

# What are words worth?

## Language and ideology in French dictionaries of the revolutionary period

*Pieter Desmet, Johan Rooryck and Pierre Swiggers*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Language and culture have been correlated in various ways, mostly with an eye towards establishing the influence of the one on the other. These endeavours often overlook the fact, which Sapir stressed in 1921, that language and culture are in essence very different phenomena. Whereas language is basically form-oriented (and its proper manifestation is through *form*), culture is a matter of content. 'Culture may be defined as *what* a society does and thinks. Language is a particular *how* of thought' (Sapir 1921: 233). From this it follows that language and culture are intrinsically distinct phenomena, unless one can discover a formal principle within culture:

If it can be shown that culture has an innate form, a series of contours, quite apart from subject-matter of any description whatsoever, we have a something in culture that may serve as a term of comparison with and possibly a means of relating it to language. But until such purely formal patterns of culture are discovered and laid bare, we shall do well to hold the drifts of language and of culture to be non-comparable and unrelated processes.<sup>1</sup>

(Sapir 1921: 233-4)

But there is more to language than just form: as is well known from the repeated caveat in comparative grammar, and in some types of structuralist description, language has also a 'contentive' aspect, which is incorporated in the lexicon. While this area of language is less interesting to the descriptive linguist,<sup>2</sup> it opens a vast area of

research for those interested in the reflection of culture in language. And here it seems possible to establish significant correlations:

It goes without saying that the mere content of language is intimately related to culture. A society that has no knowledge of theosophy need have no name for it; aborigines that had never seen or heard of a horse were compelled to invent or borrow a word for the animal when they made his acquaintance. In the sense that the vocabulary of a language more or less faithfully reflects the culture whose purposes it serves it is perfectly true that the history of language and the history of culture move along parallel lines.<sup>3</sup>

(Sapir 1921: 234)

This view is still too narrow, in that it considers culture primarily as 'material culture'. As Sapir wrote in his article 'Culture, genuine and spurious', (1924), there is also a spiritual side to culture, which is embedded in *values*, which allow the individual to assign himself a place within a community.<sup>4</sup>

For the study of these values, language – and more specifically vocabulary – is a most precious guide: this is a common principle of both 'idealist'<sup>5</sup> and 'sociohistorical' approaches.<sup>6</sup> In his trail-blazing essay on method(s) in lexicology, Georges Matoré (1953) stresses the pivotal role of words and, in some cases, groups of related words<sup>7</sup> for the 'inner' study of societies throughout a certain period. As a matter of fact, the word appears to be the link between the psychological and the sociological aspects of societal life. As noted by Matoré, the word carries a semantic charge which has its roots in preverbal behaviour and reaches to the most abstract and rationalized conceptual contents (Matoré 1953: 34–40). From this point of view, words and word choices are never arbitrary: they are motivated by basic needs and interests of a particular society, by specific attitudes towards institutions, events, persons, and by collective or individual associations. Within such a view, a number of lexical items are crucially important: these are the lexical witnesses (*mots-témoins*) and key-words (*mots-clés*). The former term refers to words that function as the material symbol of a psychic datum.<sup>8</sup> In principle, the lexical witness is the symbol of a change in the society, and is therefore a formal or semantic neologism. As an illustration, Matoré mentions the word 'coke': this word, which made its entry in the French lexicon around 1770, is the first sign of the birth of industrial capitalism. Next to these lexical witnesses, which testify to changes in culture and society, there are the key-

words: these denote persons, feelings, ideas and so on with which the individuals in a society associate or identify themselves, in an idealized form. As an example one can think of the ideals of 'l'honnête homme' or the 'Victorian sage'.

With respect to the study of history, one basic observation should be made: in our study of past cultures on the basis of lexical witnesses and key terms, it is essential to keep in mind *whose* words we are studying. As a matter of fact, the lexical deposit available to us for the study of older periods should be regarded as a filter, as the selective thesaurus of rather small groups within the society which have been responsible for the transmission of these words. The domain of lexical creation – at least from the point of view of what has come down to us – was a constrained one, not open to everyone. It may therefore be worthwhile to study the lexicon, or at least an essential part of it, of a period when this domain was opened, at least in principle, to all classes. In France this happened with the Revolution, and 1789 marks the beginning of a multifaceted ideological invasion in lexicography.

## 2 FRENCH DICTIONARIES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD (1789–1802)

The period between the Revolution of 1789 and the end of the Consular Republic (1802) is one of prodigious lexicographical activity. In his bibliographical survey Bernard Quemada (1967) lists some 150 titles for these fifteen years, and this list does not include important works such as Gallais's *Extrait d'un dictionnaire inutile* (1790), the anonymous *L'abus des mots* (1792), Rodoni's *Dictionnaire républicain et révolutionnaire* (1794),<sup>9</sup> the anonymous *Synonymes jacobites* (1795), Reinhard's *Le néologiste français* (1796), the anonymous *Wörterbuch der französischen Revolutionssprache* (1799) and Beffroy de Reigny's *Dictionnaire néologique*. Two striking facts should be noted with respect to this intensive production: the scattering of anonymous publications (between 1790 and 1803, there are about thirty-eight lexicographical publications with no author's name),<sup>10</sup> and the pervasive presence of the words 'new'<sup>11</sup> and 'neologism', as can be seen from the following selective list:-

- 1790 (anonymous), *Nouveau dictionnaire à l'usage des municipalités*.
- 1790 (anonymous), *Nouveau dictionnaire français composé par un aristocrate*.
- 1792 (A. Buée), *Nouveau dictionnaire des termes de la Révolution*.
- 1795 (L. Snetlage), *Nouveau dictionnaire français*.

- 1796 (anonymous), *Neologiste français ou vocabulaire fortatif*.  
 1796 (C.-F. Reinhard), *Le Néologiste français*.  
 1799 (Q. Tenneson), *Dictionnaire sur le nouveau droit*.  
 1800 (J. Le Cousin), *Dictionnaire néologique des hommes et des choses*.  
 1801 (J.-L. Cormon), *Nouveau vocabulaire ou dictionnaire portatif de la langue française*.  
 1800–1801 (L. S. Mercier), *Néologie ou Vocabulaire de mots nouveaux*.  
 1803 (anonymous), *Nouveau dictionnaire d'histoire naturelle*.

Admittedly, not all these works reflect to the same extent the drastic changes that had taken place in French societal life, but before 1789 and after 1804 *nouveau* appears much more sporadically, and *néologie* (and its congeners) almost never on the title page of lexicographical works.

The 'revolutionary' or innovative aspect of the lexicographical production is both a reflection of changes in the society and the expression of a changing view on language. The most important social change is the abolishment of elitism and the progressive spread of institutional functions among the lower classes. This implied the transmission of a new set of symbolic values, and therefore of a new (or renewed) vocabulary to name them. The transmission was not immediate, nor was it uniform: too many obstacles stood in its way. There was first the fact that the lower classes of the French society could hardly speak the 'national language'. This became the major impetus for a language policy aiming at a 'linguistic recycling' of the *citoyens*. To adopt the revolutionary 'newspeak', it was necessary to abandon one's *patois* and learn the national language. 'The unity of the (national) language is an integral part of the Revolution'; 'There must be a linguistic identity'.<sup>12</sup> The 'politicization' of language was advocated by Grégoire,<sup>13</sup> whose investigations on the use of French in the national territory had revealed that only in fifteen departments in central France was the national language spoken, without uniformity, and that some thirty dialects were still very much alive. This state of affairs could only be undone by a programme for the diffusion of the national language; the construction of roads leading from Paris to the provinces and language instruction in school were the pillars on which this programme was based (see Grégoire 1794). But the diffusion of the national language did not go smoothly: while some authors attacked the 'vicious'<sup>14</sup> expressions of dialects and patois, others were convinced that dialects had their own rights and that the imposition of a national language was an act of tyranny. This is clear

not only from a number of reactions to Grégoire's questionnaire, but also from the many linguistic<sup>15</sup> and literary publications which give a prominent place to dialects. Moreover, the diffusion of a national language as the main instrument of centralization<sup>16</sup> was not just a matter of spreading new words – for measures (*mètre, gramme, litre*, created between 1791 and 1793), time divisions (months: *germinal, floréal, prairial, messidor, thermidor, fructidor, vendémiaire, brumaire, frimaire, nivôse, pluviôse, ventôse*; ten-day divisions), and of new administrative units and functions (*département, arrondissement, préfet*) – but also, and primarily, a matter of imposing new views. And here the major obstacle was the existence of politically conflicting views.

