

# بموت بامعيت

RECHERCHES UNIVERSITAIRES  
ACADEMIC RESEARCH

العدد 12 - ديسمبر 2017

مجلة في الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية

كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية بصفاقس

جامعة صفاقس

الجمهورية التونسية

المدير المسؤول :

محمد بن محمد الخبو



بموت بامعيت

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مجلة كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية بصفاقس

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RECHERCHES UNIVERSITAIRES  
ACADEMIC RESEARCH

N°12 - Décembre 2017

Revue de littérature et sciences humaines

Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Sfax

Université de Sfax

République Tunisienne

Directeur responsable:

Mohamed Ben Mohamed KHABOU



# بموت جامعة

RECHERCHES UNIVERSITAIRES  
ACADEMIC RESEARCH

كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية بصفاء



# بموت باامعيت

دورية تصدر عن كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية بصفاقس

العدد 12 - ديسمبر 2017

ISSN: 1737-1007

المدير المسؤول:

محمد بن محمد الخبو

رئيس هيئة التحرير:

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الإيداع القانوني: ديسمبر 2017

# شكر

تشكر «إدارة بحوث جامعية» جزيل الشكر الأمانة الكين أسعموا في  
تحكيم الأعمال العلمية بالنسبة إلى العدد 12 وهمز

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فرنسين تينسا

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# Hybridité du mot en français

Rafika Ben Amor<sup>(1)\*</sup>

## Résumé

Qu'est-ce qu'un mot? D'où viennent les mots? Comment naissent-ils? Les mots naissent selon une origine, puis d'un pays à un autre, ils s'empruntent mais ne se redonnent plus, ils s'installent dans la langue, ils se croisent avec d'autres et deviennent hybrides. Ils sont hybrides par le sens, ils sont hybrides par la forme, ils sont calqués sur d'autres mots, ils sont sous forme de doublets en français (hôtel, hôpital). Ces mots hybrides créés par les uns et par les autres, créés par analogie sur d'autres formes donnent des « monstres ». Ces mots devenus « monstres » donnent naissance à d'autres « monstres » et la boucle n'est jamais bouclée car l'histoire et la géographie sont là, présentes, dans le circuit, pour remodeler les mots.

## Abstract

What is a word? Where do words come from? How are they created? Words are born and then, from one country to another, they are borrowed and they are not given back. They become part of the new language, they come in contact with other words and they become hybrid. Their meaning is hybrid; their form is hybrid; they are reshaped after other words; they appear in pairs in French (hotel, hospital). These hybrid words, derived from others through analogy give birth to «monsters». These words that have become monsters, in turn, give birth to other «monsters» and the procedure never ends up because history and geography are always there to reshape words.

## ملخص

ما الكلمة؟ وممّ تنحدر الكلمات؟ وكيف تولد؟

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lated - to - contemporary - life documents, in Anglophone societies, in particular (and, perhaps, in any society in general).

The paper, for one, has shown the applicability of this approach to political discourse through the example of AL's Gettysburg Address, mainly selected for its value as a primary source testifying to the political context in the United States in the very middle of the Civil War that both baffled and divided the American nation in the sixties of the nineteenth century. It has transpired that political bias was a necessary strategy in the hands of AL to preserve the unity of his country.

Yet this approach would gain from collaboration if associated with the vision of pragma - stylisticians and linguists about shared subject fields with a view to confirming, invalidating, or enhancing initial findings. Actually, this approach may rely on the combination of the theoretical implications of various academic disciplines for it can shift from a stylistic examination to a historical explanation, for a coherent interpretation of the content selected in support of the hypothesis, as is shown in this paper or, in some instances, from mere content analysis to sociological explanation and interpretation or, still in other instances, from a sociological explanation to a philosophical interpretation, mainly when documents related to the history of ideas or with religious connotations are approached.

