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LAWRENCE ALLEN KUIPER

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LITERATURE, LINGUISTICS AND THE PERCEPTION OF REGIONAL
LANGUAGE IN MODERN FRANCE

By

Lawrence Allen Kuiper

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

LITERATURE, LINGUISTICS AND THE PERCEPTION OF REGIONAL LANGUAGE IN MODERN FRANCE

By

Lawrence Allen Kuiper

This dissertation examines the social evolution of French and its changing relationship with other languages (or dialects) within France. More specifically, we explore literature as a trace of the development of language perception in the emergence of a distinct French society. We then empirically investigate the present situation of language perception among respondents in Paris, the center of the French norm. While linguistic policy and language institutions are discussed, the historical overview section focuses primarily on literature.

Because of its status as both socio-cultural artifact and as linguistic evidence (in other words, as both creator of linguistic perception and repository of linguistic exempla) literature is a fitting object for the historical section of this study. Literary works helped create and reinforce the image of standard French as the prestige dialect and the accompanying image that other languages within metropolitan France were linguistically inferior and that speakers of these varieties had cognitive deficiencies.

Over time, the complicity of literature in the maintenance of linguistic norms, whether prescriptive or social, became secondary to the literary artist's need to create new forms.

The generic and creative diversity of French literature since the mid-nineteenth century make tracing a coherent linguistic perception of regional variety less feasible than with earlier works. In recent times, the state of regional linguistic perception has become less clear, and is best examined instead through an empirical study. The findings of this study, conducted in 1995, comprise the second part of this dissertation. Using a newly-designed model for characterizing the perception of dialects, the second part of this dissertation analyzes interviews of speakers in Paris. More than simply a reiteration of the perceptions outlined in the literary survey, this empirical study adds detail and depth, while also illustrating that the monument of a dominant dialect's power over dominated languages can take at least as long to dismantle as it did to build.

This dissertation is dedicated to Kenneth Kuiper and Maïr
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is divided into two parts. Each part has its own detailed introduction, and then is divided into smaller chapters. Part one examines the social evolution of the French language and its changing relationship with other languages within France. More specifically, we explore literature as a trace of the development of language perception in the emergence of a distinct French society. In Part two, we empirically investigate the present situation of language perception among respondents in Paris – the center of the French norm.¹

Although linguistic policy and language institutions are discussed, part one focuses primarily on literature. Because of its status as both socio-cultural artifact and as linguistic evidence – as both creator of linguistic perception and repository of linguistic exempla – literature is a fitting object for the historical section of this study.

Like most European languages, French has historically evolved along two lines: 1) as a language of *nationalism* and 2) as a language of *nationism*². A nationalist language is one that serves its speakers not only as a communication device, but also as a marker of ethnic and cultural distinctiveness – “not only a vehicle for the history of a

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nationality, but a part of history itself" (Fasold, 1984, p. 3). Nationalist perceptions of language tend to be quite powerful because they are bound to the emotionally charged concept of origin and to nostalgia for that origin. Preservation of the nationalist language seems a natural goal of its speakers, who view it as an important part of their identity. The cultural instinct of language preservation becomes a powerful tool in politics, because leaders can use it to justify expansion of national borders. French began being a nationalist language – a symbol of ethnicity and historical lineage – in the sixteenth century at the latest.

During the sixteenth century, French was also establishing itself as a language of nationism. The demands of nationism on language are practical – facilitating the smooth function of government and the economy by providing a tool for communication. Nationist goals can often interfere with the nationalist purposes of other languages. The need for simple and efficient communication often dictates a government's linguistic policy. If measures aimed at meeting these practical needs are perceived as a threat to the survival of another language under the same jurisdiction, civil unrest can result. Conversely, government policies often confound nationalist and nationist

criteria in creating linguistic policy. They perceive dialects or sociolects as a threat to the supremacy of the dominant language, on which hegemony depends, and can react strongly with decrees and policies against the use of certain languages. As France expanded, nationalist rationalizations added the force of practicality to the fervor of nationalism. The combination was deadly for languages in regions politically dominated by the French Crown and later the French Republic. France found itself in a diglossic situation where standard French became the universal prestige (or 'H') language and regional dialects became grouped together as so many non-prestige (or 'L') varieties.³

Portrayals (and perceptions) of French and regional dialects corresponded to the practical needs of nationalism and the growing voice of nationalism. Literary works helped create and reinforce the image of French as the prestige variety and the accompanying image of other languages (Provençal, Catalan, Basque, Breton, Franco-Provençal, Picard, Limousin, etc.) within French territory – that they were linguistically inferior and that they reflected the cognitive inferiority of their speakers.

Literature historically participates in the establishment and maintenance of linguistic norms. This

relationship is more or less visible in a literary work depending on the historical sociolinguistic circumstances, and on the genre of the work. Linguistic standardization is a complex process depending on a variety of social, political and economic circumstances. The story of standardization is recorded in scholarly grammars or important legal documents written in or about the emerging prestige-bearing dialect. Literature, however, is perhaps the most visible agent in language standardization. Creative literature not only accompanies, but also participates and leads in the process of language standardization. In the early stages of standardization especially, literature actively participates in the process. "Literary heritage" is among the nine rubrics listed by Ferguson and expounded on by Fasold (1984, 36-38) for explaining differentiation of 'H' from 'L' varieties in diglossia. But literature is more a trace of linguistic attitudes and perceptions than other sources are. Grammars and legal documents describe and define the position and nature of the standard, while literature portrays and characterizes standard language's relationship to non-standard varieties.

Creative literature from a given period never fully represents linguistic practice from the same period. During the early period of French standardization – from the 13th

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century stabilization of grammar, through the subsequent codification of grammatical rules to the 18th century mythologization of the French standard – literature as a form of communication between writers and readers was a minority experience. Only with the educational reforms of the nineteenth century and the increasing literacy that resulted did literature become a form of mass communication. Up until that time, literary works addressed a fairly definite group of readers or spectators who often shared their goals and viewpoints.

Poets in the sixteenth century, like Joachim DuBellay and the members of the *Pléiade* group, were simultaneously involved in three crucial projects of standardization: establishment of the new norm's prestige, codification of its grammar, and artistic creation with it. DuBellay's *Défense et illustration de la langue françoise* – as much literary manifesto as linguistic declaration – combines these three phases into one coherent whole. He holds that the enrichment and vitalization of French relies on the ingenuity of poets. The *Défense* can be seen as having the nationalist motive of establishing and preserving French as a prestige variety to rival and replace Latin. The *illustration* extols the possibilities of creating in French, whose grammar DuBellay claims allows for limitless

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invention: French can easily enrich itself by borrowing words it may lack from Latin and Greek, the two languages DuBellay thinks French should supplant as prestige language. To someone knowing of the eventual dominance of French - and the resultant denigration of other dialects - DuBellay's argument in favor of French has a strangely egalitarian ring:

[...] les langues ne sont nées d'elles mesmes en façon d'herbes, racines et arbres: les unes infirmes et debiles en leurs espèces: les autres saines et robustes, et plus aptes à porter le faiz des conceptions humaines: mais toute leur vertu est née au monde du vouloir et arbitre des mortelz. Cela est une grande rayson pourquoy on ne doit ainsi louer une langue et blamer l'autre: veu qu'ils viennent toutes d'une mesme source et origine: c'est la faintaisie des hommes: et ont été formées d'un mesme jugement à une mesme fin: c'est pour signifier entre nous les conceptions et intelligences de l'esprit [...] languages are not born of themselves like grasses, roots and trees: some unhealthy and weak: others healthy and strong, and more apt for embodying human conceptions: but their whole virtue is born of the want and will of mortals. Therefore this is a great reason not to praise one language and disparage another: since they all come from one and the same source and origin: and were formed by the same judgment with the same goal: that is to signify between us the conceptions and intelligence of the mind] (DuBellay, 47-48)

DuBellay's stance on the basic equality of languages would not be maintained as a theme among later grammarians, nor would his insistence on the necessity to borrow words from other languages to enrich French.

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As French gained prestige, the urgency to maintain it as the norm diminished. Since the middle ages, France has gradually evolved from being a "multi-national state" toward being a "multi-ethnic nation" (see Fasold 1984, 2-3). For language this evolution means that speakers of languages other than French have – with a few notable exceptions such as the Corsican and Basque separatist movements – shed any aspirations of creating a separate nation based on linguistic (or any other) criteria. The supremacy of French was established gradually. Authors writing in French during the early years of French standardization and seeking immortality through their works must have perceived preservation and expansion of French as their self-interested duty. *Le beau style, le bon usage* and expanding the dominance of French were common causes.

As the durability of French was gradually ensured, literary authors turned increasingly to creating esthetically pleasing works, with less regard for the preservation of the language. As originality (or novelty) became the earmark of creative genius, the goals of literary creation gradually diverged from those of linguistic purism. For example, the prescriptivist Abel Hermant, writer of a bi-weekly column on linguistic usage for *Le Temps* from 1929 to 1939 and principal compiler for

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the Grammar of the *Académie française*, uses no author from later than the eighteenth century as an authority for his pronouncements. Hermant, himself an author, obviously thought that writers since the revolution had abandoned some fundamental part of the language.

While preservation of a pure norm may have preoccupied many authors less over time, a dynamic relationship has persisted between standardization and *littérateurs*. Literature still often provides examples for grammarians' rules and illustrates usage in dictionaries. As part of the educational canon, the literary works have helped form a generalized perception of what separates 'good' from 'bad' French.

But with the ambiguous standing of modern literature in relation to the linguistic norm, literary works since the middle of the nineteenth century are no longer reliable records to trace the linguistic perception of their (vastly larger) readership or of their authors. This difficulty is amplified when the focus is on perceptions of regional variation, since recent authors in French – when they have shown a reaction to normative language at all – have done so using socially rather than regionally marked language. Raymond Queneau's *Zazie dans le métro*, and the more recent writings of Frédéric Dard (under the pseudonym of San

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Antonio) are two notable examples of imitations of a socially-marked spoken register in literary works. Authors who have chosen to write in a regional dialect tell us little about the dominant perception of language in that region. Instead they indicate a movement to revive that language by renewing its literary tradition – certainly a valid stance, but one that sheds little light on current French speakers' perceptions of regional language varieties.

The first part of this dissertation, then, will be a historical overview of the situation of regional language varieties in works by selected French authors. Part one is divided into sections defined by historical periods. Historical periodization tends to be arbitrary, and ours is no exception. In part one of this dissertation the chapter divisions begin with the middle ages and the sixteenth century, then one chapter for each century up to and including the nineteenth century. Works have been chosen based on the presence of a clear portrayal of regional language within them.

Part two of this dissertation is an empirical study whose goal is to establish a coherent picture of the perception of regional language in contemporary France. The study, conducted by the author in 1995 uses a newly designed model for characterizing the perception of dialects. The

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study examines responses to questions and interviews of speakers in Paris – the economic and cultural center of France. More than simply a reiteration of the perceptions outlined by the literary survey, this empirical study adds detail and depth, while also illustrating that the monument of a dominant language's power over dominated languages can take at least as long to dismantle as it did to build.

Part one: Regional Language and Linguistic Norms in

Literature: A Historical Overview

INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

Quantitative sociolinguistics has mainly related language performance in individuals or groups to their social (age, gender, economic, etc.) status. Scholars of literature, on the other hand, have most often viewed "text [as...] an autonomous verbal structure which has been severed from the process of communication" (Fowler, 180). In other words, literary works lie outside the interactive framework that guides sociolinguistic analysis. Historical linguistics has similarly focused on describing language change, rather than explaining the extra-linguistic reasons for such changes.⁴

One current of sociolinguistics has focused on the unspoken attitudes of speakers toward dialects and sociolects. Ryan and Giles (1982) and Labov (1972) have shown how linguistic variation often translates into judgments about the character, cognitive ability or social mobility of speakers. Gumperz (1982) has shown that culturally differing interpretation of certain prosodic features can lead to misunderstanding of message, while variation in cultural definition of various linguistic settings can lead to conflicting strategies between

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participants, and can often cause speakers to mistrust the motives of their interlocutors. Most work on language attitude has concentrated on specific linguistic items or patterns, and speaker reaction to these specific variants. Such language *attitude* studies explore the unconscious influence of linguistic variation on the social and cultural pre- (and mis-)conceptions of members of a speech community.

Studies that concentrate on linguistic *perception* contrast with such attitude studies because they attempt to discover linguistic viewpoints that are intact when no specific linguistic input is present for judgment. In other words, instead of trying to answer the question, "What reaction does linguistic item X provoke in members the speech community?", perceptual studies ask, "How (according to what criteria, with what linguistic features in mind, if any) do members of a speech community mentally organize the linguistic space around them?"

Since they always (implicitly or explicitly) compare language varieties, linguistic attitudes and perceptions inevitably base themselves on some form of normative language. In the early stages of language standardization, grammarians write rules favoring the use of the socio-politically dominant language variety. Very often, the link

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between political power and language dominance remains just below the surface. It is occasionally, however, quite explicit. For example Antonio de Nebrija published what is considered to be the first grammar of Castilian in 1492, the year in which Fernando and Isabel, the "Reyes Católicos," finally took Granada from the last Moorish ruler. In the same year, they offered Moors and Jews the option of converting, and expelled those who were unwilling to do so from Spain. Nebrija was writing at a time when the Spanish state was emerging from the medieval linguistic situation in which related but distinguishable languages, perhaps more accurately described as Iberoromance dialects of Latin (Galician, Leonese, Asturian, Aragonese, Catalan, Castilian, Valencian), were spoken all over the northern half of the peninsula, and other Romance dialects had grown up in contact with the Arabic spoken in the southern areas dominated by the Moors. When Ferdinand of Aragon (and Navarra, Catalonia and Valencia) and Isabel of Castile (and Leon) married in 1469, their union brought together a great deal of territory, and their defeat of the Moors in 1492 paved the way for a modern state. Nebrija understood that this new state should have only one language, and he dedicated his grammar to Queen Isabel in a prologue containing these words (with updated orthography):

Una cosa hallo y saco por conclusion muy cierta:
que siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio"
[One thing I find and most truly conclude: that
language was always the companion of empire],

and

Que despues que vuestra alteza metiese debajo de
su yugo muchos pueblos bárbaros y naciones de
peregrinas lenguas, y con el vencimiento aquellos
tenían necesidad de recibir las leyes que el
vencedor pone al vencido y con ellas nuestra
lengua, entonces por esta mi arte podrian venir en
el conocimiento de ella como ahora nosotros
aprendemos el arte de la gramática latina para
aprender el latín [That after Your Highness put
beneath her yoke many barbarian peoples and
nations of foreign tongues, and that at their
defeat they had a need to receive the laws that
the victor imposes on the vanquished, and with
them our language, so by this my art they could
come into the knowledge of it, as we now learn the
art of Latin grammar in order to learn
Latin] (Nebrija, 2-10 Patricia Lunn,
trans.) Although French grammarians of about a
century later did not so explicitly link political
dominance and grammar rules, the relationship
remained a rather obvious subtext of the
linguistic struggles between Paris and the
provincial parlements.⁵ As France expanded,
French monarchs – particularly Louis XIV –
repeatedly cited language as justification for
their conquests (see Lodge, 1993, 1994, Achard and
Kibbee).

No matter what the motivations of grammarians they have
seldom displayed knowledge of real language performance.
Rather, they arbitrarily make rules from some the linguistic
performance of a select group, while at other times using
language performance as a counter-example to what they feel
should actually be said. The effect that grammarians and
the often quasi-governmental language-regulating
organizations such as *L'Académie Française* have on

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linguistic performance appears in the form of retrospective corrections of pronunciation or grammar because of preservationist spellings or oft-repeated but misinterpreted grammar rules.⁵ The forces of standardization may have a greater effect on language attitudes and perceptions than on actual performance. Literature may offer the clearest historical trace of linguistic perceptions and attitudes since it often attempts to portray or characterize, but hardly ever to prescribe linguistic performance overtly. Literature more or less consciously reflects the sociolinguistic perceptions of its author, while also conveying those of its audience or readership.

Linguistic perception in literature: portrayal and characterization

There is a strong historical relationship between linguistic and literary norms. Critics have often judged literary works based on linguistic standards. Literary works in turn often serve as models for the norm. Because of its pivotal role in establishment and maintenance of linguistic norms, literature both strongly influences and is influenced by linguistic perceptions. In this chapter we examine the historical relationship between linguistic and literary standards and explore how French literature reveals perceptions of regionally and socially marked French.

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Exploring texts by well-known authors, we shall show how the development of standard French corresponds to the portrayal and occurrence of regionally and socially marked language in these texts.⁶ Literature in this study shall be defined traditionally - as a body of drama, poetry and fiction generally regarded as the artistic component of language and as an object of scholarly study. Such an institutional definition of literature is indeed debatable. But in the study of language perception, the social and academic institutions that help establish these perceptions are often in focus. Literature participates in and benefits from the growth and dominance of the language in which it is written. Canonical literature often reflects the historical situation of the language, and the supposed linguistic perception of its readership (or audience in the case of drama).

Furthermore, the literature that dominates the present educational canon in France models normative language, and thus continues to influence language perception. While the imposition of French as the national language may have many deleterious facets, we shall view any complicity of literature in these efforts as a generally value-neutral reflection of the historical sociolinguistic situation.

The works examined in this part of the dissertation have been chosen because they portray regional language in

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one of two important ways: as dialect or sociolect portrayal or as characterization of non-standard language and speakers. Dialect portrayal is the insertion of regional (or social) linguistic features into reported speech or narration. Characterization of dialect and sociolect entails narrative descriptions of the pleasantness, correctness or social acceptability of various language varieties.

Of course, dialects surface in many early French manuscripts, starting with the well-known *Serments de Strasbourg* - the earliest known document written in French. Study and criticism of regional dialect in medieval texts generally focus on decoding texts. Dialect use is based on the author's pragmatic need for expression using available lexical items. Dialect use in these early texts can hardly be considered "portrayal," since during the Middle Ages many dialects were competing for dominance - there was no backdrop of linguistic standard with which dialect portrayal could contrast.

By the sixteenth century standardization and promotion of the French language became consciously linked to literary movements. Poets wrote treatises glorifying the beauty of the French language, and as their newfound ideal language took shape, it made non-standard local dialects targets of

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criticism. Montaigne among others openly ridicules the dialects spoken in his own region of Bordeaux.⁷ Rabelais chooses to portray scholarly incompetence and pretension in the person of a Sorbonne pupil from the Limousin.⁸ His *écolier limousin* is an early literary example of provincial boorishness mocked.

As French boundaries became more stable in the three subsequent centuries, regional identity was perceived increasingly as ethnicity and decreasingly as nationality. Regional boundaries in France that had been perceived as national and political were now seen as ethnic and administrative. Like the expanding French state, the French language was elevated to a level of higher importance than any regional varieties. A once multiplicitous linguistic landscape developed into a binary opposition — language was either proper French, or not.

With the exceptions of Corsica and the Basque region, nationalistic and political aspirations of French regions perished with the Revolution and the Napoleonic centralization.¹⁰ Though movements have arisen to preserve regional ethnic heritages (e.g., in Provence, Brittany) an increasingly mobile population has obscured ethnic boundaries once clearly demarcated geographically by customs, language, architecture, etc. Accordingly, now

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social norms – as much or more than geographical location – determine linguistic prestige. The older regional ethnic distinctions have largely blended to form a socially-charged urban/rural dichotomy. Nobles flocked to Paris under the later Bourbon kings to discard their regional identity. Paris and its linguistic norm became synonymous with social mobility. The derogatory label "provincial" denigrates those who do not comprehend the unwritten rules and tastes of refined (Parisian) society. Parisians indiscriminately stigmatize being provincial, without reference to any particular province.

A subtext of this part (part one) is how judgments contained in the characterization and portrayal of regional language increasingly identify socio-political (rather than geographical or cultural) differences. Noël du Fail's (c. 1520 -1591) works foreshadow the use of the pastoral as social critique – he illustrates the tacit alliance of country nobility and peasantry and favorably compares this model to the dominant and corrupt Court and the rising bourgeoisie in Paris. Molière, a Parisian writing for the court, often equates provincial status with social standing. In *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* language use functions as character portrayal along both regional and social axes. Marivaux's *Le Paysan parvenu* illustrates social climbing as

geographical movement. An important subtext for Marivaux's narrator-protagonist's success is his linguistic adaptability -- recognizing his own linguistic deficiencies and adjusting to meet Parisian standards. In George Sand's pastoral novels, rural culture is a setting for social commentary.⁹ The ills of urban society are cured by simplicity - an intellectual return to nature. The common sense of Sand's characters is rooted in their symbiotic relationship with their rural surroundings. This rural simplicity is reflected in their language, but even more so in their statements about language. Sand's Utopian view - meant as a model for the transformation of society - also reflects nostalgia for a rapidly evaporating rural society. Balzac - in *La Maison Nucingen* and *Les Paysans* - is less generous in his portrayal of peasants and rural speakers. He displays a city-dweller's mistrust and linguistic disdain for the rural folk he portrays.

Both Balzac and Sand represent the final phase in French literature where a coherent picture of regional language perception can be seen. Although authors that followed them may have produced images of regional language, they become increasingly difficult to distinguish from images of socially-marked language. The distinction between the cultural and the socio-economic, already somewhat

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muddled in Sand and Balzac, becomes nearly non-existent after them – and it is the same with characterizations of language. Certainly some complicity between literature and linguistic norms remained after their time, but the traces of this relationship start to disappear along with any clear definitions of either literature or norms.

Linguistic norm and literary norm

In its own statutes, the *Académie* acknowledges the close relationship between literature and the maintenance of linguistic norms.

L'institution de l'Académie française ayant pour objet de travailler à épurer et à fixer la langue, à en éclaircir les difficultés et à en maintenir le caractère et les principes, elle s'occupera dans ses séances particulières de tout ce qui peut concourir à ce but; des discussions sur tout ce qui tient à la grammaire, à la rhétorique, à la poétique, des observations critiques sur les beautés et les défauts de nos écrivains, à l'effet de préparer des éditions de nos auteurs classiques, et particulièrement la composition d'un nouveau dictionnaire de la langue, seront l'objet de ses travaux habituels. [The institution of the *Académie française* having the object of working to purify and fix the language, to clarify its difficulties and to maintain its character and principles, will in these particular meetings be involved in anything that can coincide with this goal; discussions on all that concerns grammar, rhetoric, poetics, critical observations on the beauties and faults of our writers, the preparation of editions of our classic authors, and particularly the composition of a new dictionary of the language will be the subject of its habitual work.] (Caput, 12)

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According to this 1816 statute, linguistic codification entails criticism of literary works and the creation of a classical canon. Literary creation is a forum for (positive and negative) examples of acceptable usage. From its inception the *Académie* has imposed its presence in literary norms and style. The majority of the *Académie* members who achieved lasting notoriety are literary authors.¹⁰ The predominance of literary figures within the *Académie* has made it a focal point for literary debate. Even in the earlier stages of standardization, when the norm was tied to a specific group of speakers literary use was seen as a stamp of approval:

la parole qui se prononce est la première en ordre et en dignité, puis que celle qui est écrite n'est que son image [...] mais le consentement des bons Auteurs est comme le sceau, ou une vérification, qui autorise le langage de la cour et qui marque le bon Usage, et décide de celui qui est douteux [the spoken word is first in order and dignity, since the written is only its image [...] but the consent of good authors is like the seal, or a verification that authorizes the language of the court and that marks proper Usage and decides which Usage is questionable]. (Vaugelas)

When in succeeding generations the norm was placed outside of *Usage* and in the past, the only point of reference was

"l'image écrite de l'usage de cette époque. [...] Le raffinement des auteurs classiques [devient] la norme à imiter et à préserver, et en fait tout naturellement la base de la grammaire normative française [the written image of language use of that period. [...] The refinement of the

classical authors [becomes] the norm to imitate and preserve, and in fact very naturally the basis of French normative grammar]. (Wolf, 110)

Linguistic norms and literary norms became the same phenomenon, and writers are in the position of confronting or conforming to prescriptivist linguistic constraints. Although many authors have revolted against the norms of the *Académie* while others have acquiesced, few have not somehow reacted to its influence. One reaction was the creation of new academies. The Goncourt brothers, for example, founded a literary academy to offer an alternative to what they perceived as a too conservative body. A youthful Marcel Proust was involved in a farcical imitation of the academy in which the newly elected members instead of accepting their membership with a speech would do so "par une série de grimaces [with a series of grimaces]" (Peter, 27).

The creation of new academies and mockery of the old one does not, however, mark the decline of the common association of literature to linguistic standard. Written language had taken precedence over spoken since the standard of *bon usage* was made historical rather than dependent on current court usage. The only examples of proper usage were written. The hegemony of the written has promoted authors to the status of linguistic standard-bearer even while some

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of the French hold only "mépris et sarcasmes [spite and sarcasme]" for the *Académie* (Caput, 4).¹¹

Classical literary language serves not only as the model for language standards, but has historically stood as the model for literature in general and has remained quite fixed relative to the changes in spoken language "[qui] font en plus -- pour citer Raymond Queneau -- que la langue écrite (surtout la langue littéraire) est aujourd'hui pour les Français une langue étrangère [that moreover cause -- to quote Raymond Queneau -- the written language (especially literary language) to be a foreign language for French people today] (Wolf, 110). The status of written or literary language is therefore similar to many forms of expert knowledge in a society: it is sanctioned by schools as a model; since for most it is like a "foreign language", it is impossible to master fully (thus unattainable), its definition is nebulous and dependent on the capricious judgments of a class of individuals deemed qualified to define it.

Literature, however, maintains a dual status in relation to social judgments. On the one hand, literature is a linguistic production. A literary work is a message form like a newspaper article or a political speech. In this role, literary production serves as a linguistic model.

Literature also has the status of art works. Middle class consumers tend to prefer works sanctioned by legitimating institutions, whereas upper-class readers choose works based on the less democratic

mode d'acquisition le plus insensible et le plus invisible, c'est-à-dire le plus ancien et le plus précoce; c'est là ce qui fonde les invariants du discours dominant et qui donne leur air d'éternelle jeunesse à certains thèmes, pourtant strictement situés et datés comme tous les topiques du discours mondain sur le goût inné ou sur la maladresse «des pédants» [most impalpable and invisible mode of acquisition, that is the oldest and most precocious; here is what founds the invariants of dominant discourse and gives an appearance of eternal youth to certain themes, which are, however, strictly placed and dated like all the topics of cultured discourse about innate taste or the clumsiness of pedants. (Bourdieu, 79)]

The system of cultural capital (described by Pierre Bourdieu in *La Distinction*) is the system which perpetuates the exclusivity of the intellectually elite social classes by appraising art works based on cryptic criteria – thus maintaining a differentiation between everyday tastes and cultivated tastes. Accordingly, when particular literary tastes are generalized to too large an audience, elite tastes shift rather abruptly to new models. This tendency is visible in the

deuxième moitié du XVII^e siècle [où] le renforcement de l'autorité des mondains et de la Cour, joint à la tendance des gens du monde à devenir plus cultivés, réduit la distance entre les doctes et les mondains, favorisant le

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développement d'une nouvelle espèce de lettrés, incarnée par les Jésuites Rapin et surtout Bouhours [second half of the seventeenth century [when] the reinforcement of the authority of the erudite and the socialites, together with the tendency of people to become more cultured, reduced the distance between the erudite and socially distinguished classes, making conditions favorable for a new kind of literate people, exemplified by the Jesuits Rapin and especially Bouhours. (Bourdieu 79)

Another example of this tendency for upper-class artistic tastes to shift when they lose their distinctiveness from popular tastes is the co-optation of the Romantic movement by the French elite. Napoleon's regime found Romantic individualism threatening to the democratic ideals of the Revolution, and promoted enlightenment writers as basis for political ideology. The beginning of Romanticism's legitimated rise coincides with the Restoration, and it reaches its apex in 1830 at the end of Bourbon Restoration and the beginning of the July Monarchy. The surge of Romantic literature following the fall of Napoleon comes not simply from the coincidence of relative artistic freedom and advantageous political climate. The quasi-canonization of enlightenment authors during the revolutionary reign had widely disseminated knowledge of these authors' works. The vast majority of the literate population had become familiar with the works of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot and Rousseau. The time was ripe for a new vanguard of elite

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- artistic taste. The individualist aesthetic of Romantic authors made them perfect candidates to replace their Enlightenment counterparts whose works represented the old (and unacceptably common) political, social and by extension cultural order. Many of the literary figures associated with Romanticism (e.g., Nodier, Hugo, Vigny, Musset, Chateaubriand, Lamartine) also became members of the *Académie*. At the time of their admission to the *Académie* these authors were known for genres other than the realist novel and were therefore seen as relatively non-threatening to the social order. Romantic literature's thematic and generic ties to pre-revolutionary literary styles also made it non-threatening.

As the normative goals of the *Académie* became less palatable to many literary figures, the role of literature as a source of linguistic authority became less clear. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century some literary figures began to view the *Académie* as a no-longer viable authority for the maintenance of the French language. Still, in the twentieth century, authors such as Paul Claudel, François Mauriac, Anatole France, Marguerite Yourcenar, and Paul Valéry were among the prominent literary figures who were also members of the *Académie*. Increasingly, however, authors and their styles have

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The relationship between linguistic and literary norms historically has been one of divergence, rather than convergence. Literature is the artistic component of language. As art it is necessarily seen in a different light than is other language. And the goals of artists are not always compatible with those of rule-makers. In the early stages of language standardization, the survival and prosperity of French was a necessary component of authors' artistic ends – if they were to gain lasting notoriety, then the medium of their expression needed to be well-established. Similarly, prestige and standardization were desirable to creative authors, since both helped procure a wider audience to appreciate their works. But at the very period when French linguistic norms were turning reactionary and reverting to the past for examples – around the mid-eighteenth century – literary authors and audiences began placing greater importance on novelty as a judge of artistic value. Voltaire's example perhaps best illustrates this shift in value away from academic controls on aesthetics and toward novelty. His neo-classicist drama is comparable in quality to many of his seventeenth-century predecessors, but he was (and is today) well-known far more for his

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philosophical tales and letters than for his drama. The valorization of novelty in literature and individualism in art, along with the relatively secure position of French dominance, removed much of the common ground that literature and linguistic prescriptivism had once shared. The perceptions espoused and created in literary works have endured like the works themselves.

CHAPTER ONE: REGIONAL DIALECTS IN LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENNAISSANCE

French language historians traditionally refer to the *Serments de Strasbourg* (842) as the first document written in French. The *Serments* were a treaty dividing the Holy Roman Empire along linguistic lines – Germanic and Romance languages were to be on opposite sides of the disputed Lorraine region. The text – like many others from the ninth through the thirteenth century – has dialectal features. Critics rightly treat regional language in medieval texts from a technical linguistic standpoint, separating and explaining regional language elements distinct from the historical French dialect. Given that French was competing for dominance over other languages just as the French kingdom vied for supremacy over surrounding regions, medieval texts were written before most formal

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standardization of French. The common mixing of regional languages in medieval texts results from uncoded or competing norms combining with the pragmatic needs of the writers. Although medieval authors occasionally chose the language of their works for political reasons (e.g., Dante choosing to write in Italian in order to make an implicit statement about the prestige of the language), the use of multiple dialects within one text was not intended to carry an implicit message. The thirteenth century saw a gradual disappearance of regional features from official charters. In the late fourteenth century, there is royal support for the translation of documents from Latin into French. Formalized translation suggests that a perception of an existing standard French had emerged. Villon's fifteenth century poems in *argot* are perhaps the earliest examples of the purposeful use of non-standard French in a literary work. Villon's poems contrast not to a set of grammatical or lexical rules elaborated by grammarians, but to a norm defined by other poets of his time. Villon creates an ironic or humorous tone by writing in a literary style while intermingling slang terms. Since Villon when no known grammatical treatises had been written elaborating the rules and structure of French, his work in non-standard language is perhaps the most compelling evidence that a standard was

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Until French emerged as an uncontested prestige language, dialect juxtaposition for satirical or metaphorical purposes would be impossible. Implicit messages about non-standard language are possible only after the establishment of a standard. In French, the standardization begun by *littérateurs* in Villon's time takes a codified form in 1531 with *Isagoge in Linguam gallicam* by Jacques Dubois. DuBellay's *Defense et illustration de la langue françoise* (1549) supports the use of French in literary works. He sees French as a forum for creation following ancient examples. Although DuBellay's title indicates a language in need of defense, what DuBellay is really defending is the increasing use of French in literature, particularly by members of the *Pléiade* group of poets - a group whose priorities were the promotion and standardization of French.

From the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth century, the crown and the legal courts were debating over which language should be used during court proceedings. The Crown favored French and issued edicts accordingly. Documentation of royal reiterations of the rule shows that there was some resistance from the *parlements*. The

political struggle over the language in the courts is probably peripheral to the more central political issue - control of the legal system. In literature - probably a much stronger indicator than are court documents of linguistic trends among the literate - Latin was no longer the language of preference.