The political scene in France between 1789 and 1804<sup>17</sup> was very turbulent.<sup>18</sup> After the instalment of the Constituant Assembly in 1789, attempts were made by the bourgeois factions to reach a compromise with the aristocracy. A turning point was the king's attempt to flee the country in 1791, which provoked new tensions between the aristocracy and the revolutionary nation. The Brissotins (later known as Girondins) were the chief instigators of the international war, stimulated by economic problems, which was declared on Europe's *ancien régime* institutions. The international war was a burden to the Girondist bourgeoisie, which proved incapable of setting the situation straight in its own country. Economic crises, social tensions and ideological oppositions within the bourgeoisie led to the insurrection of 10 August 1792. This 'second Revolution' brought about a democratization of the political power, but through the integration of the *sans-culottes* (lower-class craftsmen) it caused new conflicts within the bourgeoisie. The Girondins were overthrown by the Montagnards, a bourgeois faction which had made an alliance with the lower classes, and whose basic programme in Robespierre's words, was to assure 'every member of society of the means of existence'. After the execution of the king in January 1793, and the elimination of the Girondist leaders in the Convention, the revolutionary government imposed strict measures. The Revolution entered a new phase, that of Terror, under Robespierre. This phase is characterized by massive executions of political enemies (the Girondins, the aristocrats, the clergy), by dechristianization, and by a number of military and economic successes. But the revolutionary government was unable to control the popular masses, initially led by the Cordeliers, and it was divided by inner disputes (such as that between the Committee for General Security and the Committee for Public Safety). On 27 July 1794 Robespierre was arrested, and the following day he was guillotined.

From then on, the Revolution went its way to less and less collective dictatorship. The Thermidorian regime could no longer control the national economy, and the popular movement lost its primary force, unity. A new constitution (in 1795) marked the beginning of the First Directory, and reduced equality to juridical or civil equality. The First Directory had a narrow, conservative bourgeois social basis, and met with growing dissatisfaction, due to dizzying inflation and poor harvests. In the meantime, Napoleon's star was rising, and despite a period of relative stability in 1798 and 1799, the second Directory was rather unpopular. The poor economic situation and the military programme paved the way for Bonaparte's *coup d'état* in 1799 and the instalment of the Consular Republic. Bonaparte's successful wars, his monetary reforms, his organization of the state and his diplomatic attitude in religious matters made him popular enough to declare himself emperor in 1804. From then on, the old aristocracy and the upper bourgeois classes regained social preponderance, while being politically harmless. Much of the Revolution of 1789 had been swept away, but what remained was the freedom of enterprise and of profit, so that one can say that the Napoleonic 'tail' of the French Revolution confirmed the instalment of a new economy, which had begun with the abrupt destruction of the feudal structures in 1789.

This historical sketch has no other function than recalling some of the inner tensions that marked the period of the French Revolution. It prepares the way for our analysis of a number of linguistic testimonies from that period. The dictionaries published between 1789 and 1804 reflect variegated, and often opposite views about the ideals of the Revolution, its course, outgrowths, abuses, reorientations; they also reveal an intimate knowledge of the language – and discursive forms – underlying the revolutionary practices and the conflicting ideologies. In recent years the lexicographical works and the public speeches published or delivered in the revolutionary period have attracted the attention of scholars,<sup>19</sup> and work is under way on the specific vocabulary of the Revolution, its reception, and its description by language observers. This chapter is intended as a contribution to this type of research; we will focus on three dictionaries, belonging to the period 1790–6. Apart from practical considerations, our choice is motivated by our concern to compare at least one 'exterior' testimony (Reinhard 1796) with more direct witnesses. As to the latter, we have chosen two works published in the same year (1790) and reflecting different political convictions and aspirations. None of the three works is anonymous.

### 3 CONFLICTING VIEWS: CHANTREAU, GALLAIS AND REINHARD

It is well known that the period of the French Revolution witnessed several profound transformations of the French lexicon. This is clear from *a posteriori* studies such as Frey's,<sup>20</sup> but it is also evident from observations by contemporary authors. In the preface to his dictionary, Charles-Frédéric Reinhard – who had served for several years in the German embassy in Paris, including the first years of the Revolution – noted the drastic changes in the French vocabulary:

There is nothing more natural than to see a large nation, which aspires to break its chains and to regenerate itself, forging constantly, in the midst of the general upheaval, new ideas which in their turn require new words to express them. The desire for a new order of things on the one hand, and the hatred of the old order on the other, have banished even the terms that pictured the manners and customs of the previous generation, or referred to the titles and functions of the various divisions of the old administration, and have replaced them with newly created terms. This explains the mass of new and unusual expressions, many of them well chosen, and a few of them grotesque, which hamper, at every moment, the reading of the official documents and other French works of this period. . . . And the present work is the result of remarks and observations, not only on the new language since the beginnings of the Revolution but also on a few neologisms that were already in use a few years before the Revolution.<sup>21</sup>

(Reinhard 1796: \*2–\*3)

This passage testifies to the lexical innovations which the French language underwent in the years preceding the Revolution and during the first years of the revolutionary period. The revolution carried with it an entire linguistic programme, as is evident from the endeavours of the Société des amateurs de la langue française. This society was founded by the French *grammairien-patriote* François Domergue, who stressed the importance of creating new words and of assigning new meanings to old words. The aim of the society was to diffuse the national language, and to introduce a language policy, which was no longer in the hands of a select group of Academicians, but was a national matter, taken care of by all those interested in the

problem, viz. the subscribers to the *Journal de la langue française*, the official organ of the society. In his opening address of October 1791 Domergue outlined a programme for the creation of this 'new national monument', to wit the French language as open to all citizens.<sup>22</sup>

Surely, this was an optimistic view, and an utopian one. The principal idea behind it was the rejection of all words connoting the *ancien régime* institutions, so as to abolish every possible reference to the pre-revolutionary period. The principal strategy underlying or justifying the introduction of new words was to condemn the old words as *abuses*, as evil words. The new order required a new language, the language of liberty, and it rejected the language that had been the vehicle of an unjust and inhumane society. This theme is pervasive throughout all types of revolutionary newspeak (see Barny 1978; Ricken 1982). It prompted Morellet to start in 1793 a chronicle, signed 'Le Définisseur', in the *Mercure de France*, the aim of which was to instruct the nation in the use of the right words, the proper base of moral behaviour. The lexicographer thus has a humanitarian function: he teaches his fellow citizens how to avoid conceptual errors, by using the proper words, and since such errors are at the basis of social conflicts, his work is of primary importance for the society.<sup>23</sup>

But was there only abuse of words in the past? Apparently not. In the *Mercure de France* of 1794 there appeared a series of articles under the title 'Sur l'abus et les différentes variations des idées dans la révolution', the aim of which was to show how the extremist Montagnards had oriented the Revolution towards an uncontrolled massacre, and how they had distorted the ideals of the initial Revolution. These articles, probably written by J.-J. Lenoir-Laroche, appeared between October and December 1794; their attack on the Terror regime is stated in unequivocal terms, and stresses the abuse of words by Robespierre and his followers.

Words have such an influence on ideas, and ideas on actions, that it would have been a major contribution to the Revolution if the main signs of our ideas in politics could be assigned their true meaning, and if it were possible to clearly *define* before reasoning . . . . It is a remarkable fact that the Revolution, that started by enlightenment . . . was so suddenly turned off its primary course by a handful of scoundrels without knowledge, without principles, without morals, without any other talent than to impress people by a simulated patriotism and some artificial word-play that influenced the masses all the more



when their understanding of the words was poor, the words having been carefully twisted away from their true meaning.<sup>24</sup>

(*Mercure de France* 12, 1794: 161)

The abuse of words, originally the principal means of condemning everything related to the *ancien régime*,<sup>25</sup> was also an efficient means of distracting the minds of the opponents and of the popular masses: in denouncing the old abuse of words, one could turn attention away from the contemporary abuse of words, and from practices which were hardly compatible with the initial aims of the Revolution. Those practices did not pass unnoticed, and there are several texts testifying to the abuse of words by the representatives in the National Assembly. Some counter-revolutionary statements are explicit on this point:

It is unbelievable how much the orators of the National Assembly have abused and are still abusing their young followers with notions and opinions: they have made them believe, according to the circumstances, that it was the constituted organ or the constitutive organ, or the national convention, and by this simple choice of labels, they have led them into confusion about the powers, have made them forget about its origin, and have brought them to commit the crime of *lèse-majesté*, both with respect to its real sovereign the King and with respect to its trumped-up sovereign, the People.<sup>26</sup>

(quoted after Barny 1978)

The most explicit, and most rigorous attack on the abuse of words from the counter-revolutionary side is Jean-François La Harpe's *Du Fanatisme dans la langue révolutionnaire, ou de la persécution suscitée par les barbares du dix-huitième siècle, contre la religion chrétienne et ses ministres*,<sup>27</sup> which was published in 1797 and was sympathetically greeted in the conservative journal *La Quotidienne*.

