

The German Connection in NYC: A Story of Lederhosen and Bratwurst on Fifth Avenue

John Carlino

Kenmore West High School

On September 20th, 2002, eight students, squirming with excitement, two teachers with all fingers and toes crossed, and two equally excited parent chaperones boarded a plane in Buffalo, NY, bound for New York City and the 45th Annual German-American Steuben Parade. I was introduced to the idea of taking students to the parade in May 2001, and immediately recognized it for the opportunity it was - the perfect time, location and event for our students to explore our collective German-American heritage, to speak German with real Germans only one hour from home, to experience German culture live, and to celebrate the success of having finally reached the upper level German class. Three pavement-pounding days later, we returned from what some called the most exciting experience of their lives!

Leaving our luggage at our youth hostel, we jumped on a subway headed downtown. After all we had seen and heard about New York in the past year, our first stop, as difficult as it was, had to be to Ground Zero. After walking through Trinity Church and viewing the displays of memorials and mementos, we proceeded to the fence surrounding the clean-up site. Despite the media images burned into our minds, it was difficult to imagine the scene that had taken place there just one year ago. After a moment of quiet reflection, we made our way through Chinatown and the Financial District to Battery Park, where we ran into our first group of Germans while waiting in line for the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island ferry. Once on the boat, our students seized the moment and yelled out to the German firemen on the deck below, "Wir lieben Deutsch! Juu huu!" (We love German! Woo hoo!), thus starting one of many friendly, get-to-know-you conversations in German that took place over the course of the weekend. As the ferry brought us closer to Ellis Island, we temporarily parted ways with our new acquaintances, and headed into the museum of immigration on Ellis Island

Ellis Island was a terrific spot to start our official German-American weekend tour. If you have never been to this stunningly renovated building to view the artifacts left behind by past generations of immigrants to our country, it certainly is worth the trip! Walking through the Registry Hall and thinking about how my grandfather may have sat in that very room over one hundred years ago left me with an odd sense of the serpentine nature that our paths take from generation to generation. Learning the details of German immigration to the U.S. was also fascinating. Detailed blueprints of the great German steam liners, posters advertising passage from Hamburg or Bremen to New York gave us a glimpse of a world gone by, one that was still a place of awesome distances - a world where a journey we can make today in under 10 hours was the journey of a lifetime.

Time warp forward to 1929, hike up to Midtown Manhattan, and up to the observation deck of what was then and is today the tallest building in Manhattan - the Empire State Building. From this phenomenal vantage point, already well after sunset, Manhattan was a shimmering sea of lights. As luck would have it, the sky was perfectly clear and we were just in time to see the moon rise over the East River. Down a few flights, forward 73 years, up a few blocks and we were in the middle of Times Square, as light as day, where you would swear you could physically feel the pulse of the city coursing through your body. After a pilgrimage break to look at the MTV building and an ice cream break at the Häagen-Dazs shop (well, it sounded German!) we headed 'home' to our hostel to rest up for the big parade!

A few hardy souls were up at the crack of dawn for a run in Central Park, and then all headed off to St. Patrick's Cathedral for a sampling of German pomp and circumstance. Thinking we were in for a brief ecumenical service, we were surprised to find out we were attending Mass, in German, with the

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Researchers who study teaching and learning in the classroom and who assess the results have long been aware of the fact that there are many external variables that influence what takes place in the classroom. A few of these are factors such as the teacher's own social background, ethnicity, preparation, motivation and personality; parallel characteristics of the students, and the climate that exists in the school, the community and the nation, as well as the culture(s) of the foregoing. The situation is a very complex one.

The articles in this issue address a number of these variables from different perspectives. In the first article, Elvira Morse addresses the issue of organizational "health" at a variety levels, and suggests ways create a "healthy" LOTE department. Then, Joanne O'Toole reports the results of a rigorously conducted survey that will help teachers to give reliable answers from the LOTE perspective to the question "What do colleges want?". Her results certainly can be helpful in motivating students to stay in the LOTE program at higher levels. Finally, in an article reprinted from ERIC, Kathleen M. Marcos and Joy Kreeft Peyton talk about ways in which different players can help to foster the development of a language-proficient society.

We cannot expect the strategies suggested in these articles to show immediate results, but if enough of us adapt them and adopt them, the context for teaching and learning languages other than English will certainly become increasingly positive.

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Cardinal and more pomp and circumstance than any of us had ever before experienced. The song sheets helped, and before we knew it, (after a brief photo-op with Siegfried and Roy, the Grand Marshals of the parade) we were out on Fifth Avenue where we kept ourselves busy in stores like Saks, Tiffany's and FAO Schwarz until we were to line up for the parade.

Then it was time! We unfurled our Kenmore school banner, found our spot, and jumped in the parade when our turn came. Almost immediately we lost four from our group, who decided it was more fun, and financially more rewarding, to march with the group of Germans in traditional costumes behind us. The Germans had offered to pay our students \$50 to carry their banner for them. Since the entire negotiation did take place in German we let them go, and got some great pictures out of the deal too! After two hours and two miles marching up Fifth Avenue, waving at the crowd and fielding snow jokes, our moment in the spotlight was over. We headed unceremoniously back to the youth hostel to get ready for our evening activity, a two-hour cruise around lower Manhattan.

