years that they were active, the Sentinellists (as supporters of the work of *Les Croisés* were called) polarized the Franco-American population of New England. The arguments that were made for and against their work have had far-

¹ The next chapter contains a more thorough historical overview of the conflict surrounding *La Sentinelle*.

reaching consequences for the construction of francophone identity in North America.² A significant population of first- and second-generation French-Canadian immigrants lived in New England in the early part of the twentieth century, my own ancestors among them, and most had access to primary instruction in French in the region's parochial schools, until the Catholic Church established an English only policy for its US parochial schools in the 1920s. The outcomes of the "Sentinelle Affair," as historians have called it, had a catastrophic effect on the ability of French speakers to advocate for their language rights in New England and for them to continue to be French in the United States.

Now, standing in this library again after a twenty-year absence, I am struck by the fact that this newspaper—whose fate speaks directly to my family's language and immigration history and to my own acquisition of monolingual English—was in a flat file right over my head, while I mused over New Critical interpretations of e.e. cummings's poetry. Today, arguments from the 1920s advocating French language instruction in New England's Catholic schools might seem rather esoteric, but they cannot be more so than critical essays tracing the signification of typographical

² I do not mean to imply that the Sentinellist movement in and of itself had such a major impact on the continent. Rather, the ideology of the Sentinellists was one strain of a proto-Québécois nationalism that began to emerge at the turn of the twentieth century. The ideas espoused by Daignault and his colleagues were ideas that were being generated by a conservative nationalist movement centered in Québec and affiliated with the conservative *L'Action Française* in Montréal. These nationalists were themselves influenced by a similar organization in France with the same name, *L'Action Française*, which itself would also be banned by the Vatican, and which was sympathetic to the royalist (and fascist) politics of Charles Maurras. The arguments that I claim had far-reaching consequences, then, were not Sentinellist arguments *per se*, but rather were part of a larger discourse about French nationalism both in North America and in Europe. This larger discourse resulted in the transformations of a neoliberal Québécois identity later in the twentieth century which would have major implications for French-speaking populations beyond the Québec border.

ambiguity in poems like “l(a”. That is to say, there is nothing *inherently* more rewarding or valuable in developing fluency in the discourses of English literary studies than there is in tracing one’s own linguistic history. Rather, the library’s spatial arrangement of printed materials reflects a particular social arrangement of languages, an arrangement that reproduces a particular cultural logic, an implicit set of rules about linguistic interaction, which relegates the history of French in New England to the relatively inaccessible upstairs, while locating the tradition of English literature in one of the main reading rooms.

Language Ideologies

I’m using the Woonsocket Harris Public Library here as a spatial metaphor to convey the idea that the material and spatial arrangement of languages that we come to experience in everyday life—for example, English in the reading room and French upstairs—is ideological. The social arrangement of languages reflects one version of what is possible when different languages come into contact, a version that has a history marked by conflicts. Through these conflicts, other potential versions were sorted into an uneasy settlement of cross-language relations that still exists today. By virtue of being institutionalized in a space like a public library, the one version is instantiated as objective reality—it appears to be just the way things are—an appearance which is then taken for granted and reproduced in the language practices of library patrons (like myself) for whom “the social world . . . does not reflect on itself and excludes the question of the conditions of its own possibility” (Bourdieu

Outline 3). The other versions, though excluded, persist in the form of social exclusions—such as lack of access, political disenfranchisements, or illiteracies—and language work that consists of doing what is necessary to reproduce that arrangement and to regulate those exclusions.

Teachers in composition programs are situated at a critical juncture, where they are tasked with the work of reproducing, through their relationships with students, an English monolingual ideology institutionalized in the form of university writing programs. In a way, composition and rhetoric's ability to establish itself as a discipline independent from English studies derives in part from a growing critical awareness of, and dissatisfaction with, the fact that writing teachers in the US do not simply teach writing; rather, they teach writing *in English*. I think, for example, of *A Teaching Subject*, Joseph Harris's account of the history of composition since the 1966 Dartmouth Conference. The structure of Harris's book traces the development of composition studies from inward-looking, individualistic approaches such as growth (1), voice (32) and process (72), towards more social-based, difference-driven approaches embodied in studies of error (102) and community (132). The 2012 edition of *A Teaching Subject* goes beyond the idea of community with an afterword built around the ideas of contact and negotiation (161).

The entire trajectory of the book seems to address the question that opened the Dartmouth Conference itself: "What is English" (4)? According to Harris, composition studies first attempted to respond to this question from within the confines of English, defining English through the practices of native English-speakers in the US and

England. Thus English education became focused on the “growth” of the student through English, the development of student voice, and the teaching of the writing process. This focus gives way to a view of English from without, defining English instead by its boundaries, by its relationship to other languages and to the social contexts in which it is used. Thus Harris’s history seems to move out of a disciplinary paradigm undergirded by a monolingual English ideology and toward a paradigm informed by language difference—in practical terms, informed by the multilingual character of American students. By the end of *A Teaching Subject*, the question “What is English?” must be answered in an American multilingual context; that is to say, by asking what English is in relation to other languages.

To that end, in characterizing Min-Zhan Lu’s contributions to the study of error in writing, Harris recapitulates her argument in these words:

We do not teach a contextless Standard Written English...but a specific kind of writing closely tied to the particular aims and needs of university work. We thus need to recognize there are other Englishes, tied to other contexts or communities, which are not simply underdeveloped or less public versions of academic discourse, but that work toward different ends and whose use may express a competing or oppositional politics (89).

It stands to reason that failing (or refusing) such recognition is equivalent not to avoiding the political altogether, but rather to tacitly endorsing another’s politics, though a politics more difficult to detect because it enjoys the benefits of having been made into what is “real” or “natural.” Yet, in his afterword, Harris fails to come to the

same conclusions as Min-Zhan Lu. He argues that multimodality—rather than multilingualism or translingualism—is the next logical step in the history of composition.

Significantly, the Dartmouth Conference—which Harris uses as a point of origin for tracing the disciplinary development of composition in the US—is also the point of origin for studying the relationship between composition studies and the “Sentinelle Affair.” One of the consultants at that conference, the American sociolinguist Joshua Fishman, delivered a paper titled “The Depth and Breadth of English in the United States,” in which he cited the “Sentinelle Affair” as part of a history of bilingual language instruction in the US which English-only instruction has suppressed (48). Fishman’s paper is an important source in John Trimbur’s “The Dartmouth Conference and the Geohistory of the Native Speaker” (163). Together, so far as I have been able to determine, Trimbur and Fishman are the only two sources that mention the “Sentinelle Affair” in the literature of composition and rhetoric. I argue that such exclusions of the study of writing in languages other than English is part of the work of an ideology of English monolingualism, an exclusion that has received scant attention in the past fifty years of scholarship in composition studies.

It may be helpful here to offer a definition of what I mean by ideology in general and by a language ideology in particular. In *Language Ideologies*, linguistic anthropologist Kathryn Woolard describes ideology as “power-linked discourse” (7). According to her, ideology has to do with systems of “subjective representations, beliefs, [and] ideas” with which we make sense of the world (5). More than mere

consciousness or culture, however, ideology is more like consciousness-in-context, as it represents “the experience or interests of a particular social position” as though it is “a universally true” way of thinking (6). In “the struggle to acquire or maintain power,” ideology offers the interests of one social position as being representative of the entire social context, thus covering over material differences or conflicts through “distortion, illusion, error, mystification, or rationalization” (7). Ideology, thus, can be understood as the means by which the unequal exercise of power is represented in social relations so that it does not appear to be in fact an unequal exercise of power but rather a natural relation.

Extending Woolard’s conceptualization of ideology to questions of language, anthropologist Paul Kroskrity articulates a language ideology specifically as the “perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group” (8). In the case of the Sentinelle Affair, for example, the educated Franco-American élite disseminated literature to other Franco-Americans about the necessity of preserving French, at a time when the demand for English was growing among non-English speakers.³ This valuation of French on the part of the élite can be understood as necessary for protecting their own socioeconomic interests; their social position as an ethnic minority élite was predicated on the maintenance of the ethnic minority *as a linguistic minority who needed the representation of an educated élite*. Likewise, Anglo advocates of English sought to extend standard English literacy to all Americans as an instrument of upward mobility, but one of the

³ See, for example, the pamphlet *Mount St. Charles / Oeuvre Nationale*, described briefly below and discussed in more detail later in this dissertation.

consequences was that bilingual speakers whose English literacy was deemed substandard were sorted in the workplace accordingly, and they could look to their own poor language performances as justification for their social position.⁴ Attending to historical moments when the issue of language is explicitly addressed—when “contending groups” are forced to articulate what they believe language is, what it is for, what it can do and how it should do it—enables me to refute “the myth of the sociopolitically disinterested language user or the possibility of un-positioned knowledge, even of one’s own language” (Kroskrity 8).

Understanding language ideology thus, as the explanations that social actors construct to make sense of the socially situated character of their own language practices, Woolard contends that the goal of analyzing language ideologies is to identify “the way they transform the material reality they comment on” (11). In other words, while claiming to be merely describing or reflecting a natural order of languages in relation to each other, language ideologies in fact do the work of making those relationships. As Woolard has it, studies of language ideologies call attention to “the performative aspect of ideology under its constitutive guise: ideology creates and acts in a social world while it masquerades as a description of that world” (11). This constitutive work is carried out through institutionally sanctioned uses of language,

⁴ The labor politics of the French in New England was shifting at this time, as the non-English-speaking working class was experiencing increased instability in an economy shifting towards increased professionalization and the scientific management techniques of Taylorism. Education in English became a priority in order to train a newly emergent “professional managerial class” of workers in the industrial economy (Ohmann 39), making obsolete the once-respectable career path of Franco-Americans who had entered the factories as manual laborers and enjoyed a stable working-class career with only a primary school education. See Gerstle, *Working-class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Princeton UP, 2002).

such as the *educative* language of schooling or the *adjudicative* language of the law, both of which “arrogate truth and value to some linguistic strategies and forms while ruling others out of bounds” (15). Kroskrity notes, though, that this constitutive work is not carried on by one social class at the expense of another. Rather, he observes that “even those who do not control the standard will often manifest compliance with its authority,” identifying themselves with the very standards that dominate them, participating in the very processes that link language with social class, so that standard languages take on a “dual role” as “embodiments of both national identity and state-endorsed social inequality” (28).

Language Ideologies and Archival Arrangements

In addition to schooling and the law, another of the institutionally sanctioned uses of language is the institutional archive. Like schooling and the law, the arrangement of the institutional archive “arrogate[s] truth and value to some linguistic strategies and forms while ruling others out of bounds” (Woolard 15), by virtue of being the historical preservation of the life of an institution. I have spent much of the past two years immersed in the institutional archive of the *L’Union St. Jean Baptiste d’Amérique* (USJB). The USJB is a national fraternal benefit society for people of French descent living in the United States. The society was incorporated in Rhode Island on May 7, 1900, and headquartered in Woonsocket, about one-fifth of a mile west of the Woonsocket Harris Public Library. Its incorporation charter states that the society’s purpose is “to render mutual aid and assistance to its sick and disabled

members and to provide for the dependents of deceased members” (Quintal 4). In other words, the society provided accident and life insurance to its members and their families, paid through annual dues and revenue generated from various social activities. At its height in the 1950s, the USJB had over 78,000 members (Quintal 64) and \$10.6 million in assets (Quintal 65). According to the February 1927 issue of *L'Union*, the official USJB newspaper, the society reported almost \$3.4 million in assets, roughly equivalent to \$46.5 million today.

If the arrangement of the Woonsocket Public Library collections of the 1980s excluded French, the arrangement of the USJB archives of the 1920s put French on an equal footing with English. The USJB was built on a model of the francophone national society, a hybrid social, cultural and financial organization founded by the French as a way to protect their interests against the English in the United States and Canada. The first of these national societies was the *Société Saint-Jean Baptiste*, founded in Montréal in 1834, just a few short years before the 1837 French rebellion against English rule in Canada and the British Parliament’s subsequent Act of Union, passed in 1840.⁵ Recognizing their emerging second-class status in Canada, and perceiving the need to protect their own interests from British political and economic hegemony, the French founded national societies and the first credit unions (*caisses*

⁵ The Act of Union joined Lower Canada and Upper Canada, the former being largely French but more sparsely populated, and the latter being largely English and more densely populated. The Act was the British Parliament’s attempt to eradicate the French presence in Canada via political and economic assimilation. It was drafted after the recommendations of Lord Durham in his infamous *Report on British North America*, in which he called for the political, economic and cultural absorption of the French by the English as the only way to unify the two territories into a single British-controlled province.

populaires), both of which catered to people who had been rejected by the banks (Chartier 115).

In addition to its financial operations the USJB, as a francophone national society, recognized its responsibility to preserve French culture from English assimilation. It did this by producing and distributing a national imaginary very much in line with Anderson's notion of an imagined community. That is to say, French nationalism in North America was produced by the discourse of an educated élite and distributed through various institutional means, such as the French Catholic parish, the French-language press and the French national society. This discourse was designed to instill in its people (*les nôtres*) a vision of a past, a present and a future common to all people of French descent in the New World. The efficacy of this vision rested on the élite's ability to persuade *les nôtres* that it was their duty to identify with what it meant to be French in the midst of Anglo domination. Thus Adolphe Robert, the president of the *Association Canado-American* (ACA), another national society located in New Hampshire, could write in 1936 of a "scattered" (*éparpillée*) French-Canadian "nation" that encompassed the entire extent of North America and that shared "an identical history" of struggle against "the same enemies" (Robert "Par-dessus" 32). Robert perceived the mission of the ACA to be very much in line with the *Société*

Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Montréal: to join all French-speaking peoples in North America in “solidarity” against the forces of assimilation (Robert “Par-dessus” 33).⁶

Crucially for our purposes, French national societies helped to produce French nationalist discourse by building archives that documented the history of the French presence in North America and that likewise documented that the French would be just as capable of modernization and development as the English, if only they had the ability to self-determine as a people. The USJB archives are one of the United States’s best repositories of such materials on the French in North America. In 1908, the society acquired the library of Major Edmond Mallet, a Civil War veteran and Inspector General for the Indian Affairs Bureau under Grover Cleveland (Quintal 26). The Mallet library collected thousands of items from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries focusing on the French and the Native Americans of North America (“Edmond Mallet”). In addition to this library, the USJB collected thousands of printed ephemera—newspapers, personal correspondence, booklets, pamphlets, drawings, and photographs—and pasted them into a series of thirty-three large scrapbooks that, taken together, document the establishment of the French in New

⁶ Although originally founded with a similar vision of francophone survival, the USJB would emerge in the 1920s as a more moderate organization in comparison to the ACA. While the ACA actively sought to build a cross-border French “nation” that encompassed the United States and Québec and was impervious to Anglicization, the USJB struck a more conciliatory note with English America.

England and their economic and social progress, as well as the institutional history of the USJB itself.⁷

The bulk of my research focuses on five of these scrapbooks—volumes XIII through XVI and volume XX—produced between 1920 and 1940. Volume XIII, *La Campagne du Mont St.-Charles du Sacré-Coeur*, documents the fundraising drive and the pedagogical vision for the construction of Mount St. Charles, a French-English bilingual high school that opened in Woonsocket in 1924. Volume XIV through XVI, titled *La Controverse du Rhode Island*, documents the “Sentinelle Affair,” which emerged out of the English-only pressures of the 1920s and, as I said, resulted in the excommunication of fifty-six people from the Roman Catholic Church for activities related to their advocacy of French language instruction in Catholic parochial schools. Volume XX, titled *Peck Educational Bill*, documents the controversy surrounding an English-only law known as the Peck Act, passed in the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1922. As can immediately be observed from the most cursory examination of these materials, the 1920s represent a crucial moment in the instantiation of English monolingual ideology in New England, and these materials

⁷ Although the USJB is still active today, with over thirty chapters throughout New England, it no longer exists in the same institutional form as it did for much of the twentieth century. In 1991, it merged with Catholic Financial Life (CFL) and permanently ceased to exist as a French national fraternal benefit society. As of 2014 the current executive director of the USJB, Louise Boulanger, was an employee of CFL. The USJB archives are still in the process of being transferred on permanent loan to the d’Alzon Library of Assumption College, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Assumption acquired the Mallet Library in 2004 and acquired the scrapbooks and other materials in 2007. When I met Ms. Boulanger at her CFL office in Woonsocket, RI, in early 2014 for an interview related to this dissertation, she was in the process of sealing a box filled with manuscript letters from the 1920s concerning the Sentinelle Affair. Still in the basement of the CFL building were nineteenth century maps of Indian reservations collected by Major Mallet. Virtually all of this material has been unavailable to research since the 1980s.

reveal important insights into the “uneasy settlement of English in the United States” (Trimbur “Linguistic” 166).

These five scrapbooks contain over two thousand artifacts. These artifacts consist mostly of newspaper clippings from over two dozen newspapers in English and French, arranged chronologically. For example, page 193 of scrapbook XVI, the third volume of *La Controverse du Rhode Island*, contains three articles published between April 6-7, 1928, from three different newspapers, two English and one French, all concerning the announcement by the Vatican that Elphège J. Daignault and his followers were to be excommunicated by the Bishop of the Diocese of Providence



Figure 2. Page 193 of *La Controverse du Rhode Island*, Volume 3, scrapbook XVI of the USJB archives. (Photo courtesy of the d'Alzon Library, Assumption College, Worcester MA).

(see Fig. 2). In addition to newspaper clippings are many pieces of ephemera, such as booklets, pamphlets and posters, and official USJB correspondence. For example, page 183 of scrapbook XIII, *La Campagne du Mont St.-Charles du Sacré-Coeur*, has pasted into it a fourteen-page booklet titled *Mont St.-Charles / Oeuvre Nationale*, which consists of six short essays outlining the pedagogical vision and nationalist agenda of the Mount St. Charles school construction project (see Fig. 3).

Hundreds of these texts explicitly address issues of language in society. These artifacts all put into practice some language ideology, in one of three ways: 1) by making arguments about language *qua* language in the construction of a national

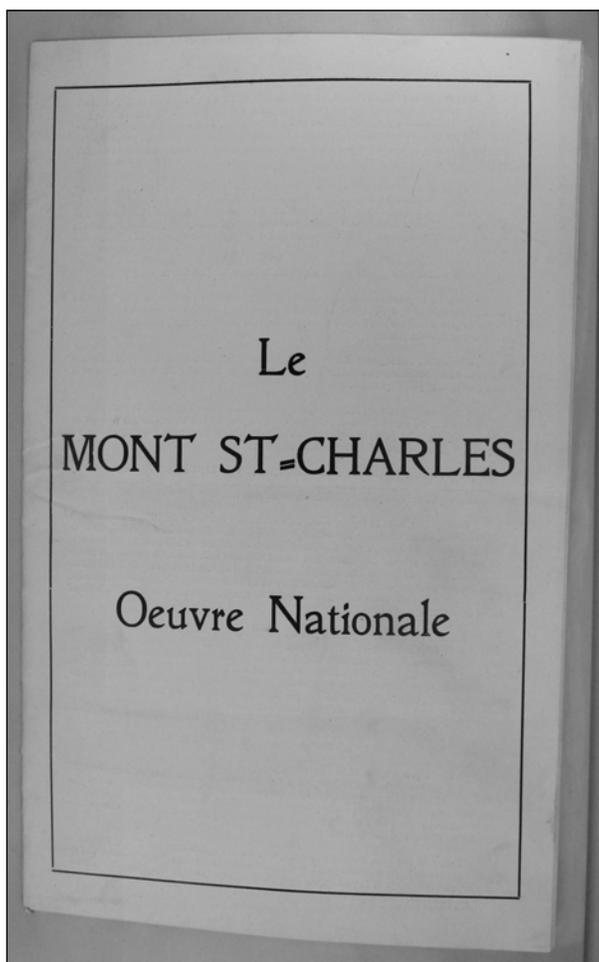


Figure 3. Page 183 of La Campagne du Mont St.-Charles du Sacré-Coeur, scrapbook XIII of the USJB archives, (Photo courtesy of the d'Alzon Library, Assumption College, Worcester MA).

imaginary; 2) by justifying or protesting the social, political, or economic status of one language in relation to other languages, and then making arguments for or against certain institutional programs based on that status; and 3) by using monolingual ideologies to make arguments about the “natural” meanings and contexts for language in the construction of a social reality. By this third practice, the making of arguments about “natural” meanings and contexts, I have in mind a series of legal decisions handed down from the Rhode Island Superior Court and the Rhode Island Supreme Court resolving the civil complaints the Sentinellists made against the Diocese of Providence. These decisions are the basis for my discussion of the value of English in chapter two, as they put into practice a particular ideology of English monolingualism in the interpretation of corporate law.

In considering the way archival arrangements are informed by language ideologies, it is noteworthy that these scrapbooks are arranged in such a way that the Sentinelle Affair is isolated from the rest of Franco-American history and attributed almost entirely to the work of its central figure, Elphège J. Daignault. This arrangement preserves the official institutional stance of the USJB against *La Sentinelle*. As producers of French nationalist discourse, the USJB leaders of the 1920s—Elie Vézina and Eugene Jalbert—were anxious to purify the organization of versions of French nationalism that were critical of church and state structures in the US political context. As we will see in more detail in the next chapter, one of the central tactics of the Sentinellists was to challenge the centralization policies of the Catholic Church education system in the United States. Sentinellists wanted to keep

the administration of French-language parishes in the hands of local pastors and their congregations as was the case for parishes in Québec. Sentinellists theorized that locally-controlled parishes would allow a French-language pastor (*curé*) and his French-language congregation to administer French language parochial schools and sacraments without interference. The bishop of the Diocese of Providence, William Hickey, was tasked with implementing national centralization policies that took control away from the *curés* and mandated English as the language of instruction in all schools. He thus became the immediate target for many Sentinellist criticisms.

The national Executive Committee of the USJB declared that *La Sentinelle*'s criticisms of the Church hierarchy were counter-productive to Franco-American interests. They issued a "Declaration and Protestation" against *La Sentinelle*, signed by the entire Executive Committee ("Declaration et Protestation"). At the same time, however, thirty-one USJB regional chapters passed resolutions supporting *La Sentinelle* and protesting the actions of the Executive Committee in taking its public stand. The USJB as a national society was conflicted: the discourse produced by the *élite* Executive Committee accommodated the bishop's centralized education policies, but the membership was not unified in this accommodationist stance. The selection and arrangement of the USJB's archive on the Sentinelle Affair seeks to justify the position of the Executive Committee in support of the diocese and in opposition to Sentinellism.

The evidential value of the archive—consisting of the combination of the content, structure and context of the materials in relation to each other (Millar 9)—is

heavily weighted toward the conclusion that the “Sentinelle Affair” was largely the result of one person’s political agitation. The archive does this by suppressing the possibility that 1) Sentinellism could be deeply rooted in the very history of the French presence in North America, and 2) that Sentinellism was a legitimate representation of French cultural identity informed by that presence. Where the archive does acknowledge these points, it allows them validity only in the Canadian context, not in the US context. That is to say, the archive disallows the possibility that a virulent strain of American nationalism could be connected to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the United States in any language other than English. The idea of a French nationalism supported by the Church and hostile to English was relegated to Québec, despite the protests of Sentinellists that this version of French nationalism was an integral part of the history of the United States. The most glaring evidence of such suppression is the strategic inclusion and exclusion from the scrapbooks of actual articles from *La Sentinelle*. The scrapbooks contain only twenty-seven articles from *La Sentinelle* in all, six articles published in November and December 1924, and twenty-one published in the first three months of 1927. Other than these two brief periods, the voice of *La Sentinelle* is silent in the institutional record.

Rhetorical historiography must take into account the way the evidential value of the archive enabled and constrains the kinds of knowledge that can be produced based on these strategies of inclusion and exclusion. If we analyze the selection and arrangement of articles from *La Sentinelle* within the USJB archive, we see that the isolation and suppression of Daignault’s arguments were an attempt on the part of the

USJB leadership to protect its precarious political position in relation to an assimilationist church and state. A brief comparison of the different contexts of 1924 and 1927 will illustrate how the USJB used *La Sentinelle* to protect its own position in the face of assimilationist and English Only pressures.

On January 18, 1927, Bishop Hickey published a pastoral letter addressed to all Catholics in his diocese. In that letter, he lamented the “unfortunate agitation on the part of a small number of a certain element of our population” and prayed that the publishers of *La Sentinelle* and all their supporters would “abandon this road which must surely lead to the loss of membership in the Church.” The letter seems to be a warning to all who may sympathize with the protests to abandon the cause or face Church sanctions. What makes this letter important to our understanding of the suppression of *La Sentinelle* from the USJB archive is that *L’Union*, the USJB’s official newspaper, published the pastoral letter in its February 15th edition (“Rome Parle”). This publication amounted to a tacit endorsement of the bishop’s position and a repudiation of the Sentinellist protest. Most of the twenty-one *La Sentinelle* articles included in the USJB archive from this time period consist of criticisms of the USJB’s publication of the letter. Thus, the purpose of including a dissenting voice in the institutional record seems to be only to justify the official position of the institution itself.

Interestingly, the inclusion of *La Sentinelle* articles from 1924 demonstrate a much different relationship between the newspaper and the USJB, coming as they do years before the Bishop began to take action against *La Sentinelle*. At that time, Mount

St. Charles Academy had recently opened. The school was planned as a French-English bilingual high school, and the USJB played a leading role in fundraising for the school construction. The belief among Franco-Americans was that the school would be an extension of French parochial schools, where French students could obtain an advanced education that would train them to be engineers and managers, rather than manual laborers, in the region's industrial economy. During most of 1921, USJB Secretary General Elie Vézina helped organize a \$500,000 capital campaign for the school. *La Campagne du Mont St.-Charles du Sacré-Coeur* includes over one hundred letters that Vézina exchanged with campaign workers throughout the year, many of them punctuated with French nationalist sentiments in connection with the plans for the school. As 1922 began, however, Bishop Hickey appeared in *The Providence Visitor*, his diocesan newspaper, saying that "...[e]rroneous reports to the contrary, the new Academy of Mt. St. Charles will not be a distinctly French institution. It will be open to all and will be supported by men of the different races and different creeds. The spirit of parochialism will be stamped out" ("Hopes").

Two weeks later, Vézina wrote to the USJB Bureau General, advising them not to speak publicly about Hickey's article until the Bureau could discuss it at their next meeting. He writes, "I believe it is much wiser not to give any publicity to the *Providence Visitor* article; certainly there were misunderstandings that will be explained later. In the present circumstances, the motive behind all our actions should be caution" (Vézina). Certainly he felt some anxiety over his own participation in promoting the French nationalist aspects of the school. Moreover, Vézina's concern

stemmed from the fact that the bishop's comments confirmed a widespread suspicion in the Franco-American community that, despite the nationalist proclamations of leaders like Vézina himself, the high school was not going to be part of a French-language school system, but was in fact being planned as a centralized high school that would assimilate non-English speakers using a curriculum in which English would be the language of instruction. Behind Vézina's caution, then, seems to lay a fear of betrayal—both his own betrayal of the Franco-American people for touting the school as well as the bishop's betrayal of him—and a fear that “the fruits of [Franco-American] sacrifices” were beginning to be usurped by a centralized diocesan authority.

