

## Developing Interpretive Insight through Reframing Texts

### Questions for Dialogue, *L'Auberge espagnole* [*The Spanish Apartment*]

#### 1. Why did you choose the character you chose?

“I chose the mother because it seemed it would be much more interesting than the father. There would be more conflict between a hippy and an aspiring economics student than a businessman and the student. (‘I want to go into economics.’ ‘I agree.’ – This seemed much more boring & harder to write about and expand upon.)”

“I felt it would be easier to write for the mom than it would be for the father. I simply know more relevant French vocabulary in regards to a ‘hippie’ than a business man.”

“I chose to write about the mother because I felt her views would differ from her son’s and that would be interesting.”

“I chose Xavier’s mother because she reminded me of my own laid-back mom, and my partner and I thought it could be funny.”

“J’ai choisi la mère pour le dialogue parce qu’elle est une ‘bab’. Elle a une personnalité unique.” [“I chose the mother for the dialogue because she is a hippy. She has a unique personality.”]

#### 2. How did you and your partner contribute to writing your dialogue?

“We both came up with our own mini-dialogues the night before, and on that day, we quickly created a new one that was mostly original (not really using our old ideas) and jointly made (N. would think of one thing, and I would think of the ‘Don’t be stupid’ part or the ‘communal farm’ suggestion).”

“My partner created all of the lines for Xavier’s father and I created all of Xavier’s lines for our dialogue.”

“J. a fait la partie de Xavier. J’ai fait la partie de son père. Nous avons fait une conversation ... et je l’ai corrigée.” [J. did Xavier’s part and I did father’s part. We made a conversation ... and I corrected it.”]

## Questions for Apollinaire Readings

1. How is reading *Calligrammes* different from reading a text you would normally read in a language class?

“It’s a lot more than comprehending / translating the text. They force us to think about the structure of the words and their symbolic meaning (so they can be just as hard to understand in French (as) in native English.”

“It forces you to recognize where the piece begins and challenges your language skills.”

“There’s fewer words in a *calligramme* but more to think about.”

“The images provide additional meaning to the overall themes of the text. There is more to connect and analyze compared to a standard language text.”

“We don’t know where to start. Even a single word is separated.”

“The words don’t necessarily read left to right, so you have to figure out the order of the words with some logic and context clues.”

“It is much more difficult because you have to figure out how to read the poem and then translate the text, and then find out how the text relates to the shape.”

2. When reading *Calligrammes*, how did you and your partner decide where to begin reading the text?

“We usually began where there was a capitalized letter.”

“We looked for capital letters, from the top of the poem, larger letters, letters in bold.”

“We found the first capitalized letter and worked from there. Sometimes we would disagree and need the context clues from other sentences to figure out the logical start.”

“We tried to determine where it would make the most sense considering the shape and title of the poem.”

“Start with phrases and sentences that you understand & work from there.”

“We mostly decided to start where we could understand the most. Then we would work our way around with context clues to comprehend the text in its entirety.”

“We usually begin with the darkest letter or the top center because our eyes automatically focus on those words first.”

“We read based on the title. The first object mentioned was the starting point of the text.”

3. Think about all of the poems you have read in class this semester. What constitutes a poem?

“A poem is constituted by simple, thoughtful phrases that don’t need to necessarily rhyme. A poem should be interpreted with many meanings and not be subjected to one whole theme.”

“A poem is a short expression of an idea through a creative outlet differing from the sentence structure of let’s say a story. It can convey a story but it does so through a new medium.”

“Anything that has an ambiguous meaning / message and is written in an intentional structure to convey something.”

“A poem has a unique structure and a lot of emotion.”

“Letters, words, structure, expressions, and form all constitute a poem. A poem is then used to express ideas, thoughts, emotions, and so on.”

“Poetry has meter, rhythm, or a set shape to it, be it lines or calligrams. It expresses emotion but in a less straightforward way than prose. It can express ideas in different ways.”