But the same misgivings were sensed in the revolutionary circles. In 1795, the spokesman of the *Tribun du Peuple*, François-Noël (Gracchus) Babeuf sensed the inherent contradiction between the demands of the right to exist and the proclamation of the right of property. The First Directory hardly corresponded to the real aim of the Revolution, viz. the equality of benefits. Less than a year and a half before his trial and subsequent execution, the propounder of communism based on equal distribution denounced the abuse of words by those who had succeeded in exploiting the Revolution for their own profit (*Tribun du Peuple*, 30 December 1795).

Several shrewd neutral observers also noticed the 'polyphony' of the French lexicon in the revolutionary period. Reinhard, for instance, recognizes a number of coexisting languages, such as the language of the Jacobins and the language of the royalists; he also points out some abuses of words, as in the entry for *Négociantisme*. 'From the word *Négoce* (Trade), *Handel*, *Handelsgeist*, *die Klasse der Handelsleute*, the trading spirit, the caste of traders. Word created to create a crime. Negotiantism is worse than aristocratism and royalism, according to the levelers of fortunes, who coveted the wealth of the traders' (Reinhard 1796: 236).<sup>28</sup>

In several of his entries Reinhard stressed the manifold use of words,<sup>29</sup> and vented his indignation about the Terror regime,<sup>30</sup> and about the failure of the Revolution. His short entry *DémagoguINETTE* is at the same time a denunciation of demagogic practices (see also his articles *Démagogie*, *Démagogique*, *Démagogisme*, *Démagogue* and *Mystificateur*) and a sad state-of-the-art of the Revolution. 'This is what the Constitution of 1789 is called, the daughter of Demagogues, as it were. This promising little girl died in the cradle' (Reinhard 1796: 121).<sup>31</sup> Reinhard's view on the Revolution was bitter, and while his judgement may have been coloured by his high opinion of Louis XVI,<sup>32</sup> it was motivated by the dreary story of the French Revolution:

*Liberty*. Freyheit. An entity, ideal up to now, to which the French have been stretching out their arms in vain through five years of convulsions. The giant statue of Freedom on the square of the Revolution has been compared to the statue of Moloch, who demanded blood-offerings.

*Patriot*. A citizen who desires the well-being of his homeland and of his fellow citizens. France, swarming with patriots since the Revolution, has very few corresponding to this definition. For each patriot aiming at the good, the happiness of his homeland, there were a thousand others who only wanted the goods of their fellow citizens. Hence, the title patriot is nowadays very ambiguous without an adjective determining its meaning.

*Fourteenth of July*. Der 14te Juli (1789). An old word, although it reminds us of a totally new scene in history, where 600,000 French-men, representing 26 million, assembled in the field of the federation, both tall and short, young and old, rich and poor, of both sexes, suddenly became brothers and kissed each other, drunken with liberty and equality, thinking that they had

found happiness. This day of elation, of which only memories are left, has been followed by a thousand and one days of mourning, distress, pain, and tears of blood, the end of which is not yet in sight.<sup>33</sup>

(Reinhard 1796: 205, 251, 270)

In short, Reinhard deplors the absence of reason (see the articles *Raison* and *Raison nationale*), the deterioration of the socio-economic situation,<sup>34</sup> the defiguration of the ideals of the Revolution (see the articles *République Française* and *Révolution Française*),<sup>35</sup> and the moral corruption.<sup>36</sup> But Reinhard was able to speak with the hindsight of a few years separating the events of 1789 and the publication of his dictionary; as a German who had witnessed some of the horrid paths the Revolution had taken, he was also able to speak at a certain distance. His distanced outlook found its expression in a carefully executed lexicographical description, which the author intended as a dictionary of words and of facts. The latter aspect is manifest, not only in the examples illustrating the definitions, but also in the systematic inclusion of professional and scientific terms. In addition Reinhard is a talented lexicographer: he is sensitive to stylistic distinctions,<sup>37</sup> to metaphoric shifts (see his articles *Aigrettes électriques*, *Brèche*, *Suppurer*), to the ambiguity of terms,<sup>38</sup> and in general to problems of classification (see his grammatical information on the entries, and his threefold distinction between completely new words, words having taken on a new meaning, and archaic words which have been reused).

To Reinhard's distanced views we can oppose the testimony of two much more time-bound publications, both of 1790, but reflecting diametrically opposed political convictions. In his *Extrait d'un dictionnaire inutile*, the monarchist J.-P. Gallais is strongly critical of the revolutionary ideas. But his criticism is hidden away in the entries of the dictionary, which have a tone very different from the oxymoric dithyramb on the Revolution in the preface. In a few cases Gallais puts the criticism in the mouth of someone else: a member of the Academy (see the article *Droit public*), a man he met in the street (*Journaux*), or a famous lawyer (*Moines*), but in the majority of cases Gallais speaks for himself. And he makes it clear that France is in much worse shape than it was before 1789. In the entry *Patriotisme* we read: 'Never has there been so much aristocracy shown in thinking, so much despotism in behavior, so much tyranny in the most reckless actions, than since we have been free' (Gallais 1790: 235-6).<sup>39</sup>

What has happened, according to Gallais, is a massive linguistic hypnotization, for which the journalists are responsible:

An army of journalists suddenly sprang from the heart of the revolution, like a swarm of venomous or bothersome insects coming out of the heart of the swamps in summer . . . . I would dare say that the true enemies of France and of the revolution are these rowdy writers, who, for a year now, have not stopped sounding the alarm, caressing the people and fawning upon the left side of the Assembly. . . .

But we are being *disenchanted* every day. The principles are the opinions of this or that person; the truth is only the system of a sect or party; the enlightenment is the personal knowledge of the journalist.<sup>40</sup>

(Articles *Journaux* and *Principes*, Gallais 1790: 163–4; 243; see also his article *Talent*).

This is in striking contrast with Chantreau's long article on *Journal* (Chantreau 1790: 85–110), which contains an extensive note on the old and new periodicals. Chantreau praises the revolutionary periodicals, which stimulate critical thinking among all the classes of the society:

JOURNAL: in the *ancien régime* a periodical leaflet, informing about rain and good weather, or giving excerpts from library catalogues, and some letters sent by the subscribers to the editor, which in the pubs were naively taken to be letters. These leaflets informed very accurately about the kind and the number of grimaces of this or that actress in a new play.

But how everything has changed! These leaflets, once the pasture of our unemployed, are now the food for all the classes of citizens. People are eager to have them, they fight for them, they devour them. Our politicians find in them the regeneration of the empire and the ups and downs of the aristocracy. The Muses are silenced, and only the journalist is on the scene, where he has the greatest success. (Chantreau 1790: 85–6; see also the article *Lettre au rédacteur*)<sup>41</sup>

This article is typical of Chantreau's dictionary, which is based on the 'old–new' contrast. Most of the articles in his dictionary tell us how bad it was before, and how splendid everything is now. Now what has changed according to Chantreau? First of all, a number of injustices have disappeared, such as the exploitation of the poor by the clergy<sup>42</sup> or by the aristocracy – the 'bad citizens'<sup>43</sup> – and the king (see the article *Roi des Français*). The Revolution has put an end to political, social and economical abuses,<sup>44</sup> and has done away with the rift

between the privileged classes and the exploited masses. There is no longer a third estate,<sup>45</sup> and true liberty reigns:

LIBERTY: in the *ancien régime* the word had a meaning totally different from its present one, now that it has become the cry of the nation. The word refers to that precious right which nature gives to all men, at least when nature is not counteracted by ministers having their fortresses, and fortresses having their *de Launay*. We have finally achieved the wish of this good nature, which we had never before known so well and which will take us far. We have finally *conquered* this inalienable right to be free . . . . A free people is one which lives under the authority of laws, good or convenient, which it has given to itself or through its representatives. (Chantreau 1790: 120–1)<sup>46</sup>

Admittedly, Chantreau wrote these lines when the Revolution could still arouse enthusiasm among its followers,<sup>47</sup> and when the reversal caused by the Revolution was still positively valued. Also, the Revolution had not yet been abused at that time in order to impose a dictatorial regime: it was still possible, in 1790, to be optimistic about the status of *citizen*,<sup>48</sup> to appreciate the role of the revolutionary committees (see the articles *Comité* and *Contre-révolution*). But it was difficult not to see the economic distress or the demagogic practices. Still, Chantreau felt optimistic about matters economic, and saw demagoguery only on the other side:

MONEY (ARGENT): . . . French-men! Free nation! but you who do not have a penny, may these moments of penury you are going to live in not drive you to despair; they will make you practice virtues you did not have, and which are necessary to a regenerating people . . . .<sup>49</sup>

DEMAGOGUE: . . . Every time I use the word Demagogue, I take it in the sense referring to a hypocritical aristocrat seeking to smother his brother the democrat by taking him into his arms.<sup>50</sup>  
(Chantreau 1790: 13, 62)

This new era is the era of free words: 'the gift of language will be, as in all free communities, the means leading to all means' (Chantreau 1790: 143, entry *Parole*). And from this new society a number of words are banished, such as *bastille*, *bourgeois*, *chanoine*, *charge*, *droits seigneuriaux*, *féodal*, *monarchisme*, *ordre du roi*, *privilege*, *vassal* and *torture*: a long list of such terms 'which will go out of use' is given in an appendix by Chantreau (1790: 183–95).

