The Material Dynamics of a London-French Blog: A Multimodal Reading of Migrant Habitus

Saskia Huc-Hepher

Introduction: Material-Digital Dynamics

In the same way that Bourdieu considered it impossible to distinguish deterministically between (internal) subject and (external) object, or between (individual) agency and (social) structure (Bourdieu 1972, 279), so it is fundamentally flawed to approach the digital and the material dichotomously, for 'le réel est relatif' (Bourdieu 1994, 17), and all lived experience is intrinsically *dynamic*. Thus, by means of a necessarily granular description of a defined online space,[1] notably a blog, triangulated with empirical evidence gathered on-land from a demographically broad sample of French Londoners who are *not* involved in blogging, this article attempts to bridge the gap between online and on-land worlds, teasing out subtle meanings from the blog which relate to the practices, tastes and dispositions of an unknown French migrant blogger within the material (and in this case social) context of London. If attire is taken as a hypothetical example, the multiplicity of dynamics at play are flagrant, because clothing represents the 'permeable relationship between the individual and their externality' (Miller 2005, 6). It is at once an external statement of the wearer's internal frame of mind (mood being an

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1 The analysis is 'necessarily' descriptive precisely because description is fundamental both to ethnography and semiotics, that is, the two theoretical approaches deployed in this study. The former is defined by Chambers as 'a detailed description of the culture of a particular society…' (<http://www.chambers.co.uk/search.php?query=ethnography&title=21st>) and by Oxford as the 'scientific description of peoples and cultures with their customs, habits…' (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethnography>); the latter is defined as the 'study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation' (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/semiotics>). In order to arrive at interpretations or to understand why certain "signs" invoke certain meanings, it is necessary to understand how the sign system works, which consequently requires the detailed description of such workings. It is therefore hoped that readers will appreciate the descriptive weight of the following analysis.

important determinant in sartorial choice) and an outward display of (unwittingly) internalised practices of both the homeland and the 'host' population; at once self and other; at once material and affective; at once individual and collective, social and cultural. If it is re-presented in an online environment, such as a blog, it is all of the above, in addition to being at once digital *and* physical, with none of these features existing in sterile isolation, but playing off and feeding into the other organically. In this way, online (re)presentations of the French community in London are an immaterial manifestation of the material world they inhabit, of their on-land presence. The Internet, as previously posited by some (Bräuchler 4, refers to a 'virtual-real dichotomy'; see also Hine; Kozinets), can no longer be conceived of as a virtual entity distinct from physical reality, rather, it is an extension of reality, in a dynamic relationship with the material world, given that our online activities are in constant dialogue with our corporeal presence in the physical environment, both in terms of the spatial materiality of the individual when 'connecting' to the Internet (Casilli 122; Miller and Slater 21) and in terms of the influences the physical spaces we inhabit have on the cyberspaces we construct (Casilli 59). The Internet is now an integral part of many people's day-to-day activities, shaping their behaviour and dispositions; similarly, it is the people that use the Internet who shape and furnish it. Moreover, with the rise of hand-held devices providing access to the Internet on the move, the line between materiality and immateriality, or between the physical home and the digital habitat, is becoming increasingly blurred (Casilli 117; Adami and Kress 186).

The focus of this article, therefore, is on hidden meanings pertaining to the material world of a London-French blogger present in a community-targeted blog, and the extent to which this digital medium provides insights into migrant habitus. Putting an innovative ethnosemiotic paradigm to the test, the multimodal analysis of the immaterial materiality presented in the blog sets out to demonstrate the appropriateness and replicability of the theoretical model in other fields of ethnographic enquiry that draw on Web resources as (an element of) primary data. Through its practical, empirical application here, the paradigm serves as a new prism through which to elicit alternative understandings of migrant constructions of identity, culture, community and belonging, both online and on-land. The diasporic cyber-space, or 'diasberspace', provides a platform for both explicit, intentional (self-)representations – the notion of 'design' in multimodal terms (Kress 6) – and unconscious, tacit expressions of Frenchness in the on-land diasporic context.

This leads onto another relevant dynamic, that of Anglo-French cultural dynamics, or the degree to which the cultures of emigration and immigration are mutually constructed, which can be likened to the dynamics of

language, also present. Indeed, focusing on a blog captured and preserved in the UK Web Archive (UKWA), has paradoxically enabled, unlike in a material, on-land setting or on the intrinsically transient live Web (Gomes and Costa 107), the materialisation of words which would otherwise have dematerialised and been lost to memory no sooner than they had been uttered. Provided they are archived, words produced in online environments, irrespective of mode (written, spoken, sung, etc.) are immortalised in the 'material' form and spatiotemporal context of their utterance for posterity. This digitally materialised trace of the linguistic here-and-now of a formerly ephemeral expression of a particular language community has been the focus of several recent studies, for example, Blackledge's work on the online language use of youths, or Cheshire's mapping of London's 'tweeted' languages, both of which demonstrate the implications of language as a reflection of the physical spaces and dispositions of minority groups in the UK today. Multimodality, however, necessarily looks beyond the purely linguistic, following the premise that 'there is in principle equity between all modes' (Jewitt 13). In this article, therefore, it is the materiality of the blog, as expressed through the various modes deployed, that will be examined. For in the same dynamic manner that 'objects construct subjects' and provide insights 'into the everyday understanding of what it means to be human' (Horst and Miller 11), so the artefacts and cultural 'stuff' of London-French blogs, together with the photographs and imagery embedded within them, reveal deeper meanings regarding identity, belonging and community.

The Ethnosemiotic Theoretical Framework: Ethnography meets Multimodal Social Semiotics

The theoretical framework constructed for the analysis of the London-French blog examined in this article is an ethnosemiotic one. This is a term coined to unite two formerly disparate schools of thought, which arguably share much common conceptual ground,[2] namely that of Bourdieusian ethnography and Kressian social semiotics. Granted, the term 'ethnosemiotic' has been used by a handful of other scholars (Fiske; Le Marec and Babou; Vannini), but their conceptualisations differ from mine insomuch as theirs draw directly on the Peircean school of semiotics, rather than multimodal iterations thereof, hence failing to acknowledge the meaning potential presented by intermodal dynamics themselves (Jewitt 11).

2   There is insufficient scope within the defined limits of this article to provide a detailed account of the multiple meeting points of Bourdieusian and Kressian thinking. However, a more ample discussion is provided in Huc-Hepher (2015).

Dynamics, alongside a shared desire to shine a beam onto the implicit truths concealed in the shadows of everyday practice and expression, constitute a compelling unifying factor between Bourdieu's ethnography and Kress's multimodality. Just as Bourdieu's theory of practice underlines the necessity to assess (internalised) habitus according to its dynamic relationship with the (external) social field, (1972, 263), so Kress foregrounds the infinite dynamics of meaning between sign-maker and sign-recipient (93), as well as between differing modes themselves, arguing that it is only through a relational analysis of the different modes at play in a single orchestration that its full semiotic scope can be appreciated (156).

