

*La langue française et la francophonie à l'aube du troisième millénaire.* By GIOVANNI DOTOLI. Paris, Schena Editore, 2005. 187 pp. Pb €17.00.

As Maurice Druon explains in the Preface to this work, Giovanni Dotoli is an Italian who has been seduced by the French language, which has become his passion, and in this book he writes about it '*dans une sorte de désordre lyrique*' (p. 14). It is certainly clear, from the outset, that Dotoli feels passionately about French, and the role it should have in the world. He begins by asserting that France has given up on the French language, and suggests that France should value *Francophonie* and invest more in it. He takes the view that it is not helpful to keep harking back to the glorious past, or to think in postcolonial terms, but that a new and positive mentality is needed to revive French as a world language. He puts great emphasis on the role that Francophone countries outside Europe can play in this revival, stressing the fact that 'Francophone' countries are usually multilingual, and that French is respectful of cultural diversity. He also repeats frequently the idea that French is the language of culture, and the carrier of European values. Inevitably, he also attacks the English language at regular intervals, claiming that it is not a real language, is certainly not a language of culture, and does not carry 'European values'. In chapter 7, he lists a long series of proposals on how to revive French and to improve Francophonie, including 'N'accorder aucun statut spécial à l'anglais' (p. 122). Although I am sympathetic to the idea that French is and should remain a valuable world language, and agree that total 'Anglo-Saxon' dominance is not desirable, I query the usefulness of a book like this. It could have made its point with half the words, and it becomes tiresome to keep reading the same arguments, couched in slightly different ways. Dotoli quotes liberally from other like-minded Francophones, and some of these quotations are very interesting, but they demonstrate that these arguments have all been aired before. This is an impassioned apology for the French language, but does not really help its cause.

344 words.