In the same vein, the present approach offers the possibility to resort to several angles and vantage points in both the explanation and interpretation sections of the argumentation, of course, when the documents being studied lend themselves to such juxtaposition of viewpoints.

shared principles he keeps on mentioning till the end, as if to guide the process of guessing.

### 2.2.5. Findings

Both ambiguous soliciting and manipulative modesty and encouragement are the most obvious speech strategies used by AL in this address. These strategies perfectly support the hypothesis about the diversion of the audience's attention. This tends to show clearly how in 1863 AL sought to influence the decision of his hesitant soldiers and to persuade public opinion, both nationally and internationally.

The Gettysburg address also reveals AL as a shrewd statesman capable of manipulating his audience through several speech strategies to obtain approval and support for his political goals. He addressed his people allegedly on the ground of defending the principles of democracy in order to save the slaves, not the American Union; and he succeeded in convincing them and gaining their support on that ground, as the Civil War would continue for two more years.

No doubt AL, who once declared, «I am naturally anti - slavery». was sincere about his electoral promise to abolish slavery. Yet, in his eyes, such a task would have perhaps necessitated a congressional battle, but certainly not a civil war. He was convinced that slavery would disappear from the United States sooner or later and, because of this certitude, the so - called «battle».for abolition could be postponed until the end of the war. What urged and mattered first to AL at that time was how to reunify a dislocated nation.

### General Conclusion

This paper has suggested a methodological approach to how to tackle the documents that are dealt with in Civilization, an academic subject that has long been «orphaned». as it has no theories of its own, nor has it a proper widely recognized, established critical approach and, consequently, it has to rely on other disciplines for theoretical frameworks and analytical toolkits. The suggested approach would normally be applicable to any known kind of document frequently used in Civilization, mainly historical, sociological, and re-

Indeed, the American public opinion began questioning the use of the war. The federal army also grew fed up with it after two years and many sacrifices. Similarly, powerful foreign countries and partners—France and Great Britain—expressed clear intentions about resuming business and commercial exchanges with the South. All of them started to agree with Southerners wondering why the Confederacy should be prevented from seceding. After all, was not the United States a ‘seceder’ itself from ‘mother’ Britain in 1776, i.e. «[f]ourscore and seven years». indeed, earlier than 1863, when the American nation was created in similar circumstances of disagreement and conflict?<sup>(1)</sup>

From the start AL sets the tone of his speech about the purpose of the war as being one only for high principles, making it look like a war for an ideal of justice and for an unquestionable noble «cause». Then, in the closing statement, AL makes sure to use the same vehicle in order to leave the same impression, the same message likely to meet not only the expectations of the audience, but also to guarantee adherence to—and agreement with—the proposed message.

Henceforth, he could use the initial hint to abolition (the unsaid or what was given to be understood) as a strategic message to reach his goal of bringing parts of his audience to continue the fight and, for some other parts, to accept the idea of continuing the fight, not for the sake of reunification, an objective mentioned almost timidly, but to serve democracy and equality, instead; i.e., in that particular context, implicitly for the sake of equality between whites and blacks, rather, which also might have been understood bluntly as the abolition of slavery.

Although now with a perspective of one hundred and fifty years, it is perhaps possible to read the message indifferently with either objective in mind with little risk of confusion, the «cause».in the words of AL remains undoubtedly undetermined. On the other hand, repetitious insistence manifests itself throughout the speech as if to ascertain that the Civil War was to continue for some reason. Yet the speaker leaves this reason for the audience to guess or imagine, mainly among the

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1 - See the American War of Independence.

all waged, had been far from being achieved yet. That was why it was vital and imperative that the war go on.