Therefore, in this article, a detailed multimodal description of the material habitus of one member of the ethnographic group in question, namely the French in London, as (re)presented online in a single blog, will allow broader ontological meanings to be inferred. In order to facilitate this, an explanation of my three-pronged conceptualisation of Bourdieusian habitus is required.[3]

Habitus: A Threefold Conceptualisation

The first element of the three-pronged approach is *habitat*. It refers to the external environment and materialisation of the social constructs that Bourdieu has described as a set of structuring structures (Bourdieu 1972, 256), internalised by those whose lives they frame and subsequently re-presented in their artefacts, dispositions and practical choices. In this paper, the habitat element corresponds to the material manifestations of the on-land diasporic space present in the blog, as well as to the "diasberspace" of the online environment in its own right, where the blogger is thought to reproduce the same tastes in the interior design of this immaterial space as in their material surroundings (Miller 2012, 156; Casilli 33).

The second prong of the habitus triad proposed here is *habit*. Bourdieu himself rejected the term 'habit' as a substitution for habitus (Bourdieu 1980, 88; Grenfell 55; Jourdain and Naulin 38), specifically because habit does not allow for the interplay between habitat, habits and habituation, and by foregrounding the repetitive it nullifies the reproductive (Bourdieu 1980, 88). Nevertheless, habit must be recognised as an integral component of habitus, for it is the main focus when studying a community from the outside (and inside) by means of empirical ethnographic study.[4] Evidence of

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3 Maton (Grenfell 55) has produced a habitus model with two etymological dimensions: habitat and habit. To these, the addition of a third is proposed: habitus as habituation (posited by Jenkins 179).

4 As indicated by the Oxford definition of the discipline quoted in Footnote 1.

the habits of the blogger and other members of the online community of London-French bloggers will therefore be sought in the following analysis, for *common* practices are constitutive of the community at large, acting as a unifying framework which displays the 'unité de style qui unit les pratiques et les biens d'un agent singulier ou d'une classe d'agents' (Bourdieu 1994, 23).[5] The habit dimension of habitus proposed here will consequently pose the following questions: in which activities is the blogger engaging? How is French Londoner identity materialised through practice? What language is the London-French blogger habitually using? Examining the habits, that is the common behaviours and mindsets, present, however implicitly, in the London-French blog is key to allowing the materialisation of otherwise abstract constructs (Bourdieu 1994, 25), such as identity, community and culture. The likeness between these Bourdieusian research aims and those to which multimodal social semiotics aspires is patent, in that revealing the unseen is central to both, which leads onto the third dimension of habitus envisaged in this analysis: *habituation*.

Habituation is suggestive of the aspect of habitus to which Bourdieu refers as 'histoire faite nature' [history made nature] (Bourdieu 1972, 263), or the fundamental 'poisson dans l'eau' [fish in water] (Bourdieu and Wacquant 103) state of mind of most members of communities and societies. It implies an unquestioning acceptance of one's sociocultural positioning and unconscious self-perpetuation thereof; one's incorporation of generations of practices unwittingly handed down and reproduced through the transmission of both habitat and habits. But in this context, will the act of migrating and being immersed in a new sociocultural setting result in a different form of habituation? Will the signs hidden in the blog embody habituation to French-ness or the habits of the 'host' culture? Will they be meaningful for a Franco-French audience or a London-French one, or both? This habituation aspect of habitus applies to intangible cultural characteristics brought to light through a purposefully granular examination and 'thick description' (Geertz 7) of the blog, focusing on the taken-for-granted multi- and intermodal expressions of the blogger's situation and shared cultural wherewithal assumed on the part of the sign recipients. Evaluating the forms of habituation to the migration context (or otherwise) is also revealing as regards 'identity slippage' (Mulholland and Ryan 5), owing to the unwitting transfer of tacit knowledge within the diasporic context.

Thus, by examining the 'material' culture manifest in a French-community blog (which, by the same token, provides on-land insights), according

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5   Translation: unity of style which unites the practices and property of a single agent or a class of agents. (All the translations in this article have been produced by the author.)

to the three components of habitus outlined above, this article will begin to reveal some defining features of this blogging sub-community of the London French and what it means to be a French fish in a London tank. It is multi-modal social semiotics that will provide the analytical framework for uncovering such meanings.

The Multimodal Analytical Prism: Making Sense of the Blog

Whilst all representations can be considered forms of communication in view of their intrinsic semiotic function to be communicatively meaningful, multi-modal theory distinguishes between representation and communication (Kress; Domingo, Jewitt and Kress). In representation, the semiotic emphasis is on the sign-maker, being contingent on his or her self-interested expressive desires at a specific point in time and space; whereas in communication, the emphasis is on the sign-recipient, with the sign-maker constructing the semiotic entity, according to the partial expectations of the sign-recipient's reaction (Kress 71). In the context of blogs, however, such a distinction becomes hazy, as the blog genre is both sign-maker-centred, like a traditional diary, and sign-recipient-centred, being a public text published on the World Wide Web. As such, it is something of a generic and functional hybrid: simultaneously private and public, an idea to which Tisseron refers as '*extimité*' (cited in Casilli 100)*,* combining the external with the intimate. Blogging (as the word suggests, itself a fitting compound of (public) Web and (private) log), therefore, is both representation of personal identity *and* communication thereof with the wider community via the Internet (in addition to having further communicational affordances if comment functions are activated). So, in the context of online representation/communication, purpose and 'interest' are crucial (as in Bourdieu's field theory (1972, 361); Bourdieu and Wacquant 25), an awareness of which permits a better understanding of the position of the migrant blogger within the migration setting, of their target audience and, as such, their sociocultural ties and sense of community.

In keeping with Peircean semiotic theory (Chandler 36–7), but contrasting Saussurean semiology, in multimodality arbitrariness is systematically replaced by 'motivation' (Kress e.g. 67, 133, among others). While conceding that all signs are motivated, this article posits that in such motivation there is either a dominant 'ego-interest' (that is, the interests of the sign-maker or of a broader body, such as a company or community, linking it thus to 'representation') or a dominant 'altru-interest' (that is, a primary concern for the recipient to receive the sign and its intended meaning, or message, which links it to communication). Establishing the motivation behind the signs and

semiotic orchestrations present in the blog will illuminate both maker and recipient habitus. A logical consequence of this inherent motivation and interest is that signs are 'made' not 'used' (Kress 62): made by society, cultures and communities over time, through the mutual understanding requisite in successful communication and representation, made by the individual sign-recipient and made by the producer of the sign (the rhetor), which brings us to the notion of design.

In the interests of both representation and communication, bloggers draw on multiple semiotic resources in their orchestration of varied multimodal ensembles, and in so doing challenge the traditional modal (and social) hierarchies which placed language at the acme. Image is increasingly 'taking the place of writing at the centre of the communicational stage' (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress 2), and by designing the following blog in particular ways, the blogger conveys particular – though tacit – meanings. For example, choices of layout, font and colour (each an extra-linguistic *mode* of communication in its own right) carry meaning, as does the 'amount of space given over to a mode on the screen' (13). By granting images equal spatial status to written text, a blogger is also bestowing equivalent meaning potential, and deciding to place images on the left of the screen, with text on the right, could be seen as prioritising images over written text, on the basis of Western left-to-right reading paths. In this article, the extent to which design consciously or otherwise emulates French habitus or an altered, migrant, London-French habitus will offer vital insights into cultural identity and its possible transformation. Similarly, the degree to which the blog is ego- or altru-interest-led will provide a more nuanced understanding of the blogger's target audience and, in turn, the degree of integration into the 'host' culture or, conversely, a communitarian, diasporic or France-leaning positioning.

