

# Almost french: love and a new life in paris by sarah turnbull

Literature



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## Almost French: Love and a New Life in Paris by Sarah Turnbull

Language is the basic medium of communication. However, language is a relative feature of culture that remains limited in its use just as the culture is. Diaspora authors help show the limitations in the application of language, as they set their books in one country but for an audience group possibly in another country. Sarah Turnbull is one such author who describes her early years in Paris, France after settling in the city from Australia. The author uses English in developing the book. She develops a simplistic yet descriptive plot that helps show the predicament she found herself in once in Paris. In doing this, the author uses language sparingly often infusing French in the book just so she develops an emotional appeal to her audience as the discussion below portrays.

As explained earlier, Sarah Turnbull moved to Paris from Australia. Her husband had invited her to France where she lived for six years. She explains that she endured hardship given the cultural differences that the change presented. Key among such cultural changes, which enhanced her hardship, was the unique French language, which she had to learn and use in order to fit in the new society. The author describes the difficulty she endured while learning French. She deliberately uses a number of French terms in the book just to show how difficult it was for her to understand the language, “ Before I can breathe bonjour...” (Turnbull 28). Her inclusion of the French words in the plot is a deliberate strategy she employs in her attempt to prove the extent of the difficulty she endured. Any English speaking audience without knowledge of French would experience such difficulties as well. This helps win the emotional appeal, which the author seeks.

Turnbull understood that she was writing the book for English speaking audience possibly living in her home country Australia. She has a negative attitude against France and Paris in particular given her difficult experiences there. She sets out to show this in her writing. She uses language systematically often using vivid description to help heighten the conflict in the plot. She describes every noun in the plot. Such is a strategic technique in writing that helps influence the attitudes, feelings and emotions of the audience. As explained earlier, Turnbull did not like her experience in Paris. She, therefore, describes the weather, people and streets with the view to portraying the unforgiving nature of the Parisian culture. Her effective use of language in describing the various features in the plot succeeds in doing so. In retrospect, Sarah Turnbull uses language systematically in the development of the plot of the novel. While doing this, the author ensures that she portrays the gravity of her experiences as a bilingual immigrant. She writes the novel in her native English but deliberately inserts French words in her attempt to prove the difficulty she endured. She succeeds in doing this given the fact that she writes for an audience group that had possibly not had similar experiences. Language, therefore, remains integral in the novel since it enhances the conflict in the plot by proving the experiences of the author.

#### Work cited

Turnbull, Sarah. *Almost French: Love and a New Life in Paris*. New York: Gotham Books, 2003. Internet resource.