### 2.2.4. Interpretation of the references

No doubt the Civil War was decided in the first place to preserve the unity of the United States of America and not to emancipate slaves. For AL the latter objective would not have necessitated a war. It needed perhaps a mere «battle».in Congress, to come up with any legal measure—an Act, a law, or an amendment to the American Constitution—abolishing slavery, but certainly not a «battle-field».of war of that magnitude.<sup>(1)</sup>

In AL's statement (about reunification), it is evident that the speaker was perfectly conscious that the real purpose of the war was not freeing slaves and that the values of the Union were superior to the moral wrong of slavery. Nonetheless, AL was not to take any risk of disappointing his audience composed, should it be reminded, of soldiers, journalists, and diplomats; all three groups of listeners expecting to hear AL announce a different reason from the henceforward unsatisfactory unlawfulness of secession (Figure 1).

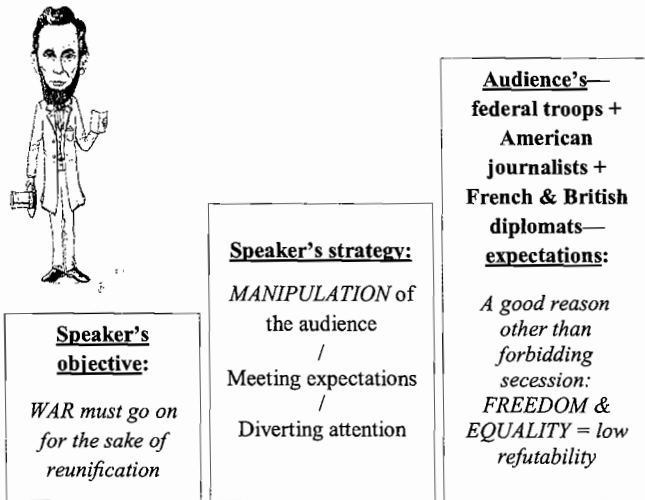


Figure 1. Abraham Lincoln's Persuasive Strategy in Gettysburg (Own Figure)

1 - See AL's Letter to A.G. Hodges, April 1864.

own President<sup>(1)</sup>, capital,<sup>(2)</sup> and independent political and military institutions. Yet, considering the secession unconstitutional, AL decided to wage a war on the Confederacy sending the federal troops to force the seceded states back to the Union.

Indeed, the American public opinion began questioning the use of the war. The federal army also grew fed up with it after two years and many sacrifices. Similarly, powerful foreign countries and partners—France and Great Britain—expressed clear intentions about resuming business and commercial exchanges with the South. All of them started to agree with Southerners wondering why the Confederacy should be prevented from seceding. After all, was not the United States a ‘seceder’ itself from ‘mother’ Britain in 1776, i.e. «[f]ourscore and seven years». indeed, earlier than 1863, when the American nation was created in similar circumstances of disagreement and conflict? From the start AL sets the tone of his speech about the purpose of the war as being one only for high principles, making it look like a war for an ideal of justice and for an unquestionable noble «cause». Then, in the closing statement, AL makes sure to use the same vehicle in order to leave the same impression, the same message likely to meet not only the expectations of the audience, but also to guarantee adherence to—and agreement with—the proposed message.

The speech strategy of AL reminding his audience of the founding principles of the new nation is, as a matter of fact, meant to be misleading and manipulative. The statement about equality for all is all the more misleading that it is in obvious discrepancy with the masked objective of reunification; an objective that does not appear to rally the support of all listeners to AL's real «cause» and, consequently, that AL would strategically be careful not to mention specifically, in clear terms. All the more reason not to do so that in 1863 other states of the American Union, mainly the so - called Border States, were considering secession too, in order to join the Confederacy which was looking for additional support to maintain slavery. Consequently, after two years of conflict, it became crystal clear to the American President that the cherished reunification, because of which the Civil War was after

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1 - Jefferson Finis Davis.

2 - Richmond, Virginia.

In the whole passage from line 9 to line 20, in addition, the speaker is not greeting the dead as much as he is encouraging the living ones, as in «for us the living». line 13, so as to convince the latter of the necessity of the Civil War; a war that must go on for a good reason that seems still to be determined. Was it so «that this nation ... *shall* not perish from the earth,».as is unequivocally stated by AL, in the very last words of the speech, or was it rather for the sake of «Liberty». (line 2)?