Rabelais' most famous gesture using language as a caricature is his portrayal of the *écolier limousin*. Much has been written about this scholar "qui contrefaisoit le langaige François [who deformed the French language] (Rabelais, 232). From the standpoint of linguistic portrayal, Rabelais uses a double-edged sword. The *écolier* is a member of the dogmatic scholastic establishment. His completely fabricated "learned" French - his penchant to *Pindariser* (use pompous words to imitate the style of the poet Pindar) - shows the corrupting influence of his Sorbonne education that has taught him much form but little substance. When Pantagruel threatens to skin him alive, the *écolier* betrays his unsophisticated (rural Limousin) roots by pleading for his life in his native dialect. The language of the *écolier* (and not much else) perfectly portrays him as a simplistic rural youth corrupted by the backward thinking educators at the Sorbonne. Rabelais' *écolier* simultaneously serves to mock an archaic norm and

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Rabelais' contemporary and friend Noël du Fail portrays country life in his *Propos rustiques* (1549) - a collection of short tales and descriptions of country life told by peasant narrators. Du Fail's other major works, *Les Baliverneries d'Eutrapel* and *Les Contes d'Eutrapel*, are stories that feature conflicting rural and urban social values. Du Fail portrays his peasant characters as intelligent and sometimes unrealistically educated. His rustic narrators are simple but not simplistic. Apart from an occasional interjection that may be associated with rural speech (Nenni!; Pardi!, etc.) Du Fail does not have his rural narrators speak in dialect.¹⁵ The portrayal of the peasants' language does not approach realism.

Du Fail does, however, attempt to imitate conversational style. Narrators often ornament their stories with self-referential asides. Parenthetical remarks such as "comme j'ay dit [as I said]," (60) "ce que j'ay expérimenté, [which I experienced]" (61) or "ce me semble [it seems to me]" (88) portray a narrator who wishes to add personal flavor to the story. These asides also paint rural speakers as frank and simple.

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Narrators' parenthetical asides more frequently resemble proverbs:

Messire jean, le feu Curé de nostre Paroisse, estant au haut bout [de la table] (car à tous seigneurs, tous honneurs), haulsant les orées de sa robe, [...] [Sire John, the late priest of our parish, being at the head [of the table] (for one should give honor where honor is due), holding up the edges of his robe [...]].” (55).

The insertion of proverbs - “rules to live by” - suggests the humble willingness of the peasant to live by these traditional rules. This conservatism would correspond to Du Fail's general ideological stance favoring an alliance between rural peasants and nobility against the burgeoning urban bourgeois classes, which he views as corrupt and unnatural.

Historians have studied Du Fail's works as documents describing peasant and country life in the sixteenth century (See Milin, 1970: 533-551). More recently literary critics have begun to treat Du Fail's work as more than a simple chronicle of everyday peasant life in Brittany. Du Fail's portrayal of peasant life provides a background for his “structuration [sémantique] qui aboutit à définir des modèles idéologiques et culturels d'une grande cohérence [semantic structure that ends up defining highly coherent ideological and cultural models].” (Milin, 1974: 65). Du Fail's country narrators primarily present a forum for the

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exposition of the country noble's ideology. They represent the positive pole of a dichotomy whose negative pole is the city and court (see Milin, 1974: 69-76). This dichotomy serves as a platform for Du Fail's criticism of the mores of the growing merchant classes asserting their increasing power in urban France during the sixteenth century. In his introduction to *Les Propos rustiques*, Du Fail (writing under the anagram "Ladulfi" - cf. François Rabelais writing as "Alcofribas Nasier") evokes the pastoral writings of Cicero and Virgil (44). An idealized country setting and strong nostalgia are important elements Du Fail borrows from these precursors. While maintaining a traditional vision of feudal hierarchy, Du Fail's pastoral ideal expresses a "solidarité économique (et géographique)" between country nobles and peasants "face aux bourgeois" (Milin, 1974: 87). Though Du Fail's exemplary province is Brittany, the city/country antagonism is generalizable:

La province (et les provinces étrangères lui sont assimilées) est, en effet à Paris ce que la campagne est à la ville. Le provincial représente la permanence du passé, le naturel, alors que le parisien, plus «évolué», a de ce fait perdu son caractère naturel, a «dégénéré» [The province (and the foreign provinces are assimilated) is indeed to Paris what the country is to the city. The provincial represents the permanence of the past, the natural whereas the Parisian, more 'evolved', has because of this lost his natural character, has 'degenerated']. (Milin, 1974: 99)

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Du Fail's pastoral functions not only as an exposition of the rustic country life of the Breton peasant and noble, it is also a platform for launching attacks against sectors of society that have abandoned the simplicity of provincial life.

Although regional differences – ethnic, linguistic, cultural – were still obvious in the sixteenth century, Parisian political hegemony (and the accompanying linguistic dominance) grew, leading to a Paris/non-Paris polarization that would eventually superimpose itself onto the perception of a multi-cultural, multi-lingual state.

Michel de Montaigne illustrates that perceptions of regional language in relation to an established norm were quite strong when he was writing his *Essais* published ca. 1572 to 1588:

Mon langage françois est altéré, et en la prononciation et ailleurs, par la barbarie de mon creu; je ne vis jamais homme des contrées de deça qui ne sentit bien evidemment son ramage et qui ne blessast les oreilles pures françoises. [...] Il y a bien au-dessus de nous, vers les montaignes, un Gascon que je treuve singulierement beau, sec, bref, signifiant, et à la vérité un langage masle et militaire plus qu'autre que j'entende; autant nerveux, puissant et pertinent, comme le François et gratieus, delicat, et abundant [My French language is altered in pronunciation and in other ways, by the barbarity of my region; I never saw a man from this side of the land who did not hardily show its cadence and hurt pure French ears. There is well above us, toward the mountains, a Gascon that I find singularly beautiful, dry, short, meaningful, and in truth a more virile and

military language than any other I understand; as sinewy, powerful and pertinent as French is gracious, delicate and abundant]. (Montaigne, 622)

Montaigne's comparison of the Gascon dialect to French lists several different types of assessment. The traits he mentions are esthetic (*beau, delicat, gratieus*) functional (*signifiant, abundant*) cultural (*masle, militaire*) and phonetic (*blessast les oreilles, sec, bref*). The reference to *oreilles pures françoises* marks his perception that a strong norm is in place. The pure language (or the pure ear) still belongs to a certain group of speakers and has not reached the mythical status that it does in the eighteenth century. Using regional language alongside the French norm is no longer accidental and tolerable. Montaigne expressed disbelief when Pasquier claimed to have found "*certain provincialismes*" in some of the *Essais*. Pasquier proceeded to show Montaigne specific examples from the *Essais* of "*plusieurs manières de parler familières non aux Français mais seulement aux Gascons [several ways of speaking familiar not to the French but only to Gascons]*" (note in Montaigne, p. 1591). Pasquier's reaction to Montaigne's *gasconismes* (the term that by the eighteenth century had become common for referring to errors in French) illustrates that French standardization had become sufficiently elaborate that readers could be offended by

"intrusions" from non-standard varieties. Montaigne's own views of the Gascon dialect, and his initial incredulity at Pasquier's claim, show that he strove to avoid such intrusions into his writing.

CHAPTER TWO: REGIONAL LANGUAGE AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

The seventeenth century marks the establishment of Parisian dominance over much of Europe. The borders of modern France changed little following the long reign of Louis XIV. As stated above, territorial gains - specifically support of Holland against Spain (1607), the annexation of territory in Gasconne (1663) and the annexation of Franche-Comté - were commonly linked to language. The seventeenth century also saw the establishment of the *Académie Française* (1635) and the first edition of its dictionary (1694). Following the *Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts* (1539) that declared that all judicial records in Provence be kept in French, similar documents emerged establishing French as the official language in other provinces - Pau (1620), Western Brittany (ca. 1640), West Flanders (1683), Alsace (1685) and Catalan-speaking Roussillon (1700). French also began replacing Latin in many international treaties - including the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668) between France and Spain, and the Treaty of

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Nijmegen (1678) between France and Holland. French was also declared the language of the church in 1629 for all documents not being sent to Rome (see Kibbee and Achard). Although these decrees did little to change the linguistic situation in the provinces – peasants and nobles alike continued to use the languages of their province in their everyday lives – they helped firmly establish Parisian French as the language of power and prestige.

Many canonical authors of the seventeenth century came to Paris from the Provinces as literary and linguistic standards became localized more than ever in the Parisian court.¹⁶ Much of the literary canon from this period consists of theater and poetry. Poetry and theater in verse form offered no plausible opportunities for the insertion of regional dialect, since the speakers in these works were usually mythological characters or heroes of antiquity – gods and superhuman heroes speak standard language as a rule. Many seventeenth-century French plays were translations or adaptations of earlier classical Spanish or Italian theater (e.g. Corneille's *Le Cid*, Molière's *Dom Juan*). Dramatists also commonly inserted verse and borrowed words from other European languages. From the standpoint of linguistic and cultural exchange seventeenth-century French theater is

perhaps the richest of any period in the history of French literature.

But the language contact in this literature happens primarily between prestige varieties. Italian embodied artistic sophistication because it represented the beginning of the Renaissance that eventually spread to France. Regional varieties became the target of increasing ridicule and their speakers were portrayed as unworldly bunglers. This portrayal prevailed in the letters of Madame de Sévigné during her visits to Provence and Brittany. She often writes of the unrefined provincial ways of her acquaintances in these provinces. She complains of the poor speech of her hosts and deforms their names in a manner that can be interpreted as ethnocentric disregard at best, mockery at worst (see Duchêne for a full account).

Molière's plays offer several glimpses of the Parisian perception of provincial language and speakers. To ensure his position as the favored court poet, Molière's plays needed tacitly to favor royal policy of centralization. One form of such implicit support is recurring ridicule of the provinces and their inhabitants in a number of his more popular plays. Instead of being written in verse form, most of Molière's comedies attempt to recreate spoken dialogue. Molière was Parisian by birth and grew up close to the Court

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- his father was the *tapissier du Roi*. Because Molière was Parisian and wrote his greatest successes for the Court, his caricatures are a good measure of the status of provincial language and speakers during the time he wrote (≈1646-1673).

Molière first extensively uses language style to satirize in *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659). Molière pokes fun at *la préciosité* - a trend in court society defined by flamboyant and clever language. *Préciosité* had nearly died out by the time Molière's play was presented. Its status as *passé* made it an easy target for satire and caricature. Molière exploits *preciosité's* preoccupation with *how* things are said without regard to *what* is said. He is also keenly aware of the social propriety of *préciosité*. The formality of *préciosité* - its focus on finding abstract or obscure ways of expressing simple notions - is contrasted with the unsophisticated language of servants, who can only see language as a direct expression of the concrete. (see Molière, 1: 201)

There is evidence in other plays by Molière that the social distinction between upper and lower class was beginning to fuse with geographical distinctions. The centralization of power in Paris and the gravitation of the nobility to the court had begun to contribute to a geographical conception of social position. Membership in

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upper classes resulted as much from *where* as from *whom* one came. Molière's first lengthy portrayal of rural language comes in *Dom Juan* (Molière 1: 726-742). Three peasant characters play a role in one of the title character's amorous conquests. Pierrot is betrothed to Charlotte, who in turn is seduced by Dom Juan. Later in the scene we learn that Charlotte is the second of two peasant women fallen prey to Dom Juan. The first victim, Mathurine, arrives on the scene in time to quarrel with Charlotte over who will marry Dom Juan. The function of the scene in the play is to show Dom Juan's ruthless character. He does not hesitate to prey on even the most innocent and vulnerable sectors of society – poor peasant women who could only dream of marrying a noble. Because *Dom Juan* is set in Sicily, the rural peasants speak with a "peasant" dialect that does not identify the speakers with any specific region. Rather, the dialect Molière most closely imitates is that of the rural area surrounding Paris (note in Molière, p.928) – the peasant speech with which his Court audience would be most likely to recognize as rural. The phonetic and grammatical traits of Molière's peasant dialect are fairly regular.¹³ Significantly, Charlotte's register changes when addressing the nobleman. She uses the dialect forms "avenc" and "bian" when addressing Pierrot but the standard forms

"avec" and "bien" while speaking to Dom Juan (see Dauzat). This switch shows that Molière understood how addressee influences register choice.

Molière's peasants embody simplicity, and their occasional mispronunciations (e.g., Marotte's *filofie* in *Les Précieuses ridicules*, or Alain's *strodagème* for *stratagème* in *L'école des femmes* [Molière 1: 416]) or misuse (e.g., Lucas in *Le Médecin malgré lui* saying *défiguré* instead of *dépeint* or *figuré*, either of which would have fit his meaning) give them the air of harmless buffoons who would never knowingly, but quite often unknowingly do wrong.

Molière's provincial buffoons are not always peasants. Wealthy or titled provincials are often central figures in Molière's comedies. The title character in *George Dandin* is a wealthy provincial who has married into a noble family. His rural roots make him the target of a more sophisticated Parisian noble family – the Sottenvilles. The family name "Sot-en-ville", which translates roughly to "fools in the city", reinforces the urban/rural polarity that lends comic tension to the play. Like the servants in *Les Précieuses ridicules*, Dandin is too unsophisticated to grasp the importance of form over substance. Dandin's inability to grasp the formalities of language is highlighted in his discussions with noble in-laws (see Molière 2: 194-195). A

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similar illustration of this rural/urban linguistic dichotomy takes place between the protagonist (Clitandre) and his valet (Molière, 2: 198). The opposition central to *George Dandin* constitutes a fusion of rural/urban and noble/peasant dichotomies. Language perceptions – understanding the implicit rules of language that identify people from different social groups – play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of this central opposition. Molière brings this opposition clearly to the foreground a year later in the comedy-ballet *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*.

The characters Pourceaugnac and Dandin have many similarities. Both come from the provinces. Pourceaugnac is from the Limousin, though the ending of his name has a Gascon ring. Dandin's province is unknown. Both characters in the original performances wore costumes representing provincial tastelessness (note in Molière 2, pp 891, 899).¹⁸ Both provincials are identified with the legal profession (see note in Molière 2, p. 891).¹⁹ As legal professionals both characters possess the same fatal flaw: they both have ambitions to rise on the social scale from noblesse de robe to noblesse d'épée. Dandin's ambition is crushed only after he has married into a noble family – he is controlled and ridiculed by his wife and in-laws who afford him the same

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social status as before the marriage. Pourceaugnac tries to marry into a noble family and *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* is the story of his orchestrated failure.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, much more overtly than *George Dandin*, exploits the rural/urban social polarity for comic effect. The particle (*de*) in Pourceaugnac's name makes him nominally part of the nobility. Since he comes to the city seemingly for the first time, he doesn't have the experience and resultant cynicism that Dandin demonstrates from his opening monologue. Pourceaugnac's pride is intact and he is outraged and confused by the urbanites' mockery as he enters the city (and the play):

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Hé bien, quoi? qu'est-ce? qu'y a-t-il? Au diantre soit la sottie ville, et les sottes gens qui y sont! ne pouvoir faire un pas sans trouver des nigauds qui vous regardent et se mettent à rire! Eh! Messieurs les badauds, faites vos affaires, et laissez passer les personnes sans leur rire au nez. Je me donne au diable si je ne baille un coup au premier que je verrai rire.

[MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Well what? What is it? What is happening? To the devil with the stupid city, and the stupid people that are there! to not be able to take a step without finding fools that look at you and start laughing! Hey idle gawkers, go about your business and let people pass without laughing in their faces. To the devil with me if I don't smack the first one I see laughing.] (Molière 2: 327-328)

Pourceaugnac does not understand the laughter because he fails to realize that his mission to hide his *noblesse de robe* origins – which he continues throughout the play – is a

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visible failure. For the noble audience that watches *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* in 1669, laughs come from the title character's inability to comply with the court's unwritten codes of fashion. He brags about his outlandish costume which he "[a] voulu mettre à la mode de la cour, " [wished to be in fashion with the Court] and is even convinced, "qu'il fera du bruit ici" [that it will turn some heads here] (Molière 2: 331). The visual evidence that Pourceaugnac believes his clothes are in fashion combines with his rural and robe roots to make him the perfect dupe for the cruel tricks the city dwellers Sbrigani, Nérine and Lucette will play on him in the name of Julie and Eraste – the courtisan lovers.

Pourceaugnac must eventually succumb to the machinations of the intriguers because he represents an obstacle to the true love of Julie and Eraste. His *noblesse d'épée* pretensions, however, are not his greatest crime against Parisian court society. In her speech introducing the conflict, Nérine articulates Pourceaugnac's greatest transgression:

NERINE [s'adressant à Julie]: Assurément. Votre père se moque-t-il de vouloir vous anger de son avocat de Limoges, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, qu'il n'a vu de sa vie, et qu'il vient par la cloche vous enlever à notre barbe? Faut-il que trois ou quatre mille écus de plus, sur la parole de votre oncle, lui fassent rejeter un amant qui vous agréé? et une personne comme vous est-elle faite

pour un Limosin? S'il a envie de se marier, que ne prend-il pas une Limosine et ne laisse-t-il en repos les chrétiens? Le seul nom de Monsieur de Pourceaugnac m'a mis dans une colère effroyable. J'enrage de Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. Quand il n'y auroit que ce nom-là, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, j'y brûlerai mes livres, ou je romprai ce mariage, et vous ne serez point Madame de Pourceaugnac. Pourceaugnac! cela se peut-il se souffrir? Non, Pourceaugnac est une chose que je ne saurois supporter; et nous lui jouerons tant de pièces, nous lui ferons tant de niches sur niches, que nous renverrons à Limoges Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

NERINE [addressing Julie]: Certainly. Your father joking when he says he wants to stick you with his lawyer from Limoges, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, that he has never seen, and so he comes (what's more) to take you away and irritate us. Is it necessary that for three or four thousand more shillings, on the word of your uncle, he rejects a lover that pleases you? and is a person like you made for a Limousin? If he wants to get married, why not take a Limousin woman and leave us Christians alone? The name Monsieur de Pourceaugnac alone made me horribly angry. I am in a rage because of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. When there would be only that name left, I would abandon everything or I would break up this marriage, and you not ever be Madame de Pourceaugnac. Pourceaugnac! Is that bearable? Non, Pourceaugnac is a thing that I could not stand; and we will put on so many acts for him, we will play so many tricks upon tricks on him, that we will send Monsieur de Pourceaugnac back to Limoges.] (Molière 2: 325)

Nérine's anger at the name "Pourceaugnac" verges on racism.

She refers in passing to Julie's love interest, but her primary motivation seems to be banishing an unwanted outsider with a provincial-sounding name. As if to de-emphasize the importance of true love's triumph, Julie

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refuses to promise Eraste her devotion in case the plan to eliminate Pourceaugnac fails (Molière 2: 327).

Pourceaugnac's adversaries seem to have more than one plan to expel him from the city, and the plans are often as excessively violent as Nérine's sentiments above. In the first act, Sbrigani and Eraste put Pourceaugnac in the hands of doctors – a fate tantamount to death as Molière makes one of his many assaults on a medical profession he abhors. At the start of his medical consultation Pourceaugnac believes he is making plans for the upcoming wedding banquet, but by the end he is about to be subjected to bleeding and purging for "mélancolie hypocondriaque" (Molière 2: 342). The scene ends with a ballet in which doctors dance and sing a song that tries to convince Pourceaugnac to take his medicine. In a nightmarish end to the act, Pourceaugnac exits as all the dancers follow him "tous une syringue à la main" [Each with a syringe in his hand] (Molière 2: 347). The next time Pourceaugnac is seen he explains to Sbrigani how he barely escaped the mad doctors (Molière 2: 353).

The next trick played on Pourceaugnac includes two women pretending to be wives he had abandoned and to come from Gasconne and Picardy. This play within a play, acted out by Lucette (*feinte gasconne* or "fake Gascon woman") and Nérine (as the abandoned Picard wife) in front of Julie's

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father Oronte, includes long passages in the two regional dialects. In his notes on *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, Jouanny points out that opinions are divided on the authenticity of Molière's dialects:

Le languedocien de Lucette, native de Pézenas (Languedoc) est très gasconnisé. Certains critiques, tel Jules Claretie, se sont extasiés sur la science linguistique de Molière, et sur sa conscience au travail, comme s'il s'était penché sur des livres d'études. D'autres ont jugé ce patois des plus approximatifs. La syntaxe y est française, et aussi – ce qui est plus grave pour les partisans de la compétence philologique de Molière – les injures, pierre de touche d'un dialecte. Lucette débite toutes les tirades avec brio, ne détachant que des mots jalons qui, proches du français, sont intelligibles aux spectateurs. Le reste du cliquetis crée simplement l'exotisme voulu. Même remarque pour le pseudo-picard de Nérine [The Occitan of Lucette, native of Pézenas (Languedoc) is very gasconized. Certain critics such as Jules Claretie, have glowed over the linguistic exactness of Molière, and over his conscious work, as if he had labored over reference books. Others have judged this patois as most approximative. The syntax is French, and also – a more serious charge against Molière's philological competence – the insults, which are the touchstone of a dialect. Lucette delivers all the tirades with verve, making only certain guiding words stand out, close to French, are intelligible to the spectators. The rest of the noise simply creates the desired exoticism. The same remark holds for the pseudo-picard of Nérine]. (Note in Molière 2, p. 903)

The accuracy of the *patois* (or *pseudo-patois*) passages is moot. The two *patois*-speaking characters are acting for the other onlooking characters. Just as these characters need Pourceaugnac and Oronte to understand their tirades,

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Molière needed at least the general sense of what Lucette and Nérine say to be comprehensible to the court audience. The experienced dramatist knew his audience well and could carefully mold these passages to prevent them from interrupting the flow of the scene. Significantly, the two characters communicate with each other in their own respective dialect. In their exchange do they, like the audience, rely on "mots jalons" to communicate? All participants in the play – the speakers, the characters looking on, and the spectators – grasp the meaning of their exchange. Rather than separate languages the two *patois* represent broken French where the "reste du cliquetis" [the rest of the noise] – the main body of the peasants' statements – are noise to lend *exotisme* to the play, and realism to the play within the play. Oronte can easily believe the scenario if he views provincials as a somewhat homogeneous group. The accused polygamist and the two women come from three distinct provinces that are far apart from each other, yet Oronte does not question the likelihood of Pourceaugnac marrying and fathering children with both women or of all three somehow meeting in the city.

For Pourceaugnac misfortunes come from the city. Just as Oronte believes the scandal played out for him because it takes place between provincials, Pourceaugnac again

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attributes his plight to urban surroundings: "Ah! je suis assommé. Quelle peine! Quelle maudite ville! Assassiné de tous côtés [...] Il pleut en ce pays des femmes et des lavements. [What agony! What a cursed city! Attacked from all sides [...]] It is raining women and enemas in this country]" The backward yokel superstitiously compares his bad luck with poor weather while the master deceiver Sbrigani hopes the planned continuous misfortune will fatigue "notre provincial" (Molière 2: 362). The possessive adjective makes the court audience co-conspirator with Sbrigani.

The complicity between audience and Sbrigani continues as he and Pourceaugnac discuss the legal issues raised by accusations of polygamy. Pourceaugnac reveals his legal training, and therefore his non-noble origins, by sprinkling his speech with generous portions of courtroom jargon. Sbrigani recognizes the jargon and tries to trap Pourceaugnac into admitting the questionable origins of his nobility:

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Oui; mais quand il y auroit information, ajournement, décret, et jugement obtenu par surprise, défaut et contumace, j'ai la voie de conflit de juridiction, pour temporiser, et venir aux moyens de nullité qui seront dans les procédures.
SBRIGANI: Voilà en parler dans tous les termes, et l'on voit bien, Monsieur, que vous êtes du métier.

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MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Moi, point du tout: Je suis gentilhomme.

SBRIGANI: Il faut bien pour parler ainsi, que vous ayez étudié la pratique.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Point: ce n'est que le sens commun qui me fait juger que je serai toujours reçu à mes faits justificatifs, et qu'on ne me sauroit condamner sur une simple accusation, sans un récolement et confrontation avec mes parties.

SBRIGANI: En voilà du plus fin encore.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Ces mots-là me viennent sans que je les sache.

[MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Yes; but when there would be information, adjournment, decree, and judgment obtained by surprise, fault and default, I have the recourse of conflicting of jurisdictions, in order to create delays, and to reach the means of annulment which will be in the procedures.

SBRIGANI: Now that's talking all the jargon, and it can easily be seen, sir, that you are a man of the craft.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: No not me: I am a gentleman.

SBRIGANI: You must have studied the law to be able to speak this way

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Not at all: It is but common sense that makes me judge that I succeed in my justificative facts, and that they will not be able to condemn me on a mere accusation, without a restatement and confrontation with my adversaries.

SBRIGANI: Now there is some even nicer talk.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Those words come to me without me knowing them.] (Molière 2: 362-363)

The technical terms of the profession are so natural to Pourceaugnac that he uses them contrary to his own will. Wishing to hide his true roots he would avoid using them, but he possesses none of the brilliance of the true aristocracy – "ses lumières sont fort petites, et son sens le plus borné du monde," Sbrigani remarks (Molière 2: 365) –

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and therefore none of its mastery of language. He cannot avoid linguistic self-incrimination and finally (and comically) resorts to consulting other lawyers only to prove to Sbrigani that he is a true aristocrat. The caricature that Pourceaugnac represents for Parisian court society combines the social and the geographical. The increasing centrality of the Paris court leads to the merging of regional stereotypes – backward, naive, witless, linguistically deficient – and social stereotypes of lower class individuals aspiring to climb above their station – transparent, self-important and (linguistically) unsophisticated.

Like the first act, the second act ends with a ballet and song. This time the dancers and singers are lawyers instead of doctors. The lawyers give Pourceaugnac little comfort as they repeat to him that polygamy is a hanging offense. The scene closes with Pourceaugnac pursued by Sergeants and Procurers.

The third act has Pourceaugnac barely fleeing the city (and his execution) dressed as a woman. Though his beard gives him away easily, the disguise fools two dialect-speaking Swiss men. They are attracted to the bearded woman and invite her to watch the hanging with them. Though

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Pourceaugnac-femme politely refuses, the ill-bred Swiss move quickly to more lewd suggestions:

PREMIER SUISSE: Mon foy! Moi couchair pien avec fous.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Ah! C'en est trop, et ces sortes d'ordures-là ne se disent point à une femme de ma condition.

SECOND SUISSE: Laisse, toy; l'est moy qui le veut couchair avec elle.

PREMIER SUISSE: Moy ne vouloir pas laisser.

SECOND SUISSE: Moy ly vouloir, moy.

[FIRST SWISS: My word! Me shleeping quite with tchou.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC: Ah! That's too much, and you don't say that kind of filth to a woman of my status.

SECOND SWISS: Leave, you; is me that wants it shleeping with her.

FIRST SWISS: Me no wanting leaving.

SECOND SWISS: Me wanting to her, me.]

With this scene, Molière takes one final swipe at provincial bunglers. He does not hesitate to place explicit language in the mouths of these vulgar hayseeds – language that would certainly be considered unacceptable if spoken by Courtisans in proper French. The two begin to grapple with Pourceaugnac and force him to call for help. The constable who comes and shoos the Swiss men away is Parisian and therefore not fooled by the disguise. He immediately recognizes Pourceaugnac and must be bribed not to take him to jail. Pourceaugnac leaves the play as he entered it: he hates the city and thinks Sbrigani, who actually designed all of the Limousin's misfortunes, is "le seul honnête homme

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que j'ai trouvé en cette ville" [the only honest man that I found in this city] (Molière 2: 371).

Much of Molière's comedy exploits social stereotypes for comic effect. Pourceaugnac is an amalgam of several stereotypes. He represents the *noblesse de robe* whose pretensions toward membership in the cultural elite are shunned in the Court. His pretensions are accompanied by the naïvete of the uninitiated. Unlike Dandin, who knows all too well that he is being tricked, Pourceaugnac knows nothing of the plan to scare him away from the city, but rather naively perceives himself as the victim of a corrupt urban environment.

More than any of Molière's comedies, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* ties language to the socially and geographically defined dichotomies it exploits. The portrayal of several different simulated regional languages emphasizes the centrality of Court usage by creating the image that these regional varieties are merely poorly pronounced simplistic forms of French. Real speakers of regional French (e.g., the two *Suisses*) are so mentally deficient that they do not perceive obvious details in their surroundings. Pourceaugnac's own French illustrates his control of the language – he is well-educated after all – but also his inability to grasp the aspects of social

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identity attached to language use. He talks and dresses with equal ingenuousness, using gaudily colored clothing and words that hit comically far above the target.

Pourceaugnac's (and Dandin's) legal profession gives his provinciality and social status an added layer of significance. The Crown's linguistic policy and debate about language from the fifteenth through the seventeenth century consists mostly of decrees concerning provincial courts of law. Provincial law courts were slow to respond to royal edicts outlawing the use of Latin in legal procedures. Later decrees aim at the elimination of all languages but French from legal processes. The ongoing battle between the provinces and Paris for supremacy in the courts must have resonated with the courtisan audience as a backdrop to the provincial/Paris tension around which the play centers. The centrality of dialect and language perception in the play must have drawn force from the linguistic nature of the courtroom disputes during this period. *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* was written and performed for the first time during one of the King's (and thus the Court's) hunting trips in Chambord - a rural setting whose immediacy in the minds of the King and Court must have played a role in Molière's decision to choose this subject matter.

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Several of Molière's comedies offer short displays of the popular court perception of provincial or rural stereotypes. Longer examples (such as Dandin and Pourceaugnac) show how regional/provincial/rural distinctions had begun to be interwoven with social and professional status by the end of the seventeenth century. This trend can also be seen in the literary form that began to predominate as the eighteenth century approached – the novel.

CHAPTER THREE: THE RISE OF THE NOVEL, THE RURAL/URBAN DICHOTOMY AND LANGUAGE IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

In linguistic policy, the eighteenth century generally continued the trends of the seventeenth. Occasionally, decrees emerge (or re-emerge) indicating the ineffectiveness of language policies in actual practice. The ordonnance of 1700 establishing French as the official language in Roussillon was reaffirmed in 1753. A royal intendant in Alsace complains in 1701 that French is barely used in the courts despite royal decrees 30 years earlier. On October 21, 1737, Louis XV, frustrated at the seeming inability of Alsatians to learn French, orders that they all learn German. A decree by Stanislaus of Poland that all communication in the German-speaking communities of Lorraine

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will go equally unheeded, as will another decree in 1786 demanding that all public records in Alsace be written in French. On the educational front, in 1729 plans are submitted for French to be a subject of study in the *collèges*. In 1740, the *Académie* elicits spelling reforms from the grammarian Thoulhier d'Olivet – the first in a series of belated, ineffectual attempts to make orthography approximate pronunciation.

William Ray (1994) sees Marivaux's *La Vie de Marianne* and *Le Paysan parvenu* as belonging to a tradition in which protagonists are constantly re-writing their personal narrative to fit into a more general social narrative. These two novels are both unfinished works written around the same time.²⁰ The title characters, "rather than creating a fictional identity for themselves [...] engineer their metamorphoses by repeatedly narrating their actual experience, but they subtly alter and embellish it as their self-image evolves and they become more firmly integrated into the shared narrative" (Ray, 105). As the term "metamorphosis" suggests, the protagonists in both novels undergo a transformation. The metamorphosis of both protagonists entails movement from a lower social class toward entry and acceptance into a higher one.

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Le Paysan parvenu much more so than *La Vie de Marianne* presents moving "up" socially as – initially at least – a geographical movement. The first movement in the novel is from the hero's father's home in Champagne to his master's Parisian house. Marianne's acceptance into the aristocracy is dependent on her behaving like the aristocrat she claims possibly being – her parentage is uncertain. In *Le Paysan parvenu* the title character Jacob's origins are known and his narrative presents itself as a potentially instructive account of how he entered into a richer social class than his peasant upbringing would have foretold. *Le paysan parvenu* therefore portrays rural/urban differences central to this study of the perception of dialects in literature.