In addition to the multimodal analytical toolkit specifically developed by Domingo and Kress for the decoding of online texts, Halliday's three 'metafunctions' (a concept borrowed by Kress 87) shall be deployed for the analysis of the blog: the *ideational* function, that is, that which the sign or multimodal ensemble 'represents and performs in the world' (Adami 8); the *interpersonal* function, that which the sign or multimodal ensemble communicates in terms of the 'relations/identities […] of author and user' (ibid.); and the *textual* function, of paramount importance here, as it 'corresponds to how the other two are presented within the text' (ibid.). Embedded in the concept of textual function are the notions of coherence and cohesion that Domingo, Jewitt and Kress (8–10) identify as the most useful analytical tool when studying blogs. In Web-specific terms, multimodal coherence can be defined as 'the effect gained from engaging with a semiotic entity, where the reader assesses that "everything that is here belongs [here] and belongs

together"' and cohesion, as 'the devices and their use employed to produce this effect' (Domingo and Kress 2). In this way, blog design and coherence are contingent upon audience constructions thereof, with the blog visitor playing an active role in the process (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress, 17). Thus, the coherence of the multimodal ensembles in the blog to be analysed conveys social and cultural messages which are often inconspicuous, yet of considerable ethnographic significance.

Finally, as a means of decoding images in the blog, Peirce's (Peirce, cited in Chandler, 36–7) fundamental sign triad shall be adopted, primarily because it is cited by Kress as a useful mechanism for decoding *images*.[6] The three sign types Peirce identifies are, firstly, the iconic sign, which 'resembles what it represents' (Kress 63); secondly, the indexical, which 'points to [it]' (ibid.)); and, finally, the symbolic sign, which '"stands for" a conventionally agreed relation between a form and an object' (ibid.).

A Cautionary Word on Methodology: Small Data as Thick Data

The French-community blog scrutinised in the following section has been selected from the London French Special Collection (LFSC) in the UKWA,[7] because it constitutes a stable, lasting platform (Pennock 2007 and 2013; Brügger) for repeated analytical consultation, and because it to some extent surmounts the ethical challenges posed by 'netnography' (Kozinets 137–8), given that prior authorisation to appear in the collection – and have the material framed in the scholarly context of the British Library – is procured from each site owner. The reason for choosing a blog, as opposed to a commercial or institutional website in the collection, for instance, is that it constitutes a more personal representation of the everyday lived experience of the individual, within the broader sociocultural and spatiotemporal context of the blog's creation (Yoon 175). The reason for choosing this particular blog, which is a generically and functionally complex 'meet-up' blog, is precisely because its communicative complexity increases its ethnographic value. Blogs are arguably the most representative online manifestation of London-French habitus, whereas the other websites contained in the LFSC are representative of the London-French 'social field' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 24), and the hybrid function of this blog extends its community reach and thereby

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6 For a more exhaustive list of the terminology required to make multimodal analysis practicable in an interdisciplinary way, see the 'Glossary of Multimodal Terms' available at: <https://multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com/> (last accessed 17 November 2015).

7 Curated by Huc-Hepher, available at: http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/collection/63275098/page/1 .

its cultural/diasporic significance. Blogs in themselves are representative of only a small minority of the London-French community. Yet, through their communicative, interpersonal function, materialised through comment threads and online intertextuality, their community potency, and hence representativeness, is intensified. This article concentrates on the minutiae of *habitus*, as opposed to the broad social structures underpinning the migrant experience, and as such it stands to reason that a single blog should have been selected as a case study, for in keeping with social semiotics, it is through ethnographic *smallness* that larger sociocultural truths can be inferred.[8] While the LFSC as a whole (a standard-sized corpus currently comprising sixty-seven Web resources) aims to be representative of the online presence of the French in London – to the extent that it can be, given the limitations imposed by a collection dependent on permissions – the *blogs* contained in the LFSC are not, and cannot, be representative, in the strict scientific sense of the term, because of both the aforementioned low permission rate and the very subjectivity and sociocultural dispositions of the London-French migrants who are creating blogs (and who are by definition a non-random sample of the population in question).[9] More importantly perhaps, representativeness is not the intention of this empirical analysis. As an ethnographic undertaking, it is concerned with the value of personal insights, of thick description (Wang 1) and of micro-level manifestations of culture, rather than sociological representativeness. Here, qualitative depth is hence favoured over quantitative breadth.

Complementing the detailed blog analysis provided below, evidence from one-to-one on-land interviewees,[10] with a diverse group of French Londoners, has been drawn upon in an attempt to triangulate and substantiate the online findings, multimodality having in the past undergone criticism for being 'impressionistic' (Jewitt 45). Again, the interviews do not claim to be representative, but an attempt has been made to involve French Londoners from a variety of geographical locations both in respect of their primary habitat in France/the Francophone world, and their adopted one in London: participants originate from French cities such as Lyon, Bordeaux and Paris, from territories and countries such as la Réunion, le Québec and le Benin, or from small villages in *la France profonde*; and they reside in London areas

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8 For a fuller explanation of the habitus value of blogs over other Web resources, as well as the advantages of a small approach to big online data in ethnographic research, see Huc-Hepher (2015).

9 Approximately one quarter only of the Web resources selected to feature in the archive have been granted owner authorisation. The collection on view to the public is therefore but the tip of the digital iceberg that lies beneath the open-access interface.

10 For a full list of Huc-Hepher's interviewee profiles, see Huc-Hepher and Drake 427–9.

as disparate as Bethnal Green (E2), Holland Park (W11), Archway (N19) and Nunhead (SE15). Similarly, the interviewees varied in age from twenty-four to eighty, and in profession from a neuroscientist to a food and beverages manager, a language teacher to an IT consultant, and from a lawyer to a gastro-pub chef. Consequently, whilst not representative in quantitative sociological terms, the on-land research participants are as representative as practicable for the small-scale ethnographic research conducted. Lastly, despite extensive, though largely anecdotal, media coverage in recent years, very little scholarly work on the London-French community has been published (the work of Huc-Hepher and Drake; Mulholland and Ryan; and Ryan, Mulholland and Agoston constitute exceptions to the rule). Therefore, any conclusions drawn from the multimodal analysis, however small, will help to fill the academic void that exists around the French in London.

The Blog: Analysing a French 'Diasberspace'

In the preceding sections, theoretical concepts from Bourdieusian ethnography have been united with analytical concepts from Kressian multimodal sociosemiotics, in order to arrive at the 'ethnosemiotic' approach developed for this case study. It is the objective of the following analysis to demonstrate that bringing these two schools of thought together is theoretically credible, methodologically viable and ethnographically edifying.

Generic Blurriness: Ambiguous Audience(s)

The chosen blog is generically heterogeneous: compounding the inherent public–private dichotomy typical of the genre is its resistance to definition as a personal *log* per se (as its name, *Apéro-blog London*, would suggest), since the primary function of this 'diasberspace' is a social (networking), communicative one.