Ambiguity is, actually, the third strategy employed by AL in this speech in which his request remains vague, though insistent, mainly when he asks his soldiers «to be dedicated... to the unfinished work ... to be here dedicated to the great task remaining».in lines 13 through 15; a «great task».he simply refers to as «that cause».in line 16. This is obviously echoing his *paramount* objective «that that nation might live». (lines 7 - 8) and «not perish from the earth». (line 20); but could not the «great task».also be referring to the «cause».of freedom and emancipation he made sure to hint to at both the beginning and close of his speech? Nobody knows the answer. It remains equivocal till the end!

### 2.2.3. Explanation of the references

Actually, no historian would refute that the Civil War was no other than an immediate political response to secession. Indeed AL, who was certainly a convinced abolitionist, ran for office as the candidate of the Republican Party on a platform that promised to rid the United States of the institution of slavery that mocked the country abroad. But the potential victory of AL represented a real threat to the American southern states to which slavery was the backbone of their growing agricultural economy constantly in need for labor force<sup>(1)</sup>.

That was why, when AL became the President of the United States in 1860, eleven southern states fearing abolition seceded from the American Union to form the Confederate States of America. As a matter of fact, a «new nation» was born, but in the South, rather, with its

1 - Jones 12.

### 2.2.2. References to the Address

[*Paramount objective*] / AL's paramount objective was saving the Union (the federal union of the United States of America), the actual rationale behind the Civil War, as is clearly stated in the speech when he says «a great civil war, testing whether that nation ... can long endure».in lines 4 - 5. In 1863, indeed, the main reason for the fight to continue, according to AL, was to verify whether or not a federal nation like the United States could resist dissension.

[*Diverting attention*] / From the beginning of the speech, AL betrays his intention of diverting the attention of his audience from the real paramount objective of saving the American Union. He, therefore, does not start the speech with any statement about reunification. Instead, he resorts to a soliciting strategy, as the speech opens and closes with the mention of the fundamental principles of freedom, equality and democracy, first in lines 2 - 3, «a new nation conceived in Liberty».in which «...all men are created equal». and then in «this nation ... shall have a new birth of freedom,».so that «government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth». lines 18 through 20. This circular structure of the speech is destined to make sure to capture the attention of the audience about the real message he is looking forward to bringing home.

The second strategy used by AL in this speech is the expression of both modesty and encouragement as is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Abraham Lincoln's Speech Strategies**

<b>Modesty</b>	<b>Encouragement</b>
“we cannot». (line 9)	“the brave men». (line 10)
“our poor power». (line 11)	“nobly advanced». (line 14)
“the world will little note...nor remember what we say here». (lines 11 - 12)	“[the world] can never forget what they did here.». (lines 12 - 13)

Source: Own Table

The American Civil War was a fratricidal conflict that opposed the South and North of the United States over the question of secession because of the national disagreement over slavery, between 1861 and 1865 (→ *defining the theme*). In this speech, which thus took place right in the middle of the Civil War (*date*), Abraham Lincoln (hereafter, AL), the then president of the federal government (*speaker*), addressed soldiers in Gettysburg after the death of many among their fellows in the site of the battle of the same name that involved the largest number of casualties and marked the war's turning point (*type of document*). The speech was delivered at the dedication ceremony of the cemetery created for federal casualties in that battle (*place*); a ceremony also to pay a last respect to the dead soldiers (*event*).

The presidential speech was an opportunity for AL to speak in public in order to boost the morale of the federal troops, many of whom had started to lose faith in the objective of the war. In fact, two years after the declaration of war, it became blurred in the eyes of many whether the Civil War had an ideal (*state of the question*), and if yes, what was it really? Was it to prevent secession or to put an end to a shameful institution?

Besides, AL's audience was not only composed of soldiers, but also of both journalists, who were eager to report to the American public whose opinion was changing about the war, too, and diplomats, chiefly French and British. The presence of the representatives of the two super powers at the time was significant in the sense that France and Great Britain took the side of the South and it imported much to AL to bring them to change side (*circumstances*).