Perhaps the largest obstacle for Jacob in creating his new identity is language. One of the first things we learn about the young Jacob is that he does not know how to write when he arrives in Paris. His first amorous conquest begins when he goes to Geneviève to ask her to write a letter for him (Marivaux, 30). When she gives him money, his first plans are to spend it on learning to write (38-39). Madame de Ferval (his first mistress after marrying) begins flirting with him in an office where they have gone so she can write a letter for him. While Madame de Ferval confesses her attraction to him and compliments him on

looking like a sophisticated city man, the two are engaged in trying to sharpen a feather pen so she can write him a letter. As their conversation moves more overtly toward their feelings for each other, Jacob takes over the pen-sharpening, which becomes a device for prolonging the interview:

Pendant qu'elle parlait, j'essayais la plume qu j'avais taillé; elle n'allait pas à ma fantaisie, et j'y retouchais pour allonger un entretien qui m'amusait beacoup, et dont je voulais voir la fin [While she spoke, I tried the quill that I had sharpened; it was not working exactly as I wanted, and I made adjustments in order to lengthen an interview that amused me greatly, and of which I wished to see the outcome]. (Marivaux, 132)

It is at the moment that Jacob begins to reveal his more than friendly feelings for Madame de Ferval that the pen is finished. The pen becomes a metaphor for the gamble Jacob takes by revealing his feelings. After several exchanges that hinted towards the beginning of a romance, Jacob prefaces his first revealing statement: "Cependant je ne savais plus que faire de cette plume, il était temps de l'avoir rendue bonne ou de la laisser là" [However, I did not know what to do with that quill anymore, it was time to have made it good, or leave it alone] (Marivaux, 132). The two continue to intermingle writing and their nascent love affair. She writes a letter for him as they continue their conversation about love. She asks him if he writes legibly,

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creating a pretext for their next meeting – he is to come to her appartement to copy some documents for her. Finally, amorous intentions and writing are fused as the two part ways:

[...] dès que vous serez marié, venez m'en informer ici où je demeure; mon nom est au bas du billet que j'ai écrit; mais ne venez que le soir, je vous donnerai ces papiers que vous copierez, et nous causerons sur les moyens de vous rendre service dans la suite. Allez mon cher enfant, soyez sage, j'ai de bonnes intentions pour vous, dit-elle d'un ton plus bas avec douceur, et en me tendant la lettre d'une façon qui voulait dire: je vous tends la main aussi; du moins je le compris de même, de sorte qu'en recevant le billet, je baisais cette main qui paraissait se présenter [...] [as soon as you are married, come and inform me of it here where I live; my name is at the bottom of the letter that I wrote; but come only in the evening, I will give you those papers that you will copy, and we will discuss ways to help you afterward. Now be careful my dear child, I have good intentions toward you, she said in a lower sweeter tone, and by holding the letter out to me in a way that meant: I am holding out my hand to you as well; at least I understood it that way, so that while receiving the letter, I kissed that hand that seemed to present itself[...]] (Marivaux, 134)

The two elements that allow Jacob social mobility – the attraction of rich older women, and the written word – are encountered simultaneously. At their next meeting, the act of writing becomes synonymous with the sexual act, as Jacob asks Madame de Ferval about the security of their secret

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meeting place in a distant neighborhood: "Eh! dites-moi, ma bonne et chère dame, il n'y aura donc point, comme ici, de femme de chambre qui nous écoute, et qui m'empêche d'avoir les papiers [à copier]? [Hey! tell me, my good and dear lady, so there will not at all be, like here, any chambermaid who listens to us and prevents me from having the papers [to copy]?] (Marivaux, 166). Learning to write and the act of writing are priorities in Jacob's social climb. He understands the status that goes with an understanding of the written language. Of course, even without references linking writing to the mistresses that promote his social ascendancy, the story of Jacob's transformation must on some level be the story of his learning to write, since the narrated protagonist does not know how to write at the beginning of the story, and the narrating protagonist obviously does. In the carriage on his way to Versailles to meet with a potential benefactor, Jacob overhears his first lesson in writing style (Marivaux, 184-187).²¹

While immediately understanding the practical utility of learning to write, Jacob also sees it as important for Parisian perceptions of his mastery of the language. After getting his fine new clothes and making a trip to

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Versailles, Jacob adds another luxurious layer to his new appearance:

Sur les trois heures après-midi, vêpres sonnerent; ma femme y alla pendant que je lisais je ne sais quel livre que je n'entendais pas trop, que je ne me souciais pas trop d'entendre, et auquel je ne m'amusais que pour imiter la contenance d'un honnête homme chez soi [At three in the afternoon, vespers sounded; my wife went there while I read a book — i know not which one — that I did not much understand, that I did not much care to understand, and that pleased me only by allowing me to imitate the countenance of an upstanding man at home]. (Marivaux, 226-227)

Educated people read, so to seem educated is to seem to read. But Jacob's linguistic adjustment is not confined to his ability to write or the appearance of reading. As we saw above, he was quite able to use to his advantage the social perception that country folk are naive. Jacob could be seen as a manipulator of language possessing great skill in using language to convey a desired image. Adams holds this view:

Whether he is dealing with men or women, Jacob's acute antennal responses guide him also in his use of a style of speech which will project the image of himself which he judges the most appropriate to any particular occasion. (Adams, 380)

Adams continues by citing a series of instances where Jacob uses rustic-style language and then another series where he makes a "no less deliberate decision to speak correctly and without affectation" (Adams 380). There is, however, an

important difference between the two types of episodes that Adams mentions. Jacob's use of his own country-style speech is unforced – he simply makes no effort to suppress his natural speech. This effortless choice differs from his attitude when he chooses to speak Parisian French:

Jusqu'ici donc mes discours avaient toujours eu une petite tournure champêtre; mais il y avait plus d'un mois que je m'en corrigeais assez bien, quand je voulais y prendre garde [...] Il est certain que je parlais meilleur français quand je voulais. J'avais déjà acquis assez d'usage pour cela, et je crus devoir m'appliquer à parler mieux qu'à l'ordinaire. [So, until now my speech had always had slight country ring to it; but I had been able to correct myself quite well for more than a month, when I wanted to be on guard [...]] It is certain that I spoke better French when I wanted. I had already acquired enough experience for that, and I believed it necessary to apply myself to speaking better than ordinarily (Marivaux, 90)

Je m'observai un peu sur le langage, soit dit en passant. [We'll just mention in passing that I kept an eye on my language] (Marivaux, 123)

Comme je n'étais pas là avec des madames d'Alain [femmes de basse classe], ni avec des femmes qui m'aimassent, je m'observai beaucoup sur mon langage, et tâchai de ne rien dire qui sentît le fils du fermier de campagne; de sorte que je parlais sobrement [...] [Since I wasn't there with Madames d'Alain [women of a lower class], nor with women who may have loved me, I paid close attention to my language, and tried to say nothing that would sound like the son of the country farmer; so that I spoke soberly [...]] (Marivaux, 177)

[Se parlant] Il faut prendre garde à vous,
monsieur de la Vallée, et tâcher de parler bon
français [...] que votre entretien réponde à votre
figure, qui est passable [[speaking to himself]
Watch yourself, Monsieur de la Vallée, and try to
speak good French [...] so that your conversation
corresponds to your face, which is passable]
(Marivaux, 236)

None of these passages portray Jacob as someone who slips easily between the prestige variety and his own. Careful self-observation and "trying" characterize Jacob's use of more refined language. Significantly, all the episodes where Jacob consciously uses his rural French precede those where he tries to maintain a more cultivated French. Rather than a simple binary choice between two language styles depending on situation, the presentation of the protagonist's choice of speech style suggests an evolution from one language style toward another. This evolution is necessitated by Jacob's will to ascend in the Parisian hierarchy. At only one moment does Jacob completely forget himself and speak using his rural "expressions naïves." When he is wrongfully jailed for murder and in his excitement he explains his misfortune to the investigating officers who "furent obligés de se passer la main sur la figure pour cachaient qu'ils souriaient [had to put their hand on their face to hide that they were smiling]" (Marivaux, 147).

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This section has shown *Le Paysan parvenu* as a fictional account of the infiltration of Parisian society by a rural peasant. We have agreed with William Ray's assessment that much of Jacob's success is grounded in his ability to understand his audience and integrate his own narrative into the collective social narrative – in short, he has the exceptional ability to mold his story to make it acceptable in the framework he desires. But more than simply integrating himself into this new society, Jacob must to some extent reject his prior culture, or at least devalue it. He rejects the visual traits that identified him with his rural roots. He devalues the language of his old culture and hides his rural upbringing because both would stigmatize him socially. His story supports the notion that learning a new culture and a new language often entail the rejection of native language and culture. For a peasant coming to Paris in the eighteenth century and hoping to succeed, the task at hand was tantamount to a change of culture and a change of language, and so it was for Jacob to become *Le Paysan parvenu* who narrates him.

CHAPTER FOUR: LITERATURE AND REGIONAL LANGUAGE AFTER THE GREAT REVOLUTION

On January 14, 1790, the revolutionary government issued its first linguistic decree: "Le pouvoir exécutif sera chargé de faire traduire les décrets de l'Assemblée dans les différens idiomes et de les faire parvenir ainsi traduits aux différentes provinces du Royaume [the executive power shall be charged with getting the decrees of the Assembly translated into the different languages and to send them thus translated to the different provinces of the Kingdom]" (Kibbee, 5). This decree shows the multilingualism that thrived in France, as does the distribution seven months later of the Abbé Grégoire's questionnaire.¹⁴ Responding to the question "Why is French the international language," Rivarol's *L'Universalité de la langue française* (1783) valorizes the role of French in Europe. But for Rivarol the "Universality" of French derives from its suitability to all intellectual pursuits. It does not mean that French is spoken universally. After Grégoire received responses to his questionnaire – the first dialectological survey in France – he understood that French is anything but universal in this latter sense. When he spoke to the Convention about the "Nécessité [...] d'anéantir les patois [Necessity of wiping out dialects]"

(Gazier, 290), Grégoire started his address with a series of direct quotes from Rivarol (though he wisely chose not to credit the passionate defender of the monarchy) to illustrate the intrinsic superiority of French, and then asked the paradoxical question:

"[...] cet idiome, admis dans les transactions politiques, usité dans plusieurs villes d'Allemagne, d'Italie, des Pays Bas, dans une partie du pays de Liège, du Luxembourg, de la Suisse, même dans le Canada et sur les bords du Mississippi, par quelle fatalité est-il encore ignoré d'une très- grande partie des Français? [This language, admitted in political transactions, used in several cities in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, in part of the countries of Liège, Luxembourg, Switzerland, even in Canada and along the shores of the Mississippi, by what twist of fate is it still unknown to a very large proportion of the French?] (Gazier, 291).

In fact, Rivarol's (and by extension the *ancien régime's*) notion of French as the language of perfect expression was not disputed by the revolutionary governments. Rather, it was incorporated into the republican ideology of the Revolution, whose egalitarian doctrine, rather than condemning the elitist linguistic views of the Court, wished to universalize them. The dissolution of the *Académie Française* on July 18, 1793 was a reaction to the old regime, not to any perceived linguistic tyranny.¹⁵ French during the Revolution would no longer be enforced simply as an administrative and judicial language. It was promoted as the primary tool of citizenship, and linguistic unity was

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made a primary goal. The most important linguistic reforms came about in education. French was the mandatory language in the newly-created state-supported primary education (October 21, 1793). A similar decree was made two years later in October, 1795. The series of debates over the French-only policy in schools that caused the second decree attests not only to the strong resistance to the policy, but also to the resolve of the Committee on Public Instruction to see the law applied.¹⁶ The major outcome of the debates about language instruction and policy during the revolution was the centralization of the educational system and the general acceptance that French would be the language of education in France. The linguistic results of these policies – the eventual marginalization of all languages besides French – would be slow in coming. In 1794 Grégoire reported that only three million (or about 10-12%) of the French population spoke French as a first language. That figure would increase only gradually over the next 100 years.

Little linguistic policy was debated in the Assemblée in the years following the fall of Napoleon (Kibbee 5-6). It seems the debate over what was to be the language of France had been settled in the legal and legislative arenas. The French-only policies established under the revolutionary

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and Napoleonic governments were not challenged under the Restoration.¹⁷ Except for the "Loi Guizot" – a general reformation of the education system that specifies French again as the language of instruction – and three court rulings concerning translation of documents and language use in the French courts, no new linguistic legislation was introduced between December, 1812 and March, 1850. During this period, however, the movement toward universalization of French and marginalization of regional languages was gaining momentum. One rather visible example of this movement is Brittany. As a regional language bearing none of the resemblance to French found in Romance dialects, Breton was an easy target and government officials devised strategies for its eradication. Strategies were employed to impoverish Breton and force communication in French: students were punished for speaking Breton in schools, public posting in Breton was discouraged, French was the required language of business transactions, clergy performed communion in French rather than Breton, and Breton was eliminated from the goals of the educational system (see Kibbee 7-8). Breton speakers reacted to these strategies by the creation of organizations for preserving and creating in the Breton language and culture.¹⁸

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Similarly, a literary movement arose in the latter half of the nineteenth century for the revitalization and preservation of Provençal – most notable in this movement are Théodore Aubanel (1829-1886), Joseph Roumanille (1818-1891) and Frédéric Mistral (1830-1914). Mistral, who won the Nobel prize in literature in 1904, was perhaps the most political of the group known as the *félibrige* – the provençal name the group gave itself. But even the immensely popular Mistral – who envisioned a kind of “Latin Union” of Provence and Catalonia – never threw down the gauntlet of regionalism in the political arena, preferring to make his points through literature. In his later life, his rhetoric had softened and his death in 1914 coincidentally also marked the beginning of the final major event pushing French toward universality within the hexagon – World War I.

While the more widely-spoken dialects – e.g., Occitan, Breton, Alsatian – held out against the French juggernaut and remained at least languages of everyday communication well into the twentieth century, the lesser-known dialects spoken (but hardly written) in various (less and less) isolated regions of France could hardly resist economic, social and educational forces which relegated them all to the equal status as *patois*.¹⁹ Because many dialects – such

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as Franco-Provençal, or the *dialectes d'oïl* (the approximately 20 related Romance dialects of the northern part of France) – bore a vague resemblance to French, dialectologists and language policy-makers viewed them as fragmented and irregular versions of French rather than the whole linguistic systems with internal regional variations that they were.²⁰ There is good reason to believe that much of the eradication of these “lesser” dialects was consensual. Parents wishing for their children to succeed often encouraged them to abandon their regional vernacular in favor of standardized French (see, e.g., Hélias for an example in Brittany). Whether consensual or forced (or – which is more likely – a combination of the two) language loss often leads to nostalgia for the culture represented by that language. By the end of the eighteenth century, French was no longer threatened by extinction or dominance by competing dialects. The political and military conflicts between Paris and the Provinces helped solidify the rural/urban polarization. The resolution of those conflicts resulted in the Parisian centralization of nearly every sphere of French public life, so that rural/urban distinctions became essentially Paris/non-Paris ones by the end of the First Empire.²¹ The Parisian view of dominated rural dialects followed the two lines of thought suggested

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by Restif and Bernardin: On the one hand – as in Restif – rural speakers were perceived as an under-educated, dangerously naïve social group, on the other hand – as in Bernardin – rural language and its speakers represented the irrecuperable loss of the pure and simple life brought on by the complex ills of urbanization. In short, city dwellers tended to look on rural dialect speakers with either haughty disdain and scorn or with nostalgic condescension.

The pastoral novels of George Sand illustrate this latter nostalgic view of rural life, combining that nostalgia with social utopianism. Sand used peasant society as a forum for exposing socialist ideals. She reveals her dislike for realism in the opening to the first of her pastoral novels, *La Mare au diable*, published in 1846. As a vehicle of social transformation, the novel's rôle is not to expose society as it really is, but rather to paint it as it could or should be (see preface to *La Mare au diable*, 12).

Sand's pastoral does not depict real peasant life, but rather highlights the elements of rural living that she feels are lacking from social and political interaction in the urban world. She is critical of Laclos and Restif because their educational novels show the reality of a corrupt world and serve as a cautionary note to the naive.

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Sand contends that truly educational novels would provide examples of a possible society rather than realistically painting the elements of actual society that should be avoided but that remain immutable.

The stories of Sand's four pastoral novels are set in her natal region, Le Berry. *Les Maîtres sonneurs* is a more complex novel than the other pastoral novels, if only for its length – more than double any of the other three. All four novels share many traits, including an idealized picture of peasant morality, an idyllic vision of peasant life and a moral model for social revolution. The society of Sand's peasants resembles a socialist utopia. Most of the peasants happily labor long hours, and those that do not love work seem strange and out of place (e.g., Joseph in *Les Maîtres sonneurs*). Sand's good peasants tend to live harmoniously with nature. Accordingly, they are rarely capable of outward appearances that do not reflect their inner feelings. Again, those that do dissimulate their true feelings are usually punished – even when they play a positive role in the overall story of a novel.²²

Transparency and frankness of character go hand in hand with a symbiotic relationship to nature. Natural surroundings (as in much romantic literature) parallel the movement of the story. In *La Mare au diable* the climactic scene where

Marie and Germain share timid confidences takes place because of a natural event – a storm forces them to take refuge in the woods – and the primeval setting facilitates Germain's confession of love to Marie. In *Les Maîtres sonneurs* natural settings are used to mirror cultural differences between the Bourbonnais and Berrichon characters in the novel. The strange and unnatural setting of the underground caverns of an ancient chateau near a cemetery sets the stage for the treachery of the Pipers against Joseph and the ensuing violence. In all the novels, rain or stormy weather tends to accompany calamitous events, while calm and happy times take place in equally calm weather. Nature carries out most of the justice in the novels as well. With the exception of the manslaughter in *Les Maîtres sonneurs* – an arguably justifiable and certainly accidental killing for which the killer nonetheless greatly atones – all deaths in the novels are of natural causes. In most cases, these deaths neatly eliminate the most malevolent characters in the novels.

The pastoral dream – the urbanite wishing to return to an idealized rural past – includes the vision of a simple relationship to one's surroundings. This dream, according to Sand, can be followed historically "en rapport inverse de la dépravation des mœurs, [in reverse proportion to the

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depravity of moors]" becoming more sentimental as the society becomes more corrupt (Foreward to *François le champi*, 213). Traditionally, then, pastoral served as a sort of escapism to a simpler world.

Because of his simplicity, the peasant lives closer to the source of all artistic creation, nature. This proximity and naive acceptance of the world around him make the peasant be an artist simply by living:

C'est une autre forme [d'art], mais elle parle plus à mon âme que toutes celles de notre civilisation. Les chansons, les récits, les contes rustiques, peignent en peu de mots ce que notre littérature ne sait qu'amplifier et déguiser [It is another form [of art], but it speaks more to my soul than all those of our civilization. Rustic songs, stories and tales paint in few words what our literature knows only how to amplify and disguise]. (Foreword to *François le champi*, 211)

This natural ability of primitive beings such as peasants to live beautifully and artistically, without comprehending beauty or art, extends to language. The linguistic gift of the peasant is to understand and express the world's complexities in simple concrete terms. Modern urban artists can never match the compact quality of the peasant's language because their overly-sophisticated vision of the world has caused their language to become muddled and imprecise. The language difference between rural and urban speakers creates a paradox for Sand, who – wishing to

capture the simple, unembellished speech of peasants – must write in French if she is to have an audience:

C'est pour moi une cause de désespoir que d'être forcé d'écrire la langue de l'Académie, quand j'en sais beaucoup mieux une autre qui est si supérieure pour rendre tout un ordre d'émotions, de sentiments et de pensées [It is for me a cause of great despair to be forced to write the language of the Académie, when I much better know another which is so superior to render a whole order of emotions, of feelings and of thoughts].
(Foreword to *François le champi*, 212)

But using French poses a more important problem than just being unable to express the Berrichon world-view: putting the French language in the mouths of these peasants may portray them as more sophisticated than they really are. On the other hand, using specific dialect in abundance would have distracted readers away from the mirage of Sand's pastoral utopia.

After the bloody events of June 1848 and the somewhat disappointing outcome for the socialist author, she took refuge for many of her remaining days in her native region of Nohant – the setting for all four pastoral novels. They therefore coincide with Sand's personal nostalgia for her more innocent youth as well as with a spatial and intellectual movement away from the urban environment that she grew to despise. They represent linguistic regression. The myth of simple peasant language is the myth of language

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birth: the first users of language – like naive rural speakers – must have spoken primarily in the here-and-now of the concrete. The ideas of peasants have evolved beyond that moment, but only so much as their society has. People whose literature is primarily oral, whose labor is menial, and whose education rarely goes beyond that needed to carry out tasks in the fields and on the farms, these people cannot be capable of elaborated language, because they do not have elaborate thought. Sand shares a common view of language complexity ("primitive" languages are "simple", "civilized" languages are "complex") held by many of her European contemporaries, but which linguists have since demonstrated to be false. Sand laments that French – like all "civilized languages" – has evolved beyond the primal stage of concrete representation. Language purity has been lost in the progress of the industrial revolution, and so has the simplicity of the language. In her appendix to *La Mare au diable*, where Sand illustrates Berrichon peasant customs at the wedding of Germain and Marie, she states this view about the notion of pure language:

Je te demande pardon, lecteur ami, de n'avoir pas su la [l'histoire] traduire mieux; car c'est une véritable traduction qu'il faut au langage antique et naïf des paysans de la contrée que je chante (comme on disait jadis). Ces gens-là parlent trop français pour nous, et, depuis Rabelais et Montaigne, le progrès de la langue nous ont fait perdre bien des vieilles richesses. Il en est

ainsi de tous les progrès, il faut en prendre sa part. Mais c'est encore un plaisir d'entendre ces idiotismes pittoresques régner encore sur le vieux terroir du centre de la France[...] I ask your forgiveness, reader friend, for not having known how to translate this story well for you; for it is truly a translation that is necessary for the antique and naive language of the peasants from the country that I sing (as they said in olden times). The French these people speak is too French for us, and, since Rabelais and Montaigne, the progress of the language has made us lose a good many old riches. Thus it is with all progress, we must come to terms with it. But it is still a pleasure to hear these picturesque idiomatic expressions reigning in the old territory of the center of France]. (MD, 131, emphasis in the original)

Sand's nostalgia for her native region clearly extends to language. Political and technological progress is the cause of language change. For Sand, the starting point for the progression of language change is rooted in the language of Rabelais and Montaigne, the two predominant canonical literary figures of the sixteenth century. Since Sand herself is an author, we might have expected her to place the origins of her own literary language in that of two renowned prose authors from the period marking the beginnings of French as a prestige language. Her statement also illustrates the role of literature in linguistic perception. She seems to have no reservations in her leap of logic between the "more French" French of the Berrichon peasants and the language of Rabelais and Montaigne, even though at other moments she (rightfully) portrays the

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peasant population as largely illiterate. Although no samples of the Berrichon dialect from Sand's period are available, it seems unlikely that the dialect spoken there resembled the French of Rabelais and Montaigne any more than it resembled the French of George Sand – although many lexical items in the dialect may have evoked an "older" French because of their proximity to archaic expressions. With literature emerging as the predominant art form in French society, it seems natural for Sand to refer to linguistic periods in terms of literary figures.²³ This reference shows how literature was becoming the popular device for measuring and understanding linguistic change. The overall rise in literacy made literature a common point of reference and a record for understanding language history.

Sand also supports the notion – increasingly popular since the eighteenth century – that the purest French resides in the past, rather than with a specific group of speakers. She modifies this generally held perception by attributing the purest French currently spoken to that of regions with the least advanced civilization. This criterion, according to Sand, eliminates the popularly accepted home of pure French, la Touraine:

La Touraine a conservé un certain nombre de locutions patriarcales. Mais la Touraine s'est

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grandement civilisé avec et depuis la Renaissance. Elle s'est couverte de châteaux, de routes, d'étrangers et de mouvement. Le Berry est resté stationnaire, et je crois qu'après la Bretagne et quelques provinces de l'extrême midi de la France, c'est le pays le plus conservé qui se puisse trouver à l'heure qu'il est [The Touraine has conserved a certain number of patriarchal expressions. But the Touraine has become greatly civilized with and since the Renaissance. It has been covered by châteaux, roads, foreigners and movement. The Berry has remained stationary, and I believe that after Brittany and some provinces in the extreme south of France, it is the most conserved country that may be found at this time]. (*La Mare au Diable*, 131-132, emphasis in the original).²⁴

Although references to the purity of Touraine language date back to the thirteenth century, it seems likely that this perception gained real popularity only after the early nineteenth-century nationwide establishment in schools of a common French language curriculum. Sand privileges la Touraine without any introductory arguments, as though she were responding to popular received wisdom.

With the apparent equation between the old and the "uncivilized" it is little wonder that Sand needed to defend against the criticism that she was trying to "ressusciter d'anciens tours de langage et des expressions vieilles [revive outmoded turns of phrase and archaic expressions]." (Letter to Eugène Lambert in MS, 58). Many of the peasant expressions she used must have seemed like archaic French, since she sought the nearest possible French equivalents to

Berrichon vocabulary, which often meant using standard French words that had long since fallen out of common usage. For example, she justifies using "Champi" for her title instead of calling her novel "François l'enfant trouvé" by pointing out that Montaigne had once used the word two and a half centuries earlier. Because of the mismatches between the simple language of rustics and the intricate French language, Sand's depictions are - as she herself admits - sometimes unrealistic because their language is not lucid enough, sometimes because it seems too sophisticated:

Si, malgré l'attention et la conscience que j'y mettrai, tu trouves encore quelquefois que mon narrateur voit trop clair ou trop trouble dans les sujets qu'il aborde, ne t'en prends qu'à l'impuissance de ma traduction. [If despite the attention and conscience I will have applied, you still find sometimes that my narrator sees too clearly or too dimly]. (Letter to Eugène Lambert in *Les Maîtres sonneurs*, 58).

This problem presents itself most particularly in *Les Maîtres sonneurs* and *François le champi* where the narrator is a peasant whose story Sand is simply translating verbatim - *François le champi* even has moments in the narration where the storyteller is interrupted by listeners. In the other two novels, the implicit (or in the case of *La Mare au diable*, the explicit) narrator is Sand herself who re-tells the story as it was told to her, but takes away the first-person status of the original narrator. As narrator in *La*

Mare au diable, and *La Petite Fadette*, she has no pretention of trying to write in the dialect of Berry. Nevertheless, the characters in these novels still display idiosyncratic speech styles. In her narration and in characters' speech Sand occasionally introduces words or forms typical of the Berrichon dialect. In the reported speech of characters Sand equally often – though not regularly – inserts traits common to working class speech not particularly Berrichon. With working-class speech she occasionally intermingles archaic language, synonymous for Sand – as we have seen – with the rustic language of France's isolated interior. The result is often an admixture of traits that creates a kind of rustic exoticism by being at once familiar and uncommon to the reader. A good example of this admixture occurs in *La Mare au diable* as Germain speculates on the notion – suggested by La Mère Maurice – that Marie may be hiding her love from him because she is poor and her generous instincts tell her that Germain should marry someone with money:

[Ç]a serait bien sage et bien *comme il faut* de sa part! Mais si elle est si raisonnable, je crains bien que c'est à cause que je lui déplais. [That would be really wise and *as things must be* on her part. But if she is so reasonable, I really fear that it is because I displease her]. (MD, 125-126, italics in the original)

The use of "ça" and the adjectivalization of the phrase "comme il faut" are both traits of popular or working class

speech, as is the grammatical error of not employing the subjunctive after the verb "craindre." The expression "à cause que" quite common throughout the novels was already an archaic usage at the time Sand was writing.²⁵ Without the rural setting, Germain's speech could sometimes be mistaken for Parisian working class speech. The same is true with the peasant in *La Petite Fadette* who comments on the title character's change of appearance and demeanor from tom-boyish to womanlike:

Dieu veuille, dit la mère Courtillet, car c'est vilain qu'une fille ait l'air d'un cheveu échappé; mais j'en espère aussi de cette Fadette, je l'ai rencontrée devant z'hier, et au lieu qu'elle se mettait toujours derrière moi à contrefaire ma boiterie, elle m'a dit bonjour et demandé mon portement avec beaucoup d'honnêteté [God willing, said mother Courtillet, for it is sinful that a girl look like an runaway horse; but I have hope for that Fadette, I met her the day in front of yes'day, and instead of that she always used to get behind me and mock my limp, she said hello to me and asked my health very politely] (PF, 101)

It is not clear why this peasant woman and others like her who appear episodically in the novels have such idiosyncratic speech compared to the other characters. Nor is there patterned usage of Berrichon speech in the language of any single character in Sand's pastoral novels. Many archaic expressions and constructions recur, but language specific to the Berrichon dialect occurs irregularly, sprinkled occasionally into the narrative to add exotic

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flavor. Sand's pastoral characters speak mostly in standard French, often in uninterrupted, coherent paragraph-length pieces of discourse.

Sand also creates the effect of rural speech by the juxtaposition of proverb-like wisdom with assessment of a concurrent situation. The children growing up with François in *François le champi* always let him go first when they played at something dangerous, because of the luck attributed by tradition to country waifs:

Celui-là, disaient-ils, n'attrapera jamais de mal, parce qu'il est champi. Froment de semence craint la vimère du temps; mais folle graine ne périt point ["That one", they would say, "will never have bad luck, because he is a foundling. Planted wheat fears weather's scourge; but wild seeds perish not]. (François le champi, 230)

The maxim adds color if not content. The superstition about the luck of *champis* is already made clear in the preceding paragraph and reiterated by the children in their first sentence above. The proverb also relates the superstition to something in the natural surroundings of the peasant children. This correlation between sentiments or beliefs and the natural world is often a feature of Sand's peasant speech. Germain in *La Mare au diable* explains what will be the consequence if his love for Marie remains unrequited:

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– Toute chose a son terme, mère Maurice: quand le cheval est trop chargé, il tombe; et quand le boeuf n'a rien à manger il meurt [Everything has an end Mother Maurice: when the horse is too laden, he falls; and when the bull has nothing to eat, he dies]. (La Mare au diable, 123)

In her portrayals of Berrichon peasant speech, Sand more often turns to this device – showing the peasants' simple wisdom in their ability to spontaneously produce a kind of mini-fable whose lesson pertains to their real-life situation – than she does to inserting dialect features.

The proverb-like speech of Sand's peasants parallels the same type of speech patterned in Marivaux's narrator. But rather than evolving toward a more complex world-view as does Jacob, Sand's peasants invert the paradigm of the educational novel by portraying simplicity and naivete as the goal, and the complexity of self-representation in society something from which to evolve. Archaic language and the occasional dialect item add an atmosphere of exoticism while the proximity of the Berrichon to Paris keeps the social model closer to home.

Although Sand paints a positive picture of the lives of peasants, it is questionable whether her pastoral had a different effect on Parisian perceptions of the rural peasantry than did the beatific arcadian portrayals of previous centuries. Sand's peasants do occasionally

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represent thinly-veiled criticism of political and social corruption in Paris. The way that Sand's peasants solve the problems they face, however, continues to paint rural society as a paradise of simplicity where common decency and respect prevail. Sentiments and emotions - legible on the face and in the actions of every member of society - have the force of law. Reality and appearance are of the same order, so deception becomes impossible. All of this perfection is tightly bound to peasant society's closeness to nature and the direct link of labor to happiness - material and spiritual. Despite her rural connections, Sand's portrayal of the peasantry is essentially urban. Her image of rusticity mirrors the growing urban nostalgia for a pristine countryside. The tone of this nostalgic vision - of the city-dweller whose culture is well-developed complex or, in a word, "civilized" - is almost parental. The peasants' simple lives have simple problems with simple solutions, and the wisdom of their problem solving resembles the naive wisdom of children. Sand's pastoral novels reinforce a positivist parallel between the individual's mental and biological development and the evolution of culture. The culture of the Berrichon peasantry has blissfully stagnated, for the moment outside the reach of modern civilization.

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As noted above, the same stagnation is evident in peasant language. But if Sand pays tribute to the special savor of this dying language, she does so entirely in French and for the benefit of Parisians. Sand clarifies her view of peasant language in her story-telling formula in *François le champi* where her companion exhorts her to speak as if she had

[...]à ta droite un Parisien parlant la langue moderne et à ta gauche un paysan devant lequel tu ne voudrais pas dire une phrase, un mot où il ne pourrait pas pénétrer. Ainsi tu dois parler clairement pour le Parisien, naïvement pour le paysan. [on your right a Parisian speaking the modern language and on your left a peasant before whom you would not like to speak one sentence or word that he could not grasp. You must thus speak clearly for the Parisian and naively for the peasant]. (FC, 217)

The language of Sand's peasants is the converse of Molière's peasant language in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*. Molière sprinkled quasi-dialect with French words to ensure general comprehension by the real Parisian audience. Sand sprinkles modern French with quasi-dialect – archaic words and occasional Berrichon lexicon – to ensure the comprehension of an imaginary peasant audience. Both portrayals of peasant language stem from and add to the same basic perception: everyone within French territory (and especially in the northern dialect regions) speaks French, with incidental and abnormal variation. Sand attributes that

variation to the lack of linguistic evolution accompanying a fortuitous lack of social evolution. Although Sand's stated purpose is to validate a peasant lifestyle that is disappearing, her vision of peasant life and language nonetheless contributes to a general perception placing rural people on a lower plane intellectually and thus socio-culturally. She claims to value the expressiveness of the Berrichon dialect – "La vraie langue [the real language]" (cited in *La Petite Fadette* – p. IV) over the sterility of Parisian French, yet it is emblematic of her ambivalence toward this claim that the three most complex characters in all of her pastoral novels – Joset, Brulette and Tiennet in *Les Maîtres sonneurs* – are also the only ones that boast of having learned to read and write standard French.

Honoré de Balzac, Sand's contemporary, shared her interest in peasant society. Balzac wrote several novels placed in the French countryside – e.g., *Les Chouans* (1829) *Le Médecin de campagne* (1833), *Le Curé de village* (1839–1841) – where peasants played an important role. Regarding peasants in these novels, however, "on ne les connaît guère que par le biais de quelques rencontres et de quelques aventures ou devenirs individuels [are only known by means of some meetings and individual adventures or destinies]." (Pierre Barbéris in the préface to *Les Paysans*, 23–4)

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Balzac's portrayal of peasants and peasant language is, on the surface, much less positive than Sand's. Balzac felt that accurate depiction, rather than embellishment, was the primary goal of the author. In this Balzac stands against Sand's position in the prefaces to her pastoral novels, where she states on several occasions that the mission of her art is to present idealized models for social change.

Balzac's vision of the peasantry is less flattering than Sand's because – as both Balzac and Sand hold in separate letters – it is more realistic. The same realism leads to a more patterned approach in the portrayal of provincial and peasant language. Instead of random regional vocabulary, reported speech by provincial characters is identified by regularly recurring phonetic and grammatical alterations. In *La Maison Nucingen* (1837) Balzac portrays accent imitation. Talking to Finot and Couture, Bixiou reports a conversation between the Alsatian Nucingen and a character named du Tillet. Balzac's character seizes on certain traits of the accent and regularizes them (my own translation attempts to follow the same patterns):

Hé pien! Ma ponne ami, dit Nucingen, location est pelle bire ebiser Malfina: fous serez brodecdir teu zette baufre vamile han plires, visse aurez eine vamile, ine indérière; fous drouferez eine mison doute mondée, et Malfina cerdes esd eine frai dressor [Ah yez! Mine goot vriend, said Nucingen, zee oggazion is right to vool Malfina: jou vill pe brodector für ziss boor grying vamili.