Once again the views were breathtaking as we gazed up the unnaturally illuminated urban canyons from the water. Our cruise narrator told us many stories about the history of New York, more than one of which involved a German connection. To name two: Gustav Eiffel, the designer of the interior support structure of the Statue of Liberty (alright, he was French, but with a great German name!) and John Augustus Roebling, architect of the Brooklyn Bridge, born in Muhlhausen, Thuringia in 1806.

With one day left and too much to see, we still managed to take in quite a bit more. Sunday was our official museum day, and our first visit was to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, which is located on Orchard Street, near East Houston. Our guide explained to us how the building had been boarded up in the 30's during Mayor LaGuardia's campaign to clean up the Lower East Side, and how by some great serendipitous fluke, the building was left virtually untouched until the early eighties when it was 'discovered'. At that time, the building almost came under the wrecking ball, but was then recognized for its unique value, and rescued. The tenement building was preserved as it was found and speaks untold volumes to the horrendous living conditions endured by millions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Especially interesting to our students was the apartment of a German-Jewish family of the 1870's.

Interestingly, for a few of the displays, the museum was able to contact descendants of the original occupants and obtain photographs, authentic furnishings and stories of their lives after they left their 'home' in the great melting pot. It was truly an eye-opening experience to compare a tenement apartment to our living arrangements and lifestyle today.

After an authentic pastrami Reuben extravaganza at the renowned Katz' Deli on East Houston, we made our way to our last official stop - MOMA, which has temporarily relocated to Queens while the Manhattan site is being renovated. By this point, many of us were already on information overload, but a quiet walk through the gallery and the opportunity to view works by artists such as Klimt, Kirchner and many others did us all good, and also gave us time to reflect on the whirlwind that was the past 3 days.

A few hours later, sitting in the terminal waiting for our flight, we played our unique version of "Survivor". As we sat in a circle and shared what we had liked best about the three days, it became overwhelmingly apparent that this had been one of those trips - the ones that the kids and the teachers will remember forever. The emotion of being in NYC after 9/11, the newness and excitement of it all for us 'rural' Buffalonians, the total fun of marching in a parade on Fifth Avenue - all added up to a huge, collective "wow!" from the group. With as much ceremony as we could muster in our weariness, we voted ourselves all off the island, and flew home. September 2003, ready or not here we come again, NYC!

Special thanks to Louise Terry for passing along the great idea, and to the German-American Steuben Parade Committee, who generously helped us out with a \$300 travel stipend!

Weblinks to the sites we visited:

<http://www.gasp-ny.org/>
<http://www.ellisland.org/>
<http://www.esbnyc.com/>
<http://www.circleline.com/sightseeing.htm>
<http://www.tenement.org/>
<http://www.moma.org/>
<http://www.citypass.com/>

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Foreign Languages for Our Times

Dr. Louise Terry and Judy Martialay
Co-Chairs, NYS AFLT Public Advocacy Committee

How many times have we foreign language teachers been stopped in the middle of a lesson to be asked by a student, "Why are we taking this subject? Doesn't the whole world speak English?"

We teachers of LOTE are constantly asked to make the case for foreign language study to students, parents, the community and the country. What is the rationale for foreign language study in our times? How do we convince students and the community that foreign languages should be an important part of their preparation for the future?

Six speakers addressed various aspects of this subject at the panel discussion, "Foreign Languages for our Times - the Case for Foreign Languages" during the NYS AFLT Annual Meeting at the Nevele Grande Hotel, Oct.11-13, 2002.

International Business

According to Duleep Deosthale, Assistant Dean for International Education at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, from a business perspective in today's environment all corporations have to be global players: their survival is based on doing business all over the world. The philosophy could very well be: "Go Global, Identify Local" This means that to be successful, global companies have to take on a local identity. Consequently, for international business, knowledge of the local language is critical to move ahead.

Dr. Deosthale informs us that the majority of the educated world today speaks not one, but at least two, if not more, languages. Unfortunately the monolingual American is quickly becoming a shrinking linguistic minority who will eventually lose out to those who can communicate better with their prospective clients.

Although over 60% of US legislators do not even hold a passport, and thus have never traveled abroad, they are very responsive to the business perspective of the global economy. Dr. Deosthale recalls an incident from his days in Alabama. Due to the results of viability studies, German was in danger of being eliminated from public school in the state. This was happening at a time when a German auto giant had just announced that they would locate their first plant in the US in the State of Alabama. A letter writing campaign by corporate supporters concerned with this contradiction made education officials realize the possible public relations embarrassment involved with the elimination of the teaching of German. Fortunately, things were turned around and the teaching of German has found a revival thanks to the efforts of many in the state.

In order to motivate students to study foreign languages, teachers need to bring reality into the classroom. Teachers should invite speakers from the business community who have ties abroad into their classrooms to speak with students so that they can emphasize the types of careers which need foreign language skills. Language needs to be "repackaged" for the new generations that today's students become aware that learning a language does not only mean a job in teaching but enhances every career option. The more languages you know, the more your options increase.

Languages for National Security

Sergeant First Class Randall Gossert, U.S. Army Language Advocate, demonstrated what happens when the person who is interrogating a prisoner doesn't know the local language. The "prisoner" (Paul Sabatino, Co-Chair, NYS AFLT Foreign Language for Business Committee) spoke French, and he was interrogated by Sergeant Gossert in English. The interpreter, after hearing the question in English, translated it into French. However, he mis-translated on purpose. Consequently, the question, "Where are your companions hiding?" became "What is your favorite food?" Sgt. Gossert explained that this is a replica of a situation which really occurred during the Vietnam War, when the translator turned out to be Vietcong. The importance of having personnel who can speak and understand foreign languages is crucial for the Armed Forces and for our national security.

