


Audition Colorée

(Hearing Colour)

Implications arising as a result of the diminishment of linguistic and cultural diversity: Supplementary analysis, issues, research parameters and creative strategies informing the film Audition Colorée.

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

The disappearance of many of the world's 6000-9000 languages is occurring at a rapid rate, with a language estimated to become extinct every two weeks, and fewer than 600 expected to survive into the future. With each language representing a unique subjectivity and worldview, embodying systems of memory and experience since the beginnings of its parent culture, the loss of cultural diversity that follows language loss should be considered in terms of its impact on all human cultures, including speakers of dominant culture lingua francas in 'advanced' or economically dominant lingua franca nations. Language loss should also be analysed in the context of the increasing diminishment of biodiversity, and the extinction of certain types of experience, in particular those connecting culture to the natural world, especially via oral language traditions. This dissertation expands on key themes examined in the film *Audition Colorée* (Hearing Colour), a fictionalised poetic essay film utilising experimental and 'anti-documentary' techniques to examine the large scale loss of linguistic and cultural diversity and the problem of representing positions of cultural Otherness in language. While documentaries have been made on the question of language loss, the dissertation contends that more experimental approaches are required in order to speak beyond the discursive limitations of journalistic and documentary genres. These 'factual' modes embody ritualised practices of production and consumption which re-enforce the West's assumed ownership of instrumental reason, objectivity, and scientific rationality, projecting the values of Eurocentric/Western hegemony on to the cultures they attempt to represent. Both dissertation and the film *Audition Colorée* not only acknowledge the challenges—if not impossibility—of representing the 'other' that is embodied by linguistic and cultural difference, they also argue the subjectivities of lingua franca cultures in advanced technocratic economies are, like every language and culture, limited by blind spots and the metaphors they live by through their own cultures. The dissertation examines philosophies of language from a range of disciplines including phenomenology and the emerging field of ecolinguistics, offering perspectives emphasising the significance of linguistic diversity and linguistic relativity, and posing questions about the limitations embedded in western assumptions of superiority in our cultural, technological, and scientific thought. Both the film and dissertation pose the question: while many eschatologies and predictions of humanity's decline exist in popular, scientific and critical theory, could the cause for concern be present at a more fundamental level—the limitations of our own languages and cultures, and the resulting disconnection to diversity as it historically applies to human evolution and experience in relationship to the natural world?

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