   With elements of representational value (for example, through the compositional and aesthetic affordances of the photograph), it is nevertheless the communicational purpose that takes precedence here, in view of the site's primary aim being to convey practical information to a specific audience; as such, the principal motivation behind this multimodal ensemble is altru-interest-focused, which contributes to its generic classification. The self-proclaimed function of the blog is an interpersonal one, namely to communicate online with members of the London-French community in order to engage physically with them in on-land social contexts. However, as
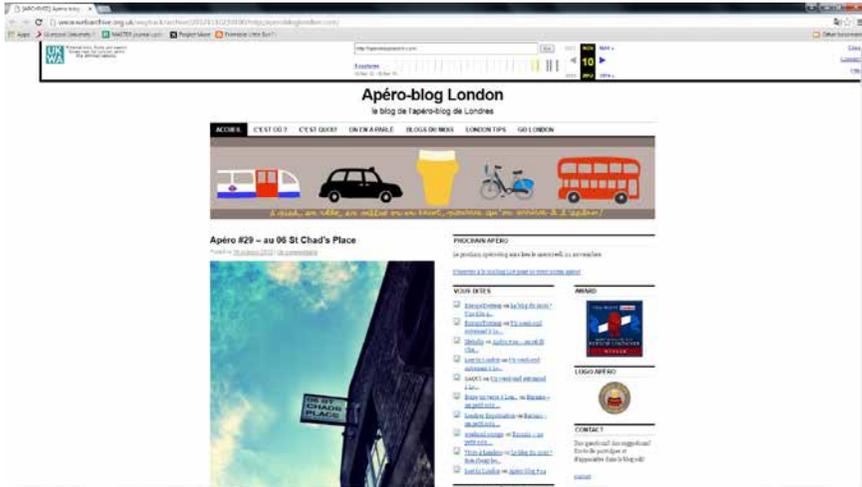
Figure 1. *Apéro-blog London* landing page
Source: LFSC, UK Web Archive, http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/
archive/20121110230100/http://aperobloglondon.com/
captured on 10 November 2012.

can be seen in Figure 1, the seven rubrics at the top of the page, above the banner, reveal an underlying generic and functional complexity. The 'C'est où' [Where is it?] 'page' is something of a traditional logbook, providing a record, in informative, as opposed to representational, list form, of all the venues and dates of previous meet-ups, beginning with the most temporally proximate and extending down to the inaugural meeting, presumably a reflection of its diminished significance to the present day. The 'On en a parlé' [Talking points] and 'Blogs du mois' [Blogs of the month] categories expand the genre from the personal to the shared by opening the diasberspace to other members of the French community through recommendations made by various individuals on-land. This is carried out in an attempt to give material permanence to their transient physical meet-up comments by means of their online publication 'comme on oublie vite et qu'il est parfois pas pratique de prendre des notes'.[11] This recording of information from the material world, be it to log physical venues or excerpts of conversations considered valuable – or at least worthy of framing and preserving in the blog – serves as evidence of the existence in practice of a French community, despite the discourse of the interviewees being one of community 'denial'. The theoretical rejection of community belonging encountered in the interviews

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11 Translation: 'as you quickly forget and it's not always convenient to take notes' (LFSC, UK Web Archive, <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20121110230759/http://aperobloglondon.com/on-en-a-parle/>.) Captured 12 November 2012.

is consistent with a wider negation of the notion of a French community in the social field, as Berthomière's reference to 'A French what?' in relation to the 'non-histoire' of French emigration and diaspora recalls (2; 3). In this way, Bourdieu's claim that there exists an 'espèce de partition non écrite selon laquelle s'organisent les actions des agents qui croient improviser chacun leur mélodie' (Bourdieu 1980, quoted in Bourdieu and Wacquant 17),[12] would appear well founded regarding the London-French participants in this study, each individually spurning community adherence through their narratives, believing themselves to be 'improvising their own tune', perhaps as the ultimate assertion of their freedom (Favell 11), but demonstrating a 'common unity' of practice through their actions and habits.

The 'Blogs du mois' rubric also serves as a platform for links to other London-French blogs, as is the case with the blogroll, which unravels vertically down the right-hand side of the screen on every page of the blog. This augments its navigational potentiality, adding another layer to its generic complexity (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress 14), while simultaneously cultivating a sense of community (a blogging one at least) (Casilli 58), by connecting visitors to others' blog spaces. The blogs of the month are also hyperlinked to interviews with the bloggers, offering insights into the motivations, desires and positioning – both physical and emotional – of community members. Aurélie, for instance, the author of *Une Fille à Londres* blog, explains how she left France three years previously 'par amour – English boyfriend' and because she was 'fed up' with Paris. As reasons for her contentment in London, she highlights career opportunities, energy, open-mindedness, benevolence (as perceived through the abundance of charity shops, to which another London-French blog is entirely dedicated)[13] and the tendency to take gap years (thereby normalising travel and discovery beyond the geographical confines of the British Isles). This is a phenomenon found in reverse in France, whose insularity was repeatedly bemoaned by interviewees. Aurélie also indicates her geographical home in the capital, 'SW4 – South Londoner baby!', which is telling in several ways: in its distance from the South Kensington mythologised home of the French community; in its confirmation that a French sub-community has grown organically around the École de Wix (an arm of the Lycée Charles de Gaulle which opened in Clapham Common in 1994); and in its illustration of Aurélie experiencing a sense of belonging to and identification with a South London community (perhaps in lieu of the *French* community), as distinct from the geographically and conceptually divorced

12 Translation: a kind of unwritten partitioning which coordinates the actions of individual agents, who think they are each improvising their own tune.

13 Britishette in the LFSC, UKWA, <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20140 325100314/http://www.britishette.com/>. Captured 25 March 2014.

North London population. This is suggestive of her integration into/of the habitus of adoption, as identification with either North or South London is a common and long-standing sentiment among 'native' Londoners.

Finally, the English 'London Tips' and 'Go London' spaces appear to address a different audience from the other rubrics, and as such can be said to have a different purpose. Still in the domain of communication rather than representation, and altru-interest-led, they offer guidance on where to stay, what to do and how to travel 'pour un petit weekend'. The shift in coherence from insider-Londoner to outsider-French-stayer is made explicit through the basic advice provided on London's habits and habitat, which would only be of use to the uninitiated (such as recommended hotels and the advantages of using an Oyster card). This redefined target audience is demonstrated equally compellingly, though more implicitly, through the language and image choices made. The rubric headings above the banner mix French and English, but French dominates, suggesting that both the sign-maker and intended recipients are more comfortable in the linguistic habitus of origin. Moreover, the somewhat unidiomatic – from a coherence perspective – lexis is typical of the slightly misjudged borrowing of English terminology in the Franco-French habitus of origin,[14] and therefore appropriate as a rhetorical and communicational device for an exchange with the French non-movers targeted in the 'Go London' tab.

The loan words favoured by French 'stayers' do not, however, correspond to the English lexis typically borrowed by the French community in London, where instead more apposite English terms are used to fill semantic lacunae in the mother tongue, or where ease and frequency of utterance supersede the nuanced Anglicisms of France. Multiple on-land participants bear witness to this, such as Robert, who reports frequently using 'une expression qui est assez adéquate par rapport à ce que j'ai envie de dire, [quand] on a pas tout à fait l'équivalent en français […], alors […] je fais un mélange d'anglais et français' (Interview 12).[15] It could be argued, therefore, that in the 'Go London' and 'London Tips' rubric headers, English is employed as a rhetorical device to present London (and the blog) in an appealing and somewhat exoticised manner to French readers most likely living in France, thus cohering intermodally with the stereotypical image presented in the 'London Tips' banner illustrated here (Figure 2) and distinguishing these rubrics from those aimed at a London-French audience, habituated to French-English blending. Instead

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14 The 'Go London' rubric contains information on travel options in the capital, a link which is not entirely clear through the lexis, as without a phrasal component, 'go + proper noun' is generally indicative of encouragement rather than displacement.