Following Vézina's letter and a clipping of the bishop's *Providence Visitor* statements, *La Campagne* includes the above mentioned booklet, *Le Mont St-Charles: Oeuvre Nationale*, a piece of Franco-American propaganda that unequivocally envisions Mount St. Charles as a “crown jewel” of the French-language school system in New England. The six *La Sentinelle* articles follow the inclusion of this booklet, as part of a section of news articles from many French and English newspapers in praise of the school. *La Sentinelle*, however, is not praising the school. Instead, it openly questions the motives of the bishop and reveals the underlying corporate structure that legally owns and administers the school. Daignault writes that Mount St. Charles “is the property of a civil corporation” whose board of directors is “composed of the Bishop, his grand Vicar, the curé of Precious Blood, a certain number of Brothers, and two members of the laity” (Juillet “Le Collège” 21 Nov 1924). The article argues that

the Bishop ultimately controls the naming of each person to this board of directors. The school, then, is “quite simply the *collège* of the Bishop of the Diocese of Providence.” Daignault further demands that the bishop respect the rights of parents to determine the course of their children’s education, “the right to pray in the language of their parents; the ability to confess in their maternal language; and a spiritual direction that conforms to their particular ethnic sense.”

The lack of caution in these articles is noteworthy especially when considered in light of Vézina’s specific call for caution in his letter to the USJB Bureau General. It stands to reason that some part of what he feared the Bureau General might express was exactly what Daignault expressed in the pages of *La Sentinelle*. We might conclude that the only distinction between the position of the USJB and the position of *La Sentinelle* in 1924 was that the USJB occupied a discursive role more constrained by its politics than did *La Sentinelle*. Daignault was free to voice the very complaints that Vézina felt obligated to suppress among the members of the USJB Bureau General. By 1927, Daignault would bear the full consequences of his discursive choice—free speech over proscribed speech—as he was repudiated both by his Church and by the leading Franco-American fraternal benefit society of which he was a member, risking losing both his access to the sacraments of the Church, the Catholic path to heaven, as well as his life insurance policy.

The content, structure and context of the USJB archive thus preserves evidence of the Sentinelle Affair, but in the context of the conflicted historical identity of the USJB as a moderate Franco-American institution. If the material arrangement of an

archive is thus informed by ideology, it follows that in order to research a history of ideological struggle over language—as that struggle has been preserved in archival collections—I find myself working against the basic principles of archival arrangement, the principles of provenance and original order. In their description of the processing of the James Berlin Papers at Purdue University, Sammie L. Morris and Shirley K. Rose describe the importance that archivists place on preserving provenance and original order, as these principles secure the internal structure of the collection and the overall context in which archival documents must be interpreted. The structure and context provided by the archive are foundational to what Laura Millar has called the “evidential value” (104) of the historical documents in the archive. Morris and Rose define provenance as the archivist’s ability to establish the original creator of a document in order to ensure “the authenticity and integrity of the materials as evidence” (Morris and Rose 54). Morris and Rose define original order as the choices the original creator of the collection made in arranging the archive’s materials (55).

Thus, Elizabeth Maisey, the archivist who is processing the USJB archive at Assumption College’s d’Alzon Library, must attend to provenance and original order in maintaining the archive as a reliable source of evidence of the institutional life of its creator, the USJB. But in order for me to use this archive, I must consciously avoid using the terms set by the archive itself, terms which would compel me to write a history of a white ethnicity’s inevitable struggle towards assimilation, a history that the USJB was helping to make. Instead, I am trying to tease out of the content, structure

and context of the USJB archive a history of difference that will allow composition scholars to dismantle the neat equations of language and nation that frame the master narratives of American pluralism, and that will allow us to see language practices as constitutive of rather than reflective of social inequality. This dismantling project requires me to hold the arrangement of the USJB archive—its provenance and original order—at arm’s length, lest I find myself “practicing the discourse [I] intend to analyze” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 339).

Re-contextualizing Composition’s History

In “English Only and US College Composition,” Bruce Horner and John Trimbur refer to “unidirectional English monolingualism” as a particular arrangement of the modern languages curriculum around the assumption that all language instruction has as its ultimate goal the mastery of spoken and written communication in English (605). They critique the “territorialization” of the modern languages in the departmental structure of the modern university (595), where the English department had sole control of the university’s required composition courses. Horner and Trimbur note that histories of rhetoric and composition typically neglect to consider the discipline’s relationship to languages other than English, taking for granted instead the institutional “affiliation” (595) of writing with English and communications as a natural point of departure for tracing the field’s historical origins (see Berlin; Brereton *Origins*; Connors *Composition*; and Douglas for a few canonical works that take this location for granted). This historiographical approach has lead, for example, to the

identification of Harvard's implementation of a first-year writing requirement in 1874 as having initiated composition's modern history.

Composition's history, though, has been a function of the particular archives identified as rightfully belonging to it. That history has been dominated by the kinds of material Connors describes as our field-specific "Archive" ("Dreams" 17)—the composition textbooks, writing manuals, documentation of programs and course development, and samples of student writing that make up the field-specific materials of composition. More progressive histories have sought out these kinds of material in an attempt to document composition's "extracurriculum" (Ruggles Gere 79), various sites of writing instruction outside of university writing programs. Others have sought to counter the Harvard-centric historical narratives of composition's origins by looking at less-studied institutions like normal schools and historically black colleges (Donahue and Moon). Still, these approaches write composition's history in a way that naturalizes the ideology of unidirectional English monolingualism by viewing language difference only in terms of how it is valued by monolingual English language instruction: as error, as writing deficiency, and as poor language competence. This approach to writing composition's history fails to consider that the values that adhere to English could be in some important way relative to the presence of other languages and to the values attached to those languages in relation to English.

One tentative example might help to clarify what I have in mind here. The writing program at Wellesley College in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries has been written about in histories of composition and English studies (see Campbell

“Freshman”; Garbus; Graff). These histories have relied on field-specific materials like published reports from Wellesley English faculty and the Wellesley department of English’s annual President’s Report. These documents have enabled composition historians to document the goal of English education in the Wellesley writing program as the moral improvement of students, training them through rhetorical education to “prudently” discern “moral truths” in working “for the good of the community” (Garbus 79). The curriculum moved from initial courses that taught women “to write clear, correct, well-constructed sentences” (Garbus 82) to advanced courses that trained women to participate in the public sphere through courses like *Social Ideals in English Letters* (Graff 83).

This attachment of English language instruction to moral development and engagement in the public sphere strikes me as a rather conventional way of thinking about English education--a conventional way perhaps made radical by its application to the education of women for participation in public life. Still, no composition historian seems to have pointed out the correlation between this way of thinking and that of British colonial educational policies in their territories of the nineteenth century. Colonial administrators sought to develop a civilized, English-speaking class of colonial subjects who could administer colonial territories in the periphery on behalf of the colonial powers in the metropolis (Pennycook *Cultural* 82). They developed this intermediary class of colonial managers in part by educating them in English, articulating much the same aims in India in 1850 as Wellesley English faculty like Vida Scudder articulated in 1910. Such ennobling goals for English studies as

were found at Wellesley, then, must be viewed in part as an outgrowth of colonial policies for the regulation and exclusion of subjected peoples from the public sphere.

The ideologies that inform such policies are not confined to the imperial relationship of the metropolis to the periphery. By re-contextualizing the Wellesley writing program in terms of the linguistic realities of the first decades of the twentieth century in the United States, we begin to see the goals of moral improvement for participation in a public sphere as part of a regime of linguistic and cultural purification in this country. The 1920s saw a rise in nativist sentiment in the United States as a reaction against the second wave of immigration, largely from Eastern and Southern Europe but also from Québec, over the previous four decades (Kraut 186-193). Since the 1880s, nativists had sought to limit the influence of immigrant languages and cultures--similar to the Know Nothing movement against the Irish in the 1850s--leading to restricted immigration laws in the early twentieth century and after-hours Americanization classes for immigrant factory workers (Sterne 188). These classes included English language instruction and moral instruction from the point of view of a Protestant ethos that was suspicious of the large number of foreign Catholics (Sterne 231). The emphasis on language instruction in English was informed by fears of civic leaders that multilingualism would lead to a breakdown of public discourse and the triumph of anarchy. The emphasis on morality was informed by eugenicist fears about the polluting effects of Eastern and Southern European stock on the purity of Anglo-Saxon genetics.

These fears were perhaps most dramatically articulated in an 1881 Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Report that called French Canadians “the Chinese of the eastern states,” who had no interest in becoming citizens and learning “our” language (Anctil 126). Wellesley itself was about thirty miles equidistant from three major French-speaking enclaves, the cities of Lowell, Worcester and Woonsocket, Rhode Island, all of which had multiple French language newspapers, multiple French-language Catholic parochial schools, a francophone economic sector in banking and commerce capable of supporting a francophone bourgeoisie, and essentially a burgeoning francophone public sphere whose metropolitan center was not Congregationalist Boston but rather Roman Catholic Québec. This francophone network was predicated on a set of cultural tactics known as *la survivance*, designed to ensure “a French presence in the midst of Anglo domination” (Peters 567).

Whatever might have been the social ideals of this francophone public sphere, they were not locatable in Wellesley’s “Social Ideals in English Letters” course, nor could they be properly articulated in “clear, correct, well-constructed sentences in English.” Thus writing programs like Wellesley’s, developed as they were at the tail end of this second wave of immigration, must be viewed in part as implicitly defining public life through the exclusion of potentially contaminating foreign languages and foreign genes. This exclusion must be taken into account when attempting to articulate the values historically attached to literacy instruction in English in the United States. As Lisa Arnold has pointed out, the presence of writing in other languages, once acknowledged, will call for a revised historiography of composition, an historiography

that will change our sense of “what counts” as writing and, by extension, what counts as composition’s history (“[Re]Working” 260).

This need to work against the arrangement of the archive has been addressed before in rhetoric and composition. In Jessica Enoch’s accounts of the research that led to her book *Refiguring Rhetorical Education*, for example, she describes some of the limitations she encountered searching archives traditional to composition and rhetoric in an attempt to document Chicano/a public education in Texas during the Mexican Revolution. Enoch found that these materials, or rather the lack of Chicano/a voices represented in them, only served to reify a “myth of Mexican indifference towards public education” (Glenn and Enoch 14). Enoch had to work against the ideological arrangement of composition and rhetoric’s archives in order to historicize the construction of this myth. In doing so, Enoch found *La Crónica*, a Spanish-language newspaper that took the lead in protesting “the discrimination of Mexican students in Texas public schools” (Glenn and Enoch 14) during the period she was studying. It seems to me that an important correlation must be made between the specific exclusion of *La Crónica* and *La Sentinelle* from rhetoric and composition’s archives, and of the isolation of these materials more generally from discussions about the role of language in education in the United States. Such exclusions are necessary predicates for the construction of an American public sphere in English, and they can only be avoided by first working against the original order and the provenance of existing archival arrangements. Only then can rehabilitative historiographical work

make use of these materials to reveal the contested nature of unidirectional English monolingualism in histories of US composition.

Conclusion

What to the archivist must be treated as a value-neutral “given order” of texts must to the rhetorician be treated as “an ideological order” (Grabau 210). The strategies of selection and arrangement of any archive can thus be read rhetorically to reveal the ideological order of the historical discourse it attempts to preserve. The researcher’s goal is not to respect the principles of selection and arrangement, but rather to disrupt them in order to avoid maintaining the original assumptions and respecting the original silences of the archive’s creators. A key strategy of disruption in archival research is to frame archival texts within contexts that are broader than the collection itself (Grabau 208).

The applied linguist Alastair Pennycook says that “in order to construct itself as a respectable discipline, linguistics had to make an extensive series of exclusions” (*Language* 6). I argue that the same is true for rhetoric and composition. In “Rethinking Our Archive,” John Brereton notes an “uncomfortable fact” of archival work in rhetoric and composition: the fact that “we still aren’t sure what should be in our archive, or how access can be broadened, or which tools we should bring to our task of exploring the past” (574). A history of cross-language relations in the United States, however, challenges the idea the “we” should even have “our” own archive, even a multilingual one. Such an archive would by necessity need to be arranged

according to the very principles that I have been critiquing here, principles which reify the institutional identities of the collection's creators through a series of exclusions of what is deemed to be *not* our archive. A multilingual archive proper to rhetoric and composition would risk sedimenting a different set of historical silences into its own natural order, having a similar effect on potential research as the arrangement of the Woonsocket Harris Public Library had on my literacy development.

Brereton implies that a problem in our field's historiography is that our scholars "have been making use of an archive assembled by others, with other purposes in mind" ("Rethinking" 575). But I argue that this is exactly the value of rhetoric and composition's historiography: the recognition of the "other purposes" of these collections is exactly what our research should seek to critically engage.

Changing the structure of an archive—or at least learning to write alternate accounts of its construction—changes what kinds of histories can be written from it. Ferreira-Buckley indicates that this has been the ultimate purpose of archival practice since the French Revolution. She sees a continuous historiographical trajectory beginning with the French Revolution's *respect des fonds*, leading from the revolutionary sense that a government be held accountable to its public, and from the initiation of public scrutiny of the state agencies through which society's inclusions and exclusions were enacted, to the writing of progressive histories that shift our thinking about "who counts and who was worth writing about" (578).

The archival researcher's work, then, consists first of not locating an archive from which he can deduce historical truths, but rather *creating* an archive specific to

his project, drawn from multiple sources (Ramsey, et. al., 5) in a way that enables him to reveal the ideological constraints under which each particular collection was assembled and under which specific documents were produced. The insight a researcher can draw from archival materials will derive from the combination of materials he chooses to juxtapose with one another. For example, Peter Mortensen's ingenious studies of the paper industry's impact on the creation of illiteracy in the Appalachian South has lead him to juxtapose historical records of a paper mill in Kingsport, Tennessee, with statistical reports on book consumption from *Publisher's Weekly* (Mortensen 45). These records are housed in different institutional locations and were originally produced to make visible different aspects of industrial capitalism.

The documents concerning the construction of the paper mill in Kingsport touted the mill as evidence of a burgeoning manufacturing sector in the early twentieth century South (Mortensen 46), while the *Publisher's Weekly* articles were intended to document market trends and consumption patterns for the publishing trade houses of Boston and New York. The combination of the two types of documents is specific to Mortensen's project; it does not exist in any single physical location. It only exists in his writing, which enables him to link industrial paper production with book consumption—and thereby to study the effects of industrial paper processing on the making of literacy and illiteracy—in a way that no single institutional collection could have made possible. The practice of historical writing becomes a practice of working across and against existing archives in order to remake history. Writing *is* archiving, and the practices of writing are the rhetorics of the archive.

CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND LINGUISTIC PURIFICATION



Figure 4. A Sentinellist demonstration at Cass Park in Woonsocket, RI. Leo Bousquet, *Woonsocket: A Centennial History* (Woonsocket, RI: Woonsocket Centennial Committee), page 88.

I begin with an image (see Fig. 4). It's September 18, 1927, a Sunday afternoon in the small town of Woonsocket, one of the largest French-speaking enclaves in the United States. Thousands of French speakers from throughout New England have descended on Cass Park, just east of the Blackstone River, to listen to the man standing on the flatbed of a pickup truck. The man, Elphège J. Daignault, implores them to stand up for their language rights as American citizens and to protest as unconstitutional a series of mandates that had been handed

down by a number of New England state legislatures and by the Catholic Church.¹

These mandates stipulated that English was to be used as the only language of instruction in all public and private schools, and that French was to be taught one hour per day as a foreign language. In this scene, Daignault appeals to their collective strength as a French race distinct in all regards from the English. He appeals to their common struggle for survival as a conquered people on this continent.

By April 1928, a few short months after this demonstration, Daignault and dozens of his supporters would be excommunicated by the Catholic Church for activities related to their language activism (“Daignault and Supporters”). Examining this photo, one wonders how many fellow Catholics in that crowd might have silently aligned themselves with Daignault and his policy of militant resistance to an Anglo dominated Church and state. One wonders how many might have instead sympathized with the more moderate position espoused by other French cultural leaders—like that of the USJB, one of the French fraternal benefit societies of which Daignault himself was a member. As we have seen, the USJB opposed Daignault and instead advocated an accommodating stance, accepting the benefits of French-English assimilation that would come with English language schooling. The USJB maintained that the French people would continue as a distinct race despite the language situation. Finally, one

¹ The editors of *La Sentinelle* held many of these demonstrations between 1925 and 1928. Many newspaper articles printed transcripts of the speeches given by Daignault and other featured guests. At the time of this photo, Daignault and his supporters had been circulating a document known as the “Franco-American Catholic Manifesto.” The manifesto declares that French Catholics have a right to choose French language priests and to send their children to French language schools. The text of the manifesto was published in *La Sentinelle* on July 28, 1927. A copy of the document is included in Bourassa, *L’Affaire du Providence et la Crise Religieuse en Nouvelle-Angleterre* (1929).

wonders how many in that crowd did not find their interests represented by either of these two competing stances, and who perhaps checked out of the controversy altogether while perhaps still engaging in subversive practices of both accommodation and resistance as it suited their everyday needs.

My goal in this chapter is to recover to the extent possible the complexities of multilingual language practices as represented by the silent crowd gathered there that day. Historically, the demonstration constitutes one scene in the larger conflict of the Sentinelle Affair, which spanned the entire decade of the 1920s. Most historical accounts of the Sentinelle Affair consider it either part of American immigration history (cf. Sterne) or part of the history of white ethnic minority experience in the US (Rumilly; Chartier; Sorrell *Sentinelle*). The conceptual frameworks of these historical accounts limit our view of the Sentinelle Affair, enabling us to see it only as a conflict motivated by the identity politics of race and ethnicity, a conflict inevitably—though uneasily—resolved in the American melting pot mythology of white ethnic assimilation.

A much different understanding emerges, however, if we view the conflict as primarily one between local multilingual language practices and centralized language planning. Despite the fact that it garnered national headlines in the US and in Canada; that its arguments were heard on the floor of the 96th US Congress; that its merits were argued before two Vatican tribunals over the course of the 1920s—despite all of the far reaching consequences of this conflict, historians must acknowledge that it was first and foremost a local fight between Woonsocket politicians and diocesan

administrators over the planned construction of that most provincial of institutions, a local high school—in English, Mount St. Charles; *en français, Le Mont St.-Charles du Sacré Coeur*.

Three points need to be made here about the different view of the conflict that emerges once we shift our attention to the local contexts surrounding this school. First, if we attend to the local material economy in which the planning and construction of Mount St. Charles (MSC) was embedded, what emerges is a more complex understanding of the contested meanings of that school. MSC straddled competing discourses operating in multiple languages and in multiple countries, which converged at the site of the school. One of those discourses was dominated by local ecclesiastical leaders who saw the school as a necessary addition to a Catholic educational system in the US which could consolidate a growing multilingual congregation into a unified voting bloc in English. Another was a secular discourse dominated by local French nationalists who saw the school as a bastion of French cultural *survivance* against English domination in North America. These discourses sought to establish the relationship between literacy, cultural/racial/national identities, political representation and economic progress. Historical actors in the Sentinelle Affair argued for and against different iterations of MSC by activating one or another of these discourses.

Second, if we attend to the value of English and French relative to each other in the local linguistic economy, we can begin to see the conflict as a communicative exchange across languages, where competing factions attempted to corner the linguistic market, so to speak, and to regulate the exchange values of English and

French literacies both in relation to each other and in relation to temporal goods.

Language was explicitly viewed as the social capital with which language users could improve their socioeconomic positions in local and regional material economies.

English Only advocates complained about the degraded value of English in this linguistic economy, and expressed dismay at the ascendent value of French. Finally, by attending to these economies in relation to each other, we gain a critical understanding of how multilingual complexities have been effaced and oversimplified by institutionalized assumptions about linguistic modernity that have informed centralized language research, language teaching and language learning in the United States.

Chronology

Before looking closely at the multilingual complexities embodied by the construction of MSC, it will be helpful to outline a brief chronology of the Sentinelle Affair so that we understand how individual incidents like the above demonstration (see Fig. 4) fit into the conflict's overall trajectory (see Fig. 5).

At the beginning of the 1920s, a number of laws were passed by twenty-two states across the country, restricting education in languages other than English (Chartier 122). In Rhode Island, "An Act to Secure More Adequate Economic Support and More Efficient Administration of Public Education" was passed by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1922. This law, informally called the Peck Act (after the state senator who sponsored it), mandated that private school instruction "in all

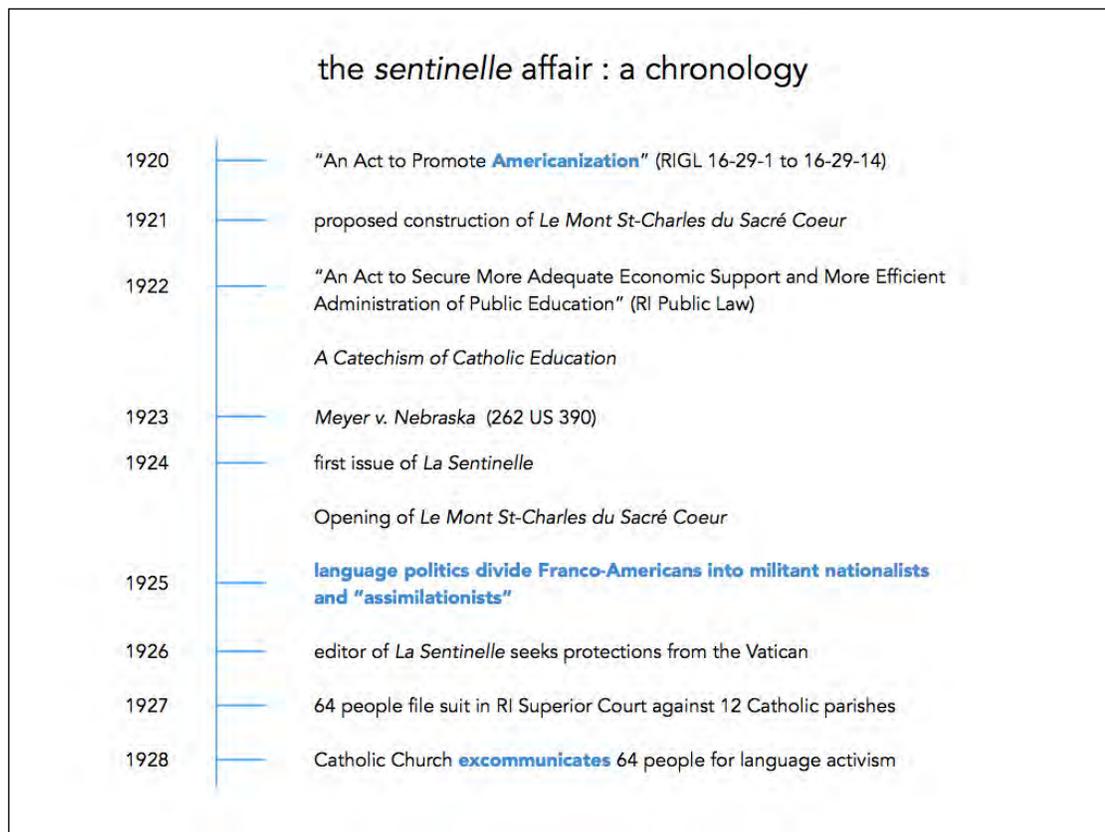


Figure 5. A chronology of the Sentinelle Affair.

studies, except foreign languages and any studies not taught in the public schools, [be] in the English language" (H. 823, 6). The law authorized the state Commissioner of Education to determine whether such instruction was "thorough and efficient" (6). The Peck Act essentially attempted to take control of the state's Catholic parochial schools away from diocesan administrators and to give it to the state's Board of Education. Since diocesan school administrators had taken a hands-off approach to local parishes' parochial schools and had allowed national parishes to teach in their maternal languages, such a move threatened to suppress French as a language of instruction in the schools of French language parishes and to replace it with English.

This law came on the heels of an earlier law passed in Rhode Island in 1920, titled “An Act to Promote Americanization.”² This law mandated that certain cities and towns establish “public evening schools...in which the speaking, reading and writing of the English language shall be taught for two hours on each of at least one hundred nights between the first of September and the first of June” (H. 720, 1). Students educated in private schools had to pass a state examination in order to be “deemed as having acquired reasonable facility in speaking, reading and writing the English language” (3). This push towards English Only Americanization at the state level reflected a similar initiative at the federal level following World War I designed to curtail Catholic parochial education in languages other than English on the grounds that they were un-American (Chartier 122).

Also in 1922, the Catholic Church’s National Catholic Welfare Council—a national conference of bishops in the United States—published *A Catechism of Catholic Education*, a policy manual for American parochial school curriculums. One chapter of the *Catechism*, on the “Americanism of the Catholic Schools,” states that—in order to prove the American character of Catholic education—all Catholic schools in the US must “make the English language the medium of instruction and teach our children to love and respect that language and its literature” (Ryan 79). Debates about how best to respond to this policy at the level of the local Providence diocese would

² Surprisingly, this law is still in effect in the Rhode Island General Laws as RIGL sections §16-29-1 to §16-29-14, a series of sections on Americanization schools. §16-29-9 still stipulates that any person between the ages of 16 and 21 who cannot speak, read, and write the English language “in accordance with standards approved by the department of elementary and secondary education” can be “committed to an institution during his or her minority” for persistent refusal to attend an Americanization school. The original 1920 law was Chapter 1802 of Rhode Island Public Law.

prove to be divisive for French community leaders in Rhode Island. While the *state suppression* of religious education in French proved to be a rallying point that brought the French leadership together with ecclesiastical authorities, *church suppression* of religious education in French divided the French leadership into, on one hand, staunch nationalists resistant to the bishop and, on the other hand, moderate assimilationists accommodating to their bishop.

Amidst the passage of these laws and policies, the French in New England had formed a coalition of fraternal benefit societies and French national societies called the *Fédération Catholique Franco-Américaine* (FCFA). The FCFA formed to plan the construction of Mount St. Charles (MSC), a bilingual *collège des hautes études*, envisioned as a school of “advanced study in commercial, technical and industrial arts,” professional skills considered “indispensable to our intellectual and material independence” as a distinct French people (Robert [*A Messieurs*]). According to the FCFA’s publicity materials, this school would be the first of its kind in New England, but one of many eventually planned at “strategic points” across New England (see Fig. 6). The FCFA envisioned a burgeoning French-language secondary school system throughout New England and Québec that would receive students from the existing parochial school system and would act as feeder schools for the industrial professions and for the *collèges classiques* already in place for post-secondary education.

Not surprisingly, FCFA leaders viewed the passage of the state's English Only laws as threats to the vision they had for this school system. They were emboldened against the state by the US Supreme Court’s 1923 decision *Meyer v. Nebraska* (262

US 390), which overturned a similar language of instruction law passed in Nebraska. The Court's majority decision explicitly protected parents' rights to choose the language of instruction for their children. Likewise, the Supreme Court's 1925 decision *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (268 US 510) ruled Oregon's Compulsory Education Act unconstitutional, effectively protecting the rights of parents to send their children to parochial schools in which the language of instruction was other than

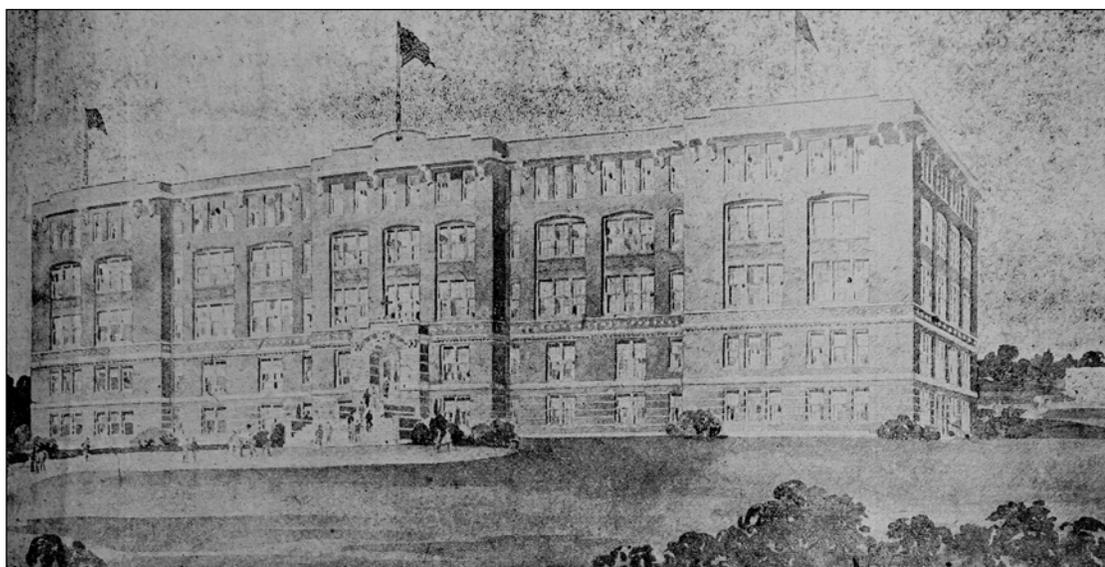


Figure 6. An artist's rendering of *Le Mont St-Charles du Sacré Coeur*, or Mount St. Charles Academy. (La Tribune)

English. In Rhode Island, French leaders successfully fought to have the Peck Act amended by 1925 (H. 699).