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Jou vill haf eine vamili, eine vay inzide; Jou vil vind eine houze all reaty for jou, and Malfina zertainly ist eine real dtreasure] (*La Comédie humaine*, 358)

The accent imitation contains two major regular phonetic alterations: (1) the reversal of voiced and unvoiced consonants (e.g., /z/ → /s/, /f/ → /v/, etc.) (2) the reduction of the vowels /e/, /u/, /y/ and /ø/ to /i/. In the passage above, these two rules are each broken once: in the phrase "fous serez". This one break in the regularity points toward the constraints in Balzac's (or rather his character's) dialect imitation: he wishes to maintain an appearance of exoticism, while keeping the text decipherable for the reader. The reader can decode much of the text through Balzac's use of spelling conventions: he retains the un-pronounced "z" at the end of verbs and helps the reader and the feminine "e" at in "mondée [montée]" to clarify that it is modifying "mison" which can then only be interpreted as "maison", and the un-pronounced "s" at the end of "fous", to clarify that this word represents "vous." If he had followed the phonetic rules of the passage, Balzac would have written "fous serez" as "fous zerez." This formulation would risk confusing the reader, however, who might understand the "z" as the product of an elision between "fous" and some following verb that begins with a vowel -

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possibly "irez," the future of the verb "to go". In order to avoid this misunderstanding, Balzac simply left the verb in its standard form. Balzac re-worked this passage so many times that even the editors of the thorough *Editions de la Pléiade* version of *La Maison Nucingen* found "Le détail de ces transformations trop complexe pour être reproduit intégralement [the detail of these transformations too complex to be integrally reproduced]" (*La Comédie Humaine*, 1278). These numerous changes, which often meant replacing a word that would remain the same in the German accent by one that would be altered, resulted in striking regularity, if not complete linguistic accuracy.²⁶

Balzac does accurately portray the sociolinguistic situation in France during the 1830s. Most battles between regional languages and French had been decided by this time in favor of French, especially and most importantly among members of the ruling class – the bourgeoisie. If the the majority of the large peasant working class still didn't speak French, decisions about schooling, the language of law, and the language of commerce were being made that would change the linguistic landscape among the lower classes over the next 100 years – leading to the virtual elimination of most of the dialects they were speaking. By the Restoration, the bourgeoisie of Paris and in the provinces

had rejected the validity of regional languages and adopted the philosophy of the Abbé Grégoire – the wholesale elimination of regional dialects and languages. Nucingen is such a provincial bourgeois who tries to speak French, but whose inability to speak like a Parisian still makes him at best an outsider and at worst a target for ridicule. There is no grammatical divergence from the Parisian norm in Nucingen's speech. If his sentences were rendered without phonetic alteration, they would seem like standard French sentences. The phonetic deformation still makes the printed version look quite exotic, and at first glance (like many non-standard language varieties) indecipherable. Balzac's Nucingen portrays linguistic variation as purely phonetic – sharing all of standard French's lexical and syntactic traits.

Nucingen has the accent of an upper-class speaker in the provinces. *La Maison Nucingen* is not meant to portray the lives of working-class or peasant characters. *Les Paysans* (begun in 1844, published for the first time in its entirety posthumously in 1855) is Balzac's only novel in which peasants are the "véritables agents de l'histoire [real agents of the story]" (Pierre Barbéris in the préface to *Les Paysans*, 24). This novel is a further demonstration of Balzac's interest in portraying regional speech styles.

The story takes place in Burgundy and involves an intricate conspiracy against an army general named Montcornet who takes ownership of a country estate called *les Aigues*. Gaubertin, a former superintendant of *les Aigues* fired by Montcornet for larceny, manipulates the peasants of the region into believing they are victims of Montcornet's will to seize power like an old-order aristocrat.

Balzac's audience (like Sand's) is essentially Parisian and upper class. Balzac's vision of rural people represents one of two prevailing urban images concerning the status and worth of working-class country-dwellers – images that were emerging as urban areas were growing²⁷ On one side of the coin was conviction that industrialization and modernization were causing an irretrievable loss from the French countryside: the loss of culturally valuable languages as well as a specific morality and innumerable customs, practices and rituals unique to the French provinces. This view was Sand's, and although she further elaborated it into a plan for social transformation, her basic feelings of nostalgia and loss were shared by many of her contemporaries. The Balzacian view regards rural people as simply another self-interested group on the overall political and economic landscape. The loss or transformation of that class of people is to be expected and

- given the somewhat negative picture Balzac paints of peasants - to be desired.

Les Paysans portrays the clash between the rural peasant and the Parisian political system that attempts, with little success, to dominate rural areas. The narrator characterizes the rule of law in France as a two-tiered system:

Dès qu'une ville se trouve au-dessous d'un certain chiffre de population, les moyens administratifs ne sont plus les mêmes. Il est environ cent villes en France où les lois jouent dans toute leur vigueur, où l'intelligence des citoyens s'élève jusqu'au problème d'intérêt général ou d'avenir que la loi veut résoudre; mais dans le reste de la France, où l'on ne comprend que les jouissances immédiates, l'on s'y soustrait à tout ce qui peut les atteindre. Aussi, dans la moitié de la France environ, rencontre-t-on une force d'inertie qui déjoue toute action légale, administrative et gouvernementale [As soon as the population of a city falls below a certain number, the administrative procedures are no longer the same. There are about one hundred cities in France where the laws are operative in full force, where the intelligence of citizens rises to the questions of general interest or of future concerns that the law tries to resolve; but in the rest of France, where they understand only immediate gratification, they elude all that could reach them. So, in about half of France, you meet a force of inertia that undoes all legal, administrative or governmental action]. (*Les Paysans*, 197)

Rurality and isolation for Balzac's peasants have an effect exactly opposite to the moral courage and social perfection that Sand's peasants display. Being closer to nature does

not allow them to listen more closely to their hearts in arriving at morally upright decisions. Nature's influence makes peasants more like animals, and more likely to respond instinctively in favor of self-preservation.²⁸ But the lawlessness of peasants is also directly linked to language. It is the mayors of cantons who "font des sacs à raisins [make bags for grapes]" with copies of the *Bulletin des Lois* and the mayors of small communities that "ne savent ni lire ni écrire [know neither how to read nor write]" who are a constant source of resistance to France's centralization – a force "contre laquelle on déclame tant, comme on déclame en France contre tout ce qui est grand, utile et fort [against which people rail, as they rail in France against all that is great, useful and strong]" (*les Paysans*, 197-198). General literacy would at least be a step toward justice in French society, since those who can read the law stand some chance of understanding it. At least one of Balzac's bourgeois characters, to whom he attributes barely more intelligence or moral courage than his peasants, sees literacy of the peasant population as a threat to his own status: "Si les paysans savaient lire et écrire, que deviendrions-nous?, dit Langlumé naïvement [If peasants knew how to read and write, what would become of us, said Langlumé naively]" (*Les Paysans*, 186). Perhaps Langlumé's

statement is naive because he misunderstands the important role language could play in civilizing the French countryside. It may also be naive because it suggests that somehow literacy would endow peasants with other traits that might make them indistinguishable from other classes of society. Literacy would certainly not eliminate country-dwellers' penchant to act primarily in the interest of self-preservation, nor would it suddenly bestow them with the urbanite's refined sense of beauty. According to Balzac, the peasants' undeveloped sense of the aesthetic is visible in their language, whose outward appearance conforms to norms less subtle than those of Parisian society:

La plaisanterie du paysan et de l'ouvrier est très attique, elle consiste à dire toute la pensée en la grossissant par une expression grotesque. On n'agit pas autrement dans les salons. La finesse de l'esprit y remplace le pittoresque de la grossiereté, voilà toute la difference [The pleasantry of peasants and workers is highly nuanced, and consists of saying an entire thought by enlarging it with a grotesque expression. We act no differently in the salons, where the whole difference is that subtlety of mind replaces the picturesque nature of crudeness]. (*Les Paysans* 109)

Balzac uses a concrete comparison with language to explain the nature of peasant language. He does not value the peasant's language as a mode of expression worthy of preservation, but rather as a different means for expressing essentially the same material as standard French. The

peasant resorts to concrete exaggeration for humorous effect, while Parisians can base humor on finer points of language.

While neither as elaborate nor as regular, Balzac's approach to representing Burgundian peasant speech is similar to his portrayal of Alsatian speech in *La Maison Nucingen* – his alterations are primarily phonetic. He intermittently removes or simplifies consonants or consonant clusters, most frequently eliminating the "l" and "r" from common interrogatives and pronouns – "quelque" and "qu'est-ce que" both become "quéque"; "quel" is written "qué"; "votre" becomes "vot'"; "plus" becomes "pus"; etc. Along with the phonetic modifications, Balzac inserts an occasional word or expression, italicized to indicate that they are lexical items characteristic of the regional setting. He also regularly simplifies the relative pronouns "qui" and "que" to "qu'" before vowels. Vowels pronounced as a rule in standard French are often omitted from much of Balzac's Burgundian. In many words containing the standard french "e caduc" (/ə/), the letter "e" is omitted. In other instances Balzac idiosyncratically inverts or otherwise modifies the standard phonological pattern by which this phoneme is pronounced or eliminated, or he eliminates what would normally be a closed syllable /ɛ/ or an open syllable

/e/, treating them like /ø/. Examples of these manipulations: "cette" becomes "ste"; "relevé" becomes "erlevé"; "de" becomes "ed"; "que" becomes "équ"; etc. None of these alterations – the consonant cluster reduction, the lexical insertion, the manipulation of /ø/ – occur regularly with every peasant speaker. One could conclude that Balzac was less rigorous than with Nucingen in his attention to detail when constructing this provincial speech.

Other explanations are possible, however, for the lack of regularity in Balzac's Burgundian language representation. First, the Burgundian accent may have seemed less marked to Balzac (and his Parisian audience) than the Alsatian. Despite Balzac's own reasons for choosing Burgundy as the site for *Les Paysans*, his Touraine roots certainly made the Burgundian dialect seem closer to his own language and hence more easily decipherable. He may have perceived less need with Burgundian speech than with Alsatien to emphasize "foreign-ness." A second reason for the lack of consistency in the Burgundian peasants' speech is that – unlike in *La Maison Nucingen* – where only one speaker is represented – Balzac portrays the speech of several different Burgundian peasants in *Les Paysans*. There is a clear differentiation between the speech styles of at

least two different Burgundian speakers – the father Fourchon and his grandson, Mouche.

One fairly lengthy scene concentrates on the interaction between Mouche and the rich inhabitants of Montcornet's chateau. Mouche – whose sole aim in visiting the Montcornets is to extract charity – uses a sly linguistic strategy. His first rule of interaction is a telling variation on the theme of the naivete of peasant children:

La politique du petit gars consistait à paraître ne rien comprendre à ce qu'on disait quand on avait raison contre lui [The policy of the little fellow consisted of appearing to understand nothing of what was said when someone had put him in the wrong].

Mouche is a "child of the field" like Sand's François. But any resemblance to the ideal behavior of the *champi* stops there. Mouche's speech more regularly eliminates vowels than does his grandfather-guardian's. Mouche uses far fewer regionally marked lexical items than his grandfather. Two of Mouche's utterances that Balzac italicizes could well be in the vocabulary of any working-class speaker: he tells of his father never having married his mother "avec les papiers" (124) and of the advantage of not being on the government's "papiers" (126). Two of Mouche's other words seem rather arbitrarily italicized, since they mark

phonological traits that go without italics through the rest of the text: "*pus*" for "plus" and "*m's'*" for "mes" (125-126). In Mouche's speech the only word inserted in italics that seems to represent an actual lexical regionalism is "*el journiau*" for "le journal" (126). Completing the list of italicized word in Mouche's speech is his attempt to sound out the letters in "quotidienne" to demonstrate his reading ability: "*cu-o-ssi-dienne*" (126). Balzac irregularly highlights non-standard speech, with no discernable logic for determining which words he highlights and which he leaves in regular type.

At two moments, Mouche's speech breaks away from its normal non-standard patterns and becomes an articulate, fluent example of standard French. Both of these moments seem designed to appeal to the emotions of the countess who has shown a penchant for helping the under-privileged. The first moment, set off by an elipsis, comes after the child explains that allowing his cows to graze on the count's land allows him to drink a small amount of milk to help ease his hunger which is exarcebated by beatings at the hands of his

grandfather. In a seemingly miraculous change of register, Mouche utters:

Monseigneur est-il donc si pauvre qu'il ne puisse me laisser boire un peu de son herbe [Monseigneur is then so poor that he cannot let me drink a little of his grass]?" (*Les Paysans*, 125)

The change of style, surrounded by so much non-standard speech, seems almost like a theatrical aside for the benefit of a specific audience. Mouche learns who this audience is from the reaction of the countess, who responds with the sought-after pity. The next time the boy enters into this register, he is not surprisingly addressing the countess again – while feigning sobs in reaction to the jokes of the men mocking his inability to read correctly. This time, when he answers her question concerning whether he has really trapped an exotic bird – a claim his other interlocutors have disputed – he does so with eloquence and expressions reminiscent of Sand's François speaking to Madeleine:

Oui, Madame, aussi vrai que vous êtes la plus belle femme que j'aie vue, et que je verrai jamais, dit l'enfant en essuyant ses larmes [Yes Madame, as true as you being the most beautiful woman I have seen and that I will ever see, said the child while wiping away his tears]. (*Les Paysans*, 126)

Mouche displays an ability to switch registers as conveniently as self-interest would dictate. The same

ability seems less available to his grandfather and guardian Fourchon.

Irregular italicization continues in a long series of speeches by Fourchon. But although the highlighting of certain words in Fourchon's speech also follows no logic – indeed within the text the same word will be italicized once, not italicized at the next occurrence, then later italicized again – it is certainly much more common overall than in Mouche's speech. The non-standard patterns in Fourchon's speech do not follow those in Mouche's speech. Fourchon, like Mouche, eliminates many consonant clusters present in standard French. Unlike Mouche, however, he also seems to regularly change the quality of certain vowels. While this difference in quality – as with the other non-standard features Balzac writes in – does not strictly follow any pattern, the most common transformation is from standard /ɛ/ or /e/ to /a/: "vertus" becomes "vartus"; "terre" is written "tarre"; "Sous-préfet" is "Souparfait"; "respirons" becomes "raspirons" etc.

Through the differences between the speech styles of Fourchon and his grandson, Balzac portrays changes in the Burgundian dialect over two generations. The more frequent italicizations in Fourchon's speech suggest that he has had less exposure to standard French than his grandson has. The

closer proximity of Mouche's vowel system to standard French suggests a generational evolution toward standard French and away from Burgundian norms. Most of the vowel contraction and consonant reduction in Mouche's language, and even his italicized lexical items can be found in Parisian (and other urban) working-class sociolects and are not specific to Burgundy's dialect. While Mouche claims to be able to read and write French, Fourchon indicates that his first language is not French:

Je sais si peu le français que je vous les [les francs] demanderai, si vous voulez, en bourguignon, pourvu que je les aie, ça m'est égal, je parlerai latin, *latinus*, *latina*, *latinum*! [I know so little French that I will ask you for the money, if you like, in Burgundian, provided that I get it, it makes no difference to me, I'll speak Latin, *latinus*, *latina*, *latinum*!] (*Les Paysans*, 130)

Linguistically, and culturally, Fourchon and Mouche represent the transformation of culturally varying provinces into one socio-cultural whole. Fourchon is the pre-revolutionary peasant whose language and mind belong to a less centralized series of culturally diverse regions. Mouche is part of the France of 1823 (the year the novel is set): the 34 years since the Revolution have seen the completion of a centuries-old trend – the centralization of finance, education and cultural production in Paris. The Burgundy of *Les Paysans* is not *une province* but part of *la*

province – a Parisian construction imposed on (and accepted by?) the nation as a whole.

This construction is where the works of Balzac and Sand converge. Although the two authors approach peasants with widely different value judgments – one, in the romantic spirit of *Paul et Virginie*, idealizing them as possible models for a new urban ethic; the other, in the spirit of *Le Paysan perverti*, seeing them as a social group corrupted by an all-engulfing system of bourgeois liberalism – they each frame their judgments in linguistically and culturally Parisian terms, despite both having strong childhood ties in essentially the same rural region of France.²⁹ Their treatments of rural language in the regions they write about give an air of inevitability to the eventual dominance of French and disappearance of rural dialects. Peasant characters are accordingly resigned to this fate. Sand's protagonists learn to read and write in French and characters who speak different dialects – the mule-drivers in *Les Maîtres sonneurs* – use French as a lingua franca, and are at their most sinister when they speak in their own dialect. The generational evolution portrayed in Balzac's Burgundian speakers shows language loss as an objective reality, and an inevitable result working-class desire to rise in the society. Standard French works as both a

potential equalizer for peasants seeking status and a bourgeois defensive weapon, barring access to their ranks.

CONCLUSION TO PART ONE

This part of the dissertation has historically outlined the image of regional dialects in French literature up until the middle of the nineteenth century. The works, chosen because they contain explicit portrayals and representations of regional language, can be seen as traces of the sociolinguistic perception of their authors and to some extent of their Parisian audiences. All of these works were either immensely popular at the time of their writing (*Les Contes Rustiques*, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, *Le Paysan perversi*), were written by authors whose works, by virtue of their reputation, have as a whole become part of the legitimated literary canon (*Les Paysans*), or both (Montaigne, Rabelais, Marivaux, Sand's pastoral novels). The end of this overview coincides with a point in the history of French language standardization where the establishment of French as the prestige language throughout the French territory had become so firmly established as to be considered a fact of life (see Weber, 1976). The survivalist motivations of sixteenth-century authors had gradually been eliminated, to the point where legitimated French- language authors like George Sand could point out

the superiority of regional language in certain domains, knowing full well that those languages could no longer pose any threat to French language dominance. Of course the more common stance – that French was in all ways superior to the various *patois* spoken across the French countryside – was reinforced in literary texts throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Zola and Flaubert occasionally describe *patois* negatively and occasionally insert dialect words into narration, to add the impression that a description or narrative is faithful to reality. This practice of inserting regional dialect into narration – Balzac does this in *Les Paysans* as well – is added evidence of the linguistic security of French-language authors. Contrary to the common prescriptivist view that borrowing words or phrases from other languages poses a threat to the survival of French, this very borrowing is perhaps the greatest indicator of the societal strength of that language. No external threat to the language is taken very seriously. Further enumeration of instances in which regional dialects are denigrated would add little content to the story of the general evolution of regional-language perception that this section of the dissertation has told.

Telling the story of regionalist literary movements would also be an interesting yet superfluous addition to

this historical overview. Regionalist literature is essentially an attempt to revive the past. As such, it is trapped (like much of today's post-colonial literature) between the Scylla of writing in the language of the conquerer and the Charibdos of having only a minute readership. This was the same dilemma faced by Sand when she wrote for her dual audience. Even though she claimed to be writing for both the Berrichon peasant and the Parisian, clearly the Berrichon lost the battle. The greater part of accommodation went toward the Parisian, since the story was told in Parisian standard French.

In short, the groundwork for most present-day Parisian perceptions of regional French had been largely laid before 1900. By 1850, the language perception conveyed in literary works had lost the coherence of the preceding periods. Certainly, some works since 1850 have reinforced the attitudes and perceptions we have seen in this part of the dissertation. Flaubert, Zola, Barbey D'Aurevilly and Hugo all displayed conscious perceptions of non-prestige varieties, but these perceptions were increasingly seen through a social rather than regional lense, and non-standard varieties were less than formerly an object of derision, more an object of study to achieve realistic effect. In the twentieth century, Prescriptivists would

continue to harken back to days of linguistic perfection, and authors – many belonging to the same ranks – would vilify socially unacceptable language. Other authors, however, were becoming increasingly aware of the injustices created by rigid prescriptive norms. Louis Aragon's *Les Cloches de Bâle* and Proust's monumental *A La Recherche du temps perdu* ridicule the stuffy normative language of the privileged classes much as earlier works mocked non-prestige language. Raymond Queneau bemoaned the distance that had gradually emerged between the written and spoken forms of French, and in *Zazie dans le métro* he uses alternative orthography to highlight this distance. Marcel Pagnol wrote regionalist literature that recovers the prestige once associated with Provence, although he does so in French, with little recourse to regional language features. These many currents in the literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries show the artistic side of literature liberating itself from its role in maintaining linguistic norms. They do not indicate, however, that all literary authors abandoned all association with prescriptive norms. Popular authors such as Abel Hermant and Maurice Leblanc, more widely read during their lifetimes than were their contemporaries Proust, Queneau or Aragon, kept well within (or helped write) the literary conventions formulated

by grammarians. The once taut alliance between literary norms and linguistic norms had loosened considerably (but not entirely broken) over the latter half of the nineteenth century. Because of this newly ambiguous status of literature, and because the literature that does treat marginalized language now tends to view it on a social rather than geographical axis, treating individual literary works' views of regional language as representative of most literature from a given period becomes even more problematic than with earlier periods. Many literary figures had reached the same conclusion as would linguists and dialectologists in years to come: that no one linguistic system can better represent truth or reality than another, and that all linguistic systems are therefore equal. Other bodies controlling linguistic policy would accordingly begin to ease the rigidity of language norms. The ministry of education would begin to loosen the reins of prescriptivism, especially in cases where rules were arbitrarily form-based (see Grévisse, 1978). Literature began to explore more marginal forms of the French language at the same time that it was assuming a less central role in French artistic life (see Nettelbeck). But while relativism in the linguistic sciences and in literature began to prevail over the course of the twentieth century, it remains to be seen to what

extent that relativism has taken hold among non-linguist speakers of French. Some authors and governmental prescriptivists may have softened their stance, but how clear-cut are questions of good vs. bad language to members of the general public?

PART TWO: Perceptual Dialectology: Present-day Parisian

Views of Regional Language Variation

INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century, economic interdependence of the different provinces, mass media, and an increasingly mobile population have caused the near-elimination of most dialects within France. Among groups speaking languages other than French "la très large majorité [...] n'exprime aucune volonté politique à travers leur usage [express no political will through their use]" (Bonnemason, 45)³⁰. What remains today of most French regional languages is an abundance of stylistic, phonetic and lexical traits that have been incorporated into a number of varieties of regional French.³¹ Beginning with the publication of the *Atlas Linguistique de la France* (1902-1920), the scholarly work done to classify and describe these regional varieties (and remaining dialects) is perhaps more abundant than literary and journalistic portrayals of them. Guenier et al. looked at French speakers attitudes toward the /e/ vs. /ɛ/ distinction among various social classes in Paris. They found that speakers from the lower strata neither performed, perceived nor reported that they made the distinction, whereas those of higher socio-economic strata did not

regularly make the distinction, but reacted to it and significantly over-reported their own performance of it. Other scholars (Weber 1976, Lodge 1993, 1994) have given a historical perspective to language attitudes - showing how Parisian French evolved as a dialect and the gradual process by which it attained prestige at the expense of competing dialects. Little has been done, however, to assess contemporary European French speakers' perceptions of regional varieties of their language.

Language perception studies have their origin in early work on subjective dialect boundaries. In 1944, Weijnen reported findings from his dialectology question list in which respondents were asked to tell in which areas speakers spoke the same dialect, and where the dialect was "definitely different." (Preston, 1989: 4). His interpretation of the data from these respondents generated a dialect perception map, showing regions where perceptions were shared (Preston, 1989, 4-6). In the mid- to late fifties two dialectologists focusing on Japan, Mase and Grootaers showed that strong perceptions of linguistic difference persisted long after earlier political and cultural boundaries had been obscured. By asking respondents to name a series of villages where language became incrementally harder to understand, Grootaers and

Mase found that the subjective dialect boundaries of their respondents matched old feudal boundaries and had no correlation with the modern Japanese prefectures. Though their work suggested a promising path for dialectology research, Grootaers is unconvinced of the usefulness of his data, and "sees the only function of perceptual dialectology as supportive of production dialect findings." (Preston 1989, 12).

Dialectologists' bias toward studying linguistic production rather than language perception was continued later by sociolinguists. According to Labov (*Language in Society*, 1972: 113), the least reliable information about language was that gathered when respondents were overtly questioned about language. However, Labov sees the definition of a speech community not "as a group of speakers who all use the same forms" but rather as a "group who share the same norms in regard to language." (Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns*, 1972: 158). To reconcile these two views Labov (*Sociolinguistic Patterns*, 146-148) uses methods that attempt to determine speakers' attitudes toward language without asking explicitly about language. Speakers are exposed to utterances that vary in certain ways, and then asked questions relating to the social status or mobility of the person performing the utterance.

This method allows us to determine much about the underlying, subconscious judgements pertaining to language performance. They do not, however, supply a complete picture: they omit respondents' conscious perceptions based on the assumption that these perceptions are invalid. The earlier dialectologists' methods helped them to understand their respondents' explicit mental picture of linguistic geography, but because these methods were aimed primarily at setting the groundwork for production dialectology, they are sketchy and incomplete in the information they gather, and they are subject to sociolinguists' usual criticism of dialectology: that they surveyed only older male respondents in the regions they surveyed.

Preston (1989) combines sociolinguistic methods for data collection with the concept of perceptual dialectology. He also borrows perceptual mapping techniques from cultural geographers of the 1960s and 70s. In the studies he cites (Preston, 1989: 13-19), respondents are asked to draw maps of their city or neighborhood. These tasks gave researchers insight into how factors such as social (and geographical) mobility play a role in peoples' perception of the space around them. Preston undertakes similar studies in which he has respondents (in this case residents of Hawaii) draw

perceived linguistic regions onto a map of the United States (Preston, 1989: 25-49).

Preston also borrows another technique from cultural geographers who created maps based on respondent ratings of the desirability of residency in various regions of the United States (see Preston, 1989: 19-23). Preston adapted these studies to determine the desirability of language from various regions of the U.S. Giving respondents from Southern Indiana a list of the fifty states, New York City and Washington D.C., Preston asked them to rank these places based on the correctness of the English spoken there (Preston 1989: 52-70). In a similar study, Preston collected ratings of the pleasantness of speech from the same list (Preston 1989: 71-83). In both studies he found a coherent picture of perceptions of regional American English. These perceptions were partly explicable by the linguistic production in the regions and the social stigma attached to some and not others. The geographical location of the respondents themselves also accounted for certain findings. For example, the Bloomington Indiana residents rated the state of Kentucky (only about an hour's drive away) in the lowest category for correctness and their own state in the highest. Preston accounts for this anomaly by noting that the respondents live nearly directly on the

boundary between two well-known production areas - one stigmatized (the middle southern) and one prestigious (the north central). This degree of differentiation between two states so close to each other may be accounted for by respondents wishing to show that they were not speakers of the stigmatized dialect (Preston 1989: 55).

This part of the dissertation examines the explicit language views of French non-linguists in an attempt to discover to what extent Parisian language perceptions present in the literature we examined also exist in the mentality of modern-day Parisians - especially given recent trends in government and literature to re-assert the cultural value of regional and other non-standard language varieties. Using techniques outlined in Preston (1989) and adapting them to the French linguistic community, we shall uncover the views of speakers in an environment where there are still strong prescriptivist views alongside a wide array of variation depending on social class and geographical location. This study reveals the complex views of its Parisian respondents as they reconcile the contradiction between linguistic diversity and prescriptive norms. This empirical study will give us the opportunity to verify or refute the lasting strength of the regional language

perceptions whose traces we have noted in our literary survey.

After a series of education laws preferring French as the language of instruction culminated in the *Lois Ferry* (1881-1886), the legislative battle against dialects within France was mostly won. The former made French the national language of instruction and the latter series of laws established free state-run schools, required attendance for ages 6-13, and greatly weakened the educational role of the last large institution in France that had continued to use local dialects – the Catholic Church. Much linguistic legislation from 1900-1945 dealt specifically with the language problem of Alsace-Lorraine. The decrees passed between the World Wars concerning this region showcase the link between nationalism and language. Acts in 1919, 1928 and 1930 require the use of French in public forums in Alsace-Lorraine, continued a long series of language-control laws in the region – laws whose continual repetition are the best indicator of their ineffectiveness. The enforcement of these laws could not have been made easy by 49 years of German rule in the territory, but that period interrupted roughly five hundred years of French control, during which similar laws were equally ineffective. In a speech before the National Assembly on December 2, 1924, Eugene Muller, a

deputy from Alsace pointed out the absurdity (and the injustice) of trying to outlaw a popular language:

Chaque peuple a droit à sa langue, c'est un droit naturel, et aucune raison d'État ne saurait l'en priver. [...] Ce droit implique l'obligation de ne pas anémier une langue populaire, de ne pas la priver de sa force, de sa vie la plus intime et de sa puissance d'action, en lui refusant le concours de l'école. Il faut que cette langue puisse devenir, à côté de la langue nationale, dont on ne saurait accentuer l'importance et la nécessité, un véritable instrument de la culture, tant du point de vue économique que du point de vue intellectuel, moral et religieux [Every people has a right to its language, this is a natural right, and no reason of State would be able to take it away. [...] This right implies the obligation to not weaken a popular language, to not remove its force and its power to act, by refusing it the support of the schools. It is necessary that this language be able to become, alongside the national language, whose importance and necessity we cannot emphasize enough, a true instrument of culture, as much economically as intellectually, morally and religiously]. (Kibbee, 9)

Muller's plea was out of step with his political colleagues, who continued to pass and enforce language policy that more than verged on the ridiculous: on February 8, 1935 the French government cited a French law from 1881 forbidding foreign language publication as a reason to shut down Arabic publications in Algeria!

Also during the period between the two World Wars, speakers of dialects began to form politically active organizations. Using the success of Catalan in Spain as an inspiration, Occitan scholars banded together to create a

unified Occitan linguistic system and dictionary adaptable to all the various regional forms of the dialect. A similar movement took place in Brittany (Bonnemason, 40). In 1951 the *Loi Deixonne* allowed the teaching of regional languages – specifically Occitan, Basque, Breton and Catalan – in public schools. Alsatian (1952), Corsican, Flemish and Lorrain (1974) were added to the list of regional languages covered under the law.³² In 1970 the option to do a baccalauréat in any one of these languages was introduced. Years and years of repression of regional languages, however, will not be immediately reversed, and it seems unlikely that regional languages will make a comeback based on this legislation. In the period that many pro-dialect policies were developing, French courts rejected appeals by Breton citizens to give their children Breton names (1962, 1965, 1980 – Kibbee, 9-11), and the Pompidou government created the "Haut Comité pour la défense et l'expansion de la langue française" (1976).

The creation of this committee and the 1975 *Loi Bas-Lauriol* announced the beginning of a shift toward protectionism in French linguistic legislation. Bas-Lauriol essentially made it illegal to use languages other than French on consumer products. All enforcement of Bas-Lauriol was in response to English on product packaging. A law

similar to Bas-Lauriol, the *Loi Toubon* was passed in 1994. In 1995 and 1996, 39 different infractions against Toubon were punished with a total of 240,000FF (about \$50,000) in fines. Although many French people ridiculed the reactionary Toubon law, it is indicative of a renewed perception that French is in danger of dying or being relegated to a status secondary to English.

Contradictory forces at work in the legislative arena—prescriptivism and permissiveness, French-only laws alongside rehabilitation of regional languages — have had parallels in other domains in French society. In literature, Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit* attracted critical attention by using a combination of literary and working-class language styles. Much of the criticism paradoxically praised the ugliness of his language (see Derval). Marcel Pagnol's plays and films focused on Provence and introduced regionalist literature into the mainstream — while employing little (no?) Occitan in his works. Raymond Queneau and Georges Pérec experimented with formal manipulation in novels and poetry and called into question the wide rift that had developed between written and spoken forms of French. Marguerite Duras and Alain Robbe-Grillet moved toward experimentation with genre as well, both of them insisting on the close relationship of

form to content and applying their ideas to the novel and the cinema. The popularity of detective novels seemed to increase at the same rate as the language used in them became non-standard. Detective novelist Frédéric Dard, well-known by his pseudonym San-Antonio, has become so popular through his manipulation and invention using non-standard language that he is probably the most-read French author alive today. The relationship between literature and linguistic norms has become ambiguous in the twentieth century. Canonical literature continues to be taught in schools and used as models for standard French. Recent literature, however, has often attempted to distance itself from its literary precursors.

It would be difficult to gauge the perceptions of regional French portrayed in twentieth-century French literature due only to the growing ambiguity of that literature's relationship to linguistic norms. To complicate matters, what in Parisian perceptions were once considered regional – and therefore ethnic and cultural – distinctions, are now viewed less geographically and more sociologically. The re-introduction of the French regions in 1972 was motivated by the perception that certain socio-economic policy considerations were best made on a scale larger than the individual departments would allow. In very

few cases do these administrative divisions match any historical cultural boundaries. The urbanization of the French population led to a generalized urban/rural dichotomy replacing a once multi-cultural view of the hexagon. This transformation from cultural to social status is visible already in Balzac's treatment of the peasantry and is echoed in works like *Germinal* where Zola's characters' northern dialects resemble Parisian working-class sociolects of characters in *L'Assomoir*.

CHAPTER ONE: THE STUDY

This section will outline the make-up of the test sample, and describe the tasks respondents were asked to perform.