15 Translation: an expression which is quite adequate in relation to what I want to say, [when] there isn't really an equivalent in French […], so […] I mix English and French.

Figure 2. 'London Tips' page banner.
Source: LFSC, UK Web Archive, http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/
archive/20121110230830/http://aperobloglondon.com/london-tips/
captured on 12 November 2012.

of the atypical photograph and semiotically complex 'hand-crafted' banner of the blog landing page (Figure 1), here there is a panoramic photographic image of the capital that corresponds to the familiar stereotype of London as tourist destination.

The composition of this iconic image is meaningful. St Paul's Cathedral takes central position and serves as a symbolic reminder of the capital's (and the Established Church's) *historic* power and wealth, whilst the 'Gherkin' stands equally tall as a symbol of development, *current* prosperity and of a willingness on the part of London as a society for (architectural and social) change. This feature is found to be lacking in Paris in several conversations, as Antoine's remark testifies: 'London is more forward-thinking' (Interview 6). It is therefore symbolically representative of London as a place where there is scope for the habitus of origin to be transformed, where the inescapably reproductive states of many French people are thought to be remediable, where the dead-end future (im)posed by 'impasse Cendrillon' (Senni 21) in a Southern-French 'Cité' can be exchanged for the social mobility offered by the 'City'. Colour acts as a mode in the photograph, too. The vivid red flecks which cut transversally across its centre constitute an indexical sign for London, iconically depicting its buses. But they also make a coherent indexical link to the scarlet letter-boxes and telephone booths scattered all over the London habitat, and are a symbolic allusion to the red of the Union Flag, and hence to the representation of London as the capital of 'cool Britannia' that so appeals to the youth of France and further afield. Indeed, Favell explicitly refers to the 'social habitus of London as "cool Britannia"' (143), while Bruno (Interview 1) singles it out as a distinct pre-migration pull-factor: 'J'aimais bien la musique anglaise, pop, etc., la British culture, l'image qu'elle représente en France, les "bobbies", le drapeau Union Jack et tout ce qui va autour: le côté plus cool, entre guillemets, qu'en France.'[16] Similarly, the decision for the perspective of the photograph to be directed eastwards, towards the City, rather than the

16 Translation: I liked English music, pop, etc., British culture, the image it represents in France, the 'bobbies', the Union Jack flag and everything else: the cooler, in inverted commas, side than in France.

West End (the French tourist hub) or indeed South Kensington (the French diplomatic centre), has ideational implications, reminding the onlooker that one of London's major pull-factors as a longer-term destination for the highly skilled French (Mulholland and Ryan 2) is the career opportunities presented in its global financial centre.[17] Finally, the waterway, whose course is obscured from view by the bridge but suggested by the imagined paths of the vessels, reminds the onlooker of London's openness to the rest of the world: London as both a physical and symbolic gateway to an international community. Indeed, in the words of Séverine, 'l'intérêt de vivre à Londres, c'est d'avoir continuellement accès à des horizons internationaux' (Interview 20; Block 64; Favell 30).[18]

Through the evocation of its demographic cosmopolitanism and world status, this photograph epitomises London's attractiveness to short-term visitors and prospective emigrants alike. The rubric lexis and imagery alone, therefore, demonstrate the blog's audience plurality. As such, its generic classification defies simplicity and singularity. It is simultaneously individual and collective, online and on-land, informative and promotional, prospective and retrospective, introspective and extrospective, and permanently representative of Tisseron's private/public 'extimité'. For now, therefore, the insufficient genre of 'the blog' cannot but suffice.

Compositional Meaning-Making

In terms of the compositional principles of the blog, its navigational potential has been touched upon above with reference to the rubrics and hyperlinks, which challenge the notion of genre as a unified whole and enhance its 'dynamic' (Jewitt 297), ideational functionality. The order in which these tabs appear on the screen, if read from left to right, as Western convention dictates, is equally meaningful. Following on from the welcome tab ('Accueil') on the far left, the tabs can be divided into three functionally coherent pairs, with primacy given to the venues and dates of forthcoming and past meet-ups ('C'est où?'), together with an explanation of what they are ('C'est quoi?') in the first pair – hence confirming the principal ideational function of the blog – and the subsequent pair ('On en a parlé' and 'Blogs du mois') disseminating information produced by and for members of the French community in London, as demonstrated above, and fulfilling an interpersonal purpose within this textual framework. The final pair ('London Tips' and 'Go London'),

17 And echoing the quarter of London inhabited historically by a former significant wave of French immigrants, the Huguenots (Kelly and Cornick 14).
18 Translation: the advantage of living in London is having constant access to international horizons.

Figure 3. *Apéro-Blog London* banner (on every page except 'London Tips').

Source: LFSC, UK Web Archive: http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/
archive/20121110230100/http://aperobloglondon.com/
captured on 12 November 2012.

aimed at French speakers outside London (as established above), is awarded the least prominent reading position on the far right of the page. This sequential hierarchy is logical from the perspective of cohesion and coherence. Since the title of the blog is *Apéro-Blog London*, it is the meet-ups themselves which are of primary communicational importance. The deployment of the blog as a platform for publicising other community members' information is secondary, and the targeting of an audience outside the London community is given least compositional weight, as it fails to cohere with that of the blog as a whole (and as such to some extent undermines the overall functional coherence of the blog). One explanation for including a space that reaches out to an audience based in mainland France, as opposed to the French community in London, could be suggestive of a continued sense of belonging to the community of origin, as opposed to being entirely integrated into that of adoption.

Running across the top of the blog landing page, in visual 'headline' position, in fact with greater visual impact than the written title of the blog just above it, is the blog's landing page banner (Figure 3).

Here, the bold primary colours of red, white and blue, featured so often in commercial French representations of London act cohesively, again recalling the colours of the Union Flag, but also contrast with the pastel hues of the banner background and script. In a single framed space, the banner encapsulates both Englishness and Frenchness, doing so in a tacit, *habituated* manner. The decision to use pale yellow and taupes to surround the superimposed images constitutes a representational, aesthetic design choice in the mind of the blog-rhetor, rather than a calculated means of establishing interpersonal coherence. In other words, the banner could be seen to mirror both the hybridity of the blogger's identity and that of her principal audience:[19] the iconic representations of London modes of transport relate ideationally to the physical environment of the migration setting, and the garish colours