The FCFA was less successful, however, in rallying the popular support of the French people of New England to financially support the construction of MSC. They organized an elaborate year-long, \$500,000 fundraising initiative, a door-knocking campaign that sought to visit every single French-speaking household in New England to solicit at least one dollar in contributions from every person of working age. The

fundraising training manual advised solicitors, “don’t be content with a single small donation from an entire family” and “never collect less than \$1.00” from each person (*Collège*). “When it comes to the salvation of the race,” the FCFA press committee wrote, “everyone must be ready to make sacrifices.”

After seven months, the Rhode Island district alone, which was one of eight districts that covered all of New England, would raise just \$5557.63.³ Assuming the other seven districts performed similarly—which is a generous assumption, since Rhode Island was to host the new school and would have stood to benefit most from it, not to mention that Rhode Island was more heavily populated than districts in New Hampshire and Maine—the entire FCFA fundraising campaign might have amounted to just over \$44,000, or less than 10% of their goal. One would need to consult the archives of other FCFA member societies in order to confirm the fundraising amounts of other districts. Sorrell claims that the drive raised around \$50,000, but he doesn’t cite his source for that figure (*Sentinelle* 172). Two of the fundraising organizers exchanged a number of letters over the course of the year, occasionally expressing the difficulty of the work in Rhode Island. One acknowledged that “it takes a certain amount of nerve to keep rowing against the current. You can be sure, however, that we will remain in the breach until the end...” (Lussier).

³ This is the final running tally of the Rhode Island district’s chief organizer, Elie Vézina, who was also then Secretary General of the USJB. His correspondence and accounts of the fundraising are collected in Scrapbook XIII *La Campagne du Mont St-Charles du Sacré Coeur*, 58-127. USJB Archives, Emmanuel d’Alzon Library, Assumption College, Worcester MA.

At the same time that the French were struggling to execute their plan to build French-language secondary schools throughout New England, William A. Hickey, the bishop of the diocese of Providence (see Fig. 7), was developing a plan to build English-language high schools throughout his diocese. Mount St. Charles was located in his diocese. Hickey took over the failed FCFA fundraising campaign and secured a loan to build the school as part of his diocesan high school project. In an article published in the *Providence Visitor*, his official diocesan newspaper, he repudiated the

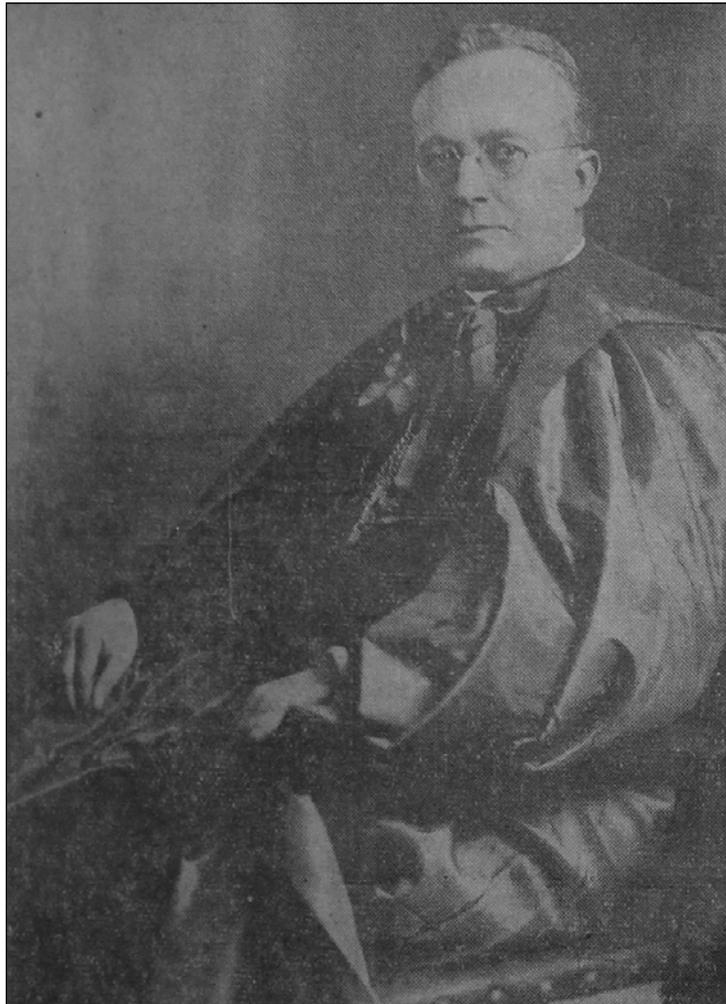


Figure 7. William A. Hickey, bishop of the diocese of Providence during the Sentinelle Affair. (*La Tribune*)

francophone vision of the school, saying that, “erroneous reports to the contrary, the new Academy of Mt. St. Charles will not be a distinctly French institution. It will be open to all and will be supported by men of the different races and different creeds. The spirit of parochialism will be stamped out. There will be nothing of the parish spirit about it” (“Hopes”). The following year, the NCWC published its *Catechism of Catholic Education*, declaring English to be the language of instruction in all of its schools. When Hickey took over the fundraising drive of MSC as part of his larger project of building a number English-language diocesan high schools, some French leaders saw the move as a subjugation of the French by the English.

In this context, we can understand the 1924 emergence of Elphège J. Daignault and his newspaper, *La Sentinelle*, as an attempt to address the faltering popular support of the French élite and the faltering ecclesiastical support of French language schooling. Daignault’s strategy for enlisting popular support of his cause was to write in an everyday style.⁴ His strategy for countering Hickey’s co-optation of the plans for MSC was to align French politics not with any American diocese, but with the diocese of Québec, where *La Sentinelle* received support from the Archbishop of Québec, Cardinal Begin. This strategy was designed to reveal that the policies of the Catholic Church in the United States were motivated out of a specific political context and in the interests of certain factions of the church but not others. Daignault showed that French-language schooling in an Anglo-dominant context was actually a thriving concern of the Catholic Church in a different political context.

⁴ I will address his politics of style in more depth in the next chapter.

La Sentinelle began publication the same year that MSC opened (see Fig. 8).⁵

In the fall of 1924, the newspaper carried a series of editorials written by Daignault under the pseudonym “Blaise Juillet” critical of diocesan control of the school. In November, Daignault expressed concern that the MSC curriculum not only taught “Latin and catechism...in English” but that “students were encouraged to confess their sins in English” (Juillet “Programme”). This curriculum, he argued, was the result of the corporate structure of the school, which gave the bishop ultimate administrative authority. MSC was “the property of a civil corporation composed of the Bishop, his grand Vicar, the *curé* [pastor] of Precious Blood, a certain number of Brothers, and two members of the laity.” The article argued that, since the Bishop ultimately controlled the naming of each of these persons to their respective ecclesiastical

⁵ A word needs to be said about the early administration of this newspaper. *La Sentinelle* was originally a daily newspaper published by Daignault and edited by J. Albert Foisy (Daignault *Le Vrai* 17). Foisy would later leave the newspaper and instead join *La Tribune*, where he would write some of the most critical articles of Daignault and his work. *La Tribune* and *La Sentinelle* would in fact antagonize each other over the next four years. However as editor, Foisy must have known about and endorsed all of the basic positions of *La Sentinelle* from the beginning: its stance toward the bishop, towards the NCWC and their plans to appeal to Rome (Daignault *Le Vrai* 19). Sorrell notes that at the outset the version of French nationalism expressed by *La Sentinelle* was very similar to that expressed by *La Tribune* (Sorrell *Sentinelle* 216).

Daignault took over editorship in November 1924 (Sorrell *Sentinelle* 216). According to him, Foisy had run through \$50,000 in start up money in seven months and left the company in debt (*Le Vrai* 17). This is around the same time that the newspaper switched from daily to weekly publication. According to Chartier, Daignault was forced to cease daily publication when he proved unable to secure a subscription to the Catholic news service of the NCWC (148).

In addition to Daignault, the staff included Phydime Hémond, who had served in the FCFA fundraising drive for the Rhode Island district, and who had previously worked for *L'Union*, the USJB official newspaper (Chartier 149). Daignault and Hémond were joined by Henri Perdriau, a naturalized Canadian citizen who was a native of France and an immigrant to the US via Canada. Perdriau wrote some of the most incendiary articles for *La Sentinelle* under the pseudonym “Etienne Lemoyne,” and he received some of the harshest treatment in the English and French press for his dubious citizenship status and his motives for leaving Europe and Canada before coming to the US. In Europe, Perdriau had been part of the conservative Royalist (and fascist) faction *L'Action Française* (Chartier 156), which itself would be interdicted by the Vatican in the 1920s.



Figure 8. Front page of the first issue (4/4/1924) of *La Sentinelle*, bearing the motto “For Our Children” (*Pour Nos Enfants*) and containing a benediction from Cardinal Begin, Archbishop of Québec. The first headline reads “In Support of the Language Spoken by Our Fathers.” (Woonsocket Harris Public Library)

positions and since he had the power to remove and replace them, he had complete control of the MSC corporation’s board of directors. Thus, the school was “quite simply the *collège* of the Bishop of the Diocese of Providence” (Juillet “Le Collège” 21 Nov).

By 1926, Daignault’s criticisms extended to other dioceses with French-language parishes for their lack of support of French language instruction. For

example, he wrote a series of editorials lampooning the head of schools in Manchester as a man more concerned with the cleanliness of the school toilets than with questions of pedagogy (Perreault 10). Daignault was gaining popular support, but many in the French leadership tried to ostracize him. The bishop of the diocese of Manchester, for example, called him a “lawyer for the devil” (Perreault 22).

At this time, Daignault also traveled to Rome numerous times to ask the Vatican to protect him from Hickey. Daignault argued that Hickey was forcing the French people to financially subsidize their own estrangement from their maternal language through an illegal system of parish taxation (Daignault *Le Vrai* 65). These taxes, Daignault argued, were being used to build and operate English language high schools like what MSC had become. Each time, the Sacred Congregation of the Council (the Vatican’s judicial court) refused to render a decision and instead requested further information.

In 1927, the year of the Cass Park demonstration, Daignault and sixty-three others—having met with frustration in Rome—filed civil lawsuits in Rhode Island courts against the corporations of twelve parishes in the Providence diocese. His case argued that those parishes misappropriated parish funds by funneling money to diocesan projects at the expense of local parish projects (Daignault *Le Vrai* 158). If parishes could maintain decentralized control of their own finances, then French-language parishes could continue to operate their own school systems independent of diocesan English Only policies. In 1928, all of the co-plaintiffs of the lawsuits were excommunicated and *La Sentinelle* was placed in the Index, prohibiting Catholics

from reading it. In the opinion of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, the lawsuits violated Canon Law 2341, which gave the bishop privilege of forum in the civil courts and prohibited Catholics from filing civil lawsuits against him (Daignault *Le Vrai* 181). Daignault maintained that the suits were against corporations, not against the bishop personally. He maintained that he had been advised by the Vatican's own canonists that, although the bishop sat on the board of directors of every parish corporation in his diocese, such suits were not in violation of canon law. The text of the papal decision to excommunicate says of Daignault, "[w]e have not even thought it worth our time to give the Contestants' Attorney (so called) a hearing nor have we thought it necessary to examine any credentials he may claim to have" ("Text").

The Sentinelle Affair and Ideologies of Linguistic Modernity

As I read through the documentary evidence of this conflict, I'm struck by the fact that opposing sides often found themselves making the same arguments but for different causes. The first evidence of this underlying same-ness is the fact that many of the most vehement adversaries started out as allies. The often bewildering shifting allegiances among historical actors in the Sentinelle Affair is what led historian Richard Sorrell to describe it as an "internecine" conflict (Sorrell "Sentinelle" 69). Foremost among these allegiances is the complicated relationship of five prominent members of the French political and cultural *élite* in New England: Elphège Daignault, J. Albert Foisy, Phydime Hémond, Eugene Jalbert and Élie Vézina (see Fig. 9). All of these men worked together at one point or another in the struggle to protect French



Figure 9. Central figures of the French *élite* involved in the Sentinelle Affair: Daignault, Vézina, Jalbert, Hémond, and Foisy. From top to bottom, symbols refer to: USJB, ACA, Franco-American Foresters, FCFA, *L'Union* (USJB newspaper), *La Sentinelle*, *La Tribune*, the archdiocese of Québec, and the diocese of Providence. (*Bureau General* and Belanger vols. 4 [1922], 7 [1925] and 10 [1933])

language rights. They all cooperated to oppose state and federal English Only legislation in the early 1920s. Many of them were organizers in the failed FCFA fundraising campaign for MSC. Not only were they members of the two major fraternal benefit societies in New England, the Association Canado-Américaine (ACA) and the USJB, but they had executive privileges and voting rights as officers and representatives of these societies and worked together to help run them.

The Sentinelle Affair itself, then, did not merely *reflect* entrenched and already-held differences, despite what the historical actors themselves claimed. Following the large public gathering in Woonsocket in 1927, Foisy, as editor of *La Tribune*, wrote that the position of *La Sentinelle* was “satanic” because it was in opposition to the Church (“Un Manifeste”). A few months prior, he had written that Daignault was forcing Catholics to choose between God and the Devil (“Dieu”). However, in his own memoir, Daignault points out that Foisy was himself the original editor of *La Sentinelle*, had been recruited from Québec by Daignault to help him found the newspaper, and was one of the movement’s first supporters (*Le Vrai* 18). The conflict was not simply an ideological clash between fundamentally opposed forces, as Foisy would have it. The differences articulated in the press were not necessarily in opposition to each other. Rather, through a series of motivated language acts made by erstwhile political allies in response to a series of materially invested rhetorical situations, the social reality of the historical actors involved was *constituted*, and what were once merely political differences were arranged into oppositions. The Sentinelle Affair, in other words, was a rhetorical conflict.

In order to recover the multilingual complexities of the francophone experience in twentieth century New England, it is necessary to first identify and bracket off the ideological move that arranges these differences into mutually opposed categories: good versus evil, God versus Satan, French versus English. In fact, the complexities of multilingual language practices have been effaced and oversimplified by an ideology of linguistic modernity that pervades the discourses of the Sentinelle Affair. An ideology of linguistic modernity defines languages as discrete and whole systems of reference that are perfectly bounded from other languages. According to this ideology, there is a one-to-one correspondence between language, speaker and identity. Language performance is idealized in the figure of the monolingual native speaker, whose language represents the language system at its most pure. One cannot be a native speaker of multiple languages at the same time, and the authenticity of one's national and cultural identity are irrevocably tied to one's native language.⁶

Most importantly, ideologies of linguistic modernity clarify multilingual complexities by separating languages into different temporal and spatial realms. In the context of the Sentinelle Affair, this arrangement locates French temporally in the past—as the language of tradition, as the carrier of Western civilization since the fall of

⁶ In formulating the tenets of an ideology of linguistic modernity, I am influenced by the work of Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs. In *Voices of Modernity*, as well as in several essays, Bauman and Briggs trace the construction of modern languages through the philosophical writings of Locke and Herder. In rhetoric and composition, the arguments made during the Scottish Enlightenment in favor of English vernacular studies over classical Latin and Greek take up the ideas of Locke and Herder in service of a nationalizing and standardizing agenda for English. See especially Book II in George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, in which he discusses the establishment of a teachable standard based on "reputable use" (141), and the need to police the boundaries of English to protect its "grammatical purity" (169) from "barbarisms" (171). See also Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* for arguments in favor of codification of English grammar (in emulation of similar work done in French) in order to make it a national language of England (75).

Rome, and as a living embodiment of Latin (Juillet “Programme”). English, by contrast, is located in the future—as the language of scientific progress and economic development. The arrangement locates French and English spatially, too, by separating them into different national languages, with French on the Canadian side of the US-Québec border. French speakers in this arrangement are “foreigners” in the US context (“Fausses”) and English monolingualism is equated with “one hundred per cent Americanism” (“No Racial”). Language conflicts arose when these arrangements were violated—when claims were made for French as an American language or as a language capable of supporting scientific progress.

According to ideologies of linguistic modernity, the purpose of language instruction is not to teach students to strategically operate multiple discursive regimes or linguistic registers simultaneously in their own interests relative to a given rhetorical situation. Rather, the goal of language instruction is to purify students’ linguistic resources, separating out the contaminating influences of multiple languages from each other. The correlation of such purification is the construction of linguistic hybrids, those whose multilingual language practices embody the premodern and are in need of remedial instruction. Thus, graduates of French-English bilingual schools were judged harshly by English monolingual speakers as speaking both languages poorly, while the French *élite* themselves eschewed the mongrelized bilingual linguistic innovations of the working classes in favor of the imagined purity of a Parisian French heritage, the language of culture, of civilization and of the intellect itself (Juillet “Programme”). It’s important to note that these views of language did not

reflect the realities “on the ground” during the Sentinelle Affair. Repeatedly, historical actors showed themselves incapable of seeing the complexities that lay beneath the ideological lenses they were using. Daignault, Vézina, et. al., saw these processes of purification and hybridization as a perfectly natural state of affairs, rather than as political acts motivated out of socially constructed beliefs.

Two incidents in the Sentinelle Affair illustrate how ideologies of linguistic modernity work to arrange complexities in this way through institutional politics and structuring practices. In December 1924, representatives of the FCFA met in Willimantic, Connecticut. The president, Eugene Jalbert, sought to unify the FCFA against Daignault and the criticisms *La Sentinelle* had recently published of the bishop of Providence. Jalbert spoke to the assembly, “I personally repudiate this entire campaign of injuries and insults directed for close to a year against His Excellence Monseigneur the Bishop of Providence. And I add the hope that we will, in the resolutions of this Congress, absolve our Society of any responsibility for them” (Rumilly 372). His speech set off a sharp debate which ultimately failed to produce any neat resolutions (373).

In October 1925, representatives of the USJB gathered in Holyoke, Massachusetts, for their General Convention. Jalbert, who was also legal counsel for the USJB, found his earlier opposition to Daignault supported at this meeting by the USJB Secretary General, Elie Vézina. A number of *La Sentinelle* supporters, however, attended the convention with plans to overthrow Vézina and Jalbert by voting Vézina out of office and replacing him with one of their own (Rumilly 383). Their coup was

unsuccessful. Vézina was re-elected and the Convention passed resolutions to defend French rights in New England “with firmness but with moderation, and in submission to religious authority” (386), essentially the same resolutions Jalbert had called for at the FCFA meeting in Willimantic. In this debate between whether to submit to a centralized diocesan authority or to resist it by fighting for the rights of decentralized individual parishes—both of which had precedence in the institutional structure of the Catholic Church in North America, and neither of which was controversial in and of itself—what was at stake was the protection of minority language rights. French language schooling existed because the French were able to exploit the special laws of incorporation and privileges of forum that the Catholic Church enjoyed by virtue of the separation of church and state. Sometimes a centralized authority benefited this arrangement, and sometimes a decentralized authority did. In the context of the Sentinelle Affair, the struggle for bilingual education against English Only legislation was displaced onto a struggle between competing and equally legitimate sources of authority: the bishop or the congregation.

At these assemblies, however, Jalbert and Vézina, like Foisy in his editorials for *La Tribune*, located the source of conflict entirely in the presence of Daignault among the gathered *élite* and in the politics of *La Sentinelle*. If the agitators would just go away, everyone would get along fine, they seemed to say. But incidents like the Willimantic and Holyoke gatherings did not merely *reflect* the divisive and contentious politics of *La Sentinelle*. Rather, these incidents actually *produced* division out of what were multiple versions of French nationalism that had developed

in response to different political contexts, sorting these versions into moderate and militant oppositions. These oppositions were located spatially on opposite sides of the US-Québec border and temporally along a modernizing trajectory from a premodern racially pure past toward an assimilated and “purely” American future. The immigration experience of the French into New England was thus a transposition of identity across space and time. As one crossed the border, one left behind a militant opposition to English and acquired an accommodationist stance toward assimilation.

Thus we see the workings of an ideology of linguistic modernity in the institutional politics and structuring practices of the FCFA congress and the USJB general convention. Through the processes of resolution drafting and representative voting, a political border was drawn through the cultural identity of a linguistic minority, arranging its various elements into two distinct peoples. The French in North America became French Canadians on one side of the border and Franco-Americans on the other, one an un-American multilingual and the other a white ethnic native English speaker trying to pass as one hundred per cent American.

Linguistic Regimes and the Linguistically Disabled

For almost a century, the French had developed *la survivance* into a sophisticated set of tactics for fighting the political and economic hegemony of the

English in North America.⁷ Among these tactics was a strategy of infiltration into Anglo-dominant institutions, whereby the French *élite* sought to occupy key positions in government and finance and to use those positions to advocate for *les nôtres*, the French people. A second strategy was to disseminate the ideology of *la survivance* through media—the newspaper and the radio. This dissemination constructed a francophone public that viewed itself as a unified people, a distinct race whose experience in the New World was marked by colonization, subjugation and diaspora at the hands of the British. This “imagined community” (Anderson *Imagined* 7) was essential to garnering the popular support needed to enact strategies of infiltration and representation. A third and final strategy made use of the relationship between Church and state to essentially make a quasi-territorial claim despite the political disenfranchisement of the French. In Canada and in the US, they incorporated French-language Catholic parishes and used those parishes as miniature fiefdoms: run by French-speaking clergy, sponsoring French national societies, operating French-

⁷ *La survivance* was an ideology of the French *élite*. It emerged in response to the British Conquest of New France in 1763 and the 1840 Act of Union. Bouchard points to François-Xavier Garneau’s 1845 *Histoire du Canada* as having “defined the parameters” of the ideology of *la survivance* (Bouchard 81). Garneau’s *Histoire* is written as a direct response to Lord Durhams’ 1839 *Report on British North America*, in which Durham recommended the forced assimilation of the French on the basis that they were a “destitute” nationality “with no history and no literature (Durham 294). Durham’s *Report* led directly to the 1840 Act of Union.

With the subsequent “closure of the political and economic routes” to French nation building, Garneau advocated “building the nation through culture, promoting a cultural identity instead of a nation state” (Bouchard 82). The French *élite* described *la survivance* as the simultaneous conservation of Catholicism (*la foi*), the French language (*la langue*), and cultural customs (*les moeurs*) (cf. Robert *Les Francos*). However, my interest in *la survivance* concerns not the ideology but the tactics, the set of resistance practices that put the ideology in action.

language schools, and using parish finances to materially support the spread of French institutions.

In subsequent chapters, I will address the first two tactics described above. Here, I want to focus on the political use of Church incorporation laws in Rhode Island. These laws were the basis for the lawsuits filed against the parish corporations. The legal decision handed down by the Rhode Island Supreme Court reveals the way language—specifically the orthography and syntax of English—is made into law through a series of interpretive acts undergirded by an ideology of linguistic modernity. We will see that, in order to make language law, the Rhode Island Supreme Court responded to the indeterminacy of English orthography and syntax by turning it into a politically neutral referential system that naturalized the corporate body of the Providence diocese. It bears emphasizing that a church has no body—its incorporation into a legal personality must be performed through these kinds of ideological acts. We will also see that in the process the Court suppressed alternate linguistic realities—specifically, the existence of a decentralized and multilingual diocesan structure—and by extension it delegitimized the multilingual body of the church (and perhaps the actual multilingual bodies of parishioners). This decentralized and multilingual structure had been built out of decades of practice, by allowing national churches to establish themselves wherever large linguistic minority congregations had settled. It at least had the legitimacy of practice, if not the legitimacy of the letter of the law.

In some states, like New York, the congregation itself was incorporated into a parish (Jalbert 1). Once incorporated, the members of the congregation constituted the

corporate body of the parish—every member of the congregation had a legal right to the temporal goods of the parish and could decide how parish finances were administered. Daignault's legal actions sought to establish whether this was also the case given the Rhode Island statutes for church incorporation. In Rhode Island, the parish corporation consisted of a corporate board of directors. The bishop sat on every board in his diocese (Jalbert 6), but each board also included two lay parishioners. Daignault sought to establish what property rights the entire congregation had in the temporal goods of its parish based on this structure. When a parishioner contributes money to the weekly collection basket, does the parish have any legal obligation to use that money for the causes to which the parishioner is contributing it? Could that money be transferred to other parishes, or be sent directly to the diocese, to be used for other projects? This question had a direct bearing on the ability of French-language churches to fund their parochial schools and their obligation to contribute parish funds to the construction of centralized, diocesan-run, English-language high schools. Daignault sought to establish the legal flow of capital through the corporate structure of the Providence diocese, as it affected the ability of language difference to be embodied in the church educational system: buildings, curriculums, teacher training, and student literacy.

In order to establish that flow, the Rhode Island Supreme Court had to rule on competing interpretations of one sentence in Section 3 of the Rhode Island Act of 1869, which incorporated the first Catholic diocese in Rhode Island, the diocese of Hartford. The sentence reads as follows:

“Sec 3. Such body corporate shall have power to receive and hold by gift, grant or purchase, all property, real or personal, that may be conveyed thereto, *for the purpose of maintaining religious worship according to the doctrine, discipline and ritual of the Roman Catholic Church, and for the support of that church*; provided, that no one corporated congregation shall, at any time, possess an amount of property, excepting church and buildings, parsonages, school-houses, asylums and cemeteries, the annual income from which shall exceed three thousand dollars” (Jalbert 2-3).

Daignault contended that, according to the language of the statute, the purpose of a parish corporation’s funds is to support the individual parish (“that church”) in worship according to Roman Catholic doctrines and rituals. Lawyers for the church (led, yet again, by Eugene Jalbert), contended that the phrase “that church” referred to the Roman Catholic Church itself; so the purpose of parish corporation funds is to support the larger Church, not the individual parish. Daignault countered that if the phrase “that church” were meant to refer to the Roman Catholic Church, it would use an uppercase *C*—*Church* instead of *church*. The court decided:

No grammatical reason exists which calls for a capital “c”. The natural antecedent of the word *that* is “Roman Catholic”. To construe *that* as referring only to the local parish corporation would be inexact. ...It would be a forced construction to hold that the first part of the sentence was dealing with generalities in the type of worship and that the latter portions suddenly shifted to localisms in the type of charitable or educational institutions. ...The natural

meaning of the paragraph is that the uses to which the general funds and property of the local parish corporation may be put are such as are connected with the Roman Catholic church in general” (Mederic).