Research

In the past year, much attention has been centered around the need for our country to have people who can speak languages such as Arabic for national security. The first foreign language of most students in this country is usually not a language critical for national security. In general, students study Spanish, French, German, Italian or Latin. How can we make a connection with the preparation that students receive by studying a second language with the study of a third language, perhaps a critically needed language?

Mike Ledgerwood, PhD., Director of the Language Learning and Research Center, SUNY, Stony Brook, and tenured professor of French and Technology and Education, informs us that there are currently fewer than 20 students majoring in Arabic in the United States. The federal government clearly has an interest in promoting "critical language" study in the United States. Yet, can we say that our stu-

dents taking commonly taught languages have the ability to learn less commonly taught languages more easily?

There is a significant amount of research on third language acquisition in the European Union. A major European Third Language Acquisition Association will hold its second conference in November. Some conclusions based on this research are:

It is believed that learning a third language is easier after learning a second. The amount of ease varies greatly. Similarity of the second language aids in learning the third language; conversely, dissimilarity of second language to third language reduces the ability to transfer already acquired cognitive knowledge and strategies. Learner age and level of desired proficiency are among other factors.

Second and third language acquisition are not that different.

Learner motivation is the key factor in language learning. The advantages in foreign language learning, whether it is second or third, are that the discipline helps the student to become a better thinker; it helps with different aspects of memory; students who have completed four years of foreign language study not only do better on the verbal portion of the SAT's but also do as well on the math test as do students who have studied four to five years of math but no foreign languages.

Teachers interested in recent research on the benefits of second language learning should visit the websites of the Center for Applied Linguistics (<http://www.cal.org>); and of the Eric Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics (<http://www.cal.org/ericcl/>). Journals such as *Second Language Research* also treat the topic.

The Power of Language

Plattsburgh Mayor Daniel Stewart has used his knowledge of French to bring the people of Plattsburgh, just 17 miles south from the Quebec border, and those of the province of Quebec together. His innovative programs promise social and business opportunities for all involved.

Mayor Stewart, who is the recipient of the 2002 NYSAFLT Friend of Foreign Language Award, has learned French after many visits to his favorite place, Quebec. Since he has become Mayor, he has organized artistic and cultural exchanges between Plattsburgh, Burlington, Vt. and St. Jean sur Richelieu, Quebec. These exchanges have resulted in increased personal and business contacts. Some of the Plattsburgh area participants encouraged by the Mayor, are now enrolled in conversational French courses.

Mayor Stewart has made videos in French appealing to the Quebequers to move to the Plattsburgh area where employment is available with expanding companies. The response from

Quebequers has been very positive; they are more favorable to Americans than to English-speaking Canadians. When Quebequers see Americans reaching out to them in French, their response is amazing.

Mayor Stewart advises teachers to approach legislators and other politicians for funding for exchange programs; this appeals to politicians because it casts them in a positive image. He also states that many mayors hold regular press conferences, during which student exchange programs can be publicized.

The National Scene

Dr. Pat Barr-Harrison, Keynote Speaker at the 2002 NYSAFLT Annual Meeting and Foreign Language Supervisor, Prince George's County Public Schools, MD., informed us that the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on Sept. 23-24, 2002, held an Embassy Forum on World Languages and International Studies in Washington, D.C. The participants included 27 embassy cultural attachés, foreign language state specialists, and presidents or directors of major foreign language organizations in the U.S.

The topics discussed were how to bring the world to the US classroom and what the embassies, the USDE and the US Department of State can do to help promote foreign language study. The USDE and the US Department of State do help promote foreign language study. The cultural attachés are anxious to help support programs such as teacher scholarships to their countries and special projects in schools. The Joint National Council for Languages, JNCL, based in Washington, D.C., is a policy/advocate organization for foreign languages in the US. The organization is working on developing a message and a motto which will effectively reach the public.

Dr. Pat Barr-Harrison made some additional points:

We should stay positive and continue to educate the public. Teachers should ask for copies of the Modern Language Association (MLA) brochure, "Knowing Other Languages Brings Opportunities" (flbrochure@mla.org, Modern Language Association, 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6981). This brochure mentions the benefits of foreign language study: development of analytical and cognitive skills; improvement of native language usage; language connection to all careers. Teachers should place copies of these brochures in the Guidance Office of their schools.

Teachers should form relationships with politicians and legislators, the Governor, their Mayor, New York State Legislators, US Senators and Representatives by inviting them into their classrooms and sending along to them articles about events in the foreign language classroom. Legislators keep a file, and even if they do not

respond immediately, someday they will get back to you. As Dr. Pat says: "If the door is open long enough, they will walk through."

Foreign Languages and Public Relations

Knowing how to reach out to and convince the public of the importance of foreign language study is as important as making the case for foreign languages itself. Roseann Loreface, Chair of the NYSAFLT Public Relations Committee, gave us an update of the NYSAFLT campaign to promote foreign languages in New York State.

NYSAFLT has been working on a plan to bring foreign languages to the attention of the public with Eric Mower, Inc., the public relations firm based in Syracuse, NY. As Roseann explains, the plan is divided into stages:

Stage 1: organization of materials; forming position papers covering such topics as the importance of foreign language for business; foreign languages for national defense. This has been in progress for two years.