19 A comment made on the *Lost in London* blog disclosed the female identity (Fabienne) of the *Apéro-Blog* creator, (<http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20140314142450/ http://lostandfoundinlondon.wordpress.com/a-propos/>, LFSC, UKWA). Captured 14 March 2014.
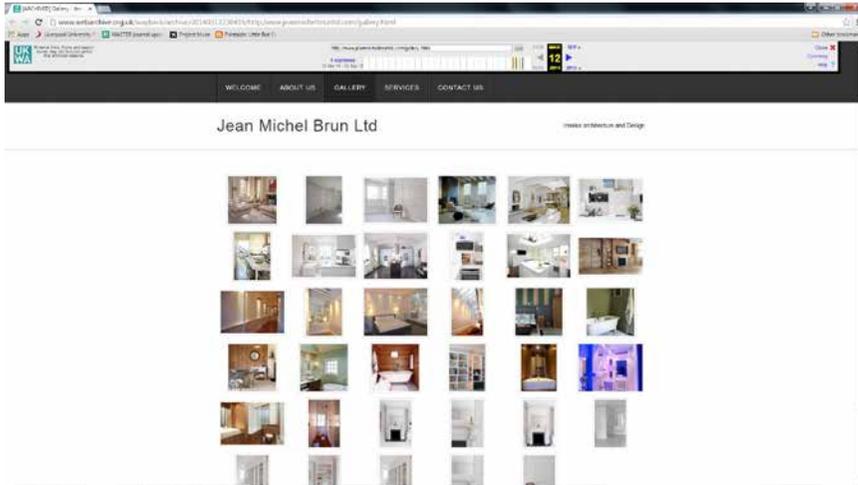
Figure 4. London-French interior design website. (LFSC, UKWA,
Source: LFSC, UK Web Archive: http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/
archive/20140312230415/http://www.jeanmichelbrunltd.com/gallery.html,
captured 12 March 2014)

which are used to portray them with iconic faithfulness could be likened to
the bold colour schemes that many interviewees associate with London sarto-
rial displays, such as Charles, who identifies 'une touche [...] de couleur qui
reste très britannique et très londonienne, en particulier' (Interview 5).[20] The
inoffensive, neutral shades of the background, on the other hand, could be
considered to represent the understated hues worn by the French Londoners
themselves, like Séverine: 'Je mets des couleurs: du brun, du noir, qui ne sont
pas forcément des couleurs qu'une Anglaise mettrait' (Interview 20),[21] and
favoured in the interior designs of their homes on-land, as demonstrated by
Brun's website (Figure 4).

In this instance, it is the exception of the bright blue bathroom in the
London-French habitat that proves the chic, pastel rule.

The angular, modular framing of the main blog banner (Figure 3) could
illustrate the desire for clean lines and order among the French – akin to
formal French palatial gardens which differ from the wilder, pastoral ones
favoured in English stately homes, or the geometric lines of Haussmann's
Parisian urban planning which contrasts with the disorderly patchwork that
is London's urbanism – and offsets the soft, rounded lines of the London
vehicles depicted within the banner frame. It is possible to interpret this

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20 Translation: a touch […] of colour that is very British and, especially, very London.
21 Translation: I wear colours, browns, blacks, which are not necessarily colours an English
    woman would wear.

juxtaposition as "opposites attracting", insofar as it is precisely the messy, eccentric and eclectic mix of London and its inhabitants that appeals to the French, acting as a migratory pull factor and perceived as a liberating force among the French Londoners interviewed. The otherness and exoticism of the London mass, and its acceptance, even celebration, of difference (whether individual or ethnic) allow the French migrants to embrace their own difference and express their identities in new, unexpected ways, as Laura explains: 'Il y a des choses que je n'aurais pas faites avant, mais maintenant je me dis, c'est comme ça qu'on vit à Londres' (Interview 16).[22] Symbolically, the gentle curves of the vehicles depicted could also constitute a tacit, *habituated* metaphor for London as a hospitable and non-threatening place in which to live, forming an ideational link to both the material *habitat* of the blogger and her social positioning within it. In all the interviews, the respondents reported feeling welcome in London and safe on its streets, unlike in Paris, as Antoine recounts: 'I feel safe in London. In Paris I wouldn't go in some places at certain times' (Interview 6).

In addition to introducing a sense of physicality and personality to an essentially digitised, automated environment, the modes of transport – 'hand-drafted' as opposed to photographed – and the 'handwritten' script under-scoring them, work intermodally, since the vehicles (iconic in both Peircian and lay terms) are the London equivalents of the French slogan beneath, both of which fulfil cultural, (stereo)typical target audience expectations, and function as a coherent subset within the cohesion of the overall multimodal ensemble. Furthermore, on the level of extra- and inter-textual coherence, the 'drawn' representations that could be deemed infantile to an English eye recall, from a French migrant perspective inescapably formed by the habitus of origin, the iconography of comic books and graphic novels deeply embedded in French culture, and by no means restricted to a non-adult readership.[23]

The modal and semiotic affordances of the banner are therefore meaningful in different ways for the French and English onlooker. Although both French and English viewers would doubtless consider it light-hearted and entertaining, thus echoing the ideational and interpersonal intentions of the meet-ups themselves, French onlookers alone are likely to interpret the banner as an implicit, habituated reference to them being comfortable in the migration habitat, or as a comforting reminder of the visual culture and habitus of their childhood. The London-French viewer would therefore

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22 Translation: there are things I would never have done before, but now I say to myself, that's how you live in London.

23 One in three French people read comics and 62 per cent of readers are educated to at least BAC level, according to a 2011 BPI and DEPS survey (<http://neuviemeart.citebd.org/spip.php?rubrique91>). Accessed 25 November 2015.

be a 'poisson dans l'eau' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 103), or fish in water, in the 'material' context of this blog banner (and the page as a whole) as it is an expression of a dual habitus, combining elements of both the inherited habitus of origin *and* the acquired habitus of the migration setting.

The Materialisation of On-Land Diasporic Spaces

Having established that it is the physical location of the next meet-up that has supremacy on the screen, demonstrated both through its superordinate left-hand positioning along the written rubric titles and substantiated inter-modally by means of the photograph of the venue (Figure 5) – which fills half the screen in a single frame – it is now necessary to examine briefly the photograph itself. The semiotic dominance of the image within the multimodal

Figure 5. Photograph of the venue for forthcoming *Apero-blog London* meet-up
Source: LFSC, UK Web Archive: http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/
archive/20121110230100/http://aperobloglondon.com/,
captured 10 November 2012)

ensemble is emphasised by its own composition, the unusual perspective of which places the onlooker in a subordinate position, belittled by the height of the building, yet intrigued to see what lies below, beyond the confines of the photographic frame.

With respect to extra-textual coherence and material-digital dynamics, the photograph, as a distinct 'Web element' (Brügger 2014, 5), has a defined on-land objective – to encourage visitors of the digital site to meet in person at a specific London location – which coheres with its role in the textual ensemble of the blog 'page' and 'site' (ibid.). In this instance, 06 Chad's Place is almost an inversion of Casilli's notion of a 'double habitat' which alludes to the 'capacité qu'ont les êtres humains de charger l'espace physique de significations affectives, religieuses, politiques, etc.' (62).[24] This anthropomorphism of the material world is just as pertinent – in reverse – to the physicalisation of the immaterial space of the Internet, which is often referred to in material, worldly terms (e.g. Web, Net, page, navigate, post, scroll, in<u>box</u>, <u>digit</u>al). Similarly, the material environment of the London French is mapped onto the intangible blog, taking physical, albeit two-dimensional, shape with the inclusion of the photograph.

Indexically, this photograph, unlike that topping the metafunctionally opposed (in terms of intended audience) 'London Tips' page (Figure 2), represents London in non-stereotypical terms. The blue sky implicitly confirms that the interpersonal function of the blog is to engage with the community in London, cheerfully aware of its changeable weather (as evidenced in Interviews 6, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 16), rather than to present a hackneyed image of London in the fog or beneath dense, grey cloud, which would doubtless meet the stereotypical expectations of Franco-French onlookers. Likewise, the pollution-tarnished London bricks embed the image in its historico-geographical context: their griminess bears witness to the urban grittiness of the (non-South Kensington) location and points to elements of the material habitat experienced by the London French on the ground.