Despite the court’s attempt to locate “natural” meaning in the un-“forced” syntactical constructions of “plain” English, in fact the court’s decision verified that linguistic meaning in the Sentinelle Affair was a function of ideologically constructed discursive regimes. English orthography and syntax were made to reflect social reality by the court’s exercise of institutional power through that orthography and syntax. This exercise of power didn’t explain what the language meant; it *made* the language mean. The decision rests on the identification of a parallel structure in the sentence (“the first part of the sentence...the latter portions”), and argues that such a structure can not shift from “generalities” in one part to “localisms” in the other. However, the court excludes the actual beginning and ending of the sentence. The beginning refers to “such body corporate,” which Section 2 of the statute unequivocally identifies as the parish corporation. The court might have accounted for the phrase “that church” in terms of the phrase “such body corporate.” More puzzling is that the end of the sentence refers to a “corporated congregation,” implying that the congregation itself has some stake in the corporate body of the parish, which was exactly Daignault’s claim. The court might have accounted for the use of the word “congregation” in a

section the language of which apparently excluded the congregation from membership in the parish corporation.⁸

The point here is not that the court read the statute wrong, nor that there is a more accurate reading available. Rather, the point is that different reading strategies produce different meanings from the same language, depending on how the language is framed. In the case of this lawsuit, the Rhode Island Supreme Court framed Section 3 of the Rhode Island Act of 1869 in such a way that capital flowed through the corporate structure of the diocese in a centralized way, from parish to diocese. In making this reading, the court authorized the bishop to take funds from an individual parish “church” and distribute those funds to the English-language high schools being built by his diocese, with the implicit argument that those schools—and not French-language schools—were the only schools being built on behalf of the entire Roman Catholic “Church” (Mederic). Thus, not only were multilingual literacy rights ultimately suppressed by the political position of English, but the Supreme Court’s decision further reified the power of English to “naturally” reflect social reality.

⁸ At the end of its decision, the court makes a cheeky display of its power to determine the significance and insignificance of lowercase and uppercase letters. After leading the reader through its interpretation of Section 3 of the RI statute, the court composes two consecutive sentences towards the close of its decision. One sentence contains the phrase: “...the Roman Catholic church in general.” The next sentence contains an almost identical phrase: “...the general policies of the Roman Catholic Church.” The use of a lowercase *c* in one phrase and an uppercase *C* in the next cannot but be a performative display of the court’s power. After declaring that no *grammatical* reason exists to use a lowercase or uppercase letter, the court shows that there may be political reasons to do so. Having just declared church/Church to be grammatically interchangeable, the court uses them interchangeably in its own decision, as though to indicate that the meaning of orthographic convention in English emanates not from the inherent and natural properties of the language but from the political influence of the court itself.

The Supreme Court's decision disrupted the strategy of attaching French political interests to the corporate structure of the Church in the United States. The result was the breaking of *la survivance* into a conceptual binary marked by two opposing discourses. The discourse practiced by *La Sentinelle* and by the ACA was relegated to the French Canadian political context. The discourse practiced by *La Tribune* and by the USJB was relegated to the US political context. Both still attempted to respond to the same basic problem: how to ensure francophone cultural survivance in the midst of anglophone domination in North America. The key difference was in the valorization of one kind of "purity" over another. In the Canadian context, the racial and linguistic purity of the French was valorized over the racial mixing of assimilation. In the US context, the purity of American identity—emblazoned as "one hundred per cent Americanism" ("No Racial")—was valorized over the racial and linguistic mixing of "fifty-fifty Americans" (cf. Dexter).

In the complex interplay of *la survivance*, the language of Church incorporation statutes, and state adjudication of English orthography and syntax, we see the ideological work of exclusion in the interests of national purity and linguistic purity. We also see the discursive work that directs the flow of multilingual social and material capital through the monolingual channels of corporate law. These are the complexities of multilingual language practices overwritten by ideologies of linguistic modernity and, in closing this chapter, I'd like to explore the consequences for multilingual bodies subjected to this linguistic regimentation. These ideologies betray an American anxiety over impurity, a fear that in lacking a national language, the

country lacked a tradition and a basis for allegiance. In *The Huddled Masses*, his survey of American immigration at the turn of the twentieth century, historian Alan Kraut describes this anxiety in terms that suggest a mass psychosis on the part of middle-class America in response to the traumatic vision of foreign intrusion presented by the second wave of immigration and concomitant fears of foreign contamination. As early as 1891, immigration laws established sanitation regulations that required vaccinations, antiseptic baths, and disposable bedding on trans-Atlantic immigrant passenger ships (58-59), to guard against cholera, yellow fever, tuberculosis, and polio, each of which were associated with specific immigrant groups (175).

The fear was not limited to pathogens. The physical manifestations of malnutrition and “bodies deformed by vitamin deficiencies” combined with unfamiliar clothing styles and different skin tones put Americans in fear of “the influence of foreign blood on the vitality of the American population” (175). Baynton cites routine medical inspections of immigrants as one of the practices that constructed ethnicity into a disability in American politics. A set of regulations for such inspections “included a long list of diseases and disabilities that could be cause for exclusion, among them arthritis, asthma, bunions, deafness, deformities, flat feet, heart disease, hernia, hysteria, poor eyesight, poor physical development, spinal curvature, vascular disease of the heart, and varicose veins” (27). The concept of disability became equated with certain ethnicities, so that “the charge that certain ethnic groups were mentally and physically deficient was instrumental in arguing for their exclusion” from the US (27). The influence of eugenicist research in the 1920s and the racialist

theories of writers like Lothrop Stoddard “seemed to lend scientific justification to the demand for immigration restriction” (Kraut 194).

The Americanization pressures which sought to purify the language practices of multilingual Americans were informed by these conceptual frameworks of ability/disability and corresponding fears of foreign contamination. In effect, these pressures constructed multilingual language practices as linguistic disabilities. Although they were not trans-Atlantic immigrants, the French were often targeted by these fears. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*—the self-styled “American Newspaper for Americans”—published an article on April 11, 1927, titled “Bishop Fights to Americanize French Flocks.”⁹ In that article, Henning paints a menacing portrait of French-language parochial schooling, claiming that “American-born children by the tens of thousands were reaching maturity unable to speak English and ignorant of the history and institutions of their country by birth, though well versed in French-Canadian history,” more interested in their allegiance to Québec than to the United States.

Dr. Charles Carroll, professor of education at the Rhode Island College of Education, would similarly argue on the floor of the Rhode Island legislature that Franco-Americans were “a race not closely allied with America... paying traditional allegiance to a country other than the United States” and were represented by a “dangerous [voting] bloc” of legislators in the General Assembly (“Representative”). Each of these arguments elicited impassioned responses from the French *élite* that one

⁹ The article was written by Arthur Sears Henning, the same correspondent whose prediction of the 1948 presidential election would lead to the *Tribune*'s infamous, erroneous front-page headline, “Dewey Defeats Truman.” See Henning, “Puts G.O.P. Back in the White House,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 3, 1948.

could be French, bilingual, and Catholic and still be loyal to the United States. Vézina himself expressed dismay at Henning's portrayal of the French. He feared the article might "instigate the drafting of laws destined to slow the rise of our professionals to public offices and will earn us the disdain of political leaders." Vézina asked the French leadership, "How can we destroy the impression created by this article" (Vézina)?

The answer lay partially in the same processes of linguistic purification as what occupied Henning, but the purification of French instead of English. To Vézina's mind, the impressions of people like Carroll and Henning were due to the fact that French had been contaminated by the impurities of the lower classes, a mongrel French that was the carrier of foreign ideological contagions: anarchy, communism, class struggle. Vézina and moderates like him sought to quarantine this strain in *La Sentinelle* and to make it discontinuous with the history of the French in North America. In the same letter, Vézina explains Henning's impressions thus: "It's the result of articles published by *La Sentinelle* and of the wanton speeches of people like Daignault, Falcon, Duplessis" (Vézina). The pages of moderate French newspapers were filled with evidence of anxiety over impurity, as Franco-Americans worked to construct a cultural identity that was authentically French, American and Catholic, by making it distinct from *La Sentinelle*. Over the course of 1927, *La Tribune* compared Daignault to anarchists ("Sacco-Vanzetti"), communist revolutionaries ("Nos Bolcheviques"), Martin Luther ("Un parallèle"), and Satan ("Dieu"), associating *La Sentinelle* with treason and apostasy. These articles betrayed a tacit acknowledgement

that purity is a discursive construct produced out of material interests in a local political context. Differences were constructed into oppositional categories by motivated language acts made by erstwhile political allies in response to a series of materially invested rhetorical situations.

Still, these discursive constructs could neither eradicate the one side nor purify the other. As late as 1929, the moderate position found itself espousing the very ideology that it sought to repudiate in *La Sentinelle*, seemingly unaware of its own contradictions. Following the excommunications and the apparent final defeat of *La Sentinelle*, a prominent French Canadian intellectual, Henri Bourassa—who had helped condemn Daignault in the Canadian press—would acknowledge that the French had a right all along to operate French-language parochial schools in the United States. Bourassa argued that the exclusion of French from American Catholic schools was the result of the political consolidations of the Catholic Church in the United States in the hands of an Irish Catholic episcopate. “Now that the rights of authority” of the episcopate “have been clearly established and recognized” by the excommunications, Bourassa wrote to Vézina “it will still be necessary for the powers that be to understand that the Irish must stop seeing themselves as the designated leaders of the Catholic Church in America” (Chartier 164). Vézina replied with the exact argument Daignault had been making for years in *La Sentinelle*, which sought to limit diocesan powers and to protect the autonomy of individual parishes. “The parish needs to be allowed more latitude,” he said, “regarding the administration of funds contributed for the Catholic cause; but especially those earmarked for the development

of parish activities” (qtd. in Chartier 164). Vézina believed that diocesan institutions should be established “without undermining the generosity of the faithful who prefer that, as much as possible, the monies they give to the pastor remain in the parish” (qtd. in Chartier 164).

The purifying effects of the Sentinelle Affair enabled Vézina and Bourassa to incorporate the arguments of *La Sentinelle* into the position of a moderate *élite*, while exonerating that *élite* from any obligation to put those ideas into action. It is unclear exactly what tactics Vézina and Bourassa might have recommended to get the Irish to “stop seeing themselves as the designated leaders” of the Church, nor to allow individual parishes “more latitude regarding the administration of funds” other than the very tactics they repudiated in Daignault.

Sorrell writes that by the 1930s the Sentinelle Affair had “passed into memory” (Sorrell *Sentinelle* 272). Beyond being a footnote in the historical record of Rhode Island state politics, this passage into memory is a passage into what Trimbur calls “linguistic memory” (145). We see the traces of this linguistic memory manifested, for example, as part of a long tradition of religious schism in the United States, which has resulted in a proliferation of independent churches to which are attached the political aspirations of disenfranchised linguistic and cultural minority groups. The independent Catholic churches in the United States, and elsewhere, represent a form of political enfranchisement for those who find themselves excluded from an English monolingual public sphere.

We also see traces of this linguistic memory in the modern languages curriculums of American schools, which continually construct languages as discrete systems of reference, wholly perfect in themselves, distinct from one another, and attached to specific peoples in specific political territories. These curriculums consist of a series of political compromises that emerged out of conflicts like the Sentinelle Affair and that are today automatically recognizable as “foreign language” instruction in the United States. First, students may elect to take a foreign language beginning in middle school. The foreign language elective is a tacit prohibition of teaching languages other than English in the primary grades, the same prohibition that the US Supreme Court found unconstitutional in *Meyer v. Nebraska*.

Second, foreign languages are taught for one period, up to one hour per day, while English is pervasive as the language of instruction. This arrangement is a direct result of compromises struck between bilingual education advocates and English only advocates of the 1920s, such as those which created the curriculum of Mount St. Charles. We must view these compromises as a tacit prohibition of multilingual instruction. Keep in mind that the Rhode Island Americanization laws of 1920—which mandated fluency in English for all American citizens—is still in force in the Rhode Island General Laws. The extent to which such laws are considered harmless vestiges of the past, and the extent to which the modern languages curriculum is assumed to be a natural state of affairs in American education—by students, educators and legislators alike—reveal the extent to which ideologies of linguistic modernity are still embedded

in our daily pedagogical practices, the living traces of the linguistic memory of the Sentinelle Affair.

CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE PRACTICES IN LOCAL ECONOMIES

In the previous chapter, I noted that existing historical accounts of this conflict contextualize it as part of a master narrative of immigration history in the United States. This master narrative makes it impossible to understand the conflict in any other way than as resistance to the inevitable processes of white ethnic assimilation. A different understanding emerges, however, if we examine the conflict in terms of local language practices, which requires us to contextualize it within local linguistic and material economies. Such contextualization allows us to see the way individual social actors used available strategies of accommodation and resistance to respond to the competing valuations and pressures of domination inherent in local linguistic and material economic exchanges.

Embedding Mount St. Charles (MSC) in local linguistic and material economies enables us to see the school's "multisitedness" (Philips 229), the way it simultaneously embodied multiple discourses and multiple language ideologies. Here I am complicating Susan Philips notion of the multisited nature of language ideologies. In her study of the way familial relationships in Tongan culture are projected outward onto Tongan institutional structures as part of "Tongan nation-making ideology," Philips argues that language ideologies attached to "nation-state-making" diffuse through multiple contexts or "sites" (231) throughout civil society. Philips describes

the terms “site” and “context” as two correlated terms that both lend a sense of materiality to discursive practices, so that concrete moments or places become instantiations of discourse (232). Thus, in her study, a courtroom in Tonga becomes a site for imagining the Tongan nation state, as the discursive practices of individuals in the courtroom embody and re-produce the constructs of Tongan brother-sister relationships, even when nobody in the courtroom is actually related as brother and sister (254).

Philips argues that the ideologies underlying the making of nation-states are “multisited” (229), harnessed and used not just by the government but throughout all of civil society, as part of the work of “imagining a Tongan nation-state” (234). Where Philips is examining the way language practice at one such site (a courtroom) imagines a homogenous nation-state to which all at that site belong, I am examining the way language practices create multiple “sites” from a single institution, MSC. Rather than seeing MSC as one of many sites onto which a homogenous nation-state could be projected, I argue that MSC was conceived of and built out of multiple and overlapping language ideologies. Philips sees social actors beginning with the ground they stand on—a local site—and universalizing their relations at that site outward to an imagined nation-state. I see social actors beginning with grand abstractions like *race*, *culture* and *nation* and provincializing them onto local economic realities.

When I re-contextualize MSC within local linguistic and material economies, what immediately emerges is a triple view of the school, one English and two French. First, it was a “strategic” *collège des hautes études*—a school of advanced study. This

view valued the school for its ability to train French-speaking American citizens to compete for managerial jobs in a local economy dominated not by native English speakers but by French-speaking European immigrants. A second view valued MSC as a “strategic” addition to an existing transnational, multilingual education system—what I refer to as the *collège classique* system—designed to counter Anglo domination by training a French *élite* in tactics of infiltration and representation. This view saw MSC supporting the tactics of *la survivance* in sustaining a growing francophone public sphere in North America. Finally, MSC was a strategic English language “high school,” part of a new, centralized diocesan school system that would position the Roman Catholic Church as an authentically American institution as evidenced by its English Only curriculum. Each of these views *provincialized* language ideologies that were attached to discourses of race, culture and nation, making MSC a multisite in and of itself.

The collège classique system

In 1922, Bishop Hickey embarked on a fundraising campaign to build Catholic high schools in his diocese. He created a controversial quota system, requiring each parish to raise a certain amount of money. If a parish could not meet its quota through its own fundraising efforts, the Bishop authorized money to be taken directly from the parish treasury. This potentially meant taking money that had been contributed by parishioners for other parish-specific projects, like the funding of a parochial school. Four Catholic high schools were established in the diocese during the years of the

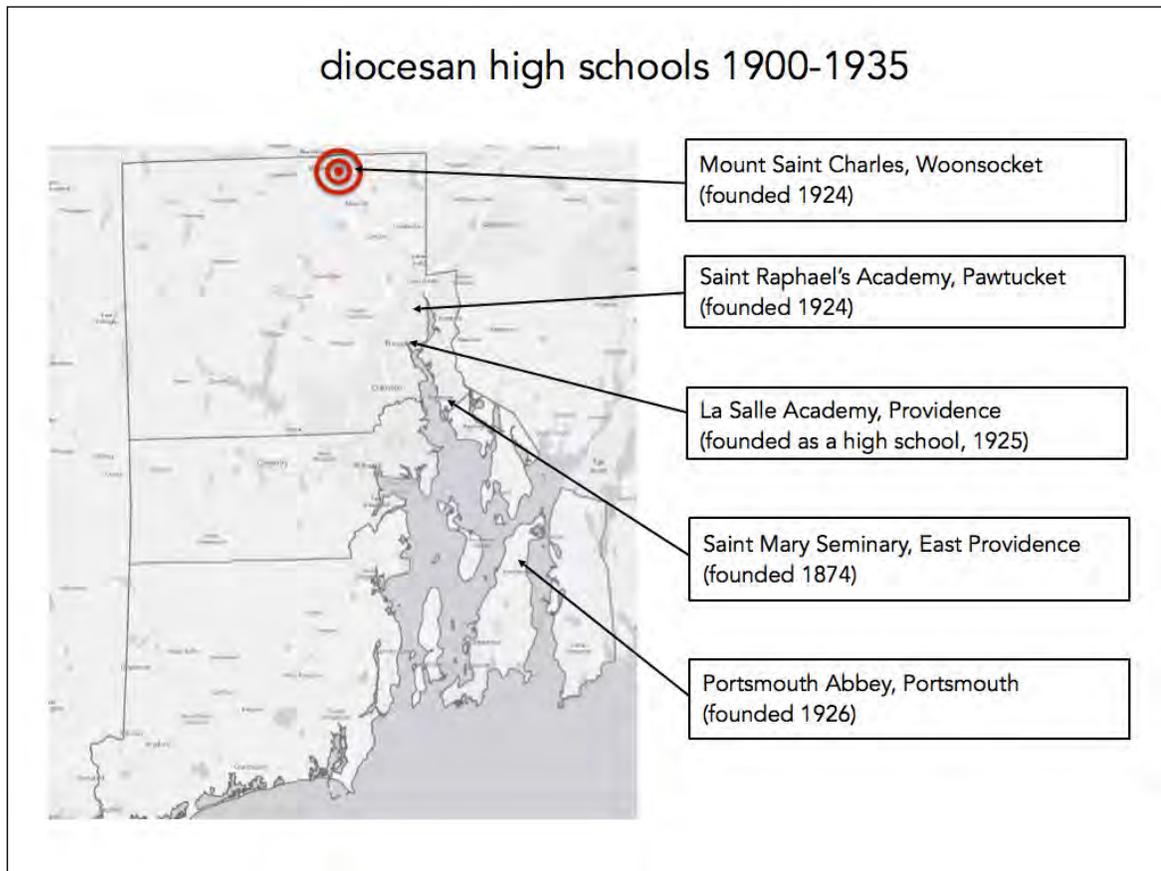


Figure 10. English language high schools in the Providence diocese during the Sentinelle Affair. (Map source: Rhode Island Digital Atlas, Environmental Data Center, URI ; School data: catholicschools.org)

Sentinelle Affair (see Fig. 10). Two of them—Saint Raphael’s Academy and Portsmouth Abbey—were funded directly through the fundraising campaign for diocesan high schools. Although it wasn’t initially conceived as one of the bishop’s schools, the plans to build MSC were taken up by the bishop after the FCFA failed to raise enough money on its own.

MSC was originally conceived not as an English-language high school, but as a *collège des hautes études* specializing in technical and industrial arts, modeled after similar institutions that had recently been built in Québec to train students to work in a growing industrial sector. These *collèges* were secondary schools, but were affiliated

with French-language classical colleges, called *séminaires* or *collèges classiques*. The tradition of higher education in Québec was almost entirely based around Catholic classical education in Latin and Greek. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, higher education in the US modernized, following the model of the German research university, and schools abandoned the study of classical languages in favor of vernacular languages and scientific research. In Québec, however, the *collèges classiques* survived until the secularization of higher education in the 1960s, when many of the original Catholic *séminaires* and *collèges* were absorbed into the CEGEP system. Following the British Conquest of New France in 1763 and Garneau's elaboration of *la survivance* as an ideology of cultural nationalism, the *collège classique* system developed as a bastion of French cultural, political and financial resistance to the English. It trained a French *élite* to resist Anglo domination in banking and politics.

I call this transnational and multilingual system the *collège classique* system (see Fig. 11), an entirely separate school system from state-sponsored, English-language higher education in Canada and in the US. By examining the way people worked language in local linguistic and material economies in the planning and construction of MSC, we see the potential for the *collège classique* system to disrupt ideologies of linguistic modernity that equate literacy instruction with native fluency in a target language, which in turn is equated with both socioeconomic mobility and national identity. A re-contextualized understanding of MSC reveals that multilingual language practices and multilingual systems of education have always existed

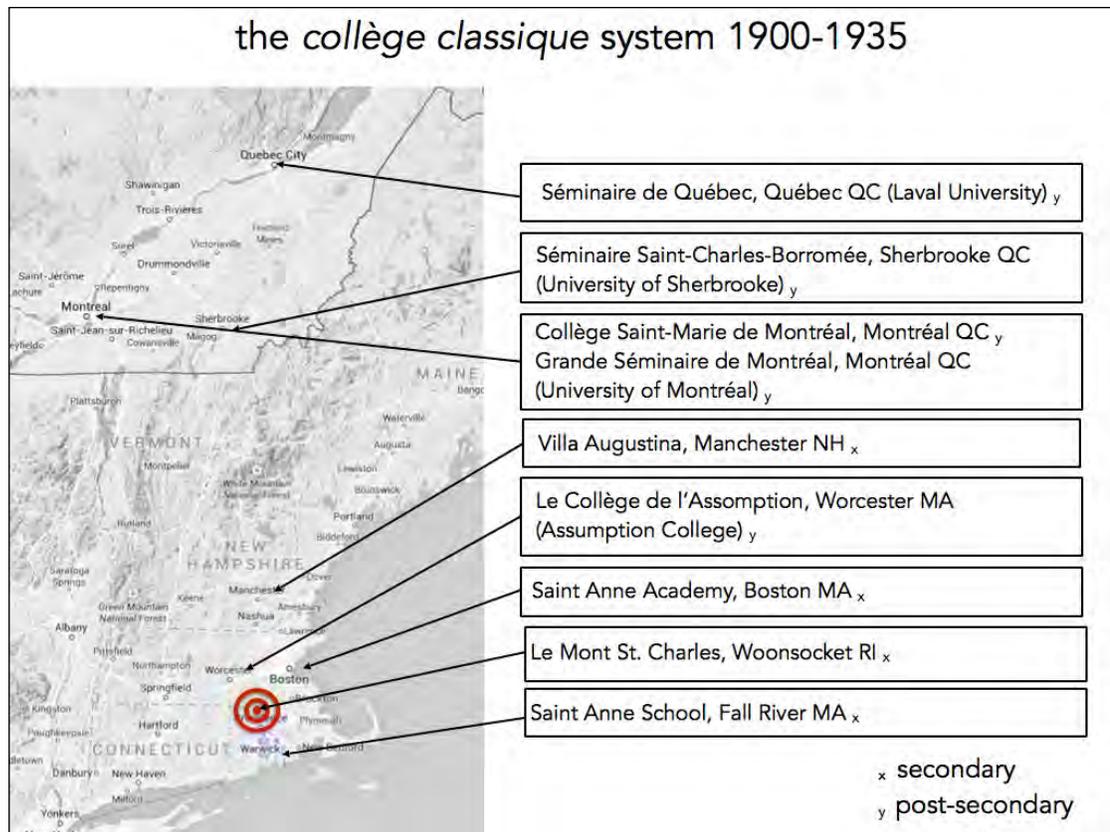


Figure 11. A small sample of secondary and post-secondary schools across the US-Québec border during the Sentinelle Affair. Belanger (1922) lists forty academies, séminaires, and collèges located in New England and Québec. (Map source: Google; School data: Chartier; Perreault)

alongside modern US higher education, and they problematize our understanding of the social value and function of literacy. These institutions were not pre-modern, archaic, and obsolete; rather, we need to see them as strategic multisites: localized and layered articulations of multiple language ideologies and their associated discursive practices. By doing the work of re-contextualization, we can recover the socioeconomic and political functions of the *collège classique* system as part of the history and lineage of US higher education. It can be made part of the “useable past” of language instruction in North America (Huot 495).

During the years of the Sentinelle Affair, many critics of bilingual education complained that students were not being adequately prepared for the new industrial professions; that students were graduating as poor speakers of both English and French; and that bilingual schools were sustaining a foreign colony that had little allegiance to the United States. From the point of view of the English public sphere, the impression of bilingual education was that it was backward and in need of modernization. However, by 1924, two Rhode Island governors—Aram Pothier and Emery San Souci—had attended schools in this system. Many cities with large French-speaking populations elected mayors who were products of this school system, and multiple state representatives throughout New England were products of this school system.¹ The leader of the Sentinelle movement, Elphège Daignault, went to the *Séminaire de Sherbrooke* and to the *Collège Sainte-Marie* before studying law at Boston College and Columbia University. His main adversaries, Elie Vézina, Eugene

¹ I have not conducted an exhaustive study of French representation in New England politics, but by consulting historical lists of mayors, state representatives and US Congressmen for French-Canadian surnames, it is clear that the French had a strong political foothold in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine in the beginning of the twentieth century. This is especially true in cities with large French-speaking populations like Woonsocket (RI), Central Falls (RI), Biddeford (ME), and Manchester (NH). Woonsocket, for example, would elect seven French mayors between 1895-1935. Central Falls would elect six between 1910-1935. Biddeford would elect eight between 1910-1935. Manchester would elect solely French-speaking mayors consecutively from 1918-1961.

In 1922, Felix Gatineau, a representative in the Massachusetts legislature, conducted a study of French representation in that state. He counted forty-seven state representatives and senators in the Massachusetts legislature from 1900-1935 (Gatineau).

Rhode Island—which only sends two representatives and two senators to Congress—had at least one French-speaking US Senator and one US Representative serving between 1925-1935, and *at least* four state representatives in the RI General Assembly were French during that time. Maine had at least fourteen French-speaking state representatives serving in its legislature between 1910-1922. New Hampshire had at least four French-speaking state representatives serving in its legislature between 1910-1925.

Many of these politicians had studied at parochial schools, and at French or bilingual *collèges*. See Belanger, vols 4 (1922), 7 (1925) and 10 (1933) for information about individual politician's educational careers.

Jalbert, and J. Albert Foisy, also attended these schools. Vézina went to the *Collège de l'Assomption* in Montréal. Jalbert went to the *Séminaire de Joliette* (as did two Woonsocket mayors between 1920 and 1935) and to the *Collège Sainte-Marie*, where he studied alongside Daignault. Foisy went to a school in Marieville, QC, and would go on to teach American history at a middle school in Fall River, Massachusetts.² Regarding the production of a French *élite* capable of infiltrating an Anglo public sphere and representing francophone interests in it, the *collège classique* system was in its ascendancy.

The social mobility of the French in North America resembles Anderson's description of the "creole pioneers" of eighteenth and early nineteenth century North America (*Imagined* 47). We can understand the *collège classique* system as an institutional embodiment of that *creolité*. I identify two compelling parallels between Anderson's descriptions of creole nationalism in central and South America and the French experience in North America. First is the development of class antagonism between creole middle classes and indigenous and slave lower classes. Anderson argues that "far from seeking to induct the lower classes into political life, one key factor initially spurring the drive for independence" among the Spanish colonies "was the *fear* of lower-class political mobilizations: to wit, Indian or Negro-slave uprisings" (*Imagined* 48). A key similarity between creole nationalists and the French is a class-based anxiety on the part of the nationalists. Their status depends upon a lower class that needs to be both ideologically unified and politically suppressed or regulated. A

² Educational careers of Daignault, Vézina, Jalbert, and Foisy taken from Belanger, *Guide Officiel*, vol. 10 (1933).

key difference in the French experience is that the development of the French middle class was cut short by the English conquest. To the English, all of the French were a lower class, while to the French *élite*, the lower classes consisted of French manual laborers and farmers (*les habitants*). We can understand the *collège classique* system as stratifying the French into antagonistic social classes, with the status of the *élite* dependent not only upon classical education, but also upon the maintenance of a population of fellow *Canadiens* who lacked access to the classical languages and who were in need of political representation.

