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## Monolingualism of the Other: or, The Prosthesis of Origin (Cultural Memory in the Present)

*Jacques Derrida*

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*Cultural Memory in the Present*

JACQUES DERRIDA

*Monolingualism  
of the Other OR The Prosthesis  
of Origin*

*Translated by Patrick Mensah*

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#104648 in Books Patrick Mensah 1998-08-01 1998-08-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .50 x 5.00l, .33 #File Name: 0804732892110 pages Monolingualism of the other or The prosthesis of origin | File size: 30.Mb

**Jacques Derrida : Monolingualism of the Other: or, The Prosthesis of Origin (Cultural Memory in the Present)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Monolingualism of the Other: or, The Prosthesis of Origin (Cultural Memory in the Present):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant personal account of Derrida's relationship to French. By Lucifex The description of singular experience but so much can be drawn and extended beyond the personal from these insights about language, the question of a mother tongue, and issues of translation. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A meditation on language and culture By Michael J. Mazza "Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin," by Jacques Derrida, is a compelling blend of autobiographical material and cultural criticism. Originally published in French in 1996, the text has been translated into English by Patrick Mensah. According to a note at the beginning of the book, a shorter, different version of the text was delivered orally at a colloquium at the Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, in 1992. In the book, Derrida reflects on his past as an Algerian Jew living under French colonialism. He raises questions about language politics, personal identity, cultural domination, the notion of a "mother tongue," and the idea of "metalanguage." He reflects on the practical mechanics of French colonial administration in Algeria, and on Algeria's Jewish population: "a disintegrated 'community,' cut up and cut off." He also discusses his own problematic relationship with the French language. I found "Monolingualism of the Other" absolutely gripping. Although Derrida's prose (as translated by Mensah) sometimes strikes me as convoluted to the point of obscurity, I often found Derrida's style to be elegant, even poetic, and very accessible. But be warned: if you're intimidated by phrases like "ontico-ontological re-mark," "a pre-egological ipseity," or "the hegemony of the homogeneous," the book may be a bit much to take. But many will, I believe, tear into this challenging text with gusto. I believe that the issues raised by Derrida in this book are relevant to many other cultural phenomena: the debate over Black English, the political and literary recognition of creole and pidgin languages, the ongoing efforts to preserve the Celtic languages, etc. If you have a serious interest in these and related issues, I strongly recommend this book. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Language functions as a site of polyphony By Richard, Lee Jacques Derrida, as well as in his other oeuvres, builds up a negative or reflective meditation upon language. Hereby, he bears a family resemblance to Michel Foucault. The book is elaborating a polyvocal phenomenon, involving the problematic of language, identity, psychic identification, cultural hegemony ( a target of verbal attack in his discourse). Besides, it sketches out the ideology behind the scene, that is, the agony of in-between identification in the Algerian Jew. It is a rich and illuminating work that can be applied to censor the phenomena of "diaspora," "citizenship," migration and so forth in our contemporary epoch.

I have but one language yet that language is not mine. This book intertwines theoretical reflection with historical and cultural particularity to enunciate, then analyze this conundrum in terms of the author's own relationship to the French language. The book operates on three levels. At the first level, a theoretical inquiry investigates the relation between individuals and their own language. It also explores the structural limits, desires, and interdictions inherent in such possession, as well as the corporeal aspect of language (its accents, tones, and rhythms) and the question of the countability of languages (that is, their discreteness or factual givenness). At the second level, the author testifies to aspects of his acculturation as an Algerian Jew with respect to language acquisition, schooling, citizenship, and the dynamics of cultural-political exclusion and inclusion. At the third level, the book is comparative, drawing on statements from a wide range of figures, from the Moroccan Abdelkebir Khatibi to Franz Rosenzweig, Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and Emmanuel Levinas. Since one of the book's central themes is the question of linguistic and cultural identity, its argument touches on several issues relevant to the current debates on multiculturalism. These issues include the implementation of colonialism in the schools, the tacit or explicit censorship that excludes other (indigenous) languages from serious critical consideration, the investment in an ideal of linguistic purity, and the problematics of translation. The author also reveals the complex interplay of psychological factors that invests the subject of identity with the desire to recover a lost language of origin and with the ambition to master the language of the colonizer.

"Clearly, Derrida is bravely turning away from decades of structuralist thinking that made even the slightest hint of transcendence into an intellectual taboo." (Substance) "In this elegant and engaging essay, Derrida turns to the subject of Derrida as Algerian Jew and as a dissociated Francophone." (The Front Table) "Derrida has produced a text which takes philosophy and autobiography into the closest possible proximity; yet the result is something far more significant than the personal reminiscences of a philosopher." (Times Literary Supplement) Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original Language: French From the Inside Flap I have but one language yet that language is not mine. This book intertwines theoretical reflection with historical and cultural particularity to enunciate, then analyze this conundrum in terms of the author's own relationship to the French language. The book operates on three levels. At the first level, a theoretical inquiry investigates the relation between individuals and their own language. It also explores the structural limits, desires, and interdictions inherent in such possession, as well as the corporeal aspect of language (its accents, tones, and rhythms) and the question of the countability of languages (that is, their discreteness or factual givenness). At the second level, the author testifies to aspects of his acculturation as an Algerian Jew with respect to language acquisition, schooling, citizenship, and the dynamics of cultural-political exclusion and inclusion. At the third level, the book is comparative, drawing on statements from a wide range of figures, from the Moroccan

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