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**Title:** Chaotic Topography in Contemporary French and Francophone Literature

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**Abstract:** Chaos theory proposed by Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers illuminates new conclusions about narrative structures in contemporary French and Francophone literature. Espousing an order-out-of-chaos paradigm, my tutor texts by Annie Ernaux, Frank tienne, and Jean-Philippe Toussaint demonstrate how the contemporary notions of identity, gender and genre are innately chaotic but simultaneously offer innovative insights into how these entities are being (re)conceived and (re)presented. Scientific, philosophical, and cultural models of chaos described by Prigogine, Deleuze and Glissant respectively, offer a means to understand the world in order to frame a contemporary cultural topography. Liberated limits of the novel, poetry, and diary genre, viewed through the concept of chaotic "noise", represent richness of information rather than a dearth in order. With Prigogine's Arrow of Time, identity is found in the future not in the past suggesting a non-linear development that is plagued with uncertainty but possibilities. Consequently, identity in contemporary literature is located in others and not in the self challenging traditional notions of this concept. Bifurcation points serve as nodes of "textual instability" revealing themes and trends questioning the function of language, identity and generic transitions in contemporary literature. Through the concept of strange attractors, women, men, language and places within these chaotic tutor texts serve as points of order to which chaotic narratives consistently return advocating the creative force of non-gendered chaos. Accordingly not only can the notion of identity, love and language be viewed as fractal within their own textual space, but the texts themselves transcend generic boundaries. Finally, the contemporary cultural topography is expanding to include electronic literature as an area of critical study. Due to the medium of transmission, i.e., the computer code, electronic literature presents chaotic form and content and challenges traditional notions of 'reading' a text. Consequently, the reader interacts with the computer code causing the 'narrative' to bifurcate resulting in multiple, unpredictable reading experiences. Chaos theory thus offers a pertinent tool through which to read and interpret this genre. Electronic literature's literariness, viewed through chaos theory, is defined as what changes instead of what remains constant.

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