A second parallel concerns what Anderson calls the journey or “pilgrimage” of the state functionary. He notes that each of the new nations in South America had originally been an administrative unit of the Spanish empire prior to independence (52). He describes the “pilgrimage” (53) as an “upward-spiralling road” that organizes the experiences of creole colonial subjects (55), as those born and raised in the imperial periphery travel to the imperial metropolis for education and administrative training, only to return to the periphery as functionaries of the state: administrators, governors, etc. He argues that these travels unified colonial subjects in a common identity as

on his upward-spiralling road he encounters as eager fellow-pilgrims his functionary colleagues, from places and families he has scarcely heard of and surely hopes never to have to see. But in experiencing them as travelling-companions, a consciousness of connectedness (‘Why are we...here...together?’) emerges, above all when all share a single language-of-state. Then,

if official A from province B administers province C, while official D from province C administers province B...that experience of interchangeability requires its own explanation; the ideology of absolutism, which the new men themselves, as much as the sovereign, elaborate (55-56).

Anderson further argues that the colonial logic that makes subjects interchangeable in the administration of empire is appropriated by the subjects themselves and transformed into the logic of nationalism: “born in the Americas, [the creole] could not be a true Spaniard; *ergo*, born in Spain, the *peninsular* could not be a true American” (58). This logic divides the colonial subject from the imperial center, forming a new provincial consciousness—a nationalist consciousness—among those creoles who shared the same pilgrimage circuits. The *collège classique* system provided such a circuit, through which the French in both the United States and in Québec could travel together *en français*.

This is exactly the suspicion that English Only advocates had of French-language schooling: it was forming an enclave of American citizens with sympathies to the Catholic Church and to Québec rather than to the mythology of America’s founding. Dr. Charles Carroll—a professor at the Rhode Island College of Education who had represented the state commissioner of education in the deliberations to revise the Peck Act—warned that public education is “seriously threatened . . . by a determined and unconcealed propaganda that has for its purpose the preservation and perpetuation in America of racial and national characteristics that are generally hostile to American democracy” (“Educator Says”). When the construction plans for MSC

were taken up by Bishop Hickey, and funded through his diocesan schools project, the school became the site of an American nationalist discourse attached to English. The bishop's financial support of the school was viewed by supporters of *La Sentinelle* as an attempt to impose the English Only policies of the *Catechism of Catholic Education* onto French Catholics. Thus the school itself became a multisite for two nationalist discourses undergirded by ideologies of linguistic modernity: on the one hand, a French nationalism purified by a Québec-centric educational system; on the other hand, an American nationalism purified by English Only monolingualism.

Local economies

In contrast to Susan Philips's study of the way relationships at local sites are projections of *universalized* ideologies of nation-state making, this chapter instead examines the way nationalist discourses were *provincialized* in the controversies surrounding the construction of MSC and how these universal ideologies were brought to bear on local linguistic and material economies. The fact is that the construction of MSC was conceived by the FCFA as a response to a local economic struggle between a French-speaking working class—consisting of French-Canadian immigrants and their descendants—and a managerial class (what Ohmann calls a “professional managerial class” [34]) consisting not of native English speakers but of French-speaking European immigrants from Belgium.

The influence of French-speaking intellectual labor imported from European markets has been given scant attention in historical accounts of the Sentinelle Affair.

The presence of these workers completely skewed the material and linguistic economies in Woonsocket, and in many ways led directly to the language conflicts of the Sentinelle Affair. In 1889 and 1899 Aram Pothier, a prominent French-Canadian businessman and politician from Woonsocket, traveled to France as the Rhode Island delegate to the Paris Trade Exposition. On behalf of the Rhode Island state government, Pothier sought foreign capital investment in Woonsocket's developing textile industry. He attracted \$6 million in foreign investment from three major French-Belgian industrial capitalists—Joseph Guerin, the Lepoutre family and Charles Tiberghien—who brought the French process to Rhode Island manufacturing (Pickering 101). These capitalists established ten textile mills and textile supply companies in Woonsocket between 1893 and 1925. All of their companies were headquartered in Europe but operated in Woonsocket to compete in US markets (Fortin 34). In the United States, although the English method of wool manufacturing dominated the domestic textile industry (Delisle 26), the “French process” more common in Europe produced a finer cloth. After thirty years of foreign investment, Rhode Island would come to lead United States textile manufacturing, and the French process came to dominate the national industry—one of the great success stories of American industrialization (Fortin 34).

Guerin, Lepoutre and Tiberghien sent European-trained technicians and executives to Woonsocket to manage the manufacturing process and business portfolios of their American subsidiaries. Delisle documents 1550 people who emigrated from France and Belgium to Woonsocket in order to work in these factories

(26). These European immigrants dominated the professional managerial class of Woonsocket, squeezing French-speaking American citizens out of employment and relegating them to manual labor on the factory floor. It is striking to me that—in researching the tensions surrounding US immigration during the Sentinelle Affair—I have not seen a single historical account that traces the effects of this material economy on the local linguistic economy. Further, in contemporary reports of social actors themselves, I have come across only *one* mention of this version of the “immigrant problem,” an omission which shows that the ideological effects of the professional managerial class are invisible in discourses about language, nation, and economic progress.

Instead, the image of the French-speaking immigrant was almost exclusively that of the *Canadiens*, the *habitants* who sought to escape the precariousness of agricultural work in Québec and desperately flocked to industrial centers in New England.³ This image hovered over the inhabitants of *les petits Canadas*—the French-Canadian ghettos of Woonsocket—despite the fact that many in those ghettos were second- or third- generation descendants, were French-speaking American citizens, and were local community leaders. Henning's publication of an anti-French, Americanization article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (see previous chapter), brought this image to the entire country and equated it with Daignault's opposition to English only legislation and his lobbying for French bilingual schools. The French language press in New England scarcely recognized themselves in Henning's portrayal. The

³ cf. Redonnet, et. al., (62-63) for a typical explanation of French-Canadian immigration.

distorted images propagated by Anglo Americanization pressures prompted French-language journalists to self-consciously ask their readers “do we live in a little Québec” (“Vivons”) and “are we pariahs?” (“Sommes-Nous”)?

When the presence of Franco-Belgian capital and French-speaking, imported intellectual labor is re-inserted into the material economies of Woonsocket, what emerges is an understanding of the strategic importance of MSC as a French-speaking, American bilingual institution within the *collège classique* system. In choosing Woonsocket as the first New England site for a school of advanced study in technical and commercial arts, FCFA organizers cited “a convergence of factors” that made Woonsocket the most favorable site for “superior commercial, industrial and technical training,” implying that the presence of Franco-Belgian factories was creating an economic exigence for targeted literacy instruction among the French-American working class (Robert). In an early pamphlet to promote the construction of MSC, FCFA organizers explicitly described MSC as essential to “the material interests of our people (*les nôtres*),” meaning the descendants of French-Canadian immigrants (*Le Mont*).

In the city of Woonsocket alone, there are about seventeen French-owned manufacturing concerns. Enter their factories and count the number of Franco-Americans occupying senior positions. You will be surprised, astounded to see the highest positions in almost all departments occupied by foreigners. ... What do our people lack that will get them out of the role of manual laborers or simple workers where the largest number are presently contented? The

knowledge needed to occupy a more advanced position. Most of our youth are good with their hands, but they lack commercial science, technical knowledge, the study of Physics, of Chemistry, of Mechanics. They are good workers, good automobile drivers, and good employees. But they can do better than what they have been accustomed to (*Le Mont*).

Organizers cited not only the need to “safeguard” the traditional elements of *la survivance*—the Catholic faith and the French language—but also the need to protect “interests that will assure the well-being, the influence, the success of our people on the economic battlefield” (*Le Mont*).

The traditional French *élite* understood the shifting local economy that was dividing the francophone presence in North America into French Canadian manual labor, Franco-Belgian capital and intellectual labor, and English-French bilingual legislation, all of which was settling into a complicated multilingual social order that was effaced and oversimplified by English Only conceptions of language difference that reduced language contact and conflict to French vs. English. Instead, the *élite* perceived the connection between material and linguistic economies, and perceived the need to intervene in a linguistic economy that was privileging not English over French, but some varieties of French over other varieties of French. This shift resulted in a material disadvantage for local French-American citizens who had grown up speaking Canadian varieties of French. From this local economic context, we can thus understand the relative social and cultural values that attach to different language

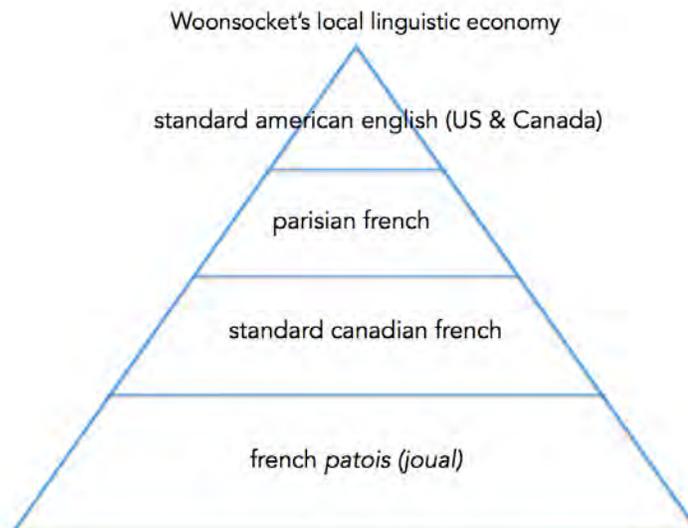


Figure 12. The stratification of language varieties in Woonsocket during the Sentinelle Affair. The figure represents the relative prestige of each language variety, not necessarily the number of speakers.

varieties in the New England-Québec region in more complex terms than what is afforded by the conceptual binaries of ideologies of linguistic modernity (see Fig. 12).

At the top of the linguistic economy was standard American English, which was the lingua franca of US politics, the language that legislated the material and linguistic economic conditions in which the French were operating. To see the value of standard American English, we need only refer to the Rhode Island Supreme Court's ability to exercise political power through English orthography and syntax in suppressing the language rights of the French-speaking minority in the Sentinelle Affair. While English may have had a similar social value translocally across sites in the United States, it is worth emphasizing that certain varieties of French competed with it in the local context of Woonsocket. Closely allied to English in the local economy was a Parisian variety of French used as the lingua franca of international finance. This language variety enabled bilingual political leaders from Rhode Island,

like Aram Pothier, to travel to France and Belgium to bring industrial capital into the local economy.

The Parisian variety of French connected a segment of the French American *élite* in New England with an internationally imagined community of *francophonie* centered around Paris rather than Montréal. An infatuation with French nationalism was widespread following the first world war. For example, in Rhode Island the French-American newsletter *Le Jean-Baptiste* printed both the “Star-Spangled Banner” and the “Marseillaise” side by side to honor French American dual heritage (Sterne 171). Significantly, it did not print “O Canada,” despite the facts that “O Canada” 1) had originally been written some forty years earlier in French by a French-Canadian; 2) was about French-Canadian protectionism following the British Conquest; and 3) the newsletter itself, *Le Jean-Baptiste*, was named for the patron saint of Québec. The displacement of a French-Canadian national anthem by a Parisian French national anthem suggests a cultural imaginary in which some of the *élite* dis-identified with their Canadian heritage and instead identified with France. An identification with Parisian French enabled the *élite* to claim to be “products of the highest civilization the world has known” (Juillet “Programme”), rather than a subjugated and impoverished people. The FCFA could describe French as “by far the most important [language] in the history of civilization” because of its role as “the language of diplomacy” and for “the intrinsic value of its literature” (*Le Mont*).

Some of the French *élite* in New England, however, did not have access to the multilingual networks of a person like Pothier or Vézina. Instead, many traveled

through the *collège classique* system and returned to New England to serve the local community in medicine, local politics and business. This subset of the *élite* valorized the standard Canadian French of the professional classes of Montréal, known as *un bon usage* (Redonnet 72). This was the variety of French imagined as the “maternal” language (“L’Américanisation”), the means of preserving “ancestral” traditions and a connection to Québec as a diasporic homeland (“La Langue”). It was used by the francophone press in New England and Québec, both in print and on the radio. The French press regarded their role as journalists to be partially the preservation of this linguistic standard in the francophone public sphere. They guarded this language variety fiercely and judged language use harshly in response to perceived violations of linguistic standards, but only those violations that dipped into *joual*, a basilectal variety of Canadian French perceived to be *un mauvais français* (Redonnet 72).

I point out the stratification of languages and language varieties in Woonsocket in order to set the stage for an analysis of Daignault’s controversial writing style in *La Sentinelle*.⁴ The material economy positioned MSC as a lynchpin institution linking multiple overlapping material interests—of the Catholic church, the Rhode Island legislature, and the French-Canadian school system. The linguistic economy positioned MSC as a lynchpin institution linking multiple overlapping discourses which articulated different literacy needs for French-speaking students—the needs of a modernizing industrial economy, the nationalist needs of a United States purifying

⁴ I am indebted to the work of Robert Perreault, whose *Elphège J. Daignault et le Mouvement Sentinelliste à Manchester, New Hampshire* identifies many of the articles used in this section as representative of Daignault’s confrontational and offensive style.

itself of multilingual contaminations, and the needs of a traditional training in the ideologies of *la survivance*. By examining the way these economies interacted in Daignault's writings and in the way people responded to him, we can see the way language ideologies infiltrate individual language performances and the way they inform language attitudes. We can also identify an array of stylistic choices that afforded Daignault the discursive agency needed to write material resistance to those ideologies. It is worth emphasizing that, beyond noting the surface features of Daignault's style—its confrontational and antagonistic qualities—researchers have paid no attention to his politics of style, neglecting to consider style as a rhetorically strategic response to the linguistic and material economy in which he was writing.

Daignault's purpose in founding *La Sentinelle* was to expose what he saw as the church corporation's illegal violation of parents' property rights in the education of their children. He was convinced that the problem lay in the church incorporation laws which favored diocesan administration over parish administration of the church's temporal property. His position was paradoxical. On one hand, here was a member of the Franco-American *élite* attempting to advance what was essentially a populist agenda—the de-centralized investment of corporate power in parish congregations. On the other hand, the Franco-American congregations themselves seemed to want exactly what the centralized diocesan policies promised—wider access to English education, which was more clearly linked to social mobility than was parochial school French. The problem Daignault attempted to resolve was that the progress of a modernized Franco-American *élite* depended on the maintenance of an unassimilable

French-speaking minority from which the *élite* could distinguish themselves.

Moderate Franco-American leaders sought to justify and explain their own social positions by representing the position of *les nôtres* as inextricably connected to a pre-modern past, and so distancing themselves from the very people they were representing. The thinking of moderate Franco-Americans like Mgr. Dauray and Élie Vézina was that education was an instrument of modernization, a way to bridge the temporal gap between the modern and the pre-modern by bridging the social gap between the *élite* and *les nôtres*.

Daignault sought to bridge that gap, literally, with style. He attempted to resolve the paradoxes of his social position by deploying in his public writing a set of stylistic rhetorical choices designed to appeal directly to a non-*élite* audience.

Perreault notes that at first Daignault's writing was not much different from many other French-language newspapers (13-14). The first issue of *La Sentinelle* carried a commendation from Cardinal Begin, Archbishop of Québec, describing the goal of the newspaper to be "to proclaim the truth, combat error, and in a word to accomplish in the United States what *L'Action Catholique* and *Le Droit* do in Canada." Many editorials in the early issues of *La Sentinelle* dealt with exposing the corporate structures of the Catholic dioceses in Providence as well as in Manchester, New Hampshire (another Franco-American center), and analyzing how such structures influenced the language curricula of parochial schools. In November 1924, for example, Daignault expressed concern that the curriculum of Mount St. Charles (which had opened that September) had "Latin and catechism...taught in English and

[that] students were encouraged to confess their sins in English” (Chartier 148). This curriculum, he argued, was the result of the corporate structure of the school, which located the authority to administer the school firmly in the office of the bishop. Mount St. Charles, Daignault explained, “is the property of a civil corporation composed of the Bishop, his grand Vicar, the curé of Precious Blood, a certain number of Brothers, and two members of the laity.” The article argued that, since the Bishop ultimately controlled the naming of each of these persons to the corporate board of directors, the school was “quite simply the *collège* of the Bishop of the Diocese of Providence” (Juillet “Le College”).

By January 1925, the tone of these articles would become more forceful.⁵ Daignault argued in two January editorials that the conduct of Bishop Hickey—his \$1 million drive to benefit diocesan high schools and his closing of a French boarding school in Central Falls—was “the result of a vast plan of absolute domination and anglicization conceived by the National Catholic Welfare Conference” (“Corporations”). The style of Daignault’s writing and his growing suspicions of a conspiracy probably derived from his emerging awareness that Mount St. Charles was not the only institution in which French was being forced out, nor was Providence the only diocese in which these tactics of suppression were being implemented. As he publicized the Rhode Island situation across New England and eastern Canada, it is likely that he received reports from neighboring regions which corroborated what he was seeing in Rhode Island. It’s likely, for example, that

⁵ It is also at this time that J. Albert Foisy left the paper and Phydime Hémond and Henri Perdriau joined (Sorrell *Sentinelle* 217).

members of the Sisters of Sainte-Croix confidentially kept Daignault informed of the corporate and curricular decision making in the diocese of Manchester.⁶ The Sisters were a French teaching order that had been in Canada since the 1840s, and in 1925 they were involved in establishing St. Georges school in the Manchester diocese. In February, Daignault published a series of editorials about it. He contended that an episcopate dominated by the Irish was using its corporate control of the schools to “anglicize” French-speaking students (Perreault 128), depriving the French of their race and their language just as the English had deprived the Irish of theirs.⁷

One has to at least admire the audacity of Daignault’s journalistic career, if not the quality of his journalism. He was often blinded by racial prejudice against the Irish, whom he called “race traitors” for promoting the language of their oppressors (Sorrell “Sentinelle” 69). He criticized the head of St. Georges school for being of Irish descent, even though he was a native of Québec and spoke French fluently.

⁶ In the 9/3/25 and 9/10/25 issues of *La Sentinelle*, Daignault wrote about an alleged \$27,000 gift of land that the bishop of Manchester gave “without conditions” to the teaching order of the Sisters of Ste. Croix for the operation of a school in St. Georges. Citing anonymous sources, Daignault argues that the “gift without conditions” actually carried with it a tacit deferral to the bishop’s curricular plans (“Plaidoyer”). Although Daignault refuses to name his sources, he indicates in the September 10 article that the treasurer of the Sisters had reservations about a number of clauses in the contract that deeded the land to the order and she refused to sign it (“Se Trompent”). He also notes that the Mother Superior, who wrote a letter criticizing some minor errors in *La Sentinelle*’s reporting, nonetheless “has complete faith in our sincerity and of our good faith in exposing the situation imposed on her Community” and would be “without a doubt very surprised that one could act in such bad faith” as have the bishop and the New Hampshire press sympathetic to him. These details suggest that the treasurer and the Mother Superior were his informants.

⁷ In the August 6 and August 20 issues of *La Sentinelle*, Daignault describes the curricular structure of the parochial schools in the diocese of Manchester based on what he claims to be first-hand accounts from the parents of children in the schools. A teacher in a school in Claremont is not French and teaches the children to mispronounce French words (qtd. in Perreault 128). At another school in St. Georges, students “will be given only 45 minutes of French per day, religion taught in English, and all the exams will take place in English” (qtd. in Perreault 132).

Daignault often contradicted himself, especially when he was publicly called out for a particularly incendiary statement. For example, in 1927 Daignault claimed that he had never directly attacked the bishop. In response, *The Rhode Islander* quoted articles from *La Sentinelle* in which Daignault had written that Hickey was engaged in “criminal work” and was trying to “strangle” the French. In response, Daignault wrote, “if in the heat of controversy we have been rude and have seemed to lack courtesy for men high in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the cause must be found in the sincerity of our intentions and in the frankness of our procedure” (“Daignault’s Own”).

Daignault was accused of using the language of the street, using *le langage de carrefour*, writing the way people might speak to each other at the intersection when one driver has cut the other driver off (“Plaidoyer”). In a 1926 article, for example, he writes that *La Tribune* “has finally reached a point, that old thing, where it vomits upon the Franco-Americans all the filth that the dirty Irish have placed in its mouth” (“Daignault’s Campaign”). In 1927, he would write in response to an anonymous article published in *La Tribune* that if the author would make himself known, “we could then make this hack, hiding in his own rubbish, swallow the drool emerging from his stinking mouth” (“Les Grands”). In December Eugène Jalbert, president of the FCFA and legal counsel to USJB, accused the Sentinellists of “parading” their grievances before the public, which only “drags respect for authority through the mud and sows the kind of disdain and hate that leads to schism” (Chartier 152). In January 1926 the bishop of the diocese of Manchester, where Daignault’s

ACA was headquartered, withdrew that association's chaplains, citing what he called the ACA's "total disrespect of ecclesiastical authority" (Chartier 152).

I contend that Daignault's writing style was not merely reckless; rather, he was motivated by an anxiety over the distance between the Franco-American *élite* and the people who they claimed to represent, specifically as that distance was measured by language difference. As I have already noted, the French language in New England was stratified into *un mauvais français* spoken by the working class and *le bon usage* of the metropolitan dialects of Montréal and Québec City. Daignault—although educated in Québec and holding graduate degrees from Boston and Columbia Universities—often writes in a colloquial, conversational style, often indulging in what were surely the racial stereotypes and coarse speech that one would have heard in *les petits Canadas* of Woonsocket.

In other words, Daignault uses the basilectal dialect of Canadian French known as *joual*. In one article, for example, in which he irreverently argues that the head of school in Manchester is more concerned with the cleanliness of the bathrooms than with pedagogical questions, the word he uses for "bathroom" is *la bécosse* (Perreault 10). *Bécosse* is an anglicism, a non-standard word derived from the English word "backhouse," meaning "outhouse" (Colpron 103). *La bécosse*/the backhouse is an anglicism found in *joual* but not in standard Canadian French. Daignault's use of *joual* marks a telling stylistic move, for it seems he is trying to rhetorically position himself alongside the common people (*les nôtres*) by representing in writing a particular way

of speaking that perhaps would have been familiar to *les nôtres* but that the *élite* would have eschewed.

Daignault's stylistic choices seem designed to mobilize the broad popular support that the *élite* rhetoric of the FCFA had failed to elicit in their Mount St. Charles fundraising drive. Keep in mind that, as a producer of nationalist discourse, *La Sentinelle*'s immediate goal had been to emulate the work of *Le Droit* in Ottawa: the creation of a transnational francophone identity that could organize against attacks on French language schooling across New England, Ontario and the western Canadian provinces.⁸ He seems anxious to position himself among *les nôtres* when, for example, he asks in 1925, "How can we defend ourselves against those who sell our rights while pretending to defend them" ("La Supérieure")? This question captures exactly the kind of paradoxical position occupied by the *élite*—their privilege was predicated on the construction of a folk tradition that remained subservient to them at the same time that they claimed to be serving it.

I have no doubt that Daignault saw the value that *Le Droit* had in organizing French-Canadians against the subtle forms of social and economic oppression such as occurred in the funding of Manitoba schools in the 1890s.⁹ His vision for *La Sentinelle*—with its motto "For Our Children" (*Pour Nos Enfants*)—surely rested on a newspaper's ability to create what Benedict Anderson calls an imagined community,

⁸ Daignault attributed the idea for the newspaper to "a Canadian prelate" who saw similarities between what was happening in Rhode Island and what was happening in Canada outside Québec (Daignault *Le Vrai* 227-228). The prelate suggested to Daignault the Rhode Island lacked a newspaper like *Le Droit*, which could advocate for the French position in the public sphere.

⁹ Cf. Clark (1968) and Crunican (1974).

built on a nationalist ideology disseminated through print capitalism. According to Anderson, the newspaper is one of the seminal forms of national identification, in that it synchronizes disparate individuals in space and time by reporting the daily events of a territorially bounded polity (*Imagined* 61). But publishing high-quality journalism on a weekly basis is time consuming and expensive. Daignault had no prior experience, little money and few people on his staff, and he was working to change nothing less than the global system of governance of the Universal Catholic Church. When the NCWC refused to grant him a subscription to its Catholic news wire service, he seemed to have taken it upon himself to single-handedly create the news and report on it at the same time. He committed himself to doing a newspaper, even if that meant doing it badly.

Still, he seemed to have more success in reaching *les nôtres* than did the national societies. This support was widespread but was not deeply committed. In December 1926, 1500 people attended a Sentinellist rally in Woonsocket featuring the French-Canadian speaker Samuel Genest, who had been engaged in the struggle to protect French language instruction in Ontario (Chartier 156). In February 1927, Daignault spoke to 3000 at an assembly in Woonsocket. In March 1927 Daignault, Gaspard Boucher and Phydime Hémond began a speaking tour of New England, attracting enormous crowds. That month, they spoke to 1200 people in Pawtucket (“Audience”), and to 3000 at a rally in Arctic RI (“Daignault Sera”). Another 3000 attended a rally in Worcester in April (“Trois Milles”) and 3000-5000 attended a rally at Woonsocket’s Joyland Hall in 1928 (Sorrell *Sentinelle* 223). Meanwhile, the USJB

membership shrank from 52,000 in 1926 (Chartier 157, Quintal 58) to 50,000 in 1927 (Chartier 157) and then to 49,600 in 1928 (Quintal 59).

The linguistic and material economies of Woonsocket show up not only in Daignault's use of basilectal varieties of Canadian French but also in the language attitudes taken in response to his style choices. In *La Tribune*, for example, a French journalist challenged Daignault: "When one claims to be the savior of the race and the faith, one uses less vulgar expressions, Mr. Daignault; when one proclaims himself a 'practicing Catholic, faithful and loyal,' one writes without swearing like a trooper (*comme un charretier*); we do not use the language of the slaughterhouse (*langage d'abbatoir*) in a newspaper" ("Nous Vous"). This response to his stylistic choices refuses them the legitimacy of rhetorical resistance, and instead reflects the attitudes inherent in a language ideology that privileged standardized written forms of Parisian and Canadian French over the spoken varieties associated with the working class.

We can also see the local linguistic economy reflected in the attitudes of the English language press toward the burgeoning francophone public sphere of the time. Echoing the warnings of Dr. Charles Carroll, an English journalist warned of "a foreign colony within this State which has its own tradesmen, schools, banks, churches and Chamber of Commerce. Among its members...there are those who are unable either to speak or understand the English language, and find no necessity for its use" ("Fausses"). Here we see English and French measured by their relative use values in a local material economy. The writer is complaining of the degraded use value of English and the ascendant value of French in the state. We can thus

understand the demand for French as a language of instruction not as a misguided and retrograde attempt to hold on to ancestral tradition and to avoid modernization, but instead as a politically savvy move by a linguistic minority to protect their material interests by simultaneously resisting subjection to an Anglo-dominant public sphere and constructing an alternate francophone public sphere.

Conclusion

Re-contextualizing the language conflict of the Sentinelle Affair in terms of local material and linguistic economies reveals the multilingual complexities underlying the proposed construction of Mount St. Charles, and reveals the multisitedness of that institution as it was embedded in multiple discursive regimes that supported overlapping material interests. The French *élite*'s resistance to Americanization and its insistence on French language instruction can partially be understood as a response to a shifting local economy given the influx of Franco-Belgian capital and intellectual labor in Woonsocket. The omission of these segments of the economy from criticisms of the immigrant problem reveals the way class biases—classic Marxian ideologies—distort the discourses of nationalism and economic progress that surrounded the language conflict. The bourgeois managerial class in Woonsocket's textile sector—although composed of French-speaking immigrants—remained invisible in the discursive representations of America's immigrant problem. In the meantime, working-class American citizens were 1) excluded from opportunities for socioeconomic advancement in their local economy due to the

importation of intellectual labor; 2) reviled by their fellow citizens for their apparent foreignness; and 3) blamed for their apparent inability to improve their own economic positions due to their apparently poor literacy skills and their linguistic incompetence.