We hear a different tone in Gallais's work, which gives a different view of the changeover. We have seen already that the author is very critical of journalists, and he regards revolution as the main objective of demagogues, abusing the poor: 'Always everywhere the popular masses, the instrument of revolutions, served the ambitions of demagogues, and were poor, ignorant, wicked and restless. It is not difficult to incite to a revolution wretches who have nothing, who are always ready to sell themselves and to change masters' (*Démagogue*, Gallais 1790: 86-7).<sup>51</sup> Gallais laughs at the so-called democracy that has been installed (see the articles *Démocrate* and *Peuple*),<sup>52</sup> and is highly sceptical about the 'regeneration' of the nation (see his entries *Législation*, *Législature*, *Régénération*). A true advocate of monarchism,<sup>53</sup> Gallais criticizes the National Assembly for its hesitations, its inconsequence, its unfounded decisions, its lack of organization (see the entries *Département*, *Droit public*, *Législation*, *Majorité*, *Orateurs*). The result is a situation of discomfort and uncertainty: 'The truth, formerly as unchanging as its author, has become as moving as time. Subject to circumstances, it takes all the forms, it follows all the movements that one wishes to imprint upon it. What was true a few months ago is not true anymore' (*Bénéfice*, Gallais 1790: 35).<sup>54</sup>

The new society is one in which people are afraid of being denounced (see *Dénonciation*), in which there is no order (nor *ordres*, distinct social classes), in which the concept of homeland (*Patrie*) has no real content (see *Patriotisme*). Degeneration, then, instead of regeneration, and the economic situation testifies to this: 'Liberty may be a good thing, but in the first place we need bread, and I challenge all the orators of the world, and all the paper-writers of Paris to show me that it is better to be free and die of hunger, than to be fed, clothed and fettered' (*Liberté*, Gallais 1790: 190).<sup>55</sup> In Gallais's eyes, the Revolution was a mistake, since France was made for a monarchist regime (*Monarchie*). His hope – expressed in the last entry – then is that the error will be a temporary one: 'Zealous citizens, zealous fanatics, zealous bastards of all kinds, be aware that errors have their time' (*Zèle*, Gallais 1790: 277).<sup>56</sup>

And things indeed changed, but not in the way Gallais would have wanted it. . . .

#### 4 CONCLUSION

The three dictionaries examined here offer different views of the revolutionary period. Different, because of different experiences, and

in the case of Reinhard, a wider experience through time; but different in the first place because of the underlying political persuasions and ideologies particular to each author. These differences result also in different strategies as lexicographers.

Only Reinhard's work is faithful to the scope of a dictionary, viz. to provide information about words for their own sake. Gallais and Chantreau use – and abuse – the lexicographical genre to make public their feelings (or misgivings) about the French Revolution: words are used here as a pretext to speak about realities, and to express value judgements about them. Within this strategy, the dictionary has a basically extralinguistic function: it serves to separate the old and new society by separating the words characteristic of each one. Gallais and Chantreau have given us dictionaries which are not so much selective encyclopaedias of a major political and socio-economic event, but rather alphabetically dispersed commentaries on the referents and the connotations of words. Reinhard's aim is an ideologically more neutral one: his dictionary is intended to help those who want to read (and understand) the 'papiers publics et autres ouvrages Français de cette époque', and is written for all the 'amateurs de la langue Française'. In contradistinction with the 'phatic' orientation of Gallais and Chantreau's works, Reinhard's portable dictionary has a basic 'conative' or public-oriented function. This is clear not only from the German glosses accompanying the entries, but also from the distinction between some kind of lexicographical definition (including a grammatical description) on the one hand and the examples on the other. Nevertheless, Reinhard goes beyond the strictly lexicographical borderlines: his dictionary not only includes 'encyclopaedic' information (see the 'Tableau des quatre vingt-neuf Départemens de la France', Reinhard (1796: 126–9), for example, and the entries containing proper names), but it also contains value judgements, subtly given as afterthoughts on sentences exemplifying the entry (but which could also be read, superficially, as a continuation of the example):

*Ça va, ça ira.* Das geht, das wird gehen. (All goes well, all will go well) Refrain of the Patriot Song *par excellence*, which has become a familiar expression and the password of the Revolutionaries on different occasions. *Ça va, ça ira*, despite the federalists, the fanatico-royalists who would want to destroy the inalienable rights of mankind. – Nothing goes well at all.

*Déprêtriser*, *se.* Sich entprietern. (To leave the priesthood) –

Many ecclesiastics have left the priesthood in France since the Revolution. Many have repented of it<sup>57</sup>.

(Reinhard 1796: 71–2, 131)

Gallais and Chantreau have given us an ideological pamphlet disguised as a dictionary; in a way, their work is their personal dictionary, in which words are treated as *tokens* and as indicators of feelings, convictions and attitudes. Reinhard, the external observer, stands on a higher level: he looks down upon the uses and misuses of words, and marks off his description from the recorded speech. In several cases he uses the strategy of displaced speech:<sup>58</sup> ‘dit-on’, ‘dit un patriote’, ‘dit un journaliste’ (‘as one says’, ‘as a patriot says’, ‘as a journalist says’). There are however instances where the lexicographer cannot contain himself, and adds a personal comment: ‘Avorton démocratique (little democratic runt, lit. democratic miscarriage); this is what Marat was called, the ugliest, the dirtiest, and the most cowardly of all Demagogues’ (Reinhard 1796: 39).<sup>59</sup>

Our three witnesses not only share the property of being laden with ideology; they also testify to a common awareness of the power of words. The use and abuse of words is a common theme of eighteenth-century philosophy of language, especially after 1740, and it received a new impetus from the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary practices. It is not surprising that in the revolutionary period Morellet deemed it useful or even necessary to start his series ‘Le Définisseur’ in the *Mercur de France* and that so many lexicographical works appeared: the power of the word to overthrow had been discovered, and the resulting situation was so disturbing and (economically) gloomy that ideals – present or past – had to be kept alive by words. The beginning of a new era: that of the *idola fori*?

## NOTES

- 1 The passage is followed by a covert criticism of Marrism: ‘From this it follows that all attempts to connect particular types of linguistic morphology with certain correlated stages of cultural development are vain’ (Sapir 1921: 234).
- 2 Note the explicit statement by Sapir (1921: 234): ‘The linguistic student should never make the mistake of identifying a language with its dictionary’. Bloomfield’s separation between grammar and lexicon (Bloomfield 1933: 138) is based on the presence or absence of ‘arrangement’: the grammar of a language is constituted by the meaningful arrangements of forms (Bloomfield 1933: 163), whereas the lexicon is the *stock* of morphemes (Bloomfield 1933: 162).