“A poem is a layered text. It is meant to be analyzed and interpreted in many different ways beyond its surface level.”

“A poem should have a very specific arrangement. If the arrangement does not matter (line breaks can occur wherever), the writing is prose. Concrete poems rely on the arrangement to make images. Haikus have 17 syllables, generally as 5-7-5. Some poems have specific rhyming schemes or meters.”

Extracts from Three Different Skits Written as Scenes for Ionesco's *La leçon [The Lesson]* (French)

Opening sequence:

*Le Professeur entre.*

Le Professeur : Bonjour, Mademoiselle... C'est vous, c'est bien vous, n'est-ce pas, la nouvelle élève ?

L'Élève : Oui... Avez-vous vu ma sœur ? Elle s'appelle Betty.

Le Professeur : Est-ce qu'elle s'appelle Betty parce qu'elle était bête ?

*La Bonne regarde le Professeur. Elle secoue la tête.*

L'Élève : Ce n'est pas drôle. Il faut que vous me disiez où est ma sœur. Je sais qu'elle était ici.

Middle Sequence:

Le Professeur : Asseyez-vous.

*Le Professeur commence à rouler une cigarette tandis que l'étudiante s'assied.*

L'Élève : Prof ? Qu'est-ce que vous faites ? Nous sommes en classe.

Le Professeur : Silence, s'il vous plaît. Je suis très stressé et je voudrais fumer une cigarette !! Mon cours ce matin était trop long et je n'ai pas eu de pause.

L'Elève : Je comprends, Monsieur, mais ce n'est pas une bonne idée. Je suis ici pour la classe et je voudrais commencer les cours.

Le Professeur : Très bien. Avec quoi avez-vous besoin d'aide ?

L'Elève : L'anglais ...

Closing Sequence:

La Bonne : Arrêtez ! Qu'avez-vous fait !? *la Bonne dit d'une voix forte. La Bonne essaie de saisir le couteau de la nouvelle élève.*

La Nouvelle Élève : Sortez ou vous vous blesserez.

La Bonne : Excusez-moi ? Vous devez arrêter !

*La Bonne continue, donc l'Élève la poignarde aussi. Puis la Nouvelle Élève met calmement le couteau dans les mains du Professeur. L'Élève essuie le sang sur ses mains sur les feuilles sur lesquelles elle a fait des calculs. Dès qu'elle quitte la maison, elle dit :*

La Nouvelle Élève : La beauté de la vie passe la douleur de mourir.

Extracts from Three Different Skits Written as Scenes for Ionesco's *La leçon [The Lesson]* (English)

Opening sequence:

*The Professor enters.*

Professor: Hello, Miss. It is you, isn't it, you're the new student?

Student: Yes ... Have you seen my sister? Her name is Silla.

Professor: Is she named Silla because she was silly?

*The Maid looks at the Professor. She shakes her head.*

Student: It isn't funny. You must tell me where my sister is. I know she was here.

Middle Sequence :

Professor : Sit down.

*The Professor begins to roll a cigarette while the student sits.*

Student : Prof ? What are you doing ? We're in class.

Professor : Silence, please. I'm very stressed and I would like to smoke a cigarette !! My class this morning was too long and I didn't have a break.

Student : I understand, Sir, but this isn't a good idea. I'm here for the class and I would like to begin class.

Professor : Very well. What do you need help with ?

Student : English...

Closing Sequence :

Maid : Stop! What have you done!?! *the Maid says loudly. The Maid attempts to seize the knife from the New Student.*

New Student : Leave or you'll hurt yourself!

Maid : Excuse me? You should stop!

*The Maid continues, so the New Student stabs her as well. Then the new student calmly places the knife in the hands of the Professor. The New Student wipes the blood from her hands on the sheets of paper she has used for completing math problems. As soon as she leaves the house, she says:*

New Student : The beauty of life exceeds the pain of dying.