Daignault's response to this situation was to construct a rhetorical resistance in the form of *La Sentinelle*. His style reflects an awareness of class conflict within the French community itself, and an anxiety to bridge the gap between *les nôtres* and the *élite*, between the common people and those privileged to have been given access to discourses of power under the pretense of representing the people. Daignault sought to use his privileged position to give voice to *les nôtres* by appropriating in the form of his writing style the linguistic register of basilectal Canadian French. The outrage expressed by the French press and the English establishment—combined with the impact his movement had on the circulation and budget of *La Sentinelle* as well as on the declining membership numbers of the USJB—suggests that his choices were effective in rallying popular support and challenging the ideologies of the middle class.

By examining the multisitedness of Mount St. Charles—and the way linguistic and material economies intersected at that multisite—we can see that the multilingual complexities of language conflicts like the Sentinelle Affair have been effaced and oversimplified by institutionalized assumptions about language learning and language teaching. We further see that twentieth century historiographical practices have often reproduced the same ideologies of linguistic modernity as what had constituted these historical conflicts in the first place. I contend that language conflicts similar to the

Sentinelle Affair are part of the uneasy settlement of English in North America, and that we must recover these histories as part of the linguistic memory of literacy instruction on this continent. Attempts to account for language differences must actively work against inherited ideological stances lest we find ourselves practicing the very discourses we intend to analyze.

CHAPTER 4

DISRUPTING REGIMES OF LINGUISTIC MODERNITY

Romeo Berthiaume, born in 1906 in Southbridge, Massachusetts, was the son of Québécois immigrants. Less than two years after his birth, Berthiaume's parents had saved enough money working in the Southbridge factories to return to Saint-Jude, QC, about fifty miles northeast of Montréal, where they purchased a farm. Berthiaume spent his next thirty-five years there, eventually returning to the US as an adult. He would live the rest of his life three hundred fifty miles south of Saint-Jude, in Woonsocket, where he would become one of the most visible proponents of Franco-American *survivance* in southern New England. In 1979, the year before his death, the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center made field recordings of him singing the folksong "La Soupe Aux Pois" and describing a French-Canadian *soirée*, vestiges of a culture that by then had already become antiquated and nostalgic (Johnson "Romeo"). Living in Québec in the years before television, Berthiaume recalled *les soirées canadiennes* as "an evening out, of singing old folk songs, *une soirée de bon vieux temps*, a good old time" where "members of the village would meet together on Saturday nights and exchange songs and stories." At the end of the interview, he noted that "today they don't do it too much anymore" (Johnson "Interview").

Paul Dulude, thirty-seven years old the year Berthiaume died, would likely have felt mildly embarrassed had he participated in a *soirée* as a young man growing up in Rhode Island in the late 1970s. But perhaps he also would have felt a sense of

pride in his ability to take part in the collective expression of a cultural identity that could take him beyond the bounds of his neighborhood or town. The son of French-Canadian immigrants, Dulude started researching his family history in 1966. Over the next decade, he would observe a growing popularity in family genealogy among his generation, which he attributed to the popularity of Alex Haley's novel and TV miniseries *Roots*. Among the stories Dulude unearthed about his own roots was one about a distant cousin, allegedly scalped by an Iroquois fighter in Québec in a conflict over a beaver skin. Dulude would preserve this legend in the family record, one of the fragments of an ancestral past around which he might imagine an otherwise forgotten familial tie to *les coureurs du bois*, French fur traders who had ventured out into the Canadian hinterlands.

In contrast to Dulude's discoveries, Florence, orphaned as a young girl in the 1920s, would grow up to marry into an Assyrian family in Rhode Island in the 1950s. With no sense of historical continuity with her French past, Florence would come to identify more with her husband's nationality than with her own. Similarly, Blanche Berichaud, born in 1898 to French-Canadian parents and orphaned as a young child, would grow up knowing very little about her family history. Many Franco-Americans who came of age in the 1970s could not say when or why their ancestors had come to the US. They would only realize how little they knew about their backgrounds when a researcher happened to ask. Or, paradoxically, one of them might come to know more history than anybody else in the family only "because it was part of a high school assignment."

All of these stories are recounted in the Paul Chassé Papers, an archive of teaching materials collected by Chassé, a professor and poet at Rhode Island College during the 1970s. The anecdotes preserved there underscore the heterogeneous and fragmentary nature of Franco-American *survivance* after the Sentinelle Affair, a struggle to maintain what Joshua Fishman has called “symbolic continuity with the distant past and cross-communal unity” (*Reversing* 309), through the continuation of Franco-American cultural institutions—primarily family, church and language. By the time Berthiaume was singing “La Soupe Aux Pois” for an American Folklife Center fieldworker, and Dulude was finding in the miniseries *Roots* the inspiration to trace his own family lineage, the functional usefulness of French had long been suppressed in southern New England and that region’s francophone public sphere had slowly constricted in the wake of the English Only policies of state legislatures and the Catholic Church. One of the consequences of that suppression was a rupture in the cultural identity of French mother tongue speakers in the region.

In “Linguistic Memory and the Uneasy Settlement of English,” Trimbur argues that despite this suppression the United States is not hostile to multilingualism but “ambivalent” to it (22). At the same time that historical figures like Benjamin Franklin and Noah Webster *claimed* the purity and natural-ness of English as the language of the United States, they also actively worked to purify and naturalize it through a systematic erasure of evidence of “linguistic contamination” that creolized and pidginized English (34). Trimbur’s point about ambivalence relies on the idea that despite these purification procedures, contemporary language practices still bear traces of historical conflict, political struggle, and historical settlement patterns that, far from

forgotten, persist as “memory imperfectly deferred” (35). He defines linguistic memory as “the incomplete forgetting of ancestral languages” despite the procedures of purification and suppression enacted by English Only policymakers (35). This imperfect forgetting of ancestral languages “virtually guarantees the ambivalence about multilingualism” in the U.S. as “traces of other languages and other Englishes (embedded residually in mundane rituals, music, ethnic and racial identifications, the names and taste of food, the sound of a word, a style of dress, and so on) collide with English monolingualism and its Anglo-Saxon heritage” (34). In studying the way *les nôtres* of New England were purified into a white ethnicity through the suppression of French and the institutionalization of English monolingualism, I want to pay critical attention to Trimbur’s observation that linguistic traces are embedded in (among other things) “ethnic and racial identifications” (34).

Trimbur’s work creates a space in which scholars can explore the possibilities for connecting past language conflicts—what Trimbur calls the “uneasy settlement” of language relations—to minority language users’ subsequent ambivalence in identifying with discursive categories of race and ethnicity even when those categories confer socioeconomic privilege like French speakers passing for white, native English speakers. Over the course of the twentieth century, French language users in Woonsocket, whose literacy was acquired in the wake of the Sentinelle Affair, had to negotiate the tactical positioning of their own identities as alternately francophone/Anglophone, American/Canadian, and bilingual/monolingual. As I have shown elsewhere, this ambivalence led others to contest the authenticity of the French as not

“white” enough in relation to white Anglos in New England (569). In thinking about the tactical self-positioning of one’s identity in relation to discursive structures, I am indebted to Malea Powell’s study of the “tactical authenticity” of Charles Alexander Eastman as evidence of a key strategy in the rhetorics of indigenous survivance (418). In studying the strategic identifications, self-representations and language practices of local Woonsocket residents in the decades following the Sentinelle Affair, I detect a similar tactical move in the rhetorics of francophone *survivance*, elaborated in their own words as a strategy of “blending” (Chassé).

In this chapter, I explore the possibilities for understanding the “tactical authenticity” of ethnic whiteness through an analysis of French language users’ self-representations of their own language attitudes—the way traces of the Sentinelle Affair persist as linguistic memory in the everyday strategic identifications of Woonsocket residents despite their claims of having fully assimilated into an Anglo-American cultural and linguistic mainstream. How did the uneasy linguistic settlements of the Sentinelle Affair affect the language attitudes of French speakers in Woonsocket in the years following, after the dust had settled and people had begun to forget the tumult of the 1920s? How might their adoption of particular attitudes be understood as one of the tactics of survivance? In order to address this question from a sociological perspective, I would need to employ ethnographic research methods such as interviews and field observations (cf. Bourdieu *Distinction; Outline*). From a sociolinguistic perspective, I would need to identify a target population’s language attitudes by devising a matched-guise experiment (Bourhis; Kristiansen). However, I am attempting to study a population that existed in the past, beginning with those born

around 1920, direct descendants of the contemporaries of the Sentinelle Affair. They are not available for direct participation in my research designs.

In order to examine past language practices, then, I must adapt archival and ethnographic methods available to the social sciences and carry out what I call an ethnography of the archive. Thus far in this dissertation, I have made use of archival materials associated with discourses of the public sphere: legislation, political pamphlets, and newspaper editorials. These materials represent the discursive spaces of the *élite*, despite Daignault's best attempts to bend those spaces towards the interests of *les nôtres*. Here, I instead use an archive of undergraduate research papers that students wrote in the 1970s as part of coursework at a local state college in Rhode Island. Such evidence is among what Connors has called the "Archive" of rhetoric and composition—textbooks, syllabi, and student writing ("Dreams" 17). Rather than use student writing to build knowledge about writing pedagogy and student writing practices, I use it as historical evidence of a particular cultural and historical moment in U.S. higher education, a moment in the 1970s when bilingual education experienced a brief resurgence in response to increased federal funding for it.

In 1972, Nixon re-authorized the ESEA with a Title IX provision for the development of ethnic studies curriculum materials (Anderson "Evolution"). A federal grant agency called the Ethnic Heritage Studies Program was established beginning in 1974 to disseminate curriculum materials concerning the heterogeneous and multiethnic composition of the United States (Kloss 45). Between 1974 and 1980, Franco-American poet and Rhode Island College professor Paul Chassé designed and delivered an undergraduate senior seminar course in ethnic American heritages,

focusing on Franco-American communities in Rhode Island. At the time of my research, Chassé's papers were being archived by the French Institute of the Emmanuel d'Alzon Library at Assumption College. The available student seminar papers covered two sections of the course, offered in Spring 1977 and Spring 1978. The papers used in this chapter are from Folder 4: Spring 1977 and from Folder 5: Spring 1978. I am indebted to the director of the French Institute, Dr. Leslie Choquette, and to the Institute's archivist, Nina Tsantinis, for directing me to the Chassé archive and allowing me access to materials still being processed.

According to Chassé's course syllabi, the goal of his ethnic heritages course was to examine the "modes of adjustment, adaptation, compromise, indifference to or rejection of a pluralistic society by a minority subculture" (Chassé). We can understand these modes—adjustment, adaptation, compromise, indifference, rejection—as the various strategies of Powell's tactical authenticity. The goal of this chapter is to trace how these modes are enacted in individuals' everyday adoption of language attitudes. The culminating project of Chassé's course asked students to compile a report synthesizing the results of six original interviews conducted with Franco-Americans living in Rhode Island. Each student had to interview a man and a woman between the ages of fifty and seventy years old; a man and a woman between the ages of thirty and fifty years old; and a man and a woman between twenty and thirty years old. The interviews were all conducted from an identical questionnaire developed by Chassé and his students in 1974. The questionnaire consists of 103 questions organized into twelve categories: family; church; education; traditions; youth;

economics; labor; politics; societies; communications; arts and literature; and language and assimilation. The most important categories for my purposes are family; education; youth; communication; and language and assimilation.

The twenty-seven reports archived from the Spring 1977 and Spring 1978 sections comprise 162 interviews. However, as with any undergraduate seminar, the quality of research varies widely from report to report. Twelve of the twenty-seven reports I reviewed do not provide useable data for the purposes of investigating historical language attitudes. Those twelve reports either do not adequately demonstrate that the original interviews were in fact carried out, or the analysis of interview data is so vague as to render it impossible to verify that the students' conclusions are supported by their data. Of the fifteen remaining reports, however, we have available eighty-nine interviews out of which we can construct a qualitatively rich multi-generational study of the cross-border consequences of language policy on the language attitudes of a minority subculture. Taken together, this archive of student writing provides an important window on the intergenerational attitudes of Franco-Americans towards language at a crucial time for 1) the development of ethnic studies in the United States and 2) the establishment of the political legitimacy of French in North America.

In the previous chapters of this dissertation, I have shown how language ideologies worked in local economic contexts to constitute differences into divisions or oppositions. I have shown how, through a series of motivated language acts made by erstwhile political allies in response to a series of materially invested rhetorical situations, language differences were *constituted* into a political conflict. In this

chapter, I want to study the way historical social actors responded to the uneasy settlements of this conflict by reifying it in the form of ambivalent attitudes towards language difference. I do not assume that people simply reproduced the ideological directives of their political leaders to purify their language, culture and nationality, nor do I assume that they merely picked sides and arranged themselves in relation to the polarizations of conflict. Rather, I want to seek evidence of their ambivalence to both English and to multilingualism, and evidence of rhetorically strategic subversive complicity and resistance—the everyday rhetorical practices of those who may not have had access to the political and economic discourses of the public sphere.

Language Attitudes and Ethnographies of the Archive

Before analyzing the interviews collected in the Chassé Papers, it's useful to first consider the theoretical challenges posed by writing a history of past language practices. The linguistic turn in historical writings of the 1960s and 1970s was occasioned by the application throughout the social sciences of structuralist theories of language to the study of social phenomena. Structuralist theories of language posited language not as a neutral and transparent system of signs capable of objectively referring to a reality that existed somewhere “outside” language; rather, language was understood as a differential system of arbitrary signs with no positive terms, made meaningful only through its system of differences. Thus, language *meant* only by virtue of its self-referential nature—the differences could be understood only in relation to each other within a linguistic system. Such a reformulation of linguistic

structure challenged traditional ways of establishing evidence and objectivity in the social sciences. From the perspective of linguistic turn historiography, for example, the past could not be merely reflected in the language of an historical artifact; rather, past realities were understood to be constituted in language. From this perspective, the past was understood to have been produced through the discursive structures in which social actors were enmeshed.

This perspective gave rise to histories that viewed the past as the product of discourse. Instead of describing individual agents as acting with intentionality to produce desired consequences, linguistic turn historians interpreted historical actors as discursive subjects, whose historical actions were determined by the discursive regime that had produced their subjectivities. Gabrielle Spiegel notes that the appeal of the linguistic turn was its “de-essentializing agenda” (25). This agenda sought to make cultural identity historically contingent—a result of the interaction between knowledge and power in discourse—rather than assuming identity to be biologically or naturally assigned. This critical approach to studying the pressures of discursive structure on social action made it possible, for example, for historians to understand oppression and disability as socially constructed exclusions rather than as natural and justified by the deficient bodies of actual people.

It is exactly this direct move from identity construction to discursive structure, however, that has led Pennycook to argue that there never has been a linguistic turn in the social sciences; rather, the structuralist emphasis on discourse was always a cultural turn that bypassed language (*Language* 123). Pennycook’s move is to

complicate the study of discursive regimes by viewing language not as a structure but as a local practice. This view rehabilitates the rhetorical agency of language users in their choices of what, when and how to speak (or to remain silent). A bilingual speaker's self-representations—the choice of how or whether to suppress evidence of their bilingualism—is a strategic choice based on everyday experience of communicative situations. At the same time, viewing language as a local practice challenges social scientists to reconcile the need to use language as data with an understanding that language is always socially situated. In the same way that Miller argues for a view of genre as a typification of individual responses to recurrent social situations (151), so Pennycook argues that linguistic grammar is a sedimentation of individual performances, a kind of genre theory of grammar. In his study of language as performance, he argues that “grammar” is “simply the name for certain categories of observed repetitions in discourse” (*Global* 72) and that languages “are the sedimented products of repeated acts of identity” (73). From this view, it is impossible to extract language from its performative context and make it *mean* in the ways that our research methodologies demand.

The turn toward practice is not new in historical writing. Studying the historical contingency of identity-in-discourse may have enabled historians to take a critical stance towards the historical workings of race, class and gender, viewing them as discursive structures that determined past realities. But recent historiographical theory has complicated the structuralist model, seeking to challenge the overly deterministic role attributed to discourse/culture. In historical writings after Foucault,

discourse was conceptualized as a totalizing structure, a conceptualization that—as post-linguistic turn historians argue—fails to account for the capacity of experience “to exceed and to escape discursive construction” (Spiegel 18) or to account for the fact that life often “outruns the capacity of culture to account for it” (Spiegel 21). Instead of arguing that “life” or “experience” has the capacity to exceed and outrun discursive models, Pennycook might argue that *language* has the capacity to outrun and exceed discursive models. Language outruns its own ability to account for itself.

In response to a growing dissatisfaction with conceptual frameworks that rely too heavily on discursive structure, historical writing after the linguistic turn has sought to rehabilitate rhetorical agency in its accounts of how discourse operates. But in order for this agency to be detected by the historian, it still must be enacted through semiotic practices, and here is how we get to the possibilities for studying past language practices. Post-linguistic turn historiography still views individuals as subjects within discourse, whose actions often reproduce the structures which produced their subjectivity, but individuals also have the capacity to use discursive structures strategically through the deployment of tactics and critical practices, to use language to outrun language. This conceptual framework thus shifts emphasis away from the totalizing effects of the structures of discourse on individual experience and towards individual capacities to operate within and *against* discursive structures by practicing language. To follow Horner and Lu, we might say that individuals respond to discursive structure by “languaging,” by “fashion[ing] and refashion[ing]

standardized conventions, subjectivity, the world, and their relations to others and the world” (“Translingual” 591).

In both rhetoric/composition and in post-linguistic-turn historiography, then, individual practice is understood as at once an individual’s perception of some social categorization(s)—discursive structure—in which she is enmeshed; her perception of how such categorization both enables and constrains her ability to pursue some material interest; and her subsequent strategic use of that categorization(s) according to her interests. In order to turn action into a tactic, the individual perceives discursive structure not as objective reality, but as a linguistic regime that attempts to turn language categories and linguistic procedures into objective reality. This regimentation creates the conditions of individual experiences-in-discourse—what Reckwitz calls “routinized” and conventionalized behaviors and ways of thinking (256), and what Miller describes as “typified rhetorical action” in “recurrent situation[s]” (151). Once recognized as typified and recurrent linguistic performance, this regimentation can be intervened in through a critical language practice, through languaging.

In focusing on language attitudes as one of the cultural tactics that strategically respond to discursive structure, I am tangling up a thread of twentieth century structuralist social theory that attempted to describe the way individuals incorporate ideology into their own thoughts and behaviors, adopting ideological positions as though they are one’s own. Kenneth Burke’s formulation of attitude as an “incipient act” (235) is a useful point at which to pick up this thread in composition and rhetoric.

In *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke argues that “the formation of appropriate attitudes” is required to induce an audience to action (236). He felt so strongly about the influence of attitude on motive and act that he ends *A Grammar of Motives* by suggesting that he might revise his entire dramatic pentad to include attitude as a sixth integral component to understanding motive. Attitudes, he says, are “the beginnings of acts” (236). Burke describes how attitudes form through recognition, as “a social relation is established between the individual and external things or other people, since the individual learns to anticipate their attitudes towards him. He thus, to a degree, becomes aware of *himself* in terms of *them*” (237).

We might then ask what is an individual doing when describing their outlook on a language as “bleak” or “welcoming”? How does an individual’s attitude toward a language demonstrate an experiential understanding of larger political strategies, shifts and ruptures in the formation and disintegration of cultural identity? And perhaps most importantly, how might the performance of a particular language attitude either reproduce or resist those larger political strategies and cultural identities? The linguist Tore Kristiansen rightly points out that the problem of scientific validity in language attitude experimentation stems from questions like these. Such questions intimate the difficulty of defining exactly what constitutes an attitude, and where the production of an attitude is to be located. Linguists have typically framed the definition of attitude as a choice between a mentalist or behaviorist approach in the design of language attitude experimentation. In the *Sociolinguistics of Society*, for example, Ralph Fasold describes the mentalist theory of attitude as “a state of readiness for an anticipated

stimulus,” while the behaviorist theory “views an attitude as the response to a stimulus” (Fasold 147).

While positioning herself as a behaviorist in her research, Kristiansen still recognizes that “language attitudes are complex psychological entities which involve knowledge and feeling as well as behaviour”:

Can we be sure that what we are measuring are really people’s attitudes? One might suspect, for instance, that a standard procedure in which a researcher asks for some kind of evaluative reaction (in an interview, in a questionnaire, or in a matched-guise experiment) will prompt subjects to reproduce generally-held opinions rather than display their particular ‘real’ attitudes (Kristiansen 291).

Structuralist approaches to social science would see the distinction between a reproduced “generally-held opinion” and a “real attitude” as a false distinction. Social scientists might instead locate the production of an attitude not in individual cognition nor in observable behavior, but in discursive activity. The discourse which constitutes languages as high prestige or low prestige, public or private, native or foreign, formal or informal, also makes a finite range of subject positions available to those individuals enmeshed in it. To each individual subject position adheres a range of attitudes toward the cultural objects through which we interact and form relationships. One such cultural object is language. Thus, rather than attempt to locate a “real” attitude in a matched-guise experiment, Kristiansen might interpret language attitudes in terms of the discourse out of which those attitudes are produced and in which they circulate.

Rather than locating attitudes in individual cognition, or in discrete individual behaviors, structuralist thought would locate language attitudes in the same interpersonal space where all cultural activity occurs. For example, Burke's interpersonal awareness of attitude production—my attitude forms in relation to my perception of others' attitudes toward me—is similar to Althusser's sense of how recognition, or “hailing,” works in ideological reproduction. For Burke, attitude is the act by which the individual internalizes the dramatic scene and reproduces it as his own strategy for action (242). For Althusser, individuals recognize themselves in the way others call them. Althusser theorized that although behaviors and attitudes seem to derive “from the ideas of the individual...as a subject with a consciousness which contains the ideas” that motivate his behaviors and attitudes, individuals make use of conceptual frameworks through which they arrive at their ideas, and these conceptual frameworks are socially constructed genres of thought. Althusser labelled these frameworks ideology, and he describes with some irony the self-deception through which individuals appear to themselves to be forming attitudes out of their own free thinking. In Althusser, the individual “behaves in such and such a way, adopts such and such a practical attitude, and, what is more, participates in certain regular practices which are those of the ideological apparatus on which ‘depend’ the ideas which he has in all consciousness freely chosen as a subject” (167). In both Althusser and Burke, attitude becomes a kind of cultural practice, ideological reproduction through interpersonal processes of recognition.

To draw this thread to a close, I connect Bourdieu's idea of the *habitus* as a “system of dispositions” (*Outline* 81)—which we might think of as a set of attitudes—

to Althusser's definition of ideology and Burke's idea of the internalization of the scene. In Bourdieu, the *habitus* provides the criteria by which individuals classify the cultural objects they encounter (*Distinction* 101). By making distinctions among varieties of language, for example, we distinguish ourselves either as tasteful or vulgar, educated or ignorant, cosmopolitan or provincial. Bourdieu complicates structuralist understandings (like Burke's and Althusser's) of the interplay between ideologies and attitudes in the making of social reality by introducing the idea that social agents make strategic use of the structures of the *habitus* in advancing and protecting their own interests in relation to others. Bourdieu argues that what social agents describe as cultural rules or an objective reality is a kind of shorthand for a tacitly held

complete description (which invocation of rules allows one to dispense with) of the relation between the habitus, as a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures, and the socially structured situation in which the agents' interests are defined, and with them the objective functions and subjective motivations of their practices (*Outline* 76).

In his theory of practice, Bourdieu shifts the language with which we can talk about cultural activity away from discursive structures and towards agency, use, function and interest (38). In effect, he formulates a rhetorical approach to studying culture, and at the heart of this theory is an understanding of the habitus as a set of attitudes strategically deployed by social agents in response to their perception of what their best interests might be given the "socially structured situation" in which those interests are defined.

The Paul Chassé Papers

In *L'Identité Culturelle*, Louise Peloquin-Faré uses Bourdieu to understand how Franco-Americans in New England represent their own ethnic heritage to themselves. In this section, I focus on the way the interviews recorded in the Chassé papers represent their own language practices to themselves. Following Peloquin-Faré, I use Bourdieu's understanding of attitudes as *habitus* as well as his theories of social distinction and contingent value to frame the responses of the Chassé interview subjects. I've organized their responses according to four themes: the role that language played in their experience of intergenerational discontinuity; the effects of that intergenerational discontinuity on representations of the parent-child relationship; the perceived role that education plays in linguistic maintenance and/or cultural rupture; and finally, the constricted functional uses of French that result from the interplay of these themes.

1. *Language and intergenerational discontinuity*: Peloquin-Faré describes the way Franco-Americans represented their language to themselves as “*une véritable possession, un bien culturel, composante primordiale de leur héritage*” (113).¹ In the Chassé papers, French is described as an heirloom through which families pass down their family histories. According to one respondent, most of the information that was known about family history was passed down or obtained through their parents. Other respondents knew the details only of their parents histories; the family knowledge did

¹ “a real possession, a cultural asset, an essential component of their heritage” (113).

not extend beyond the first preceding generation. Some respondents only had a vague knowledge of ancestral migration. One respondent said his father came “because he was tired of working a 480-acre farm for no pay. Word was coming back to them in Canada of how well they were being treated and what good pay they were receiving. They migrated and tried to carry on customs as they did in Canada, but believed that to get ahead their children should know English.” But such lucid descriptions are rare. Most often what emerges from the interviews is the fact of discontinuity in Franco-American family histories, an intergenerational rupture centered around language loss. This rupture is recognized by one respondent as the inability of Franco youth to acquire “certain historical knowledge of their family because of the language barrier.”

2. Effects of discontinuity on parent-child relationships: One fifty-eight year old woman (born in 1922) felt that Franco-American youth had grown alienated from their parents because they couldn't speak French. Another observed “a trend” among the younger generation of “getting away from most of their traditions.” Despite these observations, and despite the aforementioned effects of the language barrier and the loss of tradition on intergenerational continuity, almost all the interview subjects agreed that the parent-child relationship was closer than it had ever been, or at least they agreed that whatever alienation existed could be applied to all young people in general, not to any specific ethnicity. The insistence on closeness despite language barriers and a loss of tradition seems to parallel the insistence that Franco-American youth had “blended” into the American mainstream and are no different from any other American youth. These tensions are especially striking when considering, first,

that many of the younger generation self-reported being comfortable with and proud of their Franco-American heritage; and, second, that many of the younger generation had attended French parochial schools, spoke French occasionally in the home with their families, consumed French radio and print, and were technically members of the same linguistic minority as were their parents.

3. *Effect of education on cultural rupture:* There are four elements to consider regarding this theme: the actual educational experience of the respondents, the way they represent their education to themselves, the way they represent the place for Franco-American experience and identity in education, and the pedagogical construction of French as a foreign language in their educational experience.

Educational experience. Educational experience consists of the level and type of education received. As might be expected, the level of education increases among the younger generations. This means that the kind of exposure to language difference also increases, as the younger generation had more interaction with English-speaking Americans in public schools and they were more likely to encounter standard European French in school. By contrast, older generations may have completed a significant portion of their education with a homogeneous Franco-American student population taught by Franco-American teachers. Still, almost everyone had gone to a Catholic parochial school at some point in their education. The most common pattern was attendance at a parochial school for the primary grades and public school for the secondary grades. A few people had only attended public schools, and even fewer had only attended parochial schools.