- 3 See also Bloomfield's (1933: 444–60) chapter on cultural borrowing.
- 4 This term corresponds to Sapir's 'third use' of the term, which stresses the 'spiritual possessions' of the group. 'We may perhaps come nearest the mark by saying that the cultural conception we are now trying to grasp aims to embrace in a single term those general attitudes, views of life, and specific manifestations of civilization that give a particular people its distinctive place in the world. Emphasis is put not so much on what is done and believed by a people as on how what is done and believed functions in the whole life of that people, on what significance it has for them. The very same element of civilization may be a vital strand in the culture of one people, and a well-nigh negligible factor in the culture of another. The present conception of culture is apt to crop up particularly in connection with problems of nationality, with attempts to find embodied in the character and civilization of a given people some peculiar excellence, some distinguishing force, that is strikingly its own. Culture thus becomes nearly synonymous with the 'spirit' or 'genius' of a people, yet not altogether, for whereas these loosely used terms refer rather to a psychological, or pseudo-psychological, background of national civilization, culture includes with this background a series of concrete manifestations which are believed to be peculiarly symptomatic of it. Culture, then, may be briefly defined as civilization in so far as it embodies the national genius' (Sapir [1924] 1949: 311).
- 5 See especially Karl Vossler's work (e.g., Vossler 1913; 1923: 68–71).
- 6 See, e.g., Dubois (1962) and Brunot (1927–37).
- 7 Matoré (1953: 65) goes beyond this in stressing the need of a study of interactions within a particular semantic field.
- 8 'Le mot-témoin introduit la notion de *valeur*, nous dirions plus volontiers la notion de *poids* dans le vocabulaire. Le mot-témoin est le symbole matériel d'un fait spirituel important; c'est l'élément à la fois expressif et tangible qui concrétise un fait de civilisation' ('The lexical witness brings in the notion of *value*, or as we would rather say the notion of *weight* into the vocabulary. The lexical witness is the material symbol of an important mental fact; it is the expressive and palpable element that concretizes a fact of civilization') (Matoré 1953: 65–6).
- 9 For a description of this manuscript work, see Schlieben-Lange (1985: 170, 182 and 1987).
- 10 Compare this with the number of anonymously published dictionaries between 1775 and 1789 and 1804–20: 15 and 20 respectively.
- 11 The concept of *new* is a complex one: it can apply to various types of innovation, such as the creation of new words, the renewed use of words that had fallen out of use, and the attribution of a new meaning to a term. Some authors, such as Reinhard (1796) and Mercier (1800–1) make this threefold distinction.
- 12 'L'Unité de l'idiome est une partie intégrante de la Révolution. . . . Il faut identité de langage' ('The unity of the language is an integral part of the Revolution. . . . Identity of language is required') (Grégoire 1794, edition in Gazier 1880: 303).

See also the following passage in an official letter by the representatives of the Corrèze Département sent to the minister of Justice in 1792: 'la

langue française étant la langue universelle de la République, ce serait rendre un mauvais service aux citoyens que de les entretenir dans l'usage d'un baragouin barbare et de ne pas les encourager par tous les moyens à se servir du langage national' ('Since the French language is the universal language of the Republic, it would be of no help to the citizens to converse with them in a barbarous gibberish, and not to encourage them by all means to use the national language') (quoted after de Certeau-Julia-Revel 1975: 162-3 and Droixhe 1978: 342-3).

- 13 On Grégoire's questionnaire, and the conclusions drawn from it, see de Certeau-Julia-Revel (1975) and Droixhe (1978: 342-3).
- 14 See, e.g., E. Molard's *Lyonnoisismes ou recueil d'expressions vicieuses utilisées à Lyon, 1792*; new edition *Dictionnaire du mauvais langage, recueil d'expressions vicieuses usitées en France, et à Lyon, 1797*; E. Villa, *Nouveaux gasconismes corrigés*, Montpellier, 1802; J.-F. Michel, *Dictionnaire des expressions vicieuses*, Nancy, 1807, G. Peignot, *Petit dictionnaire des locutions vicieuses*, Paris, 1807; J.-M. Rolland, *Dictionnaire des expressions vicieuses* (Hautes et Basses-Alpes), Gap, 1810.
- 15 See, e.g., Gacon Dufour, *Dictionnaire rural raisonné*, Paris, 1808; d'Hautel, *Dictionnaire du bas langage*, Paris, 1808.
- 16 The French words *centralisation* and *centraliser* are first attested in 1790.
- 17 It is hard to define the chronological boundaries of the French Revolution; strictly speaking, the French Revolution ended in 1794, when Robespierre and his fellow Jacobins were guillotined and the Thermidor Regime was installed. But most authors include the Thermidor Regime and the first and second Directories (up to 1799) within the Revolution period; often the period is extended so as to include the Consular Republic (up to 1802) and the Empire (up to 1815).
- 18 On the history of the French Revolution, see Carlyle (1837), de Tocqueville (1856), Pariset (1920-1922), Lefebvre-Soboul (1963), Soboul (1962).
- 19 On the project of a study of the French social and political vocabulary from 1680 to 1820, see the introductory volume of Reinhard and Schmitt (1985: cf. Swiggers 1987b). See also the studies by Barny (1978), Guilhaumou (1978), Proschwitz (1966), Ricken (1974), Schlieben-Lange (1981) and Tournier (et al. 1969). For a succinct overview, see Gohin (1938). For a selective bibliography, see Gumbrecht-Schlieben-Lange (1981).
- 20 See Frey (1925); a number of these transformations were already prepared in the period preceding the Revolution (see Gohin 1903). The most extensive survey of the linguistic situation in revolutionary France is still Brunot (1927-37).
- 21 'Rien de plus naturel, que de voir une grande nation, qui tend à rompre des chaînes et à se régénérer, dans l'effervescence du bouleversement général, enfanter à tout instant des idées nouvelles, qui demandent à leur tour des mots neufs, pour les exprimer. Le désir d'un nouvel ordre de choses d'un côté, la haine contre l'ancien de l'autre, ont banni jusqu'à des termes, qui peignaient les mœurs et les usages du ci-devant Français, ou qui caractérisaient les titres et les fonctions des différentes parties de l'ancienne administration, en les remplaçant par d'autres de nouvelle création. De là cette foule d'expressions, neuves, insolites, souvent heureuses, quelquefois grotesques, qui arrêtent, à chaque pas, dans la lecture des

papiers publics et autres ouvrages Français de cette époque. . . . Et l'ouvrage actuel est le fruit de remarques et d'observations, non seulement sur la nouvelle langue, depuis le commencement de la Révolution, mais aussi sur quelques néologismes, qui avaient cours quelques années avant la Révolution.'

- 22 We quote the crucial passages from this address, after the first volume of the *Journal* (see Ricken 1974: 311–12; cf. Busse 1986a): 'Un dictionnaire vraiment philosophique, qui atteigne notre langue usuelle dans toutes ses parties, manque à notre littérature, à nos besoins journaliers, à notre nouvelle existence politique. Vraiment la nation s'est flattée, pendant plus d'un siècle, de voir élever par l'académie françoise le grand monument pour lequel elle a été instituée; toujours trompée dans sa juste espérance, elle s'est vue réduite à se livrer aux hérésies académiques, comme le vulgaire embrasse les religions fausses, parce que la véritable ne s'est pas révélée à ses yeux. Le jour de la liberté a lui; toutes les erreurs vont s'évanouir, comme les ombres disparaissent devant l'astre qui nous éclaire. Mais des diverses erreurs qui font le malheur de l'homme, la plus funeste peut-être est l'abus des mots, qui nous trompe sur les choses. Persuadé que sans une langue bien faite, il n'est point d'idées saines et que sans idées saines il n'est point de bonheur, j'ai conçu le projet de vous rassembler, pour travailler tous de concert au perfectionnement de notre idiome. La France a reçu de l'Amérique l'exemple de la régénération des lois; donnons à toutes les nations l'exemple de la régénération des langues.'

Pour bien asseoir le monument national que nous voulons élever, nous devons d'abord nous assurer des bases. La lexicque (sic), qui est la science des dictionnaires, nous les fait connoître. Elle exige impérieusement qu'un dictionnaire vraiment philosophique présente, à chaque mot, une classification juste, une étymologie saine, une prosodie exacte, une étymologie lumineuse, une définition logique, des exemples propres aux différentes acceptions; qu'il ouvre les trésors d'une sage néologie, qu'il dévoile les secrets de la logique, de la poésie, de l'éloquence; en un mot qu'il ne laisse rien à désirer de tout ce qui peut contribuer à la perfection de la langue, à l'instruction et au plaisir du lecteur.

Mais comme il est important de ne rien laisser en arrière, comme le succès dépend du soin qu'on prendra de scruter d'un oeil philosophique toutes les parties, pour composer un tout digne des lumières de notre âge, je crois qu'il est nécessaire de former d'abord un comité de lexicque, d'où, comme d'un tronc fécond, sortiront tous les autres comités.

Le comité de lexicque sera composé d'un nombre indéfini de membres. Tous ceux qui croient pouvoir apporter quelques lumières dans cette partie fondamentale de l'édifice, sont invités à se faire inscrire.

Une vaine modestie ne doit point arrêter les amateurs de la langue françoise. Le désir d'être utile est la seule considération qui doit les déterminer.