The focal point of the photograph is the central physical sign. This acts interpersonally and ideationally, giving clear instruction to the blog visitors on where to find and how to recognise the venue at the time of the physical encounter in the material environment, while the peculiar perpendicularity of the shot offers insights in terms of motivation and/or interest. The rakish angle provides a sense of spontaneity which suggests that the photograph was taken by a pedestrian, an unofficial passer-by of the venue, as opposed to a formal, commissioned photographer who would doubtless have staged the shot in a more conventional, less oblique manner. From that conclusion,

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24 Translation: [the] capacity humans have to project emotional, religious, political, etc., meanings onto physical spaces.

it is not unreasonable to proffer that the photographer – and by extension the blogger – is an 'ordinary' member of the French community in London, possibly choosing the venue for the twenty-ninth meeting of the *Apéro-blog* community during her ambles through London's streets, motivated by a physical interaction with the material London habitat. On-land buildings and spaces are thus furnishing the online habitat, which will in a subsequent dynamic turn have a physical impact on the world when the blog visitors meet in person at the venue(s).

Furthermore, the on-land spaces chosen for this blog are telling in themselves, as they digitally map out the physical spaces frequented by the London French, or at least this particular sub-community thereof, and provide insights into their sociocultural positioning. The venue of the forthcoming meet-up, 06 Chad's Place, is an informal bar-restaurant, housed in a high-ceilinged, heftily beamed and internally bare-bricked former Victorian warehouse, suggesting the 'shabby chic', vintage look that so appeals to the young French community when they begin their migratory journey (as evidenced in Interview 16: 'Là je me suis acheté à une Charity un costume en velours rouge, pantalon et veste; il est génial';[25] and in the LFSC blog *Britishette – Second Hand is a Lifestyle*, dedicated entirely to vintage clothes found and worn in London). It is not a French bar located in the (stereotypical) French quarter, and as such is testimony to the material existence of the 'Oubliés de St Pancras' (the young migrants surveyed by Ledain), not least because 06 Chad's Place is within short walking distance of St Pancras International railway station, that is, the gateway to and *from* Paris, Lille and the rest of France.

Navigating away from the blog landing page, and entering the 'C'est où' page, it is clear that choosing a venue which does not correspond to the South Kensington myth is the norm. Among the thirty locations cited (dating back to the first meeting in May 2010), only one is close to the area, in Hammersmith (W6), while all the others are found in central locations, predominantly EC, WC, W1 and NW1. This is an informative set of physical locations, for although it does not provide evidence of the existence of a specific pocket of French Londoners concentrated in one area (South Kensington or elsewhere), it does suggest that central locations have been chosen with the precise intention of facilitating access for French Londoners living in diverse districts, all finding the central venues logistically feasible irrespective of their particular London-French habitat.

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25 Translation: I've just bought a red velvet suit, jacket and trousers, at a Charity shop; it's great.

Unpicking the Logo: Common Culture, Common Language, Common-Unity

The final column on the right of the screenshot (Figure 1) contains several more thematic sections, framed by a set of black, geometric lines. The first of these (Figure 6) is the 'Award' rubric, which relates directly to the material lives of French Londoners in the migration setting and to their contribution to the city and the on-land community, designating the 'Most Influential French Londoner Winner'. Beneath this lies the *Apéro-blog London* 'logo' rubric:

The semiotic affordances of the logo are manifold, not least as an illustration of the blogger's desire to have a greater visual presence in the online environment beyond the confines of this blog, and perhaps of a will to expand the presence of the *Apéro-blog London* community on-land. Additionally, the pictorial composition of the logo serves to compound the stereotypical representation of London through its iconic red bus, as in the main banner. But here the absurdity of the image is exaggerated further. In the banner, the pint of beer is central and stands out exclusively through its scale and incongruousness in relation to the modes of transport flanking it, all of which cohere both with the physical activity of taking part in the 'apéro' meet-ups on-land and with the French text beneath, text which encourages visitors to attend the event whatever the means of transportation. But, in the logo, the pint glass is not only outlandishly disproportionate in relation to the 'double-decker', but the decision to depict it travelling on the roof of the bus increases the iconic implausibility, hence the absurdity, of the image. This in turn could be an indication of habitus transformation as regards the blogger's internalised way of perceiving and representing the world, demonstrating a shift *away* from the credibility favoured by French stayers and *towards* the eccentricity and humour considered more prevalent among the 'host' population: 'à Londres, l'excentricité est encore admise,

Figure 6. *Apéro-blog London* logo
Source: LFSC, UK Web Archive: http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/
archive/20121110230100/http://aperobloglondon.com/,
captured on 12 November 2012.)

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et respectée' (Interview 20).[26] Furthermore, if the logo is to be effective in attracting interest from other members of the London-French community, as a soft marketing tool, it stands to reason that this attitudinal shift is also expected to have taken place among the London-French viewers it targets. From an extra-textual coherence standpoint, the interpersonal function of the logo would be unsuccessful if the internalised habitus of the sign recipient had not also undergone this cultural change. This is therefore illustrative of the habituated dimension of habitus: the 'taken-for-grantedness' of absurdity as a means of promoting a brand within the cultural framework of the migration setting, now naturally adopted by members of the migrant community themselves.

Linguistically, electing the abbreviated form – 'apéro' instead of 'apéritif' – carries implications, possibly being suggestive of a younger rhetor and target audience than the non-abbreviated term, and arguably with undertones of social class. It could even be conjectured that the abbreviation alone contributes to the likelihood that the bloggers involved in these meet-ups are not members of the South Kensington elite. Likewise, the choice of a pint of beer for the *Apéro-blog* logo and banner is pertinent, for an 'apéro' could be seen as a quintessentially French phenomenon, whereas a pint of beer or lager represents a quintessentially – albeit stereotypical – British beverage (the imperial measurement and visual materialisation thereof place the glass in a non-French cultural context irrespective of its liquid content). Indeed, the visual depiction of the *pint* of beer or lager and the written 'apéro' designation are almost an intermodal contradiction, and certainly imply a merging of home and host habits, with the epitome of twenty-first-century socialising practices in *France* framing the *English* beverage par excellence.[27] Therefore, like Bourdieu's assertions that different drinks are an external, material representation of different internalised habitus and social class (1979, 206–7), so the online allusion to a pint at an 'apéro' is representative of the London-French blended habitus: it is, perhaps, a cultural exchange rather than a confrontation.

Thus, all three dimensions of the habitus triad conceptualised for this article are brought into relief indexically through the logo alone. The first inference is that the London French are now taking on the drinking *habits* of the host culture. Secondly, they appear *habituated* with respect to both home and host practices, in that they are undoubtedly unaware of the incongruity of the scripted, pictorial and practical juxtaposition of the 'apéro' and the pint of beer. Their co-location appears to be quite natural, and is certainly

26 Translation: in London, eccentricity is still allowed and respected.
27 As anecdotal evidence, in two dozen years of French 'apéro' experience, never has a pint of beer been offered to me as an apéritif in France, except by a returned *London* migrant.

representative of the third *habitat* dimension, illustrated through the pint of beer as a material component of the migration setting, more specifically the physical community meet-ups taking place within that setting, or Rowsell's notion of 'fractal habitus' (333).