Representation of educational experience. More telling than the actual educational experience of respondents is the value they placed on their own education. 56% (50 of 89) placed a high value on education, yet only 13% (12 of 89) had gone to or were currently enrolled in college. 19% (17 of 89) placed as high a value on learning a trade, and most of the middle and older generations worked in trades. Most judged the quality of education at a parochial school better, almost unanimously citing the development of self-discipline and a religious and moral character, yet very few (no more than three) contributed financially to the operation of parochial schools. The qualities that make for a good parochial education—discipline and moral development—were the same qualities people claimed to appreciate in their relationships with their parents. The mixed type of education received (parochial and public, French and Anglo), combined with the ambivalent value placed on education, reveals an unacknowledged bicultural identity among Francos.

The place for Franco-American experience and cultural identity in education. Perhaps the most aggressive question of the interviews concerned the representation of the French in North America as found in one high school history textbook. The interviewer asked, “do you find American history textbooks disparaging to the French in North America?” The interviewer would then provide the respondent with a number of excerpts from a single high school history book used in 1974 that mythologized the role of the English in bringing Enlightenment values to America. The excerpts present the English instilling freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and the right of self-government to in America, but they neglect to describe the English’s historical curtailment of these freedoms and rights from the

French colonies that were subjected to British rule. The history book also identifies the reader with the English in their interactions with the French by describing the English as “us” and the French as “them,” as “savages” and as “immoral” and “unscrupulous.”

Almost one-fourth of the interviewees dealt with this question by not even reporting on it in the seminar paper. Of those interviewees that did address the question, slightly more respondents found the portrayals disparaging than those who didn't find them so. But by far the largest portion of responses refused to take a position on the excerpts, offered no comment, or pled too little knowledge or familiarity with the subject to respond. One respondent insisted that the portrayals “must be true or the history books wouldn't print it.” The indication from such strategic silence is that the perceived role of education is not to stress ethnic differences or to point out discriminatory practices, but rather to erase them in favor of an imagined national unity.

Pedagogical construction of French as a foreign language. Most of the younger generation, and the children of the middle generation, studied French in school. Some claimed they studied French only to satisfy the school's foreign language requirement. One respondent's children studied German and Russian instead of French. One respondent insisted that children who want to learn French learn it in the home. While most students studied French in school, the younger generation only had a passive understanding of the French spoken at home. As noted earlier, the availability of French in the school curriculum might actually have contributed to the abandonment of French in the community.

The exposure of younger Francos to standard European French in school constructed a hierarchy of languages against which their home variety of French would not fare well. Citing Bourdieu's notion of the way individuals "label" linguistic performances, Peloquin-Faré writes that within the Franco-American community in New England, "*Il existe donc une sensibilité envers la langue. Le français n'apparaît pas en tant que moyen de communication tout court mais porte une étiquette: difficile, bon, excellent, académique, pas bien exprimé, par exemple*" (118).² Franco-American French was superseded in order of increasing prestige by standard Québec French (the variety promoted by the OLF), European French (the variety taught in public secondary schools and the variety promoted as the international language of *francophonie*) and standard American English which of course, in the American social milieu, carried the highest prestige, with all forms of social and economic success tied to its usage. The study of French as a school foreign language requirement constructed French as a foreign language within Franco-American communities, even as French was listed as the mother tongue for over 100,000 Rhode Islanders in the 1970 Census (Chassé). Further, by way of the hierarchy of language valorization, the Franco-American variety of French was labeled "canuck" French, *le mauvais français*, a debased and corrupted variety of the pure French taught in schools.

Rodney Ball has pointed out that lower language varieties can often carry a covert prestige among speakers, as "strong associations exist between the use of local pronunciations" and the identity of the speaker as an authentic member of the speech

² "There is a sensitivity towards the language. French does not appear simply as a homogeneous means of communication, but is distinguished through social labeling: difficult, good, excellent, academic, poorly expressed, for example" (118).

community (107). This covert prestige does not appear to have adhered to Franco-American French in the 1970s. This may be due to the contemporaneous political developments in Québec which centralized and began to codify the Québec dialect and subsequently left their Franco-American relations attenuated. The Franco cultural milieu ceased to be viewed as belonging to the periphery of Québécois francophone culture, and instead became an isolated enclave within the “fathomless sea of English” surrounding it. It ceased to be clear what speaking “canuck” French made one a member of other than the lowest stratum of French speaker. In such a context, Peloquin-Faré notes that “*Le désistement est plus facile que l’effort de parler une langue minoritaire...une manifestation de sens pratique et efficace souvent accordé à l’Amérique; la dépense d’énergie doit mener à un but tangible*” (115).³

Franco-American French became an antiquated relic of a discontinuous cultural past that was now viewed in relation to the variety of French most valorized by English speakers, international Île-de-France French. This view was held even by the youngest of its speakers, who devalorized it according to an American value system of common sense and efficiency. Peloquin-Faré explains the odd perseverance of French even within this social context as French speakers in New England made considerations other than the material for language value. “*Ils continuent à parler français par choix, par goût, par désir de maintenir le flambeau francophone transmis fidèlement par leurs ancêtres*” (116).⁴ However, this value had limited currency in a largely Anglo cultural milieu. Franco-American French was at best a family heirloom,

³ “Abandonning a minority language is easier than expending the effort to speak it...a manifestation of American common sense and efficiency; any use of energy must lead to a tangible goal” (115).

⁴ “They continue to speak French by choice, according to their tastes, out of a desire to carry the francophone torch faithfully transmitted to them from their ancestors” (116).

a nostalgic souvenir. In the Anglo public sphere, it was a disfigurement of European French, and “*plutôt que de défigurer la langue française en l’écorchant, certains Francos préfèrent l’abandonner*” (Peloquin-Faré 119).⁵

4. *Constricted functional uses of French:* What’s striking in the Chassé papers is how widespread the use of French still was in the late 1970s, considering all of the cultural and political developments which led francophone Americans born after 1920 to think of French as a foreign language learned in school and to think of themselves as fully “blended” mainstream Americans. 43% of respondents (thirty-eight out of eighty-nine) at least occasionally read French newspapers and magazines, listened to French radio stations, or watched French television. A few listened to French radio from Québec or Paris, but most listened to French language programming on a local AM radio station. Of those who read French magazines, the most common magazine cited was *Paris Match*, a glossy celebrity gossip magazine. The consumption of media in French indicates a recognition of a larger francophone cultural bond, an identification with a common French experience beyond the confines of one’s extended family and reaching into neighboring towns, states and, more rarely, foreign countries. However, that francophone bond was weakening. Kloss lists sixty-four radio stations with broadcasts in French in 1970 (Kloss 68). According to the Broadcasting Yearbook for that year, Rhode Island residents would have had access to anywhere between eleven and seventeen hours of French broadcasting per week, depending on their location in the state. By 1974 (the last year that the Yearbook published foreign language

⁵ “rather than deface the French language by flaying it, some Francos prefer to abandon it” (119).

broadcasting information), those numbers would decrease to between five and ten hours per week. Fishman describes a similar decrease in French-language newspapers up to 1960 (*Language Loyalty* 59).

Despite the widespread consumption of French media, spoken French was almost completely constricted to a private, home language spoken by adults over thirty years old. One twenty-two year old (born in 1955) still spoke French regularly at work. One middle-aged respondent (born in the 1940s) spoke French with his wife. Other middle-aged speakers spoke the language with friends. In all, 63% (fifty-six of the eighty-nine respondents) still spoke French at home with relatives and friends, a staggering percentage considering that these were mostly third and fourth generation speakers of a minority language that had been subject to restrictions since the 1920s. Most said they spoke French “only occasionally” and among the older relatives in the family. This constriction simultaneously results from and causes the prior themes discussed—intergenerational discontinuity, a rupture in the cultural ties between parent and child, and the role of education in constructing French as a foreign language.

Almost unanimously, they described their French as informal and mixed with English words and phrases, either when the French was unknown or when it had momentarily escaped them. Respondents in the generation of twenty to thirty years old had either a passive fluency in French (they could hear it and understand it but could not speak it) or what French they had was acquired in school as a foreign language requirement. Of those who spoke French, almost all described it as an “informal” style inflected with Anglicisms. A noticeable difference in language

attitudes can be seen between the younger generation and eighty-year-old Alexandrine Lacouture, who argued that “there is no ‘Parisian’ French and ‘Canadian’ French.” Lacouture said that although most Canadians felt their French language was different from European French, both languages were written the same and so were not different languages. For Lacouture, the only difference between the languages was in attitude: most Canadians “let slang slip in and become lazy about their French.”

Language attitudes form out of one’s sense of the social value of their own linguistic products. It is one’s own internalized representation of how others value their words. For Franco-Americans, this not only involved taking stock of the relative value of the different varieties of French within the francophone community; it also involved taking stock of how those varieties of French were valued relative to English, a true international market of currency exchange. These valuations accumulated over numerous social transactions and came to establish in an almost economic sense the exchange value of languages and language varieties. Thus Peloquin-Faré describes the effect of this process of self-image formation, as “*Petit à petit, une attitude d’infériorité s’est développée et a altéré, chez beaucoup de Franco-Américains, le désir de maintenir la francophonie.... Par conséquent, leur propre image sociale n’était pas atteinte par le biais de leur performance linguistique*” (120).⁶

The responses to questions about education and about linguistic assimilation reveal an ambivalence—despair combined with indifference—in the attitudes of French speakers toward the usefulness of their French in the contemporary cultural

⁶ “Gradually, an inferior attitude has developed and has altered among many Franco-Americans the desire to maintain their francophone identity. Therefore, their own social image was not reached by way of their linguistic performance” (120).

milieu. Although many expressed a desire to see French language and culture continue, nobody was willing to contribute to French parochial education, Franco-American cultural societies, or even in most cases to transmitting the French language to their own children as a language spoken in the home. Almost every respondent either 1) spoke French with friends or relatives; 2) read French newspapers and listened to French radio programs; or 3) had been educated in bilingual French parochial schools. Yet the respondents betray a vague indifference to the future prospects of French language and culture in New England.

Many express a desire to maintain or promote the status of French, but many others expressed a helplessness or disinterest in being personally involved in any ethnic heritage initiatives. One thirty-year-old woman, for example, stressed the primacy of her American identity, noting that all Americans are of diverse backgrounds. She said “it would be nice” to retain some of our ethnic heritage but it was “not really that important.” In the words of another, “most agreed that they would like some of the French culture to continue, and they hoped it would. Yet, no one knew how to keep it going or had any suggestions as to how it could be done.” Many expressed regret or despair at the “bleak” prospects of French—the future was widely described in terms of disintegration and loss. But few expressed any interest in actively maintaining a sense of their own ethnic heritage, and many welcomed the prospect of Franco-Americans being “fully blended” into the American “mainstream.” In expressing a particular set of despairing and ambivalent attitudes towards the value of French, Franco-Americans reproduced the very cultural conditions that produced that set of attitudes in the first place. This simultaneous despair and indifference is

evidence of the persistent linguistic memory of past language conflicts like the Sentinelle Affair in the institutionalization of English monolingualism and the suppression of language difference in Woonsocket.

Conclusion: Language Difference After the Sentinelle Affair

1977 and 1978 was a crucial period for francophone cultural identity in North America, as Québec was in the process of drafting and legislating Bill 101. Bill 101 provided for the institutionalization of the French language in Québec province but demanded that Québec forsake its cultural and linguistic ties to smaller French enclaves in English Canada and New England in order to francicize cultural and political institutions within its own provincial borders. During this time, French in the Québec-New England region encompassed a number of more or less distinct varieties. The Quiet Revolution of the Québec Liberal Party in 1960 set in motion a nationalist movement in that province, one of the outcomes of which was the standardization and valorization of Québécois French as a distinct language variety to be managed by the Office de la Langue Française (OLF), newly created in 1969. The OLF distinguished the French spoken in Québec from the Île-de-France variety, which was officially endorsed by the Académie Française in Paris as the international language of *le monde de la francophonie*. Relative to the French of the OLF or the Île-de-France, the French spoken by Franco-Americans in New England became *un mauvais français*, brought to the US prior to the standardization of Canadian French and developed in isolated enclaves according to local needs, which meant that it had creolized syntactically and lexically in combination with English. As we have seen in previous chapters, Franco-

American community leaders—those most influential in the continuation of *la survivance*—might themselves have felt more allegiance to *le bon usage* of European French than to the “canuck French” of *les petits Canadas* scattered throughout the industrial towns of New England.

Québécois national identity, though, rallied around the symbolism of Canadian French as a minority language in English-dominant Canada. The extent to which Québécois were successful in their nationalist political agenda was reflected in the hierarchization and institutionalization of Québec French in provincial affairs. However, this “francization of the most powerful networks and functions in the province” (Fishman *Reversing* 295) left Franco-Americans on the other side of the US-Canada border culturally and linguistically isolated against the very “fathomless sea of English” that Québécois francization was working to protect itself against (312). One of the outcomes of this isolation was a severe constriction of the functional uses of French in New England enclaves in the 1960s and 1970s. French fraternal benefit societies, French language newspapers, and francophone schooling were cut off from the transnational identification and support they had shared with Québec.

In *American Bilingual Tradition*, Kloss describes a policy of minority language tolerance in the United States in which an ethnic group’s “kin-state” is allowed “to promote institutions designed to serve the cultural life” of the ethnic group while the US itself remains passive in terms of minority language policy. Kloss cites Mexico and Spain as kin-states for Mexican-Americans, and Québec and France as kin-states for the French in New England. He refers to this policy of tolerance as “outside promotion,” since, he says, the promotion of the minority language comes from

outside the US (23). I see two problems with Kloss's characterization of outside promotion. First, the extent to which France or Québec actively promoted French in New England between 1920 and 1970 is debatable. In fact, Fishman shows that the success of Québec in reversing the language shift back towards French in that province was in part due to their neglect of French enclaves beyond the borders of the province. By laying claim to provincial sovereignty as a "co-founder" of Canada and thus a "separate society" within Canada, Québec was able to reject policies that would promote bilingualism or diglossia within the province; however, by focusing their legislative powers within their own provincial borders, they have had to neglect the plight of smaller French enclaves throughout the rest of English Canada, let alone those remote enclaves in New England (Fishman *Reversing* 311).

Second, the active outside promotion of standard Québec French and standard Île-de-France French may have further deteriorated the unity of Franco-Americans by imposing two competing normative linguistic standards on them and constructing their maternal French as *un mauvais français* relative to the international standards of the Francophone world. In this context, working-class Franco-Americans would have found motivation to abandon French altogether in favor of the economic and social advantages of monolingual English (Redonnet 67). The deterioration of Franco-American cultural institutions between the 1910s and the 1970s can thus be traced to a double rupture in the imagined cultural identity that Franco-Americans shared with Québec: a rupture effected politically via the Americanization movement in New England in the 1920s and the nationalist movement in Québec after 1960; and a rupture effected linguistically via the imposition of linguistic standards—the "outside

promotion” of French and the promotion of English Only monolingualism in Franco-American enclaves.

In tracing the effects of this double rupture on the corresponding construction of Franco-American language attitudes, I argue that the ambivalent attitudes of despair and indifference as seen in the Paul Chassé papers embody the political and linguistic ruptures that separated New England from Québec. Contextualizing language attitudes within these ruptures reveals the connection between the language attitudes of a minority subculture and the larger political discourses that produce those attitudes. The dwindling presence of French in Rhode Island after 1920 seemed to be due to Franco-Americans freely abandoning French in favor of English, implicitly rejecting *survivance* in favor of American assimilation. This is repeatedly expressed in the Chassé papers in terms of the younger generation of Franco-Americans “blending” in with the American “mainstream,” and the insistence by the older generations that Franco-American youth were “no different” from other ethnicities.

However, a rhetorical approach to understanding attitudes as ideologically produced and strategically used—in other words, making an ethnography of the archive—helps explain the simultaneous and contradictory emphases placed in the Chassé papers both on “blending” and on ethnic distinction. The desire for “blending” represents a particular attitude which values the erasure or suppression of differences. Yet at the same time, the desire for ethnic distinction represents another attitude that values the contested history of French *survivance* in North America. The simultaneous expression of these two competing attitudes as though they embody a single, coherent Franco-American identity reveals what Trimbur seems to be

describing when he notes the persistence of linguistic memory in the United States. On one hand, the interview respondents convey an attitude that embraces assimilation. One set of cultural institutions—the public school, the church, the election, the job—depend on this attitude. On the other hand, when respondents convey an attitude of ethnic distinction by continuing to speak French, by reading French newspapers and by expressing a sense of negation and loss at the dwindling presence of French culture in Rhode Island, they are reproducing the attitudes on which another set of cultural institutions depend—namely, the family, the parochial school and the vestiges of international *francophonie* that at one time linked New England with Québec. The fact that the interview respondents can consistently adopt both attitudes at the same time without recognizing any contradiction or tension between them reveals the extent to which these attitudes are produced, on one hand, by the linguistic and political ruptures effected by Québécois nationalism and New England English monolingualism—two sides of the same ideology of linguistic modernity—and on the other hand, by the persistence of linguistic memory imperfectly deferred.

CHAPTER 5

WRITING TRANSLINGUAL HISTORIES

This dissertation grew out of my struggle to make sense of a specific reading experience. In my first semester of doctoral coursework, I encountered *Hunger for Memory*, Richard Rodriguez's memoir about his education in California in the 1950s, the son of Mexican immigrants. Rodriguez tells the story of first learning through his acquisition of English that he "had a public identity" (19), and of his eventual decision not to work in higher education out of an unwillingness to accept the benefits he stood to gain from affirmative action. Rodriguez is famous for endorsing English-only education and for opposing affirmative action, two positions that have been widely criticized in rhetoric and composition (Gilyard; Villanueva; Young). What I struggled to make sense of in his work, however, had nothing overtly to do with his politics; rather, it had to do with a particular orientation to language that informed his politics, an orientation that arranges languages in relation to each other at the same time that it takes such arrangements to be natural occurrences.

Rodriguez's positions in favor of English-only education and against affirmative action are based on two key ways of imagining language difference. First, Rodriguez arranges different languages spatially according to public and private uses. He writes, for example, that "it is not possible for a child—any child—ever to use his family's language in school. Not to understand this is to misunderstand the public uses

of schooling and to trivialize the nature of intimate life—a family’s ‘language’” (12).

He speculates further that, had he not learned English early in his education, he “would have delayed having to learn the language of public society” and he “would have evaded learning the great lesson of school, that I had a public identity” (19).

Rodriguez takes for granted that different languages should occupy distinct spheres of contemporary life, with Spanish located in the private space of the family home and English located in the public space of the classroom. From this assumption follows his conviction that the responsibility of language teachers is to help students successfully navigate this public/private distinction by reproducing it within students’ own personal lives, as Rodriguez did by relegating Spanish to “intimate life” and English to the construction of a “public identity.” It is exactly the reproduction of this distinction that Keith Gilyard criticized as Rodriguez’s attempt to turn “psychic pain into pedagogy” (11).

The division proves untenable for Rodriguez himself, as he laments his alienation from his family and from his past the further he pursues his education in English at Stanford and UC-Berkeley. His “intimate” family life in Spanish becomes a thing of the past. This alienation entails a second way of imagining language difference by arranging languages temporally, according to the past and the present/future. Rodriguez represents his own educational experience as that of “a child who cannot forget that his academic success distances him from a life he loved, even from his own memory of himself” (48). Family life becomes a memory, a “nostalgic” (69) vestige of a past that can never be restored or returned. Rodriguez takes for granted

that education—by which he means education designed to form students’ public identities in English—necessarily entails this temporal break with the past. He sees the “end of education” (73) as students’ ability to perceive this break and to represent it in language. He writes that “if, because of my schooling, I had grown culturally separated from my parents, my education finally had given me ways of speaking and caring about that fact” (72). Of course, the ability to represent the loss of the past is only possible for Rodriguez in English. Spanish is not equipped for such “speaking and caring” nor for the construction of such “facts.”¹

You’ll notice that nothing about these imaginings is particularly earth-shaking; they are the assumptions of linguistic modernity itself. What gives me pause in reading *Hunger of Memory* is not the way Rodriguez operationalizes these assumptions in narrating his own life story, but rather it’s what happens when I attempt to locate myself and my own language experiences in relation to his. As I read of his growing alienation from his family and from an Hispanic identity through his acquisition of native-speaker fluency in English, I am struck both by how powerfully I identify with his story and by how strange it should be—given the current political climate in the United States for bilingual education in general and given the contested status of Spanish as an American language in particular—that I can find so much common ground between us. I am a white monolingual American male, a third-generation descendant of immigrants, one who should be reaping the benefits of that

¹ Rodriguez’s language attitudes might be forcefully countered by Hill’s study (in Woolard 1998) of the way older Nahuatl speakers in Mexico represent the loss of the past through the nostalgic saying *āxān āmo can respēto* (“today, there is no respect”), showing that nostalgia is not a product just of language shift and the acquisition of a public identity in English.

“supposedly more or less automatic language shift that takes place in immigrant families” by which the third generation has completed “the break with ancestral languages in order to become fully assimilated, monolingual, native speakers of English” (Trimbur, “Dartmouth” 165). According to the cultural logic of linguistic modernity that Rodriguez follows, my identity should be firmly located in that public space delineated by English, the space into which Rodriguez attempts to construct his own public identity.

Yet much of what Rodriguez says about his language experiences speak to me about my own. He is of my mother’s generation, both born the same year though on opposite coasts, one the child of immigrants from the southern border (Mexico), the other the child of immigrants from the northern border (Québec). My mother’s first language was Canadian French, and unlike Rodriguez, she did not abandon her ancestral language, but has lived her entire life in Woonsocket, the same French-language enclave in Rhode Island where her parents lived and where I grew up. While Rodriguez went on to study English at prestigious universities and to a successful career in journalism, my mother dropped out of high school and struggled to earn a living as a stitcher and seamstress in textile factories. After reading *Hunger of Memory*, and after learning the history of the Sentinelle Affair, I can’t help wondering if the reason for her lack of education stemmed in part from a deep ambivalence that developed in French American communities both toward being asked to recognize their “public identity” in English and to the consequences of such recognition for one’s life in French.

Until I encountered *Hunger of Memory* and the critical responses to it, it never occurred to me that some part of my family identity might be inaccessible in English, and might only find representation in another language. In master narratives of American manifest destiny, these translingual histories are completely effaced in order to make possible a purified version of the American linguistic past. The version of history I learned in school, for example, said that I was not from Québec but from New England, land of pilgrims and puritans, that I was the descendant of bold English settlers who sought out a new world where freedom and democracy could flourish. Thank God and the Wampanoags for teaching us how to bury a fish so that corn could grow. Because of them, I could now partake in the bounty of American prosperity, as long as I did well in school, all of which—prosperity and school—happened to be available in English and none of which could be found in that musty old French that *memère* spoke. Where else but in English at school recess could I and my friends play He-Man, Master of the Universe? Or G.I. Joe, the Great American Hero? Or better yet, Star Wars, an entire galactic empire populated by dozens of alien languages, English the only intelligible one among them. Of all the places and languages in the universe, it felt absolutely natural that I should live in New England and speak English. I might even discover I was related to one of those pilgrims . . . if only I knew my family history. Why didn't I know my family history? Oh, right: most of it is only available in French, and as soon as the old people started telling those stories I tuned them out, knowing nothing they said could possibly be relevant to me.

Now I see that there is another version of history to tell, one that cannot be entirely represented in English. I have in mind another scene from my childhood, this one outside of school. I'm little, maybe four, standing in the kitchen under a yellow ceiling light, looking at my mother. The windows are dark, the early dark of November in Rhode Island. We'd just eaten dinner, and in my memory I'm feeling a little sleepy. My sister has gone off to some other room. I'm there with my mother and my aunt Pauline. My mother is holding out a dress on a clothes hanger. She's speaking a language they both spoke as children. My mother seems girlish to me as she talks, a kind of naïve excitement in her voice. She made this dress. "*Gar, Pauline. Gar.*" *Gar* is pronounced almost like *gow*, with just the slightest hint of an *r* curling the end of the word. *Pauline* is pronounced like *pollen*, with emphasis on the second syllable: *pol-LIN*. My four-year-old self does not have this language, nor will he ever, but he is sitting there in that moment watching that situation and listening to that utterance, and he understands exactly what is being said. *Gar* must mean *look*, he thinks to himself. My mother is telling her sister to look at the dress she made. *Gar* is the only word in my mother's French that I can distinctly recall hearing her speak, the only word I can remember understanding. It's the extent of my bilingualism.

This dissertation seeks to discover why it should have taken me until graduate school to understand this memory not as a natural and inevitable distancing of the generations of immigrant families, not as a success story of American assimilation, but as an instance of emergent bilingualism cut short by an ideology of linguistic purification in the US. In telling this story, I have struggled to avoid writing another

history of white ethnicity. I have instead attempted a translingual history of language difference in one region of the US, a history that does not take for granted the assumptions of linguistic modernity, but rather investigates how those assumptions have been constructed into naturally occurring facts about language. My goal is to put French and English into dialogue with each other. From the point of view of an academic researcher, this means investigating exactly what has been entailed in regimenting English as a quasi-official language in the US against other languages, how it was made the language of instruction at school while other languages (like Spanish and French) were relegated to the home. As Horner and Lu remind us, and as my analysis of the Sentinelle Affair has shown, such regimentation arises as “a reaction to perceived threats to the national identity and economy posed by the twins of outsourcing and immigration” (141). This regimentation is called for and justified out of either a concern for national unity or out of a concern for the liberal ideals of American democracy. In both cases, such concerns are addressed through schooling, which attempts to institutionalize both liberal rhetorics of social empowerment and conservative ideals of national unity by teaching English to non-English speakers to ensure that all students share a common cultural and linguistic heritage. My research has sought to discover in discursive terms what such unity and empowerment look like, who calls for them in what situations and for what purposes, how they arrange people in relation to each other, and what are the consequences of their fulfillment.

One of the ironies of this mission to empower and unify is that it produces alienation and division and turns political borders into instruments of identification.

Political borders exist in language; they are arguments about difference. They are drawn in part by reifying and regulating language differences, turning differences into divisions: whether the division of nation-states, the division of public from private spheres, or divisions of the past from the future. Such linguistic borders are not natural, ideologically neutral occurrences. I have identified a specific historical moment when such borders were drawn between French and English in the United States, making French a “foreign” language, making English a quasi-official national language, and naturalizing an ideology of English monolingualism. In order to account for the Sentinelle Affair in histories of literacy instruction, we must acknowledge that at least one monolingual English context—and perhaps *the* archetypal context of English monolingualism in the United States: English in New England—that this context was in fact a multilingual context in which languages were suppressed out of political and socioeconomic interest.