Le comité de lexicque présentera son travail, à la prochaine assemblée; chaque article sera discuté, et enfin arrêté, à la pluralité des voix. Dès ce moment, nous saurons combien de comités sont nécessaires pour ordonner et préparer les travaux.

S'il m'est permis d'anticiper sur le plan qui vous sera soumis, je crois qu'il y aura sept comités:

Le comité d'étymologie.

Le comité de prononciation et d'orthographe.

Celui de définition, de signification et d'exemples.

Celui de syntaxe.

Le comité de logique et de belles-lettres.

Le comité de néologie.

Le comité de révision.

Tous ces comités, nés du comité de lexique, le rendront inutile.

'Our literature, our daily needs, our new political existence lack a truly philosophical dictionary that attains to our usual language in all its parts. The nation has been priding herself for a century on the fact that the French Academy was raising the important monument it had been created for. Always disenchanted in her just hopes, she was forced to surrender herself to the academic heresies, in the same way as vulgar men embrace false religions because the true one did not appear to them. The day of freedom has dawned; all errors are going to disappear, and shadows disappear before the star that illuminates us. But of all the errors that provoke man's misfortune, the most harmful is perhaps the abuse of words, which deceives us with respect to things. Convinced as I am that without a well constructed language there are no sound ideas, and that without sound ideas no happiness is possible, I have conceived the project of assembling you in order to work together on the perfection of our language. France received from America the example of the regeneration of laws; let us give to all nations the example of the regeneration of languages.

In order to provide a solid basis for the national monument we want to raise, we must first establish the basis. Lexicology, which is the science of dictionaries, makes them known to us. It requires unambiguously that a truly philosophical dictionary present, for every word, a right classification, a sound etymology, an exact prosody, a luminous etymology, a logical definition, examples appropriate to the different meanings; that it open the treasures of a wise neology, that it unveil the secrets of logic, of poetry, of rhetoric; briefly, that it provide everything that may contribute to the perfection of language, to the education and to the pleasure of the reader.

But since it is important not to leave anything behind, since the success of this enterprise depends on the care that will be taken to scrutinize all parts with the philosopher's eye, in order to construct a whole worthy of the enlightenment of our age, I think it is necessary to establish first a lexicology committee, from which, as from a fertile trunk, will spring all the other committees.

The lexicology committee will be composed of an indefinite number of members. All those who think that they can bring some enlightenment into this fundamental part of the edifice are invited to have themselves enrolled.

An undue modesty should not withhold lovers of the French language. The desire to be useful is the only consideration that should motivate them. The lexicology committee will present its work in the following assembly; every article will be discussed and eventually decided upon by the plurality of votes. From that moment on, we will know how many committees will be necessary to organize and prepare the undertakings.

If you will allow me to anticipate the plan that will be submitted to you, I think there will be seven committees:

- The committee on etymology.
- The committee on pronunciation and orthography.
- The committee on definition, meaning and examples.
- The committee on syntax.
- The committee on logic and literature.
- The committee on neology.
- The committee on revision.

All these committees, born from the lexicology committee, will make the latter useless.'

- 23 'Pour détromper les hommes de beaucoup d'erreurs, il ne s'agirait le plus souvent que de leur faire attacher aux mots des idées justes et précises, de sorte qu'un bon lexicographe est le meilleur instituteur que pût avoir le genre humain. Cette vérité est surtout sensible pour tous les genres de connaissances qui sont relatives à la morale et à la politique, et qui tiennent de plus près à la prospérité sociale, et au bonheur des individus. Car, les fausses notions en cette matière sont les sources de tous les maux qui affligent l'homme en société' ('In order to disabuse mankind of many errors, it would very often be sufficient to make them link right and precise ideas to words, in such a way that a good lexicographer is the best teacher mankind could have. This truth is especially valid for all knowledge that is related to morals and politics, and that is closely linked to social prosperity and the happiness of the individual. For erroneous notions in this domain are the source of all harm afflicting man in society') (Morellet 1818, vol. 3: 84).
- 24 'Les mots ont une telle influence sur les idées, et les idées sur les actions, qu'un des plus grands services qu'on eût pu rendre à la révolution, aurait été d'assigner aux principaux signes de nos idées en politique leur véritable signification, et de bien *définir* avant que de raisonner (. . . C'est une chose bien remarquable que la révolution qui a commencé par les lumières, (. . .) ait été jettée si brusquement hors de ses premières routes par une poignée de scélérats, sans connaissances, sans principes, sans morale, sans autre talent que celui d'en imposer par un patriotisme simulé, et le jeu artificieux de quelques mots qui exerçaient sur la multitude un empire d'autant plus grand qu'ils étaient moins compris, et qu'on avait eu soin de les détourner de leur véritable acception.'
- 25 See, for example, the following explicit statement (quoted after Barny 1978): 'L'abus des mots a toujours été un des principaux moyens qu'on a employés pour asservir les peuples . . . Gardons-nous donc citoyens, de nous laisser abuser par les mots; quand le pouvoir exécutif est venu à bout de nous en imposer sur le sens de certaines expressions, il paraît faire une

chose, et il en fait une autre; et peu à peu il nous chargeait de chaînes en nous parlant de *liberté*. Le mot *aristocrate* n'a pas moins contribué à la révolution que la cocarde. Sa signification est aujourd'hui très étendue; il s'applique à tous ceux qui vivent d'abus, qui regrettent les abus, ou qui veulent créer de nouveaux abus. Les aristocrates ont cherché à nous persuader que ce mot était devenu insignifiant: nous n'avons pas donné dans le piège; et les lumières gagnant de proche en proche dans les retraites de l'aristocratie, ses satellites ont senti qu'ils étaient perdus, s'ils ne trouvaient pas un mot dont le pouvoir magique détruisît la puissance du mot *aristocrate*. Nous ignorons s'il leur en a coûté beaucoup d'efforts; mais nous savons que notre mot de *ralliement* est contrebalancé aujourd'hui par celui d'*incendiaire*, et qu'à l'aide de certaines menaces dont on l'a accompagné, de certaines vexations qui le suivent de près, il glace d'effroi d'excellents citoyens. ('The abuse of words has always been one of the principal means used to enslave nations . . . . Let us thus be careful, citizens, not to be abused by words; when the executive power does not succeed anymore in impressing us with the meaning of certain expressions, it seems to do one thing, and it actually does something else; and slowly it put us in chains while talking of *freedom*. The word *aristocrat* contributed to the revolution no less than the *rosette* (cocarde) did. Its meaning nowadays is very broad; it applies to all those who live off of abuse, who regret abuses, or who want to create new abuses. The aristocrats tried to convince us that the word had become meaningless: we did not fall into the trap; and with the enlightenment slowly gaining the retreats of the aristocracy, its satellites felt that they were lost if they did not find a word the magic power of which would destroy the power of the word *aristocrat*. We do not know whether this has cost them many efforts; but we do know that our word *rallying* (ralliement) is nowadays counterbalanced by the word *arsonist* (incendiaire), and that with the help of certain threats that accompanied it, of certain harassments that follow it closely, it freezes excellent citizens with terror.'))

- 26 'Il est incroyable combien les orateurs de l'Assemblée Nationale ont abusé, et abusent encore de sa jeunesse de notions et d'opinions: ils l'ont persuadée, selon les circonstances, tant qu'elle était corps constitué, tantôt corps constituant, tantôt convention nationale, et ainsi, par un simple choix de dénomination, ils lui ont fait confondre tous les pouvoirs, oublier son origine, et commettre le crime de lèse-majesté, à la fois envers son vrai souverain le Roi, et envers son souverain factice le Peuple.'
- 27 On de La Harpe's work, see Jovicevich (1973) and Vier (1976).
- 28 'Du mot *Négoce*, *Handel*, *Handelsgeist*, *die Klasse der Handelsleute*. L'esprit du négoce, la caste des Négocians. Mot créé, pur créer un crime. — Le Négociantisme est pire que l'Aristocratie et que le Royalisme, disaient les niveleurs de fortune, qui convoitaient les richesses des négocians.'
- 29 As in the entry *Démocrate* (Reinhard 1796: 122): 'Un des mots révolutionnaires qui a fait la plus grande fortune. Il signifie sujet d'un gouvernement Démocratique, et celui qui par principes ou par mode, est partisan de la *Démocratie*. Chez les uns c'est éloge, chez les autres c'est moquerie et dérision' ('One of the revolutionary words that has had the greatest fortune. It means the subject of a Democratic government, and one who,