Section one: The Test Group

The test group is comprised of 75 respondents, all born in the Parisian Region (*Ile-de-France*), or living there from a very young age (since at least the age of 10) and currently living there. These speakers are divided into groups according to sex (44 female, 32 male), age (40 respondents were age 18-25, 18 were 30-45, and 18 were 55 or older) and socioeconomic status (27 respondents were "working class", the rest were "middle class")³³. Table 1 below shows the composition of the test group according to these factors.

This table clearly illustrates some unforeseen difficulties in the data collection: It was more difficult than expected to gain access to respondents of the two higher age groups, and the expected difficulties with finding working class respondents were encountered. The original strategy for finding respondents was to approach people in public facilities used by citizens from all backgrounds (e.g. hospitals, universities, senior citizen clubs, social services). Lengthy administrative procedures (or flat out denial) were often obstacles to gaining access to senior citizens' homes and hospital waiting areas. Because of these obstacles, the researcher was often forced to use the somewhat haphazard approach of entering restaurants and cafés with the hope of finding people that met three very limiting criteria which are (in order of decreasing probability): 1) the necessary age and socio-economic requirements 2) willingness to participate in the study and 3) being native to the Parisian region. Paris was chosen as the area to perform this study because of its historical place in the formation of the standard. Similar studies in other regions of France will yield interesting results and should be pursued. This third requirement was easily met in the younger group, because the researcher was able to go to universities in the Paris area to seek

respondents. Since university education is state-funded in France, and the quality of universities perceived to be relatively homogeneous, students generally choose to attend the university closest to their family home. Since they are younger the probability is greater that this family home is located in the same general vicinity as their birthplace. However, in the city of Paris and the surrounding suburbs a great many professionals and workers who belong to the "30-45" age group are relatively newly arrived in the area. Many possible respondents from this age group have moved to the suburbs, less expensive for people who live there and less accessible for the researcher because crowded public spaces are less common. While the population of metropolitan Paris (Paris and suburbs combined) has been increasing steadily since the middle of the nineteenth century, the population of the city Paris itself (not including the suburbs) has been decreasing since it reached its peak in 1921 (*Dictionnaire encyclopédique Larousse*-1979). These demographic trends have created a Paris largely populated by "Non-Parisians" at least as defined above for the present study.

Since the authentic "Parisian" (Paris-born) population of Paris is aging, it would seem at first glance that the "55 and older" age group would be more easily accessible.

It is true that there are a great many *Clubs de troisième* age, in Paris. Unfortunately, it was only after having arranged interviews at one of these clubs that the researcher learned, from the very club director who had granted him permission to do interviews in her club, that it would also be necessary to get a letter of authorization from another higher-ranking official in order to carry out these interviews. This permission, though not particularly difficult to obtain, required a two-week waiting period. Unfortunately, the researcher was unaware of this waiting period until after arrival in Paris. With approximately four weeks to gather data, it became necessary to seek older respondents in less obvious places.

The notoriously difficult task of finding working class respondents for linguistic studies is aggravated in Paris where the cost of living has pushed many of them to the distant suburbs. In addition, the majority of the working class within the Parisian region is immigrant, if not from a different nation at least from a distant province.

Table 2 shows the composition of the test group by respondent. While some comments made in the taped interviews and on the perceptual maps suggest that age may influence certain general linguistic perceptions, chi-square analysis revealed that none of the factors (age, sex, or

socioeconomic status) proved statistically significant for the present study. Results of this study will therefore be discussed in terms of the group as a whole, without regard to these variables. Since three of the working class groups have too few respondents to ensure the reliability of the chi-square analyses (at least five per cell is generally desirable), future studies should consider the question of the influence of these variables still open for exploration. Future studies should also consider using more refined socio-economic divisions, including for example second-generation Parisians from North and West Africa.

Section two: The Tasks

Perceptual Mapping

Respondents were given a map of France with only the following detail: the cities of Paris, Lille, Cherbourg, Rouen, Reims, Metz, Strasbourg, Dijon, Lyon, Brest, Bordeaux, Bayonne, Toulouse, Marseille, Nice, Orleans, Nantes, Tours, and Geneva; the Pyrenees, Alps and Massif Central mountain ranges; The Rhône, Seine, Rhine, Loire, and Garonne rivers; the borders of France, and the names of the surrounding waters. Fieldworkers asked respondents to circle and identify in writing any regions "where people have a particular way of speaking."

The Rating Tasks

Respondents were asked to rate 24 different regions including Francophone Belgium and Switzerland according to three different criteria: degree of difference, correctness and pleasantness.

The task of making a list of regions for respondents to rate was more complicated than one might initially suspect. It was impossible simply to name the 22 administrative regions, since these do not always correspond with historical regions, nor even remotely to dialect boundaries. Map 1 shows the current French administrative boundaries. There are 96 "départements" (not counting the four overseas départements), and 22 "régions administratives" in France. To complicate matters, there are also 30 "anciennes régions" whose names often partially or fully correspond to names of départements (e.g. Maine, Savoie). Of course, some of the old regions and current administrative regions also correspond (Alsace, Bretagne, Picardie), though some in name only, their geographical position having changed substantially, so that the new region covers more, less, or different territory than its older namesake (Bourgogne, Franche-Comté).

To complicate matters, Map 2 reveals the major dialect boundaries in France. The names of these language variety

areas correspond in various ways to other regional names: some to the names of départements (e.g. Jura), some to old regions (e.g. Lyonnais) and still others to modern administrative regions (Auvergne). The task of choosing a set of regional names to include on the questionnaires was complicated. The regional list needed to meet three criteria 1) include all the territory of France; 2) include names that the respondents would recognize and be able to associate with a language variety; 3) not include regions that respondents may be incapable of rating because they perceive the region as being home to two or more varieties that differ substantially from one another; and 4) avoid where possible regional names that would immediately provoke strong linguistic reactions based on linguistic content in the name itself. As an example of this last criterion, the name "pays basques" would be unacceptable, because of the affinity in French of language names and modifiers of nationality. To facilitate the task of meeting all these criteria, pre-study interviews with non-linguist first-language speakers of French were conducted in Bloomington, Indiana. Respondents were asked to give a list of regional names where they felt a distinct variety of French was spoken. They were then asked to react to various regional names based on the way they thought people there speak

French. From these interviews a list was generated mixing current administrative regions with traditional regional names that still hold meaning to respondents. The resulting list, to be refined in future studies, is (in the order they appear on the questionnaire): Nord (North), Picardie (Picardy), Normandie (Normandy), île de France, Champagne, Bretagne (Brittany), Touraine, Centre, Franche-Comté, Bourgogne (Burgundy), Lorraine, Alsace, Poitou-Charentes, Auvergne, Limousin, Massif Central, Lyonnais, Rhône-Alpes, Jura, Gascogne, Langue d'Oc, Provence, Belgique (Belgium), and Suisse Romande (Francophone Switzerland). It will be noticed that in this list some regions geographically overlap. One apparent overlap is Rhône-Alpes/Lyonnais. "Lyonnais" corresponds to a large metropolitan area, but also to an actual variety of French. "Rhône-Alpes" corresponds to an administrative division, and to several varieties of French. It was hoped that this division might shed light on how large urban areas affect the linguistic perceptions of the Parisian respondents. As will be seen, Lyonnais did score significantly closer to the Parisian region than did Rhône-Alpes in the degree of difference task, although in other tasks the two regions were grouped together by respondents. The other pairing that overlaps geographically is Touraine/Centre. This region is

traditionally identified with the mythical norm, free from dialectical distortions and therefore superior. It was hoped that this pairing would show whether this identification was linked primarily to the geographical location of the mythical norm, or rather to the name "Tours." The statistical results show Touraine significantly differentiated from Centre on all tasks.

Degree of difference rating

Respondents were asked to rate the 24 regions on a scale of 1 to 4 as follows: "1 si vous pensez que le français parlé dans cette région ressemble à celui que vous parlez. 2 s'il y a une ressemblance, mais moins forte. 3 si le français parlé dans cette région ne ressemble guère à celui que vous parlez. 4 si le français parlé dans cette région vous est incompréhensible [1 if you think that the French in this region resembles your own; 2 if there is a resemblance, but not as strong; 3 if the French spoken in this region scarcely resembles your own; 4 if the French spoken in this region is incomprehensible to you]."

Correctness rating

Respondents were asked to rate the correctness of the French spoken in the 24 regions on a scale from 1 to 7. 1 = "On parle un français dans cette région qui n'est pas du

tout correct [they speak a French in this region that is not at all correct]."; 7 = "On parle un français dans cette région qui est tout à fait correct [They speak a French in this region that is completely correct]."

Pleasantness rating

Respondents were asked to rate the pleasantness of the French spoken in each of the 24 regions on a scale from one to seven, with wording very similar to that on the correctness rating task, replacing the word "correct" with "agréable à entendre [pleasant to hear]."

Taped Interviews

Each respondent was interviewed on cassette at two stages: (1) immediately following the completion of the perceptual mapping stage and (2) immediately following the three rating tasks. During each interview, respondents were asked to give further detail about the regions they had mapped. They were also asked to comment on how they had labelled the various regions. In the final interview, the field worker attempted to elicit any possible linguistic detail about regional varieties. The detail elicited by these follow-up questions included commentary about phonetic and lexical traits, as well as imitations, stereotypes and caricatures of regional varieties.

CHAPTER TWO: THE RESULTS

Section 1: Perceptual Mapping

Some Extreme Cases

The mapping task revealed striking discrepancies in the range of detail that the various respondents' perceptual maps contained. While some respondents left virtually no part of the map blank, others drew a single line across the middle of the map, circling two or three regions above and below. The most regions indicated by any one respondent was 31 by respondent 56.³⁴ The least detailed map was drawn by respondent 49 who began by drawing a line down the center of the Brittany Peninsula. He then drew a circle around an area north of the Massif Central, called it the "Limousin" and wrote "parle le patois, 5 à 6 dialectes- [speak patois 5 to 6 dialects-]". Finally he abandoned the task altogether, writing at the bottom of the map, "Je ne me prononce pas. Il y a trop de dialectes en France (chaque région emploie son propre dialecte) [I can't commit myself, there are too many dialects in France (each region has its own dialect)]." While the results on these two maps were quite different, they come from a perception that the two respondents seem to share, and which was expressed by many others during the taped interviews: Many respondents believe that France is home to an infinite variety of dialects, which change

continuously as one moves through the country. While there were no significant statistical outcomes related to the age variable in any of the rating phases, it is probably not mere coincidence that the two respondents referred to above as well as all others referring to the uncountable number of dialects in France belong to one of the two older age groups. In fact, no one under 40 expressed this view. Although the respondents in this study are Parisian, the demographic situation in Paris suggests that it is extremely unlikely that the parents of respondents from these age groups were also born in Paris and it is almost certain that their grand-parents were not. It is quite likely that the parents of these respondents spoke a local dialect with their own parents. And they probably grew up in a linguistic environment where variation from village to village was indeed the norm. It seems probable that such a perception could be passed on as other linguistic items are, maintaining its force in the second generation, due to the first-hand accounts and experience of the first, but losing its relevance to the third generation.

The Composite Map

Extreme cases such as the very detailed and the very empty maps discussed above were much the exception. In fact, of the remaining 73 respondents only 4 did not

demarcate a number of regions outside the range of 4 to 12. The average number of regions designated was 10. The median number was 7. Map 3 is a composite map of all respondents' demarcations.

The map is shaded on a grey scale, with darker areas being those indicated by more respondents. A different shade was used to represent each 10% increment, based on the 75 respondents, with white for the lowest, and black for the highest density. Each area also contains a label specifying the exact number of respondents who named that area. Many respondents made only small circles around city names, stating that they identified certain regional varieties with the names of cities. Cities that were circled in this way by more than one respondent are also circled on the composite map, and the number of respondents who circled a given city is combined with the surrounding regional total.

Certain regions may have been combined by some respondents, while other respondents may have separated the same region into two areas. One clear example of such contrasts is the Alsace and Lorraine region(s). 35 respondents drew Alsace as a region, while only 14 drew in Lorraine. To complicate matters, 20 respondents drew a border around both Alsace and Lorraine, naming it as one region. If we add the times that the regions were grouped

to the times they were named separately, then the total number of respondents indicating Alsace is 55. The total for Lorraine is 34. Although simply shading these regions would show the large gap between the number of respondents naming each region, it would mask an important detail. While many respondents named Alsace without naming Lorraine as well (an obvious fact given the different totals), no respondent indicated Lorraine without also drawing in Alsace. This means that on no respondent's perceptual map is there a reference to Lorraine without one to Alsace as well, whether the two are marked separately or combined into one region. In the labeling of the two regions, Lorraine and its adjectival form are used a total of three times, whereas Alsace or its adjectival form occur 16 times. When two regions are represented both together and separately, each separately-named region is shown with the color representing the total frequency: the score of the "referent" region when it was the only region of the two delineated on the map (in this case 35), added to the number of times when the "non-referent region" was the only one of the two delineated (in this case zero), added to the number of times the two regions were named together (in this case, 20). A dotted rather than solid line separating the two regions indicates that they were regularly named together.

Within each region is placed a small round patch of color representing the number of times the region was delineated separately from its "mate," with the exact number of these occurrences given within this patch.

An initial glance at the composite map shows that the more influential perception among these respondents was that of border regions and regions where languages other than French are spoken. The only border regions that received relatively little attention in the mapping phase are those areas outside France where French is spoken. This omission probably depends on the strong perceptual boundary that the international borders represent, rather than on a neutral view of the way people in Belgium and Switzerland speak. In fact, later stages of the study will show that the attitude of these respondents toward Belgian and Swiss French speakers is among the strongest. We shall return to this composite map to discuss how it reflects the statistical results of the other phases and the major perceptual groupings of regions revealed by this study.

Section 2: Correctness Ratings

A look at the rank order presented in Table 3, column 1 reveals that the perception of correctness by these Parisian respondents is not a function simply of the geographical proximity to Paris of the region in question. The darkest

regions on the composite map, those in general found nearest the border regions, are represented by the bottom six in the rank order: North, Provence, Lorraine, Alsace, Switzerland, Belgium. Nearer at hand as well are the Auvergne and Brittany regions, which round out the bottom third in the rank order. Except for the Auvergne, all these regions contain large groups who speak a first language other than French (Flemish [in the North and Belgium], Provençal, the Lorrain dialect, the Alsatien dialect, German and Breton).

These certainly are not the only dialects or regional languages spoken in France. The composite map and this rank order combined, however, seem to indicate that they are the most powerful perceptually, at least in their relation to the norm perceived by our Parisian respondents. Figure 1 converts regional correctness scores to a Euclidean plot, as performed by a multidimensional scaling statistical function. Multi-dimensional scaling analyses basic data that are dissimilarities, or distance-like. In this case, the scores for the various regions have first been converted into euclidean plots. Multi-dimensional scaling models the "dimensions" of these converted scores, allowing us to visualize along two axes (rather than the single axis provided by simply comparing means) the likeness or dissimilarity of the variables. The regions are grouped

here into five clusters by a K-means cluster analysis. K-means cluster analysis systematically compares the means of different variables and then places variables into clusters according to the similarity of the data sets. The researcher can specify the number of clusters desired. The K-means function will create as few as two clusters, or as many clusters as there are variables, according to the researcher's needs. Variables that are members of one cluster may shift to another when the number of clusters specified changes. The more statistically similar the members of a cluster are the more that cluster remains stable through several changes in total number of clusters. The multi-dimensional scaling chart allows us the dimensions needed to circle the clusters created by K-means cluster analysis.

This visual representation of the regional scores is not surprising, given the rank order in table 1. The regions with the highest scores, île de France and Touraine, are the farthest left along the X axis, and the bottom 8 regions are on the opposite end.

The K-means groupings reinforce our suspicion that the presence of a prominent second language in a region strongly influenced the correctness ratings. The two groupings farthest to the right each contain three regions with a

well-known linguistic minority: Brittany, Provence, Lorraine and Alsace, Switzerland, Belgium. Notably, two of the regions from the bottom eight in the rankings have been grouped with regions that are their geographical neighbors, even though they are clearly not neighbors in the rank order: Auvergne is number 18, Limousin 12, North is 19, Picardy 11. This grouping by the cluster analysis is probably the result of a great many respondents' rating the paired regions identically. Since the regions on the questionnaire were arranged somewhat geographically, the two pairs (North/Picardie and Auvergne/Limousin) appear consecutively. Many respondents may have instinctively rated these regions with one another because of their geographical proximity and because they perceived no differences among speakers from these regions as a whole.

Still, if the regions were rated alike by so many, why did enough respondents chose to rate Auvergne and North so low that they would fall six and seven places respectively in the rank order? Auvergne was rated a three, four or five by 69.4% of respondents. Respondents giving these ratings to Limousin numbered a similar 66.1%. Limousin received about 7% fewer ratings of one and two than Auvergne (3.4% to 10.2%), and about 10% more ratings of six and seven (30.5% to 20.4%). We find a similar situation in the numbers for

North and Picardy, with ratings of three, four and five nearly identical (58.2% and 55.9% respectively), a discrepancy of 13 points in ratings of six and seven (23.7% to 37.2%), and 10 points in ratings of one and two (16.9% to 6.8%).

During the taped interviews, several respondents pointed toward the reason for the discrepancy in ratings between Auvergne and Limousin. Many Parisians afford special status to Auvergnat speakers because of a movement of immigration from Auvergne to Paris in the middle of this century. This group of immigrants was particularly visible in Paris because many of them became proprietors of restaurants and cafés. Since this movement was perceived to be specifically from Auvergne, some respondents reflected the special Parisian status of Auvergnat immigrants in their correctness ratings. That this reflection was overall negative is not surprising: such is often the reaction of a human group toward perceived "outsiders."

The case of the discrepancy between North and Picardy is understandable in spatial terms. As map 3 shows the region "Nord" is one of the most marked on the perceptual maps. Conspicuously absent from nearly all of the perceptual maps are delineations that include Picardy. This lacuna probably results from a psychological need to create

a wide boundary between the Parisian region and the North. Indeed, one respondent from the suburbs remarked that she commuted from Picardy to work every morning! Surely a place so close to Paris could not resist the standardization process that has spread out from Paris for a millennium! Because the name Picardy contains the historical name generally given to northern dialects (Picard), the gap visible on the perceptual maps between North and Picardy is closed considerably in the correctness ratings. The absence of a visual aid showing the proximity of Picardy to Paris made respondents hesitate to differentiate them. Thus the two regions are grouped together in the K-means cluster analysis. Nonetheless, as we have seen, enough respondents to affect the final numbers realized how close Picardy is to Paris.

Finally, note in the K-means cluster analysis the grouping of Île de France and Touraine. Numbers one and two on the correctness rank order represent at least as strong a statistical group as any of the more marked regions from the bottom of the same rank order. In fact, as figure 2 shows, when we force the K-means analysis to reduce the number of groups to four, only the Île de France/Touraine cluster remains intact.

The tenacity of this two-region group suggests that perhaps the strongest perception of all among these Parisian respondents is that of the norm. We shall return to this topic as we view the results of the other tasks.

Section 3: Degree of Difference Ratings

The mean rankings in Table 3 show us that the Degree of difference ratings are close to the correctness ratings. Only five of the 24 regions change more than two places in rank, while 14 do not shift, or shift by only one place. No region shifts by more than four places. The five shifts of three and four places can be seen as primarily a north-south geographical alignment. This slight change in alignment from the correctness rankings coincides with a well-known dialect division stretching across France approximately at the level the Dordogne river in the west, Clermont-Ferrand in the center, and Grenoble on the east. We therefore see Lyonnais, generally considered "the north of the south" slipping three places away from Paris. The southern regions of Gasconne and Langue d'Oc slip four and three places respectively, whereas Brittany and North, both clearly situated in the north, climb three and four places respectively. Even three of the four regions that move only two places relative to the correctness task follow this trend: Rhône-Alpes loses two places, Burgundy and Picardy

gain two. Chart 2 gives a visual image of the similarities between the correctness and degree of difference tasks by plotting the rank order of the two tasks by region. The pattern of correctness and degree of difference ratings shadowing each other so closely is likely to be common in studies undertaken so near the center of the norm. The opposite may well be found in studies that survey regions farther removed (geographically or perceptually) from the center of the norm.

Figure 3 shows the multi-dimensional scaling and K-means cluster analysis results of the degree of difference ratings. Given the similar rank order of means, it is not surprising that the Euclidean plot is also quite similar to the correctness plot. The clusters in Figure 3 have several distinct differences from the correctness clusters. First, with the exception of the Touraine in the "home cluster" with île de France and Champagne, and the grouping together of Switzerland and Belgium, all clusters contain geographically contiguous regions. This is far from true of the correctness groupings, where such a claim can be made this evidence alone is not sufficient to let us reach any conclusions, this difference in the groupings for the for only one group in either figure 1 or figure 2. Although two ratings suggests that spatial organization of regions may

play a greater role in the degree of difference task than it does in the correctness task.

The identical first-place rankings of the respondents' own region (Ile de France) in the correctness and degree of difference tasks suggest that the respondents feel much linguistic security. That is, these respondents are secure in their belief that the variety of French they speak is the most universally acceptable. This finding is reinforced by the cluster analysis in both tasks, which groups Île de France with Touraine, the mythical center of standard French, as taught in public school books since at least the nineteenth century. In fact references to the Touraine as the home to "pure French" date back as far as the middle ages (Lodge, 1993).

Finally of note in the cluster analysis of the degree of difference ratings is that Brittany has been placed alone as a separate cluster. It is likely that this separation arises from the ambiguous linguistic position of Brittany in the perception of the respondents. During the interview stage, many respondents expressed the view that French speakers in Brittany spoke French perfectly well, but they were also cautious to add that "quand ils parlent leur patois, on ne comprend rien [when they speak their dialect you can't understand anything]." Since the view of French

in Brittany, and the view of Breton represent the two extremes in the rating for this task (1=exactly like the respondents' speech, 4=totally incomprehensible), it is not surprising that Brittany was statistically set apart from other regions. It would have been difficult to recognize the statistical uniqueness of Brittany without the K-means cluster analysis, since the range of responses is so narrow for this task. A mere analysis of frequencies does not reveal this uniqueness.

Section 4: Pleasantness Ratings

Table 3 clearly shows that the rank order largely maintained from the correctness to the degree of difference task undergoes a considerable realignment for the pleasantness task. The average difference in rank order per region between correctness and degree of difference ratings is 1.58. This average rises to 4.16 when comparing correctness and pleasantness rankings. The regions whose pleasantness rank orders are most dramatically different from their correctness scores are the southernmost regions: Gascogne (correctness rank 14, pleasantness 6), Langue d'Oc (correctness 16, pleasantness 4) and Provence (correctness 20, pleasantness 1). By the same token, five of the regions rated in the top 12 for correctness drop to the bottom 12

for pleasantness (Normandie, Poitou-Charentes, Franche-Comté, Picardy and Limousin).

Constant for these respondents is the status of the île de France/Touraine grouping which, while giving way to Provence for first rank in pleasantness, does so only barely, as these regions slide to the second and third ranks. The K-means groupings of the pleasantness ratings in Figure 4, however, show that the "home group" is statistically separate from the southern regions. It is apparent from this separation that the pleasantness these respondents perceive in their own speech differs from that associated with the southern regions.

Whatever mathematically caused the statistical division of these two groups, we will see below that the qualitative data clearly support such a separation. Like Brittany in figure 4, the North has been put into a group alone for this task.

This classification may again (as with Brittany in the degree of difference clusters) be the result of the ambiguity caused by proximity with the île de France (where the speech is considered very pleasant), and a regional dialect which according to most of the qualitative data is considered unpleasant. In Figure 5, where the regions are forced into four clusters, North groups with its

geographical neighbor Picardy. Massif Central is also pushed in with its geographical neighbor Auvergne. The inclusion of these two regions with the perennial "foreign" regions of Alsace, Lorraine, Belgium and Switzerland is perhaps understandable in terms of a urban/rural distinction. The Massif Central and Auvergne are two regions typically referred to by Parisians (and by these respondents) as remote and backward. This distinction is detectable in the quantitative analysis only for the pleasantness task. The qualitative data reveal an urban/rural dichotomy more salient than the statistics alone would suggest. This new configuration also pushes our Touraine and Île de France into the larger, more central cluster. Pleasantness is less salient in the perception of these regions than is correctness. Also in the transition from five to four clusters, we also see that the southern group (Gascogne, Langue d'Oc and Provence) remains intact, much like the home group in the correctness clusters. In summary, the statistical outlay of the pleasantness ratings shows a favorable perception of the southern regions. The great shift in rank order and groupings between the pleasantness and correctness ratings (in contrast with the considerably smaller shift between the degree of difference and correctness ratings) demonstrates that perceptions of

pleasantness are quite independent from perceptions of correctness. The exception to this finding may be in the regions on the extremely high and low ends of the correctness task, where movement in rank order was minimal. Four of the bottom five in the pleasantness task are also in the bottom five in the correctness task, and the top two in the correctness task are numbers two and three in pleasantness. It is safe to say that for these respondents, extremely incorrect speech is by its nature unpleasant, whereas the most correct language cannot fail to be pleasant as well. The different rank orders in the pleasantness and correctness tasks are illustrated in chart 3. The marked difference in the two tasks for the three southern regions (Gasconne, Langue d'Oc and Provence) demonstrates the ambivalence of the Parisian respondents regarding these regions. It also foreshadows what the taped interviews bear out: The southern regions are the object of a strong linguistic caricature combining a high degree of pleasantness with a low cognitive capacity. Such a pattern may serve in future studies as an indicator of a caricature modeling respondent perception.

Section 5: Bringing it all together: The Taped Interviews and Map Labels

Responses and imitations during the taped interviews as well as written labels and commentary on the perceptual maps more fully explain the trends indicated in the composite map and in the statistical results of the rating phases. The section will cover the most salient regions on the composite map, starting with the areas of least frequency and ending with those that received the most attention during the mapping phase.

Burgundy, Auvergne, Massif Central, Savoie/Jura and Normandy: The "Rural" Regions

Looking at map 3, we see that the number of times these regions were designated on perceptual maps range from 7 (Auvergne) to 15 (Normandy). Based on geographical distribution alone it seems unlikely that perceptions of these regions would hold much in common outside the similar number of occurrences. Certain evidence, however, indicates parallels in respondents' linguistic characterizations of these regions: the taped interviews, including imitations of these regional varieties, and labels on the perceptual map, link all these regions on the composite map to a notion of rurality. Apart from labeling these areas with the geographical name (by far the most common practice for all

regions), the following labels, suggestive of a "rural language" stereotype, occur on the perceptual maps:

"accent rural" (twice) [rural accent]; "accent rural - pas beaucoup d'articulation" [rural accent - not much articulation]; "langage de la terre" [language of the land]; "utilise un vocabulaire plus limité" [uses a more limited vocabulary]; "campagnard" [country];

Other map labels describe the speech in these regions.

Again, the descriptions are common to all these regions.

They focus on two items: the slowness of the speech, and the rolled /r/. Imitations of any of the "rural regions"

(Burgundy/Franche-comté, Massif Central, and Normandy) had consistent features, most notably: a rolled /r/,

diphthongization and/or elongation of certain syllables, a closed, back "a", very close to /ɔ/, and use of some

agricultural reference in the imitation. The most common phrase used in imitations of all these regions was "On va

traire la vache /ɔ̃vɔtrɛⁱrlɔvɔʃ/ [we're going to milk the cow]." Some of the phonetic traits of these imitations

characterize the varieties in some of these regions.

Bourguignon and Auvergnat (or Massif Central) French show some diphthongization. There is a characteristic

elongation of penultimate syllables in Norman French. The similarity of imitations of these different regional

varieties may be evidence that respondents possess a generalized caricature of a rural variety. While

respondent opinions may vary as to which particular region is most representative of this variety, the caricature itself seems to remain fairly consistent. In fact, according to their comments urbanization is seen by many respondents as the primary factor in linguistic standardization. A number of subjects hesitated to outline linguistic regions, because for them it was "plutôt une question ville/campagne. [more a city/country distinction]." In addition to this frequent comment, many respondents circled only cities to delineate linguistic regions, indicating a belief that regional accents were identified through their principal cities. Some respondents went as far as to complain that some important linguistic landmark cities were missing (e.g. Clermont-Ferrand). Although the contention that cities are centers for linguistic varieties may seem to contradict the notion that urbanization is a catalyst for linguistic standardization, it does put urban centers in a position of linguistic dominance over the surrounding rural areas. According to this view, a variety cannot originate in a rural setting. Such a view could lead to the notion of a homogeneous rural variety that would vary only according to the proximity of urban centers. Burgundy, Massif Central, and Normandy, in this case, lend themselves well to identification with a

rural variety, because relatively few large urban centers are located there. Normandy does have Caen and Le Havre, both with metropolitan populations of more than 200,000, but both of these cities are maritime, situated on the periphery of Normandy, leaving a largely rural interior. The Massif Central, in the southern portion of Auvergne, has no urban centers of more than 100,000, and in Burgundy, only Dijon (145,000) passes the 100,000 mark. The relatively small number of urban centers in these regions, their distance from any of the more marked border regions, and the lack of a large minority language all combine to make them candidates for perceptual centers of a generalized rural variety.

The mountain regions are treated similarly. The Massif Central region was seen primarily as a rural region and not as a mountainous region, and the Pyrénées were largely untouched. Two areas close to the Alps, however, were delineated with some frequency. The Jura/Savoie region and the border region surrounding Geneva received very similar labels. As with the rural regions, many references were made to the slowness of the language, with the modifiers such as "lent" (slow) and "trainant" (dragging) the most frequent of non-geographical name labels.

Considering the evolving dichotomy from a multi-cultural view of regions toward a more dichotomous rural/urban social distinction, the grouping together of so many regions into seemingly one kind of perception is not surprising. These regions are often labeled similarly to other more marked regions. The major difference between these regions and other ones receiving more attention is the presence of a well-known dialect. The best way to categorize these regions might be to call them "unmarked rural" regions, since they certainly have a status to these Parisian as "other," but that otherness cannot be related to a specific linguistic style. A similar parallel could be drawn between Balzac's treatment of Nucingen, whose language style was distinctly related to the Germanic qualities of Alsatian French, and his treatment of the Burgindian peasants, whose language is best characterized as essentially standard French inconsistently intruded upon by some unquantifiable yet clearly rural language traits.

Brittany

Given the presence of a well-known non-romance dialect it should come as no great surprise that Western Brittany should be marked by a significant number of respondents. In fact, as the composite map shows, the Breton linguistic minority weighs heavily in the perception of these

respondents. Of the 28 who delineated the region, none drew the region as covering more than the western half of the Breton peninsula. Of these 28 respondents, 24 gave labels to the region. Nineteen of the 24 labels contained "breton" or "celte" (one of these 19 also mentioned a "mongol" influence) in their descriptions. One label refers to the "culture anglaise [English culture]", undoubtedly connecting the "breton" culture to the nearby "brittaniques". Characterizations of the variety itself include the following: "Ils coupent les syllabes" [They cut syllables]; "difficile à caractériser" [difficult to characterize]; and "indéfinissable" [undefinable]. To explain the grouping of Brittany in the correctness ratings above, we noted that nearly all mentions of Brittany contained a reference to either 1) a totally different language or 2) a perfectly good French being spoken. The proximity of the Touraine to the eastern part of the Breton peninsula probably explains the second of these two descriptions. The first description reflects the residual influence of a language with few speakers today, but that was virtually the only one spoken in the countryside of Western Brittany at the turn of the century (see Hélias).

Paris

Although 30 respondents delineated Paris on the perceptual mapping task, it is difficult to characterize what precisely is the perception of a Parisian variety, or what its relationship might be to the perceived standard. A glance at the labels given to Paris by those who outlined it are varied in quality.

Of the 22 respondents labelling the region, 13 referred to a specific Parisian accent or variety: "accent parisien" (5 respondents); "titi parisien" (5 respondents); "région parisienne"; "parigot"; "accent pointu ou parigot".

"Parigot" and "titi Parisien" refer to a specific variety associated with the Parisian working class. The following written labels³⁵ express the view that Paris is linguistically mixed territory, and/or including special varieties exclusive to the suburban areas:

- 1) "banlieue, verlan" [suburbs, verlan slang].
- 2) "dans Paris: accent parisien, banlieue parisienne: accents différents dû à la présence des étrangers (exemple: arabe)" [in Paris: Parisian accent, Parisian suburbs: different accents due to the presence of foreigners (e.g. Arab)]
- 3) "mélange de tous" [mixture of everything].
- 4) "Paname" [cosmopolitan, or worldly].

An equal number of respondents used descriptive labels on perceptual maps for the Parisian variety (and/or its speakers):

on fait traîner la dernière syllabe [they drag the last syllable]; plus vite [faster]; accent assez sec, avec beaucoup de "heu" [dry accent, with many "euhs"]; accent parisien - ton arrogant, parler lent [Parisian accent - arrogant tone, slow speech.]

Only one speaker made reference to Paris as the center for "le plus pur" [the purest] language. This seems a small proportion when we consider the statistical results of the rating tasks, which rate Paris the highest in terms of correctness, and very near the top for pleasantness, while consistently grouping Paris with the mythical home of the norm, Touraine. How is it that the same respondents who so rate their own region on the one hand, can label it with such "non-standard" traits on the other?