Stage 2: Massive Media Events, targeting the media for special occasions relevant to foreign languages throughout the year.

Press releases have been mailed to education journalists, to radio and TV stations throughout the state for Foreign Language Week 2002; beginning of this current school year coinciding with the anniversary of 9/11 terrorist attacks;

International Education Week in November. There has already been much positive coverage generated by the media blitz. The agency targeted 600 media outlets state-wide. Follow-ups are planned with contact people including parents, students and businesspeople across the state. Further action will be based on the response to these efforts.

This endeavor is funded by NYSAFLT through 2003.

Stage 3: Foundation Support: approaching foundations for funds starting in 2003 for future campaigns. NYSAFLT needs to gather more research on such issues as: future business projections; future immigrant patterns. The NYSAFLT team working on

this effort needs to discover ways to approach foundations, and how to make presentations to foundations. It would be very much appreciated if individual teachers could join this effort by suggesting names of potentially approachable foundations and contacts; please contact Roseann Loreface, travbug@twcny.rr.com

Conclusion

Many of the good ideas suggested by our speakers are within your reach as an individual teacher: invite speakers to your class; check the websites listed above for the latest research on the benefits foreign language study; send away for the MLA brochure; make connections with your New York State and US legislators.

Public support for foreign languages is strong. A recent poll, "One Year Later: Attitudes about International Education Since September 11", September 2002 states that "public support for foreign language learning is particularly strong, even when asked if they would support an increase in state funding for foreign language learning."

This passive support, however, still has not resulted in concrete progress for foreign language study in New York State. NYSAFLT is consulting the experts in public relations, Eric Mower, Inc. for ways to promote foreign language learning to the public.

The NYSAFLT Public Advocacy Committee and the NYSAFLT Foreign Language for Business Committee have organized exciting and promising initiatives. Be a part of the action. Join the NYSAFLT Public Advocacy Committee or the NYSAFLT Foreign Language for Business Committee.

To find out more, contact the organizers of this panel discussion:

Paul Sabatino, Co-Chair, NYSAFLT FL for Business Committee, PSabatino@yahoo.com, 516-489-7620

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Bridges For Education

A Rewarding Educational and Personal Experience

Anne Szczesny

Become all you can be in the classroom!

I would like to share with my colleagues some of the enriching experiences I have had with Bridges for Education, a not-for-profit organization incorporated by the New York State Education Department. In a variety of ways, my husband Leonard and I have been involved with BFE since it started in 1994. Through it, we both believe that we have developed a deep appreciation for the challenges facing us and others in this world, and a tolerance beyond our imaginations! Through this organization, teachers can enrich their lives and share their experiences with their students.

The purpose of BFE is to promote tolerance and understanding using English as a bridge.

BFE organizes international English language camps in cooperation with various Ministries of Education and UNESCO. As of September 2002, BFE has organized 71 camps in eight countries, sending approximately 810 teachers to serve 9,000 students from 35 countries. BFE also provides scholarship money for International students who would otherwise be unable to attend.

The experiences that both teachers and students have in these camps is absolutely wonderful. For example, in 2000 my husband Leonard and I spent a month teaching in Minsk, Belarus, and this past summer I taught in Timisoara, Romania. Having students mixed from a number of countries from the former Soviet Union was a unique experience. Students from Bosnia, Serbia, Yugoslavia, Romania were together in my classes, activities and evening get-togethers this past summer. Some of these countries have been fighting for years so when these kids are together they are very careful at first. At the end of the session they are the best of friends.

Speaking as a teacher, I must say that, although living conditions, food, etc., may not be ideal, the students are incredible. They want to learn everything — it's teacher heaven!

To demonstrate what happens in these camps, let me quote from a couple of e-mails or letters which we have received after coming home. As the anthropologist, Margaret Mead said, "never doubt that a small group of concerned citizens can change

the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever does."

Xenia Cobets from Moldova at a BFE camp in Hungary— "Though we were very different, coming from different countries and therefore different cultures, we were all treated equally by everybody. I think we have reached the goals of BFE, promoting understanding, cooperation and friendship."

Michael Miaskiewicz from Poland at a BFE camp in Poland in 1996 and in Ukraine in 1997. He was a student in the USA in 1998, was elected President of the Council of Europe 50th anniversary Student Council in Strasbourg, France, received a full scholarship to Harvard and Oxford in 2000. "This camp was such a success because most of us are now speaking English much better than when we came here. But this camp doesn't only teach English. It helps bring up a new generation, which will build a peaceful world without borders"

Marija Milosavljevic from Bosnia in a BFE camp in Romania -"After war in Bosnia there is still a lot of hate between different religions but young people are trying to escape from all prejudices. The weeks I lived with kids who have other language, other religion and I tell you that those weeks are the best thing that happened in my life. I just hope that one day everyone will realize that thinking one nation is better than other is stupid and that it's so much easier to love than to hate. I wish all people can feel such positive energy I felt in the BFE camp."

I believe that these quotes from our students tell the story of BFE in a way that a teacher never do.

Since Bridges for Education is an not-for profit organization incorporated by NYSED, all contributions and participant cost are tax deductible. Teachers may apply for in-service and community service credit and for college credit. Spouses, teenage children and educated adults are welcome as teaching assistants.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Do good, however seemingly insignificant it may be, just do it. If we are to reach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with children".