Arguably, having sensed his soldiers were losing faith in the Civil War whose *paramount objective* was saving the United States from *secession*, and being aware of the presence of journalists and foreign diplomats in the audience, AL sought to *divert the attention of his audiences* from the real objective of this war, by insisting the war was fought *for equality* and, implicitly, freedom for slaves.<sup>(1)</sup>

1 - In order to formulate the **thesis statement** or **hypothesis** we simply have to answer the question related to what the document reveals about the theme—Civil War.



used here is the Bliss version, for it has been the most often reproduced and for it is the only one signed and dated by Lincoln.

### **Text of the Address<sup>(1)</sup>**

1. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a
2. new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men
3. are created equal.
4. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any
5. nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great
6. battle - field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a
7. final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might
8. live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.
9. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate - we can not consecrate - we can
10. not hallow - this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here,
11. have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will
12. little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what
13. they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the
14. unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.
15. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -
16. that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for
17. which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve
18. that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall
19. have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the
20. people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

## **2.2. Commentary on the Address: A civilizationist perspective**

### **2.2.1. Identification, background & thesis statement**

A well - known speech by Abraham Lincoln delivered in Gettysburg in 1863, the document under examination deals with the American Civil War and the necessity to continue the fight.<sup>(2)</sup>

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1 - Lincoln, «The Gettysburg Address». Bliss Copy.

2 - In the introductory section, after determining the theme—the American Civil War in the case being—and the other clues of identification—speaker, date, place, and date—normally follow both the **definition** of the theme and the **context** pertaining to it in the guise of a concise reminder of the historical circumstances and events revolving around the Civil War.

theme, in order to be able to compare and cross the available information from inside and outside the document.

### 1.3. Concluding remarks

In the last step in the commentary, the *synthesis* of the different personal ideas and partial conclusions should just be put forward with utmost objectivity. Yet, personal critical remarks and judgments about the document are accepted, but not to indulge in developing long statements, or in additional argumentation, or still in fervent condemnations of the document or its author(s).

In the second place, the conclusive remarks should include some *findings* emerging from the long process of analysis, examination of facts, and construction of arguments.

Last but not least, hints about *prospects* for further analysis and about how to extend the argumentation are, too, more than welcome before bringing the commentary to a close.

## 2. Application of the Approach

### 2.1. «The Gettysburg Address». Presentation and text

Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States of America, was invited to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to speak at the dedication ceremony of the graveyard where were buried the soldiers who had been killed in the American Civil War battle of Gettysburg that took place in the summer of 1863. The ceremony represented a big event, as about twenty thousand persons gathered in the cemetery to listen to the President, according to a *New York Time* article that also recounts that Lincoln was interrupted five times by long applause during this short speech and at its close.<sup>(1)</sup>

There are five known copies of the speech, each with slight differences and named after the persons who first received them. The one

1-«The Heroes of July: A Solemn and Imposing Event,». *New York Times* 20 Nov. 1863, NYT Archive: front page. <<http://www.nytimes.com/1863/11/20/newheroes-july-solemn-imposing-event-dedication-national-cemetery-gettysburgh.html>>.

granted the floor according to what serves the *thesis statement/hypothesis* in the best convincing way.

At this stage of the argumentation, also, it would be a huge mistake to neglect the style and the way the ideas and assertions are vehicled through the language used throughout the document. Often real intentions are whether betrayed or confirmed by the choice of words and expressions. The most meaningful stylistic devices should therefore be examined, at all three levels: word, sentence, and entire text, in an effort to explore the impact of language use on the significance of the document's *message*. Indeed, modals, repetitions, sentence forms, reflections, ideas, humor, irony, and the list goes on, are all worth considering, whenever they are significant, either as additional means of clarification and confirmation of the *thesis statement/hypothesis* or as evidence of the manipulative intentions expressed in the document being analyzed.