Data from the interview stage help clarify this somewhat muddled picture. Many respondents were quick to explain that they circled Paris on the map to indicate that a specific variety or varieties exist there. These respondents were clarifying that they were complying with the instructions for the mapping task, namely "circling any linguistically relevant area." Although they did indeed circle Paris, either due to a perception of suburban language innovation (e.g. verlan, a sort of syllable-reversing talk widely used by immigrants, and which has made many recent additions to the spoken lexicon), or to their perception of the presence of a "Parigot" or "Titi Parisien"

variety, they subsequently stated that they themselves were not speakers of these varieties.

Perhaps most telling about the status of the Parigot or Titi variety are the imitations of them by five different respondents. One respondent could imitate the variety only when she was saying the word "Parigot" itself. The other four imitations used the same line by the actress Arletty from the classic 1938 film, "Hôtel du Nord." The line, apparently quite famous, begins with the actress nearly shouting the words, "Atmosphère! Atmosphère!" Clearly these respondents have little or no contact with the variety they claim is spoken in their own city if they can conjure only this image to describe it. Still, Parigot or Titi Parisien remains a linguistic reference point for many respondents. This reference point may not be strong enough overall to influence ratings in tasks asking about correctness, for example, but it still obviously plays a role in the mental linguistic map that many Parisians carry in their minds.

The Southwest

The southwestern corner of France on the composite map visually presents the most confusing picture of any section. This muddled perspective is echoed in the statistical results: Gascogne and Langue d'Oc, the regions roughly corresponding with this area of the map, fall in with the

largest central K-means group in the correctness task; in the pleasantness task, however, they come together with Provence to form a southern block of highly rated regions. These three also stay in the same K-means group in the degree of difference task. The clutter in the southwest indicates a convergence of many influencing factors: presence of strong historical dialects, large urban centers and emerging economies.

To understand the mixed statistics on this area of France, and the muddled picture accompanying it on the composite map, let us first turn to the urban areas. Their reputations may in part account for this region not belonging more solidly to a "southern" perception. Bordeaux, Toulouse and Bayonne all geographically belong to southern France. Each has a specific quality that may cause many respondents to give it special status.

Bordeaux possesses a long literary heritage, including Montaigne and Montesquieu. Such a reputation explains why respondents may have rated this region higher in correctness. Its literary heritage connects Bordeaux to the literary capitol, Paris, that most correct of all regions. The status of Toulouse as a center of technology is another possible reason for an ambiguous linguistic definition of this region. The Toulouse that is home to the French

aerospace industry stands against the traditional (and especially Parisian) view of the southern part of the hexagon as a backward agrarian society. Finally, Bayonne is identified with the nearby Basque population.

Of the 93 different designations (some respondents made more than one) made in this region, 60 are exclusively placed around one of these latter two cities (Bayonne=29, Toulouse=31). Another 19 designate the Bordeaux region separately. 20 of the remaining designations are various combinations of the three cities. Eight of these respondents delineated all three city areas as one linguistic region, using widely varying labels to designate the region. The other twelve outlined some combination of two of the three city areas. Finally, four respondents designate areas in the southwest of France that contain no cities, three circling the Pyrénées, and one more outlining an area between Bordeaux and Bayonne, but including neither.

Many remarks by respondents, both on maps and in interviews, indicate an uncertainty about how they should characterize this region: Should they view it as a part of the area where southern varieties are spoken, or should it be included in that area of France that has more or less succumbed to standardization? Of those who held the former position (that southwesterners speak a southern variety)

about half depicted this region as having "le même accent qu'à Marseille [the same accent as in Marseille]." This comment was made especially in relation to Toulouse, although an equal number believed that Toulouse has its own particular variety. Apart from the clear designation of the area surrounding Bayonne (12 of the 15 respondents labelling this area use the word basque) it seems that the southwest is a region that, among Parisians, is currently undergoing a shift in perception. That shift is perhaps best summarized in the following commentary (by respondent 47) on the region:

Le seul vrai [accent] qui reste, qui est très reconnu, qui... qu'on peut reconnaître facilement [...] c'est l'accent du sud, de... qui vont... on pourrait presque dire sous la Loire, mais bon, à l'ouest, c'est, comme c'est plus... euh ... comment dirai-je ... c'est plus "parisiennisé" quoi, plus euh, Européénisé à la parisienne, quoi... [The only real (accent) that is widely recognized, that, that one can easily recognize (...) is the accent of the south, of... that go... one could almost say below the Loire, but not quite, in the west, it's, since it's more... um... how should I say? ... it's more "Parisianized", um, more, um, Europeanized in a Parisian way.]

While a shift in perception may be taking place, the southwest should still be considered a region that weighs strongly in the perception of these respondents. Even though they are not in strong agreement as to how to delineate the boundaries in this area, the total of 93

designations of this area on the perceptual map is still the most of any area on the map.

The North

More densely outlined and more clearly delineated than any single part of the Southwestern region is le Nord. In all, 44 respondents delineated this area surrounding the city of Lille. Many labels (17) simply named the variety of this area by the geographical location (e.g. "l'accent du nord"). The second most common label (seven respondents) was the word "Chtimi", or a variant thereof ("Chti, schtimi, etc.). One respondent explained the name for the variety by saying that "Chti" is the regional patois word for "petit". In fact the word "Ch'timi" is formulated from three Picard forms: Ch (definite article), ti (second person singular stressed pronoun, French equivalent "toi"), and mi (first person stressed pronoun, French equivalent "moi"). The word designates not only the regional patois, but the regional inhabitants as well (*Larousse - Dictionnaire de la langue française*, p. 344). The following were used to portray the regional variety: "fort" [strong] (2), "dur" [hard], "lent" [slow] (2), "lentement" [slowly], "trainant" [dragging], "bas" [low], "lourd" [heavy]. Intonation may influence these judgments. The intonation pattern in Northern and Picard French is descending from the beginning, with a

slight rise before a phrase-final drop. When compared to the flat or slightly rising intonation of declarative utterances in a standard French segment, it is not surprising that this variety is considered "low" or "heavy".

Despite the proximity of the region to the Belgian border, only three respondents mention the regional variety as being under any Belgian influence: "belge"; "accent très proche des belges"; "belge un peu." In the rating phases of the study Belgium and Switzerland are the two most stigmatized regions, yet on the mapping phase a relatively small number of respondents (17) delineated any part of Switzerland as a linguistic region, and the number circling Belgium (5) is among the smallest in the study. It is quite probable, given these varying results, that the perceptual boundary represented by an international border was so strong that respondents were reluctant to cross it on the mapping phase.

Taped interviews show strong negative comments about the regional variety in the North as well. The following comment (by respondent 69) typifies those made about the North:

Dans le nord, ils parlent très mal. Ils parlent même pas bien le français de toute façon. Ils parlent ch'timi. Je sais pas comment le définir. On le reconnaît mais, bon, le définir... Euh... [ça ressemble] peut-être à de l'allemand ou même pas. Du belge, ça ressemble à du belge. [In the north they

speak very poorly. They don't even speak French properly, anyway. They speak Ch'timi. I don't know how to define it. It is recognizable but, well, to define it... um... (it's similar) maybe to German, or not even. Belgian, it's similar to Belgian.]

As suggested above in the discussion of the statistical plots for correctness ratings, Picardy seems to have been separated from the North not from linguistic evidence, but because respondents may have felt the need to have an area separating what they perceived to be a very non-standard variety (that of the North) from their own speech (clearly identified in the statistics with the standard). This suggestion receives support from the total absence of reference to Picardy either in interviews or in map labels. Picardy also inevitably shares certain political interests with the Parisian region, which it borders to the south. As also stated above, many people residing in Picardy may work in Paris or its suburbs, and so may have more interest in the political and financial well-being of the capitol than those living closer to the northern industrial center of Lille. In fact the industrial and mining workers of this northernmost corner of France have made it a stronghold for more leftist political parties. The region, therefore, has historically shown itself in defiant opposition to the often conservative Parisian political elite. The largely working class population and its fairly consistent political posture

may be major extra-linguistic factors playing a role in the stigmatized status of this region in Parisian perception.

This relationship of a linguistic perception to a region constantly defiant of Paris is reminiscent of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century references by Rabelais and Molière to Limousin lawyers. The *parlements* in certain provinces were constantly trying to usurp Parisian authority by asserting the autonomy of their judicial decisions. Much of the linguistic legislation of that period was a product of the tension between the Crown and the *parlements*. The perception in literature of lawyers from faraway regions – Dandin, l'écolier limousin, Pourceaugnac – as presumptuous, overambitious outsiders fits in well with this power struggle.

Alsace and Lorraine

Certainly extra-linguistic factors in the perception of this clearly historically charged region cannot be ignored. Alsace and most of Lorraine as a territorial possession changed hands from France to Germany in 1871, Germany to France in 1918, France to Germany in 1940³⁶, and finally Germany to France in 1945. While the region was often named after Alsace (13 labels), and seldom after Lorraine (3 labels), labels more numerous than either referred to its "German-ness." A total of 19 labels included either the

adjective "allemand(e)" or "germanique." These labels were often accompanied by other adjectives that seem more a description of character than of linguistic performance: "strict; rigoureux [strict, rigorous]; dur [hard]."

Adjectives describing phonological traits refer to choppiness, slowness and, again, to German-ness: "tranché (cut); saccadé (jerky); lent (slow); prononciation allemande; consonance allemande; prononciation germanique." No descriptive terms are positive in the labeling of these areas, and some are clearly negative: "Plouc (hick); vulgaire." Finally, one respondent refers to Luxembourg, one states that the speakers of the region are often bilingual, and still another says that the way people in the region speak "ressemble un peu au québécois". Taped interviews echo these labels. Many of the comments on the taped interviews also foretell the statistical results of the other three stages. Clearly the perceived proximity of Alsatien French to German, combined with the existence of a large group of speakers of the Alsatien dialect, has led to a high degree of difference rating. The contention by many respondents that Alsatiens are incomprehensible and use "their own expressions" led to analogously low correctness ratings. The follow-up interviews found respondents forthcoming about their dislike of the Alsatien way of

speaking as well. These comments were, not surprisingly, backed by statistical results in the pleasantness rating phase. Comments made about the Alsace variety were in direct contrast to those about the southern varieties. Where the latter were "sing-songy", "flowing", and "warm", the former were "choppy", "jerky" "cold, and "hard". It is reasonable to assume that such opposite comments would lead to opposite rating results.

An analysis of the phonological traits of the this variety reveals why a speaker of standardized French may qualify it as jerky or choppy. Alsatien French (like American English, for example) is stress-timed and the speed of articulation depends on the number of syllables in each word. Standard French is syllable-timed. For example, a word of more than three syllables in Alsatien French would have alternating strong and weak stress with a weak accent placed on the last syllable. Standard French would stress only the final syllable of a word group, with even stress of all other syllables in a word group. The intonation system of Alsatien French is more elongated and rising in beginning and continuation positions. It has a slight rise and comparatively sharp drop in phrase-final position, as well. The more elongated intonation may also explain why some of the respondents described the variety as slow.

As shown by the discrepancy in numbers of designations on the perceptual maps between the two regions, there seems a preponderance of evidence that Alsace is a far more important referent in the identifying of this linguistic region than is Lorraine. Many factors may be responsible for this difference in status. The capital of Alsace, Strasbourg, is much larger than the two large urban areas in Lorraine, Nancy and Metz, combined. It is therefore likely that Strasbourg receives considerably more media and business attention. Perhaps more importantly, Alsace is one of the few regions of France whose modern administrative borders nearly match its traditional regional borders. It has therefore been able to maintain a certain regional ethnic identity as many of the administrative regions have not. In summary, even though only about one-third the size of Lorraine, and with considerably less population, Alsace has the ingredients necessary to be perceived as a particular linguistic (and cultural) entity: (1) A border with another powerful historical rival nation, Germany (Lorraine partially borders Germany, but about half of its northern border touches Belgium and Luxembourg, and its eastern border is entirely conterminous with Alsace). (2) A large and powerful urban center as its capital. (3) Longstanding traditional borders. It was the same cultural

coherence that allowed Balzac to create such a studied caricature of the French spoken in this region.

Provence

Since Provence was rated at the top in the pleasantness task, yet near the bottom in the correctness task, it should come as no surprise that it is the single area that received the most designations on the perceptual maps. In fact, labels seem to indicate that the region surrounding Marseille and Nice is for many the center of southern speech: 14 respondents labeled the region with a general term for "the south" (*Midi, sud*). Eleven respondents use a form of the word "Provence", with two of these making reference to the Provençal dialect, one calling it a disappearing language, one citing it as the major influence for the regional variety of French. Two other respondents refer to Italian as the external influence that gives the regional variety its distinctive traits. Seven respondents labeled this region on the map with phonological attributes of the variety:

1. "Chantant [singing]" (Two respondents).
2. "Accent chantant de Marseille [Singing accent of Marseille]"
3. "Accent chantant proche de l'Italie [Singing accent close to Italy]"
4. "Entraînant [Dragging]"
5. "Ils font rebondir les mots et traîner les syllabes. [They make words bounce and syllables drag]."
6. "Accentuation vive [lively inflection]"

The following labels were used to evaluate the regional accent as well:

accent populaire; rigolo [funny]; chaleureux [warm]; très fort [very strong]; Pagnol [Movie director, Marcel, who made popular films set in the region]; oh pochère! [imitation of an expression often associated with the region, rough translation: "poor baby!" (sarcastic)]

Contributing to the region's strong showing on the perceptual maps may be the popularity of Provence as a vacation spot. Many of the labels for the variety associate it with warmth and sun. The follow-up interviews reinforce this perception. The following statements are a sampling of those where various respondents stress the relationship between the weather of the region and the way the people speak there. The taped response of respondent 53 typifies comments made:

On se dit: "Ah le midi de la France, les gens, euh, l'accent, c'est chantant, c'est le soleil, etc." [...] Mais on identifie toujours un accent ou bien un langage à l'atmosphère qu'il y fait, au paysage qu'il y a, et c'est vrai que le sud est bien plus joli que le nord, et donc bon, ça explique aussi, les... les résultats. [You say to yourself, "Ah the south of France, the people, um, the accent, it's singing, it's the sun, etc." (...)] But an accent or a language is always identified by the atmosphere that surrounds it, by the countryside there is, and it's true that the south is much more pretty than the north, and that explains the, the results."

These comments not only reflect a perceptual connection between the weather in Provence and the Provençal accent, but also show a willingness to relate climate conditions to language variety in general.

Finally, the taped interviews indicated the strength of the linguistic caricature of this region, because it was the Provençal variety of French that the most respondents readily imitated. While the accuracy of the imitations has not been technically assessed, it is safe to say that respondents who did the imitations concentrated on transforming the nasal vowels of Parisian French into velar nasal consonants, the systematic pronunciation (rather than omission) of the schwa or "unstable e" /ə/, and changing of /r/ from a "back r" to a "front r". Notable during these imitations was that nearly all respondents chose to use profanity in their imitations. Respondent 65 almost refused to imitate, making the following comment:

Il y a aussi un accent ...Et tout de suite, on en vient à des mots grossiers dès qu'on parle [...avec cet accent]. Ils disent "putain" tous les mots, à toutes les phrases ils disent "putain"... [There is also an accent ...and right away we come to dirty words as soon as we speak (...with that accent). They say "putain" ("goddam," "fucking," lit. "whore") at every word, in every sentence they say "putain."³⁷]

Such linking of Provençal French to socially marked language implies a judgment on speakers of the variety as well.

Respondents use language they would otherwise find unacceptable with a stranger (the interviewer) only when imitating this variety. This represents an interesting parallel with Provence's vacation-spot reputation. Respondents consider Provence somewhere a Parisian might go to forget social and professional obligations. Apparently this forgetfulness is extended to language use: the above speaker is the only one who hesitated before using "dirty words", the other imitators had no misgivings about it, as long as they were just doing an imitation.

Several respondents who did not use profanity in these imitations evoked the actor Fernandel, an actor born in Marseille, and chiefly recognized for his comic roles in films during the 30s and 40s. Such a reference is comparable to those of the actress Arletty in relation to the Parisian accent, as discussed above.

In all the rating tasks, Provence is at one extreme of the statistical results, either highest or lowest. It is also the single most delineated region on the perceptual map, and the most referred to and imitated language variety in the interview stage. In other words, whether respondents are asked to discuss it specifically in relation to other regions (as in the rating tasks) or if they bring it up on their own in a discussion of the linguistic environment of

France, it is clearly the most marked region in this study, in so much as markedness is an attribute of difference.

This dual perception of Provence can be compared to Sand's idyllic picture of peasant life. Although Provence is one of the earlier regions to be tied to the French Crown (1481), the economic development of the region has been slower than most of France since the beginning of industrialization. As late as the 1960s – when tourism in the region began transforming from profitable commerce into mega-industry – Provence's economy remained almost entirely agrarian. Many of the more common manifestations of the modern world – running water in homes, telephone lines, etc. – arrived in Provence only after the tourist industry burgeoned. Since Provence was a late-comer to many aspects of modernization – just like the Berry of George Sand's time – the perception of linguistic "pleasantness" in Provence may be tied to a more general perception that the region has remained "unspoiled" by the progress of industry. Pagnol's popularization of the region's rustic quality in film has undoubtedly reinforced this perception. On the other hand, the perception of language correctness remains linked to the presence of a historically prestigious dialect, and the second largest French city (Marseille) as the center of that dialect. It is also interesting to note that Provence,

unlike any other Occitan-speaking region was originally colonized by the Greeks, who also founded the city that is now Marseille in the seventh century B.C. – another example of a very old boundary that still shows a residual effect on perceptions today.

The Strength of the Norm

While Provence displays a strong markedness because of its perceived difference from Parisian French, two regions in the rating tasks show a perception that is even stronger, at least statistically: île de France and Touraine, or the "home group." The statistical strength of the perception of these two regions is manifest in the consistency of the k-means analysis: in the correctness and pleasantness ratings tasks these two cluster together consistently when the k-means function is asked for six, five or four clusters and Champagne (sharing a boundary with the Ile-de-France administrative region) is the only region to be grouped with them in the degree of difference ratings.

The common perception of Tours and the Loire valley as the cradle of standard French is confirmed by the labels given to these areas on the perceptual map. The following is an inventory of all labels given by the 18 respondents (11 around Tours and 7 others very nearby) that outlined a region on this part of the map:

"Touraine (2 respondents); Touraine, le meilleur français [the best French]; français pur (2 respondents) [pure French]; français + [le plus] pur [the purest French]; en principe: français pur [normally: pure french]; sans accent (2 respondents) [no accent]; le langage à l'origine du français national [language at the origin of national French]; Peu d'accent [little accent]; accent tourangeot; Berri; Berry (2 respondents); Loiret."

These last five respondents are the only ones who indicate the existence of a non-standard variety in these regions. Four of these last five are represented on map 3 by a small circle to the northeast of Tours. The name "Berry" refers to a feudal Duchy, whose sovereigns occasionally played important roles in royal politics during the middle ages. This was also the name of one of the provinces before the Revolution. Clearly most of the remaining labels in this area are consistent with the notion of Tours as the center of standardness.

Without the Touraine and Berry delineations, map 3 would have a wide section of blank space on all sides of the Loire River. Obviously, the great majority (more than 80%) of individual maps indeed show this wide empty area. Respondents were asked to comment on what these spaces represent linguistically. Their responses were quite similar to the labels given for the Touraine:

"Pas d'accent (5 respondents) [no accent]; Pas d'accent spécifique [no specific accent]; plat, parisien, pas d'accent parce que c'est mon accent [flat, Parisian, no

accent because it's my accent]; accent neutre [neutral accent]; on ne peut pas entendre l'accent [the accent can't be heard]; un accent mais bon, comme nous, hein? [they have an accent but, well, like us, you know?]; pareil qu'à Paris [same as in Paris]; ils parlent comme moi [they speak like me]; le meilleur français [the best French]; C'est le centre de la France où on parle le meilleur français [It's the center of France where they speak the best French]; Les espaces blancs sont comme Paris [the blank spaces are like Paris]; unitaire, accent pas prononcé [unitary, the accent is not marked]; léger accent [slight accent]; un accent moins tranché [a less defined accent]; pas d'accent très marqué [no really marked accent]; un accent moins marqué [a less marked accent]; Je ne connais pas bien cette région (6 respondents) [I'm not very familiar with this region]; un peu tout pareil [pretty much all the same]; un continuum d'accents [a continuum of accents]; C'est la campagne [it's the country]; C'est les paysans, ils roulent les 'r' [It's country people, they roll their 'r']."

The majority of these respondents see this region as the center for the French linguistic norm. This view may be more conscious (respondents saying the French is "best" there) or less so (those saying the speakers in the region have "no accent"), but it is beyond doubt among the strongest perceptions held by these respondents. The combined strength of the statistical results and the large number of respondents identifying Paris and the Loire region with the standard in interviews and on maps easily put it on even footing with Provence as a force in the linguistic perception of these respondents.

The blank places on the maps are also the blind-spot in literary manifestations of linguistic perceptions. Authors

who assert the Parisian norm as the best or most pure form of French do so tacitly, just as respondents left the map blank. Writing in the Parisian standard, as the authors we examine did, creates an image of this language as an *a priori* condition upon which variation takes place. Treating norms as objective realities rather than positions to argue from is the most silent and strongest type of adherence.

CHAPTER THREE: Characterizing the norm

Section 1: Descriptions of the standard

Close study of the interview comments on the region identified with the linguistic norm in chapter one reveals a mostly negative definition of the norm. Descriptive terms mostly indicate what the accent of the region is not, rather than what it is. Labels that mark a lack of accent are also present on the perceptual maps, although they are outnumbered by labels including the modifier *pur*. The choice of *pur* highlights the abstract quality of the norm. The following dictionary definitions (*Petit Robert*, 1992) of *pur* reveal why the norm may have such status:

Sans mélange [without mixture]; Qui ne doit rien à l'expérience [owing nothing to experience]; Qui s'interdit toute préoccupation étrangère à sa nature spécifique [that which allows itself no preoccupations foreign to its specific nature]; Sans défaut d'ordre moral, sans corruption, sans tache [without moral fault, without corruption, without stain]. (p.1567)

Of course applying any of these definitions to a living language reveals the absurdity of the notion of language purity. The same French educational system that identifies Tours as the center for the norm also teaches that French was derived from the contact of Latin with Germanic and Celtic languages. This fact alone eliminates the possibility that there could be a French "sans mélange ou préoccupation étrangère à sa nature spécifique." The practicality of language excludes the possibility of a language "qui ne doit rien à l'expérience." Arguments of moral superiority or unblemished linguistic conduct of Touraine speakers and speech could be easily dismissed with surreptitiously recorded conversations of Touraine speakers. Recordings would not, however, eliminate or explain the myth and how speakers perceive it.

The strong presence of royalty and aristocracy in Touraine is well known. This information alone, however, does not explain why the perceptual center for the norm would be historically displaced from Paris. Lodge (1993) suggests further historical and political grounds for the establishment of the Touraine as center for the norm. The fifteenth and sixteenth century Parisian elite may have wished to distance the linguistic point of reference from the Parisian working class which they both loathed and

feared. The choice of the region southwest of Paris was political as well: members of the Parisian elite wished to dissociate themselves from political rival speakers of the northern Picard dialects. Such political factors and a lack of convincing evidence linking upper-class Parisian and the regional dialect of Touraine lead to the conclusion that this choice was not arbitrary, but that it had little to do with language (see Lodge, 1993, 167-69).

Aside from historico-political reasons and the perpetuation of the Touraine myth in French education, many spatial factors could explain the persistence of Tours as the perceptual center for the norm. If we look again at the composite perceptual map, we can see how Tours remains a prime location for "uncorrupted" and "unmixed" language. The corrupting influence of large urban centers is far removed. Tours is at about an equal distance from Lyons, Bordeaux and Paris. It is far enough west to be immune from German or Burgundian influence, yet far enough east to escape contamination from Breton.³⁸ It is clearly too far south to fall under the sway of the northern dialects, yet well north of the strong perceptual boundary of the southern Occitan dialects. Tours also lies in the Loire river valley, well-known for its historical connections to French royalty, and as the center of activity for Joan of Arc,

considered the savior of the French nation and a symbol of the French national spirit. As a middle-sized city, it is free from stigma as a "rural" area without being too "urban." Apart from well established vineyards, Touraine as a whole is not regarded as an agricultural region with the stature of Normandy or Burgundy, so it has escaped the agricultural reputation of the "rural" regions discussed in chapter above. In short, much like the negatively defined linguistic norm and the adjective *pur*, Touraine can be spatially defined by its unmarkedness — by what it is not rather than by what it is. It is neither north nor south, neither east nor west, neither rural nor urban, neither agricultural nor industrial, etc...

The valorization of an (imaginary) unmarked form of the language over other forms is common in standardized languages. We can agree that the norm "ne recouvre aucune réalité empirique et ne pourrait être décrit par des enquêtes empiriques aussi bien menées et rigoureusement planifiées qu'elles fussent [fits no empirical reality and could not be described by empirical studies, as well conducted and rigorously planned as they might be]" and that such an ideal, constructed norm "est le propre de toute norme [is the distinctive feature of all norms]" (Valdman, 221). What is unique to the findings of the present study

is the perceptual strength that the norm shows. While empirically non-existent,³⁹ perceptually it seems the norm is a palpable entity. Contrary to the present study, linguistic perception studies in other speech communities have generally shown the largest perceptual weight falling on marked varieties. The firm strength of the norm in French linguistic perception must have important psychological outcomes. Since the norm is definable only by its difference from actual performance,⁴⁰ speakers in general must possess a negative image of the way they themselves speak even though (as with the Parisian respondents of the present study) they have high linguistic security in relation to speakers from other regions. To the common devaluation of regional and social varieties as deviants from the norm, French society has added that of the vernacular in general:

The vernacular is associated, in the lay-person's mind at least, with low-status groups in society and with ignorance and laziness: whereas use of the vernacular comes effortlessly (by definition), skill in manipulating the language varieties required for formal discourse can only be acquired through a considerable period of training. (Lodge 1994, 62)

This statement defines what is perhaps the most prevalent view of what constitutes language expertise in French society: the ability accurately to construct formal discourse. The most formal variety of language (again by

definition) is written. Of course the privileging of written language and the stigmatization of spoken language are not unique to France. The results of the present study, however, indicate a continuing (at least tacit) acceptance of traditional linguistic hierarchies that find their authority increasingly challenged in many other speech communities.

First-language instruction in French schools (especially in reference to writing) stresses the impossibility of attaining complete correctness. A formula well-known to French students exemplifies French perception of their linguistic norm. In a grading system where 20 is a perfect score, "20 est réservé pour dieu, 19 pour le professeur [20 is reserved for God, 19 for the teacher]." Although this formula is true for all subject matters, it refers specifically to tasks that involve writing. It is perceived as possible (albeit difficult) to attain perfect scores for tasks involving only mathematical equations or proofs, for example.

In summary, language expertise (or the perception of it) can be characterized as the ability to manipulate the written norm to near perfection. Since the norm itself is only a perceptual (and not empirical) reality, any actual linguistic performance that meets the standards of the norm

is impossible. Even though it has no basis in empirical reality, the norm is arguably the strongest single linguistic perception in French society. We will now examine what at first glance are perplexing results from the rating phases of the present study.

Section 2: The correctness phase - dissenters

As made clear above and in chapter one, the norm represents an extremely strong perception for the respondents of this study. 18 respondents (24%), however, excluded themselves from the statistical data of correctness ratings, because they either 1) refused to rate any of the regions based on correctness; or 2) chose to give all regions an equal rating for correctness. Given the statistical strength accorded the norm, this inability to rate the regions was surprising. When seen in other studies (e.g. Hartley, to appear) such refusal indicated a challenge to the notion of correctness. The refusals in the present study, if based on notions of equality among linguistic varieties ("all varieties are of equal correctness"), would represent a strong counter-current to the statistical results of those who did choose to do the task, as well as the labels and layout of the perceptual maps which seem to back up those statistics.

There is no consistency of gender, age or socioeconomic status within the group of abstainers, so these factors could shed no light on their unwillingness to differentiate between the regions on the basis of correctness.⁴¹ Except two who also abstained from the pleasantness rating phase, these particular respondents displayed no idiosyncratic behavior in the mapping or other rating phases. Most of them account for their reluctance to perform the correctness rating task in the taped interview phase. Their statements in taped interviews reveal their awareness of the norm.⁴²

Respondents' comments show that their reluctance to perform the correctness task stems not from a disagreement with the concept of correctness, but rather from a flaw in the design of the task. Correctness for these respondents is a matter not of regional but of social distinction.⁴³

Respondents do not dispute the presence or validity of a linguistic norm. The regions as criteria for correctness judgments lead them to give homogeneous ratings. For these respondents each region presumably has a fairly even distribution of correct and incorrect speakers. According to respondents' comments it would be a mistake to consider the perception of the norm less strong in these respondents than in those who performed the correctness ratings without hesitation.

Some respondents expressed reluctance to rate the various regions because they did not want to seem discriminatory. Again, none of their comments specifically deny the notion of a norm. The statements by respondents 12 and 72, "le français est correct" and "c'est toujours du français" seem to express a kind of intrinsic correctness in French, regardless of how it is spoken. Regional varieties represent variations of an underlying consistent system. Respondents 2 and 4 reveal their view that no one speaks in the norm – respondent 2 stating that people in other regions make "no more mistakes" than Parisians, respondent 4 finding it "fortunate" that no one speaks completely correctly. Many of these respondents gave all regions a mark below seven to signify that no one speaks correctly.

Two respondents stated that correct speech cannot be evaluated because it is no longer present. Correct French should be associated with the past. Respondent 32 implies the primacy of written forms by associating correctness with the pronunciation of "all the letters." Respondent 65 echoes the sentiment of the eighteenth century grammarians who "increasingly turned away from current usage" (Lodge 1993, 181) to anchor the norm in an idealized linguistic past. It is not necessary to seek out the writings of eighteenth century grammarians to find such a nostalgic view

of the norm, however. In his 1991 introduction to Rivarol's *L'Universalité de la langue française* Jean Dutourd (member of the *Académie* since 1978) writes:

"[Le] 18^e siècle fut l'âge d'or de la grammaire. Les illettrés eux-mêmes respectaient la concordance des temps. Les pêcheurs de la Grenouillère n'hésitaient pas à employer l'imparfait du subjonctif quand il le fallait. Qui ferait montre aujourd'hui d'un tel courage? Les salons (mais sait-on, aujourd'hui, ce que pouvait représenter un salon?) ne le cédaient en rien aux marchands de bois de la paroisse du Gros-Caillou: on parlait encore mieux chez les Polignac et les Montremart [The 18th century was the golden age of grammar. Even illiterates respected tense agreement. The fishermen of la Grenouillère did not hesitate to use the imperfect subjunctive when necessary. Who would display such courage today? The salons (but is it known today what a salon could represent?) were no better than the wood sellers of the Gros-Caillou parish: they spoke even better in the houses of Polignac and Montremart]" (Rivarol, 12-13).

Although they may not conform to the needs of the rating task, the views expressed by the nostalgic respondents support the statistical results showing a strong perception of the norm. In fact, of the entire group of abstainers from the correctness task, only one (respondent 30) intellectually challenges the notion of correctness in linguistic performance. The same respondent's statement about the pleasantness task hints that her hesitation relates to epistemological issues rather than to questions of the existence or authority of the linguistic norm. She seems most concerned about making seemingly objective

ratings based on her own (highly subjective) experiential knowledge:

Respondent 30: "J'ai eu un problème [pour le mot 'agréable'] parce que c'est la même chose que le mot 'correct' – c'est très subjectif et un peu péjoratif [...] et en effet on a un petit peu du mal à s'avancer parce qu'on devrait pas paraître discriminatoire mais bon, c'est vrai qu'il y a des accents qui subjectivement me paraissent moins chantant et moins agréables que d'autres [I had a problem [with the word 'pleasant'] because it's the same as the word 'correct' – it's very subjective and a little pejorative [...] and I have a little trouble pursuing this topic because we shouldn't appear discriminatory but anyway, it's true that there are accents that subjectively seem to me less singing and less pleasant than others]."

The respondent's hedging (i.e. the reiterations of the subjective nature of her judgments: *très subjectif*; *subjectivement me paraissent*) indicates uneasiness with the scientific appearance of the study, which she perceives as a mismatch to her purely subjective responses. Such hedging was common among respondents.

The insecurity of many respondents might arise not from mistrust of their own linguistic perceptions – the common reference to their own experience as authoritative indicates confidence in accounts of linguistic performance – but from a traditional French view that devalues knowledge based on experience in favor of knowledge obtained through analysis, systematization and codification. Because it is socially and culturally legitimated this latter type of knowledge maintains a higher truth value. In the case of language,

legitimacy lies largely with formulators and codifiers of the norm. Linguists have energetically attempted to dispel ideologies that privilege one language or variety over others. It appears that these efforts have been at best marginally successful if their influence over the respondents of the present study is any indication. Such attempts at deconstructing traditional epistemological hierarchies are present in other fields of human study. The linguistic perceptions and judgments of these respondents often imply issues that reach through the realm of the regional into the social.

CONCLUSION TO PART TWO

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how the different phases of this study complement each other in creating a clearer picture of the linguistic perceptions of a set of respondents. The mapping phase allows us to take a first look at how subjects react to geographical, space with as few leading questions as possible. Although the map used in this phase had very little detail, the results suggest that the inclusion of so many cities may have led respondents to outline areas they may otherwise have not. Future dialect perception studies on France should strongly consider eliminating most or all cities from the perceptual map given to respondents. Despite this shortcoming, the

perceptual mapping phase did provide information that would not have been readable in the statistics of the rating phases alone. The best example of information invisible in the statistics, yet easily discernible on the composite perceptual map, is the confused picture of the southwestern corner of France.