If you plan for an exciting month in the summer of 2003 and join Bridges for Education, your life will never be the same. For further information please see website www.bridges4edu.org. I hope that you too will be able to share in this incomparable experience.

Interview With Herbert Lottman

Mel B. Yoken, Ph.D.

Chancellor Professor of French
Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Herbert Lottman, 75, has lived for over 40 years in Paris. He feels as much a part of the city as the city reflects his own identity. Interestingly enough, his first true love was English literature and he, therefore, desired to research under a Fulbright scholarship in England. Since the British Fulbright program was filled, Lottman was offered a scholarship in France and stayed there for the school year 1949-50. When he returned to the United States, he dreamed of going back to Paris as a writer. Thus, he returned there in the late 50s and began his prolific career, as he had no other ambition and did not see himself as a teacher. He first engaged in freelance journalism, writing literary and cultural pieces on France and neighboring countries. In 1970, he published his first book, *Detours from the Grand Tour* (Prentice Hall), a collection of personal travel essays. In 1976, he published his second work, *How Cities are Saved* (Universe Books).

He then embarked on a major project, *Albert Camus: A Biography* (Doubleday), published in 1979. (A propos, Editions du Seuil actually grabbed it and translated it before Doubleday finished the original!) Due to the success of the Camus biography and others, Lottman has become known as one of the finest biographers of French literary figures. In addition, he is one of the most widely respected and astute observers of French civilization and society in today's literary world.

I first met Herbert Lottman in July 2000 in Paris, where we discussed his work and career. Our talks continued through July 2002. The following interview is a compendium of our numerous discussions.

Q: When did you discover that you wanted to write?

A: I became a journalist at age five or six, starting with a hand-printed newspaper. I did school and amateur journalism all the way up to college. When I discovered the contemporary novel, Greene, Waugh, Huxley, eventually the great Joyce, I tried writing fiction, and even produced short stories I thought publishable (although none was ever published). Then I actually finished the manuscript of a novel. But I had sufficient critical judgment to know that I lacked creative talent. Non-fiction came naturally to me; it began as an extension of my literary criticism and cultural journalism.

Q: When did you permanently move to Paris and why?

A: It's easy to say when—not so easy to explain why. You could say that I grew up in the wake of the

Lost Generation, with the sights and sounds of their Paris still vivid. My choice of literature seemed to call for a career as a writer or teacher. But I've already said that I discovered that I lacked the storyteller's touch—and patience. And my experience standing up in a classroom warned me that I'd never be able to stand (or to sit) in front of a class. My Fulbright year in Paris showed me that I could live there. So I decided that I'd build on that. In the late 1950s, it was still possible to get a small job and live on it; mine was to run an American publisher's forward base in Europe. Attending the book fairs, taking care of visiting authors, selling translation rights, even looking for promising books to acquire for translation. For American publishers were still translating from French then, still doing Colette and Mauriac, and my mission was to find the next generation of Colettes and Mauriacs. Neither I nor my publisher could know that the French had stopped writing for the world.

Q: How does it feel to be an American in France?

A: With less limited resources, I should spend more time in the United States each year than I am able to now, for I do miss my country and my city (New York), as well as surviving friends who are now scattered around the country, and the many things you can see and hear and eat and even read (like the early edition of the next day's *New York Times*). But I found out—it wasn't as obvious a discovery that one might think—that you can live in only one place at a time.

Q: Do you write and research every day?

A: When I begin a project I try to work on it at least part of every day, and that includes weekends, holidays, and traditional vacation breaks (which I ignore). But I don't mix research and writing. In the ideal, I do my research first, say over a period of a year, and then sit down to write—and that usually takes a second year. Obviously during the writing year I'm usually doing further research—verifying details, resolving inconsistencies, contradictory testimony. And catching up with people and institutions that hadn't come through during my research year.

Q: Do you still have a predilection for English Literature?

A: I dare not say that now. When I fell in love with English literature (ancient and modern), I was quite ignorant of the French, and of course I could read it only in translation—which sometimes produced disastrous results. When I moved abroad I left a lot of books behind; I often miss them. I never seem to find the Elizabethan poem I'd like to read again.

Q: Were you always interested in Camus?

A: I wasn't quite mature when Camus first came to international attention shortly after the liberation of Paris (in August 1944), or when he showed up in New York in 1946 at the moment he was first published in English. By the time I awoke to contemporary books and authors and realized that some of them were alive and well and living in Paris, Camus seemed the perfect young hero, the image that the French—awakening from defeat and enemy occupation—needed for themselves, and needed to project, and the image Americans were ready to receive from France. But I wasn't then quite ready to read Camus.

I confess that I was first drawn to Camus in a later historical context, the developing cold war. Camus became a witness not to the recent past but to very contemporary history, as an activist against totalitarian regimes. I can't be more precise about when I first saw Camus as a culture hero, but I'm sure that his role in the underground press, and his clash with Sartre over Stalinism, were part of the attraction. And then his position at the center of a literary Paris I was beginning to envy.

Q: Is it true that you wrote several chapters in the Camus book each in just one day?

A: There were special days when I couldn't stop. These were times when a lot of things suddenly came together—my transcription of interviews, notes taken from various documents, correspondence—and I felt that if I stopped writing before the end of the chapter I'd lose the thread; an outline wouldn't do. At one point I had a small platform built for me, and set it on the dining room table in order to work standing up—because I couldn't sit for so many hours. I believe that it was only later that I learned that Camus often wrote standing up (but I believe he used a lectern).