- by principles or by fashion, is a partisan of *Democracy*. For some it is praise, for others mockery and derision').
- 30 See, e.g., the article *Peuple de Robespierre* (Reinhard 1796: 255): 'C'est ainsi qu'on a appelé les assassins, les égorgeurs, les buveurs de sang de la Jacobinière, à la solde de ce Démagogue et qu'il voulait faire passer, pour le peuple Français'. ('This is what the murderers were called, the cut-throats, the blood-drinkers of the Jacobinière, in the pay of that Demagogue who wanted them to be taken for the French people'). See also the articles *Guillotiné, Guillotinade, Jacobin, Jacobinière* ('A small tribe in Gaule, which, it is said, lived on human blood, several centuries before the year 2440'; 'Une petite peuplade de la Gaule, qui, dit-on, vivait de sang humain, plusieurs siècles avant l'an 2440'), *Maison de sûreté, Populacier, Pouvoir révolutionnaire, Robespierreiser, Robespierreisme, Sanguinocratie*, etc.
- 31 'C'est ainsi qu'on a appelé la Constitution de 1789, comme qui dirait fille des Démagogues. Cette jeune fille, qui donnait de grandes espérances, est morte au berceau.'
- 32 See the article *Révolution Française* (Reinhard 1796: 292-5).
- 33 '*Liberté*. F. Freyheit. Un être, jusqu'à présent idéal, vers lequel les Français tendent en vain les bras depuis cinq ans de convulsion. On a comparé la statue colossale de la *Liberté* sur la place de la Révolution, à celle de Moloch, qui demandait des offrandes de sang.'
- '*Patriote*. Un citoyen, qui veut le bien de sa patrie et de ses concitoyens. La France qui a fourmillé de *patriotes*, depuis la Révolution, en compte très peu, dans le sens de cette définition. Sur un qui voulait le bien, le bonheur de son pays, il y en avait mille, qui ne voulaient que les biens de leurs compatriotes. Aussi le titre de *patriote* est-il, aujourd'hui, très équivoque, sans un adjectif, qui en détermine la signification.'
- '*Quatorze Juillet*. Der 14<sup>te</sup> Juli (1789). Un mot ancien, mais qui rappelle une scène, absolument neuve dans l'histoire, où 600 000 Français, représentants de 26 millions, rassemblées dans le champ de la fédération, grands et petits, jeunes et vieux, riches et pauvres, des deux sexes devinrent tout à coup frères et s'embrassèrent, ivres de liberté et d'égalité, croyant avoir trouvé le bonheur. Cette journée d'allégresse, dont il ne reste que des souvenirs, a été suivie de mille et une journées de deuil, d'angoisses, de douleurs et de larmes de sang, dont on ne prévoit pas encore la fin.'
- 34 See, e.g. the article *Régime* (Reinhard 1796: 280): 'L'ancien *régime*, le nouveau *régime*, c.à.d. la Monarchie et la République. La différence la plus saillante, entre ces deux *régimes*: sous l'ancien il y avait des carêmes, des jeûnes de quelques jours, de quelques semaines, prescrits par le culte dominant, et qu'on observait, tant bien que mal. Sous le nouveau il y a des carêmes, des abstinences civiques de plusieurs mois, de plusieurs saisons, qu'on est forcé d'observer, en dépit des murmures de son estomac' ('The old *regime*, the new *regime*, that is to say the Monarchy and the Republic. The most striking difference between these two *regimes*: under the old *regime* there were fasts for some days, for some weeks, prescribed by the dominant cult, that were observed to the best of one's ability. Under the new *regime*, there are fasts and civic abstinences for several months, for

several seasons, which one is forced to observe, despite the murmurs of one's stomach').

- 35 'Dans la *Révolution française* le bouleversement est général, rien n'est sacré, rien ne reste à sa place, tout est renversé, écrasé, détruit, pour faire place à un système de liberté, d'égalité et de fraternité, qui ruine et la patrie de ce système et les Etats circonvoisins. Des ambitieux cruels, tour à tour groupés et isolés, se jettent successivement avec fureur, dans l'arène; des monstres à figure humaine, au nom sacré de la patrie, massacrent, fusillent, guillotinent et noient dans des flots de sang, tout ce qui s'oppose à leurs barbares projets. Et le feu de cette révolution, qui jette encore des flammes dévorantes à travers les fumées des décombres, menace d'embraser le reste de l'Europe. Les siècles à venir béniront, peut-être, les bienfaits tardifs de la *Révolution*, mais celui-ci et le prochain saigneront, encore longtemps, des playes profondes, portées à l'humanité, par les moyens insolites, violents, destructeurs, employés pour obtenir ces bienfaits' ('In the *French Revolution*, the upheaval is general, nothing is sacred, nothing remains in its place, everything is overturned, crushed, destroyed, to make room for a system of freedom, equality and fraternity, ruining both the homeland of this system and the neighbouring states. Cruel and ambitious people, in turn grouped then isolated, throw themselves furiously into the arena; monsters with human faces, in the sacred name of the homeland, slaughter, shoot, guillotine, and drown in torrents of blood everything that is opposed to their barbarous projects. And the fire of this revolution, that still throws devouring flames through the smoke of the ruins, threatens to inflame the rest of Europe. Future centuries will perhaps bless the belated benefits of the *Revolution*, but this century and the next will bleed for a long time from the deep wounds inflicted upon humanity by the unusual, violent, and destructive means used to obtain these blessings').
- 36 See, e.g., the articles *Actif*, *s'Adoniser*, *Affolé*, *Agacerie*, *Aspérité*, *Baguette*, *Charme*, *Dévergondage*, *Dévirginer*, *Ehonté*, *Erotiquement*, *Etreintes d'amour*, *Frivolisme*, *Impure*, *Maquereller*, *Physique*, *Pornographe*, *Saturé*, *Trainees*.
- 37 He distinguishes between various sociolinguistic and stylistic levels of terms, using qualifications such as *termes familiers*, *termes vulgaires*, *termes d'argot*, *termes nobles*, *termes plébéiens*, *termes des bons écrivains*, etc.
- 38 The ambiguity may be due to a short-range diachronic change of meaning (see the articles *Aristocratie*, *Département*, *Despotisme*, *Diplomatie*, *Marcher*, *Pair*, *Régime*) or to a socially distinct use of terms (see the articles *Démocrate*, *Ligaments* and *Nationicide*). Finally, some terms may be considered basically ambiguous: see, e.g., the entry *Patriotisme* (Reinhard 1796: 251): 'Mot enchanteur, ensorcelé, qui a fait tourner depuis 6 ans les têtes de tant de millions d'individus; mot, qu'il est presque impossible de définir, au juste, malgré la foule d'exemples, que les événemens les plus récents nous offrent de la chose' ('Enchanting, bewitched word that in the past six years has turned the head of so many millions of individuals; a word that it is almost impossible to define precisely, despite the mass of examples that the most recent events give us of it').