The rating phases, on the other hand, allowed us to see results that might have been masked in the perceptual mapping phase. By naming specific regions on the questionnaire, the rating tasks directed respondents' thought toward questions that they had perhaps not consciously considered before. The clearest example of results in the ratings that may have been unnoticed in the mapping is the extremely strong perception of the Parisian and Touraine norm. The rating tasks highlighted important results that would have been missed by simply assuming that blank or sparsely marked spaces on the perceptual map indicated a lack of clear linguistic perception.

Finally, the taped interviews helped steer the researcher toward answers to difficult questions raised in the statistical outlays and on the perceptual maps. Examples of such clarification are the comments by respondents about the North and Brittany, that reflected the ambiguous position of these regions in the minds of many

respondents. Respondents' uncertainty about the status of these regions is not observable in the mapping and rating phases.

The information provided in this chapter represents only a small part of the issues that the qualitative and quantitative data raise. Questions about folk definitions of linguistic terms (*patois*, *dialecte*, *parler*), and the refusal of certain respondents to perform certain tasks (most specifically the correctness task) are not addressed in this chapter. Other issues, such as the rural/urban animosity displayed in many respondents, are alluded to only briefly. Subsequent chapters will look more deeply into some of these questions as we begin to relate this study to a wider cultural picture.

Given the strength of some linguistic perceptions (e.g., the norm, the caricaturized southern, rural and Parisian varieties), it seems likely that linguistic perception plays a strong role in linguistic performance. If widely held perceptions stigmatize certain varieties, speakers are likely to recognize such overt markedness by adjustments either toward or away from these varieties. Many linguists (e.g., Gumperz 1972) have investigated the influence of ingroup and outgroup identification in the language variation. Discoveries about linguistic perception

made in most studies have been considered secondary to questions of social status and the linguistic performance that accompanies it. Speakers who shift styles based on situation or ingroup solidarity do so based not only on the desire to "fit in" with situation or group, but also on the perception that a certain speech style will help accomplish that goal. Motivation and perception go hand in hand. Given the universality of linguistic perception (i.e., everyone has some perceptions about who uses what language where) few if any linguistic events take place without consideration of participants' views of language. Any study concerned with language use could profit from knowledge of language perception patterns. Sociolinguists studying specific variables or literary critics studying the artistic use of language style can gain valuable insight from awareness of language perception and its manifestations.

By the same token, to make our study useful to a larger audience, we should seek to relate linguistic perception studies such as this one to other fields. The numerous questions raised and the answers (fully or partially) produced by simple analysis of the data here attest not only to the richness of such data, but also to the necessity for further investigation into linguistic perception and how it mirrors social outlooks and constructions. It is evident

that one's linguistic perception is not simply the linguistic component of an overall world view, but also the vehicle through which many other prejudices and prejudices are expressed.

CONCLUSION

Linguistic perception and linguistic expertise

We saw in part two that many respondents were able to describe specific characteristics or global traits of regional varieties with some accuracy. Such descriptors as "saccadé [jerky]" can be attributed to specific differences between the respondents' variety and the variety they are describing. In such cases the linguist can explain the source of these perceptions by a simple comparative analysis of the respondent's variety and the variety assessed. The linguist's task is translation. By explaining the respondent's description in scientific terms the linguist can either legitimate or discredit it.

Labov (1975) claims that folk-linguistic knowledge cannot be valid because non-linguists lack the linguistic terminology needed for accurate description. Such a statement implies that knowledge of expert terminology is one factor that separates expertise from non-expertise, at least in language study. It also highlights the dichotomy

between these two types of knowledge. This dichotomy is common to most fields of knowledge. Labov's statement is questionable because it simultaneously privileges the study of language as object and discounts the important role of meta-linguistic knowledge (however lacking in terminology it might be) in speakers' judgments of others' linguistic performance.⁴⁴ It also discounts the unique value of a lifetime of direct observation, at least of one's own dialect.

The essential elements distinguishing non-expert knowledge from expert knowledge are systemization and specialization. Systems of knowledge, according to at least one definition, are separate from everyday understanding:

Systems of knowledge dictate thinking and action concerned with the nature of the world and are limited to this subject only. Habitual actions, customary actions, and other ordinary day-to-day activities do not usually call up questions about the nature of the world or require explanations of connections in the world and are not subjects of concern for systems of knowledge (Willer, 17).

Regular contact with language is not sufficient (nor even necessary, by this definition!) to constitute systematic knowledge of language. Linguistic perception based on daily contact with language is not only ineligible for consideration as expertise, it does not even qualify as a system of knowledge. The expert/non-expert dichotomy also

relies on the specialization of individuals in a particular field requiring technical knowledge not available to the lay person without specific training. To be socially validated, specialization or expert status must be recognized by the scientific or intellectual establishment bearing the authority to bestow legitimacy (see Sassower).

The establishment of a field of expertise identified with the French language dates to the original commission of the *Académie*.⁴⁵ Of course other areas that could be equated with this expertise have emerged since 1635: philology and linguistic geography in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and more recently, fields of theoretical and applied linguistics. The prescriptions of the *Académie*, however, remain the most recognized single linguistic authority in France today, even though many of their current pronouncements are popularly recognized as reactionary and arbitrary.⁴⁶

The societal impact of the expert/non-expert distinction is bound to be much greater on language than on other disciplines, since everyone uses language. It may be reasonable to speak of expertise and authority in applied nuclear physics or auto mechanics since these fields require specialized training and understanding that few people obtain. Such specialists are justified in giving expert

instructions or advice relating to their respective fields. Everyone, however, acquires language. An individual's grasp of language may be more automatic and complex than any other understanding obtained during a lifetime. No field of study where expertise is socially sanctioned has such a large number of highly skilled and knowledgeable non-experts. Labov's remark paraphrased above could lead us to conclude that much expertise in "non-language" fields is only a refinement of linguistic skills in the expert's area. What results from the expert/non-expert dichotomy regarding language? Certainly language as a field is not immune to "the myth of expertise" (Sassower, 64). The strong perception of the linguistic norm (as codified by the Académie) makes it appear that linguistic authority is socially legitimated. Such acceptance of expertise "has an immediate pragmatic consequence since it suggests that only experts can and should make decisions about their specialty, and that only experts in the same field may judge each other's decisions. [... Non-experts] seem unqualified to be external reviewers of the decisions of experts, for they do not possess the specialized knowledge that qualifies experts to make certainty claims." (Sassower, 65). This consequence is less influential on daily human activity when considered from the standpoint of nuclear physics which has

as few practitioners as experts. Language is a field, however, where the numbers of practitioners far outweigh those with expert status, and where expert status is conferred to many and varying practitioners of language. Many professionals— lawyers, psychologists, politicians — owe their professional status to their expertise in language. Literature is the most palpable manifestation, however, of language as expertise and expertise as language. Attributing to literature the authority of expertise in language is another way of pointing out its role as a receptacle for and creator of linguistic perceptions.

Whoever were the perceived authorities for the respondents in the study outlined in chapter one, most respondents made it clear during the rating phases that they themselves were non-experts. Some respondents remarked that they did not know the correct answers on the rating phases, but that they would do their best. Some felt it important to point out that they were giving only their opinion and that their responses should not be considered factual. Others wrote comments on the rating sheets explaining that if they did not know the answer they would mark 4 for the region in question. Many of the verbal disclaimers are purely anecdotal evidence because they were made as asides

to the researcher while rating tasks were being performed and the tape recorder was off.

Respondents occasionally stated their own expert status. When they did so, the authority invoked was invariably their own experience. If they had visited a region, or had relatives that spoke with the variety of that region, they were more at ease in describing the variety in question. On the questionnaires, respondents were asked to mark the regions from the rating lists that they had visited for one week or more. During the design of the research project this information seemed important for correlating amount of detail offered with time spent in regions. Because only two respondents marked fewer than eight of the 24 regions used in the study, no specific correlation could be made: with so many regions marked, it was impossible to determine (unless the respondent stated so specifically) whether or not detail offered was a direct result of experience in a given region. Future studies should not only elicit which regions have been visited for a given period (the "one week or more" requirement was admittedly arbitrary), but also ask respondents to name specific regions with which they have greater familiarity.

Despite the shortcomings of the project design, we can make one general observation about respondents' self-

assessment of expertise. Respondents considered themselves experts only in descriptive tasks (the mapping phase and follow-up interviews). They frequently deferred expertise during prescriptive tasks (rating phases). The prescriptive character of language expertise revealed by this observation suggests that it is not only authoritative (as with most expertise) but also authoritarian. In most sciences expertise is as much experience as it is education. We tend to trust the judgments of a doctor of medicine with 20 years of experience more than we would those of a young intern just out of medical school. In the case of language we can all claim virtually equal amounts of experience on the whole, especially in speaking and listening. Expertise in language requires valorization of certain linguistic experiences/styles over others. Western societies commonly privilege reading and writing over speaking and listening.

(Language) Perception and (social) knowledge

Many socially sanctioned institutions of knowledge privilege objective theoretical knowledge over experientially or perceptually based knowledge. At least one sociologist, in a study aimed at determining the roots of social knowledge shows a similar bias in her own method:

This work is theoretical; the theory and facts for it are clearly distinguished. Theory provides generality without ambiguity of empirical generalization because it is rationally constructed to be exact. Theory thus

makes exact differentiation between phenomena possible. But, even more importantly, theory provides an objectivity not possible when analysis is made solely on the basis of our perceptions. [...] The use of formal theory makes objectivity at least possible. (Willer, 8)

Willer's intention is to eliminate the researcher's biases in formulating a theory of the social determination of knowledge. Her study design unwittingly privileges one definition of social knowledge over others because she chooses one of the objects of her study (a socially legitimated theoretical mode of inquiry) as her primary tool for understanding socially determined modes of knowledge. She thus undermines her project from the outset. In studies that involve human behavior it is however unlikely that such biases can be avoided entirely.

While subjectivity in research with human subjects cannot be entirely eliminated, researchers undertaking empirical studies of human behavior have directly addressed the questionable status of objectivity. In his work on Japanese dialectology, Grootaers realized that dialectologists who claimed to base linguistic boundaries on the performance of speakers often used their own cultural perceptions as starting points for dialect investigations (see Grootaers, 1959). Grootaers addresses his concern about researcher bias in the only way possible: he allows

speakers of the language to identify dialect boundaries. The reasoning behind his decision is simple: since dialect boundaries must be subjective, they should at least reflect the perceptions of the speaking subjects, rather than those of the researcher. Labov (1972) discusses what he calls the "observer's paradox" in sociolinguistic studies: by eliciting targeted linguistic items the researcher necessarily draws the subject's attention to her/his linguistic behavior, thus spoiling the authenticity of the very object of the study – speech taking place in its natural environment.⁴⁷ Robinson (1975) voices concern that sociolinguistic studies whether diachronic or synchronic may overlook several layers of social reality in reporting results. He argues for multiple methodologies to account for divergence between objective and phenomenological realities.

The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has also been preoccupied with the precariousness of claims to objectivity. His work La Distinction parallels dialect perception studies because it examines social perceptions – specifically those created by ownership and knowledge of artistic goods. Language style clearly fits into such a discussion since like artistic consumption it can be (at least perceptually) recognized as a marker of social status.

Like language style, a culturally defined object such as "taste" viewed in relationship with social distinctions is too easily perceived as unambiguous. Bourdieu cautions us against relying on the self-evidence of social phenomena:

Mais on n'en finit pas avec les évidences: c'est l'interrogation même qu'il faut interroger – c'est-à-dire le rapport à la culture qu'elle privilégie tacitement – afin d'établir si une modification du contenu et de la forme de l'interrogation ne suffirait pas à déterminer une transformation des relations observées [But we never finish with obviousness: it is the investigation itself that must be investigated – that is the relationship that it tacitly privileges – in order to establish whether a modification of the content and form of the investigation would not suffice for determining a transformation of the observed relationships]. (Bourdieu 10)

In order to eliminate subjectivity as much as possible from social analysis, we must recognize its necessary place in the framework of our investigations, and avoid the "false polarization of 'subjective' versus 'objective'." (Robbins, 128)

Taking his own advice in his analysis of the social role of works of art, Bourdieu found that understanding the social significance of works of art meant not only focusing on producer, production and product in the realm of art, but also (and perhaps more so) on the messages of social identity that guide their consumption. The social distinction that accompanies ownership (in the proprietary and intellectual senses) is capital in the market of social

perception. This distinction is not only a product of aesthetic appreciation, but also one of its (tacit or explicit) goals.

The status of the art work as a sign of social distinction is paralleled in language code and style switching. Milroy (1980) demonstrates the relationship of language style to models of social networking. Gumperz and Hymes (1972) and Gumperz (1982) show how language functions as marker of in-group status or solidarity. Bourdieu perceives a similar relationship between socially established language hierarchies and the system of artistic consumption that clearly demarcates social distinctions. Social equality is characterized in language as opposite or even the enemy of autonomous artistic production and refined consumption of cultural objects. Bourdieu notes the complicity of legitimated language in the perpetuation of social difference:

On pourrait ainsi évoquer toute la charge sociale du langage légitime et, par exemple, les systèmes de valeurs éthiques et esthétiques qui sont déposés, prêts à fonctionner, de manière quasi automatique, dans les couples d'adjectifs antagonistes ou la logique même du langage savant dont toute la valeur réside dans un écart, c'est-à-dire dans la distance par rapport aux manières de parler simples et communes [One could thus evoke the entire social duty of legitimate language and, for example, the systems of ethical and aesthetic values that are set down, ready to function, in an almost automatic way, in pairs of antagonistic adjectives where the very logic of learned language whose entire value lies in a *disparity*, that is in the

distance relative to simple and common ways of speaking]. (p. 250)

According to this point of view language is both symbol representing the distance between and differentiation of social classes and the system that creates and perpetuates these differences and separation. Bourdieu's position on the role of language echoes the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in both its weak (language represents social and psychological reality) and strong (language creates social and psychological reality) versions. He claims that the modifiers forming oppositional couples as part of the "appareillage conceptuel du jugement de goût [conceptual machinery of taste judgments]" are extremely weak, making them perfect for the expression of that which is undefinable, namely taste. The separateness of elite social classes from the masses is most often implied rather than explicit in oppositions present in the language system "— puisqu'il s'agit de système des évidences et des présupposés admis comme allant de soi [since this is a system of obviousness and presupposition admitted as self-evident]" (Bourdieu, 548). Multiple meanings and substitutability of oppositional couples reinforce the imprecision and consequently the effectiveness of the social definition of taste. Imprecision allows definition of social limits to

remain implicit because it obscures the value judgment attached to terms defining social borders by including the possibility of value neutral opposites. That social boundaries are implicit makes them difficult to oppose because their appearance of self-evidence makes resistance seem irrational. Actual social limits are reinforced by the appearance of neutrality which validates them as objective:

Les limites objectives [des divisions sociales] deviennent *sens des limites*, anticipation pratique des limites objectives acquise par l'expérience des limites objectives, *sense of one's place* qui porte à s'exclure (biens, personnes, lieux, etc.) de ce dont on est exclu [Objective limits [of social divisions] become a *sense of limits*, a practical anticipation of the objective limits acquired by experiencing objective limits, a sense of one's place that leads us to exclude ourselves from (goods, people, places, etc.) those things which we are excluded from] (549).

The social order is maintained by the experience of members of the society because it takes on "toutes les apparences de la nécessité objective [all the appearances of objective necessity]" (550).

Applying Bourdieu's vision of the formation and maintenance of social boundaries to respondents of the present study, we begin to understand the position of the linguistic norm within a larger framework. Respondents in this study clearly sense the existence of a linguistic norm. They consistently described the norm negatively, choosing to say what it is not, rather than what it is. Acknowledgments

of the otherness of the linguistic norm often accompanied these negative descriptions. Standard language was placed by respondents at a distance physically (in the Touraine), temporally (in the more or less distant past) and socially (in other social classes, among the more learned, etc.) and accordingly seldom referred to in the here and now. The overall characterization of the norm by these respondents therefore parallels Bourdieu's conception of the realization of social borders. They perceive the norm as implicit or self-evident (hence the largely negative definitions) and when they defined it positively, modifiers (e.g., "pure") implied opposites (e.g., "tainted, corrupt") that condemn language usage outside the norm but also maintain imprecision because of other less value-laden opposites (e.g., "practical, mixed"). Finally, the large majority of respondents explicitly excluded themselves from access to the norm because of their own sense of limits - their implicit understanding that they reside on the opposite side of a social boundary from those who speak or write standard French.

NOTES

1. While grade-school textbooks and cultural lore often make Tours the standard-bearer of the linguistic norm (the mythical "pure" language standard) the economic, artistic, political and social supremacy of Paris makes it the center for the "real" or "performance" norm.

2. These concepts are first introduced by Fishman and later summarized in Fasold, 1984, pp. 3-5 .

3. 'H' and 'L' stand for "high" and "low" language. They are intended as value-neutral terms useful in describing a diglossic situation. As the political strength of Paris grew, the *francien* dialect gradually evolved to replace Latin as the H dialect.

4. Lodge (1993 and 1994) represents a notable exception to this general tendency.

5. A couple examples from English: the re-introduction of the pronunciation of /t/ in "often" and the hypercorrective use of the subject pronoun "I" in prepositional phrases. A French example: the widespread (and prescriptively incorrect) use of the subjunctive mood after the conjunction "après que", by analogy with its use after "avant que" – conjunctions that require the subjunctive are a favorite staple of French prescriptivist grammarians.

6. Although the purpose of this chapter is not to give a social history of French – such histories have been written – we occasionally refer to important historical moments in linguistic policy or social trends to highlight the environment in which were written the literary works being treated.

7. See Montaigne, 662.

8. Rabelais, 232-3.

9. *La Petite Fadette*, *Les Maîtres sonneurs*, *François le champi*, and *La Mare au diable*.

10. Caput (p. 116) shows an *indice de notoréité* which gives a seat-by-seat list of celebrity occupants in the *Académie* up to 1977. Of the 55 historical celebrities named 28 are known as literary figures. The other 27 are divided among political figures (9), scientists (6),

philosophers/theologists (5), grammarians/philologists (3) and historians (2).

11. Disdain for the Académie within France is not universal. The Académie has responded to a changing literary landscape by inducting several authors from North Africa and the Caribbean. The Académie's (and literature's) influence in standardization of French is mostly symbolic, with little effect on actual performance. In practice, implementation of Ministry of Education policies, both within France and abroad – heavy-handed methods used to force children away from using their native language in schools – probably had the greatest impact in the establishment of a powerful linguistic norm. The distinction between Ministry of education policy and the linguistic edicts of the Académie is not always clear. For example Grévisse's *Le français correct: guide pratique* (1973), a manual used and often referred to by teachers in the French school system, contains complete accounts of the Académie's stance on each specific grammatical item – citing it as one among various authorities. It reports the latest policy of the Ministry of Education in an appendix, outside the main body of the text. Whatever the case, the focus here is not so much what causes changes in language performance, but rather how those changes are legitimated through such bodies as the Académie and the literary community. Caput's assessment of the status of the Académie certainly exaggerates public sentiment for the body.

12. The reader approaches reading a legitimated novel (no matter what the modalities of the legitimation) from a different standpoint than reading a newspaper article or a non-legitimated form of fiction – comic strips or detective fiction, for example. The perceptual framework surrounding written material in general – given the superior status of writing – is laden with expectations that are not present in judgments of speech. These expectations are amplified when the material has been (socially, individually) dubbed literature. Understanding these expectations requires placing linguistic perception within the framework of modalities that shape discourse and allow us to analyse it. This kind of detailed study lies outside the scope of the present study. To explain fully the portrayal and characterization of non-standard language and speakers in literature will nonetheless require occasional references to the presumed readership or audience of a given work.

13. For example, phonetically, standard /ɛ/ becomes /a/; the nasal vowel corresponding to /ɛ/ also becomes nasalised /a/; /n/ often becomes /ɲ/ particularly in word initial position the /l/ in 'quelque' is dropped; /r/ is often dropped. Grammatically, standard third-person plural ending '-ent' becomes '-ont' ; first person singular and plural are often the same, etc.

14. "Une série de questions relatives aux patois et aux mœurs des gens de la campagne [a series of questions relative to the dialects and habits of country people]" (Kibbee, 5).

15. Partially filling the gap for the *Académie* during the Revolution and First Empire years was the *Académie Grammaticale*, which was founded in 1807 and met 83 times before its dissolution in 1811.

16. The French-only policy in primary education surfaced no less than five times in the *Assemblée* as a subject of debate or amendment during the two-year period between the decrees. Debate concerning French as mandatory in public documents was also fairly common during this period.

17. This maintenance of Napoleonic policies is not surprising. Louis XVIII's Charter – his constitutional document defining the Bourbon Restoration – was a moderate document designed to assimilate many Napoleonic and revolutionary changes.

18. The *Association Bretonne* was founded in 1829, suppressed, and then re-founded in 1834. The *Académie Bardique* was founded in 1855.

19. The name patois itself derives from "pâte", referring to the muck in which medieval peasants lived, as opposed to the cleaner French speaking nobles who went about on horses.

20. The Name "Franco-Provençal" effectively illustrates the "non-language" status of this language – rather than being a system in its own right, it is labelled as a mixture of two more prominent languages. Franco-Provençal has been a language separate from the *dialectes d'oïl* and Occitan since the time of Charlemagne (742-814). The region in which Franco-Provençal is spoken is surrounded by more well-known language regions. It also crosses three national boundaries, Switzerland, France and Italy. The Oïl/Oc distinction was so generally accepted that dialectologists

did not recognize Franco-Provencal as a coherent linguistic system – seeing the region rather as a chaotic series of unrelated romance dialects – until well into the twentieth century.

21. The only real challenge to Paris as the dominating urban center during the revolutionary years came in 1793 when Lyon protested against the extreme nature of the Revolution. Revolutionary troops took over the city while Parisian decrees went as far as to remove Lyon's name and call it "commune affranchie." Although Lyon was re-established under Napoleon, its economic and political might had been crippled to the point that it would never again mount a serious challenge to that of Paris.

22. For example Marie in *La Mare au diable* must withstand poor treatment by a lecherous employer after she gives in to the social convention of age difference and does not reveal her true feelings to Germain in the woods. Brulette and Thérèse in *Les Maîtres sonneurs* each do a kind of atonement for hiding (and having) their feelings of vanity and jealousy. Madeleine's husband in *François le champi* lies when he sends François away, claiming that Madeleine is attracted to François when in fact it is his mistress la Sévère who had made advances. He is punished by his lie coming true – after his death. Madeleine hides the truth from François – both about her husband's given pretext for sending him away, and consequently the truth behind the pretext – and is punished by François' shame and departure when she does finally tell him the truth.

23. For a discussion of the centrality of literature in the French artistic world, see Nettelbeck.

24. The mention of a "patriarchal" quality in language preserved in the Touraine evokes interesting parallels between the structure of Sandian rural society – the fathers have almost dictatorial authority in *La Mare au diable*, *La Petite Fadette* and especially *Les Maîtres sonneurs* where Huriel's father "le grand-bûcheux" is regarded as a sort of monarch – and the *ancien régime*. Sand is a socialist, but the society she idealizes as a catalyst for social change often resembles that of an enlightened monarchy.

25. Some other archaisms employed in all four novels: *emmi* (for "parmi"); *mêmement* (for "même" and "de même"); *souvenance* (for "des souvenirs" and "la mémoire"). Sand

also regularly uses non-archaic words in an archaic sense – e.g., *brave* to mean "clean and properly dressed"; *ennui* to designate severe duress, in concrete or spiritual terms.

26. The question of accuracy in Nucingen's accent cannot be resolved, unless it is by saying that his language represents a possible idiolect of a bourgeois from Alsace. Since such speakers were second-language speakers of French, it is reasonable to assume a large array of variation among them.

27. This growth of urban population was gradual. By the end of the nineteenth century, 57.5% of the French population was still rural. Nonetheless the population's urbanization progressed and accelerated throughout the nineteenth century, even while the overall population remained fairly constant (Cobban, 156).

28. Zola also compares peasant behavior to animal instinct in *La Terre* (see, e.g., in *Oeuvres Completes*, Ed. M. le Blond, Paris, Bernouard, 1929, pp. 186-187).

29. Sand's childhood home of Nohant is about 40 miles from Blzac's native Tours.

30. The militant Basque population in the southwest is a notable exception. Most of the violence on behalf of the Basque cause, however, takes place in Spanish territory.

31. The distinction between a dialect and a "variety" of regional French is admittedly vague. The distinction hinges on comprehensibility. Speakers of two different dialects cannot without considerable difficulty understand each other. Speakers of different varieties of the same language (or dialect) encounter few difficulties understanding one another, although they can distinguish phonological, syntactic and lexical differences in the speech of the other. In this study, "language" and "dialect" are used interchangeably, and "French" is meant to designate not only the Parisian standard, but all of the regional varieties of French.

32. Still today notably absent from this list is Creole of any kind.

33. The original model for this study called for three socio-economic groups: working class, middle class, and upper middle class. Some of the upper middle class respondent groups had fewer than five members, however, so

it was decided that the two middle class groups would be combined in this pilot study. Socio-economic status was determined by the following: 1) profession of respondent's parents 2) respondent's profession and education; 3) respondent's preferred daily newspaper; 4) respondents favorite author. Numbers one and two were the most important for deciding socio-economic status. Three and four were used along with respondent birthplace and present living situation in cases where profession and education did not offer sufficient grounds for socio-economic classification.

34. See table 1 for details that correspond to respondent numbers.

35. These descriptive comments were written as labels on the perceptual maps. Throughout this study such comments are reproduced exactly as respondents wrote them.

36. Note that the occupation of Alsace-Lorraine by the German army was treated quite differently from the rest of the Occupation. Citizens of Alsace and Lorraine were treated as German citizens in every right, meaning, among other things, that the men were drafted into the regular German army.

37. The literal translation of "putain" is "whore." "Putain" takes so many grammatical forms and is present in so many colloquial expressions of vulgarity, however, that this translation does not do justice to its status as an universally applicable taboo word.

38. In the 15th century Burgundy was among the French Kingdom's greatest political rivals.

39. The grammarians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (e.g. Vaugelas) claimed that their prescriptions were based on empirical observations, namely the usage of the court. By the eighteenth century, however, grammarians began linking correctness to the inherent clarity and logic of the norm, rather than to the usage of one specific social class. At this time, all prescriptivist claims to the empirical reality of correctness (however tenuous they may have previously been) were abandoned. (see Lodge 1993, 178-186)

40. Lodge (1993, 181) indicates that this negative definition of the norm has likely been present since the beginnings of

codification: "The stigmatization of vulgarisms (or *gasconismes* as they were often called) proceeded apace [in the mid-eighteenth century], no doubt leaving most people with a clearer idea of what they were supposed to avoid saying than what the grammarians actually recommended for them."

41. The respondents that did not perform the task (or put the same rating for every region) were: 2, 6, 14, 22, 30, 33, 37, 40, 43, 44, 45, 49, 53, 58, 65, 70, 72 and 73. This group consists of seven men and eleven women. Six respondents are from age group one, seven from age group two, and five from age group three. Nine respondents were in each of the two socio-economic divisions. The only information on the questionnaires that might indicate political views is the name of respondents' favorite daily newspaper. The responses to that part of the questionnaire reveal no overall political tendency among members of this group: *le Monde* (6), *le Parisien* (5), *le canard enchaîné*, *Paris info-matin*, *Libération*, *le Figaro*, *la Revue scientifique*, *le Courrier international*, *l'Express*, *Charlie hebdo*, *le Point*. Some respondents named no daily newspaper, some more than one.

42. I have included in this section the statements of four other respondents who while performing the correctness rating task voiced reluctance. Their ratings reflected this reluctance, showing a low range of ratings or more than two-thirds of ratings being the same. These respondents are numbers 4, 6, 32 and 33. Two respondents (numbers 14 and 58) refused to be interviewed on tape. Nor did they write comments explaining their correctness ratings. Both of these respondents rated a five for all regions.

43. See Appendix for transcriptions and translations of statements by dissenting respondents.

44. Speaker A may judge speaker B as a poor speaker based on the "guttural" sound of his/her /r/. The term "guttural" may not be scientifically precise, but it does indicate one of the focal points of that speakers' linguistic judgments. According to Labov's statement such respondent descriptions as this are of no use in a sociolinguistic study. While I would agree that a single statement about the quality of the /r/ does not constitute important linguistic data, the present perceptual study shows how discovery of respondents' consistent perceptual focus on particular phonemes or lexical items can lead researchers to more complete

understanding of the sociolinguistic landscape than performance data alone.

45. Language expertise at the time of the founding of the *Académie* was attributed to those who "would have been considered the inheritors of the best French and the obvious arbiters of good taste," namely the clergy, nobility and military. "Since the notion of language purity is a fiction anyway, there is no requirement on linguistic grounds for experts." (Edwards 1985, 28)

46. Edwards (1985) notes that since the inception of the *Académie* "only two men trained in philology or lexicography have ever been members." (p.27) Accordingly, decisions of the *Académie* rarely correspond to actual usage. The forward-looking 1901 elimination of the "pleonastic *ne*" [from the Latin *ne* meaning "lest"] did not prevent speakers from continuing to use it, any more than the sometimes reactionary lexical protectionism of today's *Académie* has prevented people from uttering "le marketing" or "les baskets."