(II) *Explanation of the reference*: This part of the argument requires, not to say necessitates, general background knowledge, in order to provide enough clarification about the document's statement or assertions, just as in stage two of the introductory section about the theme. It is in the *explanation* part of each argument also that the borrowed theoretical frameworks could be of great help in this task, in order to frame the argumentation within a predetermined perspective or vision. In this respect, it is the content or, sometimes, genre of the document that determines the theory to borrow or the paradigm to adopt, whether it be sociological, philosophical, historical, or else.

(III) *Interpretation of the reference*: It is not until the end of each argument that personal opinions, views, evaluation and criticism are allowed. The *Interpretation*, indeed, allows the students in Civilization to wonder about whose interests or cause—political, ideological, or material—the document serves; whose viewpoint it omits or neglects. It is also the space for any need to bring rectifications to the account in the document under analysis, whether to restore the truth or assess information, sometimes, to compare with findings from other sources, to consider the point from other perspectives, or still to repair misunderstandings and, perhaps, introduce partial conclusions.

Checking the document's allegations while *interpreting* the document is another instance requiring background knowledge about the

(c) *Thesis statement/Hypothesis*: The last stage of the introductory section is simply devoted to say what the reader learns or discovers about the theme announced in the *identification*. (For example, in some documents, one may discover that Abraham Lincoln's paramount objective during the Civil War was not necessarily to free slaves from bondage, as one may expect!)

In other words, this stage serves to put forward the main articulation of the *hypothesis* attributed to the document being studied. This is supposed to *state* the *thesis* that the document suggests, not to paraphrase it. This articulation, indeed, is expected to introduce the document's (or its author's) *statement* about the theme, precisely to determine the relation—for instance causal, paradoxical, biased—between the theme and the revelations made in the document about the theme in question, preferably in a cohesive structure announcing the layout to be followed along the argumentation, i.e. the next step in this methodological pattern.

## 1.2. Argumentation (The commentary proper)

At this point of the commentary starts the construction of arguments in support of the *thesis statement/hypothesis*. Its pattern can, but may not, follow the structured articulation announced in the last stage of the introductory section. The argumentation can follow the same pattern, too, though arguments may be changed or reversed, whenever it is deemed necessary. Arguments can also be grouped in separate paragraphs and, if need be, each paragraph may be subtitled according to the substance or length of each argument.

Clinging to the document is imperative as each argument is treated. The role of the students in Civilization is simply to be the «interpreter».of the points made in documents; and just to say what they testify to the theme. It is recommended that each argument be constructed in three complimentary parts, as is suggested through the Roman numerals in the following order:

(I) *Reference* to the document about the argument under construction: It summarizes, or simply, quotes the passages about that argument, in order to corroborate the *thesis statement/hypothesis*. At this first stage of the argumentation only the document (or its author) is

etc., in order to determine the impact of any particular genre on the reader's understanding; e.g. most often, a broadsheet covering a given event is supposed to be more serious than a tabloid covering the same event. It is also assumed that an article in a broadsheet tends to be more objective than an editorial in the press organ of any political party. (iii) Finally, whenever it is significant and meaningful, the *identification* has to specify any other relevant informative clues likely to clarify the purpose of the document even more, such as identifying the author, the speaker's view point, the source, the date of publication, etc.

(b) *Definitions and contexts:*<sup>(1)</sup> At this stage of the introduction, the most obvious key - words used to announce the theme of the document should be explained and *defined*. Moreover the document should be related to a prominent *contextual* event. For example the Great Depression; the Civil Rights movement; the Arab - Zionist conflict; the Irish Question; Labor Day; etc., to mention a few. In other words, the clear reference to any event determines the elements to utilize in order to *situate* the content of the document in a historical, socioeconomic or political *context* and, perhaps, to detect the underlying ideology, political interests and objectives, or social concerns. Actually the background knowledge about the *contextual* trends of thought, the religious and cultural attitudes, the prevailing mentality, common values, etc. concerning the theme is of paramount importance at this stage.