- 39 'Jamais on n'a montré tant d'aristocratie dans la pensée, tant de despotisme dans la conduite, tant de tyrannie dans les actions les plus indifférentes, que depuis que nous sommes libres.'
- 40 'Une armée de journalistes est sortie tout à coup du sein de la révolution, comme cette foule d'insectes venimeux ou incommodes sortent en été du sein des marais fangeux ( . . . ). J'oserai dire que les vrais ennemis de la France et de la révolution sont ces écrivains énergumènes, qui, depuis un an, ne cessent de sonner l'alarme, de caresser le peuple et de flagorner le côté gauche de l'Assemblée.'
- 'Mais on nous *désabuse* chaque jour. Les principes sont les opinions de tel ou tel; la vérité, c'est le système d'une secte ou d'un parti; les lumières, ce sont les connoissances personnelles du journaliste.'
- 41 'JOURNAL: dans l'ancien régime c'étoit une feuille périodique, qui parloit de la pluie et du beau tems, donnoit des extraits des catalogues de librairie, et quelques lettres de MM. les abonnés à M. le rédacteur, que dans les cafés on prenoit bonnement pour des lettres. Par la voie de ces feuilles on étoit informé très-exactement du genre et du nombre de grimaces que telle ou telle actrice avoit faite dans une pièce nouvelle . . . Mais que tout est changé! Ces feuilles, autrefois la pâture de nos désœuvrés, sont à présent l'aliment de toutes les classes de citoyens. On court après, on se les arrache, on les dévore. Nos politiques y lisent la régénération de l'empire et y trouvent les hausses et les baisses de l'aristocratie. Les muses sont réduites au silence, le journaliste seul est en scène où il a le plus grand succès.'
- 42 See the articles *Abbaye*, *Abbé*, *Abbesse*, *Clergé* (Chantreau 1790: 1-5, 36-8).
- 43 'Aristocrate: il est synonyme de mauvais citoyen, de pire encore; il désigne un fauteur de complots, un ennemi de la liberté' ('Aristocrat: a synonym of bad citizen, or even worse; refers to an instigator of conspiracies, an enemy of liberty') (Chantreau 1790: 14, see also the articles *Noblesse* and *Vaisselle d'argent*, Chantreau 1790: 132-9, 177-9).
- 44 'What the free Frenchmen now call *abuse*, we called *right* in the *ancien régime*' ('Ce que les François libres appellent aujourd'hui *abus*, l'ancien régime le nommait *droit*') (*Abus*, Chantreau 1790: 5; see also the article *Droits*, Chantreau 1790: 70-1).
- 45 See the article *Tiers-Etat* (Chantreau 1790: 174-5): 'Lorsque la nation ou l'état, comme on le voudra dire, étoit composé de trois ordres; le troisième ou dernier étoit le *tiers-état*. Il étoit formé de ce que les deux premiers ordres, le *clergé* et la *noblesse* appeloient les *vilains*, et ces *vilains* c'étoit nous, ces vils enfans que Dieu avoit condamnés à manger le pain à la sueur de leur front, et à payer les violons à *nosseigneurs* toutes les fois que *nosseigneurs* l'ordonneroient ainsi. La volonté de Dieu s'est faite pendant une longue suite de siècles, jusqu'en 1789, époque à laquelle un *oint du Seigneur* a pris en considération les vingt-trois millions de vilains qui peuploient son royaume, et a dit: "Je n'aime point cette race parasite de *nosseigneurs* qui reste les bras croisés, tandis que les vilains travaillent. Il n'y aura désormais de *monseigneur* que celui qui sera utile au bien public; plus de distinctions; que un soit plus que *vingt-trois* est une absurdité arithmétique dont je ne veux plus entendre parler". Ces paroles ont eu un effet magique, et soudain *nosseigneurs* et *vilains*, *vilains* et *nosseigneurs*, tout a été confondu' ('When the

nation or the state, whichever name one prefers, was composed of three orders, the third or last was the *tiers-état*. It consisted of those who were called *villains* by the two first orders, the *clergy* and the *nobility*; and we were those *villains*, those vile children God had condemned to eat their bread by the sweat of their brows, and to pay the expenses to our *Lords and masters* (*nosseigneurs*) whenever our *Lords and masters* would order us to do so. The will of God was done for several centuries, until 1789, when *Our Lord* took into account the twenty-three million *villains* that inhabited his kingdom, and said: "I do not like that parasite race of *Lords and masters* who sit around idly while the *villains* are working. From now on, the only *lord and master* will be the one who is useful to the public good; no distinctions anymore; that *one* be more than *twenty-three* is an arithmetic absurdity I no longer want to hear of". These words had a magic effect, and suddenly *Lords and masters* and *villains*, *villains* and *Lords and masters*, everything was mixed up.'

- 46 'LIBERTE: dans l'ancien régime ce mot ne signifioit rien de ce qu'il signifie aujourd'hui qu'il est devenu le cri de la nation; il désigne ce droit précieux que nature accorde à tous les hommes, quand nature ne trouve point sur son chemin des ministres qui ont des bastilles, et des bastilles qui ont des *de Launay*. Nous venons enfin de remplir le voeu de cette bonne nature que nous n'avions jamais si bien connue et qui nous menera loin. Nous avons enfin *conquis* ce droit imprescriptible d'être libres ( . . . Un peuple libre est celui qui vit sous l'autorité des loix, bonnes ou convenables, qu'il s'est données lui-même ou par ses représentans.'
- 47 See also the author's preface: 'Cette révolution fameuse qui vous rend aujourd'hui une des plus célèbres de nos quarante-huit mille municipalités; cette révolution, MESSIEURS, me ramena sur la bonne route; je fus vivement frappé de voir notre langue s'enrichir chaque jour d'une foule de mots qui caractérisent un peuple libre. Je m'écriai: *je suis libre aussi, moi!* Alors l'idée d'être utile à la nation fut la seule qui s'empara de mes facultés . . . Ce fut dans un de ces momens d'enthousiasme que je formai le dessein de travailler au Dictionnaire que j'ai l'honneur de vous présenter' ('This famous revolution that made you into one of the best known of our forty-eight thousand municipalities; this revolution, Sirs, brought me back to the right track; I was struck to see our language becoming richer every day with a host of words that characterize a free people. I exclaimed: *I am also free!* Then the idea of being useful to the nation was the only one that possessed my powers ( . . . ). It was in one of these moments of enthusiasm that I came upon the idea of working on the dictionary that I have the honour to introduce to you') (Chantreau 1790: 6-7).
- 48 A moral and civil concept according to Chantreau (1790: 29-30): 'C'est un membre de la société, qui, non-seulement acquitte les charges civiles, mais encore est rempli des sentimens qu'inspire l'heureuse liberté dans laquelle nous vivons.' ('A member of the society who not only fulfils his civil duties but is also filled with the feelings inspired by the happy liberty in which we are living'). See also the positive tone of the entries *Citoyen qui brigue l'honneur d'être élu*, *Citoyen enrôlé*, *Civisme*, *Milice*, *Patrie* and *Patriote*.
- 49 See also the articles *Caisse* and *Egalité* (Chantreau 1790: 26-8, 71-2).

- 50 'ARGENT: . . . François! nation libre! mais qui n'avez pas le sou, que ces momens de pénurie, dans lesquels vous allez vivre, ne vous désespèrent point; ils vont vous faire pratiquer des vertus que vous n'aviez point, et qui sont nécessaires à un peuple qui se régénère . . . .'
- 'DEMAGOGUE: . . . Chaque fois que je me sers du mot de Démagogue, je le prends dans le sens où il signifie un aristocrate hypocrite qui cherche à étouffer son frère le *démocrate* en le serrant dans ses bras.'
- 51 'Dans tous les temps et dans tous les pays, le peuple, qui fut l'instrument des révolutions, et servit l'ambition des démagogues, fut pauvre, ignorant, vil et inquiet. Il n'est pas difficile de conduire à la révolte des malheureux qui n'ont rien, toujours prêts à se vendre et à changer de maîtres.'
- 52 'Qu'est-ce qui compose le peuple en France? Ce n'est point la noblesse, ce n'est point le clergé, ce ne sont point les riches bourgeois, ce ne sont point les marchands, ce ne sont point les artistes, restent donc les *manoeuvriers*, les *artisans*, les *prolétaires*, qui composent la nation et assurent les fondemens de la constitution. Voilà-t-il pas une constitution bien appuyée?' ('What does the people consist of in France? It is not the nobility, the clergy, the rich middle-class, the merchants, nor the artists. All that is left are the *labourers*, the *craftsmen*, the *proletarians* who make up the nation and ensure the foundations of the constitution. Doesn't this make for a well sustained constitution?') (Gallais 1790: 242).
- 53 See his articles *Despotisme* and *Monarchie*.
- 54 'La vérité, jadis immuable comme son auteur est devenue mobile comme le temps. Soumise aux circonstances, elle prend toutes les formes, elle suit tous les mouvements qu'on veut lui imprimer. Ce qui étoit vrai, il y a quelques mois, ne l'est plus aujourd'hui.'
- 55 'Sans doute, la liberté est un bien, mais avant tout il faut du pain, je défie tous les orateurs du monde et tous les folliculaires de Paris, de me prouver qu'il vaut mieux être libre & mourir de faim, que d'être nourri; vêtu & enchaîné.'
- 56 'O zélés citoyens, zélés fanatiques, zélés frippons de toute espèce, apprenez que l'erreur n'a qu'un temps.'
- 57 '*Ça va, ça ira*. Das geht, das wird gehen. Refrain de la Chanson patriotique, par excellence, devenu une expression familière et le mot du guet des Révolutionnaires, en différentes occasions. *Ça va, ça ira*, en dépit des fédéralistes, des fanatico-royalistes, qui voudront anéantir les droits imprescriptibles de l'homme. – Cela ne va guères.'
- 'Déprêtriser, *se*. Sich entpriestern – Beaucoup d'ecclésiastiques se sont déprêtrisés, en France depuis la Révolution. Beaucoup s'en sont repentis.'
- 58 As noted above, Gallais also appeals in a few cases to 'a spokesman'.
- 59 '*Avorton* démocratique; c'est ainsi qu'on a appelé le plus laid, le plus sale et le plus poltron des Démagogues, Marat.'