Q: What is your reaction to negative reviews?

A: That depends in part on where the reviews are written. For example, I never pay attention to British reviews. After browsing through a rather large batch of them—from the London publisher of one of my first books on a French subject—I discovered a theme common to nearly all of them. Here was this brash American daring to tread on our ground. For these critics were only a channel hop from Paris; French cultural history belonged to them. It was their left bank. Some of the reviews actually ignored my books, and consisted largely of personal anecdotes of the reviewer's Paris.

Naturally I care more about what American newspapers and periodicals say—they are the ones I grew up with. And as an author hoping to sell a few copies of the book after reviewers chew over the complimentary ones, I did pay attention to what was said in the influential press—say The New York Times Book Review. There a negative review, even a negative comment in passing, can be both painful

to the ego and to the purse.

I had worked very hard on Flaubert; I was publishing the first serious biography of the master in a generation, in any language, and I had the advantage—over the last “serious” one—of access to an extraordinary collection of correspondence not previously known to exist (including the childhood letters). Thanks to the fact that I live in France and can do my research twelve months a year, and “will travel”, I found archival materials in Rouen and Paris that had never been exploited—not even by French scholars, who often act as if Flaubert is too sacred a subject to be touched by mere mortals.

For example, I discovered the personal file of the man who taught Flaubert to write French, and these papers revealed a maverick teacher who let his bright students go their own ways—writing their own undisciplined French, which indeed Flaubert grew up to do! You can imagine that I was particularly proud of that.

Anyway, in New York's most influential weekly book review, a critic who had obviously been handed the book because she knew a little about French literature and was herself writing a biography—but so obviously not on the 19th century—remarked in passing that “scholars will learn little from this book”. A brief remark, dashed off by someone totally unfamiliar with the subject, but how could readers know? It was enough to discourage anyone who might have wanted a definitive biography. I know that a remark like that would have kept me away from a book.

Most often, the writer who has spent years on his subject is the victim of a reviewer who doesn't have minutes to spare. I don't know if you know the professional review media which are designed for distribution within the book trade. Twice my books were dealt in one of these bulletins by people who didn't take the time—presumably didn't have the time—to read them. The one-minute reviewers indicated with regret that I hadn't dealt with this or that in my book—when in fact I had. I suppose that readers of such things are aware of the handicaps under which the reviewers are writing, and discount them. If not, a lot of books and authors are being dealt with unjustly. (I can't believe that I am the only victim!)

Reviews of my first books published in French translation—Albert Camus and The Left Bank—were ecstatic, largely because serious biographies and cultural history weren't familiar to the postwar generation there. The meticulous detail expected by Anglo-American readers amused and shocked—but in the end was accepted. I was called “the detective”, usually not pejoratively. My book on Camus actually encouraged the writing of definitive biographies in France, even the use of footnotes, and of course the arduous research that goes with all that.

But then came the reaction. For it turned out that I was not a passing comet; I had come to France to

stay. I was going to continue to meddle in French affairs, and when I invested time and effort in a subject—opening archives no one had bothered to touch, although they were available for touching, or tracking down surviving witnesses before they disappeared—I was going to preempt a subject and publish a book that should have been written by a native...In a word, I became a nuisance. It would take a lot more space than we have here to tell you how some careerist French historians dealt with me after that. I wish they had devoted that much energy to research.

Q: Speak a bit on the translations of your books...

A: I've been lucky with my translators into French, and of course I always have the opportunity to look over their shoulders. I could try to read Spanish and Italian translations but I don't, in part for lack of time and chiefly because I have had the good fortune to have reputable publishers in those countries. But my books have also appeared in Japanese, Korean, and even one—Camus—in China, in Brazilian Portuguese, Poland, the Czech Republic, and so on—so I can only hope for the best. I have tried to control cutting—giving permission to allow it when there are very good reasons for it, but how to check up on the translator or the publisher, or to prevent the political censorship which I suspect has been exercised?

My own writing is not what you'd call "difficult"; I should be easy to translate. I have many happy readers in literary and intellectual circles in Spain—to mention a country which has translated all my books—and so suppose that the translations have been quite reasonable there, and presumably quite accurate as well.

Q: Do you ever have to force yourself to write?

A: My method is to accumulate so much material—notes and documents—that when I sit down to write it bursts all over the page. There are some difficult moments—such as getting the first line and indeed the first paragraph right—finding the best place to begin. After that, everything else seems easy.

It's true that one sometimes has to stop short, when it becomes apparent that the material may be too rich for the page; the reader may not be able to follow, or even want to follow. The writer who hopes to read a broad audience—and not only the specialists—must be willing to make the effort to keep them interested. This involves no compromise with truth or documenting truth, only a little more effort on the part of the writer, and a smoother ride for the reader.

Yes, writing comes easy when I have something to say. Usually that means being prepared—having a large batch of notes, roughly sketched ideas which can be shuffled and reshuffled. A pause—bedtime, a walk, a bus ride, shaving—helps me to sort everything out, and then I must begin immediately, (or at

least scribble out the opening lines). It helps a good deal to write a first sentence or a first paragraph; that often sets the pace for a whole essay or chapter.

Q: Why is it important for you to write?