On the other hand, the *definitions* and *contexts* are also of great help in both determining the state of the question and paving the way for the formulation of the research question (i.e. the problem advanced),<sup>(2)</sup> the outcome of which is supposed to be announced concisely in the *thesis statement/hypothesis*, which is none other than the last stage in the introductory section.

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1 - The term «contexts» is used in its neutral, non - technical conception. Here, it simply refers to the potential historical and ideological **backgrounds** revolving around the themes to be defined at this stage of the introductory section.

2 - The examination of the state of the question in combination with the formulation of **the research question** are supposed to raise the problem about what the students would like to understand and then explain, which, in turn, determines the point at which the students are supposed to continue –to take over– the topic, in order to offer their personal contributions and avoid either compilation, plagiarism, or even the inadvertent appropriation of others' findings.

cal devices,<sup>(1)</sup> evaluate the degree of objectivity,<sup>(2)</sup> investigate the significance of the figures of speech,<sup>(3)</sup> along with the strategies of enunciation,<sup>(4)</sup> and also check the semantic relevance, as either discrepancies or coherences may often emerge obviously out of the message in the material and the semantic fields used to convey that message. As a matter of fact, this methodological approach may resort to all available analytical means and tools that it may use isolated or combined, depending on the nature or type of the material to be examined. Yet, should the case arise, this approach must also commit itself to abiding by the scientific techniques and system of methods agreed upon and approved authoritatively in the aforementioned linguistic and stylistic branches.

The outcome of this approach should preferably be presented in a three - step commentary, comprising the introductory section, the argumentation, and the conclusive remarks. The following part describes these sections in more details.

### 1.1. Introductory section

The introductory section comprises three *sine qua non* points: (a) *identification of the document*, (b) *definitions and contexts*, and (c) *thesis statement/hypothesis*.

(a) *Identification of the document*: It, in a general informative manner, announces (i) the specific theme of the document, for instance, the New Deal; the African Americans' march on Washington; the Palestinian Question; the US invasion of Iraq; the Irish Civil War; a miners' strike; ghetto urban riots; etc. The *identification* also has to indicate (ii) the nature of the document—Act of Parliament, editorial, congressional debate, political speech or platform, inaugural address,

1 - Sellami - Baklouti, «From Text to Concept: Using Linguistic Clues in Analyzing Civilization Texts.». Symposium on Teaching Civilization: Problems and Remedies. ISLG, May 7 - 8, 2003.

2 - Triki and Sellami - Baklouti, **Foundations**. See chapter 5: «Political Discourse: Language Use as Social Acting».

3 - Rafroidi, **Précis**. See chapters XIII & XIV.

4 - Gérard Cordesse, **Langages littéraires**. See chapter 4: «énonciation et stratégies narratives».

In this respect, it is essential that a distinction be made between the *theme*, i.e. the answer to the question «what is the document about?», on the one hand, and the *thesis statement* as an answer to what the document reveals about that *theme*, on the other. Moreover, the French method rather insists on the inclusion of a summary in the introduction of the commentary, which tends to lengthen it uselessly and unbalance the outcome as whole.

In sum, the paper seeks to provide a guiding methodology so that the available resources are explored to the best of their potentials, in order to allow for the acceptance, questioning or refutation of their contents and arguments. Adopting a civilizationist point of view, hence, the paper also includes an application of this methodological approach to Abraham Lincoln's «Gettysburg Address».

## **1. Methodological Approach:**

The main role of this approach, in the first place, is to manage academically to uncover the rationale behind the examined material and then discover what this material reveals to the students in Civilization, with the intention also to unravel the theses and main ideas it holds, to discuss them and interpret them. Civilization is, *par excellence*, an interdisciplinary subject, it thereby explores documents of diverse natures and categories, ranging from geographical graphs and historical records to sociological findings, political discourse and, sometimes, even publications in economics and statistics, official censuses and the like. However, any interpretative attempt necessitating speculations should imperatively abide by the respective available theoretical frameworks pertaining to these disciplines. A poorer sister, as it were, Civilization has no distinguishing theories of its own and, thus, must borrow from the deep-seated existing ones.