47. Labov's notion that natural speech (or the vernacular) takes place when the speaker is paying the least amount of attention to their own linguistic performance is problematic because it introduces a variable that is impossible to assess – speaker attentiveness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Collection devices

Après chaque nom de région, encerclez le numéro

1 Si vous pensez que le français parlé dans cette région ressemble à celui que vous parlez. 2 S'il y a une ressemblance, mais moins forte. 3 Si le français parlé dans cette région ne ressemble guère à celui que vous parlez. 4 Si le français parlé dans cette région vous est incompréhensible.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Nord | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 2. Picardie | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 3. Normandie | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 4. Ile de France | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 5. Champagne | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 6. Bretagne | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 7. Touraine | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 8. Centre | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 9. Franche - Comté | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 10. Bourgogne | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 11. Lorraine | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 12. Alsace | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 13. Poitou-Charentes | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 14. Auvergne | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 15. Limousin | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 16. Massif Central | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 17. Lyonnais | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 18. Rhône - Alpes | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 19. Jura | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 20. Gascogne | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 21. Languedoc | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 22. Provence | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 23. Belgique | [1] [2] [3] [4] |
| 24. Suisse romande | [1] [2] [3] [4] |

Après chacune des régions nommées ci-dessous, encerclez le numéro (de un [1] à sept [7]) qui correspond à votre avis, selon l'échelle suivante:

1 = "On parle un français dans cette région qui n'est **pas du tout correct**"

7 = "On parle un français dans cette région qui est **tout à fait correct.**"

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Nord | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 2. Picardie | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 3. Normandie | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 4. Ile de France | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 5. Champagne | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 6. Bretagne | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 7. Touraine | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 8. Centre | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 9. Franche - Comté | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 10. Bourgogne | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 11. Lorraine | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 12. Alsace | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 13. Poitou-Charentes | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 14. Auvergne | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 15. Limousin | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 16. Massif Central | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 17. Lyonnais | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 18. Rhône - Alpes | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 19. Jura | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 20. Gascogne | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 21. Languedoc | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 22. Provence | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 23. Belgique | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |
| 24. Suisse romande | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] |

Appendix B

Figures

Figure 1: Multidimensional Scaling of Correctness Ratings with
5 K-Means Clusters

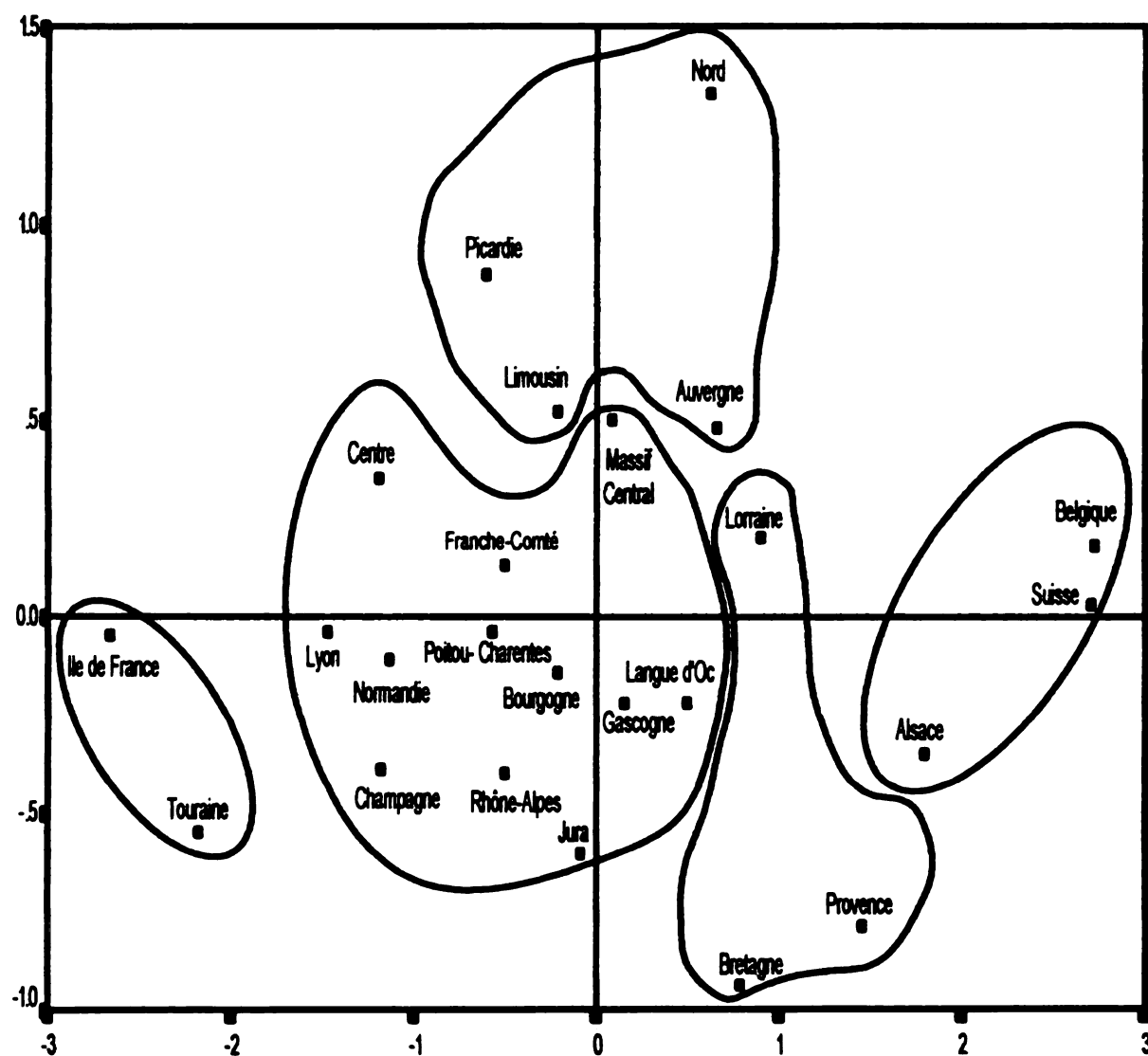


Figure 2: Multidimensional Scaling of Correctness Ratings with 4 k-means clusters

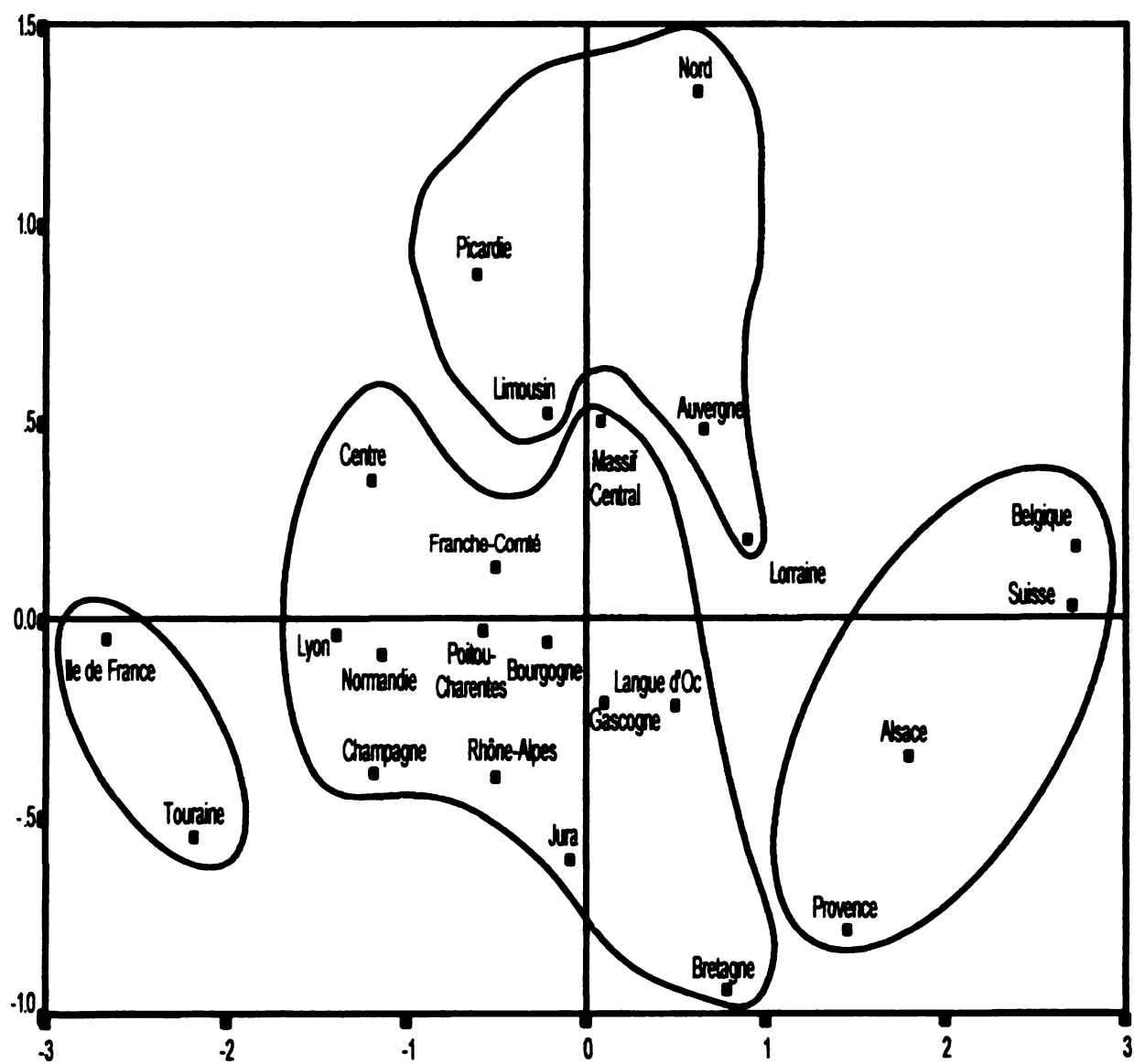


Figure 3: Multidimensional scaling of Degree of Difference ratings with 6 K-means clusters

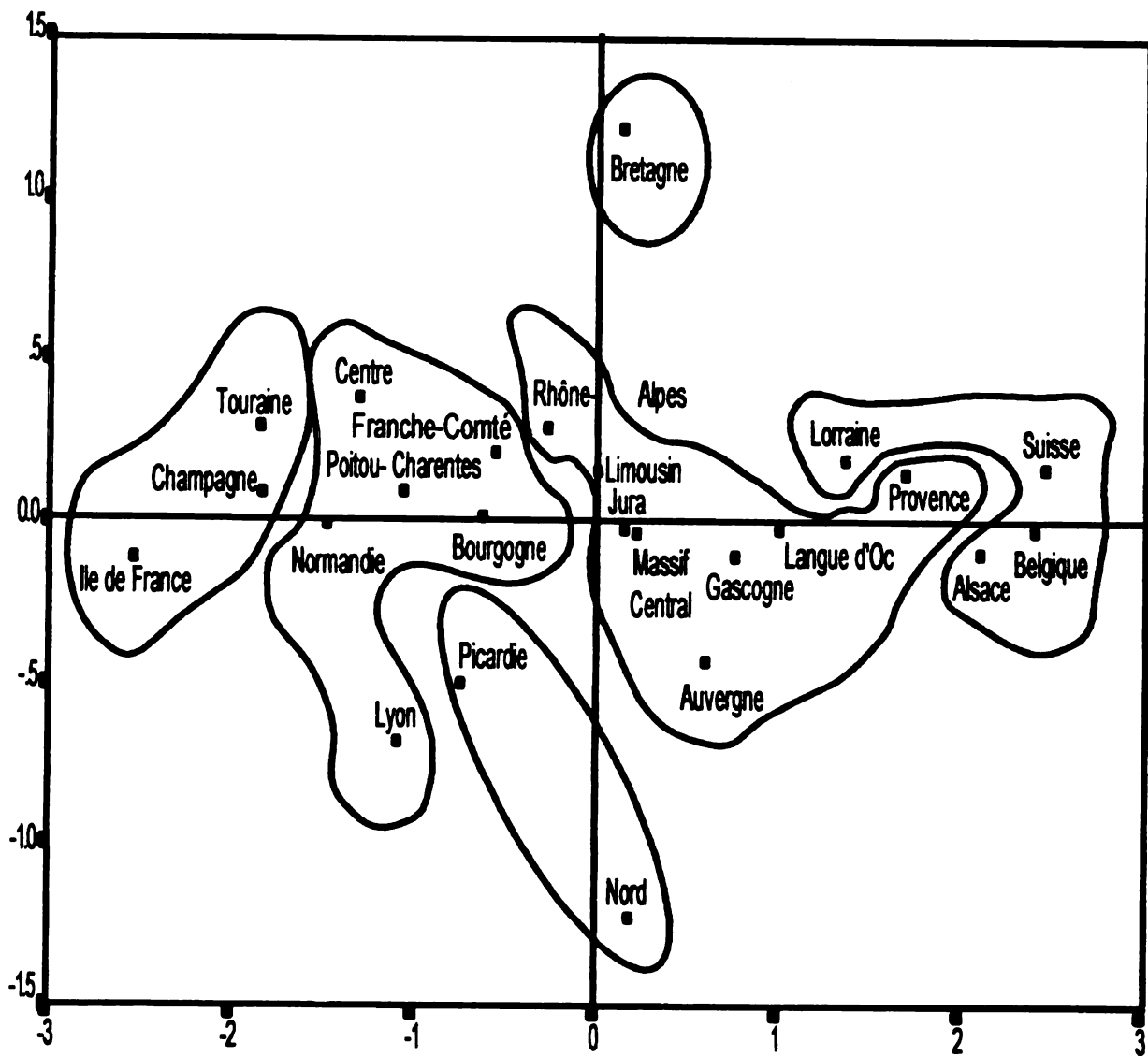


Figure 4: Multidimensional scaling of pleasantness ratings with 5 k-means clusters

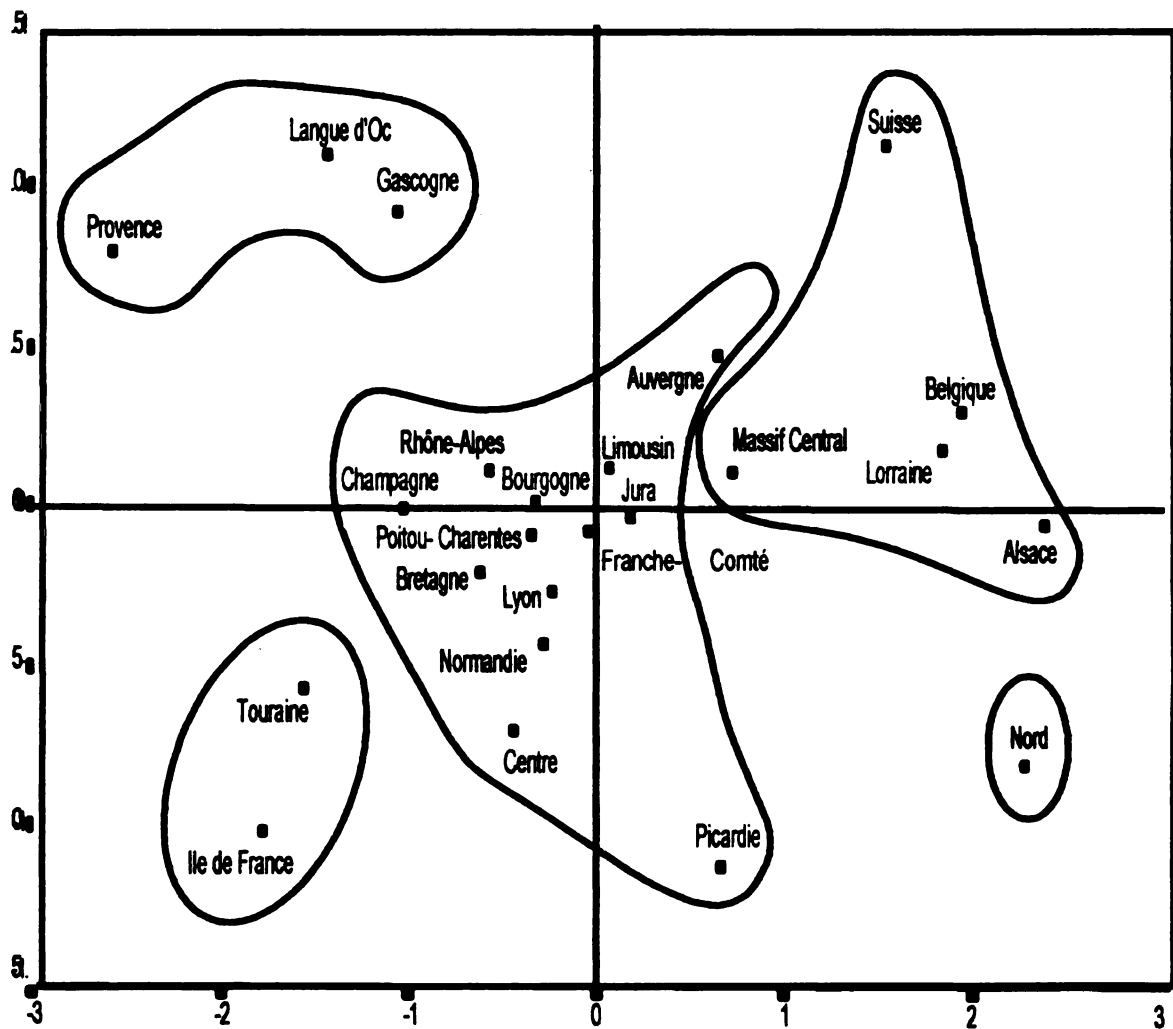
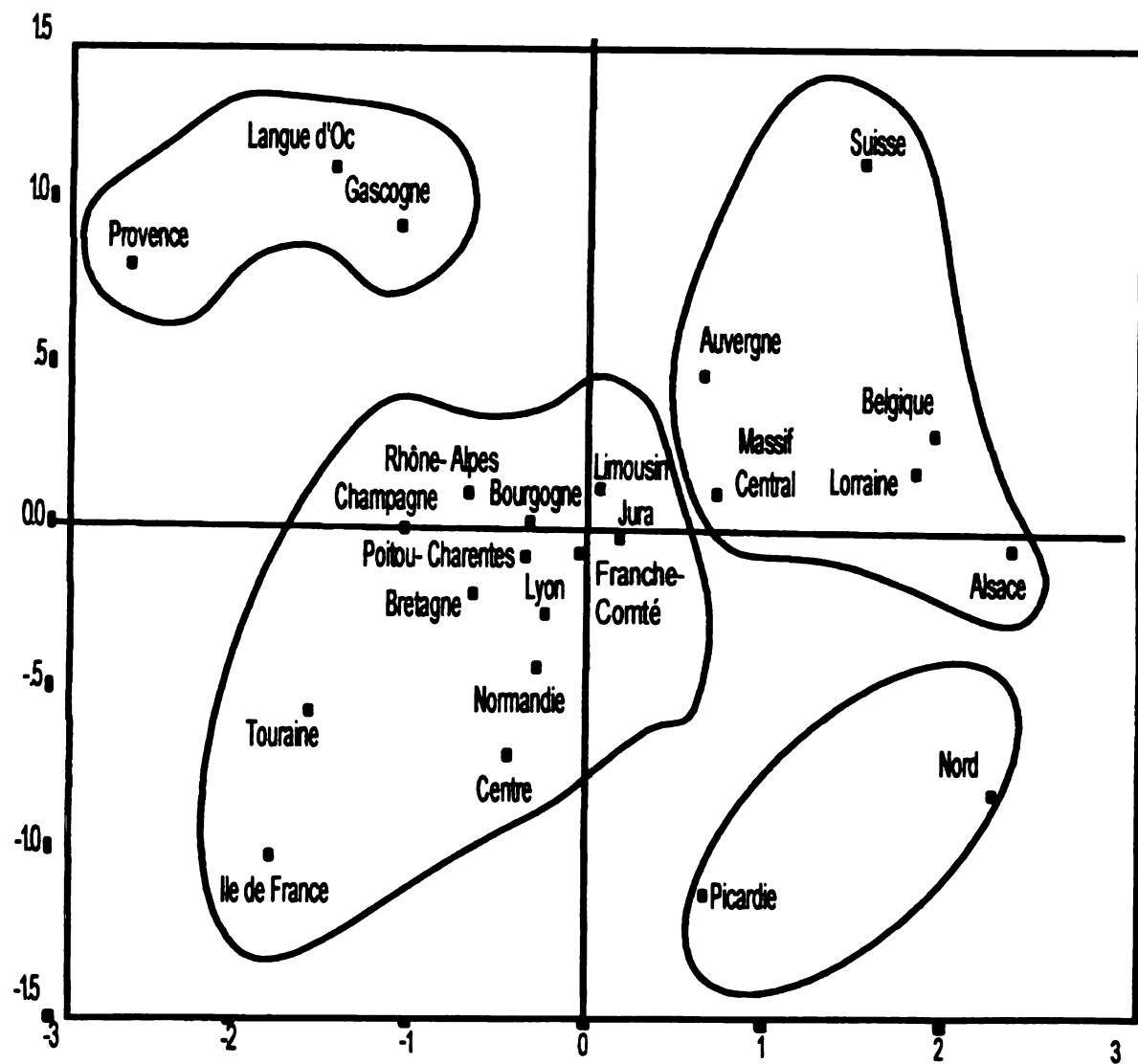


Figure 5: Multidimensional Scaling of Pleasantness Ratings
with 4 k-means clusters



Appendix C

Tables

Table 1, the distribution of respondents by age and socio-economic status:

Age 18-25		Age 30-45		Age 50+		
Sex ->	M	F	M	F	M	F
Working Class	5	5	4	4	4	5
Middle Class	10	20	4	5	4	5
TOTAL	15	25	8	9	8	10

Table 2. Individual Respondents

Key:

Age Group: (1) = 18-25; (2) = 30-45; (3) = 50+
SES (Socio-economic status): (1) = working Class (2) = middle class

Res #	Age	Sex	SES	Residence (postal code)	Place of Birth
1	1	m	1	Banlieue (94)	St. Maur
2	1	m	1	14th arrondissement	14th arrondissement
3	1	m	1	La Garenne-Colombes (Nanterre)	La Garenne-Colombes (Nanterre)
4	1	m	2	La Celle St. Cloud	Suresnes
5	1	m	2	Montesson (78)	Suresnes
6	1	m	2	Les Clayes sous bois (Versailles)	Versailles

7	1	m	2	Colombes (92)	Colombes (92)
8	1	m	3	Versailles	St. Etienne (in Paris since age 10)
9	1	m	3	8th arrondissement	14th arrondissement
10	1	m	3	Sevres	Clamard (92)
11	1	m	3	Neuilly-sur-Seine	Neuilly-sur- Seine
12	1	m	3	Colombes	Saint-Germain- en laye (78)
13	1	f	3	17th arrondissement	Boulogne- Billancourt (78)
14	1	f	Meudon-la-fôret		Issy-les- Moulineaux
15	1	f	1	Fontenay (94)	Montreuil
16	1	f	1	Epinay sur Seine	Epinay sur Seine
17	1	f	1	Clichy (92)	Suresnes
18	1	f	1	Pavillons s/s Bois (93)	4th arrondissement
19	1	f	1	Cergy-le-haut (95)	4th arrondissement
20	1	f	2	La Courneuve	8th arrondissement
21	1	f	2	Neuilly-sur-Seine	Paris
22	1	f	2	17th arrondissement	14th arrondissement
23	1	f	2	17th arrondissement	17th arrondissement
24	1	f	2	Jouy-le-Moutier (95)	Saint-Germain- en-laye (78)

25	1	f	2	Garches	Briançon (Paris since age 5)
26	1	f	2	Saint-Germain-en laye (78)	16th arrondissement
27	1	f	2	Poissy (78)	Noisy-le-sec (93)
28	1	f	2	Fontenay-sous-bois (94)	11th arrondissement
29	1	f	2	4th arrondissement	Paris
30	1	f	2	Le Pecq (78)	14th arrondissement
31	1	f	2	Neuilly sur Seine (92)	Neuilly sur Seine (92)
32	1	f	2	Levallois-Perret	16th arrondissement
33	1	f	2	17th arrondissement	16th arrondissement
34	1	f	2	18th arrondissement	Saint Ouen (93)
35	1	f	2	Neuilly sur Seine (92)	8th arrondissement
36	1	f	2	Puteaux	Boulogne-Billancourt (78)
37	1	f	2	Garches	Saint-Cloud
38	1	f	2	17th arrondissement	Cardiff, UK (in Paris since six months old)
39	1	f	2	Elancourt (92)	Avignon (in Paris since 2 years old)
40	2	m	1	"Paris - banlieue sud"	"Paris - banlieue sud"
41	2	m	1	Chilly Mazarin (91)	Dugny (93)

42	2	m	1	20th arrondissement	Paris
43	2	m	1	Argenteuil (95)	Suresne (92)
44	2	m	1	Meaux (97)	"93"
45	2	m	2	Montmorency (Val d'Oise)	14th arrondissement
46	2	m	2	Avon (77)	Fontainebleau (77)
47	2	m	2	13th arrondissement	Neuilly (92)
48	2	m	2	12th arrondissement	Orsay (91)
49	2	f	1	17th arrondissement	Voutrè (53) (in Paris since age 5)
50	2	f	1	17th arrondissement	Normandie" (in Paris since age 7)
51	2	f	1	Paris (Vincennes)	Paris
52	2	f	1	Saint-Germer-de-Fly	Garches
53	2	f	2	Meudon (92) (since age 5)	Dakar (both parents born in France)
54	2	f	2	17th arrondissement	Mont Bonvillers (in Paris since age 10)
55	2	f	2	12th arrondissement	Suresnes (92)
56	2	f	2	13th arrondissement	Pèrigueux (in Paris since age 10)
57	2	f	2	1st arrondissement	13th arrondissement
58	3	m	1	17th arrondissement	Paris
59	3	m	1	Ivry	13th arrondissement

60	3	m	1	4th arrondissement	4th arrondissement
61	3	m	1	5th arrondissement	14th arrondissement
62	3	m	2	Paris (Boulogne)	Paris
63	3	m	2	20th arrondissement	12th arrondissement
64	3	m	2	Neuilly	Paris
65	3	m	2	1st arrondissement	14th arrondissement
66	3	f	1	Bagnolet	20th arrondissement
67	3	f	1	Paris	Marseille (in Paris since age 10)
68	3	f	1	Marseille	Paris
69	3	f	1	15th arrondissement	12th arrondissement
70	3	f	1	Charenton (94)	15th arrondissement
71	3	f	2	5th arrondissement	Paris
72	3	f	2	12th arrondissement	15th arrondissement
73	3	f	2	12th arrondissement	9th arrondissement
74	3	f	2	5th arrondissement	17th arrondissement
75	3	f	2	16th arrondissement	15th arrondissement

Table 3 This table shows the mean score, by region, of the three rating tasks. Column 1 is the correctness task. Column 2 is the degree of difference task. Column 3 is the pleasantness task. Numbers in parentheses represent rank order of the region for the particular task. After each column, is a sub-column (std) noting the standard deviation by region for that task.

	1 (correctness)	std	2 (difference)	std	3 (pleasant)	
Ile de France	6.00 (1)	1.25	1.04 (1)	.26	5.75 (2)	1.49
Touraine	5.78 (2)	1.27	1.34 (2)	.6	5.73 (3)	1.35
Lyonnais	5.53 (3)	1.36	1.62 (6)	.77	5.15 (8/9)	1.41
Champagne	5.46 (4)	1.30	1.36 (3)	.56	5.49 (5)	1.30
Normandie	5.27 (5)	1.38	1.57 (4)	.66	4.97 (13)	1.52
Centre	5.25 (6)	1.46	1.64 (7)	.72	5.19 (7)	1.49
Poitou-Charentes	5.08 (7)	1.19	1.59 (5)	.64	5.12 (10)	1.26
Rhône-Alpes	4.93 (8)	1.31	1.89 (10)	.78	5.15 (8/9)	1.36
Franche-Comté	4.92 (9-11)	1.25	1.91 (11)	.68	4.88 (14)	1.39
Bourgogne	4.92 (9-11)	1.21	1.79 (8)	.66	5.08 (12)	1.25
Picardie	4.92 (9-11)	1.48	1.80 (9)	.73	4.41 (19)	1.59
Limousin	4.73 (12)	1.36	1.99 (12)	.70	4.81 (15)	1.33
Jura	4.63 (13)	1.36	2.07 (13)	.72	4.75 (16)	1.34
Gascogne	4.53 (14)	1.22	2.29 (18)	.71	5.37 (6)	1.44
Massif Central	4.49 (15)	1.43	2.13 (16)	.66	4.44 (18)	1.51
Langue d'Oc	4.49 (16)	1.41	2.33 (19)	.79	5.56 (4)	1.49
Bretagne	4.36 (17)	1.59	2.09 (14)	.87	5.11 (11)	1.47
Auvergne	4.25 (18)	1.42	2.24 (17)	.76	4.49 (17)	1.57
Nord	4.20 (19)	1.62	2.11 (15)	.81	3.68 (23)	1.88
Provence	4.17 (20)	1.60	2.57 (21)	.81	6.05 (1)	1.39
Lorraine	4.14 (21)	1.36	2.53 (20)	.81	3.85 (22)	1.75
Alsace	3.73 (22)	1.42	2.78 (22)	.74	3.56 (24)	1.79
Suisse romande	3.49 (23)	1.77	2.89 (24)	.83	3.99 (20)	1.89
Belgique	3.44 (24)	1.72	2.87 (23)	.81	3.93 (21)	1.92

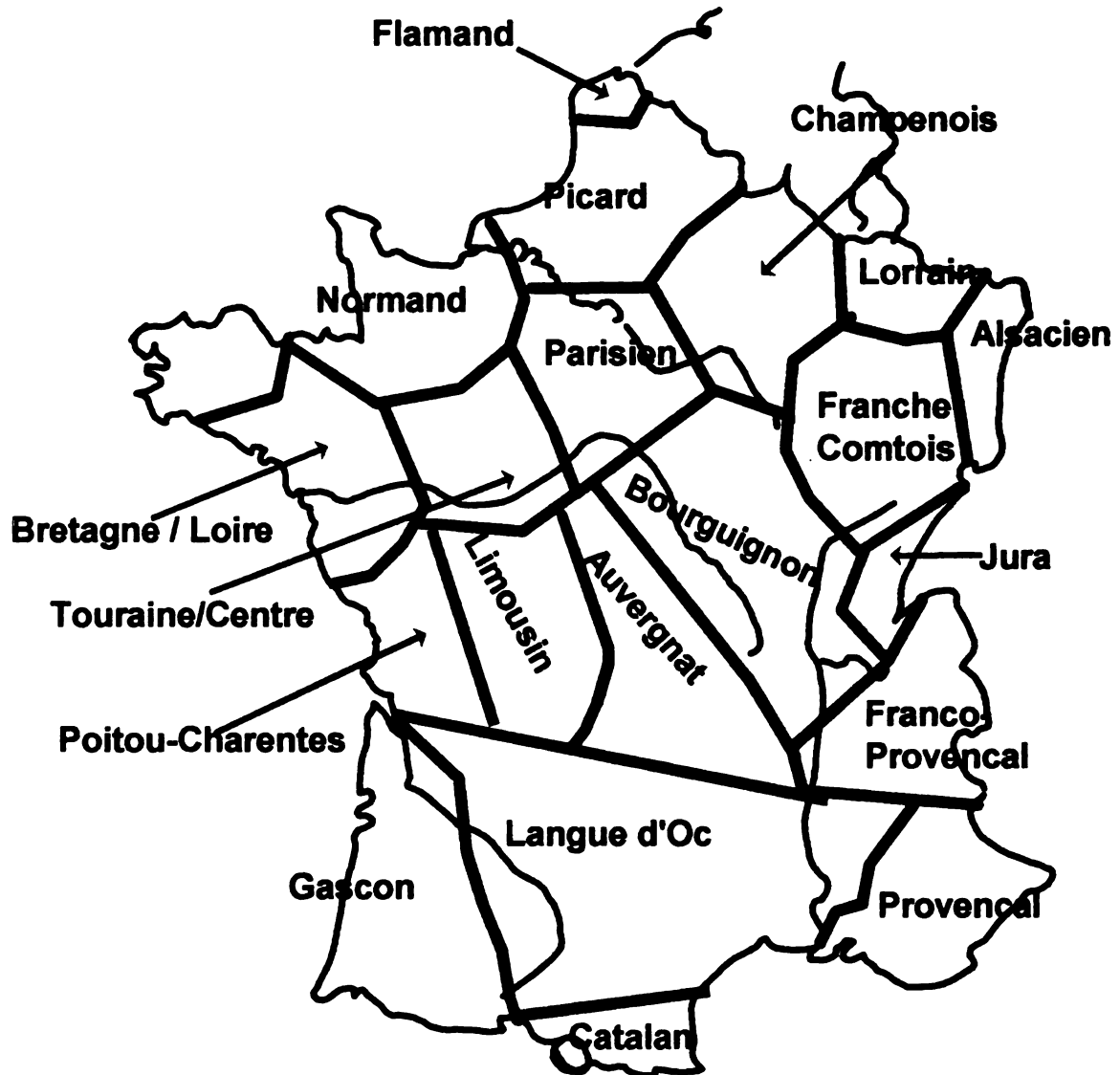
Appendix D

Maps

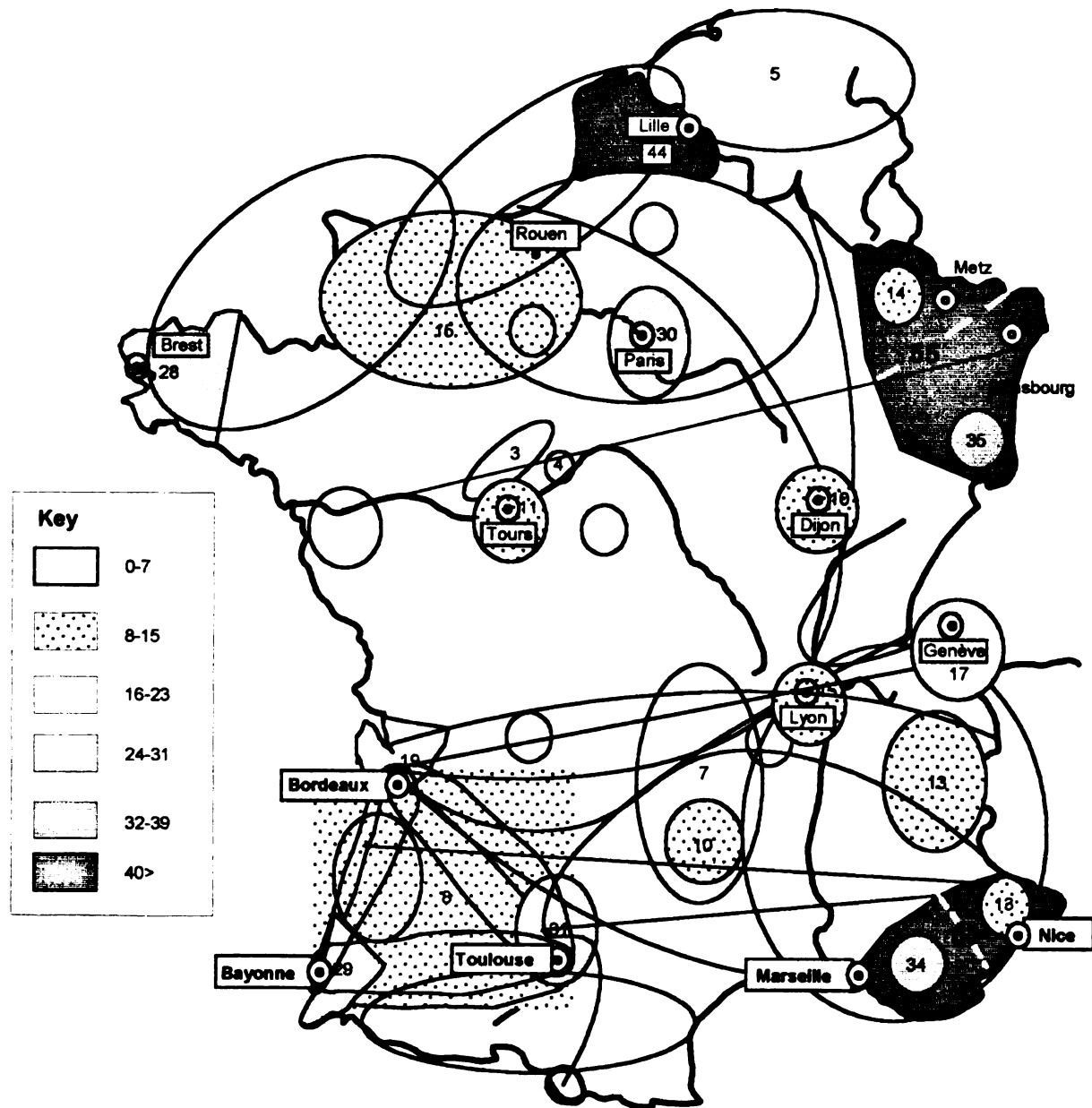


Map 1: The administrative boundaries of France

Map 2: Dialect divisions of France



Map 3: Composite map of respondents' drawn perceptual maps



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