Multilingual Writing

Just as we saw the way the assumptions of linguistic modernity were institutionalized in the form of the USJB archives (see chapter one), we can also see the same assumptions institutionalized in the form of two specialized tracks in language teaching and learning in the US: second language writing (variously called ESL and L2 through the years) and mainstream composition. Both of these tracks are undergirded by a common ideology of what Horner and Trimbur call “unidirectional English monolingualism” (594). By “unidirectional monolingual English,” Horner and

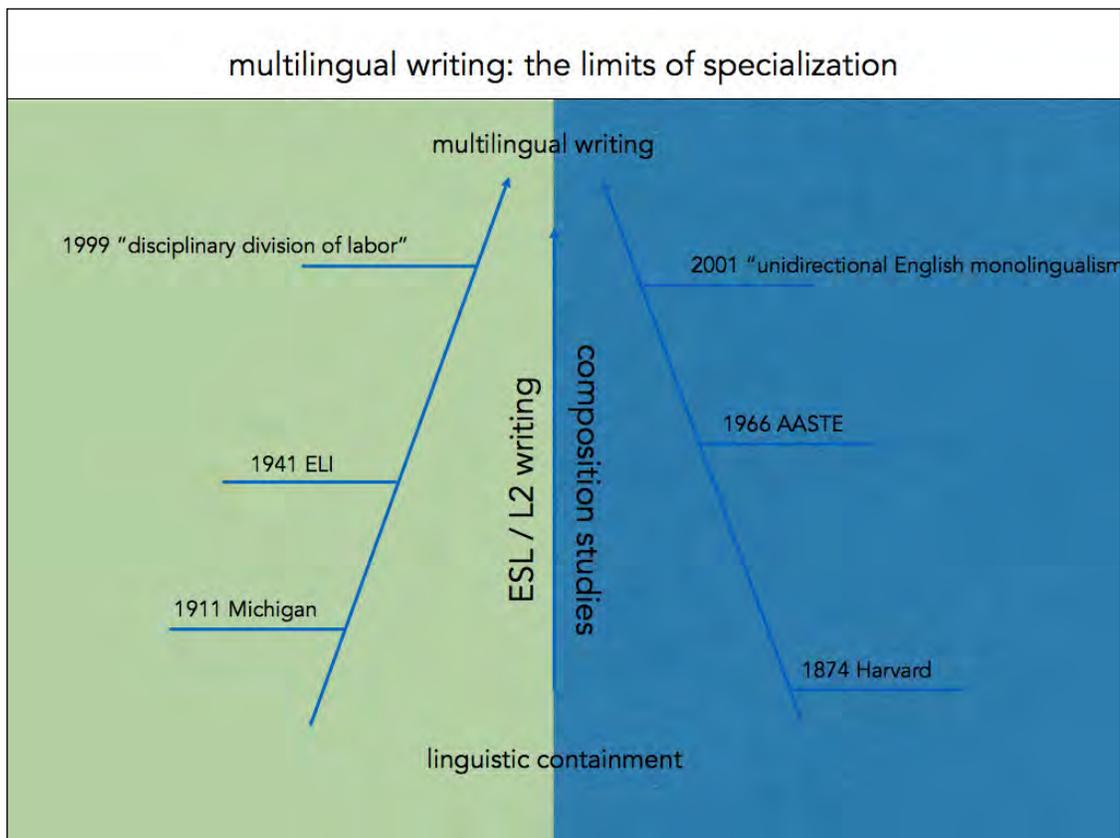


Figure 13. Historical trajectories of L2 writing and composition studies.

Trimbur identify a largely unexamined conceptual framework for language learning and for the design of teacher training programs in languages in the United States. This framework requires that all language acquisition be oriented towards the development of competence in English, and that levels of competence in English in and of themselves account “for the socioeconomic status of ethnic groups” (617). This framework holds the acquisition of English to be “natural, neutral and beneficial” for all language learners (Pennycook, *Cultural Politics* 9). The framework assumes that monolingual English language instruction is the result of an inevitable spread of Anglo Western culture, that it possesses ideological neutrality, and that language learning is simply a question of providing access to socioeconomic advancement. Horner and

Trimbur show that this framework undergirds the arrangement of the modern languages curriculum in American higher education (597).

L2 writing and composition studies developed out of two different historical trajectories, but both in the context of twentieth century English monolingual institutions of higher education (see Fig. 13). Each of these trajectories developed its own specialized tracks for language teaching and language learning. In L2 writing, Matsuda notes that “the first English class for international students was taught in 1911” at the University of Michigan (Matsuda “Composition” 701) and the first development of L2 pedagogy appeared in 1941 with the founding of the University of Michigan’s English Language Institute (ELI), which provided direct instruction to international students and developed its own pedagogical materials (Matsuda “Second” 17). In mainstream composition, historians point to Harvard’s 1874 implementation of a required freshman writing course as the initiation of composition’s modern history (Berlin; Brereton *Origins*; Connors *Composition*). Historians (Harris; Trimbur) likewise locate the specialized development of a composition pedagogy in the 1966 Dartmouth Conference, which Trimbur calls by its revealing official title, the Anglo American Seminar in the Teaching of English (“Dartmouth” 143).

Matsuda has written on the consequences of these two separate trajectories for both teachers and students. For students, he has critiqued the “policy of linguistic containment” that separates language differences from mainstream composition through instruments like proficiency tests and placement procedures (“Myth” 642).

These instruments are among the strategies for excluding language differences from higher education and for perpetuating what he calls a “myth of linguistic homogeneity...by making it seem as if language differences can be effectively removed from mainstream composition courses” (642). For teachers, Matsuda has described the “disciplinary division of labor” that emerged in the middle of the twentieth century between ESL and composition as different professional tracks. In 1966—the same year as the Dartmouth Conference was developing a teachable pedagogy for mainstream composition—ESL teachers left CCCC and formed TESL (“Composition” 700).

Recent composition theory has expressed a growing unease with what these policies of linguistic containment and these disciplinary divisions of labor mean *not for L2 writers but for L1 writers*. Some have argued against assuming that mainstream composition classes consist entirely of monolingual English speakers and writers. Others have developed pedagogical strategies that use language difference as the starting point for instruction and assessment. Matsuda is careful to avoid recommending the abandonment of placement procedures and proficiency tests. He does not recommend mainstreaming all L2 writers, because many such writers “prefer second-language sections of composition, where they feel more comfortable and where they are more likely to succeed” (“Myth” 649). According to Silva, research has shown L2 writing to be “strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in important ways from L1 writing” and thus in need of its own comprehensive composition theory distinct from L1 composition theory (201). L2 writing specialists

emphasize that these disciplinary divisions are effective and preferred by many second language writers. Where these divisions are problematized, however, is in the implication that if language differences can be effectively isolated and treated in the form of L2 programs, that means that mainstream composition consists of a purified linguistic space of monolingual English.

Instead, much composition research suggests there is more language difference in mainstream classrooms than what L1 writing pedagogies and assessment strategies have been able to detect and account for. This research seems to be an outgrowth of the field's increasingly nuanced and critical approaches to the study of error since the

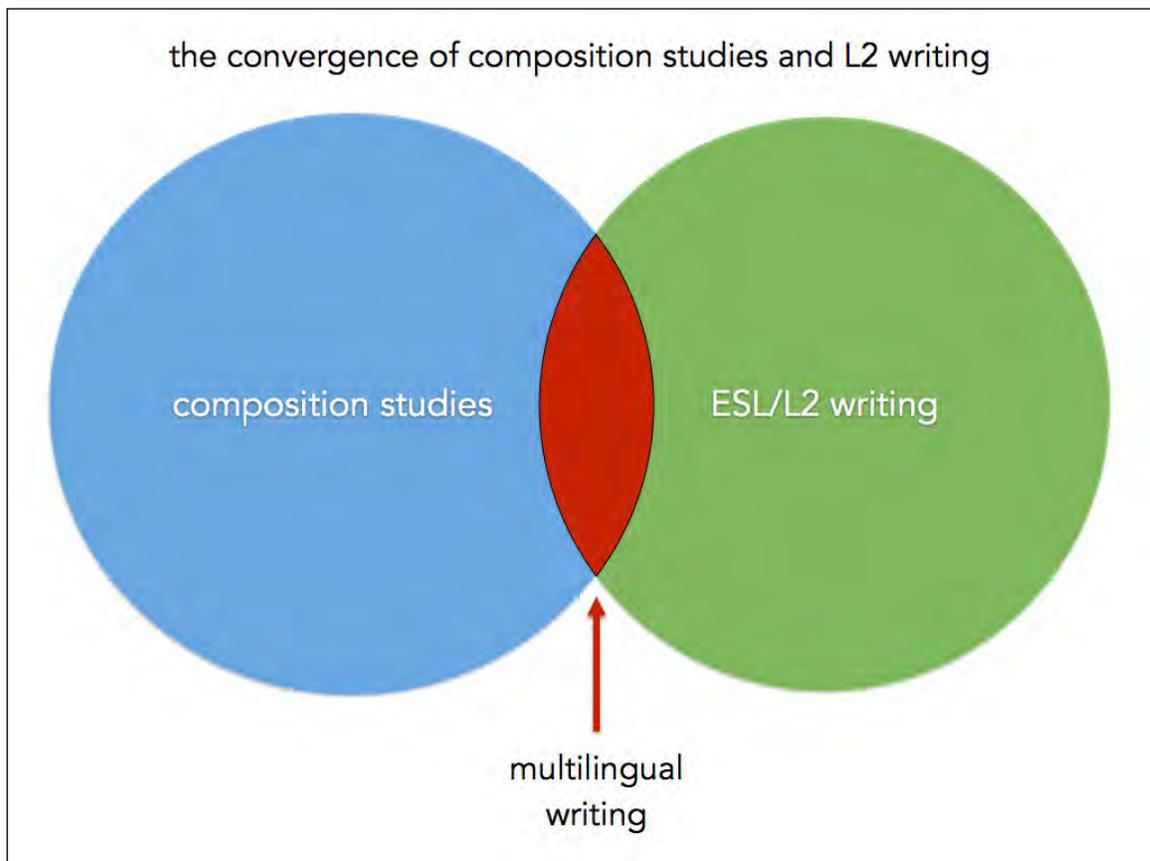


Figure 14. Multilingual writing in the convergence of composition studies and ESL/L2 writing.

publication of *Errors and Expectations* in 1979. The following year, Bartholomae published “The Study of Error,” a response to Shaughnessy in which he argued for the treatment of all writing as the writer’s attempt to compose an “approximation” of their idea of conventional discourse (255), rather than seeing error simply as incorrect language use. This critical thread was taken up again some years later by Bruce Horner in “Mapping Errors and Expectations” (1994). Influenced by the work of Anzaldúa and Pratt, Horner critiques Shaughnessy’s view of basic writing as a “frontier” (35), which he argues leads teachers to think of basic writing in imperialist terms of “conversion or deracination” (35). Horner’s reconsideration of error as a matter of sociocultural difference—evidence of a linguistic “border” (30) rather than of cognitive deficiency—led to an emergent conceptualization of a politics of language in composition studies.

In “Resisting Monolingualism in ‘English’,” Horner and Lu develop the notion of a “multilingual approach” to teaching writing that accounts for “the increasing heterogeneity of students’ language practices” (143) as evidence of the shifting and fracturing of English into “Englishes” in a global economy (142) rather than as poor or deficient language performances that need to be eradicated or accommodated to the demands of Standard Written English (SWE) or Edited American English (EAE). They critique approaches to language difference that assume language to be fixed and unchanging (145). This formulation of a “multilingual approach” represented a convergence of L2 writing and mainstream composition, moving the disciplinary division from policies of linguistic containment to strategies of multilingualism (see

Fig. 14). In terms of pedagogical strategy, teaching multilingual writing entails turning our attention towards the rhetorical work students do *between* languages rather than within one or another language, what Canagarajah terms “shuttling” between languages. In Canagarajah’s formulation, students and teachers should focus on developing “versatility” in response to the “changing contexts of communication” that demand writers “switch their languages, discourses, and identities in response to this contextual change,” re-conceiving of “textual difference” not as error but as “a strategic and creative choice by the author to attain his or her rhetorical objectives” (“Toward” 591). Canagarajah notes that in the “vast, diffuse, virtual community of global English, one always has to learn a lot—and rapidly—as one decides which receptive and productive resources to adopt for a context” (“Multilingual” 20). The development of linguistic and rhetorical versatility in response to shifting contexts encourages us to rethink language teaching and learning not as emphasizing correctness or even appropriateness to the situation, but that instead emphasizes creativity and innovation, as every language performance is an act of rhetorical invention and identity constitution.

In terms of assessing such rhetorical work, Jay Jordan offers an array of multilingual competencies through which writing teachers can more effectively detect and evaluate students’ multilingual language performances. For example, Jordan identifies the deployment of 1) “lexical and syntactic innovation;” 2) rhetorical and linguistic accommodation and resistance; and 3) meta-discursive sensitivity as areas where students can develop sophisticated rhetorical knowledge as they move between

languages and discourses for different communicative contexts (105). We can see the deployment of linguistic innovation, rhetorical accommodation, and meta-discursive sensitivity in Canagarajah's example of "a typical interaction among multilinguals" ("Multilingual" 20). He describes a telephone conversation between a cheese supplier in Europe and a cheese importer in Egypt in which both must use English as a lingua franca to negotiate the return of a shipment of spoiled cheese. In the exchange, the Egyptian customer complains that the cheese is "blowing" (21), after which they must work to negotiate the meaning of "blowing" in this context in order for both "to achieve their social purpose [i.e., a business transaction] through English" (22). Canagarajah observes that both are appropriating English for their purposes, "without regard to what native speakers may use in these contexts" (21). The exchange represents what composition teachers like Jordan might be looking for in assessing competencies in innovation, accommodation/resistance, and meta-discursive sensitivity. It's important to emphasize that this work leads to a more nuanced understanding of language difference not only in already-designated L2 writing sections, but also in writing spaces that up to this point have been thought of as monolingual. Students in such classrooms may already be putting into practice many of the above multilingual rhetorical competencies, but our pedagogical approaches do not know how to detect them, assess them, and value them. Our pedagogies might move from the development of rhetorical competencies in monolingual situations to the development of rhetorical competencies in lingua franca spaces.

As Canagarajah notes, the multilingual writing research he conducts requires that the researcher also be multilingual (“Toward” 591). The challenge, then, for writing instructors who identify as monolingual native English speakers is to position ourselves as teachers, scholars and researchers in relation to this disciplinary convergence, when many of us may not be multilingual. We need to develop a strategic awareness of how we, too, are always already shuttling between languages even when our language practices seem to represent a purified version of English. Without this strategic awareness, composition teachers and researchers tacitly take up the ideologies of linguistic modernity in the way we position ourselves as language experts in relation to students and their language differences; in our attitudes towards language difference in the classroom; and in our pedagogical strategies for (de)valuing it and assessing difference as error. To begin addressing this challenge, the field of composition and rhetoric must first acknowledge the suppressed historical presence of multilingual writing in US systems of higher education and the suppressed historical presence of alternate systems of education, like the *collège classique* system, as US systems of education. If we consider francophone education part of the history of writing instruction in the United States, we must acknowledge that our institutional structures and pedagogical practices emerged out of the suppression of multilingual complexity and out of the political need to purify English from multilingual contamination. To the extent that we take those institutional structures and pedagogical practices for granted, we are continually enacting that suppression and purification on ourselves and our students.

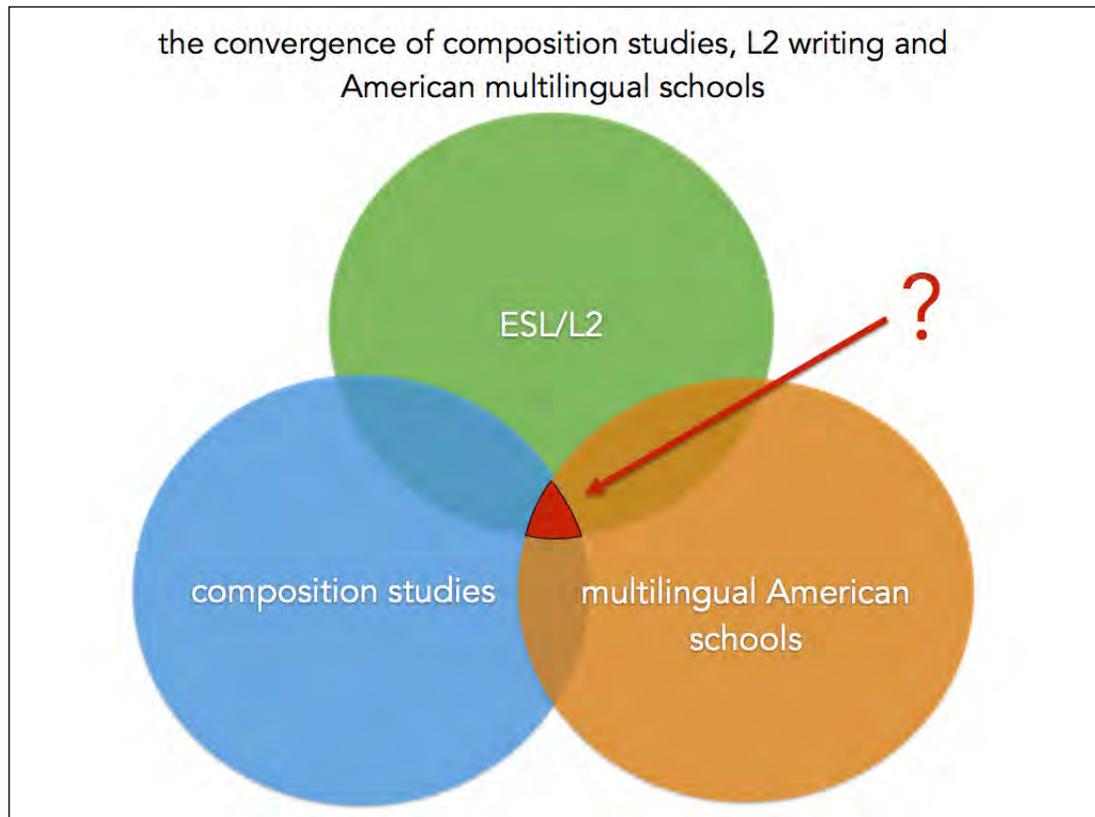


Figure 15. Re-imagining institutional structures and pedagogical practices for writing instruction.

Writing Translingual Histories

We can formulate alternate structures and alternate practices, however, if we bring the francophone presence to consciousness and revise our conceptualization of what is possible in writing instruction and literacy acquisition out of that consciousness (see Fig. 15). The rehabilitation of a suppressed francophone presence forces us to problematize certain disciplinary assumptions which even scholars of multilingual writing work take for granted. Matsuda's historical framework, for example, is limited to the trajectory of ESL and L2 writing within the context of

English monolingual institutions. However, rather than recognizing this limitation in his work, he instead writes as though his history applies broadly to “US higher education” (“Second” 17), implying that his history is inclusive of language difference across all institutions of higher education in this country. Similarly, Horner and Trimbur’s historical framework is limited to the modernization of language curriculums at English monolingual institutions. Yet they write in terms of “US college composition” (594), implying that their history is inclusive of language curriculums at all institutions of higher education in this country.

This unacknowledged limitation restricts the archival materials they can access as evidence. Matsuda’s evidence, for example, is restricted to the University of Michigan (“Second” 17), the CCCC (18), and the City University of New York (23). Within this restricted framework, language difference appears to be an emergent issue in the twentieth century history of US writing instruction, rather than as an issue integral to the development of such instruction. We might instead contextualize such institutional histories within overt political struggles to regulate cross-language relations in ways that favored English and devalued other languages. As late as 1932, for example—nine years before the founding of the ELI at Michigan—a writer in the French newspapers pointed to the 1883 founding of the MLA as evidence of the ascendancy of French as one of many languages taught in the United States, arguing that the association “did much to increase the influence of French” and that by 1896 French had “become mandatory in almost all universities in the country” (“La Langue”). The writer was apparently unaware of the English-language publication in

PMLA of James Morgan Hart’s “English as a Living Language,” in which Hart argued for the centrality of English fluency to all other language work. Hart asks *PMLA* readers, “Are you prepared to assert that a student is adequately trained in German, let us say, when he is unable to express in English the grammatical logic of a German sentence” (qtd. in Horner and Trimbur 606)? The institutions and organizations that Matsuda studies assume the primacy of English to all other language instruction—and to all academic training—and ignore the presence of, let us say, French language schools in which students were asked to explain the “grammatical logic” of French *in French*.

Similarly, Horner and Trimbur restrict their archival materials to institutions like Yale (597), Harvard (598), and Williams College (606). Within this restricted framework, monolingual English instruction appears to be the result of a modernizing shift in American education away from the study of the classical languages (Latin, Greek and Hebrew), rather than as a political shift that suppressed the increasing influence of Latinate language speakers from the U.S. public sphere. Daignault complained of exactly this shift away from French and toward English as a language of instruction for teaching Latin in French schools, not because he was against modernization, but because French-speaking students could learn Latin better in French than in English. After the implementation of the NCWC’s English Only policy, Daignault asks readers of *La Sentinelle* to “consider the monumental pedagogical error that is the teaching of Latin and Greek using English as the language of instruction” (Juillet “Programme”). He argues that teaching French-language students

Latin using English as the language of instruction alienates them from their own cultural identity, disabling students from situating their language and culture in relation to Greco-Roman civilization and de-historicizing their sense of being French in North America. “For a French speaker,” Daignault concludes, “these classical studies in English would be like studying French literature through French works translated into English.” As Horner suggests, we should view this linguistic alienation as the transformation of multilingual writers into basic writers, mapping the “frontier” of basic writing in imperialist terms of “conversion or deracination” (35).

As the Sentinelle Affair suggests, the boundaries drawn around “US higher education” and “US college composition” have historically required the suppression of alternate versions of the US. This suppression yields an exclusion of actual multilingual bodies—US citizens and their children—from participation in a public sphere purified in English. If we are to avoid reproducing this process of exclusion and purification, we must accommodate multiple histories and multiple languages into our understanding of what it means to teach and write in a college/*collège* in the United States (see Figure 3). We must attend to the multisitedness of the history of US composition itself, seeing its history as constituted by overlapping ideologies, public spheres, languages, and discourses in the making of writing classrooms. The multisitedness of US college composition allows us to reframe monolingual institutional structures and practices in the context of suppressed histories of multilingual language instruction.

Horner and Lu point out that the “multilingual approach” to accounting for language difference shifts the framing of writing and language performance from a national and monolingual perspective to a multilingual and global perspective (“Resisting” 148). This shift in perspective makes available a range of other kinds of evidence that will allow researchers to construct alternate accounts of what writing is and what difference means in the United States. Horner and Lu point, for example, to Lu’s use of unconventional written artifacts like “the anonymous Chinese writer of the sign ‘Collecting Money Toilet’” to help her describe the way students’ might harness a range of linguistic resources available to them. Students can learn to use these resources to strategically “intervene” in global markets “by contesting power relations involved in the construction of EAE/SWE and its status as the ‘power’ language” (148) as well as contesting what counts as “powerful language” (150). This work of critical intervention into global linguistic and material economies has a parallel in the work of French organizers of the FCFA fundraising campaign for Mount St. Charles in Woonsocket, as they sought to create a literacy program for Franco-Americans that could counter the social arrangement of Franco-Belgian capital, intellectual labor and Franco-American manual labor in the local textile economy. What Horner and Lu propose, then, as a novel approach to accounting for language difference in US college composition, in fact has historical precedence in our field once we reframe our understanding of the field to include multilingual American *collèges*.

In contrast to Canagarajah's research designs—which require multilingual researchers—scholars in rhetoric and composition can do the archival work necessary to write multilingual histories and chart multilingual networks in the United States without themselves being multilingual. It does require that we develop our linguistic resources alongside our language research, and that we rely on multilingual scholars in other fields such as history, linguistics, and anthropology who have turned up important multilingual artifacts and made them available to monolingual English researchers. When I was still in coursework, I began to rehabilitate my high school knowledge of French so that I could begin to read it for research purposes (I did have the benefit of growing up in Woonsocket, where French was still ubiquitous during my childhood). In conducting the research for this dissertation, I relied on the rich field of francophone historical writing available in English as a guidepost for helping me study primary sources that were available only in French. I relied on bilingual dictionaries of Parisian and Canadian French, dictionaries of *joual* slang terms and anglicisms, and online multilingual forums for translation and language learning. I sought out the assistance of French scholars and language teachers through my university and through the local chapter of the Alliance Française who could answer my questions about language usage, and historical language shifts.

These multilingual networks have enabled me to expand my own linguistic resources at the same time that I am using these resources in the situated context of academic research. In Horner and Lu's terms, I am constructing a multilingual identity for myself by performing that identity in language: “[i]dentity itself is viewed as

performed, constructed in language use rather than expressed or revealed through language” (148). Multilingualism does not have to be prior to research; they can be mutually constitutive. I began by viewing my own truncated bilingualism as part of the story I was trying to tell. From there, my performance of a multilingual identity and my writing of a translingual history of language difference became simultaneous, mutually constitutive language acts.

In terms of broad movements in the social sciences, writers of translingual histories of language difference contribute to the restoration of rhetorical agency to social and historical actors who operated within and against the discursive structures of history. The conceptual binaries of modernity arrange languages spatially and temporally—as Richard Rodriguez’s memoir attests. The discursive structures that regulate this arrangement consist of terms like public/private; native/foreign; past/future; and modern/traditional. In order to develop the multilingual and global perspective called for by Horner and Lu’s multilingual approach, our histories must finally account for themselves in the context of one more conceptual binary: center and periphery. As Phillipson shows us, English is one of the exported commodities of the imperial center, packaged into English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum materials, attached to sociopolitical agreements between developed and developing countries, and adopted in global niche markets out of the belief that English will be one of the technologies of modernization through which people will gain access to global flows of capital and goods. Horner and Lu see English Only arguments

anticipat[ing] a linguistically homogeneous global future in which, instead of the presence of a plethora of shifting and interacting world Englishes as well as other languages, it is imagined that everyone will speak and write something termed ‘standard English’ to insure efficiency in the worldwide conduct of economic transactions (142).

Rather than trying to bring people into the global traffic of goods, capital and labor, Pennycook suggests that ELT might do better to bring students into “the global traffic of meaning,” so that linguistic competence is measured by critical engagement with the discursive structures which impose meaning on us all in the form of “social, cultural and historical meanings conveyed by the grammar and lexicon” of English (“English” 34).

In short, the rehabilitation of rhetorical agency is brought about by shifting our analyses from the categories of discursive structure (e.g., center and periphery) to the practices of individuals operating within and against those structures. A neat parsing of the relationship between discursive structure and individual practice in multilingual studies of English can be seen by comparing the approaches in Robert Phillipson’s *Linguistic Imperialism* and Suresh Canagarajah’s *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism*. Phillipson’s book is a study of the discourses that make English Language Teaching (ELT) into a global industry that values languages as market commodities in relation to English. He traces the historical development of ELT during the period when Britain was divesting itself of its imperial territories. He looks specifically at policies for promoting English internationally as they were established by official state

agencies like the British Council in England and the Cultural Relations Division of the US State Department.

This focus on official state policy and its determining effect on language relations in former British territories makes *Linguistic Imperialism* a structuralist account of ELT that Canagarajah seeks to complicate with his idea of “micro-politics” (*Resisting* 29). Canagarajah criticizes Phillipson’s inability to see how imperialism is received in peripheral territories. This inability derives from a methodology that attributes political motives only to the imperial center. Thus Phillipson limits his study to official documents of the imperial center and to interviews with western ELT experts (*Resisting* 42). By contrast, Canagarajah’s work is an ethnographic study of ELT classrooms in Jaffna, an approach based on his belief that “to really study how linguistic imperialism is carried out in the periphery . . . one must undertake work in the periphery” (*Resisting* 43). Where Phillipson’s study is concerned with the totalizing effects of ideological state apparatuses like agencies of the British Council and the US State Department, Canagarajah’s study is a practice-oriented response that looks at how individual teachers and students use imperialist policies to enact their own agendas through resistance. Together, they represent two views of language ideologies in practice, one from the imperial center and the other from the imperial periphery.

My project, however, seeks to collapse the binary between periphery and center by showing how the center has historically constructed itself as such. By studying the discursive structures designed to suppress language difference, and the

language practices of a prominent linguistic minority located in an imperial center and subjected to those structures, I expose the imperial center as itself an interstitial space, composed between differences. Francophone New England represents a periphery-in-the-center, as francophone cultural agents developed tactics for living in the midst of anglophone domination. We can see the later sublimation of these tactics into white ethnic identifications of being “same as everyone else” while maintaining distinct language practices as a French people, a tactical authenticity designed to shift one’s language and identity to suit the needs of potentially treacherous and ever-shifting communicative contexts. Writing translingual histories of language difference will enable us to acknowledge and incorporate multilingual complexities into our identities as erstwhile monolingual language teachers and researchers; into our language attitudes as we struggle to account for the perplexity of language difference in student writing; and into a multisited conceptualization of both our writing classrooms and our histories of US college/*collège* composition and US higher education/*hautes études*.

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