A: Will you allow me to rephrase the question? For it isn't important that I write, but important for me to have something worth telling. In college I thought that I'd become a creative writer—what other kind was there, after all? But that was the time, in the aftermath of World War; the beginning of a particularly nasty postwar decade, when fact overwhelmed me. I found that the fiction I tried to write was trivial, even frivolous. Obviously Joyce and E.M. Forster hadn't had to cope with Cold War.

Later, living in France, I discovered much that needed telling. It seemed as if decades of history had passed without a historian. It had become unfashionable to write biography, for example, and witnesses to the lives of contemporary authors were dying without having told their stories to anyone. I remember how I shocked one of the first reviewers of my biography of Camus—the first biography of Camus in any language, even though he had died 19 years earlier. Anyway, the reviewer wrote, with undisguised contempt, "Mr. Lottman seems to prefer facts." My books on Pétain and on the purge of Nazi collaborators were written 40 years after the events described, and yet they were the first to have made use of the archives.

Q: Are you still crusading for city centers?

A: I am still very interested in what's happening, but I shouldn't speak of a crusade. Much has been accomplished, after all: Some of the largest American cities have been—consciously—improved, downtowns renovated with people-oriented amenities such as pedestrian malls. Everybody seems to have learned something. I'm a long-standing member, a card-carrying member, of a French group called Rights of the Pedestrian, for Paris is one of the poorest pupils of city-saving; expediting automobile traffic and real estate still takes priority. But I must confess that I no longer cry about these things or write letters to the editor.

Q: Name a book you've read recently and liked.

A: I shall mention a book but I'm not sure that you'll be able to run out and pick up a copy; it was published in Paris last year [2000] by Libro, one of the new inexpensive paperback formats. The title, *Auschwitz Graffiti*, is ironic. Its author Adrien Le Bihan was a French cultural attaché—clearly a brilliant one—based in Poland at the time French president Jacques Chirac was preparing a visit to that country. Le Bihan was asked to make an advance visit to the Auschwitz concentration camp to browse through the guest book, so that Chirac could write an appropriate comment in it. The attaché found much in the banal or uninformed scribbings by chiefs of state and other eminent personalities to allow him to

exercise his irony, and to give us his reading of some very contemporary history in the bargain. A masterful essay.

Q: Who are your writers of predilection?

A: I don't read much now. I was always a slow reader, I think because I deliberately reduced my reading speed as a would-be writer in order to soak up the language style of writers I admired. And this was at a time that everybody around me was being taught to scan the page. When I read my tastes were conventionally modern—Joyce, Yeats, Eliot. Auden, Dylan Thomas, Faulkner, Conrad. The writers I cared about most had in common precision of language, as opposed to the soapbox orators like Lawrence and Thomas Wolfe.

I was in awe of Flaubert, although vaguely aware that I wasn't really reading him when I had to use a translation. At that point I couldn't have talked about Camus at all, for available translations made him appear precious if not pompous.

Q: Please speak about your work in progress:

A: I'm superstitious, but I'm still sorting out research and looking for an appropriate form. Usually the form dictates itself to me (as an obvious example, I begin a biography with birth, and run through the years until death). But for my next project I shall cover two French centuries and I'm not sure that I'll use chronological order at all.

I'd rather talk about the book just completed, now going through the publishing process. It covers the heroic years—or the fun years—of Montparnasse, which for me are the 1920's and 30's decades, told through the eyes of one particular observer for whom all doors opened.

Q: Comment briefly on the following: Michel Butor, Francis Steegmuller, Nathalie Sarraute, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Isaac Singer and Albert Cohen.

A: Michel Butor: a stunning writer I'd need more patience to re-read than I have nowadays. Francis Steegmuller: he didn't influence me as a biographer but his choice of subjects definitely inspired mine. And I should have liked to be able to marry my research techniques to his style. Nathalie Sarraute: another writer I admire intensely, and enjoy in short doses (in part because I can't afford long ones). John Dos Passos was an early fascination, and that at a time when the only literature I cared about was English and American. But I can't even guess how I'd feel on reading him so many decades later. Hemingway's European books are always interesting to me. Isaac Singer is one of my favorite contemporary storytellers, but when I sat down with

each new story or novel I felt that I wasn't reading a contemporary at all, but one of the inventive geniuses of a century or more earlier. Albert Cohen: I was struck by his narrative energy, the comic genius of Belle du Seigneur. But he's another whose complete work I shall never read.

Q: What do you consider your best work?

A: It has to be my biography of Camus; I can say this with modesty, because Camus wrote it for me. I simply followed his itinerary from birth to death, being as faithful as I could to documents and eye-witness testimony, and it came out as a moving story. But all the emotion in that book came from the circumstances, from the "facts" as my detractors said. When some of Camus's friends of his early Algerian years gave me their accounts of their and his youth, down to details of where they boarded the tram for school, and what they saw and heard as they crossed town, I simply put it all down. And then some of the same witnesses read my book, and said they wept over it. But they were weeping over an Algiers they themselves had created for me.

Q: What is your advice for young people wanting to publish?

A: I shouldn't want to give advice without having the opportunity to talk with the writer and then to read some of his or her work (and as a slow reader I would never find the time for that). My general advice would be: Don't show anything until it's mature—until it's the best you think that you will ever be able to do. Be wary of your own reactions; try to find a severe and discerning critic among your best friends. Write about what you know, but remember that you must climb out of your own skin to construct a true Bildungsroman, as paradoxical as that may sound.

I have no experience of writing schools and seminars, but I've often heard stories of teachers who are themselves professional writers who have helped their students see publication.