However, despite this cultural blending, there is evidence to suggest that the transformation of the original habitus and subsequent integration into/ of London culture is not complete. The drink remains an 'apéro', that is, it is consumed *before* a meal, not instead of a meal; many interviewees lament the latter as the norm within the London habitat, something to which Favell refers as the 'liquid lunch' (170, citing an interviewee). The venue itself, described as a 'Bar & Restaurant',[28] substantiates the prospect of food as a choice, in line with the habits of the primary habitus. To some extent, it testifies to on-land Anglo-French cultural dynamics, with the French now taking beer and pub-culture back to France,[29] and London taking on the 'apéro' culture of the French, as evidenced materially through this venue and the growing number of wine bars, pavement terraces and gastro-pubs in the capital.

Habitus transformation is also evoked by the overall composition of the logo. Its circular shape is reminiscent of a badge, in turn recalling the 1970s' punk look, or possibly a beer mat. Both are material, fractal features of the host habitat and cohere with the habituated constructions of 'London-ness' among the French population, as Chantal demonstrates: 'c'est vrai, on voit des punks, on voit des gens avec des cheveux bleus' (Interview 17).[30] Similarly, the distortion of the bus depicted in the logo could be suggestive of it driving around in endless circles, in the same way that one interviewee refers to London itself, comparing it to the London Eye: 'Londres en un mot: la grande roue […], elle tourne, Londres elle évolue' (Interview 15).[31]

However, the written text in French acts as a counterpoint to this. Both the font and colour, which frame the central pictorial image, are modally revealing. Designing the script in the same colour as the beer ideationally coheres with the material beverage, and also enhances the visual cohesion of this multimodal sign-complex. Such colour coherence reinforces the lettering's positioning within the migration setting. But the font remains fundamentally French, as it is the same as that found extensively in French children's literature and cursive handwriting books. This highly stylised and aestheticised script is an entirely habituated representation of French-ness, tacitly throwing the French viewers back to their primary habitus and serving as a reminder of the rigid visual expressive codes to which people

28   Source: <http://www.6stchadsplace.com/>. Accessed 25 February 2015.
29   See Debra Kelly's article for specific references.
30   Translation: It's true you see punks, you see people with blue hair.
31   Translation: London in one word: the big wheel […], it turns, London evolves.

are expected to conform. In French schools, there is a single 'correct' way of writing, deviation from which is discouraged by figures of authority (teachers), just as deviation from the unwritten dress codes of French society is often derided. Chantal (Interview 17), among others, voices this explicitly: 'quand [mes enfants] rentrent en France habillés d'une certaine façon, mes sœurs disent "eh ben dis donc, vous êtes à la mode!"'[32] As a result, many French do conform to these subtle yet culturally engrained assertions of authoritative power and subsequently write in this stylised manner. Thus, by making a motivated font choice for the logo script, the blog-rhetor evokes the primary habitus (as regards *habitat* and *habits*) of the London French, and as such connects with the principal target readership in a manner with which they will implicitly identify (*habituation*).

In addition to offsetting the London-ness of the pictorial dimension of the logo intermodally, and therefore visually reproducing the hybrid habitus of the London French, the script provides further clues about the identity of the blogger and by extension the French community in London. This identity, as expressed through the font, seems somewhat paradoxical, for the narrative of the French migrants often revolves around a desire to be free from the rigidity of the French system, materialised by their very migratory act. But, through their habits, they appear to reproduce and transfer it to subsequent generations: hence the success of French Saturday schools, for example, where French language and script are transmitted as intrinsic components of French culture. There is, therefore, a contradiction between the narrative and the practice of the London French, comparable to the idealistic discourse of the English in Spain regarding social class (Oliver and O'Reilly 55), and, to a certain extent, a contradiction in terms of identity, although not one with any semiotically perceivable tension. The London French, as conveyed multi-modally through the logo, are simultaneously rebelling – the agentive act of migrating and embracing the habitat and habits of the 'other', as represented ideationally and indexically through the central image, could be seen as a form of dissent, of breaking away from the status quo and of seeking change elsewhere if impossible to accomplish in the habitus of origin, given its intrinsically reproductive nature – and conforming (as exemplified by their unwitting reproductive endorsement of the codes of the primary habitus, be they sartorial or textual).

On the other hand, rather than being ego-interest-led and centred around the blogger, the decision to reproduce the font of the French primary habitus in the logo could have been primarily altru-interest-led, in coherent and

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32 Translation: when [my children] go back to France dressed in a certain way, my sisters say 'oh my, you're fashionable!'

cohesive accord with the rest of the blog, the sign-maker's chief motivation being to construct a sign-complex according to her subjective expectations of the sign-recipients' inherited points of reference. By communicating with the recipients of the logo sign-complex in terms to which they will, however tacitly, be able to relate, the blog-rhetor is both assuming and implicitly encouraging a sense of belonging, rekindling links to their shared, community, cultural heritage. Finally, with reference to the hybridity of the logo, in terms of its interpersonal and ideational cultural duality, it is necessary to underline the iterative role played by the language. With 'London' mirroring the 'apéro-blog' written above it, the rhetor of the sign-complex gives the reader/audience no choice but to code-switch and give linguistic articulation to both the French and English dimensions of the blog, the meet-ups and the community. The sign-maker could just as well have written 'Londres' at the base of the framing circle, thus remaining within a single culturo-linguistic context. Yet, because this audience is not expected to be composed of outsiders looking in, but of insiders, or of Londoners in their own right (the most common form of self-identification cited in the interviews), it stands to reason that 'London' should be more apt a term than 'Londres' – the voice of the French in France. By framing the logo with an oppositional placement of both languages, the rhetor is to a certain degree compelling the French reader to embody their Englishness, and vice versa.

Conclusion

Rowsell posits that both ethnographic and multimodal social semiotic traditions 'should be braided to lift out how materialities exist within modes' (332). This article has combined both such traditions in its fine-grained examination of the dynamics at play between modes and between the online and on-land environments of members of the London-French blogging community, in turn revealing material facets of the cultural dynamics at play in their habitus. The thick, multimodal description of a single London-French blog has begun to shed light on the hybrid habitus that members of London's French community connected to the blog inhabit and that inhabits them. In a transitional state between the habitus of origin and a transformed migrant habitus, the blogger has revealed herself to be at once comfortable in the migration habitat, taking on local habits in a taken-for-granted, habituated fashion, and yet fundamentally, if unwittingly, rooted in the original habitus and intent on replicating it in the migration context. A concrete sense of the diasporic space has also emerged from the 'materiality of [the] digital content' (Horst and Miller 25) of the blog, itself somewhat of a functional hybrid, containing elements of

communication and representation, and therewith giving insights into the blog-rhetor and her target audience. Studying the interpersonal dynamics at play between the multimodal text and its envisaged recipients has laid the foundations for an understanding of belonging and cultural positioning among this sub-community of the wider French community in London that goes deeper than that gleaned from the narratives of on-land interviews alone: while overtly negating community belonging in conversation, the tacit message of the blog is one of community interaction, even cohesion.

Thus, by means of the ethnosemiotic theoretical model applied to this study, Jewitt's concerns over the 'impressionistic' pitfalls sometimes associated with multimodality have been allayed, in the same reciprocal way that the ethnographic validity of the investigation has been enhanced by the semiotic triangulation of the empirical interview and observational data. The convergence of the findings from the on-land and online multimodal data has served as confirmation that 'life lived offline is directly connected to online life' (Adami and Kress 189), and that by observing the digital diasber-space of a London-French blogger, internal and external facets of habitus materialise.

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