The whole task in this approach consists not only in determining the amount of knowledge or information that the examined material brings about, but in gauging the extent of its credibility. Is the account genuine and conforming to truth? Is it backed up by other sources? Do some of its assertions contradict others?

To this end, the methodology in Civilization may have recourse to linguistics and pragmatics. It, indeed, may apply stylistic criti-

cal, political, or socioeconomic circumstances revolving around the themes of interest to students in Civilization, data hopefully leading to speculations, hypotheses, and the formulation of research questions about these themes.

Actually, this approach aims at inducing the formulation of personal opinions about the studied themes, in order to stimulate reflection about *how* to think rather than *what* to think, and at enhancing (the) ability to draw up-to-date conclusions and, perhaps, lessons from the historical contexts, political events, or social circumstances dealt with in the material submitted to this approach, which is intended, in addition, to be applicable to primary and secondary sources alike, with all due considerations and precautions in tackling each category. These sources may consist of texts of all genres—literary, biographical,<sup>(1)</sup> and epistolary—together with official documents, political speeches, news articles, interviews, posters, advertisements, artistic renditions etc. All should normally offer sources to constitute corpuses (with) and to exploit for topics subjected to research inquiries.

The present approach is inspired by the method of the French school of commentary and text analysis in Civilization that has been developed since the early 1970s by Monica Charlot and others.<sup>(2)</sup> The method was meant to endow Culture Studies—the academic subject known as Civilization—with its own analytical device in order to demarcate the subject from other close and coexisting subjects, such as history, sociology etc., and to give it all its significance and, to the teaching of this subject, its *lettres de noblesse*.

The present approach and the French method are not so much in opposition as they are complementary developments, hopefully indicative of the same and unified vision about how to deal with Civilization documents. However, the French method has essentially been conceived for the oral presentation of commentaries, not for written ones, mainly in the postgraduate *Agrégation* examination. There are other differences. Unlike this approach, the French method does not emphasize the distinction between themes and main ideas in documents.

1 - Damak 10.

2 - Monica Charlot, **Le commentaire**; Monica Charlot, **Le guide**.



## **Abstract**

*This paper presents a methodological approach to documents dealt with in Cultural Studies—or the academic subject known as Civilization.*

*It seeks to elaborate on the existing French school of commentary techniques related to the subject by working out an exhaustive version that might provide the tools for research in the branch of knowledge of Civilization. The paper argues that an important feature of this branch is the way Civilization corpuses are analyzed. The approach is then applied to political discourse in Abraham Lincoln's «Gettysburg Address» as a sample.*

## **Keywords**

Abraham Lincoln - American Civil War - civilizationist perspective - Cultural Studies - Gettysburg Address - methodological approach - political discourse

## **Introduction:**

If documents in Civilization—be they of historical, political, sociological, philosophical, or economic nature(s)—are surveyed without recourse to their potential particular backgrounds that determine the roles they play along with the purposes and intentions behind their creation and production, they may not yield the entire essence of their cognitive content. Moreover, if the content of the documents studied in Civilization is not questioned in the light of new developments, it may remain static, just revealing simple facts that add no new knowledge, neither leading to the formulation of new hypotheses nor to new findings about the themes, topic, or areas covered in these documents.

This paper, thus, is dedicated to conceiving a methodological approach in the guise of a number of recommendations on how to proceed to cope appropriately with cognitive contents in Civilization documents. It especially intends to show how best to deal with the factual and argumentative information extracted from these documents, and how to utilize it in research works. With this approach, the analyzed content of Civilization documents will no longer be regarded as a series of dead facts, but rather data relevant to understanding the histori-