Q: How would you like to be remembered?

A: How would I like to be remembered? As a writer, by the sort of thing that French critics have said about my books on French cultural history and French personalities: That I did more original research, found more significant things, showed more objectivity than anyone known to them—than anyone French. That by so doing I, an American, made important contributions to French literature and contemporary history.

I'm not sure that such things matter as much to my fellow Americans.

NYS AFLT IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE FOUR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDY IN QUÉBEC FOR THE SUMMER OF 2003

THE SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL is for one three credit course. During the period from July 7th to July 25th, 2003, “Communication Orale”, “Atelier d’enseignement du français langue seconde”, and “Communication écrite” are offered. In the second session, from July 28th to August 15th, “Communication Orale”, “Français langue des affaires” and “Culture et société, Québec contemporain” are given. “Communication Orale” and “Communication écrite” are offered at intermediate and advanced levels, while “Atelier d’enseignement du français langue seconde” and “Français langue des affaires” and “Culture et société, Québec contemporain” are given at an advanced level. All courses given in French and are for students who wish to improve their language skills and enrich their knowledge of the language and culture of Québec. This scholarship includes books and tuition for a 3-credit graduate course, lodging on campus in the dormitory, sociocultural activities and access to the sports complex and the library. The scholarship recipient will be responsible for all transportation costs, personal expenses and meals.

THE SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE COLLEGE DE JONQUIÈRE is offered from July 14th to August 1st, 2003. The course consists of language instruction in the context of Québec culture and society. The scholarship provides the following: tuition, room and board with a carefully selected Québec family, sports, recreational activities, access to the library and the multi-media lab. Other excursions are available at minimal cost. A certificate is awarded upon completion of the course. Meals are included in the program. Transportation and personal expenses are not. The city of Jonquièrre has a population of 60,000 and is situated in the Saguenay Region of Québec, 2 1/2 hours north of Québec City.

THE SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL in Québec City is offered from July 7th to July August 8th, 2003 for the *Stage de perfectionnement pour les professeurs de français langue seconde ou étrangère*. This advanced training course is designed for teachers of French. It covers three different areas: linguistics (advanced French language courses); pedagogy (workshops on teaching strategies, new computer technologies and class observations); culture (courses on Québec literature and civilization). The scholarship covers tuition, lodging in a campus residence or with a French-speaking family, some cultural activities linked to the program, sports, access to the library and multi-media lab. Other activities and excursions are available at minimal cost. Transportation and meals are not included. A transcript describing this 4-credit course will be issued upon completion of the program.

THE SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À CHICOUTIMI is offered for a 3-week Summer Program from July 6th to July 26th, 2003. The scholarship recipient will have the choice of taking one of two programs: French Immersion (oral proficiency oriented) or Approaches to Second or Foreign Language Teaching. These programs provide the following: tuition, instruction, class materials, lodging with a French-speaking family and meals as well as health insurance coverage. Extra-curricular social, cultural activities and outdoor activities are also included, plus excursions to Québec City and Tadoussac. An official transcript for 4 credits will be issued upon completion of the program. Full immersion is guaranteed in Chicoutimi, a totally French-speaking town, which has a population of 70,000 and is surrounded by a magnificent natural environment.

A Scholarship for the Collège de Rivière-du-Loup is pending at this time. Details after January 30, 2002.

Applicants must be American citizens. While the scholarships are intended essentially for teachers who are not native speakers of French, native speakers may be considered for the Université of Montréal and Université Laval programs. The recipient must hold a teaching position in French during 2003-2004. ONLY NYS AFLT MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY. Please direct application requests to: NYS AFLT Québec Scholarship Committee, Co-Chairpersons:

**Eliane McKee David Graham 1985 Delaware Avenue, Apt. 3 H 344 Trim Road Buffalo, NY 14216
Morrisonville, NY 12962 Telephone: (716) 873-9620 Telephone: (518) 563-1779 E-Mail: mckee@buffalostate.edu E-Mail: davidg8809@aol.com**

CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

NYSAFLT is proud to present awards to outstanding educators, administrators and leaders in foreign language at our annual meeting. Now is the time for members to begin submitting nominations for these prestigious awards.

Outstanding Journalist / Media Presenter Award

Given for the best reporting, analysis, or commentary in a general circulation New York State publication or for having conceived, originated, produced, or written a film a TV/video-tape presentation, or a radio broadcast in New York State during the calendar year which promotes foreign language education in America.

Dorothy Ludwig Memorial Award

Given to a foreign language teacher for outstanding service to the profession.

Sister Rose Aquin Caimano Distinguished Administrator Award

Given to a non-language specialist who is supportive of the teaching of foreign languages.

Ruth E. Wasley Distinguished Teacher Award

Given to a NYSAFLT member who has demonstrated excellence as a K-12 and/or post-secondary teacher.

Remunda Cadoux Award for Leadership in Foreign Language Supervision

Given to a NYSAFLT member who has demonstrated excellence, service, and leadership in a supervisory position.

National Culture Through the Arts Award

Given to a person in the performing arts for whom knowledge and appreciation for foreign languages and cultures are important.

New York State Friend of Foreign Languages Award

Given at the statewide level to an individual and/or an organization outside of the foreign language profession who has demonstrated support for foreign language education and/or foreign language teachers.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: MAY 1, 2003

For applications and information, write, call or e-mail:

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